

PAGE ONE

A QUICK READ OF THE NEWS

Best liar tells clean story

Gordon Zwicky's outrageous tale about his trip to Florida earned him top honors in this year's Burlington (Wis.) Liars Club contest.

Zwicky, 72, beat out 299 other entries from 31 states and Canada. He claimed he and his wife, Dorothy, won the lottery and decided to drive to Florida.

Their neighbor told them they would be fine as long as they paid attention to the road signs.

According to the tale, "Thirty miles from home they saw a road sign stating 'Clean Restrooms Ahead.' Two months later, they arrived in Florida."

By that time, they had cleaned 450 restrooms using 267 rolls of paper towels, three cases of bowl cleaner and 86 bottles of Windex.

They were so tired, they immediately left for home.

A family blow-out

Expect everybody to be blowing out candles next year when the Greco family has its birthday party.

Suzanne and Michael Greco share the same birthday, Dec. 23. They celebrated this year by welcoming their first child, 8-pound, 8-ounce Maxwell Allen Greco.

"We're wondering what the odds are of having the whole family born on the same day," said Vicki Greco, Michael's mother. "It's just amazing."

Drat those blue suede shoes

A Chicago bank robber was done in by his blue suede shoes.

A teller at the North Community Bank thought something looked familiar about the man who held her up: His shoes were the same as those belonging to a recent employee of the bank.

The teller mentioned this to authorities. Marque Love, 19, was arrested and confessed to one count of bank robbery.



Drawing date: Saturday, Jan. 3
Winning numbers: 2-7-24-30-33-54
Estimated jackpot: \$33 million
Winners: 0
Next drawing: Wednesday, Jan. 6
Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

On this date in history

Jan. 8 — Edmund J. Davis is elected Texas' first Republican governor (1870).

Jan. 10 — The Lucas gusher comes in at Spindletop, setting of the Texas oil boom (1901).

Jan. 11 — The Confederate ship *Alabama* sinks the *USS Hatteras* off the coast of Galveston during the Civil War (1863).

LOCAL WEATHER

As of Friday, the forecast was calling for seasonable temperatures all this week, along with partly cloudy conditions. Sunday and Tuesday should be the coolest mornings, with the mercury dipping to about 22. Monday and Wednesday should drop only to near 30 degrees. Daytime high temperatures should be in the 50s most days to about 60 on Monday. No moisture was predicted during the week.

Editor Ronn Smith can be reached at 272-4536 or ctyankee@fivearea.com

Missed your paper? Call carrier Melissa Flores at 272-6719 or the Journal during business hours, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

County may be near to final approval on jail

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Bailey County's proposal to build a regional jail just south of Muleshoe may not be far from becoming reality, members of the project's steering committee said Friday.

County Clerk Sherri Harrison said she still hopes the groundbreaking can be held this month; City Manager Rick Hanna said February might be more likely.

The project's engineers have done their site

survey and the architects have visited Muleshoe and drawn up the design.

Corplan is putting together the bond package to finance the project, Hanna said, and then the entire plan must go to the Texas Attorney General's Office for final approval of the financing.

The city's purchase option on the 20-acre site, at Texas 214 and Rabbit Road No. 1, expires Jan. 30.

Hanna said the plans are in place to extend all the utilities onto the site.

Muleshoe City Council members discussed annexation of the land at their Dec. 29 meeting. Hanna said the annexation was on the council agenda early in order to determine if any council member had any objection to the move.

The annexation would be necessary because state law requires that county jails be inside the city limits of the county seat, he added.

Football team to be presented semi-finalist medals Tuesday

Members of the 2000 Muleshoe Mules football team are scheduled to be presented with their semi-finalist medals during a ceremony at 11 a.m. Tuesday in the high school auditorium, head coach David Wood said Friday.

The team was the first from Muleshoe to advance so far in the playoffs, and the first to compile a 14-1 season record.

Cotton still king in Texas — but what's the alternative?

SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Texas farmers were hammered by drought last year and are looking ahead to the 2001 planting season with a wary eye.

Even if they want to switch out of cotton, however, there's the quandary of finding an alternative.

For farmers in West Texas, one of the top cotton-producing regions, few crops can withstand the harsh environment. High natural gas prices are creating another stumbling block this year for the state's producers.

Drought damage to the 2000 Texas cotton crop was estimated at \$485 million, more than that registered for wheat, hay and forage, additional water and feed costs, corn and

