

The Post Dispatch

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Post Notes

Post ISD Bands celebrate Christmas

The Post ISD bands will celebrate Christmas with a special concert December 16 at 7 p.m. at the Elementary School Auditorium. Join the fifth, sixth, and 7-12 bands playing traditional Christmas music for the holidays. All are welcome, come early to get a seat for the one hour show.

Dalby Unit sponsors Angel Tree

Employees at the Giles W. Dalby Correctional Facility are once again sponsoring the Angel Tree to provide gifts and clothing for children who otherwise might not have gifts this Christmas. The facility is joined this year by the Post Lions Club in the effort. This is the fourth year employees at the Dalby unit have provided this outreach program for children. Those interested in contributing should contact Rev. Lloyd Stice at the First United Methodist Church (495-2942) or Rev. Ron Miner at the Church of the Nazarene (495-3044) or by mail to Joe Duran, P.O. Box 644, Post, Texas 79356. Gifts will be distributed December 19.

Trailblazers set Dec. 13 bake sale

The Garza County Trailblazers will hold a fund-raising bake sale at United Supermarket Saturday, December 13 beginning at 9 a.m.

Church offers Gordita plates Dec. 13

Members of the Holy Cross Catholic Church are offering Gordita plates with rice, beans and salad on Saturday, December 13 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. The plates are \$5 each, available at the church's parish hall.

Lions Club seeks Toys for Tots help

The Post Lions Club is once again asking for monetary and new toy donations for the annual "Toys for Tots" campaign. The program provides gifts for needy children for Christmas. To donate call 777-4783 or 495-5383.

Grassland Nazarene Choir Cantata

The Grassland Nazarene Choir will present the Christmas Cantata, "Come and Worship," at the church Sunday, December 21 at 6 p.m. The church invites all to join in the celebration.

Children's Christmas Party Dec. 20

The annual VFW Ladies' Auxiliary sponsored Children's Christmas Party will be held Saturday, December 20 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the VFW Hall. Santa will be at the party for children to visit.

Merry Christmas edition Dec. 23

The Post Dispatch will publish its annual "Merry Christmas" edition on Thursday, December 23, with a Friday, December 12 deadline for Santa Letters and Thursday, December 18 for "Merry Christmas" advertisements.

Canned food drive under way

Members of Post Middle School's STARS and Student Council organizations are conducting a canned food drive this week. Today, students can bring cans to contribute to the drive and receive lollipops. On Friday, students who bring four cans and make a \$2 donation will receive a sticker to wear on their hats in observance of Cap Day. Canned goods should be delivered to Mrs. Adams or Mr. Powell.

J&T Imagination Santa on display at the White House

A piece of Post is on display at the White House this holiday season. A life-sized J&T Imagination Santa was shipped to Washington, D.C., at the request of the First Family. But the invitation to create a Santa for the White House didn't come out of the blue.

Jackie Cruse and Theresa Doggett donated a life-sized Cowboy Santa to the Governor's Mansion in Austin when President Bush was governor, and First Lady Laura Bush visited Lubbock's Vatican Exhibition where she saw the duo's Vatican St. Nicholas on exhibit (the Vatican Santa was auctioned off for \$10,000).

Cruse and Doggett chose a patriotic theme for their latest creation, which took two weeks to complete. Their six-foot Patriotic St. Nicholas pays tribute to the Bush family, the courageous men and women who fight for freedom and those who lost their lives on Sept. 11, 2001.

The figure is dressed in a jacquard Uncle Sam-style tuxedo jacket with tails and 100 percent cotton red-and-white antique-stained trousers. He holds Boyds patriotic bears, a decorated pre-lit Christmas tree with American-style tin stars and ornaments and a real antique lamp that features a flickering candle. A fireman bear and an antique reproduction metal fire engine truck filled with more Boyds bears rest at his feet.

New water line valves to help with future line breaks

by Wes Burnett

The Post City Council took action at its most recent meeting (12-2-03) to alleviate difficulties with water distribution when water mains break. The council approved purchasing turnoff valves for the two main water lines from the storage tanks.

"If those were in place last month," city manager Fred Stephens emphasized, "we could have isolated the water break and kept a steady flow of water, but as it was, we had to shut down the entire system in order to make the repair."

Stephens also pointed out that special parts had to be purchased before repair could begin, which added to the length of the water outage.

In other action, the council approved the first reading of a revision to its ordinances providing for due process to condemn abandoned or junked vehicles. City attorney Harvey Morton explained that the old ordinance did not comply with state law, and the new measure gives city staff clear guidelines for notification and removal.

"There are literally hundreds of junked or abandoned vehicles in Post," Stephens added, "this will give us what we need to proceed." The city will make reasonable attempts to notify vehicle owners, who will be given an opportunity to remove identified vehicles prior to city legal action.

The council appointed Budget Inn owner Mukesh Bhakta to serve on the hotel/motel committee.

No action was taken on a discussion about a letter received from Cebridge Connections concerning local cable television service. Council members expressed dissatisfaction with recent rate increases and suggested that the franchise agreement might need to be revised.



