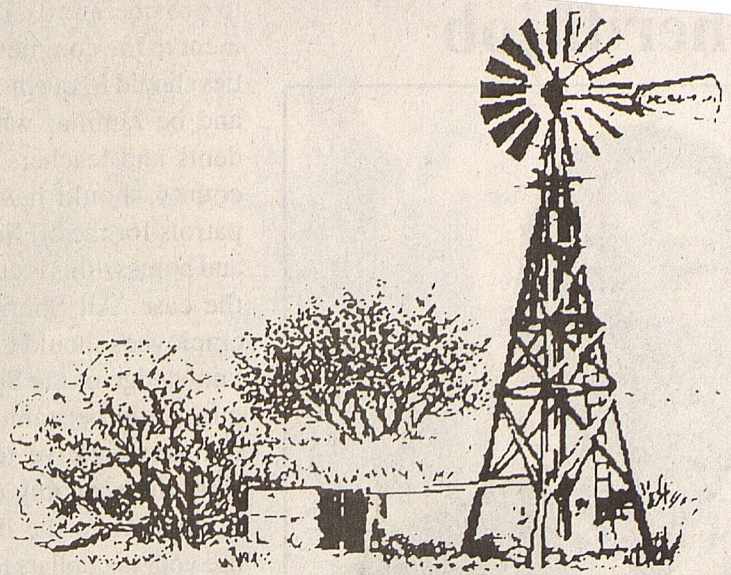


Cowboy Country News

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

Volume X, Issue 17, January 7, 2004



First Denim and Diamonds Gala Proves To Be Genuine Smash Hit

Formula for successful venture; Have a good idea.... tell other positive thinking, enthusiastic people and seek their help....ask them to find and convince others to help promote the idea.... don't lose sight of your goal.... forget the word CAN'T.

Following the tremendously successful first and now sure to be annual Denim and Diamonds Ball on New Year evening, a number of Yoakum County Hospital Foundation members told CCN the above formula was essentially what the Foundation followed in planning and hosting the gala event at the K&T Ranch headquarters.

With the help of many volunteer workers, the large, partitioned ranch barn was transformed into a layout for a lavish dinner, beautifully decorated dining area which also served as the site for both a silent and live fund raising auction, and when the tables and chairs were re-arranged, a ballroom for dancers.

Chair person Edith Kidd welcomed well over 200 guests to the Gala, and recognized many of the hard working volunteers who donated time, labor and



money to the Foundation event.

Hospital spokesperson Beverly Mills told CCN Monday the precise amount of money raised from ticket sales, the sale of donated merchandise and services, and the two auction events, after deducting all expenses, should be in excess of \$20,000. Mills explained the money can only be

used for the purchase of equipment or supplies used by the hospital in the care of patients. The crowd clearly reflected West Texans tastes. The ladies dazzled with attire very appropriate for a New Year Eve party, expensive dresses and exotic hair arrangements. Most of the men were a bit more casual - a few suits, and lots of western

hats, jeans and boots.

Mingling among the partygoers in the very crowded main barn room one of the most frequently heard comment was, "I'll bet the K&T Ranch people build a bigger barn next year!"

If this years success story is a valid indicator, that could be a likely happening.

Manager Dreyspring departs LCEC, Wade Roberts named to board

Michael A. Dreyspring, General Manager and Executive Vice President of Lea County Electric Cooperative, Inc., has resigned his position after more than 8 years service to the Co-operative. Dreyspring has accepted a position as Chief Executive Officer of CoServe Electric Cooperative in Corinth, Texas. The effective date of his resignation is January 31, 2004.

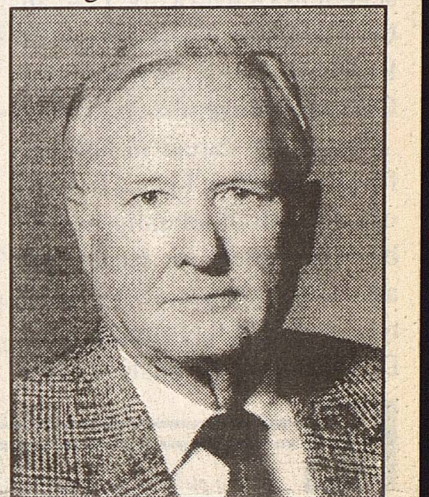
"Mike has been instrumental in helping the Cooperative advance in a number of important areas," said LCEC board president Billy Royce Medlin. "From

member services, Mike has helped Lea County Electric effectively meet the challenges of a changing industry. We wish him continued success in his new position at Co Serve." Pending the results of a nationwide search to fill the top post, the Co-op board has named John Benard as Interim General Manager.



Mike Dreyspring

strategic planning and legislative advocacy to implementing new technology and improving



Jack McMillan

The Cooperative also announced the resignation of long-time board member Jack McMillan, after 31 years service to the Cooperative. A Trustee since 1972, McMillan represented Co-op members in District 7 (Gaines County). He

Turn To Page 2, Resignations

Redistricting flap could affect candidate filing and voter registration deadlines

Employees in the County Clerk and Tax offices are keeping a nervous eye on the three federal judge panel studying the issue of congressional redistricting plan rendered by three sessions of the Texas Legislature. Depending on the panel's final decision on redistricting plan 1374 C, voter registration dates could be set back, as well as registration deadlines for candidates in the upcoming March Primary Election.

A copy of a directive from the Texas Secretary of State office points out the three judge panel recently issued an order containing the following:

"At the hearing November 3, 2003, the parties asked this court to ensure that during the legally required examinations of Plan 1347C....preparations for the March 2004 general primary elections... can proceed in an orderly manner. This court recognizes the redistricting Plan in place, 1151C, cannot be implemented until the Department of Justice pre-clearance process is successfully concluded. This court can, however, prevent delay of the

primary election caused by simple failure to prepare for it..

"Under present law, the candidate filing period is from December 3, 2003 to January 2, 2004. If Plan 1347C becomes legally enforceable before January 10, it would establish a supplemental January 11 to January 16 filing period. This court cannot order making Plan 1374C legally effective before it is legally enforceable. Candidates may therefore file applications under present law and the present Plan 1511C, and file again under the new plan if and when it is determined to be legally enforceable."

The current period for counties to issue voter registration certificates is November 15, 2003 to December 6, 2003. but the court earlier ordered all voter registrars to delay issuing the voter registration cards until January 11, 2004.

The two county offices which register voters and conduct elections are closely monitoring the court's deliberations and waiting for further instructions from the Secretary of State.

