

# The Post Dispatch

A BUILDER IN GARZA COUNTY SINCE 1926

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2012

THEPOSTDISPATCHONLINE.COM

75 CENTS

## Binford to leave GCFO after 20 years

### Outgoing administration leaves at least four vacancies

By Wayne Hodgin  
The Post Dispatch

A 20-plus year veteran of the Garza County Sheriff's Office will be resigning his post as chief deputy effective at midnight Dec. 31.

Tommy Binford has served in various capacities with the office under two different sheriffs.

"It's time to move on," he said. "A change is in order."

Binford joined the ranks of the Garza County Sheriff's Office on May 1, 1992, when Sheriff Kenneth Ratke was appointed to fill the unexpired term of the outgoing Freddy Cockrell.

Prior to that, Binford served about two and a half

years as a patrol officer and dispatcher with the Slaton Police Department.

A Garza County native, Binford graduated from the South Plains Association of Governments law enforcement academy in 1989.

With just more than a year left until he was expected to retire, Binford will continue his law enforcement career serving as an investigator for District Attorney-elect Michael Munk for the 106th Judicial District of Texas.

"I'm excited about this new chapter in my life," Binford said. "It'll be a great learning experience for me in my career and learning the ropes from the judicial side of the law."

Over the past two decades, Binford reflected on a few cases this week that stood out among the rest, including the missing persons case of Garza County resident Edna Blodgett.

Blodgett, in her early 70s, disappeared from her northern Garza County home in June 1993.

The woman, who apparently suffered from some type of dementia, had been known to date a younger man by the name of Jerry Tom Smith, who last was seen by a couple of local oilfield workers off County Road 134, reportedly, "in a deranged state of mind," Binford said.

"After those two oilfield workers saw him, he kinda disappeared for a couple of weeks and no one saw him," Binford said. "Then he showed up two weeks later attempting to pass a check on (Blodgett's) account."

Smith subsequently was prosecuted on forgery charges and sent to prison.

More **BINFORD** on page 7



**BINFORD**

## Post Notes

Events are listed free of charge for nonprofit civic organizations, schools and community events. Submit listings at least two weeks ahead of the date. Listings will run through the date of the event. Emailed submissions are preferred to thepostcitydispatch@gmail.com.

### Holiday dance

The Cowboy Christmas Ball will be from 8 p.m. to midnight Dec. 22 at the Dickens County Show Barn. Entertainment provided by recording artist DeAnne Roberts. Hors d'oeuvres, soft drinks. BYOB. Tickets cost \$15 and are available at the Post Dispatch, 123 E. Main St. For information, email contact@spur2020.org or call Cory Witters at 505-314-4852.

### Chamber award noms

The Post Area Chamber of Commerce is now accepting nominations from members for its annual Outstanding Business and Citizen awards. The banquet will be Feb. 23, and nominations will be accepted through Jan. 8. For information, call Janice Plummer at 495-3461 or email chamberofcommerce@postcitytexas.com.

### Red Kettle project

Members of the Post Lions Club will be "ringing the bells" to help the Salvation Army's Red Kettle Program every Saturday until Christmas at the United Supermarket in Post. This is the fourth year the Lions have participated in the event.

### Rabbit validations

Market show rabbit validations will be conducted at 5 p.m. Dec. 20 at the Garza County Junior Livestock Association show barn. For information, contact the Garza County Extension Office at 495-4400.

### Christmas exhibit

"The Joy of Christmas," an inspiring exhibit of Nativities and crèches from around the world, is on display at the O.S. Ranch Museum, 201 E. Main St. Hours are 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Call 806-495-3570 for information. Exhibit closes Jan. 26.

### GED class

General Education Diploma classes are now in session and are free to the public. Classes meet from 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays in Room 18 at Post High School. Enter through southwest doors. For information, email Ed Singletery at esingletery@postisd.net or call 495-2770.

### Beef symposium

The 2012 Southwest Beef Symposium will be Jan. 15-16 at the Overton Hotel and Conference Center in Lubbock. Pre-registration is 470. For information, call Bruce Carpenter at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Fort Stockton at 432-336-8585 or visit swbs.nmsu.edu.