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A magnificent life-size Santa designed and constructed by Jackie Cruse and Theresa Doggett of Post is on display at the White House this holiday season.

County sends message to Austin: no mandates without funding

by Wes Burnett

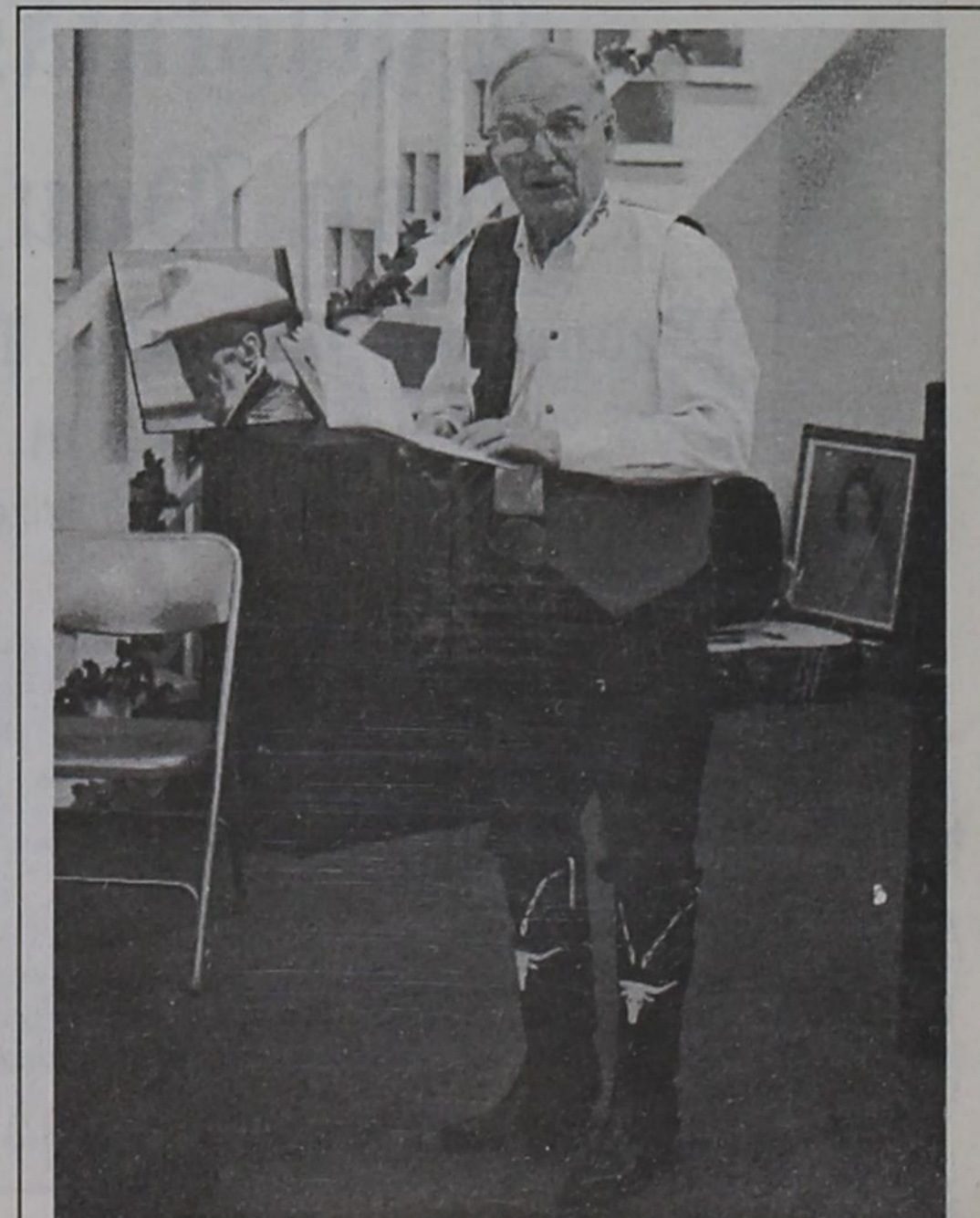
A resolution demanding that the State Legislature fund mandated statutes which increase costs to the counties was approved by the Garza County Commissioners' Court at its regular meeting Monday (12/8/03) (see related story). Judge Giles W. Dalby said that it was a never ending cycle of state government mandating new responsibilities to counties without providing funding. "It puts the burden on us, and that's just not right," Dalby said.

The court also approved membership in the "Texas Yes Program," which is an initiative promoted by the Texas Department of Agriculture at no cost to counties. The purpose is to promote economic growth in rural Texas.

The rate for indigent court representation in the 106th Judicial District was approved. Garza County's share of \$9,558 is based on the number of court appointed attorney criminal cases last year. Gaines, Dawson, Lynn and Garza share in the cost. Dalby explained that if the county had to pay for the indigent representation on its own, it would cost more than \$26,000.

