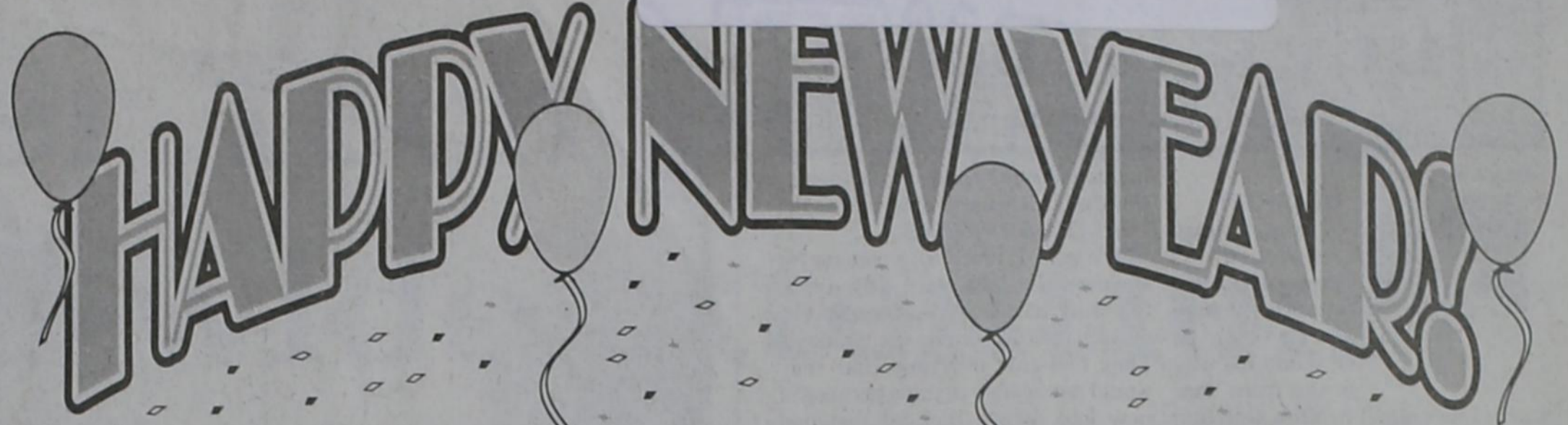


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The Post Dispatch

78th Year Number 31 USPS 439-620 © 2003 The Post Dispatch Newsstand Price 75¢ Thursday, January 1, 2004

Christmas Eve fire consumes house, leaves couple stranded

Bill and Barbe Bevers were planning to move to Fort Worth over the holidays, but a Christmas Eve fire interrupted their plans. The couple lost the entire contents of their home in a fire that erupted at about 7 p.m. Dec. 24.

All but a few clothes and the couple's everyday essentials had been packed in boxes and stored on a screened-in porch that flanked the back of the house, located in the 700 block of North Broadway. The Bevers had spent much of the day with two of their sons who'd come in for a holiday visit. Their visitors had been gone a short time when Barbe Bevers said she and her husband heard a "loud pop" at the back of the house.

Bill Bevers ran to the area the noise came from - the screened-in back porch - and saw the back wall engulfed in flames. He grabbed a water hose while Barbe Bevers ran out the front door to the gas station down the street to call for help. The Bevers' phone has been disconnected in preparation for the move.

By the time she returned, Barbe Bevers said flames were already billowing out the front door.

Seventeen firefighters and three units responded to the emergency call, Fire Marshal Mark Short said. It took firefighters almost three hours to contain the fire.

Investigators have determined the fire was likely started by an electrical short, Short said. The structure and its contents were a "total loss."

Some of the outside walls and the roof of the wooden house the couple rented for five years is still standing, but Bevers said the fire destroyed everything she and her husband owned.

"It's totaled," she said. "There's nothing at all left.... Stuff can be replaced, but my kids' baby pictures and all the pictures when they grew up are all gone. You can't replace that."

The couple had no renters' insurance. Their life savings, which Bevers said had withdrawn from the bank earlier in the week before the planned move, was lost in the fire.

In addition to losing the contents of their home, the Bevers also lost two dogs in the fire. The animals escaped the burning house, but the two adult blue heelers died at the scene.

Four blue heeler puppies, including one Bevers carried with her on her dash to call 9-1-1, survived the blaze; however, one of the animals disappeared after the couple left their dogs with a friend in the Graham community. There, 1-year-old Diamond climbed a fence and disappeared.

Following an extensive search over several days, Bill Bevers found Diamond Sunday morning on the Tahoka highway about eight miles from where she'd disappeared. She was exhausted, Barbe Bevers said, but in good condition.

"I think she was trying to go home," Bevers said Sunday evening after her dog was recovered. "It's nice to have some light at the end of this tunnel."

Bevers lauded the work of local firefighters, including her nephew, Kelly Baker. When Baker learned Bevers' purse, along with the couple's savings, was inside the burning house, he promised he would locate it after the fire was extinguished.

"He kept that promise," Bevers said.

The contents of the purse were scorched and melted, but the bills inside were at least partially recognizable as U.S. currency. The Bevers are working with a local bank and the Federal Reserve in hopes of eventually recouping at least a portion of the savings they lost.

Short commended the quick response of local firefighters, particularly with regard to the timing of the Christmas Eve fire.

"To have 17 firefighters there, that's a good turnout, especially during the holidays," he said. "It shows the dedication of the firefighters in Post. They put aside time with their families to help others."

As of Sunday evening, friends had supplied the Bevers with some clothes and the Salvation Army and the Victims Assistance Program had arranged for a four-night stay at a local motel.

Bevers said it is unclear what the future holds.

"We're still trying to figure out what we're going to do," she said.



Christmas Eve fire guts house on North Broadway
A house fire Christmas Eve kept Post Volunteer Firemen busy and put a big dent in a local family's holiday cheer. No one was injured in the blaze, which was reported about 7 p.m. The house is located on North Broadway near the curve. (Photo by Tim Burnett)

Big changes in 2003

by Sheri Lewis

The past 12 months have ushered in a variety of changes for Post and Garza County. Tragedies and triumphs. Expanded water availability. The closure of the community's oldest store. And increases in taxes, as well as a public outcry for a roll-back election to be decided in 2004.