## Correction

Deana Watson has been city secretary for eight years and a city employee for 15 years. A story in last week's Dispatch contained inaccurate information.

## News on the go



Use your smartphone to scan the quick response, or QR, code to visit us online.

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USPS 439-620



## County will pay for Curtis' new trial

### Accused thief has asked for a new jury trial in bus-battery case

By Wayne Hodgin  
The Post Dispatch

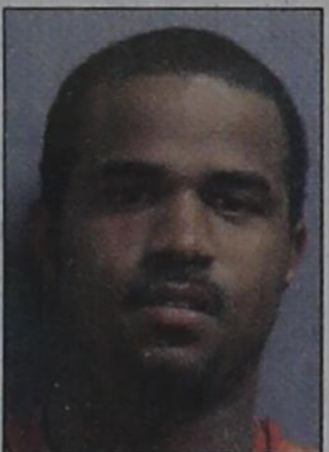
The defense of a Garza County man whose rap sheet is about as colorful as his conviction record will continue to be funded by local taxpayers.

County Judge Lee Norman on Tuesday ruled in favor of an indigent defense motion submitted by Jerry Lynn Curtis, 26, of Post, whose convictions last year in a theft and burglary at the school transportation facility was partially overturned by a state appeals court this past October.

County Attorney Michael Munk has said Curtis, who once again is being represented by the Caprock Regional Public Defenders Office, has indicated he will pursue another trial.

During a hearing Tuesday to determine his indigency status, Curtis testified he made about \$500 a week, putting his annual salary at roughly \$26,000 a year.

According to court records, however, the during the court's last indigency hearing last month, Norman denied Matthan Lane Ethridge's motion for indigence even though the man testified he made about \$1,690 a month, or roughly \$20,280 a year.



**CURTIS**

See **CURTIS**, Page 4

## All-American



Photo special to the Dispatch

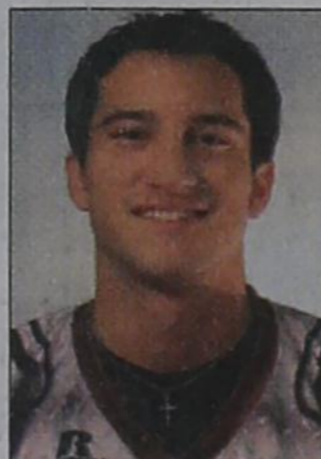
**D.J. Baiza returns a punt during McMurry's game Nov. 10 against Bacone College. Baiza was recently recognized as a first team All-American by Beyond Sports Network.**

## McMurry's Baiza named first team All-American

Special to the Dispatch

ABILENE — Four years ago, McMurry University punt returner/defensive back D.J. Baiza had to practically beg to be a part of the War Hawks' football program. Now, after closing out his career following his team's CHAMPS Heart of Texas Bowl victory and after playing a huge role in the turnaround of McMurry football, he has been recognized as a first team All-American by Beyond Sports Network.

"D.J. is a great football player," said McMurry head coach Hal Mumme. "But as good as he is as a player, he's an even better person. He is a big



**BAIZA**

reason the McMurry University has a winning football program."

In 2012, Baiza returned 18 punts for an average of 20.8 yards per return. He brought back two punts for touchdowns, one a season-long return of 75 yards. His TD returns added to his school career record total, giving him five punt returns for scores from 2009-12.

Baiza, a team co-captain, also had four kickoff returns for an average of 18.5 yards per return this year.

While being recognized as an all-America punt return specialist, Baiza helped the War Hawks

See **ALL-AMERICAN**, Page 9

## Schools ordered to address security plans

### Deadly attack at suburban CT school triggers safety concerns across nation

By Wayne Hodgin  
The Post Dispatch

Less than a week after one of the bloodiest massacres against youngsters in the nation's history occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., the Texas commis-

sioner of education has called on school systems across the state to review their emergency operation plans.

In a memo to all school administrators Monday, Commissioner Michael Williams, at the recommendation of Gov. Rick Perry, directed all public school superintendents throughout

the state to immediately address their respective district's plan to address mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery in the event of such a disaster.

