

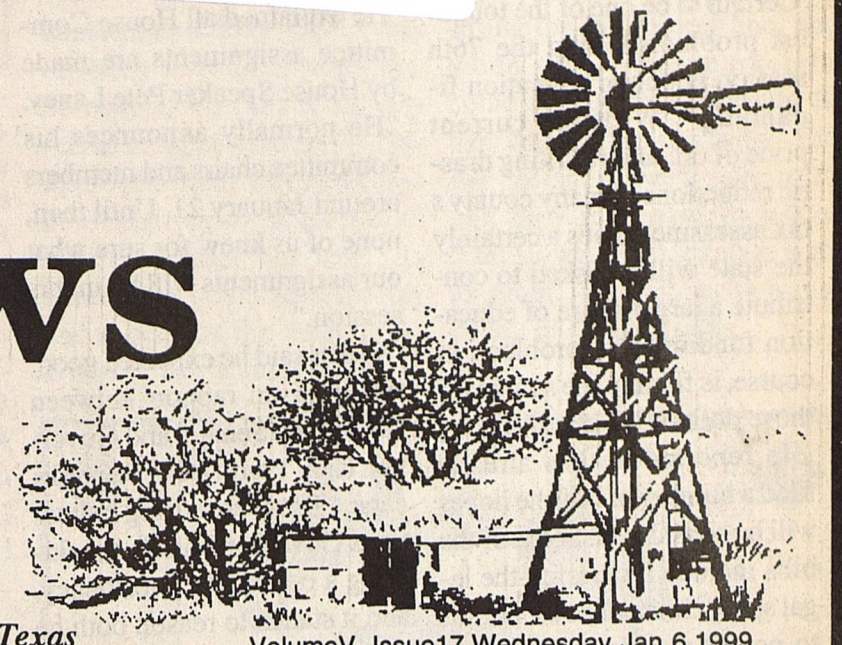
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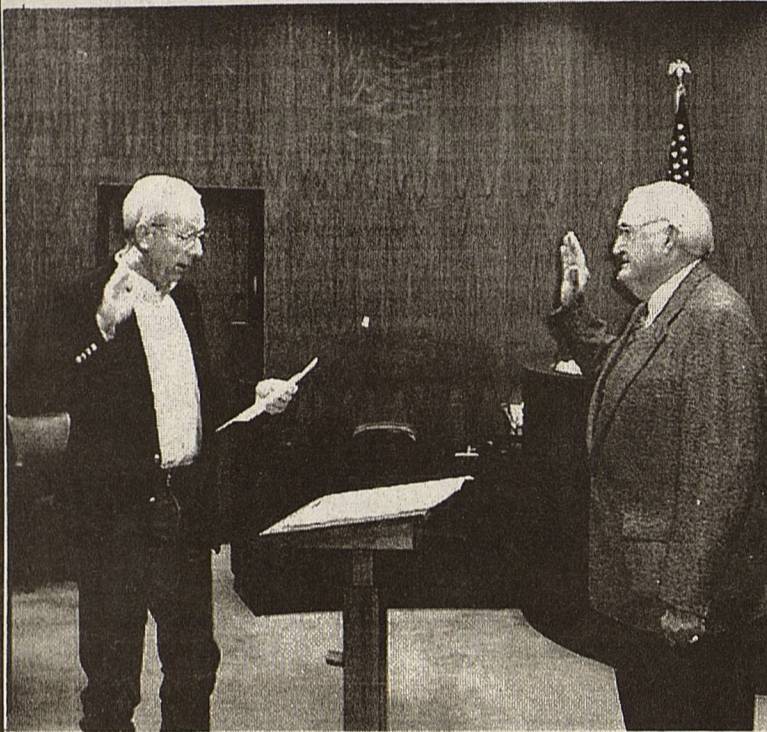
Cowboy Country News



Published each Wednesday in the county seat of Yoakum County, Plains, Texas

Volume V, Issue 17, Wednesday Jan 6, 1999

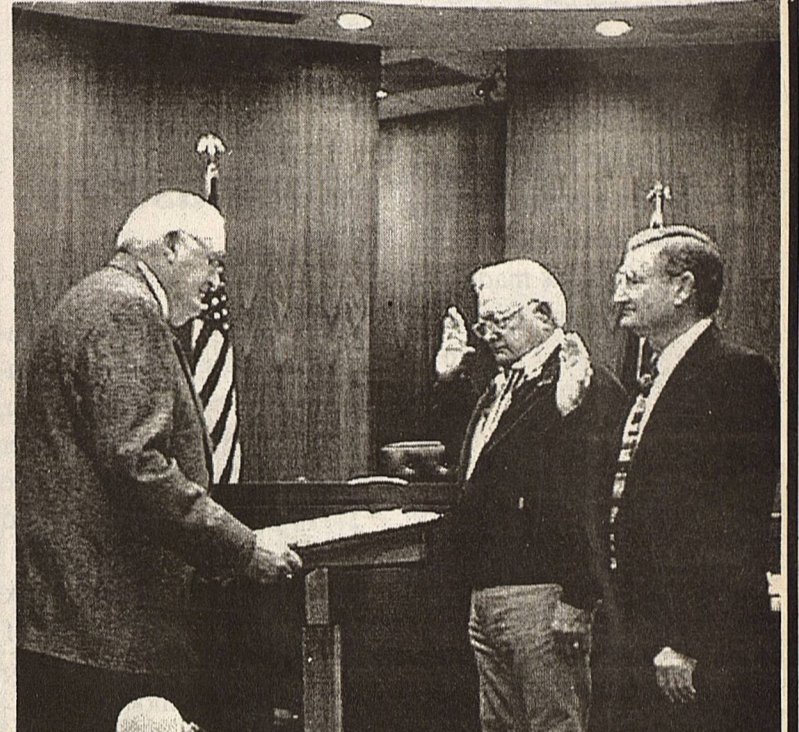
Elected officials sworn in New Year's Day



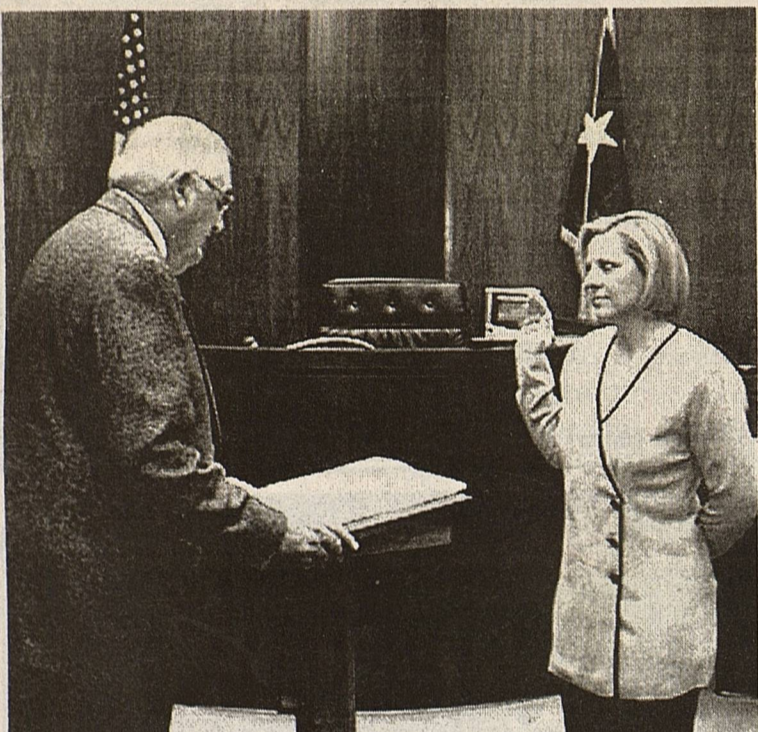
Commissioner Jim Barron, Pct. 3, swears in re-elected County Judge Dallas Brewer