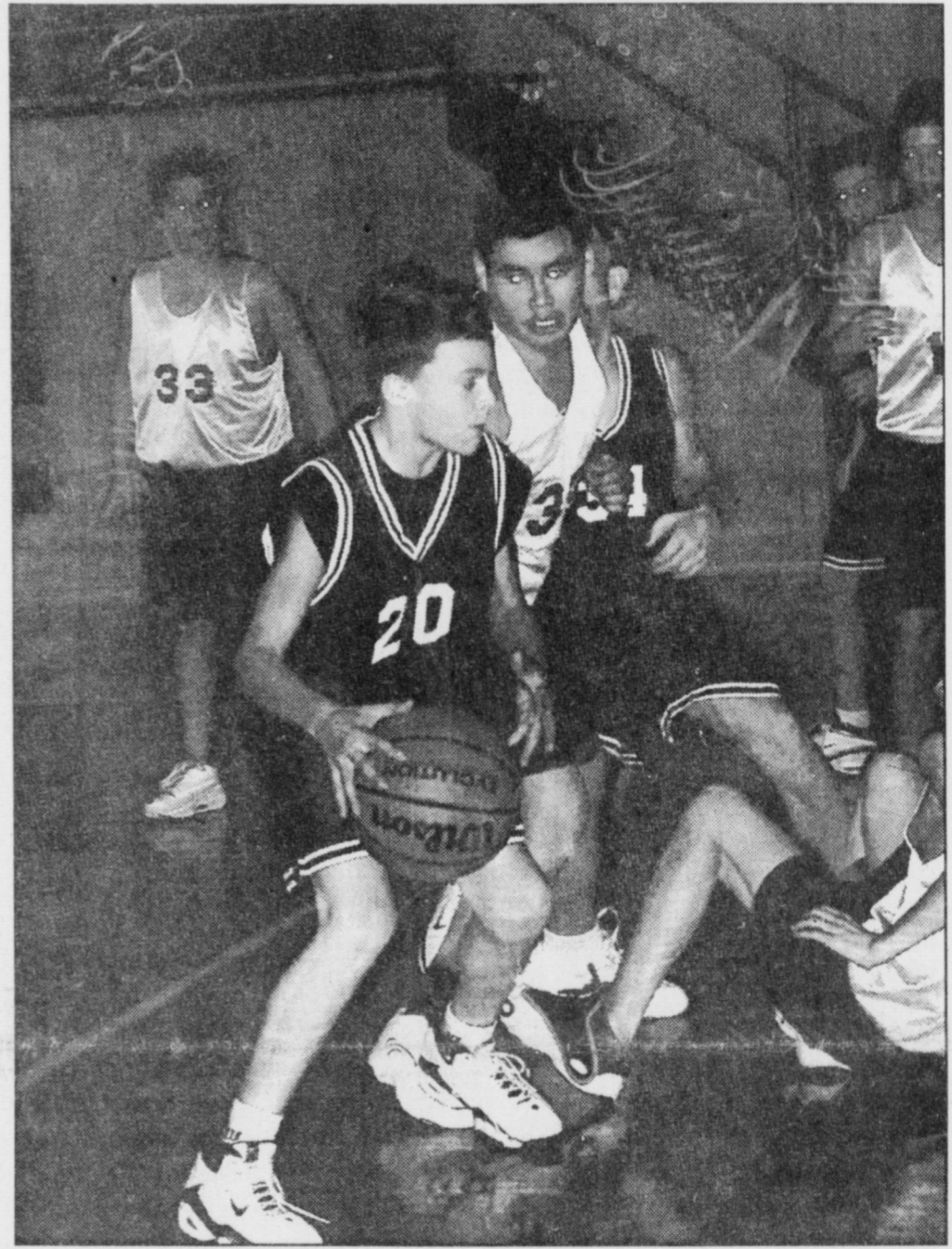
grain sorghum put together.

The state's 2000 upland cotton crop — 4.1 million 480-pound bales — was down 19 percent from 1999 on yields that were 14 percent lower.

Still, Randy Boman, a cotton agronomist with Texas A&M University at Lubbock, said he was willing to add 50,000 acres to cotton planting estimates for the northern Panhandle.

Farmers there have been eagerly checking into a cheaper alternative to corn as they look for a crop that requires less water, he added.

Irrigation costs are expected to soar as natural gas prices climb, raising the price of electricity and diesel as well — all see COTTON on page 2



Journal photo: Beatrice Morin

Eighth-graders win at Lazbuddie

Tyler Wood (No. 20) handles the ball against Whitharral in the eighth-grade Mules opening game of the Lazbuddie Tournament on Thursday night. Muleshoe lost 39-35.

3 Mules make Lubbock all-class team

JOURNAL STAFF REPORT

Three Mules — two on offense and one on defense — were named last week to the *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal* super team from all classes of schools.

The sole representative from the Mules' much-praised defense was linebacker Darrell Lewis, who also was the defensive most valuable player for District 2-3A. He is a 6-0, 200-pound senior.

Offensively, Muleshoe's two representatives on the super team were Danny Ramirez, the 5-8, 165-pound senior running back, and Stephen Woodard, a

6-2, 250-pound lineman.

Ramirez earlier was voted the most valuable offensive player in District 2-3A after setting school scoring and rushing records.

Other area players on the Lubbock super team were Springlake-Earth's big lineman Ben Angely (6-5, 250, senior) and Hart back Keith Finch (6-0, 205, senior), both on defense.

Angely was a Class A all-state selection for the Wolverines.

Muleshoe district rival Lubbock Cooper had two players selected, wide receiver Russell

Madison, a 5-11, 174-pound senior, on offense, and back Brad Wuensche, a 5-11, 158-pound senior, on offense.

The *Avalanche-Journal* selection as coach of the year from all classes was James Morton of Lubbock Monterey, who led the Plainsmen to their best record since 1976 at 11-2, and their first playoff victories of any kind since 1979.

This was Morton's third season at Monterey.

For players to be eligible for the super team, they had to have been previously named to one of the paper's All-South Plains teams, selected by class.