Post ISD Superintendent Mike Comeaux on Tuesday said he already had been in contact with his administrators at the elementary, middle and high schools to address each school plan, which is required by state law.

Each plan must provide for employee training in responding to an emergency and mandatory school drills and exer-

cises to prepare students and employees for responding to an emergency, among other provisions.

Districts are required to conduct a safety and security audit of facilities and plan every three years and submit it to the state for review.

"While residents here in West Texas certainly aren't immune to such vicious attacks, it's still somewhat comforting to know we live in a small, close-knit community where we can still leave the

See **SECURITY**, Page 9

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# Letters to the editor

## Post Elementary food drive a success

The Post Elementary GT student hosted a food drive for the Post Cares organization. With great success a grand total of 1,285 food items were donated. Here are a few words from the GT students:

Thank you to every person big and small who gave food. You will help many people. JaCoby Webster (1st grade)

Thank you everyone big and small for helping us with the food drive. Raela Blevins (2nd grade)

I liked the food drive because I wanted to help others. Kohen Hudman (3rd grade)

We raised 1,285 food items and that was perfect. Thank you again for all your help. MyKaela Turner (3rd grade)

The food drive went really well and it will help feed a lot of people. Thank you for donating. Cohen Allred (3rd grade)

Thank you for being a part of the food drive.

The food drive was a success. Drew Porter (3rd grade)

The food drive was a great thing to do. We have a great school to help our community. Daisyana Cruz (3rd grade)

The food will help people from going hungry. Damon Mauney (3rd grade)

The food drive was fun and it helped the people on our community. Lupita Gonzales (3rd grade)

Thank you all for the food and it was fun counting all the food. Blake Parrott (4th grade)

The food drive was a good idea and will help many kids in need. Jacob Isbell (4th grade)

The food drive was a lot of hard work but was a blessed activity for those in need. Brennan Riker (4th grade)

The food drive helped people and helped show love to others. M'Kenzie Eidson (4th grade)

Thank you everyone and we could feed approximately 321 families of 4. Carson Holson (4th grade)



Special to the Dispatch  
Members of the gifted and talented program at Post Elementary School hosted a food drive over the last several weeks for less-fortunate families in the Post and Garza County communities.

Thank you everyone and you are all amazing and I am very impressed of how good we did. Chris Dihenia (5th grade)

Thank you all for your hard work. I'm sure all your help will go to a good cause. Dillon Mc-

Kee (5th grade)  
Thank you kids and parents; you are heroes to some people that need food. Dylan Greer (5th grade)

A food drive was good because we can help other families. Maddie Guthrie

(5th grade)  
The community of Post is truly blessed by the generous giving to help others in need.

**RAELINE REECE**  
Gifted and talented teacher  
Post ISD

The Post Dispatch, 123 E. Main St., Post Texas, 79356, is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Phone 806-495-2816 Fax 806-495-2059 Email thepostcitydispatch@gmail.com

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Wayne Hodgins

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It is the mission of this newspaper to promote the rights of individualism in the American Declaration of Independence. The right of life, liberty and ownership of property are the cornerstone of 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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Mondays  
Editorial: Noon Tuesdays

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**Letters to the Editor Policy**  
The Post Dispatch welcomes letters from readers on topics of local, state, national and international importance. Email letters are preferred to thepostcitydispatch@gmail.com. All letters must include a first and last name, street address (no post office boxes), daytime phone number. Letters sent via U.S. mail may be sent to P.O. Box 426, Post, TX 79356.)