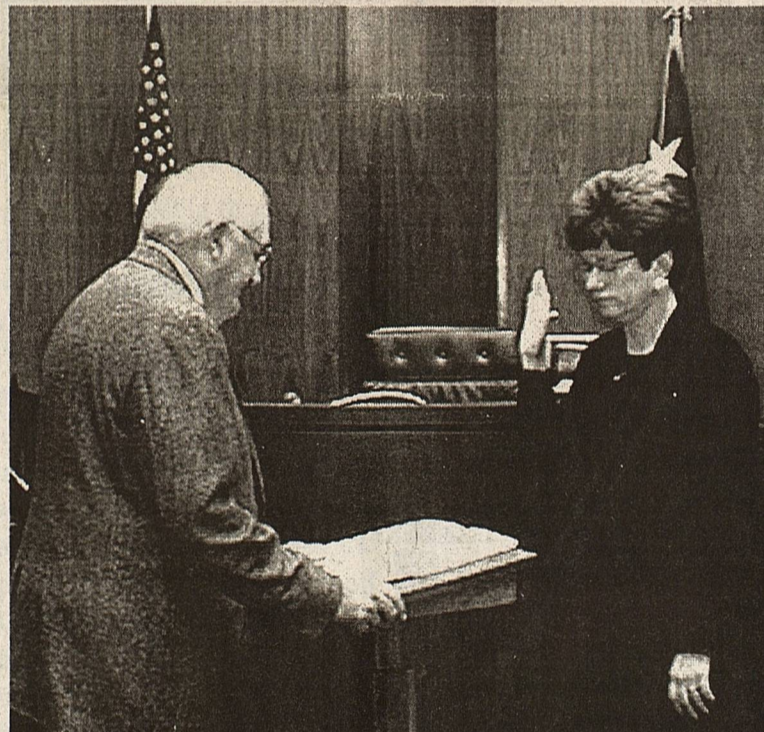
Newly elected District Clerk Vickie Blundell is sworn into office by State Representative Gary Walker



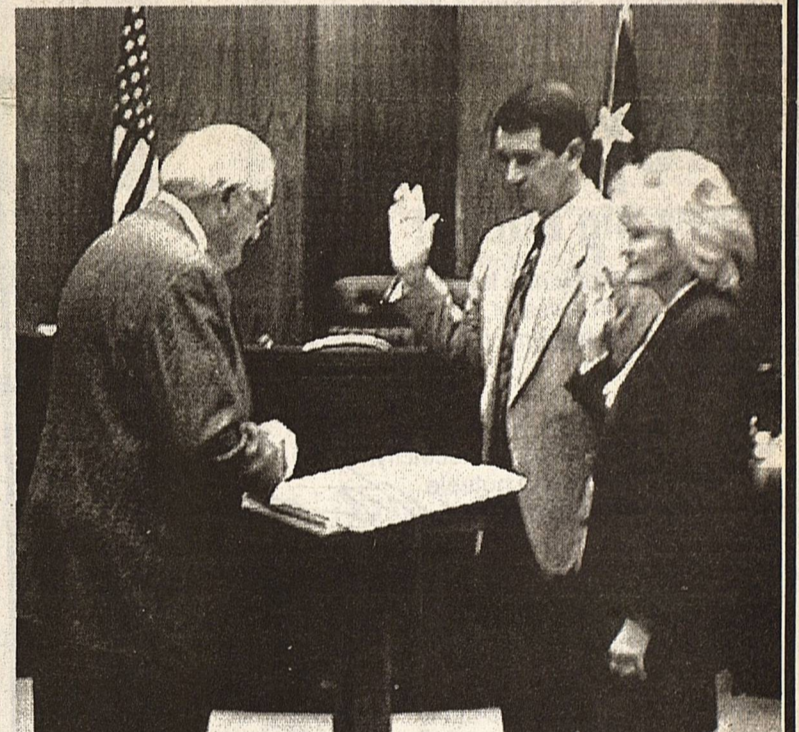
Judge Brewer swears in re-elected Commissioner J. R. Slentz, Pct. 2, and newcomer Jack Cobb, Pct. 4.



Re-elected County Clerk Debbie Rushing is sworn in by Judge Brewer



Treasurer Toni Jones returns to office, sworn by Judge Brewer
(more photos inside)



Justice of Peace Kenny Smith, Pct. 2, and Justice of Peace Melba Crutcher return to office, sworn by Judge Brewer

Walker outlines tough issues facing 76th Legislative Session

In an interview on New Year's Day, State Representative Gary Walker, Dist. 80, said a number of monumental issues face state legislators in the 140 day session which convenes in Austin January 12. Asked what he considered the number one task facing the state's House and Senate, he replied, "It's always adopting the state budget for the next two years. Regardless of the nature of the issue, whether it's boll weevil eradication, public education, water programs or teacher retirement, all the problems we must address involve dollars. Without funding, all of the needs we must consider become dead issues." He feels certain another campaign promoting electric utility deregulation will surface during the session. In the 75th

session two years ago, deregulation was seriously proposed, but proponents failed to get enough support to mount an effective campaign. Walker said another attempt would be made in the session to completely rewrite the state constitution, the extremely long document in place since 1845. "I don't feel there is much of a realistic chance of the effort to create a new constitution succeeding. Virtually everyone agrees the document is unwieldy, too cumbersome, and that's the reason it will be so difficult to replace. It contains so very many issues, affecting so many different interest groups, it will be a very tough chore." He cited an example of the problems faced when changing issues already in place in the old document.

"In the last session, we discussed and debated for days and days the proposal to allow home equity lending, which had always been banned by the constitution. That's an indication we would have to be in session virtually forever to rewrite the entire constitution." On the subject of cooperation between Democrat and Republican legislators during the January 12 to May 31 session, Walker was very optimistic. "I can't speak for the Senate, but in the House, there is not much partisan politics after the state elections are over. I think most of us are more concerned with serving the interests of our constituents at home than getting involved in party politics."