One application for public assistance was considered and approved. The applicant met county guidelines and was granted \$15 for rent and \$28.41 for utility assistance.

The court recessed until Friday at 9 a.m., when it plans to continue with a workshop on how to trim the budget in preparation for the February 7 tax rollback election.



Alvin Davis entertained with Cowboy Poetry at last Friday evening's Caprock Cultural Association awards banquet. (Photo by Tim Burnett)



Performances of the Garza Theatre's rendition of "Miracle on 34th Street" continue this weekend. Remaining performances are set for Dec. 12, 13, 19 and 20. Based on the book written by Valentine Davis, the Garza's rendition of "Miracle" is being directed by Laura Bryan. Its cast members include David Johnson, Stan Tucker, Mitchell Britton, Kevin Bryan, Michael Vorauer, Jackie Neal, Taylor Garland, Marcie Johnson, Marissa

Merritt, Keely Ratliff, Jason Porter, David Savage and Cordell Green. Curtain times are Friday and Saturdays, 8 p.m. Tickets cost \$9 for adults and \$6 for children ages 6-12. Tickets are available at the box office Monday through Friday, 12:30-5 p.m. (except show weekends, noon to curtain time). Call 495-4005 for more information.

Judy's Jabberin'

by Judy (Ballentine) Bush



Hey everyone, Well, (for my daughter's information) it is most certainly winter time today. I know that wind must be 50 miles per hour and that is too bad when it is only 48 degrees. If this cold weather doesn't get you in the holiday

mood nothing will. **BEFORE I FORGET** I want to take this time and means to wish my mom a very, very special happy birthday. She will turn 90 years young December 11. Saturday the 13th we will honor her with a party, 2pm-4:30pm in the Fellowship Hall of First United Methodist Church. We would love to invite all of her friends to spend this special time with us. Please, no presents, just come spend some time with us. Also, happy birthday to my son Kevin. He and his Nana share the same birthday. **HATS OFF TO THE CITY GUYS** I want to let the city fellows know how beautiful the lights look down town. The trees are absolutely gorgeous!! I think they

are the prettiest that they have ever been and I for one really appreciate all the hard work!
CHURCH FOOTBALL QUARTERBACK SNEAK-Church member quietly leaving during the invitation.
DRAW PLAY-What many children do with the bulletin during worship.
BEANCHWARMER-Those who do not sing, pray, work, or apparently do anything but sit.
BACKFIELD-IN-MOTION-Making a trip to the back (restroom or water fountain) during the sermon.
TWO MINUTE WARNING-The point at which you realize the sermon is almost over and begin to gather up your children and belongings.
INSTANT REPLAY-The preacher loses his notes and falls back on last week's illustrations.
BLITZ-The rush for the restaurants following the closing prayer.
TILL NEXT WEEK Hope all of you have a great week end. May God bless each of you. See you next week. Don't get caught in the shopping traffic!!!! Judy

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 Saturday, December 13, 2003
 Please pop up at 2 p.m. and be ready to "leaf" by 4:30 p.m. or Fannie will wilt!
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 Hosted by Fannie's "Sprouts"
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 Ricky & Judy Bush
 Your Presence is your gift.

Post Lighted Christmas Parade Winners

The parade route had to be changed due to U.S. Highway 84 construction, but that did not deter Post parade fans out in the cold evening last Saturday. The Giles W. Dalby Correctional Facility took first place with their float, followed by Golden Plains Care Center and the Post Girl Scouts. Sponsored by the Post Commerce & Tourism Bureau, float winners were awarded \$400 for first place, \$300 for second place and \$200 for third place. The parade route started from the courthouse and went south across Hwy 380 to the Golden Plains Care Center, then east on Hwy 380 to the Algerita Park, then west on the south side of East Main Street and back on the north side, returning to the courthouse by way of Hwy 380.

Garza Theatre wows audiences with 'Miracle on 34th Street' show

by Ruth Ann Young
 The Garza Theater opened its production of "Miracle on 34th Street" the first weekend of December to near capacity crowds. The show will run for two more weekends and is great entertainment. The huge cast includes popular actors from Post and many from the area. The story, which unfolds under the able direction of Laura Bryan, keeps the audience enthralled through scene after scene. The stage setting imaginatively changes from a Christmas parade to Macy's Department Store to a courtroom; spotlight vignettes are used in several instances. The classic story answers the question in the hearts of young and old - "Is there really a Santa?" Stellar performances by Stan Tucker as Kris Kringle, Marissa Merritt as Macy's Department Store employee Doris Walker and Mitchell Britton as Fred Gayley. These are only a few of the outstanding performers in this play. Zoe Kirkpatrick, as a political adviser to a judge, lends humor to the story. A bevy of elves, several played by local youngsters, are delightful.

This heartwarming story is great family entertainment and will run Dec. 12-13 and Dec. 19-20. Call the box office at 495-4005 for tickets.



Mr and Mrs Syd Conner were honored with a 50th wedding anniversary dinner at the Hotel Garza Bed & Breakfast November 21. They were married November 20, 1953. The event was hosted by their children Rusty and LaNae Conner, Tony and Karen Conner, Christie Conner Curb and Randy and Lana Conner.