*Ring In The Season*  
Church bells chime throughout the land To remind us it's Christmas once again, A time to express to the Lord above Our gratitude for His light and love; And to the good folks that we know, Our warmest wishes also go; For your friendship we feel blessed.  
Merry Christmas to you and all the best!  
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# Dear Santa

## Supported Education Huffman: (ES)

Dear Santa,  
How are you? For Christmas I want a remote motorcycle. I have been good. I listen very well at school. I am good at home also.  
Sincerely,  
**Francisco D.**

Dear Santa,  
How are your reindeer doing? How have you and Mrs. Claus been doing? I have been good this year! I want a laptop, DSI, and a Wii for Christmas this year. I have been good everyday this year.  
Sincerely,  
**Bobbie Escobar**

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I would like to pet your reindeers. I would like a laptop, play cat, I Pod, and pink DS. I have been good all year round.  
Sincerely,  
**Adrianna Vargas**

Dear Santa,  
How are you? How is Mrs. Claus? How are the reindeer? I have been good. For Christmas, I would like a new jacket, laptop, I Pod, and an I Phone!  
Sincerely,  
**Lisserre Gonzales**

Dear Santa,  
How are you? I have been good this year. I would like an I Pod, DSI, and clothes, and a new Wii. Thank you!  
Sincerely,  
**Mandi Hudson**

Dear Santa,  
I have really tried to be good this year. I have really done good. For Christmas this year, I would like a big toy truck.  
Sincerely,  
**Jayden Pewitt**

Dear Santa,  
Hello! This year I have been really good. I am doing good in school. I listen to the teacher. For Christmas, I want a big truck that I can play with. I love you.  
Sincerely,  
**Yeuddi Montoya**

Dear Santa,  
Hi, and hope you are doing fine. Hope the reindeers are keeping warm. This year for Christmas, I would like a big toy snake. I have been good this year Say hi to Mrs. Claus for me. I love you.  
Sincerely,  
**Xavier Gomez**

Dear Santa,  
For Christmas, I would like for you to bring me a big dinosaur toy. I have really tried to be good this year. I have worked really hard in school. Say hi to the reindeers and Mrs. Claus. I love you.  
Sincerely,  
**Victor Rodriguez**

Dear Santa,  
How have you been this year? How is the Mrs.? This has been such a wonderful year for me this year! I have been blessed with 2 beautiful grandkids! I also have another one on the way, due in May of next year. I have really tried to be good. I think I have succeeded! The only thing I would like for Christmas this year is to have my family together! I would love it if you could bring my daughter Erica, my son in law Orlando, and my wonderful grandson Benjamin home for the holidays! I miss them so. I would also like world peace and to get my health back! Thank you!  
Sincerely,  
**Francis Gomez**

Dear Santa,  
I've been a good girl this year! This year for Christmas I want a bicycle, books, and a laptop.  
Love,  
**Kvleiah**

Dear Santa,  
This year for Christmas I want a choo choo train, a truck, and a shark. I have been a very good boy this year!  
Love,  
**Javan**

Dear Santa,  
I have been a good girl this year. I would like a big trampoline and a swing set for Christmas. I love you Santa.  
Thank you,  
**Ashlee York**

Hidalgo's :(Kindergarten Class)

Dear Santa,  
I would like a robot, a video game, and a remote control car.  
Love you,  
**Keyandre J.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a Barbie doll, a horse, and a dog.  
Love you,  
**Lilliana M.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a unicorn, a Barbie doll, and a toy butterfly.  
Love you,  
**Ariela C.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a Wii, a dog, and a toy.  
Love you,  
**Alexandria P.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a Barbie doll, a unicorn, and a puppy.  
Love you,  
**Azaliegha R.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like to get a bicycle, a skateboard, and a motorcycle.  
Love you,  
**Elijah S.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a bike and a dog.  
Love you,  
**Yeraldin H.G.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a dirt, a motorcycle, and a drum set. Please bring these toys to me.  
Love you,  
**Joey W.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a robot, a horse, and a motorcycle.  
Love you,  
**Isael A.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like motorcycle, a horse, and a toy robot.  
Love you,  
**Ivan C.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a robot, a remote control car and a bike.  
Love you,  
**Adrian C.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like Barbie doll, a unicorn, a toy puppy, a horse, and a toy cat.  
Love you,  
**Aidan O.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a remote car, a skateboard, and video game.  
Love you,  
**Ian V.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a dog a cat, a Barbie doll, and a bike. I will make you some cookies.  
Love you,  
**Jayla C.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a doll and a bike.  
Love you,  
**Ariel S.**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a bird, go camping, go to the zoo and see all the animals. I will make you a hat because you like them.  
Love you,  
**Anastaizha S.**