As local residents gear up to move into a new calendar year, The Post Dispatch looks back at news that made front page headlines during the past 365 days. The following is a synopsis of the Dispatch's coverage of events that have shaped and impacted local residents:

January 2003
The Post City Council approved a contract for \$3.8 million for the installation of pipe and tanks for the emergency water supply project. The project is designed to transport water from Slaton to Post.

The Post City Council took action to place a sales tax increase proposal on the May ballot.

The Lubbock City Council approved increased fees for the Sam Wahl Recreational Area of Lake Alan Henry.

Ninety-nine 4-H and FFA youths participated in the 39th annual Garza County Junior Livestock Show, receiving a total of \$49,960 in premiums and prize money.

Officials with the Garza County Health Care District received notification that Covenant Health System plans to opt out of its contract for the operation of the local health care clinic.

The Garza Theatre's "Charlotte's Web" was recognized as Best Show at the annual Willy Awards event. Several "Web" cast members garnered individual awards.

February 2003
The Post City Council established the Caprock Economic Development Corporation. The purpose of the corporation is to oversee the payment of bonds relating to the Slaton water

project. Once bond payments are completed, the corporation will be dissolved.

Marlin Marcum, an educator with the Comfort Independent School District, was named superintendent of the Post Independent School District.

The contracts of all Post Independent School District principals were extended by district trustees.

Garza County Commissioners approved a resolution in support of a regional Foreign Trade Zone in cooperation with Market Lubbock Inc. The FTZ is designed to provide incentives for manufacturers and distributors to locate in counties adjacent to Lubbock County.

Dr. Bobby Bain, retiring Post ISD superintendent, was recognized at a reception held in his honor.

Garza County officials were notified that the MTC Corporation would no longer operate the local juvenile detention center after April 30. The corporation cited financial losses in its decision to give up operation of the 96-bed facility.

The Garza County Health Care District board voted unanimously in favor of contracting with PNS of Lubbock for the management and operation of a local health care clinic. PNS was one of two groups that submitted bid proposal packages to the board.

March 2003
About 35 local residents gathered at the flagpole of the Garza County courthouse March 3 to show support for the U.S., its leaders and military.

The City-County Ambulance Service joined the emergency communications system operated out of the Garza County Sheriff's Department. The move, made possible following an update of communications equipment at the sheriff's department, is designed to increase the overall emergency medical response capability by teaming the ambulance operations with the existing 9-1-1 emergency

dispatch system.

Betty Posey was named Citizen of the Year at the annual Post Commerce & Tourism Bureau awards banquet. Business of the Year honors went to Citizens Bank. The Conservation Farmer of the Year award went to Lewis Farms.

A town hall meeting was held at the Post Community Center. Hosted by directors of the Garza County Health Care District, the event was designed to provide information on the various health care options available to district taxpayers, including the possibility of opening a new hospital. The meeting drew a large turnout.

Post Independent School District trustees accepted the resignation of athletic director Richard Gorman. Gorman had one year remaining on his contract.

Garza County Health Care District directors voted to call a May 3 election to allow voters to decide whether or not a new hospital should be constructed and opened in Post.

The traditional Tabana Yuane (Sunrise Wind) ceremony conducted at the city park indicated the county's agricultural interests will see an "above average" year. Kenneth LeBlanc led the annual event, which included a memorial to the late "Chief" Frank Runkles, the longtime leader of the ceremony who died March 21.

April 2003
Tim James of Lamesa was named athletic director of the Post Independent School District. James began his coaching career in Floydada and spent 14 years in Lamesa prior to accepting the Post position.

Garza County officials accepted an offer from the Denver, Colo.-based Cornerstone firm to manage the juvenile detention facility. Cornerstone manages similar facilities in Pennsylvania, Montana, Colorado and Utah. They will take over May 1.

May 2003

A plan for city-wide upgrades to be budgeted over the next three years was approved by the Post City Council. The plan calls for upgrades in the cemetery, baseball fields, streets, sewer, water, landfill and municipal facilities.

Voters turned down a proposal to construct a \$10.5 million, 10-bed hospital in the Garza County Health Care District election. Almost 31 percent of the district's registered voters participated in the election, which saw 743 votes against and 113 in favor of the plan. The two unopposed board candidates - incumbent Zoe Kirkpatrick and newcomer Terry Bartlett - were voted into office.

In the municipal election, both propositions earned voter approval. Proposition 1 called for the adoption of an additional sales and use tax at the rate of one-half of one percent to reduce the property tax rate. Proposition 2 called for the adoption of a sales and use tax at the rate of one-half of one percent to fund the cost of debt service to finance a new water supply project. Mayor Archie Gill, Ward 1 Councilwoman Juanita Pantoja, Ward 2 Councilman Dick Odom and Joshua Whiteley, all of whom ran unopposed, were voted into office.

The top three vote-getters in the Post Independent School District election were Alexa Collier, Scott Creech and Milton Williams. Eight candidates, including three incumbents, were vying for three open positions.

VFW Post 6796 hosted the District 7 convention.

Municipal Judge Jim Plummer announced he would resign his position in June to devote more time to personal and business interests.

A 20-year-old Shallowater man, Brandon McIntyre, drowned at Lake

(Continued on Page 7)

Post Notes

Stocksow entries due January 8

All exhibitors planning to show in the Garza County Jr Livestock Show must have entries in the Extension Service office by 5 p.m. Thursday, January 8. 4-H'ers will need to bring checks or enough money to pay for all validation tags at time of entry.

Willy Awards Gala January 24

The Garza Theatre's annual Willy Awards Gala will be held Saturday, January 24. Call the theatre box office at 495-4005 for reservations.

MAD DAD's open during Christmas break

MAD DAD's will be open during the Christmas break Monday through Friday, except for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. The center will operate from 1 to 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. to midnight on Friday and Saturday evenings. For more information, call 495-1244.

Judy's Jabberin'

by Judy (Ballentine) Bush

Hey everyone,



DURWOOD

Not very long ago I watched as Durwood parked in front of the store and I watched as he made his way to the front door

where I met him. I had not seen him in awhile so I gave him a hug and ask what he was up to that day. He replied with "I just came in to let "Judy's Jabberin" know that I still loved her. How I will miss him. He was my column critic. If I missed a week he would call me on Thursday and want to know what was up that I didn't get the column in.

