

MERRY CHRISTMAS

Rockwall County News

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Serving Our County • Fate • Heath • McLendon-Chisholm • Rockwall • Royse City

Rockwall's Patriot Paws pairs helper pets with disabled vets

Patricia Nolan Butts
Armhearted stories of soldierly reunions abound during the holidays, a feature on every news about special overseas packages

I'll-be-home-for-Christmas. When a soldier's homecoming gives life changing injuries, the life is hard to come by.

Rockwall's Patriot Paws, a nonprofit organization that trains and gives service dogs to disabled veterans, is working to change that. Founded by Royse City resident Lori Stevens in 2006, the group has trained nearly 15 service dogs with disabled veterans, especially amputees who depend on their dogs to help them retain physical and emotional independence.

It's impossible to overstate the impact these animals have on the lives of disabled service men and women," says Bonnie Hardick, who recently volunteered as Patriot Paws' marketing director.

One veteran who will receive a dog after the first of the year had his arms burnt off from the elbows down in 2006," she says. "He will be in rehab in San Antonio, but one wish he has, so that he can be independent he is looking for a dog that can help him pull up his pants. He's not going to be able to live alone unless he can do it. So Lori is working with the dog training staff."

Dogs that can help their human owners get dressed? Yes, and also prostheses, telephones, water jugs and laundry, open and close doors and drawers, take off socks and shoes, pull wheelchairs, and provide bracing to stand, walk, and sit down. The dogs can even be trained to recognize and help avert oncoming

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) episodes and to get help in emergencies.

Labrador retrievers are the breed of choice for their eager-to-please personalities and natural fetching ability. Sometimes a shelter dog is selected, but dog donations cannot be accepted to the program. "We've had a couple of mutts work out, and Lori is training a full-size poodle right now, but the dogs have to be specifically chosen," Hardick says.

Each dog requires 18 months to two years to train. The mission of Patriot Paws is all the more remarkable in that, although the cost to train and place a dog is \$30,000 or more, the recipient is charged nothing.

"Donations are the lifeblood of Patriot Paws," says Hardick. Only in the last year, as the result of a grant from the Meadows Foundation, has founder Lori Stevens begun receiving any salary for her work.

Patriot Paws is a 501(c)3 organization with a facility at 254 Ranch Trail in Rockwall. Tax deductible donations can be made via their website (www.patriotpaws.org) or by calling 972-772-3282, Hardick says. Other ways to help include volunteering to bathe and walk dogs, plan fundraisers, do office work and errands, and clean the facility. Families and individuals can offer foster homes to dogs-in-training.

Back in 2005, Stevens, who had been a professional dog trainer for 15 years, responded to a request from the Dallas VA hospital to train service dogs for them. "When she saw the incredible need of those vets for dogs that could help them, she quit her job and formed Patriot Paws," says Hardick.

Stevens has since received national

recognition for her work with service dogs for veterans: a story in Guideposts and in an Oprah-recommended book, "Dogs and Their Women", an NBC news feature, appearances on "The Late Show" with David Letterman and on Animal Planet's "Pet Star", as well as being named American Legion Auxiliary Woman of the Year in 2009.

But time spent answering media requests and promoting Patriot Paws with VA officials, military hospitals, rehabilitation centers, and veterans' groups--while drawing national exposure--drew time from dog training. Stevens "saw she wasn't going to be able to do it all," Hardick says. The waiting list for service animals continued to grow, and her time for training dogs continued to shrink. Then reinforcements came from an unlikely source: female prison inmates.

In 2007, Patriot Paws entered into an agreement with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to house 20 puppies-in-training with female inmates at the Laine Murray and Craine Units of the women's correctional facility in Gatesville. The young dogs, which Patriot Paws often receives as donations from Labrador breeders, are cared for individually by inmates who qualify to participate in the program.

A professional trainer from Patriot Paws teaches the women how to socialize the dogs, as well as how to train them in 35 basic commands during their 18-24 months together. The dogs stay with the inmates around the clock and train in a mock apartment at the unit which simulates their future home with a veteran. The dogs receive their final training in

(Continued on Page 2)



Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus, and Lori Stevens, founder and director of Patriot Paws of Rockwall says his name is spelled "Petco Foundation". Patriot Paws, a Rockwall nonprofit that trains and gives service animals to disabled veterans without charge, recently received from the Petco Foundation a new full-size van, complete with red, white and blue logo, handicap adaptations, and removable kennels. The van is used to transport disabled veterans and the Patriot Paws-trained service dogs that restore independence to them. Stevens is pictured with Jazz, a golden lab demonstration dog, and Trooper, a rescue dog that is ready to be placed with a veteran. Patriot Paws is a 501(c)3 organization with offices at 254 Ranch Trail in Rockwall. Tax deductible donations can be made via their website www.patriotpaws.org or by calling 972-772-3282.

Photo courtesy of Patriot Paws/Rockwall County News

Wounded warrior awaits service dog

by Patricia Nolan Butts

In 2006, Staff Sergeant Juan Amaris was in his second tour of duty in Iraq.

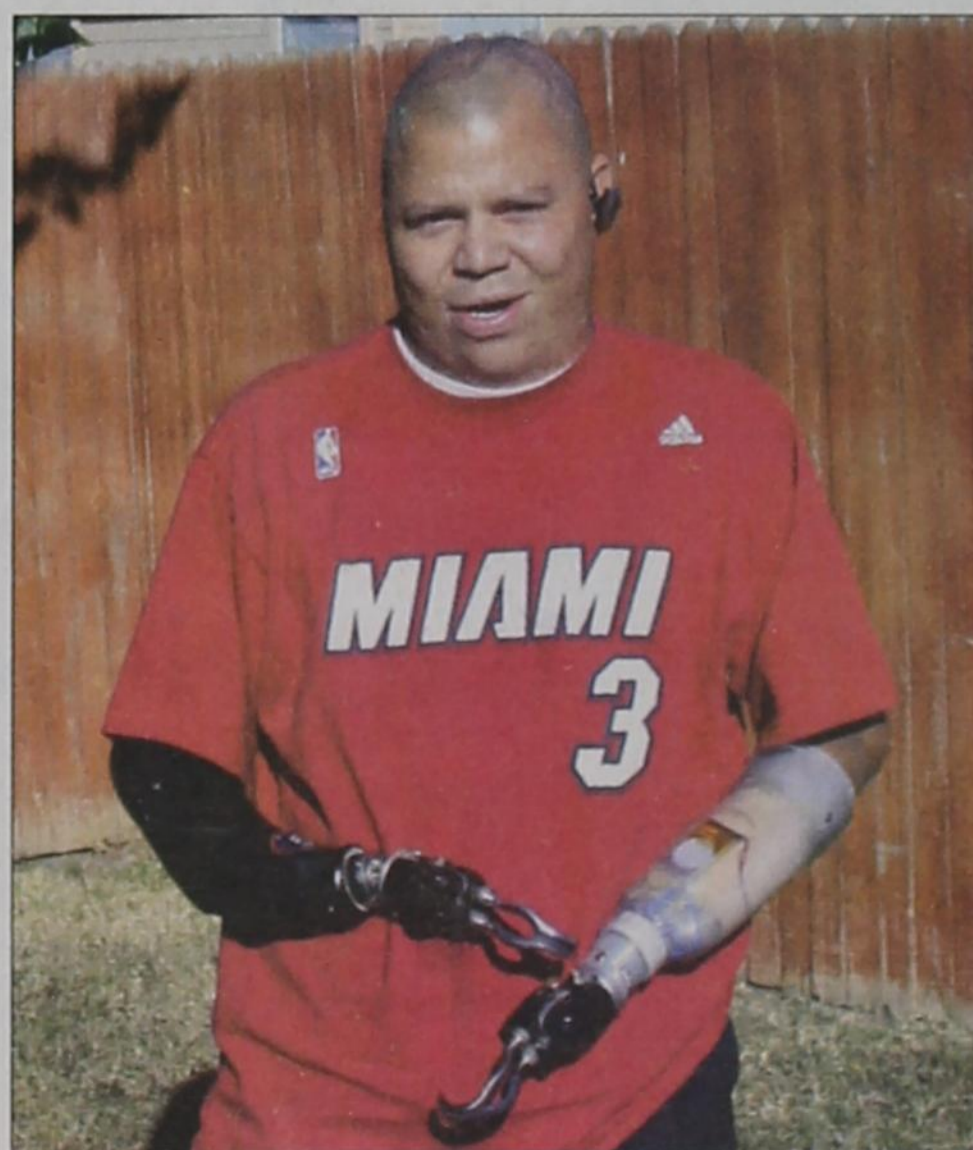
An explosion left him with burns that eventually took away his two forearms and, with them, his independence.

Now it may be a service dog from Patriot Paws in Rockwall, Texas that restores to Amaris some of the life he has given up for his country.

His country is the United States of America, but Amaris was a U.S. soldier before he was a U.S. citizen. When his mother emigrated from Bogota to make a better life for her family, Amaris, age 10, was enrolled in a Colombian military school. He finally joined his mother in the United States in 1999, and in 2001 enlisted in the U.S. Army. It wasn't until after his first tour of duty in Iraq during 2003-2004 that he achieved his lifelong dream of becoming an American citizen.

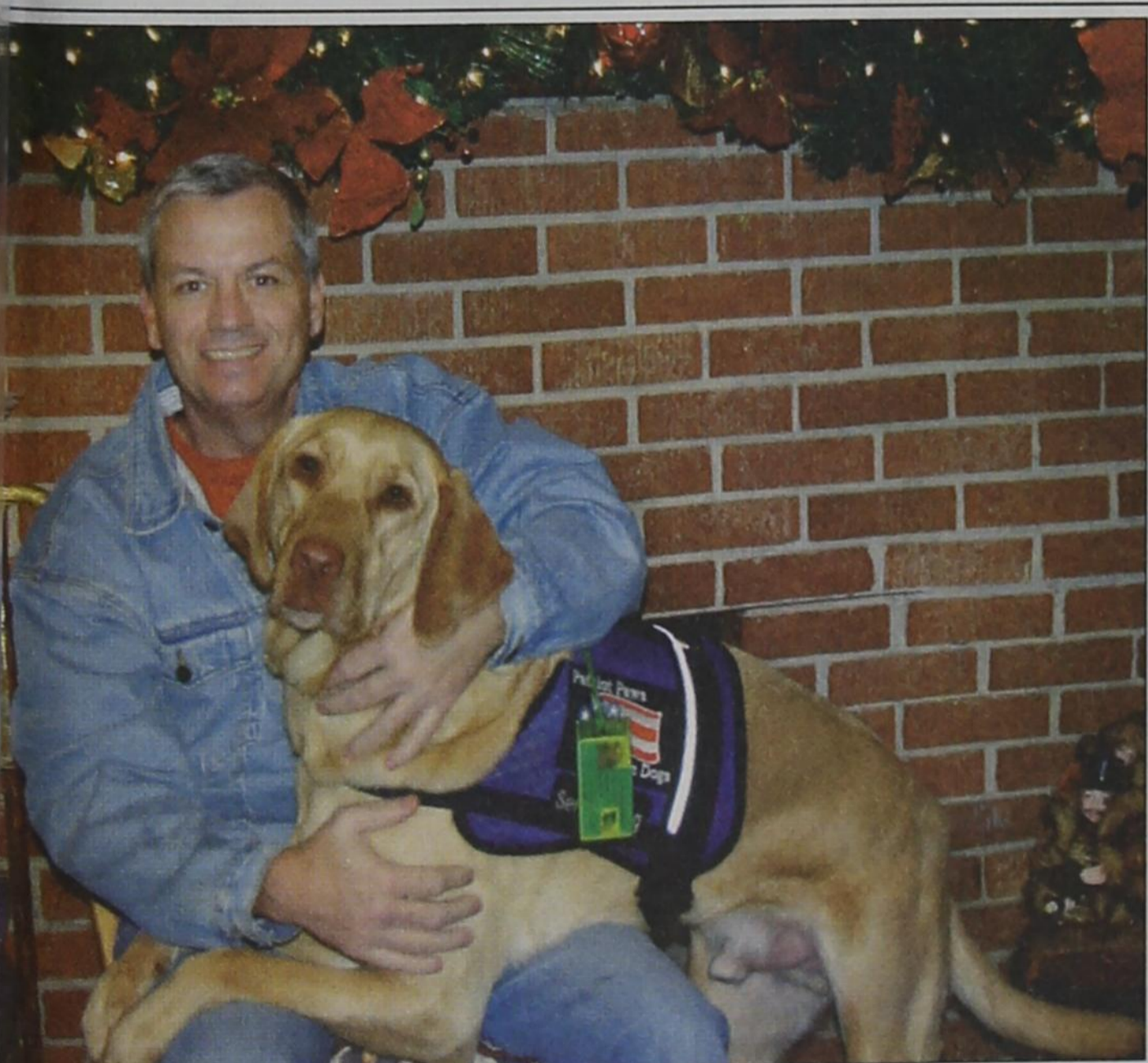
Following tours of duty at Ft. Bragg in North Carolina and then in Alaska, he returned to Iraq. A month from his deployment back to the states, Amaris was supervising Iraqis that were supposed to be assisting with transport. At one point suspecting fuel theft, he walked toward the truck to investigate. The