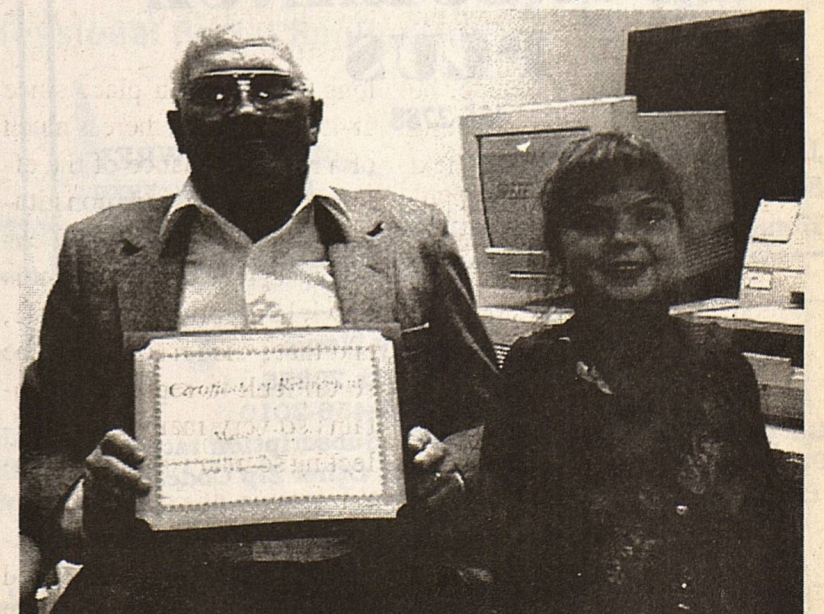
Turn to Page 2, "Walker"

Veteran Tx Dot Employee Resigns Here

The time worn employment phrase, "Start at the bottom and work your way up", certainly applies to Maxey McElroy. He started his career here with the Texas Department of Transportation Maintenance office in 1961. Thirty seven years and five months later last Thursday afternoon, Maxey officially retired. He told CCN he started his career as a common laborer. Over the years, he worked as a truck driver, a motor grader operator, maintained state highway signs, even served a stint as office secretary. He retired last week with the title Assistant Maintenance Supervisor. During his almost 38 years service, he worked under a number of supervisors, including the late H.G.'Bob' McDonnell, 'Cotton' Howell, Elbert Estep, and the current supervisor, Jerry Morphis. Asked who was his toughest boss, he smiled and said, "Bob McDonnell. He wanted the jobs done right and wasn't sat-

isfied until they were. He was really a fine man." He and his wife Adell have four children, Tommy Dale, James Lee, William Lynn, and daughter Marya Rena McElroy. They also have four grandsons and a granddaughter. Asked if he or his wife had any message, they both said they wanted to thank the people of the community and county.

Adell said, "It's been a great experience living in Plains, and we love our neighbors." Maxey said he would probably miss his job, but would work hard learning to enjoy retirement. His present boss, Jerry Morphis, expressed his appreciation for Maxey's contributions. "We will all miss him. I've learned to count on him remembering many highway problems and how they were corrected."



Maxey McElroy and proud granddaughter Meagan McElroy.

From Page 1,
"Walker"

Certain to be one of the toughest problems facing the 76th session is public education financing. "With the current price of oil, and resulting drastic reductions in many county's tax assessments, it's a certainty the state will be asked to contribute a larger share of education funding. Our problem, of course, is finding the source for those dollars," Walker said.

He reported he has already filed a number of bills he hopes will be considered. Some of the bills include increasing the legal speed limits of school buses to posted speeds on the roads they travel; To boost the state's school teacher retirement benefits, raising the multiplier from 2.0% to 2.25%, matching the rate for state employees; Seeking approval of a planned water district for Reeves, Loving and Pecos Counties.

In the 75th session, Walker served as Vice-Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee, and was a member of the powerful Appropriations Committee. He said he has made a request to remain on Appropriations Committee. "I've also requested to be considered for a seat on the Calendars Committee. This is a very important committee. All bills must pass through Calendars, and their survival depends on that committee's decisions." He said if he is allowed to remain on Appropriations and Natural Resources, and be fortunate enough to be named to Calendars, "I would feel like I'd hit a real home run, and would be

servicing in the most influential position I could hope for."

He explained all House Committee assignments are made by House Speaker Pete Laney. "He normally announces his committee chairs and members around January 21. Until then, none of us knew for sure what our assignments will be in this session."

Walker said he expected good, non-partisan rapport between the House, Senate, and Governor Rick Perry, both Republicans. "There are strong indications Governor Bush is considering a run for the Presidency, and it stands to reason both he and Lt. Gov. Perry will seek harmony during the session, and I feel the Democrat Legislators will seek mutual cooperation. All of us should be working for what is best for the citizens of Texas."

Economic growth forecast for New Year

"Although the latest Texas Index of Leading Economic Indicators rebounded this month, we should still expect slower growth for the new year," State Comptroller John Sharp said Tuesday.

The October 1998 Index stands at 133.3, and increase of 1.4 percent from a year ago. Compared to the month of September, the index is up 0.6 percent.

The State Comptroller's office produces the monthly Index of

Leading Texas Economic Indicators to help compare to 12 months ago. Texas consumer confidence was down 3.7 percent from October a year ago, but rose by 1.1 percent compared to September of this year.

Texas retail sales were up 7.5 percent compared to a year ago. The number of total authorized housing units for the month of October was 13,310, up 19.1 percent from last year. The number of housing permits increased by 1.9 percent from September.

The Texas Stock Index (TSI) is 684.7, 46.1 percent higher than a year ago. The TSI is up 25.7 percent from September.

New business incorporations grew by a mere 0.9 percent from a year ago.

The average manufacturing hours per workweek showed a 0.6 percent decline from October 1997, and a 2.3 percent drop when compared to the previous months of this year.

For the second straight month, the Texas Help Wanted Index fell by 4.6 percent from a year ago; however, it was up 2.1 percent from the previous month.

In the 12 months ending in October, the state added about 253,000 new jobs for an increase of 2.9 percent. The service sector accounted for the bulk of these gains with 222,000 jobs, a 3.2 percent increase from October 1997.

Kirk Parrish in A&M Cavalry unit



Cavalry members Marcos Edwards, Georgetown, Victor Garza, Mission, Michael Murphy, Paris, Kirk Parrish, Plains, and John Boles, Boerne, and 1902 unit cannon.

Kirk Parrish, son of Jerry and Jan Parrish of Plains and a Junior at Texas A&M, is shown in this photo with some of his buddies and fellow members of the prestigious Aggie 'Parson's Mounted Cavalry', the only horse mounted cavalry unit in the nation. The cavalry unit was started at A&M in 1973, and is named for Colonel Tom Parsons, former Commandant of the Corps of Cadets.

Kirk said belonging to the unit is not all glamorous pomp, pageantry and parades. "We have 40 horses to take care of, and keep their stalls clean. The work is sometimes hard, and always dirty," Parrish said. Cadets are eligible for the cavalry unit as sophomores, and applicants are limited to around 100 students, then their ranks thinned to 80 members.

When the cadets become Juniors, they can actually start riding the horses, and become "bosses" of the work details. Kirk is currently a Section Sergeant and in charge of the cannon shown in the photo. The artillery piece dates from 1902, and was used in World War I. When Kirk enters his Senior year, he will be upped to Section Chief of Cavalry, second in command of the elite unit. There are currently some 1,200 students in the Cadet Corps, including those in the Aggie Marching Band.

Keeping an eye on Texas

Food banks share Texas' bounty

Non-profit shelters, emergency food pantries and churches received more than 100 million pounds of food for hunger relief in Texas in 1997. The distribution of donated food and grocery products to numerous food banks throughout the state is coordinated by the Texas Association of Second Harvest Food Banks in Dallas.