Corzine Seeks Re-Election

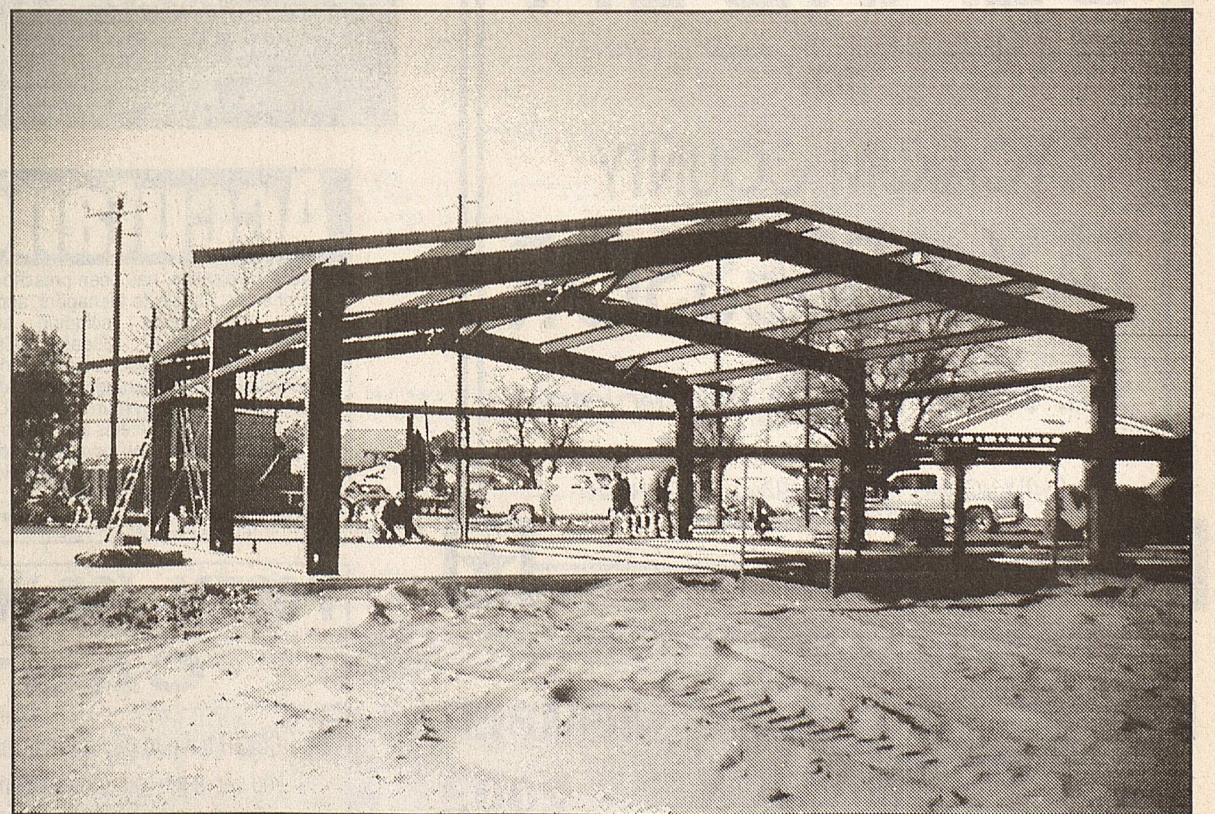
I would like to announce my candidacy for re-election to the office of Sheriff of Yoakum County. My commitment to you, the citizens and voters of Yoakum County, Denver City and Plains, is to strive to continue to operate the Sheriff's Department to the best of my ability for the benefit and welfare of our citizens.

Your friendship, support and input will continue to be very important to me. Thank you for your consideration. I remain at your service. Respectfully,
Donald L. Corzine

District Court forgery case

In the December 30 session of District Court, Judge Kelly G. Moore presiding, David Charles Mendenhall pled guilty to forgery. A two year state jail sentence was suspended and probated three years. He must pay a \$1000 fine, \$271 court costs and \$25 time payment fee. He must also pay \$675 restitution to Myrl Slentz, and serve 120 hours community service. Investigating officer was Chris Ballard, Denver City Police. Criminal District Attorney Richard Clark represented the state.

New home going up for Credit Union

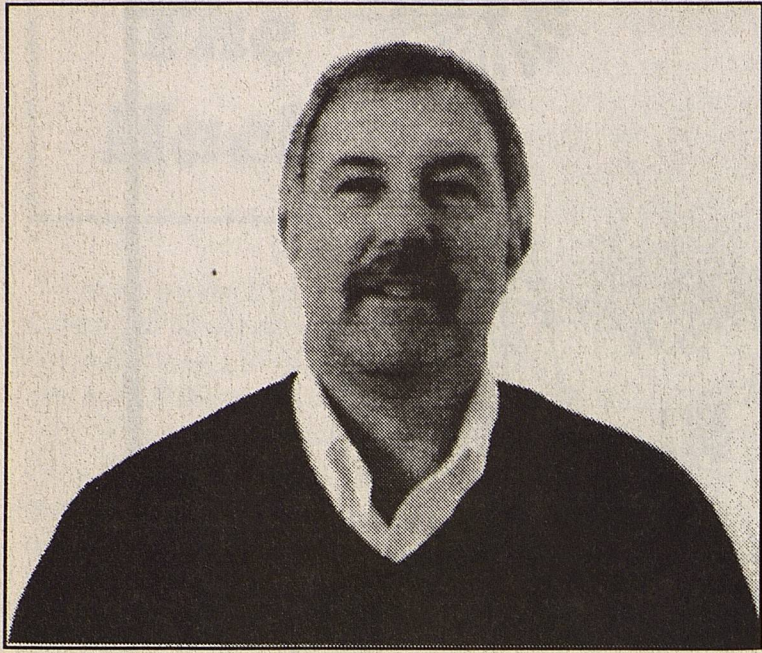


A new, 1250 square foot office will be the home of Yoakum County Credit Union sometime in April, if weather permits construction work to continue as planned. The project was contracted by C & J Enterprises of Denver City, and construction work started in November last year. Some of the amenities of the new office include a drive-in window on the West side, covered parking spaces for employees, two 10' by 14' Loan Officer spaces, a 10' by 7' reception area, and a 24' by 19' Board Room. Manager Teddie Know said the credit union board had originally hoped to have the project completed in time to celebrate the 55th anniversary of the organization in February, but title difficulties slowed the closing on the building site.

The new building is located immediately behind the present site on Cowboy Way, on the corner of 11th Street and Ferrell Avenue. Full time employees are Ms. Knox, and Assistant Manager Tina Snead. Credit Union Board of Directors include Melvin Dearing, President, Ruby Sellers, Vice-President, Tommie Brown, Supervisory Chairman, Robert Canon, Secretary, Kenneth Engle, Lisa Switzer and Lanny Smith, Directors. To start the new year 2004, the credit union had 958 members, and assets totaling over \$ 2.8 million, including more than \$ 2 million outstanding loans, and incredibly, no delinquent accounts..

The annual membership supper will be held at 7 PM Friday, February 28 in the school cafeteria.