Journal photo: Beatrice Morin

Another milestone

Muleshoe High School athletic director David Wood congratulates Darrell Lewis on becoming the first Mule ever named to the all-tournament team in the huge Caprock Holiday Tournament at Lubbock.

U.S. farmers may face drought in federal funding now

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is the opinion of Dennis Avery, director of global food issues for the Hudson Institute in Indianapolis, who clearly feels that the U.S. farm crisis will get much worse before it gets better.)

For the new year, farmers looking to Washington will see a new president, George W. Bush, along with the first female secretary of agriculture, Ann Veneman — and a huge, bipartisan farm problem.

If farmers are expecting the next Congress to wave its magic wand and create more farm income, they're likely to be disappointed: They probably will get less gov-

ernment cash in the years ahead.

Farmers recently have been getting Freedom to Farm phase-out payments plus emergency assistance. Together, the two put 32 billion Washington dollars into farmers' pockets last year.

That's why in most parts of the U.S., farmland values and cash rents have been rising rapidly. But phase-out payments are dwindling down to nothing, and it's hard to claim that farmers have an "emergency" every year.

When Larry Combest, the House Agriculture committee chairman, goes to the Appropriations Committee with a request for a

longer-term obligation to farmers, he'll probably be told that \$5 billion to \$7 billion a year is the limit.

The optimists think farm payments could be worked up to \$15 billion; nobody thinks they will stay at \$30 million.

The agriculture committees face a rapidly worsening cash shortage, even though both parties will be desperate to protect marginal seats for another close election in 2002.

The economy is far more likely to slow than to stay in high gear, and that will mean fewer tax dollars flowing to Washington. If Bush manages to cut taxes, that could stimulate the economy — but re-

duce the discretionary funds that Congress has to spend on farmers.

The biggest constraint on congressional spending could be the Social Security reform Bush has declared as one of his highest priorities. Even Democrats realize that D-Day for paying off the \$12 trillion owed to baby-boomer retirees is rapidly approaching.

All the recent federal budget "surplus" has been Social Security money, and reform will mean diverting a lot of that cash from the general fund to interest-bearing investments.

see CRISIS on page 3

AROUND MULESHOE

EMT class set for Muleshoe

Bailey County Emergency Medical Services will sponsor an ECA/EMT class starting Jan. 31 at the First Assembly of God. Class times will be 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday. Everyone taking the class must be CPR-certified before starting class. A CPR class is scheduled for 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. Jan. 17-18, also at the church. Anyone interested should contact Christopher Thompson at 272-4930 to be scheduled.

Signup for boys' basketball scheduled

There will be a signup for boys' Muleshoe Youth Basketball from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Jan. 9 at Muleshoe State Bank. The cost is \$35. A second signup and evaluation is scheduled for Jan. 13. Players must be at the evaluation in order to play in the league. Eligibility is open to boys in grades three through 12.

Correction

A story that began on Page 1 of Sunday's Journal should have stated that Kay Swint is affiliated with the Muleshoe Area Medical Center outpatient services clinic, not South Plains Health Provider Clinic of Muleshoe.

Public calendar

Jan. 8 — 10 a.m. Bailey County Commissioners' Court, in the commission room at the courthouse.
Jan. 9 — Noon. Muleshoe School Board, in the board room of the district administration building, 514 W. Avenue G.
Jan. 11 — 7:45 p.m. — Public hearing in Three Way Independent School District for discussion of the district's Academic Excellence Indicator System, just before the school board's regular 8 p.m. meeting.
The deadline for items to appear in Around Muleshoe is 5 p.m. Monday for Thursday's editions and 5 p.m. Thursday for Sunday's editions.

Special-education services available

Anyone who knows of a child needing special education but not receiving it is encouraged to call South Plains Educational Co-op at (806) 894-6858. Signs of need can be developmental delay or ongoing behavioral or medical problems that interfere with education. The co-op provides services for the speech-impaired, visually impaired, hearing impaired, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded as well as health or physical disabilities. Services are available in districts that are co-op members.

High Plains becomes eligible for more federal aid

SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL
 U.S. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman declared several new federal Resource Conservation and Development areas Thursday, including one for the High Plains. The action makes the region available for federal help in planning and implementing projects that increase reduce soil erosion, improve water quality or diversify the local economy, among other things. Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, said, "As someone who has been pushing the USDA to

do this for some time now, today's announcement is clearly good news. The designation of the High Plains as an RC&D has been a long time in coming. Congress increased funding late last year for RC&Ds, so I'm pleased to see the USDA finally follow through and approve the High Plains' status." Rep. Larry Combest, also R-Texas, stated, "I am very pleased that the Texas High Plains has received this important designation. Like most of rural America, the High Plains

has suffered as farm income and farm employment has diminished. This designation will enable the Texas High Plains to receive assistance from the USDA program, which will benefit our entire region." RC&D areas are locally led by councils comprised of volunteers, civic leaders and local elected officials as part of a "volunteer cooperation" effort. Gwen Barnhart, vice chairman of the Texas High Plains RC&D Council, added, "I am very thankful to Representatives Combest and Thornberry

for their unexhausted efforts in getting this project done." The 2001 Agriculture Appropriations Bill includes a \$7 million increase in RC&D funding, which strengthened the likelihood of the High Plains RC&D receiving the designation. The federal designation is important, Combest said, because it allows an RC&D area to become eligible for federal funding. The High Plains RC&D area has been in existence for some time, but without federal funds.