## Reiter :(Kindergarten)

Dear Santa,  
I would like Lord of the Rings legos, Lego Ninjado, and alligator stompeez. Thank

you for my presents.  
Love,  
**Kaiden Soto**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a gold car. Is it

cold at the North Pole?  
Love,  
**Bryson Whiteley**

Dear Santa,  
I would like a 3DS, an

angry bird video game, and a Wreck It Ralph Video game. I love you Santa.  
Love,  
**Cooper Osborn**

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# Dear Santa

Dear Santa,

I would like a toy truck, dog, and a monster truck game. Me love you, Santa.  
Love,  
**Xavier Curtis**

Dear Santa,

I would like a remote control car, an antelope, and a toy owl. I love you, Santa.  
Love,  
**Juan Garcia**

Dear Santa,

I would like a remote control car, a toy duck. Will you give my sister a toy?  
Love,  
**Sebastian Martinez**

Dear Santa,

I would like a toy dog, and a stroller. Do you make a lot of toys in your factory?  
Love,  
**Dimree Menjares**

Dear Santa,

I would like a toy Santa, a toy elf, and a stuffed animal bear. I love you, Santa.  
Love,  
**Shaylee Pope**

Dear Santa,

I would like a toy horse, a toy Santa, and a remote control car. Thank you for bringing the elf on the shelf.  
Love,  
**Kasen Wink**

Dear Santa,

I would like a leap frog tablet, doodle bears, and Bobby cruise ship. Thank you.  
Love,  
**Koedee Self**

Dear Santa,

I would like an airplane, a remote control car, and a bike. What do your reindeer eat?  
Love,  
**Preston Perez**

Dear Santa,

I would like an ipod, a kitchen, and stairs. Thank you. How do your reindeer fly?  
Love,  
**Carolina Chavez Soria**

Dear Santa,

I would like a princess. I

will play with it. How do your reindeer fly? Thank you.

Love,  
**Jacob Rodriguez**

Dear Santa,

I would like a car and a cardboard house. How do the reindeer fly? Thank you.  
Love,  
**Trak Crow**

Dear Santa,

I would like a SpongeBob toy, a heart toy, and a dog. Thank you.  
Love,  
**Angelina Pena**

**Pittman (Kindergarten)**

Dear Santa,

Um I only want 2 things! I want a farty thing. And then Wreck it Ralph hands. Mm hm that's what I thought. Yea that's it.  
**Cameron Toney**

Dear Santa,

I want a book of the Night Before Christmas. I want a baby doll. I'll be good for Christmas.  
**Kenedi Holly**

Dear Santa,

I want a marble pack. Santa and a blue dinosaur. Tell Rudolph hi.  
**Emmett Collier**

Dear Santa,

I think I want a vigit. It's a little friend that moves around. Guess what else? I really like another La La Loopsie. Two more snow globes. I have a collection and it isn't complete.  
**Sarah Palmer**

Dear Santa,

You know those shoes and they have the wheels under it. I want that! I want a monster truck. I want a fast car.  
**Angel DeLuna Gutierrez**

Dear Santa,

I want a race car for Christmas, a real one. I want for Christmas some drums with some drum sticks. I want for Christmas a motorcycle, a toy one.  
**Bryan Saucedo**

Dear Santa,

I want a scooter, a bike, and a Barbie. That's it!  
**Karen Rodriguez**

Dear Santa,

I want for Christmas a doll that's a Barbie with a puppy and a Ken and with a puppy and a baby. Happy Thanksgiving. I want to see your reindeer.  
**Jaiden Brunkow**

Dear Santa,

I want a trailer fire truck. I want a big truck that I can drive. I want a shark mask.  
**Hayden Lively**

Dear Santa,

I want a Santa Claus toy. And I want Santa Claus sled, Santa Claus reindeer. I like Santa stuff. And I want a toy snowman.  
**Selina Aguilar**

Dear Santa,

I want a guitar and a motorcycle and a bike. I want a phone. That's all.  
**Athen Moore**