There was no acceptable excuse. He would always tell me that "Jabberin" came first because he liked to read it. He would also call every now and then call and give me "news" to put in. No matter how short or lack of material he always let me know how much he appreciated "Jabberin" to read.

During the time that Rick and I lived next door we became so close to Durwood. He was such a wonderful, caring person. I know that his family will miss him terribly.

OTHER SYMPHTHIES

Also to the Cleo Sappington family and the Ruben Wilke family. Our

holiday season has been saddened by the loss of all these wonderful people.

WHAT A SURPRISE

Rick and I received a wonderful surprise the day after Christmas. Our children, Megan and Stan Everitt of Akin, SC flew in for the holidays. They had told everyone that they would not be able to come because of new jobs so we had all resigned ourselves that we would not get to see them until March or April. But lo and behold there they were Friday. What a great surprise it was and Megan was really proud of herself for pulling it off. It was great to see them. They are really happy in their new home and have adjusted to "Southern" living quite well.

UPDATE ON BETTY

I hear that Betty Posey is recovering from her knee replacement surgery pretty well. I know she had a hard time in the beginning but things are going better now. I know she is missed on the ambulance but hopefully will be back and going strong before long.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

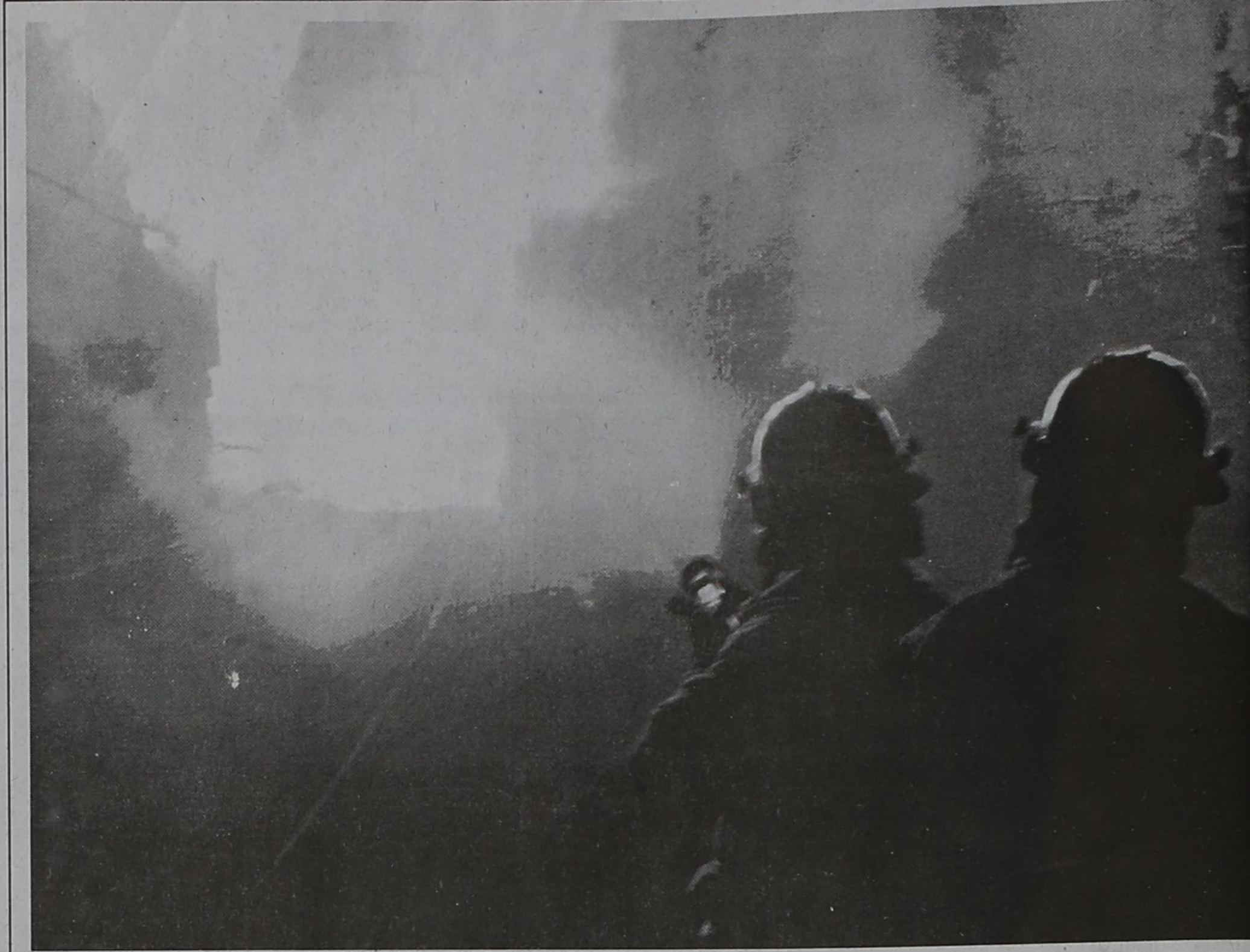
Happy birthday to my son, Kelly of Lubbock. Also to my granddaughter Alison, a belated birthday wish. She celebrated her birthday on December 26.

YOUR NEWS

Please call in your news and tidbits so that I may keep Jabberin going. It is so hard to know what all is going on if you don't call in. You can call me at 495-0277 or you may email me at cellonepost@dtnspeed.net. Thanks in advance for your help.

TILL NEXT WEEK

Guess that is all for this week. I hope that everyone has a great New Year and that if you are out on the road, please be careful. May God bless each of you. See you next week.



Post Volunteer Fire Department crews fought a house fire for several hours Christmas Eve. (See Page 1 for details). (Photo by Tim Burnett)

State reports decreases in sales tax receipts

The sales and use tax analysis by the state comptroller's office show Garza and Lynn counties posted substantial drops in the second quarter of 2003.

According to the analysis report on retail trade published by the state in late November, Garza County ended the second quarter with 138 reporting outlets compared to 156 in the same time period a year earlier.

Gross sales for the second quarter in 2003 approached \$6.5 million, while they exceeded \$7.5 million in the second quarter of 2002, resulting in a percentage change of -24.6 percent.