Rick Dickson announces for Sheriff job



Happy New Year! My name is Rick Dickson and I am pleased to announce I will be running for office to serve as your Sheriff. I have over 25 years of experience in Law Enforcement in West Texas, the last eleven of those in Yoakum County. I am married to Nancy, the daughter of the late Joe and Mary Terrel. We have two daughters, Dena Sautter of Abilene, and Glinnis Fowler of England. Nancy, Dena and Glinnis all attended high school in Denver City. I am an Odessa native. There I attended Permian High School and Odessa College. I began my career in law enforcement when I was 18 years old. My Mom actually had to buy my bullets for me at that age. During my career I have received training from the U.S. Department of Justice, the

Texas Department of Public Safety, the Drug Enforcement Administration, The Texas Narcotics Control Program and many other local training events. I have experience in all forms of investigations, from bicycle theft to homicides. I have earned Distinguished Service Awards from the National Association of Chiefs of Police and the D.E.A. I have provided training to the U.S. Department of Defense as well as for Police Officers in ten other states. I currently hold an advanced Peace Officer Certificate from the State of Texas. Presently I am employed with the Criminal District Attorney's office, assigned as the Commander of the Llano Estacado Drug Task Force. My background has provided me with expertise in every facet of law enforcement. I feel I am fully qualified to serve

as your Sheriff. As Sheriff, it would be my goal to provide a proactive department to the community. Deputies should frequent our schools and be familiar with the students and teachers. I feel the county should have 24 hour patrols for the oil fields, farms and homes - this is currently not the case. All Sheriff's office employees should have a basic knowledge of the Spanish language and be trained in modern investigative techniques. With the economy of today, it is imperative the department use your tax dollars to their fullest. In other words, the department would give you, the taxpayer, a hard day's work in return for your investment. I want to work for YOU.

I will be running in the Democratic Party. I have several issues I would enjoy discussing with you in person between now and election time. Thank you for your support.

From Page 1, 'Resignations'

and his wife Mona have operated a successful farming operation near Higginbotham for more than 50 years.

McMillan served as the board's secretary-treasurer from 1978 until 1990 when he was elected to the post of vice-president, the position he held until 2000.

"Jack did an outstanding job of representing the members in his district, and was a tireless advocate for rural electrification," board president Medlin said. His resignation was effective December 27, 2003.

The board appointed Wade Roberts to fill McMillan's unexpired term of office which ends April, 2004. Roberts is Executive Vice President of the Denver City branch of West Texas National Bank. He will stand for election by the Co-op membership next April at the Annual Meeting.



Holiday Greetings from United States Senator John Cornyn

Greetings to my Fellow Texans.

As we gather together with family and loved ones to observe the holidays, we ought to pause a moment to recognize that these are critical times in our nation's history. While we celebrate in comfort, we should remember the brave men and women of our Armed Forces, many of them Texans, who are even today laboring overseas to defend our lives and our homeland against America's enemies.

Serving in good cause on the field of battle, these men and women are doing work that prevents them from enjoying such well-deserved comforts firsthand. While I wish it could be otherwise, America cannot spare them now. Yet I am sure that all of us who are observing the traditions of the holidays here in Texas are filled with gratitude and thankfulness for these brave men and women, who are spreading the light of freedom to a land too long imprisoned in darkness.

I strongly believe that the true spirit of the holidays is embodied in the selfless commitment to help those in need, to give hope to those who despair, and to spread a just peace throughout the world. We pray that the brave men and women serving this mission overseas will have cour-

age, be of good cheer, and return safely and soon to the open arms of home and family.

In times of great difficulty, it is often a struggle to celebrate. In 1941, Winston Churchill spent the holidays visiting Washington D.C. Speaking at the lighting of the national tree on Christmas Eve, he urged all Americans to "cast aside, for this night at least, the cares and dangers which beset us."

"Let the children have their night of fun and laughter, let the gifts of Father Christmas delight their play, and let us grown-ups share to the full in their unstinted pleasures." Churchill said, "Before we turn again to the stern tasks and the formidable years that lie before us - resolved that by our sacrifice and daring these same children shall not be robbed of their inheritance or denied their right to live in a free and decent world."

Today as Americans we are all joined together in pursuit of this ultimate goal: We seek a free and decent world - not just for ourselves, but for all generations. Let us renew our commitment to this noble end as we gather together in the joy of fellowship and celebration.

May God bless you and all your loved ones in this holiday season.

★ **VOTE** ★
★ FOR ★
KAREN BEARDEN
for
YOAKUM COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR
Your Support Will Be Appreciated.

EARLY VOTING FEBRUARY 23rd - MARCH 5th
ELECTION DAY MARCH 9th

Political Ad Paid For By Karen Bearden, Plains, Texas

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Think Texas
by Agriculture Commissioner **SUSAN COMBS**

The New Year brings new resolutions, and many well-intentioned folks make promises to live healthier lifestyles, whether it's by signing up for a new gym membership or cutting back on fried foods. These promises don't have to be just for adults; parents may want to use the New Year's resolutions as a time to teach their children about healthy eating and set examples that will last a lifetime. Kids love to snack, and when it comes to food they're all about "grab and go." Fresh produce that is cut, peeled and ready to eat make for an excellent after-school snack and can easily be tossed into brown bag lunches.

Orange wedges and apple slices are a familiar snack, but parents should try to incorporate a variety of produce into their diets. Try red grapefruit wedges, baby carrots, fresh strawberries, raw turnip slices, bell pepper strips and broccoli florets. Paired with a yogurt sauce or low-fat ranch dip, fruits and vegetables are even more appealing.

Another way to turn kids on to fresh produce is to get them involved in their own food preparation, allow them to make decisions about what the family picks from the produce aisle and give them a say in what ultimately goes into their lunch boxes. This is a confidence-booster and will teach children healthy habits that they will carry with them over the course of the new year - and over the course of their life.

Think Texas
by Agriculture Commissioner **SUSAN COMBS**

Most Texans agree the Lone Star State is one of the most breathtakingly scenic, culturally diverse and historically captivating places in the nation.

So it comes as no surprise that the state is growing, with the population expected to almost double from 2000 to 2050. But with added people comes added strain on our water. Statewide water demands are on the rise, and the estimated cost of meeting future water needs through 2050 is \$18 billion.