(Continued on Page 2)



U.S. Army veteran Juan Amaris will come to Rockwall in January to meet with Patriot Paws director Lori Stevens and be matched to a service dog who can help him regain some of the independence he lost to injuries in Iraq.

Photo courtesy of Patriot Paws/Rockwall County News



When tuned to the Rose Bowl Parade on New Year's Day, watch for these and others representing Rockwall's Patriot Paws on the "Saving America's Mustangs" float. Service dog Harley Davidson lives with and assists disabled veteran Clay Rankin of Clarksburg, W.V. Rankin sustained a spinal cord injury in Iraq and is unable to walk unassisted. He works for the Wounded Warrior Program which ministers to ill and injured soldiers, veterans and their families, and also serves on the board of trustees for Rockwall's Patriot Paws. His first service dog from Patriot Paws was a black Lab named Archie (named Dog of the Year by the ASPCA in 2009). They were together over three years before Archie died of a massive heart attack in Nov. 2009. Rankin says, "He was more than a dog, he was my friend. He was part of my body and soul...He braced me so I could walk, and without him I couldn't visit other soldiers because I can't get around." In January 2010, at Patriot Paws founder Lori Stevens' insistence, Clay took home another dog for a trial. That was Harley Davidson. Now Harley has given Clay back the ability to help others and to be independent himself. (And yes, Harley shovels snow; See Page 2.)

Photo courtesy of Patriot Paws/Rockwall County News



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Wounded warrior...

(Continued from Page 1)

Iraqis began to run, and the truck exploded in a ball of fire, setting Amaris' clothing on fire.

He first tried rolling in a grassy area, but could not extinguish the flames. He ran screaming to fellow soldiers, who finally were able to put out the fire. But in the 30 minutes before the medical helicopter could evacuate him, he was fully conscious and in horrific pain.

Four days later, Amaris arrived in Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio to the news that he had third degree burns over most of his body. One hand had to be amputated, and then the other. His chest and neck were so badly burned he couldn't bend his neck.

Nearly four years later, 2010 is drawing to a close. Juan Amaris' long journey of hospitalization and rehabilitation is also closing, and a new one beginning. When Amaris comes to Rockwall in January, he will meet with Lori Stevens, founder and executive director of Patriot Paws, a nonprofit organization that trains service dogs for disabled American veterans.

Stevens will introduce him to three dogs specifically trained to assist Amaris in skills he cannot perform for himself, even with his prosthetic hands. Help with dressing is at the top of Amaris' list of needs. All the dogs will have the skills, but most likely just one will have the heart for the wounded warrior. And that is the one that will go—at no charge—with veteran Juan Amaris, to be his hands for him.

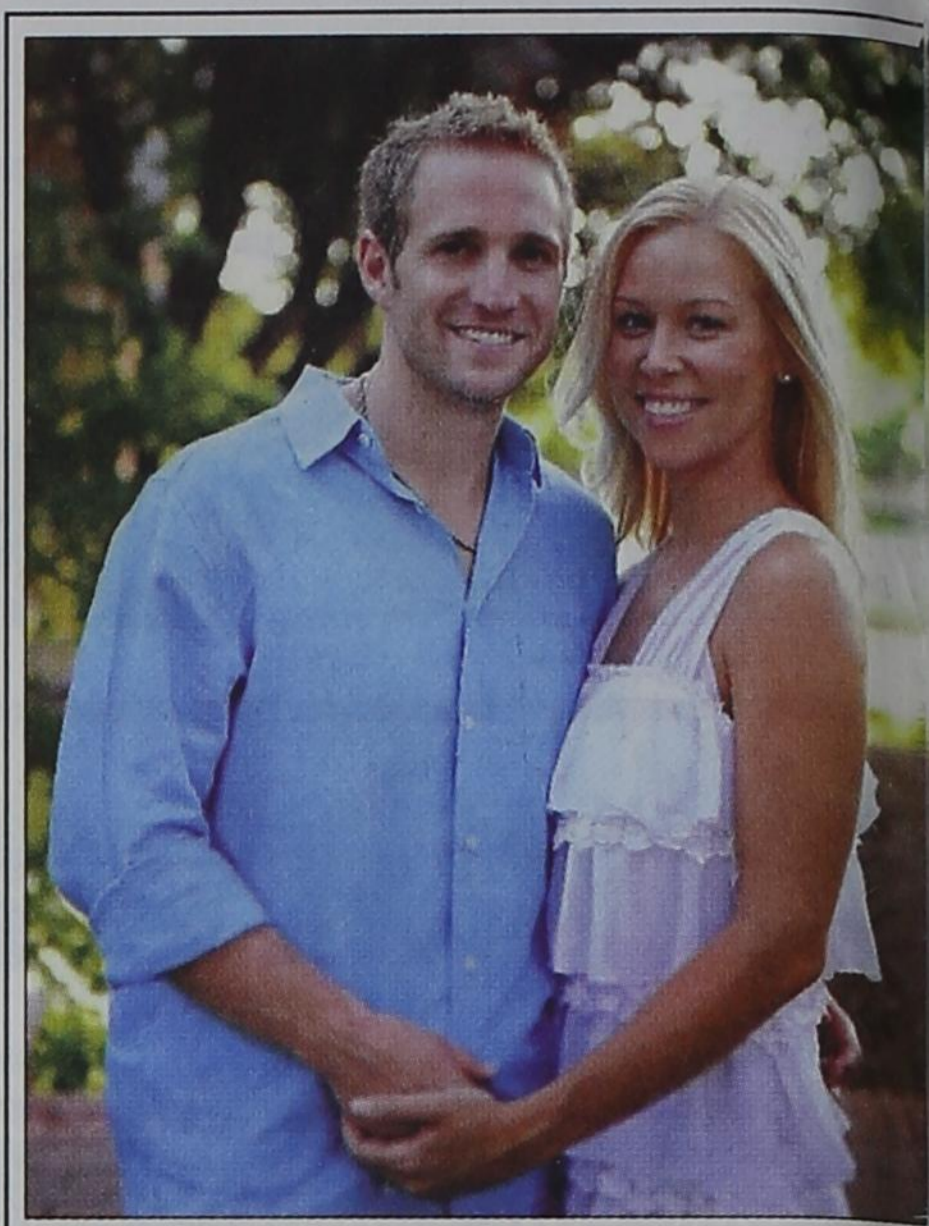
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Ryan Jean Latham, Jessica Kelly Rice

Jessica Rice, Ryan Latham plan April 16 marriage

Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd M. Rice of Houston are proud to announce the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Jessica Kelly Rice of Dallas, to Ryan Jean Latham of Dallas, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ronald J. Latham of Dallas.

The bride-elect, a graduate of Woodlands High School, earned a bachelor's degree from the University of North Texas. She is employed with Locke, Lord, Bissell & Liddell LLP.

The prospective bridegroom graduated from Rockwall High School and holds a bachelor's degree from Southern Methodist University. He is owner of NutriShop.

An April 16, 2011, wedding at the Highland Park United Methodist Church is planned.



In addition to helping their humans with household chores and labor tasks, service animals can even be trained to handle manual labor jobs, such as clearing snow. Here, Clay Rankin's dog, Harley Davidson, clears a path in the snow at Rankin's West Virginia home. Patriot Paws in Rockwall is dedicated to training service animals for injured veterans to make their lives easier and provide loving companionship to these American heroes.

Photo courtesy of Patriot Paws/Rockwall County News

Patriot Paws...

(Continued from Page 1)

Rockwall before placement.

The benefits are reciprocal, Hardick says: the women enjoy the companionship of the dogs and feel that they are making a contribution to others. An some inmates find, on release, that they have developed a pet-related vocational interest. Some women have gone to work for veterinarians as a result of their Patriot Paws service. Others have found employment with pet stores. One has come to work for Patriot Paws.

Rhonda Lee applied to work with Stevens in Rockwall after partnering with Patriot Paws at Gatesville. First volunteering, now she and co-trainer Bonni Hoard, a disabled retired Navy veteran, will in January begin to receive small salary through a Meadows Foundation grant.

The successes at Gatesville have encouraged Patriot Paws to expand the program to the men's prison in Seagoville in early 2011. Stevens plans to eventually have 20 puppies in training there.

The goal is to place each service dog by age three so that it will bond well with the veteran and so that the pair will have the maximum length of partnership. So, when a dog is trained, the disabled veteran comes and picks out his or her dog, right?

Wrong. Actually, the dog does the picking.

The veteran is invited to stay or her 10 days in Rockwall (at his or her expense, which is part of the application agreement) and to interact with three fully trained dogs. Hardick says, "Usually, by the third day, the dog shows his preference. It's amazing. They just bond."

Patriot Paws makes every effort to pair veterans and dogs successfully. This accounts for part of the expense of training: pre-visits to the veteran's home to see that it can accommodate a service animal and a follow-up visit to check on the adjustment. Sometimes, despite all due care, something doesn't work. Perhaps the dog is too protective of his partner and growls at the veteran's children or is frightened of elevators. So the process backs up a step and a new pairing is offered.

Once the match is made, though, says Hardick, observing the bond between human and dog and the veteran's joy in regained independence makes every step of the process worth it.

"These veterans have paid a very high price for us. This is the least we can do for them," she says.