Name and location of food bank	Total pounds distributed in 1997, in millions
Houston Food Bank	22.0
North Texas/Dallas	14.7
Tarrant Area/Fort Worth	13.4
San Antonio/San Antonio	9.5
Rio Grande Valley/McAllen	6.6
South Plains/Lubbock	6.0
Capital Area/Austin	5.4
Odessa/EI Paso/Alpine/Big Spring	4.5
Regional East Texas/Tyler	4.0
Food Bank/Corpus Christi	2.8
Food Bank/Abilene	2.7
High Plains/Amarillo	2.6
Laredo-Webb County/Laredo	2.5
Community Food Bank/Victoria	2.0
Caritas-Food for People/Waco	1.9
Southeast Texas/Beaumont	1.0
Concho Valley/San Angelo	1.0
Wichita Falls Area/Wichita Falls	.8
Brazos/College Station	.7

SOURCES: John Sharp, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, and Texas Association of Second Harvest Food Banks.

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Criminal District Attorney Richard Clark re-elected, sworn by Judge Brewer



New D.C. Constable Mary Barron sworn in by Judge Brewer.

Hospitals' Name Change Takes Effect

Lubbock, Tx.—The name changes of Covenant Health System's two cornerstone hospitals officially take place on Friday, January 1, 1999.

Effective with the advent of the new year, Methodist Hospital will now be known as Covenant Medical Center, while St. Mary Hospital will become Covenant Medical Center-Lakeside.

These changes complete the process for all Covenant Health System (CHS) member hospitals. Methodist Children's Hospital was the first to change its naming, becoming Covenant Children's Hospital on October 1, 1998. Partner hospitals in Levelland and Plainview recently updated their names as well—to Covenant Hospital Levelland and Covenant Hospital Plainview, respectively.

In addition, the system's home health agency, Total Home

Health Care, is changing its name to Covenant Home Health Care at most of its locations across Texas.

According to CHS President/CEO Charley Trimble, these name changes more accurately reflect the system's vision "to be recognized as a leader in providing regional integrated health care, promoting health improvement and creating healthy communities."

"We are proud of our histories of service to this community as Methodist and St. Mary hospitals, and we look forward to a future where people recognize the Covenant name as the one they can count on to provide the medical needs of their entire family," Trimble said.

Sign changes at all CHS member institutions will begin taking place this spring.

Caveat Emptor, Anybody?

* The following article appeared in the January issue of 'Enchantment', a monthly publication of the New Mexico Rural Electric State-wide Association, and was written by Kevin J. Groenwold, Executive Director. Our front page article featuring Representative Gary Walker's views on the up coming 76th Legislative Session includes the subject of deregulation of the electric utility business. We thought the cooperative associations views on the subject would be of interest, with Plains and much of the County now customers of Lea County Electric Cooperative.

Senator Richard Durbin, a Democrat from Illinois, says there are over 400 power marketers trading electricity in the United States. Testifying before the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Durbin said many of them have "limited expertise and creditworthiness." He was concerned because they market "a commodity that is vital to public health and safety." He worried that their inexperience or financial limitations could hurt American consumers as the country moves towards a deregulated electricity market.

When Congress deregulated the interstate sales of electricity, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) lost its authority to review the expertise and creditworthiness of corporations involved in that market. In a competitive market, according to FERC's staff, "market participants must take responsibility for determining the credit worthiness of their competitors."

That sounds a lot like the Latin phrase *caveat emptor*, "Let the Buyer Beware." You don't hear it much these days, especially in the electric utility business. In fact, laws and regulations in all 50 states set specific standards to govern the quality of service from electric utilities. Not knowing what you are doing or not having the financial strength to do it are not excuses for poor or missed electric service.

This may be changing, if the position of the FERC staff is any sign of the future. The commission itself seems headed in a similar direction. It recently reviewed the power outages and price spikes that plagued the Midwest last summer, including Senator Durbin's home state. The conclusion? It was just one of those things, as the old song goes.

This country has never seen outages and prices like those that occurred last year, which was the first year of a fully deregulated wholesale power market. Much of the problem resulted when a newcomer to

the power market defaulted on his delivery contracts. That left his customers scrambling to find enough electricity to meet their customers needs. Demand exceeded supply, and the deregulated price skyrocketed.

Rural electric cooperatives are the corner store of the electricity business. Unlike an anonymous power supplier who defaults on his contracts, we are accountable to the families and small businesses we serve. In fact, we appreciate it when our members come by and visit, spending time at our office like sitting at the soda fountain in that corner store.

That image doesn't leave a lot of room for attitudes like *caveat emptor*—particularly in a cooperative, where the buyer is the seller, too. There is no room for a seller who rides into town with a load of snake oil, electric or otherwise, dumps it on unwitting buyers and leaves before they know what happened to them. New Mexico's rural electric cooperatives have been around for over half a century. We'd like to round that off to an even century, then start on another 100 year run. We can't do that if we "default on our default on our deliver contracts."

The very phrase has no meaning in our way of doing business.

This may not fit some folks'

view of the future. They may consider it old fashioned or out-of-touch with the modern era. Somehow, we can't bring ourselves to agree with them. This interconnected, electronic age is as exciting to us as it is to most passionate "Net-izens." As a matter of fact, you could say we've been in the business of bringing the outside world to

our members from the day we strung the first power line. So, when the power marketers come calling, we'll be ready. If they have a deal that works for our members, we'll take it. If not, they may have to talk a little slower. And, explain it to us again. After all, we're just a bunch of country folks.