Scooter injuries reported to be on the rise

SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL
 The scooter craze that saw many young children wake up Christmas morning to find a shiny new scooter under the tree has led to an increase in scooter-related injuries, the Texas Chiropractic Association said Thursday. The federal Centers for Disease Control released a report Dec. 14 stating that the injuries related to scooters have increased dramatically since May. One group has estimated that 5 million scooter were sold last year. Most injuries prove to be bruises, strains and sprains, but many fractures also have occurred. Dr. James Welch, president of the Texas group, cautioned parents: "The recent scooter craze has a lot of young chil-

dren riding these things. Used properly, scooters can provide hours of fun and some physical recreation to young kids." He recommended the following as safety tips:
 • As with Rollerblades and skateboards, make sure children use the proper equipment.

This should include helmets, elbow pads and knee pads — at a minimum.
 • Make sure the pavement is smooth and level where a child rides his or her scooter. Watch for large cracks in concrete or asphalt, because a small wheel could get stuck and children

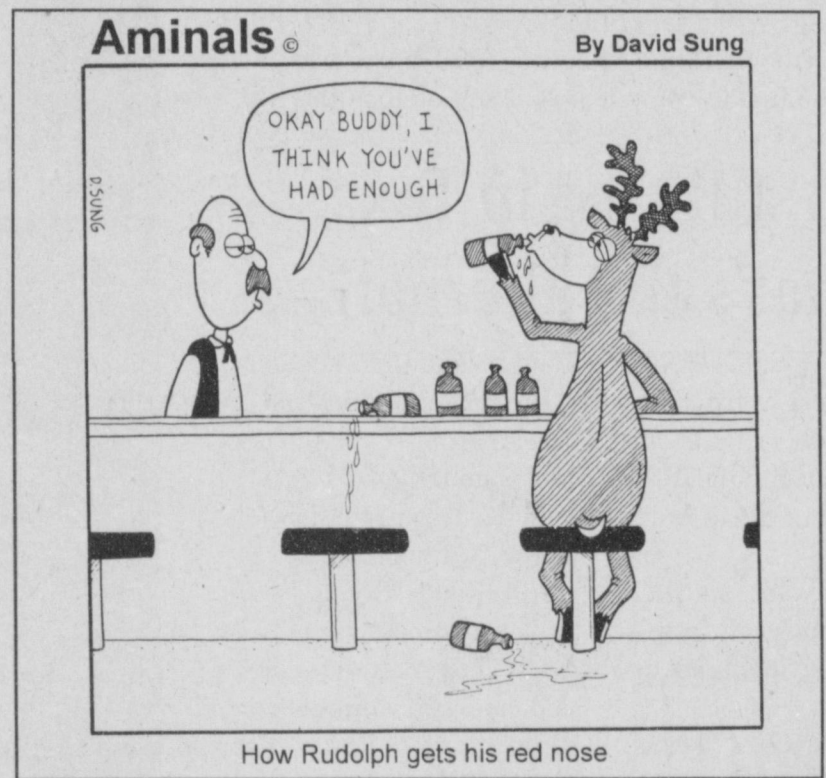
could fly over the handlebar, seriously injuring themselves.
 • Watch for cars and other vehicles when on a scooter. Since there is no way of changing the popularity of scooters for the time being, parents can rest easier if their children follow these rules.

WILDLIFE REFUGE NEWS

By DON CLAPP
Muleshoe Wildlife Refuge
 It's a new year and the cranes are still at the Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge — and will remain until early March. Lesser sandhill crane numbers on the refuge have remained around 5,000 at Paul's Lake for the past month. At least another 7,000 have been roosting in nearby playas or fields as 12,000 or more cranes have been seen in the air

at one time early in the mornings the past two weeks. Although some cranes are using all three refuge lakes, visitors are most likely to see cranes at Paul's Lake. On sunny afternoons, visitors also are apt to see prairie dogs at the newly constructed interpretive viewing turnout near the Paul's Lake viewing platform. Other new additions in the Paul's Lake area include a restroom and a foot bridge.

Visitors interested in birding are likely to see ladder-backed woodpeckers, curve-billed thrashers, dark-eyed juncos, scaled quail and great horned owls. During mid-December, the Llano Estacado Audubon Society from Lubbock conducted the annual Christmas Bird Count on the refuge. They found 64 species, with such local rarities as the verdin, Eastern phoebe, northern shrike and pyrrhuloxia.