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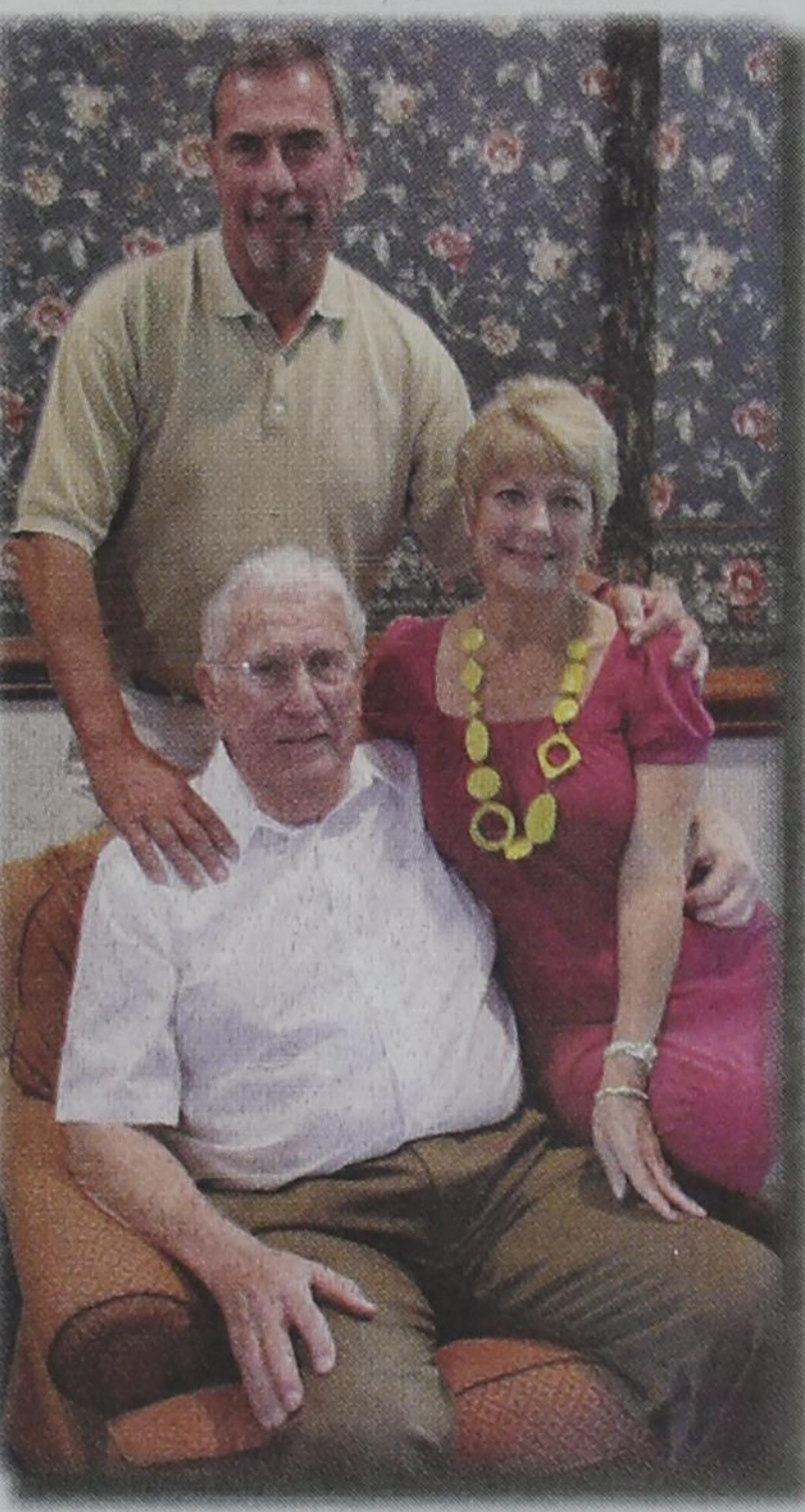
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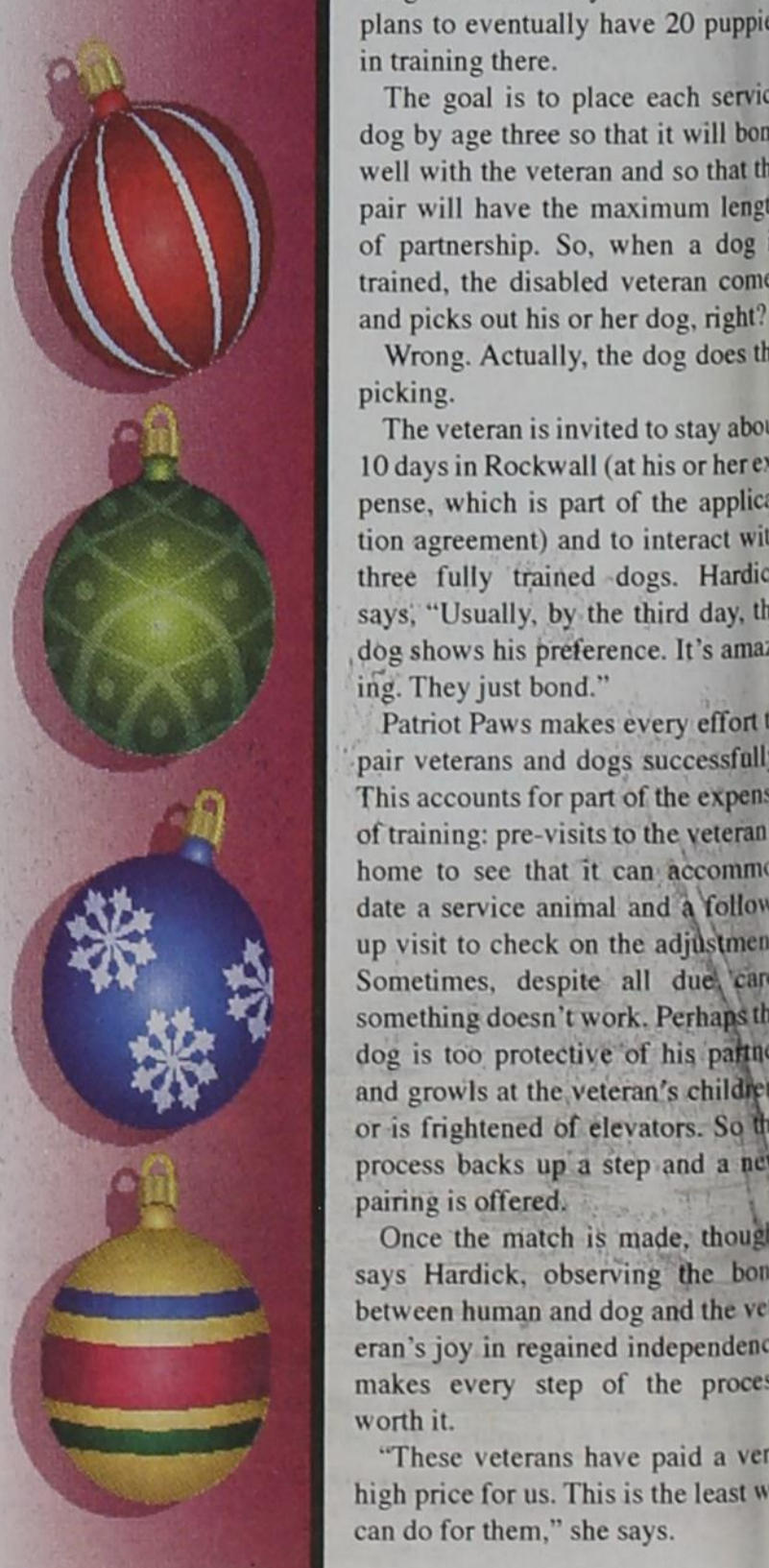
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Helping Hands director touches heart of Rockwall-Heath student

(Editor's Note: This essay was submitted to the Rockwall County News by the family of Rockwall-Heath High School student Morgan Iles. Morgan's time volunteering at Helping Hands and her contact with Executive Director Margo Nielsen touched her in unexpected ways. During this holiday season, the Iles family and the Rockwall County News paired to share Morgan's experience and encourage others to reach out to someone in need this Christmas. You just may be changed in return.)

Morgan Iles
UNLID
 A Personal Essay I-Write an essay which you tell us about someone who has made an impact on your life and explain how and why this person is important to you.

Margo Nielsen is a woman that you may walk right by in the grocery store. She is not a local celebrity and she is not the limelight, but as director of Helping Hands, a Rockwall-based non-profit that provides a variety of support services for families in need, Ms. Nielsen serves on the front lines of Rockwall's fight against poverty. She also taught me what being a servant truly means.

During through Rockwall, a suburb outside of Dallas, one might not imagine a need for an organization like Helping Hands. Fortunately, I was blessed with parents who stressed the importance of giving back to the community and, from a young age, they encouraged me to discover my own personal vision of service about which I could become passionate. As a result, I was able to join National Christian League (NCL) when I became eligible in the ninth grade. NCL allowed me the opportunity to familiarize myself with many of the charities operating in Rockwall.

While I worked with many wonderful non-profits, each with dedicated volunteers, it was my involvement with Helping Hands, and Margo Nielsen specifically, which led to a true awakening. Even in light of the current economy, many do not realize that they have neighbors who are struggling to pay their bills, keep their car and keep their children fed and clothed.

I am ashamed to say that I was one of those who did not fully realize the need of such need. That outlook certainly changed once I met the people at Helping Hands.

While at Helping Hands, I witnessed Margo and her staff work tirelessly to help people in need while also serving the community with dignity, patience, love, respect and a caring spirit that goes far beyond a job title. Margo and her staff approach each case without judgment, but rather with an understanding that each family has a unique set of circumstances that propelled them into their current circumstances.

Helping Hands has made it their mission to provide a way out of these circumstances, a ladder to climb out of the spiral of adversity. Margo truly encompasses the phrase, "It takes a village," as she uses her leadership to inspire many volunteers to make our community a better place. With Margo, the needs of self are always a distant second to the needs of others. Perhaps most impressive, Margo and Helping Hands accomplish their mission without extensive funding from most volunteers and faith that the community will provide.

At the end of my first week of volunteering, I realized that no matter the challenges, deprivations or

humiliations I had encountered in my short life, they were nothing compared to what others were facing.

After such an eye-opening experience, I was sad when my rotation at Helping Hands ended, but I made it a point to keep in touch with Ms. Nielsen. Fortunately, our paths would again cross.

As a junior, I was selected to a position on the Rockwall Youth Advisory Council (YAC). As a member of the YAC board, I was required to attend meetings of the City Council's Planning and Zoning, of which Margo is a member. Each student on the Youth Advisory Council is assigned a city official as a mentor.

Knowing the respect I have for Margo, you can imagine the elation I felt when she selected me as her student mentee. As part of this relationship I was able to spend more one-on-one time with Margo, which broadened my understanding of her commitment and dedication not just to Helping Hands, but also to the city as a whole.

Through my relationship with Margo Nielsen, I have come to believe that privileged life is one of service. In a society that so often lauds

selfish acts, it is refreshing to know that people like Ms. Nielsen are so committed to selflessness. She is an inspiration and continues to impact my life and dedication to volunteer-

ism. Because of her influence and mentoring, I plan to get involved in the University of Texas Student Volunteer Board to continue to serve in the community.



Morgan Iles and Margo Nielsen



Members of Cain Middle School's Rock City Players were among entertainers at the Heath Holiday in the Park event conducted earlier this month. Pictured at back, from the left, are Shayna Oden, sponsor, Leah Perry, Lexi Greenhill, Kendall York, Melanie Cavendish, Ashlynn Smith, Jessica Kiker and Bailey Maxson; and, at front, Gina Pisano, Niki Swercinsky, Kenzie Osborn, Nickole Selensky and Marlow Amick.

Photo courtesy City of Heath/Rockwall County News



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Royse City News

RCISD earns favorable rating

by Patricia Butts

During its Dec. 13 meeting, the Royse City Independent School District Board of Trustees announced the school district has received four out of five stars in a new report from the state comptroller that compares the amount of money spent per student to academic success of students.

According to the comptroller's office, The Financial Allocation Study for Texas is a detailed study of Texas public school funding and its relation to academic achievement. Facing budget constraints in the 2011 session, the Texas Legislature's HB 3 required the study,

aiming to identify districts that perform efficiently—achieving strong academic performance while keeping costs low. Districts like Royse City could offer examples for other districts.

The comptroller's office reports that, to ensure that all school districts were rated on a level playing field, the FAST report's academic progress measurement involved variables such as student demographics, economic disadvantage and limited English proficiency. A new, comptroller-developed spending index took into account variables such as labor costs, enrollment and geographic size to

determine the most relevant fiscal peer groups to Royse City.