South Plains McDonald's raise funds for "Give-A-Hand"

McDonald's Restaurants of the South Plains presented Ronald McDonald House Charities of Lubbock checks totaling \$5500 from the first annual "Give-A-Hand" fundraiser. The restaurants sold paper cut-out "hands" for \$1 each and displayed them in their stores. McDonald's Restaurants in Brownfield, Denver City, Lamesa, Levelland, Lubbock, Muleshoe, Plainview, Post, Seminole and Snyder are part of the McDonald's "co-op" which raised the \$5500. The "Hands" were also sold by various partnering businesses and organizations throughout the region. Student organizations from Texas Tech's Rawls College of Business collected \$2000 for the Ronald McDonald House via the fundraiser. The McDonald's Restaurants of Eastern New Mexico are still collecting donations. The promotion, which was sponsored by McDonald's Restaurants and Coca-Cola, offered a simple way for communities to help support the families served by Ronald McDonald House Charities of Lubbock. The money raised will help to operate the Lubbock Ronald McDonald House which is a home-away-from-home for families of critically ill children who are receiving treatment in local hospitals. The Ronald McDonald House of Lubbock serves over 500 families per year. More than 95% of the families come to Lubbock from the South Plains area of Texas or from Eastern New Mexico. Over 70% of the Ronald McDonald House budget is generated from donations and fundraisers.

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Former Post resident Troy Cartmill publishes first book

A Houston pastor with links to Post will be signing copies of his new book, "It's Time for Pure Hearts," Dec. 20 in Lubbock.

Troy Cartmill will be at Mardel's, 7020 Quaker Ave., from 1-4 p.m.

Cartmill has been a pastor in Houston for more than 30 years, but his South Plains roots are deep. His hometown is Post and his wife, Janice, is from Southland. He is a graduate of Wayland Baptist University and his early pastorates included churches in Levelland and across the South Plains.

Cartmill has served as pastor of both traditional and nontraditional churches. For the past 13 years, his ministry has principally been from his home. The slower pace and lower profile of pastoral duties changed his life and ministry and deepened his love and respect for the New Testament church, he said. A house-church, requiring fewer pastoral

responsibilities, gave Cartmill more time to study the Bible and pray. It was the opportunity he said he'd always wanted - to satisfy a voracious longing to know Christ in a more meaningful way.

He discloses in his book what few ministers would readily admit.

"Though painful to recognize, much of what I had been giving those who

were looking to me for truth was stale bread and stagnant water rather than the bread of life and the living water," he writes. "My deeper examination of scripture revealed that self-love, self-preservation and self-serving was controlling my life and in turn was hindering achieving my heart's desire - that of Christ-likeness. I discovered I had been

studying to show myself approved by man, rather than God."

Cartmill's book may be purchased from Christian bookstores or directly from Xulon Press (866) 381-2665, ext. 109. Major bookstores, including Barnes & Noble, can order the book. The book also may be ordered online at www.amazon.com.



Mr and Mrs B.L. Thomas, 1953



Helen and B.L. Thomas

B.L. "Shug" and Helen Thomas will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary Dec. 17 with a family dinner to be held in Miami, Florida. The couple married in the First Baptist Church in Post. They are the parents of Kelvin Thomas of La Grange, Wyoming, and Kirk Thomas of Miami. A small group of family members and friends will share the occasion with a dinner celebration in the home of Wayne and Carol McDonald Dec. 12.

Jon Smith files for Democrat primary as Sheriff candidate

I am announcing my candidacy for sheriff of Garza County in the Democratic primary.

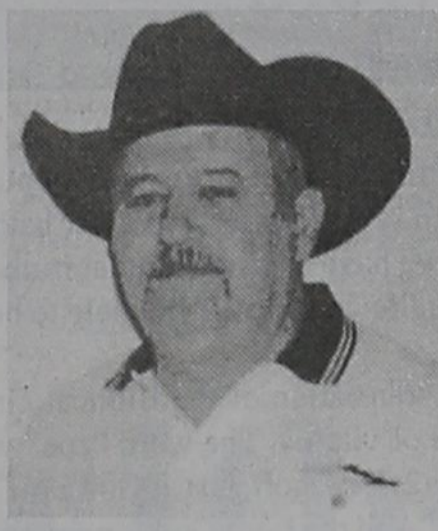
I am a resident of Garza County and a West Texas native. My wife, Sandy Smith, and I have four children and five grandchildren, as well as strong family ties to Garza County.

I began in law enforcement in 1974 right here in Garza County after attending Central Texas College where I studied criminology.

I will strive to show the people of Garza County a sheriff's department that will be dedicated to the safety, service and protection of all, with professionalism and courtesy. Because the mission of any sheriff should be to preserve the peace, uphold the constitutionality of the sheriff's office, prevent crime and provide judicious service to the community with integrity in a positive and professional manner, I also will be dedicated to providing sound service through ethical and humanitarian practices. My personal commitment will be to strive for excellence in developing the organization to meet the present and future needs of Garza County.