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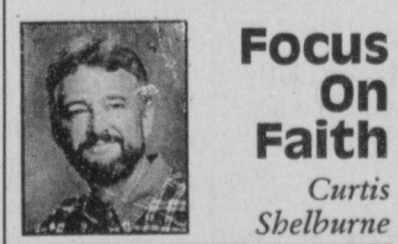
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My Son's Dog Zeke and the New Millennium

Our oldest son recently brought his dog, a Great Dane named Zeke, home from college for the holidays. No, Zeke is not in college. And, no, I don't think any dog, much less a Great Dane, is a really great idea or a wonderful asset to the college experience which, though it may be rich with learning, means living, temporarily I hope, very near to poverty. (Actually, Chris's genes probably

particularly appropriate as we kick off the new millennium. Zeke is quick to give and accept genuine love. He loves to be stroked and petted, and he'll quickly respond with warm nudges and friendly rumbles. Just watch out for that tongue. He loves his master and likes his family. He's easy to love, almost impossible to rile, and he never holds a grudge. He'll forgive you for going off to work and banning him to a cold yard. He won't hold it against you that you won't let him lounge on the couch. He makes an interesting picture when he tries to cheat by propping his hindquarters on the couch with only his front legs touching the ground on the carpet in front. I don't think I ever saw a dog actually sit on a couch.



Focus On Faith
 Curtis Shelburne

assured that anyway. I don't know a single Shelburne even remotely interested in anything even remotely lucrative.) This animal is huge. Stretched out on the carpet, long legs and huge paws fully extended (and he stretches a lot presumably because he sleeps about 20 hours out of every 24), I'm sure he's six feet long if he's an inch. Stand him up, on his hind legs, hold his front paws in the air, and he'll look you eyeball to eyeball—and try to give you a slobbery doggy kiss. Did I mention he's only six months old? He really is a lovable, albeit uncommonly large, beast, well-trained and compliant. And, even if he's not in college, I think he shows some obvious intelligence because, well, he agrees with me on many items, and he's reminded me of a few things that I think are

He loves the snow, and realizes that God made it to play in. Zeke loves naps and takes as many as possible, and he knows that almost nothing is better (and precious little is truly more important) than a snooze in the sunshine. I will admit that Zeke occasionally, in rare flashes of frenetic energy, chases his tail, and looks seriously silly doing so. It's probably due to the bad influence of the humans he's seen wasting a lot of energy and looking very silly doing the same thing. But he generally wakes up pretty quickly and opts again for a nap in the sunshine. Zeke seems to know that someone even bigger than him has made provisions for his food and shelter. I've never seen him worried. Maybe I'd worry less if I was as wise, and as trusting, as big Zeke. Curtis Shelburne is minister of the 16th & D Church of Christ in Muleshoe.

COTTON

from page 1

fuel sources for Texas. Irrigation costs also are expected to rise due to the lowering of the aquifer, which has been depleted during the past two dry years. "The northern Panhandle produced corn in the past, but I'd not be surprised at another 50,000 acres of cotton going in up there," Boman said. "I know there's a lot of economic pressure to go to cotton in those fringe areas," he added. Boman said corn requires twice as much irrigation as cotton in Texas. "On the high side, you can spend \$200 an acre for irrigation for corn, but cotton would be less than half that," he said. Traditionally, the northern areas lack enough heat units for a reliable cotton crop, but a series of mild falls and reports of 2.5-bale-per-acre yields around Amarillo have farmers taking a serious look at cotton. Heat-unit accumulation for September has been 30 percent above normal for the past

couple of years, Boman said, but those who risk planting cotton could see serious quality and maturity problems if heat units are average or lower. Also, the clay-loam type of soil in the area could pose harvest problems if rainy, cool weather in October and November leaves the ground too soft to move equipment. As far as other areas in West Texas, Boman said farmers do not have economical alternatives to cotton, and acreage should be about the same for next year. "We won't see much change in West Texas. Those guys don't have many options. Cotton is the mainstay as long as the economics are there," Boman said. "From our perspective, government programs favor cotton rather than corn or sorghum," he said. The USDA recently left cotton and corn loan rates unchanged for 2001, at 51.92 cents per pound and \$1.89 per

It also left the sorghum loan rate at \$1.71 per bushel, but not before initially announcing a 3-cent rate cut, drawing howls. Besides acreage, yields could decline as farmers opt to spend less money on their cotton and irrigate it less. That is espe-

cially so after spending on pesticides, fertilizer and irrigation in 2000 only to have yields shriveled by late-summer heat. "I know, with the price of energy for pumping, that cost has essentially doubled," Boman said. "Farmers will look long and hard at how long to run their wells."