A similar trend was recorded in Lynn County, where 46 outlets were reported at the close of the second quarter in 2003, compared to 49 mid-way through 2002. Gross sales for the second quarter in 2003 were slightly more than \$2.9 million, down 10.2 percent from the \$3.23 million recorded in the previous year.

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PHS Junior Varsity Lady Lopes enjoying their recent Christmas party are (back row, left to right) Claire Kirkpatrick, Steffi Norman, Keisha Odom, Ashley Powell, (middle row) Cristina Aguilar, Rachel Gray, (front row) Kylie Easterling, Courtney Short, Kadie Vernon, Jackie Hay and Ashley Wilson. Others attending the event were Coach and Mrs White and Courtney Copeland.

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Post Fiber Tech products get world-wide attention

by Sheri Lewis

Post Fiber-Tech has enjoyed a substantial measure of success in recent years. But all of that is about to change.

The corporation, which manufactures a variety of items ranging from industrial pads to feminine hygiene products, appears to be on the verge of tremendous growth as its biggest product, Insultone, is being marketed by the largest Fiberglass insulation company in the world.

Insultone is a fire-retardant polyester insulation product developed by Post Fiber-Tech for the Johns Manville Company, which logged worldwide sales of \$525 million last year. Marketed nationally and internationally through Johns Manville, Insultone can be used in countless situations where insulation is needed in motors, heaters, electricity panels, small appliances and a myriad of other uses.

Post Fiber-Tech Vice President David Davis said the association with Johns Manville could be the catalyst to significant growth for the local business. Also, Insultone materials have recently been shipped to Fort Hood for possible use in the maintenance of U.S. military vehicles.

"It's pretty exciting to see what you can do," Davis said.

In addition to Insultone, Fiber-Tech manufactures and markets a variety of other products, including CottonSorb absorbent pads, InsulCot insulation products created from denim waste, and organic sanitary liners made from organic cotton purchased from South Plains farmers. With the exception of Insultone, all of Fiber-Tech's products are biodegradable.

CottonSorb pads, rolls and booms are marketed for use in industrial settings to contain drips, leaks and spills in both oil and water. Also used for containment and wipe downs, CottonSorb is useful in the event of tanker spills and major water-based spills in rivers, lakes and oceans. According to a brochure on CottonSorb, the product "sorbs" up to 30 times its weight, can be recycled and reused numerous times and can be easily disposed of through incineration. The products burn without toxic fumes, leaving less than 1 percent ash residue.

InsulCot cotton insulation products are made from 100 percent cotton fibers using a patented manufacturing process. They provide equivalent R-values to synthetic fibers in any given thickness, according to an InsulCot brochure, and are non-toxic and flame-retardant. InsulCot products can be safely handled and installed without the use of protective clothing and are environmentally safe.

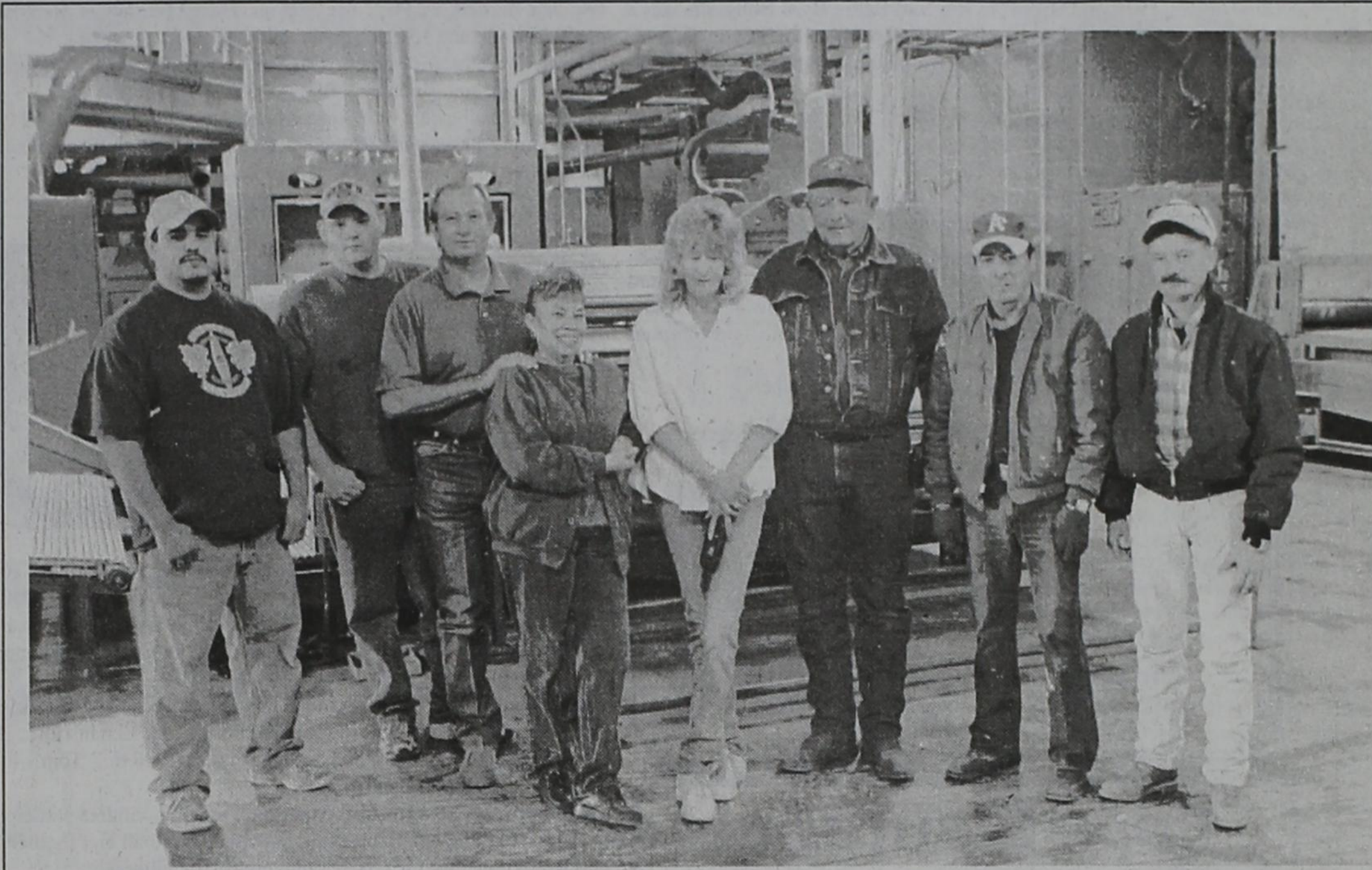
Fiber-Tech also has done substantial research in the development of feminine products created from organic cotton. Organic Essentials of O'Donnel will soon be marketing some of these products.