The measure of academic progress was based on three years' worth of test results, was adjusted for factors affecting student performance, and can be used for state-wide comparisons. The spending index, by contrast, compares district and campus performance to that of up to 40 fiscal peers with comparable socioeconomic and financial characteristics, according to the comptroller.

A web-based tool allows access to all results of the study.

Parents and coaches of 13 4A all-district teams and athletes joined the school board in recognizing the athletes for a successful season. Among those for whom resolutions were read were athletes from the Bulldog varsity football team, Lady Bulldog cross country and volleyball varsity teams, and junior varsity teams.

Nicky Morris, maintenance director, presented a report to the board on the physical plant, noting a total of 3,158 work orders responded to by a maintenance staff of 17 in 2009-2010. Six hundred-sixteen of those orders were for preventive maintenance. Forty-two percent were general, with the next highest categories being heating and air conditioning and grounds, with 20 percent each.

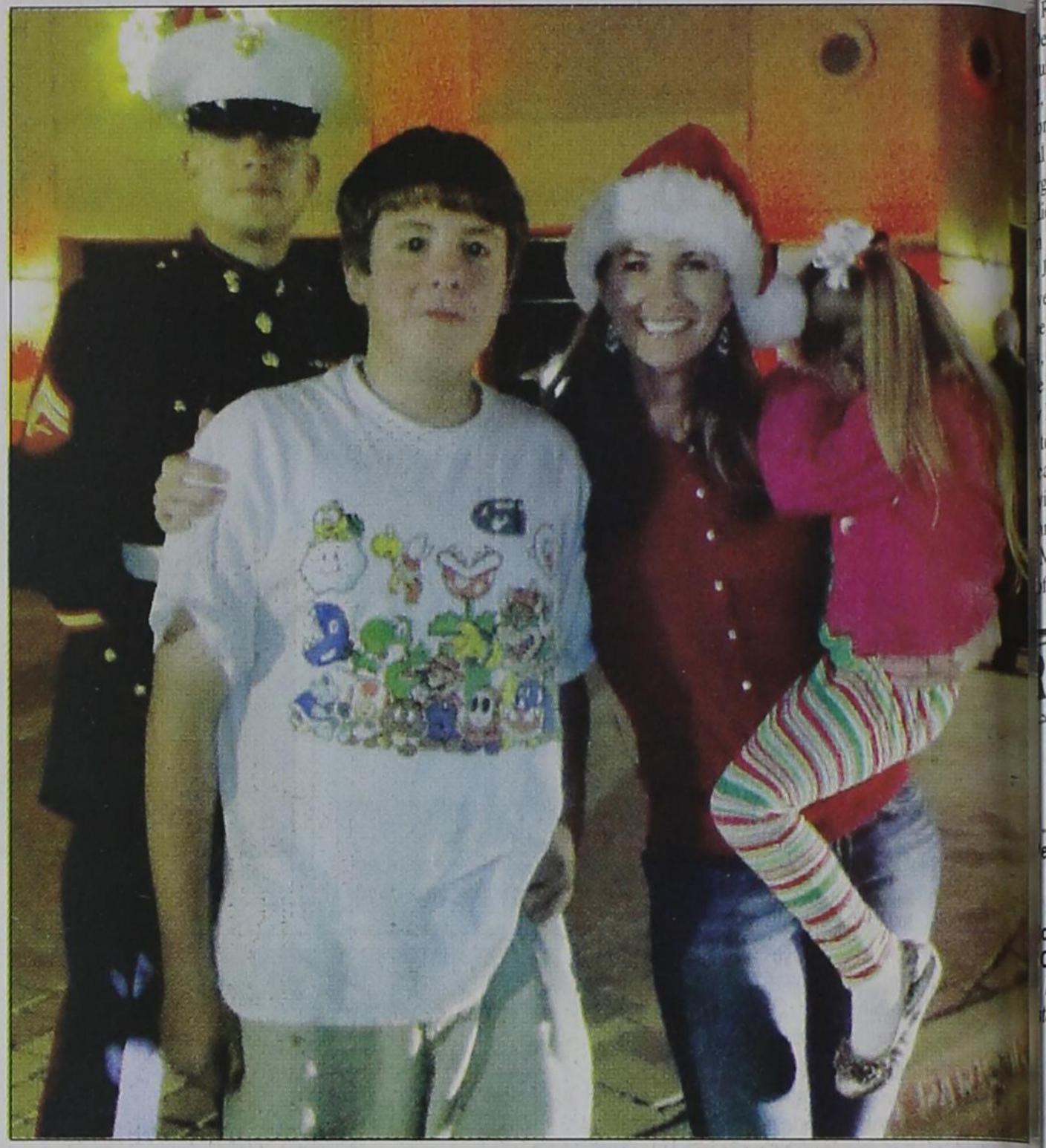
Transportation director Tammy Loveless reported that for 55 percent of the district's enrollment ride the district's 35 buses. The district transports 2490 students daily on 126 bus routes for a total of 466,459 miles. Co-curricular transport accounts for another 36,713 miles, summer school for 13,849 miles and an additional 7,748 miles for tutorials. The district employees 41 fulltime drivers.

Enrollment in the district was reported at 4541, up 4.6 percent over last year.

The Royse City Education Foundation is recruiting five new directors. The Annual Drive dinner was a success, and early planning for the Top Dog Spectacular has begun, according to foundation president Scott Muckensturm.

Board president Don Palmer reported that all members of the Royse City ISD Board of Trustees have exceeded the required hours of continuing education required by state education code.

The school board approved Rutherford, Taylor CCP's audit on the district's financial statement for 2009-2010.



Royse City Harbor District was one of several locations around the Metroplex chosen to host the KDFW Channel 4 Toys for Tots event earlier this month. The drive netted several thousand toys for area children who may have done without a Christmas treat if not for the generosity of local residents. Helping with the toy drive was Royse City resident Robert Mueller, who drained his savings account an amount totaling about \$1,700, to help children have a happy Christmas. Mueller and his mother Tabatha Mueller, were interviewed on Ch. 4 and she said the family was "paying it forward;" that they had hard times in the past and were now in a position to help someone else. Robert is a freshman at Royse City High School and plays in the Bulldog Band. Shown with Mueller is one of the many U.S. Marines on hand to accept donations and Ch. 4 news anchor Heather Hays and her daughter. Photo courtesy of Tabatha Mueller/Rockwall County News

Royse City to regulate water wells, awards bid for sewer line expansion

by Patricia Nolan Butts

The Royse City council moved another step away from rural municipality toward urban with the passage of an ordinance regulating water wells in the city limits.

According to the ordinance passed by the council at its Dec. 14 meeting, existing water wells must be registered and new wells may be drilled by permit only. Wells are allowable on tracts of five acres or more, and only for agricultural or irrigation purposes, or a combination of the two.

Bill Shipp, city manager, noted

that water wells are regulated "in most cities", and that it is in Royse City's interest to know the location of all wells, because any new well placement could interfere with the water supply.

The council awarded a \$1,293,900.90 bid for construction of an expanded capacity 36-inch sewer line section to replace an old, existing 12-inch line that collects waste water from the northeast side of town, some of the central portion, and the area around the high school. The bid was awarded to TNT's Pipeline Corporation of Southlake.

Bearpen Creek Development received the nod from city council to proceed with crafting a bill to present to the Texas legislative session that begins in January. The bill proposes creating a conservation and reclamation district within the city limits of Royse City. Final wording will be voted on by the city council at their January meeting.

"This is a continuation of the city's ongoing discussion with this developer," said Shipp.

"Essentially, creation of a district is a financing mechanism that allows Bearpen to incur debt to build infrastructure on their 962 acres southeast of the high school. Their agreement with the city is that they will complete infrastructure for 100 homes within five years. Ultimately, they plan to build 2800 homes in the

subdivision," Shipp said.

The council also agreed to other developer request, grant Verandah Municipal Utility District (MUD) inclusion of new tract and 5 into Royse City's extrajurisdictional (ETJ). Verandah may hold development agreements with the city only on properties within the city's ETJ.

In other action, the council concurred with the recommendation of the Economic Development Board to reappoint members Claylis, Mike Gilbert, and Otis Go to new three year terms. Cand Middleton's application to serve was accepted by the EDC board approved by city council. She will serve a three-year term, taking place currently held by Bill E who is moving out of the city.

The council voted to give city manager Bill Shipp and city attorney Jason Day authority to negotiate the city's certificates of convenience and necessity (CCN) water and sewer service, including necessary filings with local, state and federal agencies.

Shipp also told council he is awaiting a structural engineering report on the Wing Dingers building at the southeast corner of I and SH 548. The building, heavily damaged in a fire Sept. 2, is being checked for structural integrity pursuant to rebuilding and retail use.



In early October of 2010, I fell with my bicycle and broke my hip.

After surgery and a stay in the hospital, I was given the option of going to the rehab of my choice. Because it was close to my home, I chose Royse City Health and Rehabilitation Center for my therapy.

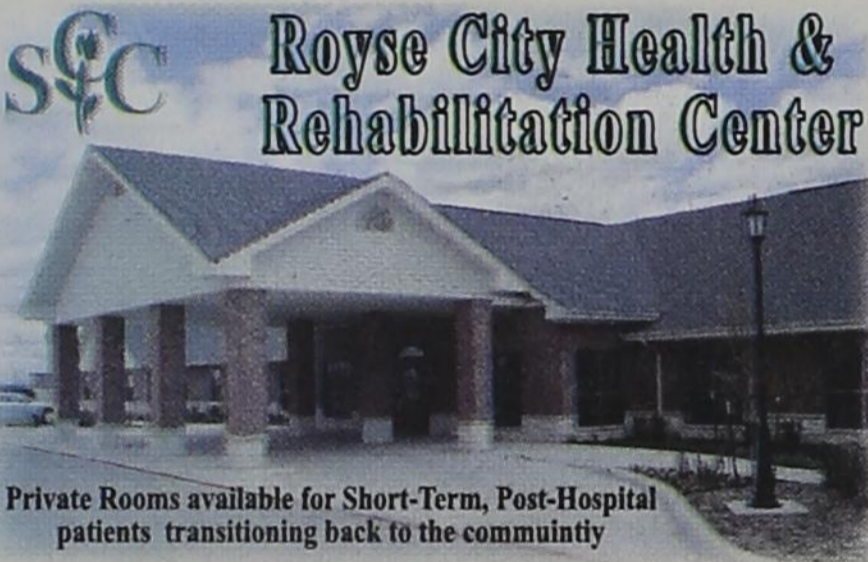
I want people to know that I am delighted with the care given me while I was a guest there. Every worker, every nurse and every

Therapist in that center are genuinely delightful people. The staff began immediately learning my likes and dislikes; then they worked diligently to please.

I also watched these workers interplay with the others too. Their care and concern for the the oldest and most unresponsive patient was heartwarming. I saw kisses and hugs along with pills; and pats along with therapy.

If I were to grade the rehab center, I would have to give it at least a 9 on a scale of 1 to 10.

David Lusk, Royse City



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Pastor Shannon Thomas

Rockwall Children's Chorus busy during fall, holiday season

The Rockwall Children's Chorus has been busy spreading music throughout the Metroplex. Chorus members began by singing at the Friends of the Library Pumpkin Patch in October. The group, led by Alan Clark, entertained spectators with a medley of patriotic songs.

In early December the 40-member chorus traveled to Summer Ridge Retirement Center where the residents were thrilled to see so many young, smiling faces. Rockwall's J.C. Penney hosted the young singers who greeted their customers as they entered the store. The next holiday stop was to North Park Mall in Dallas where they sang in front of hundreds of shoppers, seeking last minute gifts.