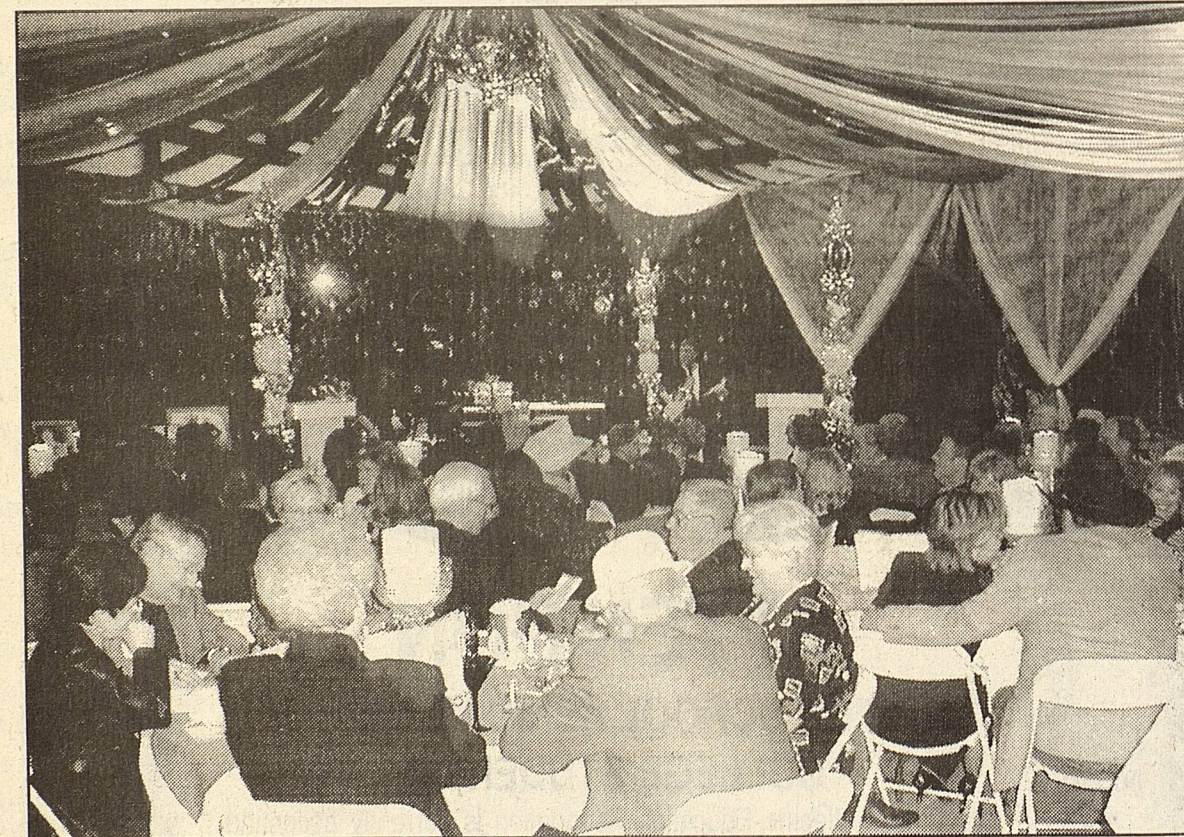
Unfortunately, development and drought aren't the only factors. Mexico continues to fail to comply with the 1944 U.S.-Mexico Water Treaty, which is causing even further strain on our water supply. Since 2000, the Texas Department of Agriculture has spoken loud and clear on this. In November, I addressed Mexican President Vicente Fox in Austin at a policy meeting about Mexico's 1.3 million-acre-foot water debt to the United States.

Unfortunately, Fox did not provide any reassurances that Mexico would make good on its water debt even though northern Mexico had experienced torrential rains a month earlier. Instead, Fox said he would have to gather more information on the water needs of northern Mexico.

Since 1992, Mexico has created a \$7 billion economic loss in the Rio Grande Valley due to noncompliance of the water treaty.

We at TDA will continue to speak out on the issue and work to hammer out solutions for Texas farmers and ranchers. Working together, we'll make sure Texas remains one of the top states in the nation.

More scenes from a Gala Evening... the first **Denim & Diamonds**



NOTICE OF SPECIAL ELECTION (AVISO DE ELECCION ESPECIAL)

To the registered voters of the County of Yoakum, Texas
(A los votantes registrados del Condado de Yoakum, Texas.)

Notice is hereby given that the polling places listed below will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., January 20, 2004, for voting in a special election to fill the vacancy in the office of State Senator for District 31

LOCATION(S) OF POLLING PLACES (CONSOLIDATED) FOR THIS ELECTION ONLY (DIRECCIONES DE LAS CASILLAS ELECTORALES)

Precincts #101, #202, #305 and #406
will vote on Election Day at the Tax Office (Branch) at 122 W. 4th Street, Denver City, TX.

Precincts #303 and #404
will vote on Election Day at the Yoakum County Library at 901 Avenue G, Plains, TX.

Early voting by personal appearance will be conducted each weekday at County Clerk's Office, Courthouse, Plains, TX
(La votación adelantada en persona se llevará a cabo de lunes a viernes en:)
Yoakum County Tax Office, Denver City, TX
(location) (sitio)

EARLY VOTING INFORMATION

between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. beginning on Monday, January 5, 2004
(date)
(entre las 8:00 de la mañana y las 5:00 de la tarde empezando el lunes, 5 de Enero de 2004
(fecha)
and ending on Friday, January 16, 2004 (y terminando el viernes, 16 de Enero de 2004
(date) (fecha)

Applications for ballot by mail shall be mailed to:
(Las solicitudes para boletas que se votaran adelantado por correo deberan enviarse a:)

Deborah J. Rushing
(Name of Early Voting Clerk)
(Nombre del Secretario de la Votacion Adelantada)

P.O. Box 309
(Address) (Direccion)

Plains 79355
(City) (Ciudad) (Zip Code) (Código Postal)

Applications for ballots by mail must be received no later than the close of business on:
(Las solicitudes para boletas que se votaran adelantado por correo deberan recibirse para el fin de las horas de negocio el:)

January 13, 2004 / 13 de Enero de 2004
(date) (fecha)

Issued this the 31 day of December, 2003.
(Emitida este día 31 de Diciembre, 2003.)

Yoakum County Plains Clinic Amir Memon, MD and Jo Lena Wall, PA - C

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Cotton king

Texas leads the U.S. in cotton production, growing about 25 percent of the nation's cotton. Cotton is grown on more than 5 million acres in virtually all regions of the state. In 2002, about 44 percent of the Texas crop, worth \$425.7 million, was exported out of the U.S. from Texas.



SOURCE: Texas Agricultural Statistics Service, Texas Agricultural Statistics 2002.

Megawatts in the Wind

Twenty years ago it was an oddity to spot a field of sleek windmills on a flat stretch of West Texas plain. Today, the 'wind farms' of electricity generating turbines are as common as cactus.

Fossil fuels and nuclear power are still the mainstays of the Lone Star State, as much as 98 percent of Texas' electricity supply comes from those sources. But the availability and pollution free performance of wind in Texas has made it the most in demand form of renewable energy across the state, according to the Texas Comptroller's State Energy Conservation Office (SECO). Despite high demand for wind power, the existing transmission infrastructure can't handle the amount of power wind generates on any given day. The Texas Public Utility Commission (PUC) and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) say they are working to bring delivery in line with production.

Each year, Texas produces more wind energy than any state except California, according to the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA). "Texas is currently second behind in December of 1981," said Tom Gray, AWEA's director of communications. "California has about 1,832 mega-

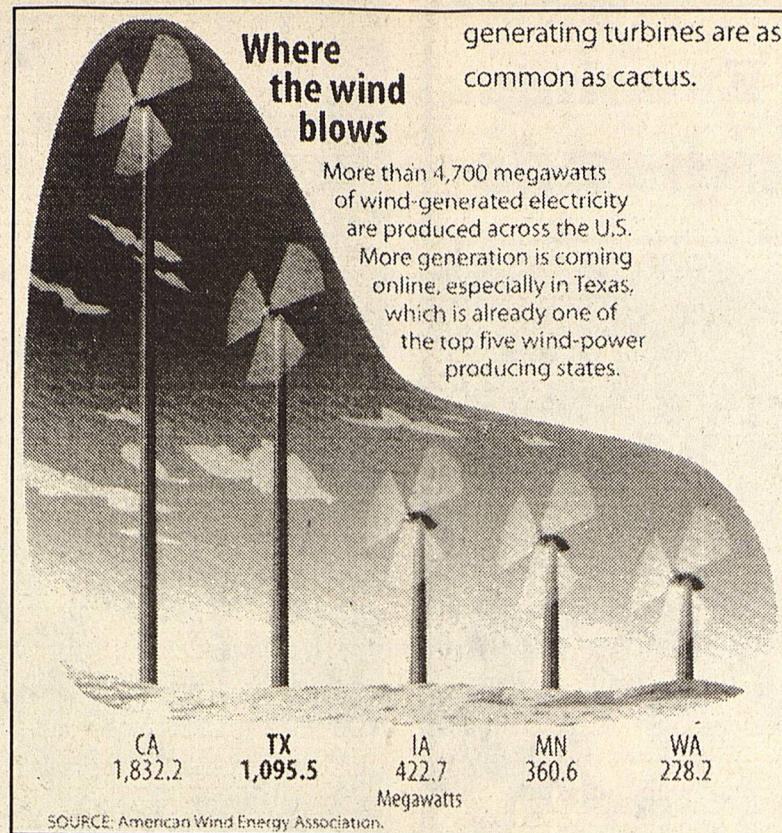
watts (MW), Texas about 1,096 MW, but both are expected to climb a little at the end of this year."