Davis said the company continues in its research and development, working with Texas Tech University, Green Tech Texas, Advanced Foil Systems Inc. and other small companies interested in developing non-woven products. One product they are currently working on is a disposable high chair tray.

Fiber-Tech has been operating in Post for several years. Davis, who farmed cotton for 15 years, and his partner, contractor and builder Charles Smith of South Lyon, Mich., purchased the company in 1999 with the understanding that Davis would operate the local facility.

Last year, Fiber-Tech purchased the old Burlington building in about 80,000 square feet of space from the Post Economic Development Corp. The business employs eight individuals who work 10-hour shifts four days per week. Davis said he plans to add two more shifts in March or April with the expansion of the business.

Davis resides in Post with his wife, Kelly, and their son, Dylan, a student at Post Middle School.



The folks at Post Fiber Tech - (left to right) Eric Hernandez, Paul Criswell, David Davis, Raquel Collazo, Judy Marchetti, Bill Gandy, Saul Rodriguez and John York Jr. (Photo by Tim Burnett)

Cotton Kings host "Post Night" on January 10 at Lubbock Municipal Coliseum

Lubbock Cotton Kings professional hockey team will honor the City of Post Saturday, January 10th, as the 'Kings will celebrate "Post Night" at the Lubbock Municipal Coliseum while hosting the Wichita Thunder.

Prior to the game, the Cotton Kings will honor Post by having the Pride of Post High School Band performing the National

Anthem and the Post High Fight Song. The Cotton Kings have Lubbock tied into their name, but they benefit from all South Plains communities. They give back to the communities by recognizing area schools, and on this special night, the 'Kings are recognizing a community.

Citizens of Post can receive a

special rate for the January 10th game by contacting Geoff Goff at the 'Kings office at 747-7825 ext. 215.

Tickets are on sale at all Select-A-Seat locations or by calling (806) 770-2000. For more 'Kings information, please call (806) 747-PUCK or visit the Cotton Kings website at www.cottonkings.com.

'Lope football players get additional honors

The Bold Gold Antelopes continue to rake in gridiron honors. In the Dec. 24 issue of the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, four 'Lopes were named to the 2003 A-J All-South Plains 2A football team.

Running back Mitchell Mills and offensive lineman Chessauf Garcia were tapped for the team's offense, while defensive end Kris Hernandez and linebacker Mark McCallister were included on the defense. McCallister was also named to the AJ's South Plains Super Team.

All four honorees are seniors at Post High School.

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Trying Saddam

by Bill O'Reilly



According to a recent Gallup poll, most Americans want Saddam Hussein tried in an International Court, but 24 percent say a U.S. military court should decide his fate. This, of course, would be a disaster, because America's legal system is so screwed up, Saddam might wind up a winner. Here's what could possibly happen:

The Ninth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals in San Francisco, a legal body modeled on the philosophy of Che Guevara and the most overturned federal court in U.S. history, might well rule the military court unconstitutional because, as we all know, military people have strict rules of behavior and make judgments. The Ninth would never abide that.

Immediately after the Ninth ruled, Saddam would find himself in civilian criminal court and would hire Mark Geragos and Johnnie Cochran to represent him. Geragos would book himself on the Larry King program and declare that Saddam was not responsible for the mass murderers in Iraq, devil worshippers were. Geragos would convince Larry that the devil people infiltrated Saddam's inner circle without his knowledge. Only Saddam's sons knew about the insidious activities. Too bad they're dead.

At the same time, Cochran would be asserting that U.S. forces actually planted the tens of thousands of bodies that were dug up in mass graves. Yes, that would have been difficult, Cochran would tell the E! Entertainment Network, but if the Los Angeles police department could plant evidence on every single criminal case it had ever investigated, then surely the American Armed Forces could transport 100,000 dead bodies into Iraq. E! would also report that Cochran had evidence Colombian drug dealers actually held Saddam hostage and ordered him to invade Kuwait.

In the preliminary hearing, Geragos would demand Saddam be let out of prison and housed at the Neverland ranch so he, Geragos, could do the needed leg work on the Michael Jackson case and Saddam's situation at the same time. Geragos would also file a motion to suppress everything Saddam has ever said in his entire life.

Meantime, Cochran would raise the race issue. He'd produce an American corporal who had uttered anti-Arab remarks while taking machine gun fire in a foxhole. Using that evidence, Cochran could then weave a brilliant line of logic: If Americans were so hateful toward Saddam's forces, why wouldn't they develop hideous weapons and violate international law? Anyone would, it was absolutely a matter of self-defense. Cochran would then have Saddam try on all his old uniforms and they would not fit. Obviously, then, this man isn't really Saddam after all. He's Scott Peterson.

Geragos would then jump in quickly. If Scott Peterson were in Baghdad all these years, he couldn't possibly have killed his wife Lacy and their unborn child. Different devil worshippers did that. And Geragos would convince Larry King that those people worked at Fox News. Al Franken would back him up.

In the end, Saddam Hussein would be acquitted by a jury, which would find reasonable doubt indeed. No weapons of mass destruction. Planted bodies all over the place. Devil people running wild. No wonder things went wrong in Iraq. But you can't blame Saddam.

The delighted dictator would then move to Florida and buy a nifty home near O.J., because the Sunshine State will let you keep your assets no matter how many people you kill and torture. A few months later, Saddam would appear on "Dateline" and proclaim that he would spend the rest of his days trying to track down the real culprits in Iraq. He would also file suit for millions claiming Michael Jackson had molested him at Neverland. American justice. There's none better.

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. This column originates on the Web site www.billoreilly.com. COPYRIGHT 2003 BillO'Reilly.com.

Our vision for 2004

by Wesley W. Burnett
I have a dream for the new year ... a dream filled with visions of individual liberty and freedom for all people.