I would appreciate your support and vote.

Jon Smith



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Students research foreign holidays

Post Middle School students in Dedra Adams' sixth grade world history class are researching Christmas customs in other countries.

Each student selected the county he or she wanted to research and is using the Internet to do research. From that research, students will write papers and create graphics and illustrations. Some students also are planning to prepare cookies and other foods from their countries.

Some of the countries being researched include Africa, Australia, England, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, India, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Spain and Sweden.

Students will share their research with the classmates Friday.

FOR SALE BY WRITTEN BID

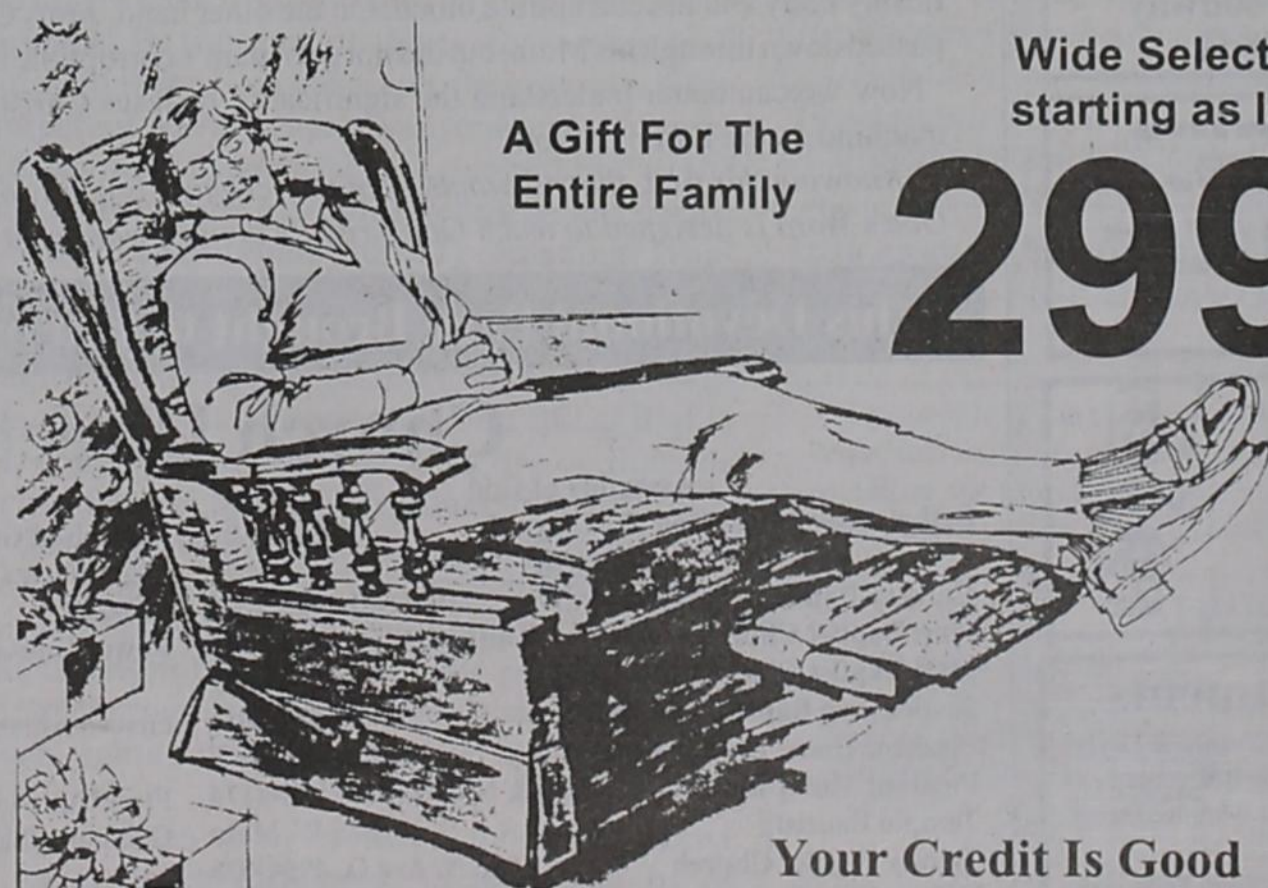
The City of Post will accept written bids until December 12, 2003 for the following used vehicles and equipment. Potential bidders can view the items by calling 806-495-2811. Items sold will be "as is, where is."

All bid sheets should briefly describe the vehicle or equipment covered by the bid and must be written, dated and signed by the bidder. Terms are cash on date of sale.

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- 1 1991 Half ton Chevrolet Pickup Short Wide Bed ... 1GCDC14H8MZ192686
- 1 1997 Ford 4 door Crown Victoria. 2FALP73W8VX107829
- 1 1989 Half ton Chevrolet SWB Pickup 1GCDC14H7KZ220314
-
- 1 used MTD Riding Lawn Mower
- 1 used John Deere Riding Mower
-
- 1 used 1,000 gallon fuel tank on skids
- 1 used 500 gallon diesel tank on stand
-
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The City may reject any bid or all bids, for any reason.