A megawatt, or one million watts, can provide electricity for about 300 homes over the course of a year.

AWEA, a trade association representing companies with interests in wind power ranging from turbine manufacturers to insurance companies, expects two new wind energy projects to come online in Texas by the end of 2003: the 160 MW Brazos Wind Ranch south of Lubbock; and the 37.5 MW Sweetwater wind project. The addition of nearly 200 MW will bump the state's production by 20 percent, with plans for even more wattage.

"About 2 percent of Austin's requirement in electricity is coming from wind, with 86 megawatts of wind under contract right now," said Mark Kapner of Austin Energy. "We also have a third wind contract with Cielo (Wind Power), which yet to be built, and we're going to city council on October 2 to approve a fourth contract. Cielo will add 40 megawatts, and the fourth is to be 93. Those additional megawatts will make our energy total a little more than 4 percent from wind."

Kapner said renewable energy



like wind power has become important to consumers because it is cleaner to produce than traditional, coal-fired electricity and, perhaps surprisingly, customers will pay extra for it.

"The customer is helping by causing the electrical provider to burn less (coal) to produce electricity," he said. "Why do people do it? They want to see us burn less and not put pollutants into the air or the environment and are willing to pay more up front to do it."

Austin Energy purchases a little less than 10 percent of the state's wind power output, Kapner said.

Texas has the available wind power and is working to harvest it. More new wind energy generation, 951 MW, was installed in Texas in 2001 than in any state in U.S. history, according to AWEA. The Texas Panhandle, South Plains region and Davis Mountains area offer the best wind in the state, with consistent wind speeds of at least 15 miles per hour at 50 feet above the ground, a common height for wind turbines, according to SECO.

Kapner said the wind is in the west but the need is further east. "The market's not West Texas, it's North and Central Texas," he said. "Can the energy get to the market? That is the ques-

tion."

Robby Abarca of the PUC said the state's existing transmission lines are unable to accommodate the power generated by the turbines in West Texas.

"If all the turbines are running, it can create an overload," Abarca said.

To protect the transmission lines, ERCOT can instruct the owners of the turbines to cease running then to guard against overloading the lines and to prevent large power outages, he said.

ERCOT's Ken Donohoo said each day ERCOT determines how much space is available on the state's power grid and works from there.

"We know the (generating) capacity of each wind farm," he said. "We look every day at how much we can handle and then pass the word along as to how much the turbines can generate that day and they have to stay within that number."

Reaping energy from the wind is more complicated than just putting a few spinning blades in the sky. Repairing blown transmission lines is expensive and time consuming, Kapner said. Turbines constantly produce energy that must be used or it will be lost. Production is a delicate balance.

"There's more wind energy production than can move

through the power lines when the wind is strong," he said. "Some turbines have to be curtailed in those times, and the owners of the wind farms suffer when they're offline."

Abarca said the transmission problems can be overcome but adds it will require some time and creative thinking. "Wind generators can be built relatively quickly," he said. "The transmission lines take much longer. Eventually, we'll

catch up but it takes time to evaluate different transmission alternatives. What we do out in West Texas (will) affect the rest of the state in some way."

He said one alternative is building wind farms in areas where there are existing transmission lines to handle the load of the generating facility, but the trick to that is finding lines and a location with wind suitable for electric generation.

List of local candidates for March Primary now complete

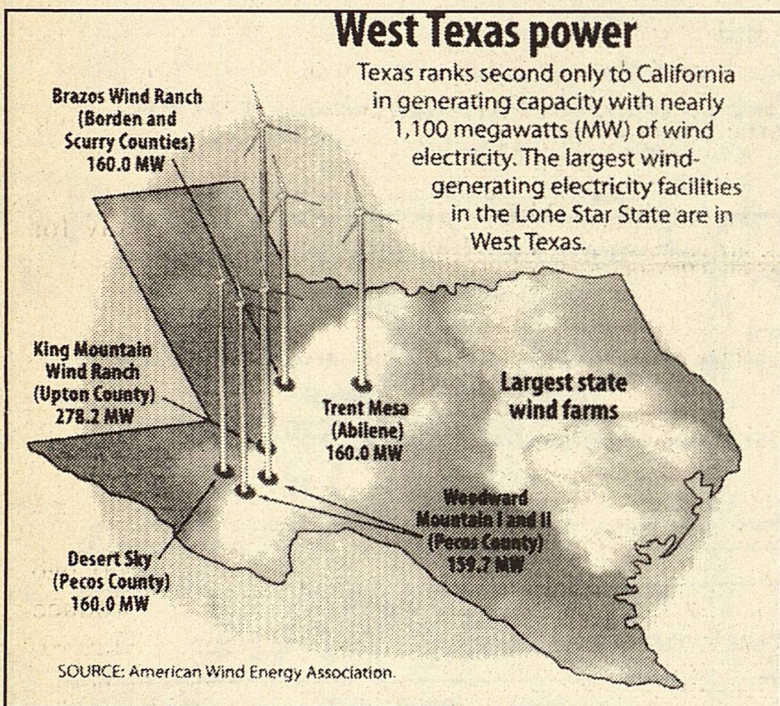
The deadline for filing as a candidate for office in the March Primary Election expired last Friday at 6 PM. The following is a list of County Democrat and Republican candidates who will appear on the Primary ballots:

DEMOCRATS:

County Commissioner, Pct. 3:
Ty Earl Powell
Cody Flores
Rex Swann
County Sheriff;
Rick Dickson, Denver City
County Chairman:
Billy Ray Moore, Denver City
Pct. 101 Chair;
Kathy Smiley, Denver City
Pct. 202 Chair;
Earlene Freeman, Denver City
Pct. 303 Chair;
Edith Tuggle, Plains
Pct. 404 Chair;
Helen Worsham, Plains
Pct. 406 Chair;
Sammy Bruce Greer, Denver City

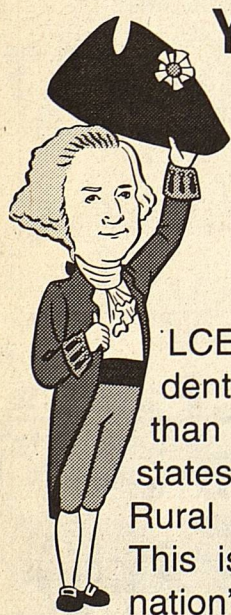
REPUBLICANS:

County Commissioner Pct. 1;
Woody Lindsey, Denver City
County Commissioner, Pct. 3;
Tim Willis
County Sheriff;
Don Corzine, Denver City
County Chairman:
Steve Slentz, Denver City
Pct. 101 Chair;
Dalphine Benson, Denver City
Pct. 202;
Donna Givens, Denver City
Pct. 303 Chair;
Charlotte Palmer, Plains
Pct. 404 Chair;
Martha Palmer, Plains
Pct. 305 Chair;
Flor Quintanilla, Denver City
Pct. 406 Chair;
David Bruton, Denver City
Tax Assessor/Collector;
Karen Bearden, Plains
Jan Parrish, Plains
Elvida Winkler, Denver City



Hey High School Students!