It's a dream about us, for us.
I dream that free enterprise will replace the current socialist notion of "government controlled economies."

I dream that a republic form of government will replace the corporate form that now strangles us with cajillions of corporate rules and regulations.

I dream that young people will learn about and appreciate the sacrifices of their ancestors in fighting and dying for liberty and freedom.

I dream that the evils of democracy and majority rule will be replaced with a government designed to secure individual rights.

I dream that elected officials will understand the importance of upholding our constitutional rights.

I dream that the principles of individual liberty and personal responsibility will once again be embraced by Americans.

I dream that justice will be dispensed with fairness and simplicity.

I dream that peace officers will be relieved of revenue collection duties and devote their efforts to securing our individual rights.

I dream that all parents will take responsibility for the moral instruction and education of their children.

I dream that our church leaders will see the evil of government control and discard corporate charters and the infamous "501c3" instrument.

I dream that people will reject the evils of taxation through lawful and peaceful means.

I dream that people will express their disagreements with one another without being disagreeable.

I dream that people will accept God's love, grace and mercy, and show by our daily lives that we are his people, eager to be his instruments on this earth.

Parting company is an option

by Walter E. Williams



A fortnight ago, in "Let's Do Some Detective Work," I provided unassailable evidence that Congress had vastly exceeded powers delegated to it by our Constitution. In last week's column, "Getting Back Our Liberties," I argued that liberties lost are seldom regained, but there was an outside chance to regain them if enough liberty-minded Americans were to pursue Free State Project's proposal to set up New Hampshire as a free state.

Free State Project (www.freesstateproject.org) intends to get 20,000 or so Americans to move to New Hampshire and, through a peaceful political process, reduce burdensome taxation and regulation, reform state and local law, end federal mandates, and attempt to restore constitutional federalism as envisioned by the nation's founders.

Since there was only a remote possibility that we could successfully negotiate with Congress, the Courts and White House to obey the U.S. Constitution, I speculated that liberty could only be realized by a unilateral declaration of independence — namely, part company. Quite a few readers criticized the idea, calling secession unconstitutional. Let's look at it.

On March 2, 1861, after seven states had seceded and two days before Abraham Lincoln's inauguration, Sen. James R. Doolittle of Wisconsin proposed a constitutional amendment that said, "No State or any part thereof, heretofore admitted or hereafter admitted into the Union, shall have the power to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the United States."

Several months earlier, Reps. Daniel E. Sickles of New York, Thomas B. Florence of Pennsylvania and Otis S. Ferry of Connecticut proposed a constitutional amendment to prohibit secession. Here's my no-brainer question: Would there have been any point to offering these amendments if secession were already unconstitutional? I'm guessing, no.

But there's more evidence. The ratification documents of Virginia, New York and Rhode Island explicitly said that they held the right to resume powers delegated should the federal government become abusive of those powers.

There's more evidence. At the 1787 constitutional convention, a proposal was made to allow the federal government to suppress a seceding state. James Madison, the father of our constitution, rejected it, saying: "A Union of the States containing such an ingredient seemed to provide for its own destruction. The use of force against a State would look more like a declaration of war than an infliction of punishment and would probably be considered by the party attacked as a dissolution of all previous compacts by which it might be bound."

Professor Thomas DiLorenzo, in his revised "The Real Lincoln," provides abundant evidence in the forms of quotations from our Founders and numerous newspaper accounts that prove that Americans always took the right of secession for granted. Plus, secession was not an idea that had its origins in the South. Infuriated by Thomas Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase, in 1803, the first secessionist movement started in New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut and other New England states.

Every single bit of evidence shows that states have a right to secede. There's absolutely nothing in the Constitution that prohibits secession. What stops secession is the brute force of a mighty federal government, as witnessed by the costly War of 1861. Only one thing good came out of that war. It eliminated slavery. It's had a devastating legacy for future generations of Americans, in that since the issue of secession was brutally settled, the federal government is free to run roughshod over the safeguards envisioned by the Framers, namely the Ninth and Tenth Amendments.

There's little to suggest that the same brutality wouldn't be encountered if secession were tried again, as one writer cautioned: If New Hampshire seceded, massive troops along with today's deadly modern military equipment would be on its soil before lunch.

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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Saddam's capture violates constitution

by Sheldon Richman

Saddam Hussein went a great distance toward establishing the kind of totalitarianism that emerged in the early 20th century in Russia, then Italy and Germany. It was a regime based on a pervasive party and ideology, self-adulation by the dictator (with concomitant privileges), and rule by terror.

The regime combined brutal repression, including unspeakable forms of torture and murder, with succor, such as food rations and medical care. The inclusion of welfare-state features was an admission that brute force and fear are not enough to hold people as political slaves. Unless they are led to believe they need the regime — that its terror is somehow necessary — the people remain capable of rebellion.

Now this man who wanted to be regarded as every Iraqi's father has been brought low, dragged out of a hole in the ground looking like a common bum.

What lover of liberty cannot take joy in seeing Saddam reach the end of his road? Reading in the Washington Post about the four Iraqis permitted to confront the captured Saddam, one can imagine their satisfaction in seeing the tyrant treated as he deserves: as a criminal.

The joy at his fate, unfortunately, should not be unalloyed. The capture of Saddam and his impending trial and punishment cannot be separated from the manner in which he was deposed and apprehended. It was the result of an improper and unconstitutional exercise of U.S. government power by a president convinced that the rule of law, including international law, is made of elastic.

Contrary to what some may think, this is not the time to forget the illegal conduct of the Bush administration. Those who experience unmixed satisfaction at Saddam's capture need to check their premises. They are willfully evading a host of considerations that are too important to be ignored.

It may not matter in today's postconstitutional America, but there was a time when the thought of American troops chasing another country's dictator would have inspired revulsion in this country.

The failure to find weapons that could have threatened the American people and the lack of evidence that Saddam participated in the 9/11 attacks have left the Bush administration with one last rationalization for its illegal and undeclared war: the liberation and reform of Iraq. The president, his spokesmen, and his media boosters talk of mass graves and the prospects for democracy. Those are rationales enough, they say. Are they?