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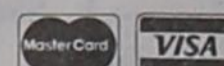
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Opinions

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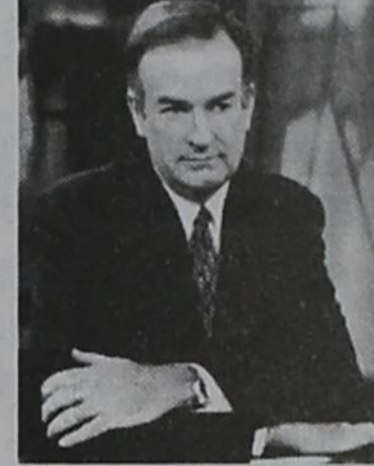
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It is the mission of this newspaper to promote the rights of individuals, guided by the principles so eloquently described in the American Declaration of Independence. The right of life, liberty and ownership of property are the cornerstone for our freedom. Government's sole purpose is to enhance our liberty and freedom. Therefore, we hold every elected and appointed agent of government accountable to that standard.

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Bush and the stars

by Bill O'Reilly

You may have heard that some Hollywood types are organizing to unseat President Bush next year. So what, you say. What can these people really do?



Well, they've got money. No. 1. Far-left billionaire George Soros has pledged \$10 million to a group called "America Coming Together," which is recruiting celebrities like Julia Louis Dreyfuss, Rob Reiner and Mike Farrell to spread the anti-Bush word.

But money is not really the issue here, access is. Here's what's going on. Right now only about half of the voting age population in America actually votes. And for Americans under the age of 30, the percentage is far less than that. The anti-Bush forces believe if they can reach young Americans, they can boot the president out. But the only way to connect with many of those people is through entertainment vehicles. And that's where the celebrities come in.

Increasingly, singers like Bruce Springsteen and the Dixie Chicks, to name just four, are using their venues to talk up liberal politics. So are other performers like Sean Penn, George Clooney and Susan Sarandon. While promoting their films, they drop anti-Bush grenades that millions of people hear. The message is getting stronger and louder: Bush is a menace.

This strategy will become even more organized and intense in the coming campaign year. The danger for Republicans is that only the anti-Bush side will be heard, as many entertainment venues do not actively seek political balance. Let's take a look at the landscape.

— Jay Leno is a fair guy and books people on all sides of the political spectrum so there's no problem here.

— David Letterman is a different story. Since Labor Day, for example, his guest list has included far more liberal thinkers than right-leaning people. The anti-Bush people will have support on this program.

— The network morning programs are hosted by people who are primarily socially liberal, but these shows do present a wide variety of guests. However, conservatives are usually challenged harder and celebrities are mostly given soft treatment. The Democrats have an advantage in the morning.

— "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" is a liberal funhouse, but right-wingers with a sense of humor are welcome, so this venue is a political wash.

— Oprah wields enormous power but does not get involved with partisan politics much. However, she will allow celebrities almost free reign. Advantage: Hollywood liberals.

— "The View's" ladies take a decidedly liberal approach to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, but they are not exclusionary. You can get a contrarian point across on the program, but you'd better be quick.

— The late-night gabfests like "Late Night With Conan O'Brien" play to their young viewership, which means the mean, old Republicans don't have a chance there.

So if liberal entertainment people really invest some time and effort, it might be bad news for President Bush. We are living in a time where perception is reality and impressions are formed from rank propaganda and outright deception. A flood of anti-Bush celebrities on the chat shows could help the Democratic candidate big time, and the GOP really has no answer. Can you imagine Dick Cheney dishing with Star Jones?

The left-wing sharpies see an electoral potential in the young vote, and they believe they've found a way to tap into it. Seven hundred votes decided the last presidential election. This time, Letterman is good for at least that.

Veteran TV news anchor Bill O'Reilly is host of the Fox News show "The O'Reilly Factor" and author of the new book "Who's Looking Out For You?" To find out more about Bill O'Reilly, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.

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It is easy to be conspicuously "compassionate" if others are being forced to pay the cost.

M.N. Rothbard

"The people of the States are free, subject only to restrictions in the constitution itself or in constitutionally authorized Acts of Congress, to define the moral, political, and legal character of their lives."
Executive Order 13132 "Federalism" section 2(d) August 4, 1999