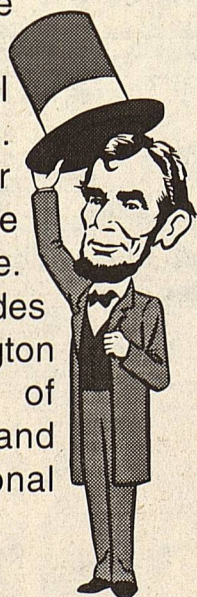
Where will you be this summer?
You could be in Washington, D.C.,
Courtesy of
Lea County
Electric Cooperative, Inc.!



LCEC will be sending two local high school students on an all-expense-paid trip to join more than 1,400 high school students from 37 states in Washington, D.C. for the National Rural Electric Youth Tour, June 10-18, 2004. This is the chance of a lifetime to tour our nation's capital, visit personally with legislative leaders, and see where history has been made. The Government-in-Action Youth Tour includes visits to the Smithsonian Institution, Arlington National Cemetery, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Mount Vernon, all the National Monuments and more!

For more information contact Allan Brown at the Cooperative's Lovington office at 396-3631 or (800) 510-5232.

You can now apply on line at www.leacountyelectric.coop! Applications are also available at your high school or any LCEC office. Applications due by February 13, 2004.



ATTENTION

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS AND COLLEGE STUDENTS!

Lea County Electric Education Foundation is currently accepting applications for scholarships to be awarded for the Fall 2004 semester. The Scholarships are renewable up to 8 consecutive semesters, for a total of \$4,000.00!

Eligibility criteria are as follows:

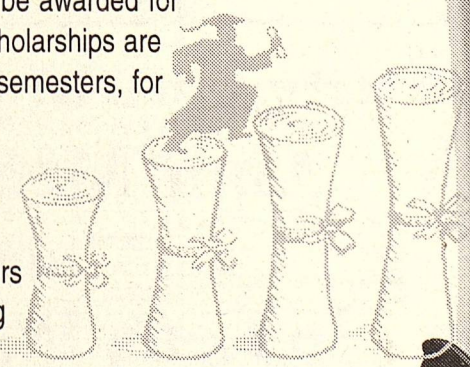
Available only to active members (and immediate family) receiving service from LCEC.

Applicant must maintain a 2.50 GPA on a 4.00 scale and be considered a full-time student.

Applicant must submit two letters of reference (see application for important details) and demonstrate a coherent degree plan.

Applications must be received no later than February 13, 2004.

For more information contact Allan Brown at the Cooperative's Lovington office at 396-3631 or (800) 510-5232. You can now apply on line at www.leacountyelectric.coop! Applications are also available at your high school or any LCEC office.



Lifelines & Styles

Senior Citizens Corner

Visitors at the Center this past week on Wednesday to share our Christmas lunch included Kenny and Wanda Smith, and Sandra Ford who is a daughter of Zelma Boone. Some of the family members joining Layne and Wanda Black on that day were Rojean and Eugene Therwanger and Sandra Holt. Joyce Hicks, Pam Young, and Ruby Isenberg came to share our Christmas luncheon. Wanda Moose, who hasn't been here for awhile, also came on that day. On another day Robert, Donita, and Ryan Noah joined us for lunch. Ione Johnson's sister and husband, Howard and Teddi Carlson, from Minnesota, joined her for lunch one day and Ben Coston hosted lunch one day for his son and grandson, Bailey and Asa Coston. There were also nine friends from Lovington who came to play in the pool tournament and have lunch with us. Welcome to each of these people.

Thursday was our monthly pot luck evening. Twenty people enjoyed an evening of listening to the Chaparrals play their music. Genevieve Gordy won the ladies gift that evening while Coy Black carried home the one for the men.

We cannot say often enough how much we appreciate our staff. Although they were unaware of it, all of us enjoyed the quiet Christmas music they provided from their kitchen stereo as they worked to serve our luncheon. Each of them go out of their way to recognize and provide for the needs of those who are in the dining room. Again we say "Thank You" to each of them. The Center was closed on Thursday and Friday this week to give them time to spend with their families at this holiday season.

For those who like solving riddles, here's one that came via telephone to me this week. I managed to have the one word answer. How about you? "What's greater than God - more evil than the devil - poor people have it - rich people

don't need it - and if you eat it, you die?"

We are sorry to lose Carl Green and Therman Meyer from our Center family. Our sympathy goes to the families of these men during this time.

June Hanneman and Ben Coston were the lucky winners of the domino tournament this week. Next week on Tuesday we will be playing Bingo after lunch. Come join us.

It is good to see Carl and Ireta Davis are back in this part of the country and coming to the Center whenever they can. They plan to be here until mid February, so we look forward to their good company, especially on pool nights.

Are you aware of the mythology of mistletoe? Besides bringing the possibility of a kiss if you wait under it, others believe it might cure cancer. Although neither of these theories are a proven fact, I hope you didn't miss an opportunity to test it during this holiday season.

It's that time of the year again when we elect people to serve on our Board of Directors to replace those whose turn it is to retire. We say a special thanks to Faye Black, Bob Thurston, and Bruce Greer for their willingness to serve these past six years. New ones who have come on board for the next three years include Opal Roberts, Nancy Chamberlain, Ken White, Gail Ribble, Ty Powell, and Ben Coston. At the end of three years they will be given the opportunity to continue in their position for an additional three years. They will be serving with current board members, Pat Altman, June Hanneman, Charlie Gillis, Jack Sessions, Walter Gail, and Royce Hemmeline. Royce will continue to serve as Board Chairman and June as Board Secretary. Pat Altman will serve as Vice Chairman this year.

Thought for today: "War does not determine who is right. War determines who is left." a Chinese proverb

You have to except whatever comes and the only important thing is that you meet it with the best you have to give.
Eleanor Roosevelt

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Plains, Texas

Sunday School
9:30 A.M.
Morning Worship
10:45 A.M.
Evening Program
6:00 P.M.