No one should be surprised by the mass graves. It was known that Saddam was a mass murderer when he was still a U.S. government ally in the late 1980s and the neoconservatives were proclaiming

him the voice of moderation in the Middle East. (This was after he was helped into power by the ubiquitous CIA.)

As for planting democracy, it seems that nothing has been learned since 1917, when the war to make the world safe for democracy ushered in the worst era of European despotism imaginable. The project to bring freedom to Iraq must seem strange to those around the world who realize that the Bush administration is allied with some pretty nasty rulers in the Middle East and Central Asia. If most Americans see nothing peculiar in that, it may only be because their government has done this sort of thing for so long.

But even if democracy were a vine that would easily take root in the Iraqi soil, that would not justify what President Bush did. The end does not justify the means. Or does that apply only to others?

I realize that bringing up the constitutional limits on government at a time like this is as welcome as telling the designated driver he shouldn't have ordered that beer. But here goes. The Constitution delegated a short list of powers to the Congress. Any power not expressly delegated is therefore off-limits. Nowhere on that short list does one find language implying that the U.S. government may free captive peoples in other lands.

That makes the war unconstitutional — even if Congress had declared it, which it didn't. How can we bring freedom to Iraq when we're losing it here?

Sheldon Richman is senior fellow at The Future of Freedom Foundation, editor of Ideas on Liberty magazine and author of "Ancient History: U.S. Conduct in the Middle East since World War II and the Folly of Intervention."

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To be ratified at county ratification conventions. For a link to the entire constitution or for more information or to volunteer, go to this web site:

www.tcrf.com
www.freetexans.org

Post Middle School students earn U.I.L. awards

Post Middle School recently recognized several of its students who earned top honors in UIL contests.

Recognized for one-act play were Brenna Postell and Kelsey Sanderson, both listed to the All-Star Cast. Receiving honorable mention were Samantha Hoover and Michael Porter. Participation awards went to Tamara Raymundo, Chasiti Rutherford, Meagan Howard-Griffis, Zachary Kocurek, Lori Jones, Clint Windham and Cass Tatum.

Other honorees, according to information provided by the school, included:

- Oral reading - Sixth grade, Chloe Mason, sixth place, and Kelly Chapa, second place.

- Modern oratory - Seventh grade, Adrianna Ceja, sixth place, and Jakelin Delgadillo, third place; eighth grade, Zachary

Kocurek, sixth place.

- Ready writing - Seventh grade, Alex Hart, second place; and eighth grade, Suhani Bhakta, fourth place, and Meagan Howard-Griffis, first place.

- Editorial writing - Seventh grade, Jackie Slaugh, sixth, and Stacy Bocko, fifth.

- Math - Seventh grade, Braden Courtney, third place

- Math team - Braden Courtney, Zachary Nava, Jackie Slaugh and Clint Windham, third place.

- Number sense - Sixth grade, Chandi Bhakta, fifth; seventh grade, Braden Courtney, sixth place.

- Number sense team - Sixth grade, Chandi Bhakta, John Rodriguez, Chasiti Rutherford and Clint Windham, third place.

- Calculator - Sixth grade, Ranae Storie, sixth place; seventh grade, Braden Courtney, third

place.

- Calculator team - Seventh grade, Braden Courtney, Zachary Davis and Travis Rasbeary, third place.

- Spelling - Sixth grade, Lindsay Morrow, fourth, and Alexandria Rodriguez, second.

- Spelling - Sixth grade team, Lindsay Morrow, Alexandria Rodriguez and Quinton Valdez, second place.

- Dictionary skills - Eighth grade, Ericka Cravy, sixth place.

- Dictionary skills - Eighth grade team, Ericka Cravy, Lori Jones, Brenna Postell and Tamara Raymundo, third place.

- Listening skills - Sixth grade, Michael Porter, second; seventh grade, Jakelin Delgadillo, sixth place; and eighth grade, Meagan Howard-Griffis, second place, and Suhani Bhakta, first place.

- Listening skills - Eighth grade team, Suhani Bhakta, Meagan Howard-Griffis and Zachary Kocurek, first place.

- Maps, charts & graphs - Sixth grade, John Bocko, sixth place; seventh grade, Zach Davis, second place; and eighth grade, Call Windham, fifth place, and Tim Wilson, first place.

- Maps, charts & graphs team - Eighth grade, Tim Wilson, Call Windham, Bertha Gonzales and Allen Heckaman, first place.

- Art - Sixth grade team, Travis Bergen and Chandi Bhakta, fifth place; seventh grade team, Francisco Gonzales, Chloe Mason and Branda Stevens, third place; and eighth grade team, Chasiti Rutherford, Toni Wait and Danica Williams, fourth place.

Words worth saving ...

Will Rogers, who died in a plane crash with Wylie Post in 1935, was probably the greatest political sage this country has ever known.

Enjoy the following quotes—

1. Never slap a man who's chewing to bacco.
 2. Never kick a cow chip on a hot day.
 3. There are 2 theories to arguing with a woman...neither works.
 4. Never miss a good chance to shut up.
 5. Always drink upstream from the herd.
 6. If you find yourself in a hole, stop digging.
 7. The quickest way to double your money is to fold it and put it back in your pocket.
 8. There are three kinds of men: The ones that learn by reading. The few who learn by observation. The rest of them have to pee on the electric fence.
 9. Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.
 10. If you're riding' ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there.
 11. Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier'n puttin' it back.
2. AND FINALLY: After eating an entire bull, a mountain lion felt so good he started roaring. He kept it up until a hunter came along and shot him... The moral:

When you're full of bull, keep your mouth shut.

About Growing Older...

First, Eventually you will reach a point when you stop lying about your age and start bragging about it.

Second, The older we get, the fewer things seem worth waiting in line for.

Third, Some people try to turn back their odometers. Not me, I want people to know "why" I look this way. I've traveled a long way and some of the roads weren't paved.

Fourth, When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think of Algebra.

Fifth, You know you are getting old when every thing either dries up or leaks.

Sixth, I don't know how I got over the hill without getting to the top.

Seventh, One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young.

Eighth, One must wait until evening to see how splendid the day has been.

Ninth, Being young is beautiful, but being old is comfortable.

Tenth, Long ago when men cursed and beat the ground with sticks, it was called witchcraft. Today it's called golf.