The group's final concert of the season was at Castle Douglas. The rustic setting was the perfect backdrop for the boys and girls clad in tuxedos and long, formal dresses.

"I enjoy hearing the music of Christmas sung by children," said Clark. "It seems a natural pairing to put the sounds and stories of Christmas with voices that have an innocent and pure quality."

Rockwall Children's Chorus is one of the best-kept secrets in Rockwall. It is an audition-only choir started more than 11 years ago by Shelba Gorham-Bell to provide local children the opportunity to share their musical talents with the community.

The choir is divided into two parts: Concert II is made up of students in second, third and fourth grades, and Concert I consists of children in grades five through nine.

The group practices at First United Methodist Church of Rockwall every Monday.

Clark said he is passionate about his role in shaping young singers.

"I hear a lot of music. It's on the radio, television, iPods, computers and many other places. Yet, we rarely hear the sound of children singing," he said. "There is something natural and beautiful in the sound of a young voice."

Clark knows how to bring out the beauty in the young singers' voices. Many of the choristers have been RCC members for three or more years.

The choir will perform at additional venues in 2011 and will sell singing valentines in February during their annual fundraiser.

RCC auditions will take place in the spring with time and locations to be announced. To learn more about the choir, visit rockwallchildrenschorus.com.



Pictured are members of the Rockwall Children's Chorus following an October performance at the Friends of the Library Pumpkin Patch. The group, under the direction of Alan Clark, has remained busy during the fall and into the holiday season, performing at events and businesses throughout Rockwall and the Metroplex.
Courtesy photo/Rockwall County News

Lake Pointe tapped for 'Gold Seal of Approval'

Lake Pointe Medical Center has earned the Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval for certification as a Primary Stroke Center following an on-site evaluation and demonstration of compliance with nationally developed standards for stroke care.

"Stroke care time is brain," said Dr. E. Range, MS, RN, CPHQ, executive director, Disease-Specific

Care Certification, with the Joint Commission. "By achieving certification as a Primary Stroke Center, Lake Pointe Medical Center has proven that it has the ability to provide effective, timely care to stroke victims and can significantly improve outcomes for stroke patients."

Each year about 795,000 people experience a new or recurrent stroke, which is the nation's third leading

cause of death. On average, someone suffers a stroke every 40 seconds and someone dies of a stroke every 3.1 minutes.

Stroke also is a leading cause of serious, long-term disability in the U.S., with about 4.7 million stroke survivors alive today.

"Stroke is today what heart attacks were 30 years ago," said Dr. Larry Dencklau, medical director in the Lake Pointe Center Emergency Department. "The faster a patient gets to a Primary Stroke Center... the more likely they are to make a significant recovery."

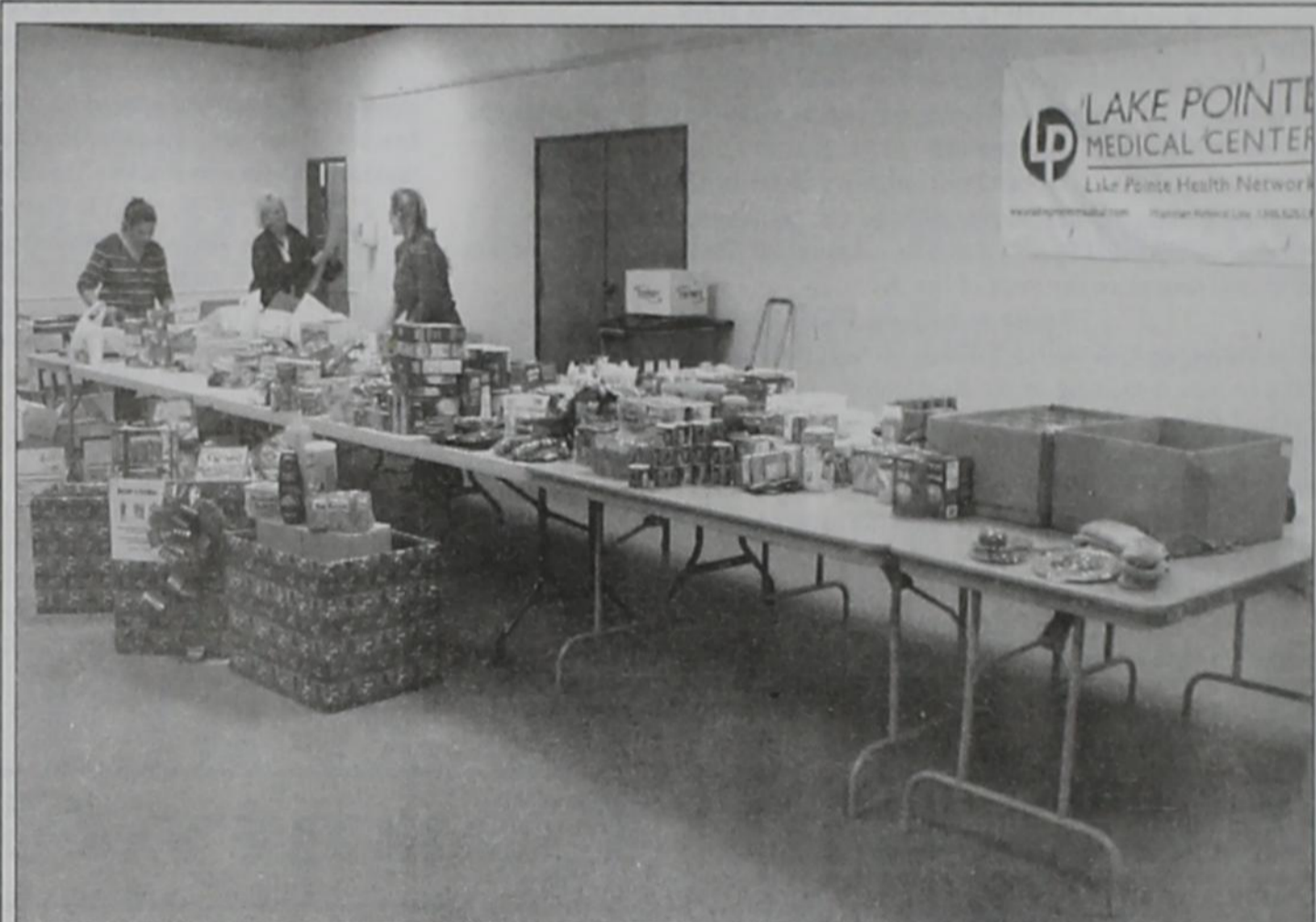
Aggie mothers selling pecans

The Rockwall County Aggie Moms are conducting their annual pecan sales fundraiser.

Cost is \$8.75 per one-pound bag. For recipes that use pecans, visit rockwallaggie.com.

To make a purchase, contact Dena Beddow at 469-446-7472 or denabeddow@msn.com.

Funds raised through the pecan sales are used for scholarships.



The holidays will be a little brighter this year for more than 100 soldiers on active duty in Afghanistan and Iraq, including at least three hometown heroes, when they receive gift boxes donated by employees and volunteers from Lake Pointe Medical Center. Volunteers Behnaz Lavaee, Norma MacLeod and Kate Williams (from left to right), along with LPMC Volunteer Coordinator Sharon Talty, LPMC Director of Human Resources David Olmstead and LPMC Marketing Manager Bobby Montgomery (all unpictured) packed the boxes Friday, Dec. 10 for delivery to the post office the next Monday. Montgomery said one employee from the hospital is currently deployed to Afghanistan and they have identified at least two more hospital employees with family members deployed in Afghanistan or Iraq. The boxes will be shipped to those personnel and they will distribute them to the members of their units. Lake Pointe is partnering in the Adopt A Soldier project with the Texas Regional Medical Center at Sunnyvale.
Photo by Kathy Williams/Rockwall County News



The Rockwall High School Stingerettes Drill Team had their annual Recycling Drive Saturday, Dec. 11 at the school. The drive accepted electronic items, cell phones and other items that will raise funds for the team as they move into competition season in the New Year. Helping to load the donated items were Stingerette Moms (left to right) Jan Brooks, Michelle Wiggins, Tracie Archer, Amy Wiggins, Tena Weeks, Deanna Hartmeier, and Jan Pitts (seated).
Photo by Kathy Williams/Rockwall County News

Three tapped for Midwestern honors

Three local residents were among honor students for the fall 2010 semester at Midwestern State University at Wichita Falls, according to a university press release.

Rockwall students feted included Samantha L. Bigham, named to the President's Honor Roll; Jennifer A. Bujnovsky, named to the Provost's Honor Roll; and Whitney D. Caldwell, who was listed on the Provost's Honor Roll.

A student who completes a semester schedule of at least 12 semester hours with no grade lower than a 4.0 will be included on the President's Honor Roll.

A student who completes a minimum of 12 semester hours with a grade point average of 3.75 to 3.99 with no grade lower than a C will be included on the Provost's Honor Roll.



Sixth grade students at Dobbs Elementary have been researching the decades of the 20th century. Each student selected a decade to research and then produced a time capsule and a newspaper front page containing stories about trends of the time period. Students also found examples of U.S. Census forms from past decades. Pictured with work from their projects are, at back, from the left, Jonathan Porter, Bryan Sandoval and Carlos Rivera. At front, Sydney Philip, Savannah Capehart and Allison Kelly. Not pictured at the project's coordinators, teachers Sherri Naylor, Courtney Butler, Melinda Porter and Deanna Wheeler.
Courtesy photo/Rockwall County News



Dobbs sixth grade student Caroline Wilson is shown positioning a slide containing her own cells under the microscope in science lab. Teacher Deanna Wheeler had her students scrape cells from the insides of their mouths to examine magnified human cells. Students also were asked to sketch and describe what they saw through the microscopes.
Courtesy photo/Rockwall County News

Exclusively in Your Hometown Newspaper Rockwall County News



There is more to owning a car than putting the key in the ignition and driving from Point A to Point B, as the members of Girl Scout Troop 2265 recently learned when they worked through the requirements for the Car Care Badge. On a visit to a local car dealership, the girls learned about changing the oil, checking tire pressure, checking the air filter and the steps of a state inspection. Shown above, members of the troop check the oil level after an oil change. For more information about joining or volunteering with the Girl Scouts, they may be contacted at www.gsnetx.org or 972-636-9419.
Photo courtesy of Jodi Spicer/Rockwall County News

RISD puts surplus computers to work in students' homes

The Rockwall Independent School District's Central Administration building is typically quiet after business hours, but the evening of Dec. 16 was busy with families coming in to complete their Bridging Home and School requirements.

The program, made possible through state legislation, allows school districts to place computer equipment that has been declared surplus outside of the homes of students who have no access to this type of technology outside of school. Under the legislative guidelines, all equipment remains the property of the school district, but eligible families are provided the computers free of charge and may keep them in their homes until the student graduates or withdraws from the school district or until five years has passed, according to a RISD news release.

In the RISD program, which was developed by Debbie Smothermon, assistant superintendent, and Chris Gasaway, director of technology and information services, families with students in grades two through six were invited to apply to participate. The district received 256 applications, and each was evaluated using specific criteria. A total of 100 applicants were selected, with every elementary campus having at least one recipient.

Participating families were required to attend two training sessions before computers were distributed at the final mandatory session on Dec. 16.

The RISD also is providing three optional training sessions for participating families, as well as a support structure that includes technical assistance and maintenance/repair access.

Through this program, a total of 294 children who previously did not have access to computer equipment outside of school now will have the equipment available.

"It was absolutely a case of Christmas coming early," said Sheri Fowler, the RISD's executive director of communications, public relations and marketing. "The families were so excited and so grateful to be a part of the program and the district is thrilled to find a use for surplus technology that directly benefits students and their families. It is an ultimate win-win situation."