'Connection' Annual Meeting Coming Up

The Annual Meeting to elect Directors of Yoakum County Connection will be held Thursday, January 15, at the Connection Building in Denver City at 7:00 pm. Plains High School Band ensembles will entertain, under the direction of Georgeanne Weisgerber. Barbara Wright is in charge of refreshments and Lisa Brown and Linda Powell are collecting door prizes. Eight directors, including current directors Ed Hansen and Linda Harris, will be elected. Retiring directors include Debbie Rushing Spears, Dennis Harrison, Pam Burgess, Connie Webb, and Tim Addison. Rushing and Harrison have both served their 6 years limit. LeAnn Romines, Elsa Moya and Hansen, as the nominating committee, are looking for willing citizens to serve.

The Connection sponsored the Denver City High School Art Show in May under the direction of Romines. Janie Loya Ramos organized and supervised our wonderful Summer Youth Arts Program in the month of June in both Denver



What about? I'll never forget Jamie. He was a 15 year old boy who was on probation, in lots of trouble and came to live with Beth and I in Dallas.

We soon found out that he was very active in the Bloods, a violent gang in Lufkin, Texas. He had done all kinds of things that some of us have seen on TV.

Jamie was a good looking kid. Tall, blond headed and a great leader. He could lead the kids any place he needed or wanted them to go.

One day, he came to me and said, Mr. J, do you think someone can go to Heaven if they have killed someone? Boy, did that open up communication! Some on the Bible, and some about life in general and what he was talking about.

You see, at 12 he had been given a pile of pornography books, pot, and lots of beer for his birthday. His friends were over and this was his parents' birthday gift to him because they had a party to go to. Some family life, huh?

In the course of several months, he shared about one of his 'homeys' being shot and killed. He was to retaliate by shooting a relative of someone in another gang. So, he went to the door

of a home, ask if this was _____'s house. When the man answered yes, Jamie shot him.

Jamie ran so fast, he never knew for sure if the man was hit and injured or killed. He never looked back. Of course, he accepted Christ as his savior, was baptized and later went back home. I kept asking why he would stay in the gang and he would always reply, "Mr. J, I have to, they are my only family!" His parents really weren't around unless they needed their drugs sold...and he could do that well. (Thus the reason for probation?)

The other day the phone rang and this voice said, "Is this Mr. J from the Dallas area?" I stuttered, but said "yes." It was Jamie and he had tracked us down. He was calling to say thanks for believing in him. He is now grown, has a wife and kids and works in the Wichita Falls area. He seems to be doing well and is out of the gangs. He has his own web site to publish his poetry.

You just never know whom your touching and who is watching you. Until Next Time!

Mark A. Jones
www.majonesfuneraldirectors.com
email comments to:
markajones@door.net.

Senior Citizens Corner

With all of the Christmas decorations safely back in their boxes in the attic or storeroom; the candy and nuts diminishing from sight; regular music instead of carols playing on the stereo; and a whole new set of pounds safely packed in place; it's time to move on into the new year. A statement in one of our Christmas letters from a dear friend of many years said, "As the world scene grows darker, the heavenly scene grows brighter." May 2004 be good to you.

Red Berry gifted the Center with a box of many paint brushes for our painters in the ceramic room. He stated that some need cleaning and he offered the services of his lovely wife, Jean, if help is needed to put them back in A-1 shape. Thanks Red.

At the time of this writing, Walter Holland remains in the Lubbock hospital. News from Ann indicates that she hopes to have him home within a few days.

Thursday was vacation time again at the Center while everyone recuperated from ringing in the New Year.

Fifteen would be winners gathered on Tuesday after lunch to try their luck at Bingo. A good time was had by all. Thanks to Bruce Greer for being our 'caller' this week.

The Center looked a bit plain on Tuesday after Pat Altman's helpers gathered all of the Christmas decorations on a table ready to be sorted and packed away for another year. When I left at 1:30 pm., Pat was still busily working to put everything back in order. We all appreciate Pat's talent in this area and her willingness to be dependable when each holiday rolls around.

While wrapping Christmas balls in tissue paper in preparation for storing, Pat shared that her family had enjoyed a very special event during the

Christmas season. She described a five generation reunion with her mother, Mary Lou Hamilton, who is ninety-three now and resides at the Memorial Health Care Center in Seminole. Pat and her daughter, Jena, came from Plains while Jena's daughter, Amber, came from Denver, Colorado, with her three month old daughter, Ally, to celebrate. A photographer was on hand to see that the festive time will become a permanent memory for all of them. Pat's mother was a member of our Center family until she moved to Seminole.

We were all delighted to have Leo Daniel join our Monday night pool and game time. He came with his son and reported that his wife is doing well at this time. It's good to have him back.

It's also great to see Paul Sweitzer back at lunchtime. They have moved their RV back to Denver City and he will continue his treatment from here. Wanda joined the line dance exercise group again this week. We have missed these folk as an active part of our Center family and pray for Paul's complete recovery.

It's all in how you look at it. We're told about this car dealer who wants to buy a cow from a farmer. The farmer had been 'taken' so many times by the car dealer that he priced his cow like this: Basic cow-\$400.00; four wheel drive-\$780.00; two tone extra-\$90.00; produce storage compartment-\$120.00; 4 spigot assembly; dual horns-\$30.00; automatic fly swatter-\$70.00. The total price of the cow was \$1,970.00. I've not heard if he made that sale or not.

Thought for today: "The real art of conversation is not to say the right thing at the right time, but also to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment."

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From The Hack

To refer to the first annual Denim and Diamonds Ball as successful is akin to referring to the Grand Canyon as a ditch. I have been accused numerous times of being a Doubting Thomas type, and I admit I thought the Yoakum County Hospital Foundation whingding New Year's Eve would attract a few folks, but secretly wondered if it would be a one time venture. This type thinking again exposes my abundant ignorance. I attended the Ball in a rather novel way - I escorted a daughter. When she first strongly suggested this arrangement I was a bit reluctant, but as New Year Eve drew closer, I realized just about anything would be much better than sitting alone watching something stupid on the tube. And besides, she had volunteered to be my designated driver!

The Ball was held in the large barn at the K & T Ranch just out of Denver City. If you're thinking barn, like where there are stalls for livestock and livestock stuff is half a foot deep on the floor you'd be wrong. The decorating was impressive, and the smaller side of the divided barn where the food was displayed on table after table was REALLY impressive.

Debbie and I found a table we shared with friends, then got in the food line. We started on the side containing salad stuff and what she called finger food, and then moved to the other side where the REAL GRUB was, a bewildering array of terrific looking and smelling delights.

We had just started down the line when the lights went out! Pitch darkness. Someone yelled it might be a few minutes before the problem was fixed, so I decided to grope my way down the line. I very carefully eased along, my hand wrapped in my napkin, feeling the stuff in all the serving pans. I believe I could learn Braille fairly easily.... I filled my plate over the brim, and when I

neared the end of the line and the lights came on again, I discovered I had made some excellent selections with my feely fingers. I only made one mistake - in the darkness, I groped around on something strange, and thought, 'Boy, they're really splurging for this thing... this feels like a little miniature cow head, complete with horns, stuffed with something'. I was wrong - it was merely a stuffed crab.