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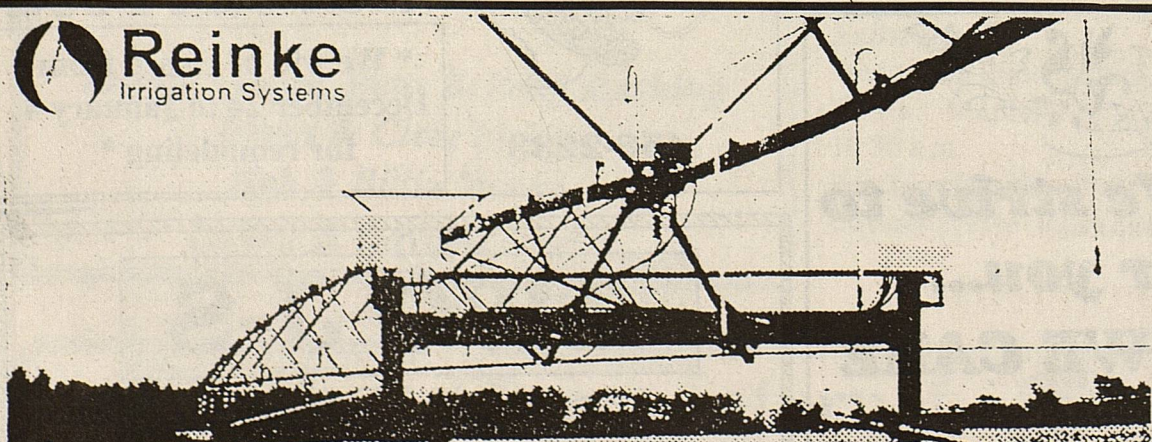
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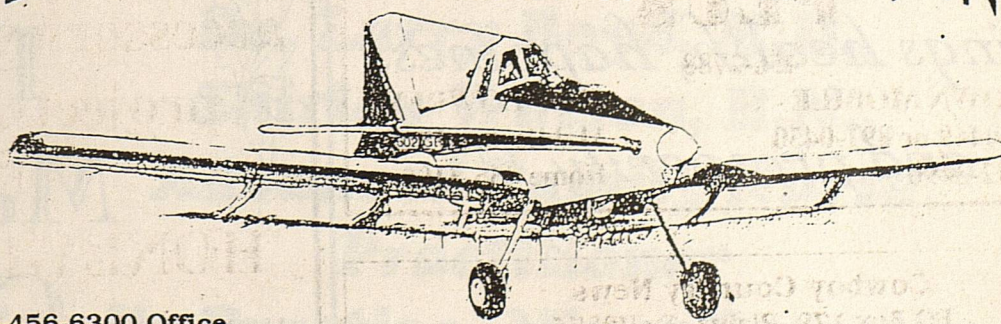
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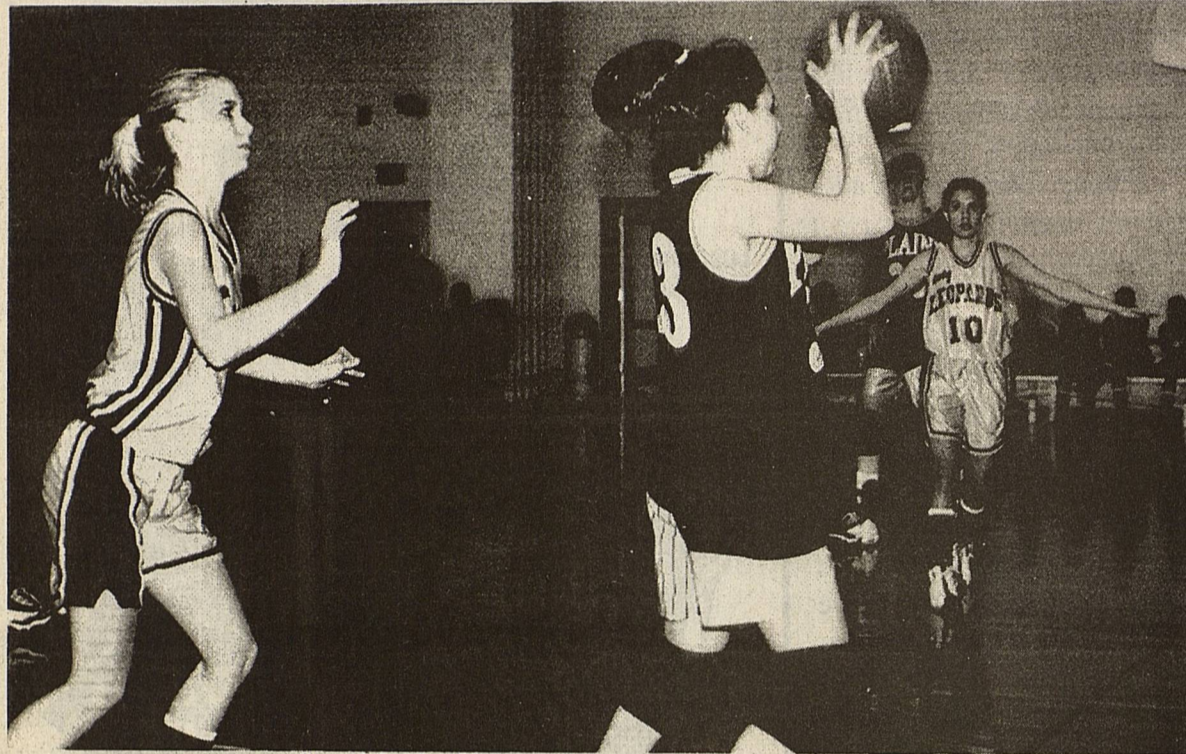
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David and Sarah Guetersloh

Cowgirls in Sundown tourney action



Kristen prepares to go airborne for shot against New Home Leopards



Guard Jessica Flores ponders how to get the ball inside



Tanya Vasquez shows good form in shot attempt

Cowboys shine in tourney Cowgirls uncertain of their finish

The Plains Cowboys, playing their best basketball of the season, swept the field in the big Sundown Tournament last week and brought home the Championship Trophy. The Cowgirls won two of their three contests, but because of a very confusing format, didn't know if they finished in third or fourth place. Kimberly Newland had an outstanding tournament, and was named to the elite All-Tournament Team.

Two Cowboys were also honored for their great performance. Adam Garcia made the All-Tournament Team, and Tanner Blount walked away with Most Valuable Player honors.

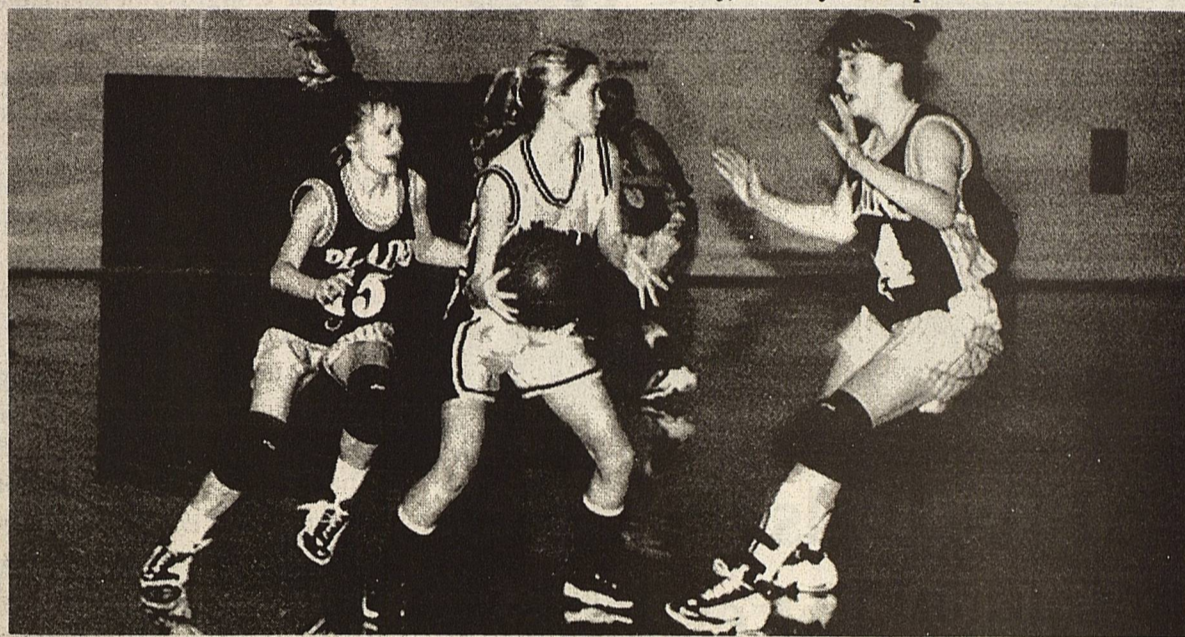
The Cowgirls dropped their opening game to a tough Sundown squad, 55-38. Kayla Redman and Newland each scored 13 points, Kristen Gray had 8, Candace Bowers 4. They stormed back against New Home. Newland poured in 31 points, Kayla had 17 points and 17 rebounds, Candace 5, Kimbe Jones 4, Kristen Gray 3, and Tanya Vasquez 1. The Cowgirls next dominated House, NM, 65-27. Kimberly Newland had 22 points and 12 rebounds, Kayla scored 20, Candace 7, Jessica Flores 6, Tanya 5, Kimbe and Kristen 2 each, Anne Palmer 1.