Coby McDonald Band, The Dirt Road Gypsies featured at Southern Junction

The Southern Junction Nightclub & Steakhouse is having a New Years Eve party Friday December 31st featuring The Coby McDonald Band along with The Dirt Road Gypsies on stage. The night includes our famous balloon drop with \$2011 in cash and prizes, complimentary champagne toast at midnight and party favors for all. Ring in the New Year here at the Southern Junction.

Doors open at 6PM. Dirt Road Gypsies start at 8:30 p.m., alternating bands all night long! For ticket prices and other information call (972) 771-2418, or log on to www.southernjunctionlive.com.

Just Say You Saw It In the "County News"
RockwallTexasOnline.com

Rockwall County Sports

Lady Bulldogs win to even district record

Royse City took a 3-2 lead on Nina Gaines' first-quarter 3-point shot and didn't trail again in a 60-39 home victory over Sulphur Springs Friday, Dec. 17.

By winning, the Lady Bulldogs improved their record to 1-1 in District 13-4A and 7-9 overall.

After Gaines gave them the lead, RC went on to lead 14-8 after the first quarter and 25-18 at halftime, and continued to widen its advantage during the second half.

Krystal Pickron led Royse City with 15 points, and had plenty of help from Jennifer Null with 12 and Gaines with 11.

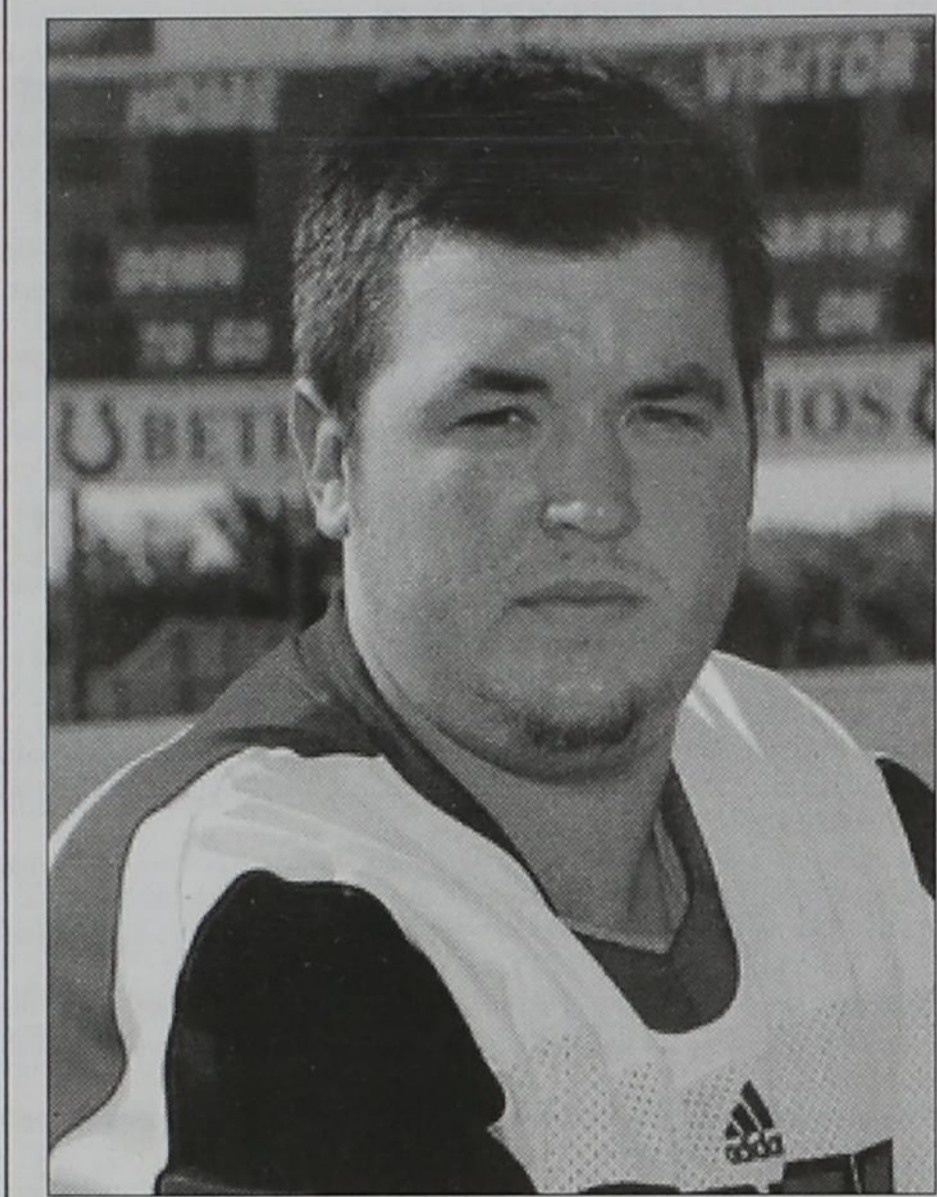
The Lady Bulldogs dominated every phase of the game. They outrebounded the Lady Cats 40-29 and held them to 30 per cent shooting (14-for-47) with no 3-point field goals. Sulphur Springs put itself into foul trouble, sending RC to the foul line for 28 shots.

Royse City was scheduled to host Texarkana Texas Tuesday before playing in next week's Kaufman Holiday Tournament.

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	Final
Sulphur Springs	8	10	13	8	39
RCHS	14	15	14	17	60

RCHS (N/A, 1-1) - Ariel Tippitt 11, Reagan Humphrey 9, Destiny Wade 8, Andrea Tippitt 4, Marissa Walter 3, M. Debase 2, Ashanti Ivory 2.

RCHS (7-9, 1-1) - Krystal Pickron 15, Jennifer Null 12, Nina Gaines 11, Dezary Gardner 9, Sydnie Erbe 6, Taylor Jordan 6, Colleen Moore 1.



Ex-Jacket Termin named All-Academic

Jake Termin, a 2010 Rockwall High School graduate, made the Central States Football League Academic All-Conference team in his first semester at Southern Nazarene University.

The Yellowjackets' starting center for two years, the 265-pound Termin joined junior Chance Willard, another RHS grad, as an offensive lineman at the university in Bethany, Okla.

To be eligible for the Academic All-Conference team, players must have completed at least 12 hours of coursework with a grade point average of 3.0 or better.

Mercer leads Hawks to 9th in tournament

Troy Mercer won his second individual wrestling tournament championship this season to lead Rockwall-Heath to ninth place in the Rockwall "Rumble at the Rock" Invitational Saturday at Rockwall High School.

Mercer won all four of his matches in the 180-pound weight class. After pinning his first three opponents, he took a 6-2 decision in the final match over Zach Rowe of tournament champion Keller Central.

The Hawks totaled 87 points to 132.5 for Keller Central.

For RHHS, Jacob Black (130 pounds) and Jay Arnold (215) each placed third with 3-1 records. Jacob Glastad (130 pounds) won three of five matches, fourth at 171 pounds.

4 Bulldogs named All-District 13-4A

Four Royse City offensive players were named to the 2010 All-District football first team for District 13-4A.

Junior wide receiver Jake Horbacz was a unanimous selection. Joining him on the first team were three senior teammates - running back Jonathan Burns, tight end Taylor Pollock and offensive lineman Hunter Williams.

Bulldogs junior J.R. Arredondo was named to the All-District second team at two positions: outside linebacker and punter.

Other second-team selections were three seniors - offensive lineman Jose Ramirez, defensive end Brody Johnson and cornerback Dylan Funderburk - and two juniors - inside linebacker Damion Foster and safety Caryn Pence.

Fulton wins 1st 2 in district

The Fulton School won its first two district boys' basketball games in different fashion.

On Thursday, the Falcons ran to a 35-13 lead after the first quarter on the way to defeating Irving StoneGate Christian Academy 87-31 on their home court at the Forney Sports Center.

Tuesday's game was played at a much slower pace and was much closer. Fulton defeated Brownwood Victory Life Academy 41-33. In addition to a 2-0 district record, Fulton is 4-1 overall.

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RCA's Rousset, Eastin double up on All-District

Rockwall Christian Academy seniors Joey Rousset and Aaron Eastin have been named to the TAPPS District 2-IV football All-District first team.

Rousset made the team as a lineman both on offense and defense; Eastin was honored as a receiver and defensive back. Because of injuries to other players, the versatile Eastin also played running back and quarterback.

Three other Warriors were honored twice in All-District voting. Sophomore Daniel Rorie was a first-team running back and Honorable Mention defensive back. Senior Ryan Lee made the second team as an offensive and defensive lineman, and Raymon Stewart was a second-team selection at receiver and defensive back.

Senior linebacker Randy Castaneda also made the second team.

RCA's Honorable Mention selections were senior defensive lineman Carl Clewis, senior linebacker Justo Garcia, senior defensive back Seth Burkshier, junior offensive lineman John Edwards, sophomore linebacker Shelby Sharpless and freshman receiver Colton Jones.

Jackets win 3 of 5 matches

On a busy wrestling weekend, Rockwall won at McKinney 55-32 Thursday, Dec. 9, then split four matches in Saturday's Lone Star Duals at Dallas Star's School of Texas.

The Yellowjackets (10-2) knocked off Colleyville 51-21 before losing to Arlington Martin 45-30 and dropping a tough decision to Grapevine 27-26 in the tournament. RHHS bounced back to down Wylie 52-18.

Coach Brent Pohorsky pointed to five Jackets who have played major roles in the team's success.

4 Falcons receive All-State mention

The best football season in The Fulton School's history has been rewarded in part by having four players receive mention on the TAPPS 6-Man II All-State team.

Two of those players, seniors Brett Steffen and Tyler Johnson, also were named to the Academic All-State team.

Steffen, who played in Saturday's North-South All-Star Game in Waco, received second-team All-State honors as a defensive lineman. Johnson was an Honorable Mention All-State punter.

Senior Dylan Leverett was named a second-team All-State safety, and junior Milan Rabah received All-State Honorable Mention at both running back and cornerback.

Johnson was named to the TAPPS 6-Man District 2-1 second team at three positions: punter, kicker and center.

Three Fulton players received All-District honors at two positions. They were Steffen, quarterback and defensive line; Rabah, running back and cornerback, and Leverett, utility back and safety.

Sophomore C.J. White was a first-team All-District tight end, and was named to the second team as a defensive lineman.

In addition, senior Kendall Johnson made the All-District second team at both tight end and defensive line, and freshman Hayden Leverett was a second-team wide receiver and linebacker.

The Falcons hosted a playoff game for the first time in their history during a season when their 5-6 record was their best ever.

Griffin is RCA's first female scholarship athlete

By Lary Bump

Little more than a year ago, Brittany Griffin was playing little for the Rockwall High School girls' basketball team.

A year from now, she's likely to be the most celebrated female scholarship athlete ever from Rockwall Christian Academy.

Those changes have come because she transferred during last basketball season from RHHS to RCA, and on Friday, Dec. 10, she became the first Lady Warrior to sign a college athletic scholarship letter of intent.

She's likely to play some as a college freshman. That's according to Southwestern Assemblies of God University head women's basketball coach Arlon Beadles. He made the trip from Waxahachie with assistant coach Jacob Rodriguez for Griffin's signing before students and well-wishers who crowded the foyer of RCA's gymnasium.

Beadles said, "Last year she came in for a workout with our team and went through all our drills. We knew she could play at our level. There will be a senior playing ahead of her next year at small forward, but as sophomore she'll be capable of starting for us."

That would be no small feat. SAGU, an NAIA Division I university, won 49 games during its last two seasons. At the time of Griffin's signing, the Lady Lions were 8-3 and coming off the first victory over an NCAA Division I team in the program's history. They had won in overtime at Texas State.