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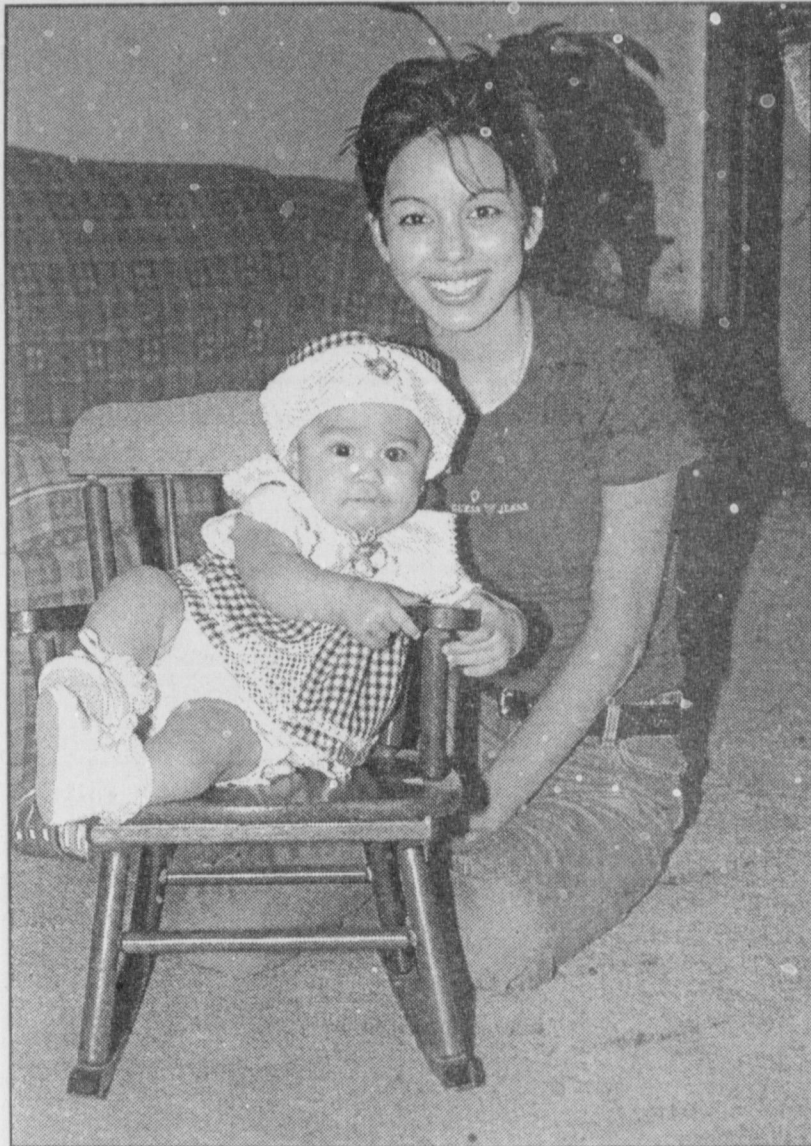
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Journal photo: Beatrice Morin

'Cause I'm cute, that's why!

Five-month-old Hailey Anzaldua tries to look casual after winning the Muleshoe Alco store's most recent cute baby contest. Her mother, Kimberly, lends a hand. Terri Brewster, the store's customer service group manager, said the contest raised \$526.03 for the Bailey County Meals on Wheels program.

Duct-cleaning provides breath of fresh air

SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL
Got nothing to do after the holidays? How about cleaning the air ducts?

Whoopee! And after that, you can organize your socks, you say?

"Although it's probably not No. 1 on your list of new year's resolutions, cleaning the ducts can make a big difference in your respiratory health, especially if anyone in your household has a chronic respiratory condition," said Richard Roll, president of the American Homeowners Association.

Air ducts can collect an amazing quantity of gunk. Cleaning them can help to eliminate dust, odors and contaminants that affect indoor air quality.

A home's heating, ventilation and air-conditioning system, sometimes referred to as "HVAC," collects a variety of unwanted things including mold, fungi, bacteria and small particles of dust.

According to the federal Environmental Protection

Agency, removing those contaminants from a home can dramatically improve the air a family breathes.

Not only that, but a home's HVAC system will function more efficiently, costing less in heating and cooling bills.

These ducts should be cleaned every three to five years, and at least every three years if the household includes smokers or pets or is in a dusty climate.

Changing the air filter four times a year also reduces dust buildup in the system.

But before prying the grates off the ducts, remember that cleaning the ductwork is not a do-it-yourself project.

A professional cleaning company can use special equipment to suction dirt out of the ducts as well as dislodge anything that may be stuck. Upon request, the company also can apply a sanitizer, an anti-microbial chemical that will reduce the growth of bacteria and fungus.

Expect to pay anywhere

from \$450 to \$1,000 for this cleaning, depending on the size of the house and the type of system.

Be sure to ask for EPA certification before hiring a duct-cleaning company. Beware of "blow and go" companies — those that promise to clean a system for a very low price but also do a very poor job.

One source for information about air-duct cleaning is the National Air Duct Cleaners Association website at www.nadca.org.

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Observations learned in the school of hard knocks

1. There's always time to pet yer dog.
2. If a feller doesn't trim his own horses' feet, he's got too many horses or not enough time.
3. Some people do what they've gotta do to live where they wanta live, while others live they have to live to be what they wanna be.
4. Sometimes gentle pressure is better than jerkin' as hard as you can. Kinda like pickin' up a bull's nose.
5. When a person says, "I'm not that kinda guy!" he probably is.
6. Wine doesn't give me a headache. Winos do.
7. I like a woman who smells



BAXTER BLACK
ON THE EDGE OF COMMON SENSE

like BBQ sauce.

8. I felt sorry for myself when I had no hat, 'til I met a man who had no . . . wait a minute, that's not right.

9. I commented to a man in New York that I was surprised they had so many cows and so much farming. He said, "Son, this is where it started."

10. Oelrichs is so small that if you know where it is, that's where

you're from!

11. It's hard bein' a cowboy. If a man gets run over by a truck, he gets sympathy. If he gets run over by a horse, they laugh.

12. Vet prognosis: Those that linger have a better chance than those that die right away.

13. The only thing I can't do in excess is moderation.

14. It's a bad weekend when you wake up Sunday morning and it's

Thanksgiving.