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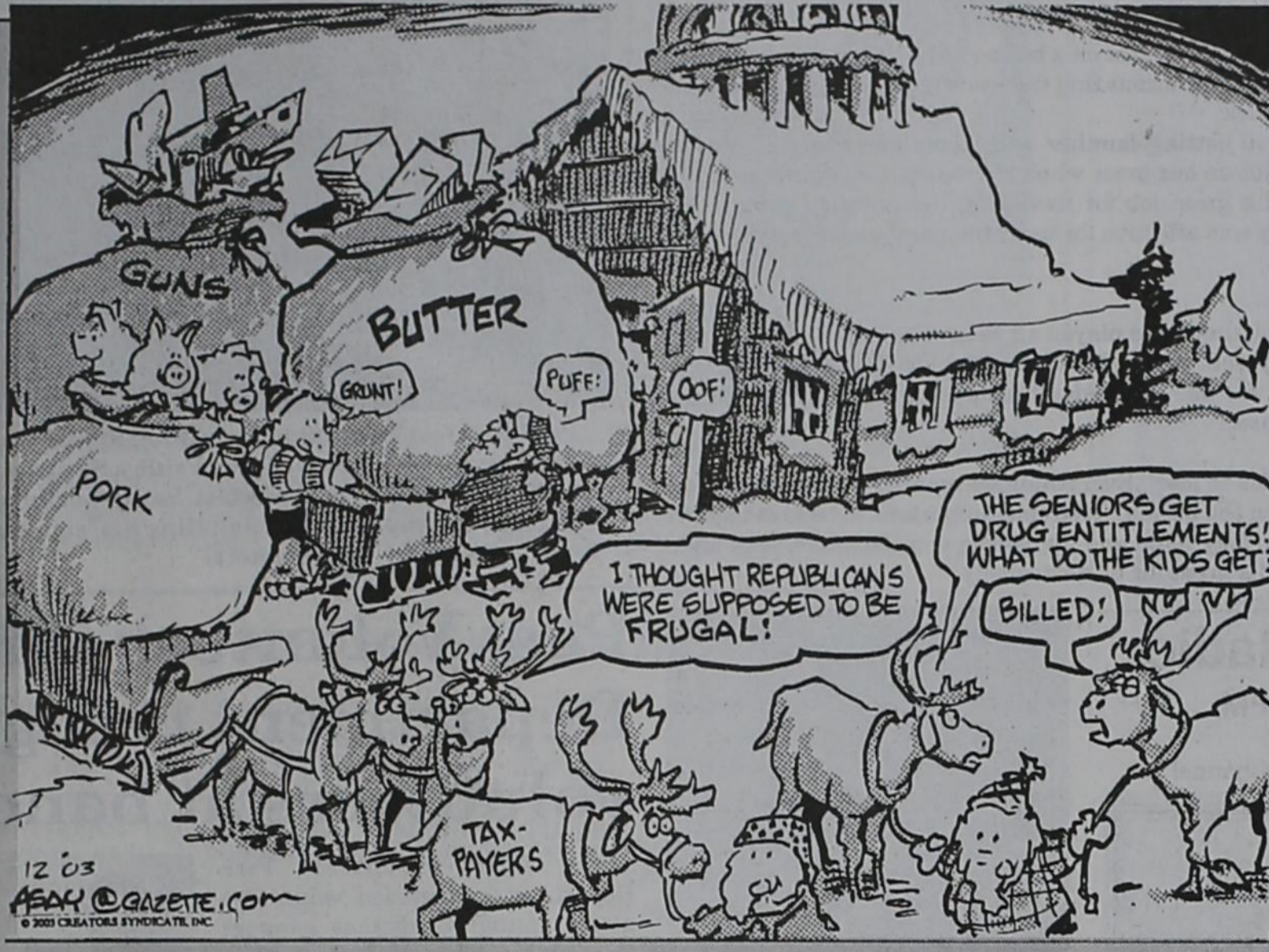
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Economic straight thinking

by Walter E. Williams

A fortnight ago, I wrote "Harm's a Two-Way Street," a column that generated considerable reader response, some of it angry and nasty. The gist of the column was that the liberty-oriented solution to the smoking controversy was through the institution of private property, where the owner of a workplace, restaurant or bar decides whether there would be smoking or not. The totalitarian solution was to use the brute force of government.

I argued that harm is a two-way street. Tobacco fumes might harm someone who is allergic or just finds the odor offensive. The person who smokes and is not permitted to do so is also harmed by being denied a pleasurable experience. Quite a few letters asserted, "Williams, you can't compare the health harm to a nonsmoker to the inconvenience harm that a smoker suffers just because he's not allowed to smoke." No, I can't and wouldn't even try. Why?

Using economic jargon, it is impossible to make interpersonal utility comparisons. Let's try a few. A dollar will bring me more happiness than it will bring you. It's better to like opera music than hip-hop music. Human life is more important than money. There's no objective way to prove any of these statements simply because there is no objective standard for comparison.

You might have an opinion, but an opinion is not proof. The same reasoning applies if you said, "The harm I suffer from your smoking is greater than the harm you suffer from not being permitted to smoke." Contrast these statements to: "You are taller than I." For such a statement there are indeed objective standards for falsifying or verifying it — just get out the measuring instruments.

Another part of the column suggested that an owner of a restaurant, workplace or bar might post a sign indicating whether he permitted smoking or not. After all, private property rights have to do with

rights held by an owner to keep, acquire and use property in ways he pleases so long as he doesn't interfere with similar rights held by another. Private property rights also include the right to exclude others from use of property.