The Cowboys opened play with an easy 63-28 win over Tornillo. Tanner Blount was high scorer with 22, Adam Garcia had 19, Josh Bell 11, Kyle Sisson

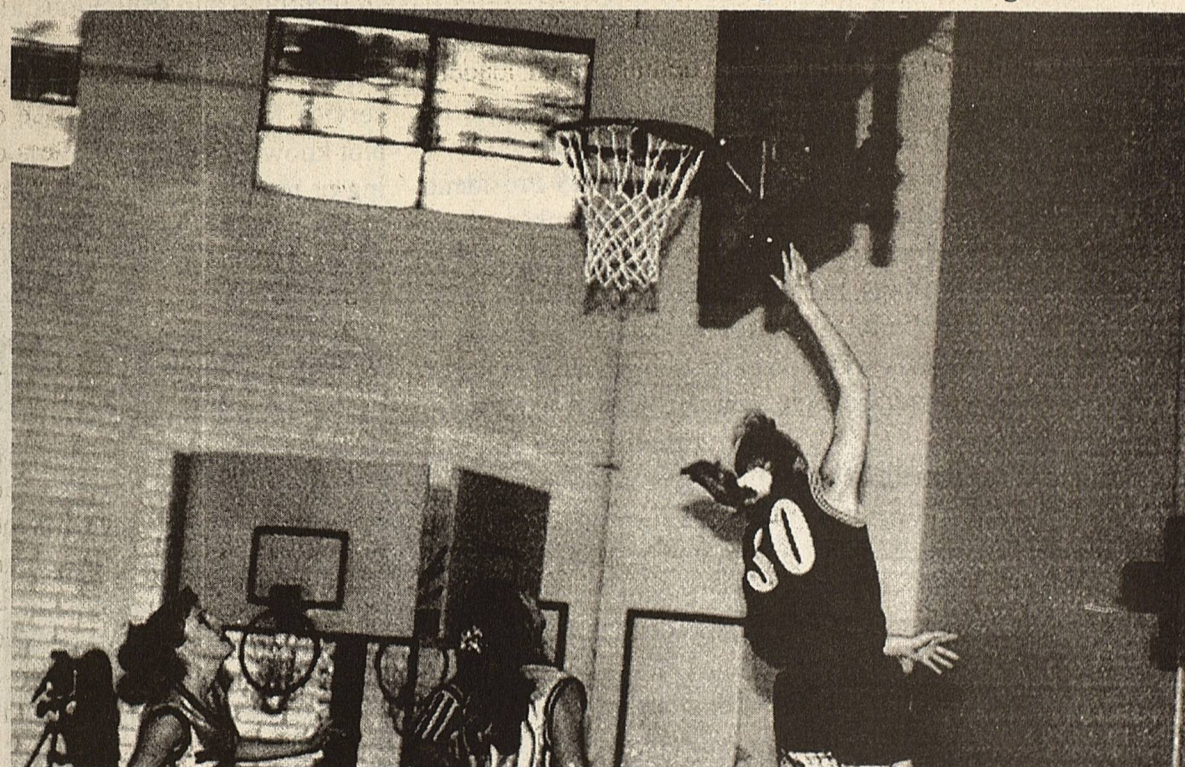
3, Colt Winn, Jared Bell, Justin Bennett and Dustin Six 2 each, and Sisson grabbed 10 rebounds. They next displayed a great effort against Abernathy, winning 67-66. Tanner poured in 31 points, Adam had 19, Josh 6, Justin 5, Patrick McGinty 4, Kyle 2. In game three, the Cowboys downed a large Borden County squad 58-54. Tanner scored 27, Adam 17, Josh 7, Patrick 3, Justin and Kyle 2 each. Tanner made a career high 45 points in the championship game against Electra, Adam had 14, Justin 5, Josh and Jared had 4 each, Kyle and Brett Squyres 2 each.

Cowboy Head Coach David Williams said he was extremely proud of the teams performance. "We faced some tough opposition. Borden County is rated in the top 20 in Class A, and started four players over six feet, including one 6' 8". We have now beaten Abernathy twice this season, and they're rated 13th in the State AA teams. We could have lost three of these games, but the guys never gave up and showed lots of determination. I think this is a good indicator where our basketball program is. We are 15 and 3 for the season, and two years ago we finished 15-15, then 15-14 the next season. I was proud of each player, and for Tanner making MVP, and Adam named to the All-Tournament Team was icing on the cake."

Sorry, Cowboy action photos unavailable



Anne Palmer and Kimberly Newland, in black, cause grief for New Home guard



Kayla Redman goes high over defense for good layup shot

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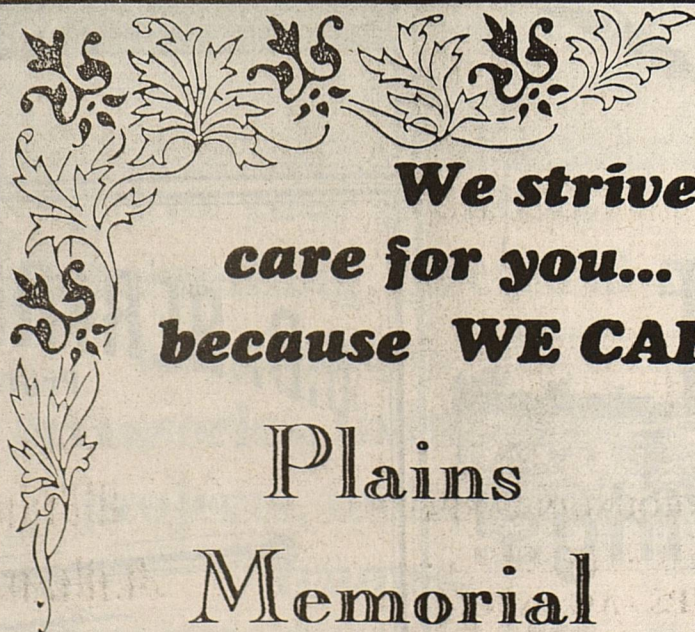
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Lifelines & Styles

Cowboy 'Pep Band' leads off home basketball games



The brass section of the Pep Band start all home games with a stirring rendition of the National Anthem. Members shown here, directed by Ray Portillo, include, L-R, Skyler Johnson, Jonathan DeLa Rosa, Josh Bayer, Isaac Gonzalez, Chris McGinty, Mike Guerra, Alex Tarango, Tony Lazos, Chisum Deaton, and Chase Howell.