15. Sure yet waffle was tough; You ate the pot holder.

16. I can't make myself at home: I live here!

17. If a person has an excuse to be less than they can be, they probably will.

18. Calvin said a true friend will tell you if yer hat's on backwards.

19. Whoever named The Dumb Friends League has dang sure punched a few cows.

20. If you are not generous when you can afford to be, it marks you as a small person. This does not mean being generous with somebody else's money; that's merely being cheap.

CRISIS

from page 1

Farmers are in particular trouble, because buying a commercial farmer's vote through commodity programs costs a lot more per vote than winning retiree votes with a prescription drug subsidy.

A renewed set of government entitlements also might have to be shared with livestock producers and horticulturists.

If Congress is going back to subsidies instead of pressing for freer farm trade, then the farmers who haven't gotten payments in recent decades won't want to be left out in the cold.

Then there are the hard-to-solve realities that make being a farmer difficult:

- Farmers can't sell more food to Americans. Even our pets are overfed.
- Government price supports quickly produce surpluses. That's where Europe has been stuck for 30 years, and why they keep ruining the world market with export dumping. Even today's marketing loans are stimulating surpluses: Check soybeans right now.
- Ethanol is an expensive substitute for coal, and we have plenty of coal right now.
- We're still blocked by trade barriers from selling more food to newly affluent Asians.
- The Democrats can't move on freeing farm trade because of their political alliances with trade unions that oppose it, nor

do they want Republicans to get credit for doing it.

Bush says his farm-policy solution is liberalization of farm trade. But if he can't get farm-trade reform through Congress, dominated by his own party, he certainly won't want to let the Democrats "solve" the farm problem with farmer payments that will bust a newly re-tightened federal budget.

Members of the environmental movement would mostly support payments for reduced use of the farm inputs they hate — pesticides, chemical fertilizers and veterinary antibiotics.

But such "organic" payments wouldn't be a windfall for farmers. They would merely offset lower yields and higher production costs. Conservation tillage has made modern farming the most soil-safe in history — and anyway, we already have a conservation reserve.

The Europeans are trying to unite behind a policy of "multiple use" income payments to farmers. In other words, farmers would be paid for their landscaping, in addition to their crops and livestock.

But Europe is a much more densely populated continent

than North America, and its agriculture is much closer to its city dwellers. European farms are also more picturesque.

Because we are not an ancient land, North America concentrated on production, not peasant cottages or hedgerows. How many scarce tax dollars are city folks willing to spend on manicuring the landscape in Texas and North Dakota?

Some Democrats on Capitol Hill are actually relieved that their party didn't gain control of Congress, simply because they expect a train wreck in agricultural policy.

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Muleshoe area always well-represented on the stock-show circuit

(EDITOR'S NOTE: With this year's junior livestock shows about to swing into high gear, the beginning of another year is a good time to focus on the type of values represented by these institutions. Caring for an animal can instill in a child a lifelong habit of caring for something besides themselves, as few other experiences in life can do. This article is reprinted by permission from The Banner-Press of Brenham, Texas, and originally ran during last season's livestock show season.)

If the strongly agriculturally based West Texas community of Muleshoe represents the average Texas town, there might well be an influx (into Brenham) this weekend of "visiting pigs and people" nearing the total of Brenham's roughly 14,000 population.

Indeed, Muleshoe — located 530 miles away, 70 miles north of Lubbock in the Panhandle — has a contingent of five trailers, 40 pigs and at least 80 people who have traveled to Brenham for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo's Junior Market Barrow Sift.

It doesn't take much calculating to see that the sift continues to grow, its 17th in Brenham almost certainly the largest yet — with a total stock population in excess of 5,000 barrows.

And if all areas of Texas were as well-represented as Muleshoe, the visitor total of perhaps 7,000 humans would be swelled to more than 10,000 for this gigantic Thursday-through-Sunday pig-sift period.

Indeed if there is a means of counting accurately, the Washington County Chamber of Commerce tourism division's 6,000-visitor estimate may turn out to be a little on the low side.

One busy Muleshoe mom, Susan Kerby — who drove here with four youngsters — feels that their city's contingent comes close to a total of two adults and youngsters per participating pig.

"We may even have a hundred people here," Kerby suggested, perhaps basing this ample estimate on the size of her own crew — one of more than a dozen Muleshoe groups making the 10- to 12-hour drive southeastward from the Panhandle.

A young lady from there, Myndi Heathington — a junior in high school and now a nine-time swine sift veteran — was among the fortunate youngsters who beat the roughly one-in-80 odds last year.

Heathington proudly pointed out that her 1999 crossbred category entry was one of the 600 pigs selected for the super-tough competition in the HLS&R Junior Barrow Show — and then it advanced all the way to rank as eighth-best in its



Brock Steinbock (No. 445) of Lazbuddie shows the first-place Hampshire lightweight gilt at the Panhandle-South Plains Fair in Lubbock in September. The animal belonged to the Mason family.

division.

Landon Kerby, a Muleshoe sophomore, seeks to return to a spot in the Houston show and another high finish, after managing to place fourth in the Duroc division in 1998.

A random survey of other folks wandering around under the hog pavilions Friday indicates most every corner of Texas represented here — with Ennis, Levelland, Seymour, El Paso and Shepherd (the closest, at less than two hours away) among the other places reporting in during a one-hour random sampling of visitors.

Many of these groups make their headquarters at one of the motels in College Station.