Quite a few readers asked, "What if the owner wished to exclude blacks or some other race?" I value freedom of association. An important part of the right of association is the right not to associate for a good reason, bad reason or no reason at all. That's not to say that I don't find some forms of association offensive. But the true test of one's commitment to freedom of association doesn't come when he allows others to associate in ways he deems desirable. The true test of his commitment comes when he is willing to allow others to associate in ways he deems offensive.

One might be tempted to think that if owners were free to reject customers by race, segregation would be widespread. But that's nonsense because there's a difference between what people can do and what they'll find in their interests to do.

Think about it. During the United States' Jim Crow era and South Africa's apartheid era, there was an elaborate legal structure mandating and enforcing racial segregation. Whenever you see a law on the books, your best guess is that the law is on the books because not everyone left to their own devices would behave according to the specifications of the law. After all, why would there be a need for a law saying bars or theaters cannot admit blacks if no white bar or theater owner would admit blacks in the first place?

There're a lot of things we can disagree about, but let's have straight thinking as a part of the process.

To find out more about Walter Williams, and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate web page at www.creators.com.
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Freedom without due process of law?

by Jacob G. Hornberger

No American should be too enthusiastic about the Pentagon's decision to permit accused terrorist Yaser Hamdi to speak to an attorney after some two years of incarceration in a military brig here in the United States. While some people might be tempted to be grateful to the Pentagon for finally permitting Hamdi, an American citizen, to consult with an attorney, make no mistake about it: the only reason Hamdi is now speaking to a lawyer is that Pentagon officials, in an act of pure discretion, are permitting him to do so.

We live in a country in which the military authorities are continuing to claim and exercise the same type of omnipotent power over the citizenry that the military does in China, Burma, and many Latin American countries - the arbitrary power to seize any citizen, either here or abroad, and punish him. All that is now needed here in our country is the mere assertion by military officials that a particular citizen is an "illegal combatant" in the government's metaphorical "war on terrorism," and that now means: no attorney, no jury trial, no due process of law. And for any American accused by the Pentagon of being an "illegal terrorist," no appeals. Just arrest and punishment.

That's in fact what the cases of Hamdi and Jose Padilla, another American accused of terrorism by the Pentagon, are all about. Americans would be well-served to take notice before it is too late, because what the government is doing in these cases quite possibly constitutes the most dangerous and audacious attack on the freedom of the American people in our lifetime.

This is especially true given that the government is also claiming the power to arbitrarily remove a criminal defendant accused of terrorism from the jurisdiction of the federal courts and to transfer him to the control of military tribunals run by the Pentagon - as they have done with accused terrorist Ali S. Marri and as they are threatening to do to accused terrorist Zacarias Moussaoui - if the civil courts don't go along with what the Pentagon wants. While at the moment the Pentagon is still applying military tribunals only to foreigners and not Americans, that decision, again, is an act of pure discretion and thus could be changed at the whim of Pentagon officials.

What's so bad about a military tribunal? It is nothing more than a kangaroo judicial proceeding to provide cover for the military to incarcerate or execute under pretense of law any person accused of terrorism by military officials. That's in fact why the criminal defense bar has chosen to boycott the Pentagon's military tribunals in Cuba, rather than participate in a sham defense of the accused terrorists being held at Guantanamo Bay.

If the Pentagon has the power to do to Americans what it is doing to Padilla, Hamdi, and Marri, then what good are any other freedoms that we enjoy as Americans? Do they not all effectively become dead letters? After all, what good is freedom of speech, for example, if the Pentagon has the omnipotent power to accuse anyone and everyone, including critics and dissenters, of being "illegal combatants" in the "war on terrorism," incarcerate them in a military brig for any period of time, or even execute them after a sham judicial proceeding? What person would feel safe to speak the truth in the face of that kind of governmental power?

Ironically, even though the Pentagon is maintaining that the "war on terrorism" has subordinated our Constitution and Bill of Rights to military command, U.S. officials continue to assure us that the troops in Iraq are fighting to protect our "freedom." But to which freedom exactly are they referring? The "freedom" of living in a country where the military authorities have the omnipotent power to arbitrarily arrest and punish people and deny them such fundamental rights as the right to counsel and due process of law? Or the freedom of living in a country whose Constitution and Bill of Rights guarantees such rights to everyone, citizen and noncitizen alike?

In 1961, President Dwight Eisenhower warned us to "guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex" and advised us to "never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes." The American people would have done well to heed Eisenhower's warning.

Mr. Hornberger is founder and president of The Future of Freedom Foundation.

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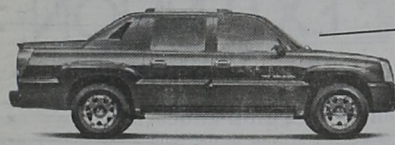
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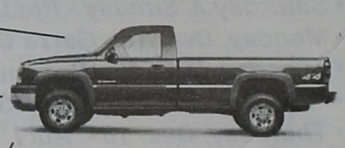
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