There were some truly wondrous items available in both the silent and live auction. I was intrigued by something called the Royal Treatment, courtesy of the hospital. I quickly became un-intrigued when I learned the Royal Treatment included all the free blood work one could stand, a free night in a luxurious hospital room, and I'm sure one of those totally hideous gowns was part of the deal..... you know, the ones making it totally impossible to hide your bohunkus. A free mamogram was included, which did nothing for me, nor did the 'Royal Flush' - I am quite certain I know what type of Royal Throne you would be perched upon as you were 'Royally Flushed'!

It really was a very nice evening.

Courtesy the internet and a helpful reader:

The next time you hear a politician use the word 'billion' casually, think whether or not you want that politician spending your tax money. A billion is a difficult number to comprehend, but one ad agency did a good job of putting it into perspective in a release:

A billion seconds ago it was 1959.

A billion minutes ago Jesus was alive.

A billion hours ago our ancestors were living in the Stone Age.

A billion dollars ago was only 8 hours and 20 minutes at the rate Washington spends it.

On a different subject: The Democrats are complaining how long the Iraq war is taking, but it took far less time to take Iraq than Janet Reno took to take the Branch Davidian complex. That was a 51 day operation.

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It took less time to find Saddam's sons than it took Hillary Clinton to find the Rose Law Firm billing records.

It took less time for the 3rd Infantry Division and the Marines to destroy the Medina Republican Guard than it took Ted Kennedy to call the police after his car sunk at Chappaquiddick.

It took less time to take Iraq than it took to count the votes in Florida.

Notice To All Persons Having Claims Against The Estate of Lena Almeda Hickam, Deceased

Notice is now given that Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Lena Almeda Hickam were issued on December 29, 2003, in cause No. 1445, pending in the County Court of Yoakum County, Texas, to: Otha E. Hamm.

The residence of such Executor and where claims may be presented is as follows:

Otha E. Hamm
1703 E. Tate
Brownfield, Texas 79316

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them within four (4) months after the date of the receipt of this notice and in the manner prescribed by law or the claim will be barred if not barred by the general statutes of limitation.

Dated: December 29, 2003

Warren New
Warren New, Attorney for the Estate
PO Box 670, Denver City, Texas, 79323
Phone: 806-592-2129
Fax: 806-592-7733

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Texas Yes!

Texas Department of Agriculture
The Heart of Downtown Beats Again

By Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs

Just 22 miles from the geographical center of Texas, you can hear the old Santa Fe train whistle blow in the community of Brownwood and feel the excitement coursing down the line as the heart of the city's downtown beats again. Once home to the largest military training center in Texas at Camp Bowie, Brownwood has survived the booms and busts of the cotton, oil and military industries. Today, the community is laying new tracks for the future, earning a place as one of the five Texas Yes! Hardworking Rural Community Shining Stars.

During a yearlong planning process, volunteers and city leaders in Brownwood produced a living downtown master plan that resulted in renovations to more than 30 buildings. Streetscape construction is now underway as well.

The revitalization of downtown is key to growing business and tourism. With the Santa Fe Depot restored and a transportation museum on the drawing board

(complete with a million dollar model train collection donated by a local family), Brownwood's heritage is the lifeblood for its future.

The community's hotel and motel tax revenues have increased almost 12 percent in the last two years, and 350 jobs have been retained or created. Brownwood's year-round "Feels Like Home" activities also include a bluegrass festival, rodeo, quilting bee and fishing tournaments.

Texas Yes! salutes the hardworking town of Brownwood for its community spirit and leadership. Texas Yes! is our brand new initiative at the Texas Department of Agriculture for rural communities, businesses and organizations to promote rural Texas through business development, job growth and tourism. For more information on Texas Yes! call (866) 4TEX-YES or visit www.TexasYes.org.

Yoakum County Connection

P.O. Box 117
Plains, Texas 79355

December 12, 2003

Thanks for your continued support of the ARTS in Yoakum County with your donations of time and money to Yoakum County Connection. We (YOU) sponsored the Denver City High School Art Show in May under the direction of LeAnn Romines. Janie Loya Ramos organized and supervised our wonderful Summer Youth Arts Program in the month of June in both Denver City and Plains. Mid-America Arts Alliance helped fund 568 participants enrolled in the 21 different FREE classes. Prize money was donated to the Denver City Chamber of Commerce for their July 4th celebration.

The eighth Annual Watermelon Round-Up under Jeannette Head's capable leadership was held August 30 on the Plains Courthouse Square. Music, booths, cars, roping and games kept the gigantic crowd busy. On October 15 and 16, in conjunction with the public schools and Texas Commission on the Arts, Harm's Marionettes Production entertained children in Denver City and Plains.

Our Annual Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 15, 2004 at 7:00 PM at the Connection Building in Denver City. Entertainment, refreshments and door prizes will be provided. Board members will be elected and discussion on goals for our group will take place. Your input and energy are desired and needed. Please make plans to attend and keep our youngsters (and oldsters) participating in the arts. To paraphrase JFK, "Art can nourish the roots of our culture." Yoakum County roots grow strong with your willingness to give, and give again. Our gratitude overflows.

L.J. Sanders
L.J. Sanders
Honorary Director

Please complete the form below and return it with membership dues to: Yoakum County Connection P.O. Box 117, Plains, TX 79355

2004 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Class 1 Annual Dues \$25.00	Individual or Non-Business Family
Class 2 Annual Dues \$50.00	Business, Farm, Ranch with LESS than 5 full-time employees
Class 3 Annual Dues \$100.00	Club, Organization, Business, Farm, Ranch with MORE than 5 full-time employees

Individual, Group, Business Name _____
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Voting Representative _____
Suggestions for 2004 activities or changes from 2003 _____

Above response can also be made in person at the January 15, 2004 Annual Meeting 7:00 PM at Connection Building at Denver City, Texas

Texas at a Glance

The Old College Try

The number of first-time students applying to four-year public universities in Texas increased by more than 16,000 students from 1998 to 2001, according to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Universities have kept up with the demand, admitting about the same percentage of students over that span.

In the 2001 summer and fall semesters, Angelo State University in San Angelo was the toughest ticket for college admissions. Fewer than half of the first-time, undergraduate students who applied were admitted to the school.

The state's largest public universities were also bursting at the seams with applicants. Texas A&M University accepted 69.1 percent of applicants, while Texas Tech University admitted 73.6 percent and the University of Texas at Austin admitted 76.8 percent. Statewide, 94,058 students applied, and 83,595 were accepted.

College or university	Number of applicants	Number of students accepted	Percentage of applicants accepted
Angelo State University	3,230	1,554	48.0%
Univ. of Houston-Downtown	1,901	961	50.6%
Texas Woman's Univ.	1,721	915	53.2%
Texas A&M Univ.	16,684	11,511	69.1%
Texas Tech Univ.	12,323	9,068	73.6%
Texas State Univ.	7,232	5,500	76.1%
Univ. of Texas at Austin	16,113	12,370	76.8%
Univ. of North Texas	7,615	6,024	79.1%
Univ. of Houston	8,001	6,425	80.3%
Texas A&M International Univ.	1,149	932	81.1%

Year	Statewide acceptances	Statewide applicants
1998	68,943	77,901
1999	70,807	80,102
2000	78,604	88,170
2001	83,595	94,058

SOURCE: Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.