The much larger group from Muleshoe is spread out all over the place — ranging from staying in College Station to a whole bunch based in cabins at



Nine-year-old Ryan Mason of Lazbuddie poses with his lightweight gilt that was named champion Spot at the Panhandle-South Plains Fair in Lubbock last Sept. 25. Ryan is the son of Sheldon and Debbie Mason.

Thanks, for making us part of your day!



Brett Bamert of Muleshoe poses with his first-place medium-weight European cross steer at the Southwestern Exposition and Livestock Show in Fort Worth last February. The show's junior division had a record 8,800 animals entered.

Camp-for-All near Burton.

Still others from Muleshoe — when all of their day's barrow duties are done — will be found sleeping nights at the Half-Moon Motel in the Lake Somerville area.

It certainly doesn't appear to be hotels, motels and bed-and-breakfasts — plus RV spaces at both the fairgrounds and area campgrounds — are booked up for 50 miles around Brenham because of this gigantic pig sift.

Another small random survey found that most youngsters

name their pigs, and unless it was just coincidence this time, they are frequently named for popular figures in professional wrestling.

Of course, part of any stock show is food. Booths run by Girl Scouts and 4-H clubs were starting to catch the eye of the large human population as 11 a.m. approached.

Most members of the Muleshoe group had a plan of their own: Someone was cooking up fajitas, and lunch would be ready within the next half-hour or so.

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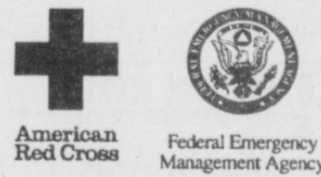
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The next time disaster strikes, you may not have much time to act. Prepare now for a sudden emergency.

Learn how to protect yourself and cope with disaster by planning ahead. This

checklist will help you get started. Discuss these ideas with your family, then prepare an emergency plan. Post the plan where everyone will see it—on the refrigerator or bulletin board.

For additional information about how to prepare for hazards in your community, contact your local emergency management or civil defense office and American Red Cross chapter.

Emergency Checklist

Call Your Emergency Management Office or American Red Cross Chapter

- Find out which disasters could occur in your area.
- Ask how to prepare for each disaster.
- Ask how you would be warned of an emergency.
- Learn your community's evacuation routes.
- Ask about special assistance for elderly or disabled persons.

Also...

- Ask your workplace about emergency plans.
- Learn about emergency plans for your children's school or day care center.

Create an Emergency Plan

- Meet with household members. Discuss with children the dangers of fire, severe weather, earthquakes and other emergencies.
- Discuss how to respond to each disaster that could occur.

- Discuss what to do about power outages and personal injuries.
- Draw a floor plan of your home. Mark two escape routes from each room.
- Learn how to turn off the water, gas and electricity at main switches.
- Post emergency telephone numbers near telephones.
- Teach children how and when to call 911, police and fire.
- Instruct household members to turn on the radio for emergency information.
- Pick one out-of-state and one local friend or relative for family members to call if separated by disaster (it is often easier to call out-of-state than within the affected area).
- Teach children how to make long distance telephone calls.
- Pick two meeting places.
 - 1) A place near your home in case of a fire.
 - 2) A place outside your neighborhood in case you cannot return home after a disaster.
- Take a basic first aid and CPR class.
- Keep family records in a water and fire-proof container.

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Assemble supplies you might need in an evacuation. Store them in an easy-to-carry container such as a backpack or duffel bag.

- Include:**
- A supply of water (one gallon per person per day). Store water in sealed, unbreakable containers. Identify the storage date and replace every six months.
 - A supply of non-perishable packaged or canned food and a non-electric can opener.
 - A change of clothing, rain gear and sturdy shoes.
 - Blankets or sleeping bags.
 - A first aid kit and prescription medications.
 - An extra pair of glasses.
 - A battery-powered radio, flashlight and plenty of extra batteries.
 - Credit cards and cash.
 - An extra set of car keys.
 - A list of family physicians.
 - A list of important family information, the style and serial number of medical devices such as pacemakers.
 - Special items for infants, elderly or disabled family members.

BIRTHS

CAIN

Gary and Stacy Cain of Muleshoe are the parents of a daughter, Chantel Elizabeth, born at 11:55 a.m. on Dec. 27 at University Medical Center in Lubbock. She weighed 8 pounds, 8 ounces and was 18 1/4 inches long.

Siblings include Tamara and Travis Thompson.

Grandparents are Gene and Janice Snell of Muleshoe, Sue

Petty of Lubbock and Clayton Thompson of Lacey, Wash.

Great-grandparents are Opal Cain of Clovis, Julia Symcox of Farwell and M.A. Ferguson of Amarillo.

MACIAS

Marcos and Christy Macías of Muleshoe announce the birth of a daughter, Megan Ariana Macías.

She was born at 7:04 a.m. Nov. 19 in Clovis. She weighed 6

pounds, 8 1/2 ounces, and was 20 1/2 inches long.

She has a sister, Leslie Danielle Macías, 7.

Her grandparents are Alex and María García of Muleshoe and Prosperino and Juana Macías of Seminole.

Great-grandparents are José and Arminda Orozco of Muleshoe and Guadalupe Muñiz of Sudan.

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