Her future coach said, "She has pretty good size (5-foot-9) for our league and a nice little jump shot. She can move without the basketball really well. She fits in well with our students. We look for kids who want to be in our environment."

Griffin is the second high school senior to sign with SAGU this year. Beadles indicated the recruiting class would include two additional players.



Lady Jackets' Morgen Day (5) drives the ball upcourt with after her rebound against Wylie during last Friday's game at Rockwall.
Photo by Roy Heath/Rockwall County News

Lady Hawks win L.D. Bell Invitational

Jade Bowerman won the individual all-around championship with 39.20 points, just .8 short of a perfect score, to lead Rockwall-Heath to first place in the Hurst L.D. Bell Invitational Thursday night, Dec. 2.

The Lady Hawks' 116.05 total edged the host team by less than half a point. Bell scored 115.625 in the 19-team event. Bowerman, also won the uneven bars at 9.8. She placed first in the vault with 9.90 and third in the balance beam and floor exercise with scores of 9.75.

Backing up her performance was freshman Carolyn Sherwin, third all-around at 38.85. She won the floor exercise and placed third on the uneven bars (9.7), eighth in the vault (9.8) and 10th on the balance beam (9.55).

Another freshman, Jacquelyn Doughty, finished seventh all-around at 38.00. She was 10th in both the uneven bars (9.4) and floor (9.45). Sophomore Ashlee Reese also tied for 10th on the uneven bars at 9.35.

The next night, RHHS was fourth among 11 teams in the boys' competition at the L.D. Bell Invitational. The Hawks score of 163.15 was just 4 1/2 points behind champion Rockwall.

Reed named 10-4A Offensive Player of the Year

Quarterback Alan Reed, who led Rockwall to second place in District-104A football this season, has been named the district's Offensive Player of the Year.

Reed passed for 2,574 yards and 24 touchdowns and led the Yellowjackets with 794 yards and 14 TDs rushing. They posted a 5-2 district record that included a victory over 4A state semifinalist Wylie and a 7-point loss to 10-4A champion Highland Park.

Joining Reed on the All-District first team were three unanimous selections - two seniors, wide receiver Blake Turner and safety Reed Loftis, and junior return specialist Spencer Edwards. Turner led the team with 890 receiving yards, and tied Edwards for RHHS' lead with 10 touchdown catches.

Loftis paced Rockwall's defense with 89 tackles and four interceptions.

Other Jackets on the first team were tight end Kyle Crawford, offensive

receivers. Other second-team selections were three seniors - offensive lineman Robert Hinton, defensive end Jarrett Spencer, the team's leading tackler with six sacks, and inside linebacker Andrew Doughty - and junior safety Andrew Hincley.

RCHS finished with a 6-5 overall record after reaching the playoffs for the first time in three years.

RHS finished with a 6-5 overall record after reaching the playoffs for the first time in three years.

RHHS' Arnold named Defensive Sophomore of the Year

Rockwall-Heath defensive end Jay Arnold has been honored as the Defensive Sophomore of the Year on the District 10-4A All-District football team.

Arnold leads a strong group of underclassmen who could lead RHHS to the playoffs in 2011. Of the seven Hawks who received All-District first-second-team mention from a 5-5 team, just three were seniors.

The seniors were offensive lineman Shelton Williams and defensive tackle Matt Gruner, named to the first team, and tight end/H-back Tyler Wood, named the second team.

Juniors Juan Hernandez and Amaris Fields were named to the first team for leading the Hawks' offense. Running back Hernandez gained 825 yards and scored 11 rushing touchdowns. Fields led the run-oriented team with catches, 380 yards, nine interceptions and 68 points.

Sophomore inside linebacker Raaquan Davis was voted to the second team.

HCA's Pettit, Terrell named 1st-team All-State

Heritage Christian Academy's 9-3 football season was rewarded in part by having two players, linebacker Austin Pettit and defensive lineman Quincy Terrell, named to the TAPPS 6-Man I All-State first team.

Pettit also was named to the TAPPS District 2-1 All-District team at his position. He was a first-team linebacker and second-team quarterback and tight end. Pettit played for the North team in Saturday's 62-34 victory over the South team in Waco.

Terrell received All-District honors as a first-team defensive lineman. Honorable Mention tight end. Number one tight end Asa Burke received second-team All-State and first-team All-District honors.

HCA's fourth All-District first-team player was senior safety Aaron Mateer. He also was named a second-team All-District performer as a kicker and received All-State Honorable Mention as a safety. Mateer and Pettit represented the Eagles on the Academic All-State team.

Other All-TAPPS District 2-1 players were junior Caleb Cathey, center-running back and Honorable Mention linebacker; senior Ty Arterburn, second-team defensive lineman; junior Stephen Salter, Honorable Mention center, and sophomore Evan Pettit, Honorable Mention cornerback. HCA head coach Robert Huckabee coached the North in Saturday's All Game. Sixman football.com ranked the Eagles 26th among 253 teams in Texas.

Last Puzzle Solution

Last Puzzle Solution

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Rockwall County Letters to Santa

Dear Santa,
Are you ready for Christmas? For Christmas I would like the game Uno, Nerf, and battleship pleas. I will want cookies on the fire place.
Love, Jacob

Dear Santa,
I have been very good this year. How about the reindeer? I am going to leave 2 gallons of milk. I will allow you to eat lots and lots of cookies I will have a lot of candy for you.
Love, Kaya

Dear Santa,
How are the reindeer and the elves? How are you? For Christmas I want a X box 360 and Skelbord, a car, and a hot air balloon. Santa how many cubs do you have?
I love you!
Love, K

Dear Santa,
How is Rudolf? For Christmas I would like a new puppy in my pocket, and a American girl doll close, and a teddy bear. I will live you hole made in the fire place. Calf dot fall in the fire place its going to be Hot.
Love, Abby

Dear Santa,
I want a DSi and a X box 360. I want a nut cracker, a DSD, a X box 360, a star wars toys. My own cris me, a spider man cosdooom. A tv a dvd player. Dsantu hat. Snow a sandeem x box 370 air Hawk a rael rael star waers min a brt are a big presit lake.
Love, Mac

Dear Santa,
I want a Dsi and a X box 360. I want a nut cracker, a DSD, a X box 360, a star wars toys. My own cris me, a spider man cosdooom. A tv a dvd player. Dsantu hat. Snow a sandeem x box 370 air Hawk a rael rael star waers min a brt are a big presit lake.
Love, Mac

Dear Santa,
I want a Dsi and a new mock in

throl car and a comeputer that has a captopand a phonu wen I'm big and a Folawear.
Lex

Dear Santa,
I want a DSi and a X box 360. I want a nut cracker, a DSD, a X box 360, a star wars toys. My own cris me, a spider man cosdooom. A tv a dvd player. Dsantu hat. Snow a sandeem x box 370 air Hawk a rael rael star waers min a brt are a big presit lake.
Love, Mac

Dear Santa,
We (heart) you. And I whot a ruel Dinesor and I whot you. He. Ples sent bak aluath (heart) Michael to Santa.
Michael

Dear Santa,
I want a dsi and a boin ano and a Kamo Jackit and a Kamo pelit gun and a brtbick and a rille NFL Futball and sum NFL daliscawboys Futball helmet and a NFL daliscawboys Futball grse and a NFL daliscawboys leg pats and a X Box Ed ar hock and a rill big Korpit that Kurrsup my holl bakrard and a beanaroo and a soot ann and a Kano and Black pelit gun
Jenny Lowe

Dear Santun,
I Want a Dsi!! For crissmiss and a littell st pet spop and a GoGo!! And a unckgirl!!! Phone and a mackupset to the to the NNRS and a DS!!! I Love you Santun!!!!!! And a Sonic Pack 2010 PS I Love YOU Santun so so so so so so so so so so so so so so so much!!!!!!
Chaney

Dear Santa,
A X Box, some ik ah DSi, Game Boy Star Wars on Game Boy.
From Collin

Dear Santa,
I want a IDD2, and little panda me pck grlrl.
Mac

Dear Santa,
I wut a DS and a box uvdra and antucupandra andiwut a catpot and I wut a snologe
Drew

Dear Santa,
All I want for Chistmas is a spyi rip-eyo wosh and a sekodot. And a Tecup pigs phoneto:cannu
Jocelyn

Dear Santa,
How are you? Hows Mrs. Clos? How is the toys? Hows Rudolf? For Christmas I would like a puppy, and a pinkish D.S. and a pink panda bare webken. I'll give you oreos. How many cookies, do you want? I also want more Clos for my Amaricin girl.
Love, Madilyn

Dear Santa,
How are the elves? I Would like a penbow, a pony, a fon, a bug catcher and a baby set
Love, Sophia

Dear Santa,
How is Rudoph? Are you ready for Christmas? I'd like a chocolate lab, a laptop, boards to break, and a camera. I will leave you milk and cookies on the fire place.
Love, Reed

Dear Santa,
How are the reindeer are the elves? For Christmas I would like a big bike, a baby Cat and a desk. On Christmas I will put Cicees on the tabl. I am triing to be good.
Love, Hanna

Dear Santa,
How are you? I hope you are not sic. I hope you cometoo crismis. For crismis I would want a noow cat and a dog. A fish will be fine. I also want 5 hamstrs. I will put some candy out.
Love, Brianna

Dear Santa,
How is Rudolf? For christmas I would like a puppy, and a rascar trac, and a Helcedr, and a flawr, some cande and a cat. Thank you for the toys. I like you'r jingle Ball.
Love, Illijah

Dear Santa,
How is Rudolf? For christmas I will like anything that is boy stuff.
Love, Dub

Dear Santa,
How is Rudolf? For christmas I wud like a DS and a Nerf and Lego Kegdum. I wud like a dog, and a brother.
Love, Noah

Dear Santa,
I am triing to be good. For Christmas I wold like a pet gardiner snake. If you cant get me that than I wold like a pet ferret, and a soccerball sise 4, and the D.S. game Pokemon Hart gold. If you come I will give you cookise.
Love, Drew

Dear Santa,
How is roodof and all of the uthr raddeer? For cisms I wud like a snowcone machienes, cat, bog, and ten fish, and five hamsters two white a three black, a American Girl that looks like me and go go the Wogindog.
Luv, Krista

Dear Santa,
How is Rudolf? How are you? For christmas I would like Scoby Doo cursee of the lake monstr, a puppy, a wii pop The pig, and hary potr on paystashin 2. I will Leev KooKees on the Kawnter.
Love, Tyler

Dear Santa
I would like a Nutcracker and a fosle so I can start a collection.
Love Jacie
Merry Christmas!!!

I would lik gutr Brooke Elliott I would lik a laptop
Love Brooke

I Love you Santa!! Mixehand 1) Easy Bake 2) Vanity and chair Barbie 3) puppy swim school & pool 4) Barbie with Long hair 5) My first doll house 6) Barbie grill
Prissilla

Dear Santa,
I have bin good this year I do my Chres at home. So can you give me a pad of Super hearous.
Love, Jon

Dear Santa,
Iv been a good boy this year I want a I tutch
Your Friend Mason.

Dear Santa,
If bin good tooday If bin doing good I've bin doing manno If rub peoples back I rilee wut a pupey beekus I luv pupey I wil giv the pupey luf
Reagan

Dear Santa,
I think I have bin good so I want a Ipod tuch I have bin dooeg miy work.
Love Brian

Dear Santa,
Your friend Kollb bcii he want a wii nut king of wii mead for speed wiy I zrv it beus I gov my Hchrris reds. Thor u evf for gcv cj kis prezes. Ken u poot thux em my scpgex in my scpgex I wut a one of spum beis.