PHS Student of the Week

Student of the week is Lesli Rowe, a Sophomore and the daughter of Bill and Pam Rowe. She was nominated by Mrs. McFatrige, who said, "Greek philosophy says success is not the money you make but the knowledge you take. Lesli is always willing to take the extra steps to do the job, and she always has a smile for everyone."



No wonder I feel so tired.. I'm older than I've ever been before!

City installs payment drop box

The City of Plains has completed work on a new drive-up drop box for depositing customer utility bill payments during the day and after office business hours. The convenient facility is located just east of the Fire Hall.

Contents in the box will be collected each morning, and each afternoon prior to the bank closing. PLEASE ... DO NOT DROP CASH PAYMENTS!!

TTAF Offers Scholarships

The Texas Telephone Association Foundation (TTAF), a non-profit, philanthropic organization founded to help further the understanding of telephony and its advancement as a career choice, will offer eight \$1,000 scholarships for the 1999-2000 school year.

The Scholarship Committee is soliciting applications from each high school in the state. Each school is being asked to forward to the TTAF one (1) qualified potential recipient. The Scholarship Committee will be making its selections only from those applicants who meet the following criteria.

- * U.S. Citizen; * Students graduating from Texas high school no later than June 1999;
- * Students possessing a cumulative grade point average of 3.5 or higher (out of a possible 4.0);
- * Students planning to attend a Texas community college or university by fall of 1999; * Application along with a current transcript including the fall

semester and letter of acceptance postmarked no later than February 1, 1999;

Although not required, special consideration will be given to students who will be pursuing a college degree in fields of study which are of particular interest to telecommunications (such as math, business, engineering, and computer science). The courses of study in high school, extra-curricular/civic activities

and demonstrated leadership will also be considered.

The Scholarship Committee will select 20 semi-finalists from the applications received and request an essay from each. After reviewing the essays, the committee will choose eight scholarship recipients.

Recipients will be notified by May 3, 1999. Any questions regarding the scholarship application should be submitted in writing to the TTAF office, 512-472-1183.

Senior Citizens Corner

We are beginning a New Year, with hope for the best one ever. Some of our regular people are still missing due to illness. Wanda Black is recovering after a stay in the hospital. Also Zelma Boone and Linora Matus both ill.

Wednesday of this week was special due to the presence of one of our good supporters of past years. Vernell Blevins was greeting everyone and we were happy to have her for a visit. She had her sister with her. Both are from Alabama. Also visiting at table #9 was Flora Smith.

Things at the center have been slow during the Holiday and due to cold weather. So come on down and help fill the empty spaces. The long hall is always nice to walk your mile each day.

Our condolences to the family of Louise Crittenden.

Make a New Years resolution to come to the center every day and enjoy the fellowship and a good meal.

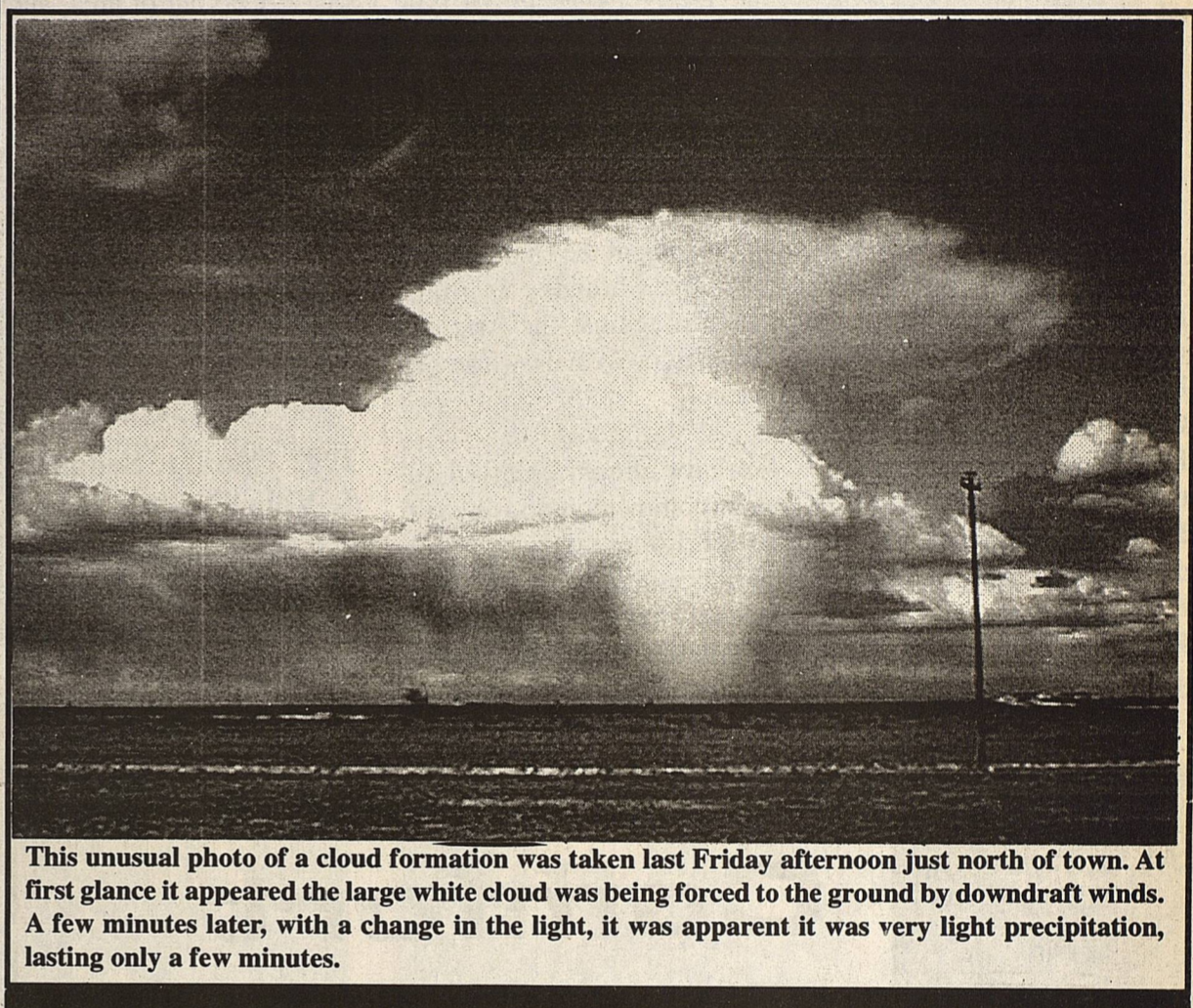
A Happy, Prosperous New Year to all!

See you next week, Smitty

- Activities:**
 Wed.: Line Dancing 10 a.m.
 Thurs.: Medical Arts B/P 10:30 a.m.
 Fri.: Line Dancing 10:00 a.m.
 Lovington Pool Tournament

We wish to thank each one of you for your love and support during our loss. The prayers, food, flowers, calls and visits were so very much appreciated.

*Eunice Moore, Betty & Polly Rushing
 James & Clela Moore,
 Bob & Billie Moore,
 Luther & Daylene Moore*



This unusual photo of a cloud formation was taken last Friday afternoon just north of town. At first glance it appeared the large white cloud was being forced to the ground by downdraft winds. A few minutes later, with a change in the light, it was apparent it was very light precipitation, lasting only a few minutes.