And finally, If you don't learn to laugh at trouble, you won't have anything to laugh at when you are old.



Oral Reading and Modern Oratory are (top row, left to right), Adrianna Ceja, Zachary Kocurek, Jakelin Delgadillo, (front row) Kelly Chapa and Chloe Mason. Coaches were Mrs. Vass and Mrs. Hester. (Photo by Greg Henry)



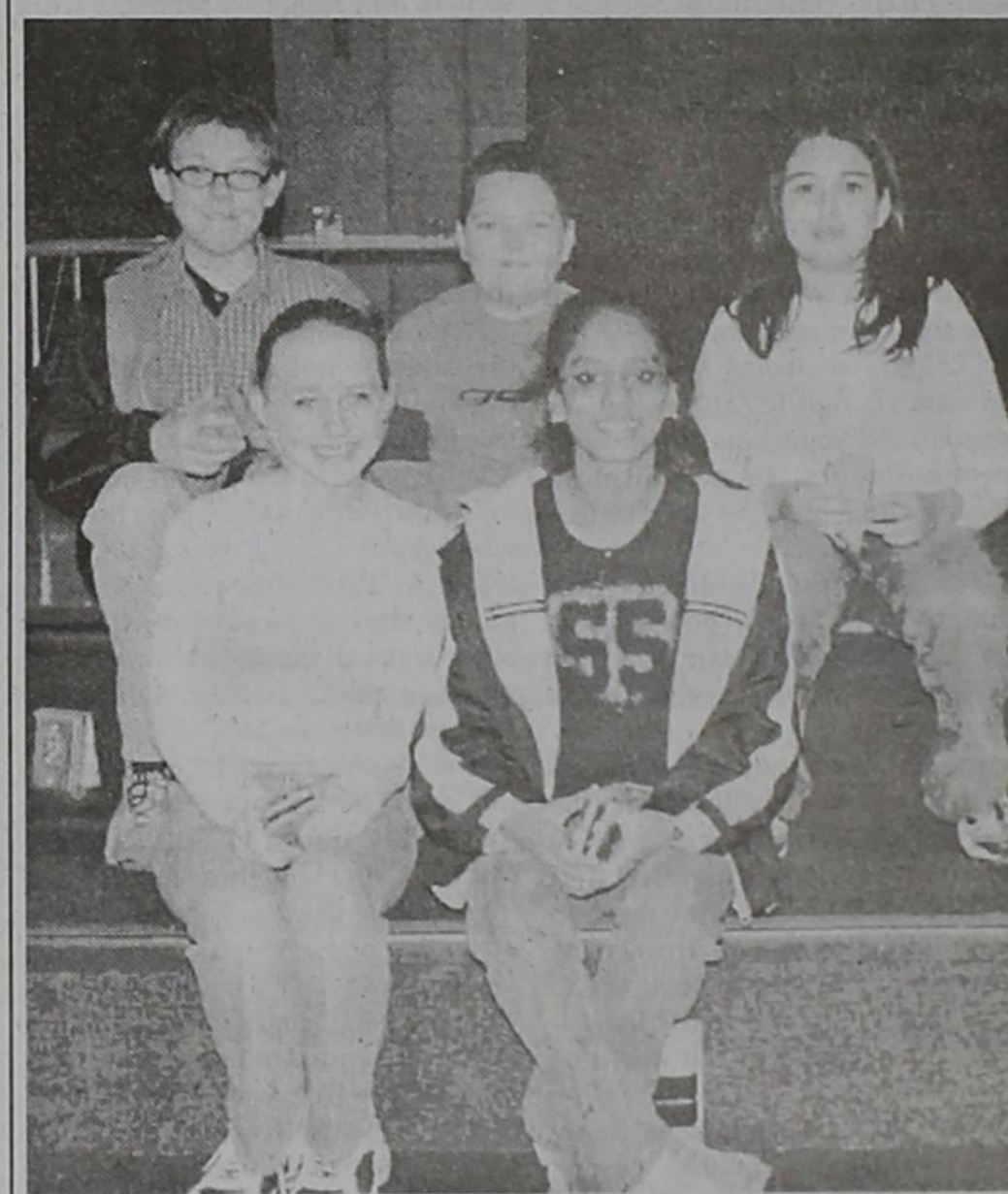
One Act Play participants are (top row, left to right), Wanda Osborn (Coach), Tamara Ramundo, Samantha Hoover, Lori Jones, Brenna Postell, Clint Windham, Dena Potter (Coach), (front row) Megan Howard-Griffis, Kelsey Sanderson, Cass Tatum, Zachary Kocurek, Michael Porter and Chasiti Rutherford. (Photo by Greg Henry)



Ready Writing and Editorial Writing are (top row, left to right), Meagan Howard - Griffis, Jackie Slaugh, Stacy Bocko, (front row) Suhani Bhakta and Alex Hart. Coach was Mrs. Tatum. (Photo by Greg Henry)



Math, Number Sense and Calculator team include (back row, left to right), Chasiti Rutherford, Chandi Bhakta, Jackie Slaugh, Zachary Nava, John Rodriguez, Clint Hindham, (front row) Ranae Storie, Travis Rasbeary, Braden Courtney and Zachary Davis. Coaches are Mr. Powell, Mrs Fluit and Coach Holdman. (Photo by Greg Henry)



Listening Skills team were (top row, left to right), Zachary Kocurek, Michael Porter, Jakelin Delgadillo, (front row) Meagan Howard-Griffis and Sukani Bhakta. Coach was Ms. Vaughn.



Spelling and Dictionary Skills team are (back row, left to right), Lori Jones, Tamara Raymundo, Quinton Valdez, Lindsay Morrow, Alexandria Rodriguez, (front row) Erica Cravy and Brenna Postell. Coaches are Mrs. Humble and Mrs. Greer. (Photo by Greg Henry)



Maps, charts and Graphs and Art team are (back row, left to right), Tim Wilson, Call Windham, Zachary Davis, John Bocko and Francisco Gonzales, (front row) Toni Wait, Danica Williams, Chasiti Rutherford, Chloe Mason, Travis Bergin, Chandi Bhakta and Branda Stevens. Not in photo are Bertha Gonzales and Allen Hickaman. Coaches are Mrs. Adams and Dr. Coltrane. (Photo by Greg Henry)