Dear Santa,
I (heart) you Can I have som Toys? I Will wut a computer because I rilly wut a computer for Christmas. (heart) Santa
(heart) Jacob

Dear Santa,
I want a four wheelr not just a flt remot kontrol four wheelr. I did my chors and I rub moms back.
Love Tanner

Dear Santa,
Can I have some DS game and a Wi for my family ples I have ben rily good I no that I have axudinly ben hurting peopl but ples frgiv me
Love Makenna

Dear Santa,
For Christmas I rely want a ntendoe DS and am I on the good lest and I want this because I been good by being nise to my bruthr.
Love, Faith.

Dear Santa,
Santa I. Wont a big dolhas that Was pink dolhas. And a computer pecus I play. With My Bruthr and his name is HayDeN.
Love Haylee

Dear Santa,
I was good Santa. I want the wii game the hunt. I got good grads. I did my chors. I want the wii game the hunt because I want to lrm how to shoot. Santa.
Love A.J. for Santa.

Dear Santa,
I want a ipod becus I play good my friend candy becus I cat call my friends.
Love Cayden

Dear Santa,
I want a American Gril I Listen in class I been good. For Santa
Love Zerenity

Dear Santa,
I would like a Dsi decause I been good I clend the hose my mom told me I love Santa.
Love Alexis

Dear Santa,
I wanta Brie and Wii thos I like. I thik I like Chirstmas.
by Candy

Dear Santa,
I want a nerf stamped and a ben ten ultimant alien creatshin lob. I love crismas!
Max

Royse City Bells on Main Street



Royse City Mayor Jerrell Baley helps light the city Christmas tree at the Dec. 11 Bells on Main Street festivities at Old Jail Park in Royse City. In addition to lighting the official tree, revelers has story time with Mrs. Claus at the Royse City fire department, sang carols, had pictures made with Santa Claus and were delighted with the annual lighted parade down Main Street.
Photo by Roy Heath/Rockwall County News



Donald Clinard holds up his three-year old granddaughter, Allison, who threw the switch to light the Royse City Christmas tree on Dec. 11 at Old Jail Park. Clinard donated \$1,000 to the city for the purchase of the tree for the event. After the tree lighting and singing of Christmas carols, the annual lighted parade passed in front of the beautiful tree down Main Street.
Photo by Roy Heath/Rockwall County News

(More Royse City Parade Photos on Page 12)

A Merry Christmas to you all!

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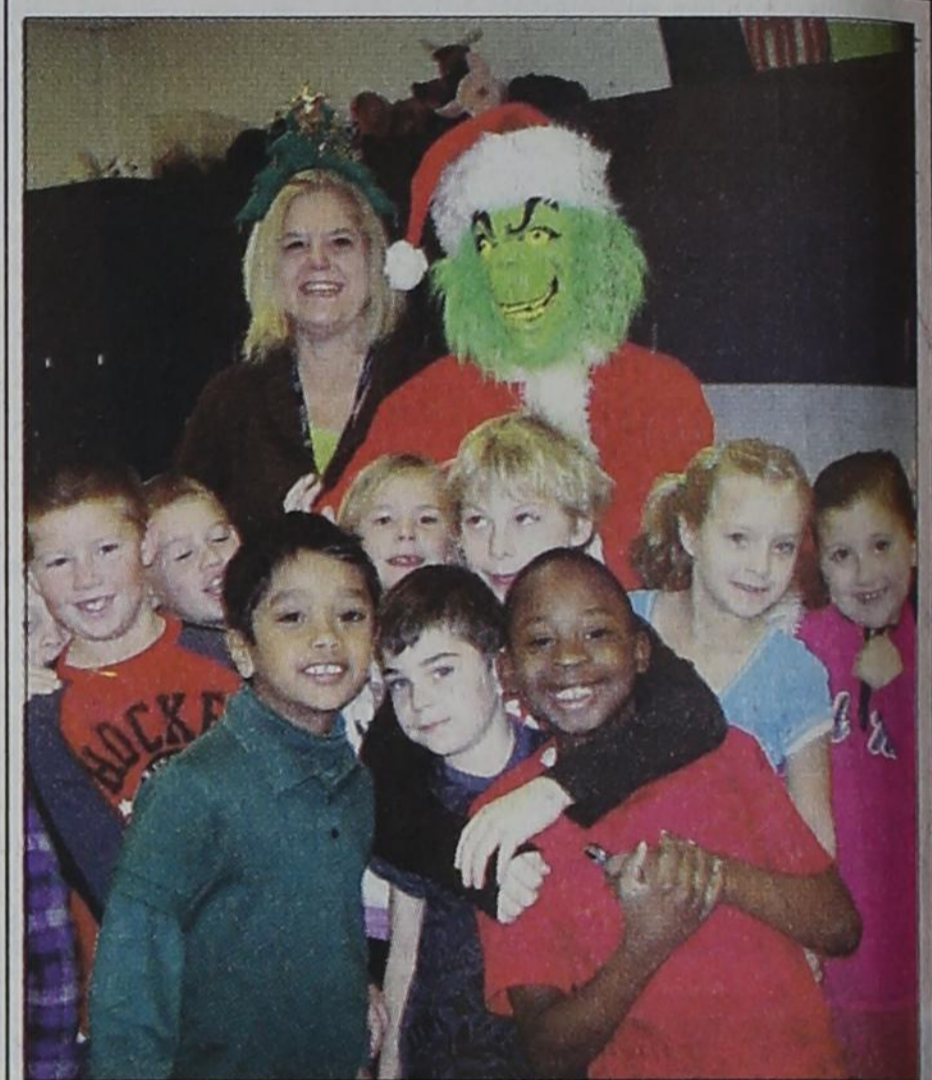
The Roysie City High School Bulldog Band entertained the holiday crowds with Christmas tunes at the Dec. 11 Roysie City Bells on Main Street Christmas parade. Flute players (right to left) Natalie Barsoum, Rachael Reel, April Lopez and Megan Fraundorfer dressed in their holiday finest to celebrate the season.

Photo by Roy Heath/Rockwall County News



Scouts and leaders from Cub Scout Pack 1401 bundled up against the chilly night but still had on their shiniest holiday lights and Santa hats at the Roysie City Bells on Main Street Christmas Parade on Dec. 11. The Bobcats, Wolves, Bears and Webelos participate in many community events and service projects as part of their Cub requirements.

Photo by Roy Heath/Rockwall County News



The Grinch visited Dobbs Elementary recently. Pictured from the left, front row, are Sion Philip, Tyler Kappahn and D'Shaud Turner. On the second row are Colton Crawford, Daniel Cunningham, Karlea Kilpatrick, Michael Sparks, Emma Parr and Carsyn Willess. Standing with the Grinch is second grade teacher Robyn Gunderson.

Courtesy photo/Rockwall County News

Easter egg hunt set April 16

The Rockwall Parks & Recreation sponsored 9th Annual Easter Egg Hunt will begin at 10 a.m. at the Tuttle Athletic Complex, Field 1 will serve children ages up to the age of 2; field 2, ages 5 and 6; field 3, ages 3 and 4; and field 4, ages 7 through 12. A bounce house, face painting and a visit from the Easter bunny are planned.

Rockwall plans Hazardous Waste Day

Rockwall residents will have the opportunity to dispose of household chemicals and other hazardous waste items from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. April 30 at 1600 Airport Road. To participate, local residents must bring a copy of their utility bill or driver's license to verify residency.

Founders Day Festival set May 21

The City of Rockwall's historic downtown square will play host to the annual Founders Day Festival May 21. Vendor booths, children's activities, food, entertainment and a sunset concert are planned. For more details visit rockwallfoundersday.com.

Exclusively in Your Hometown Newspaper
Rockwall County News



Rockwall High's Fellowship of Christian Athletes organization recently conducted a bake sale to raise funds to help out the less fortunate during the Christmas season. From donations and the bake sale, the youths raised \$1,000, which was used to shop for clothing, electronics, sports equipment and jewelry for Rockwall teens in need. Pictured from the left are a handful of FCA members: Julia Sealock, Candace Schmucker and Taylor Lemons.

Courtesy photo/Rockwall County News

A simple Christmas wish
May your holidays,
and all of your days be
blessed and peaceful



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It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Christmas!

All the stockings are hung and filled with delicious goodies ... but the thing we love most about Christmas is the joy God gives us with the birth of his Son, the Savior of all God's children.

We pray God's wonderful blessings fill your life as he has filled ours ...

Pat and Wes Burnett

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Allen and Kim Dolberry

and their daughters

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Cailee Hope

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Habitat for Humanity reaches 400,000 home milestone

Habitat for Humanity surpassed its 400,000 house milestone during its recent fiscal year, with Rockwall Area Habitat for Humanity contributing to the effort. The nonprofit organization was founded in 1976, its self-help, hand-on approach has resulted in rehabbed, repaired or new housing for more than 2 million people worldwide. The Rockwall Chapter for Habitat will finish its twenty-sixth house in 2011 and begin two or three new houses in the New Year. Rockwall Area Habitat for Humanity is continuing its efforts to help families

in need of decent, affordable housing. "We are happy to have helped Habitat for Humanity reach this important milestone in bettering communities across the country," said Cindy Bruemmer, with RAHH. "With continued support of our sponsors and volunteers, we'll address affordable housing needs in Rockwall County." In fiscal year 2010, Habitat for Humanity served a record 74,960 families worldwide through a combination of new construction, rehabilitation and repairs. Habitat also helped an additional 6,355 families establish legal rights to a house or land, and provided more than 46,964 individuals with technical

assistance ranging from legal help to construction advice or training. "We are pleased that even in this difficult economy, Habitat for Humanity has been able to help a record number of families around the world have a better place to live," said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International. "Our affiliates are the backbone of Habitat's efforts. Their hard work and dedication have made this milestone possible. We are grateful for the work of Rockwall Area Habitat for Humanity." For more information, or to donate or volunteer, visit Habitat.org.

Rockwall County Health Matters

We wish you blessings, joy and a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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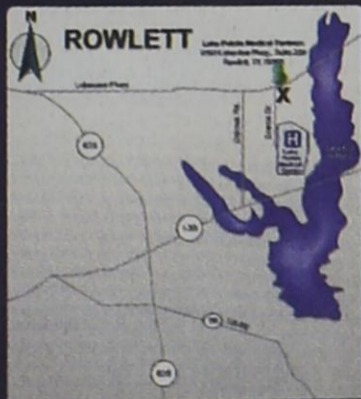


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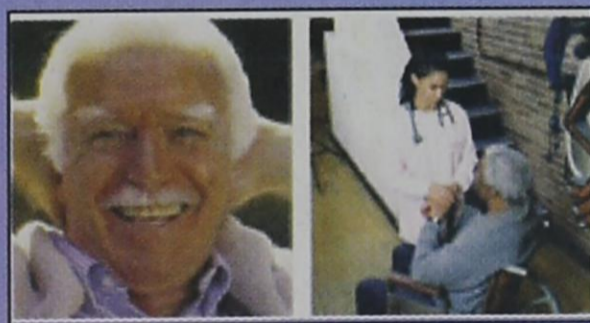
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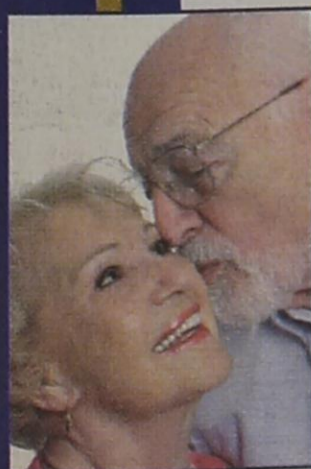
Holiday Schedule

- Thursday, Dec. 30 (Deadline Monday, Dec. 27)
- Friday, Jan. 7 (Deadline Tuesday, Jan. 4)

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