Beginning Computer Course

If you are interested in learning Office 97 Excel (spreadsheet), you need to register at Plains High School by calling 456-7445. Brenda Canada will teach the course on Monday night for six weeks. Class will be taught from 6-8 pm. and will begin on Monday, January 18, 1999, in the high school business lab. Keyboarding or typing is a prerequisite. The cost of the course is \$15 and will be limited to 17 students.

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Saturday's	Sunday's
January 09, 1999	January 10, 1999
January 23, 1999	January 24, 1999
February 06, 1999	February 7, 1999

8:45 am...10:45am...12:45am...
 2:45pm...4:45pm...6:45pm...

Linda Kennedy 456-5547

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Monday - Friday

Dr. Larry Boyd, M.D.,

Shirley Watson, R.N.,

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From The Hack

I read a very neat column in last week's Lubbock A-J, penned by one of my favorites, Ellen Goodman. What, me vote for a female writer? You bet. She was writing about some of the many mistakes she had made writing her column, from misspelling, to poor choice of words, some of which offended readers to the point they responded with letters pointing out the brain-lapsers.

Good for you, Ellen. It's good you were man-sized enough to 'fess up to your literary transgressions. I happened to mention this lesson in humility to the Bride, and she responded by asking, "Why don't you follow up on that, and do a similar confessional about all your dum-dum mistakes?"

A bit taken aback, I said, "You mean there were some in my stuff?"

A rather cold look followed, and she replied, "Oh, it will take a while, but I think I can recall one or two. When writing of our high school athletes, they're not Cowploys. When you refer to Plains Independent School District, it's not abbreviated to P.I.S.T. You put a caption under our daughter's picture referring to her as Debora Rushing. You wrote of our 87th Anniversary, which really made me feel warm. You spelled

out our top county official as 'Drudge Brewer'. Would you like for me to continue this conversation?"

What a question. Would I enjoy thirty more lashes with a cat-o-nine tail?

To all we have offended, I sincerely apologize. Unfortunately, I cannot absolutely promise no further mistakes... no, futher mistakes... no, no more Fudge Bruwmeirs.

Almost unbelievably, there were very few resolutions made at our house prior to the descending of the great lighted globe in Times Square New Year's Eve, before 500,000 depraved, stoned and probably imbibing idiots. For some reason the thought keeps recurring to me, "What an opportunity for pick pockets." When I informed the Bride I was not making any resolutions for the last gasp prior to the Millenium, she also most shrieked and wept with joy; "Oh, praise, praise, praise you, this is the first time you have failed to lie to me about all the stuff you intend to quit!"

I would sincerely love to write something good, positive, about the showing of the Dallas Cowboys last Saturday in their matchup against the Arizona Warthogs, or Weevils, whatever. I cannot

We have already received an omen commemorating the recent Christmas frenzy I was not at all pleased to get; A very attractive Thank You card from both Master Card and Visa for our unprecedented generosity, and complete lack of monetary

responsibility. They were so grateful they upped our credit limit. How warm and thoughtful of them.

New Year hype brought back varied memories, good and bad. On Dec. 31, 1953, I was a young sailor stationed at Hickam Field, Hawaii, a mech and flight crew member of a Military Air Transport Squadron of brand new "Super Connie" 4 engine transport planes, flying all over the Pacific.

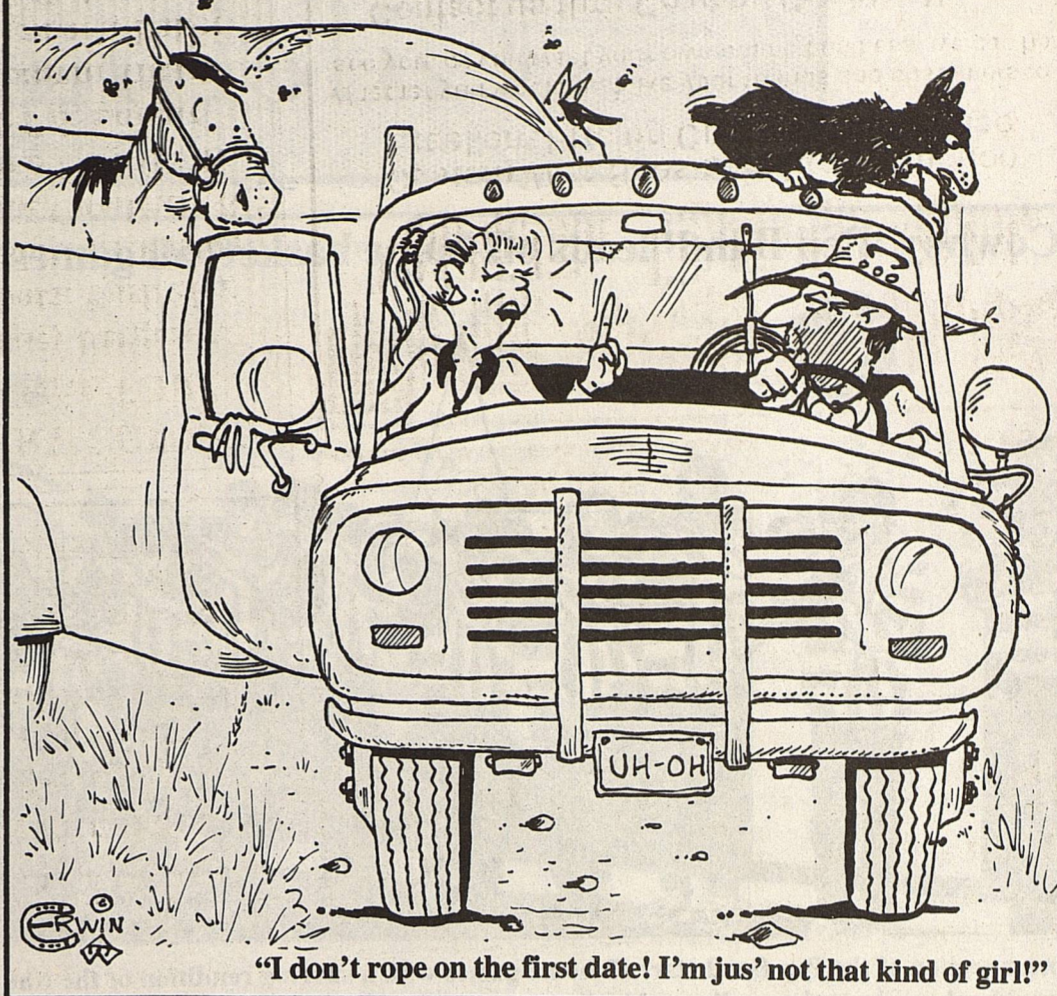
That evening my crew was laboring on the number two engine of the plane. Just before midnight, drinking coffee, we could see across the bay as all downtown Honolulu lit up with a stunning display of fireworks, truly spectacular.

There was the usual amount of bitching and belly aching about having to work on the eve of the New Year. We finished our work about 4 am, delivered the plane to the control area, and watched as a DC-6 Air Force transport pulled alongside, and medics unloaded 63 stretcher cases of wounded GI's from Korea enroute to stateside hospitals.

I suddenly didn't feel so bad about my sorry New Year party.

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