Dear Santa,

I want a guitar. I want a monster truck. I want a motorcycle, a toy one. I want a toy gun. That's it. I want a um a toy parrot and a toy snake and the last thing I want is a toy race car and track and a sharky thing that has a remote.  
**David Scott**

Dear Santa,

I want a yo-yo. I want a dog. I want a Barbie and stuff animal. I want a Barbie house. I want a Barbie closed and a Barbie car. I want colors and a stamper.  
**Kailyn Collazo**

Dear Santa,

I want a fast bike. It go fast. A race car with a remote control. I want a SpongeBob a for my and Elmo for my brothers. And I want a transformer.  
**Julious Webster**

Dear Santa,

I want for Christmas this little shark thing you have to blow it. A shark thing that glows in the night. I want an angry bird. I want a Nerf gun. Another gun that glows in the dark, like it really glows, I dont know why it does that. That's it.  
**Ethan Salazar**

Dear Santa,

I want a joker cave. I want a sharky thing that has a controller with it that everytime your family tells you to go to bed you grab the controller and scare your family with it. And a toy little monster truck.  
**Jon Soto**

**Comeaut (Pre-K)**

Dear Santa,

Me want a Barbie and a bike.  
Love,  
**Lindsey Meier**

Dear Santa,

Can I get a big Barbie?  
Love,  
**Karmon Mullins**

**CAPROCK BAIL BONDS**  
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Sherry Williams, agent  
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407 S. Broadway  
Post, TX 79356

The staff at the Garza County Health Care Clinic/District would like to thank you for your continued love and support throughout the year. Wishing you and your families a very Merry Christmas and a Safe and Happy New Year!

*Merry Christmas*

**GARZA COUNTY HEALTH CARE CLINIC/DISTRICT**  
608 W 6TH POST, TX  
806-485-2853

May the love He brought that holy night light your days with joy and hope.

**Merry Christmas**

*Ted and Carmen Brannen*

*Merry Christmas*

Post Chamber of Commerce

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SPOTS!  
& SCARVES!** Oh my!

*La Posta*

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*Merry Christmas!*

She's done it... She's gone

**plum crazy**  
495-3888 - Post, Texas

# Dear Santa

Dear Santa,  
I want a big doll house with princesses.  
Love,  
**Hailea Apolinar**

Dear Santa,  
I am good every day. Give me a pretty doll and doll-house.  
Love,  
**Mercedes Hernandez**

Dear Santa,  
I am good. Can I have a toy box with a lot of toys in there?  
Love,  
Jaycob Fry  
Dear Santa,  
I want you to bring me a big ol mermaid toy. Don't forget the candy.  
Love,  
**Naomi Bruton**

Dear Santa,  
Santa goes Ho Ho Ho! I want some toys.  
Love,  
**Marcus Castorena**

Dear Santa,  
I want presents and make-up.  
Love,  
**Kylie Bowman**

Dear Santa,  
I like your reindeer. I like your boots. Don't forget to eat cookies. I like you! I want you to bring me a Hello Kitty bunk bed, some lipstick, make-up, the ahir color thing and a Hello Kitty motorcycle.  
Love,  
**Harli McClellan**

Dear Santa,  
Can I please have a bunk bed,

a princess room, and princess clothes? I like your reindeer.  
Love,  
**Aziah Reed**

Dear Santa,  
Can you geat me the thing you color on your hair with, Barbie swimming thing, and nail polish? Come to my house.  
Love,  
**Chelsea**

Dear Santa,  
Merry Christmas! I want presents.  
Love,  
**Joel Soliz**

Dear Santa,  
I have been bad, but the elf is watching me. I like when you bring toys. I want Pokemon bobs that spray out super heros.  
Love,  
**Kody Osborn**

Dear Santa,  
I really want a Team Ninja Turtle set, a Power Ranger mask with weapons, and more imaginex sets. I like your boots.  
Love,  
**Micah Courtney**

Dear Santa,  
All I want for Christmas is a Princess and the Pop Star Movie, and a Rapunzel Barbie doll with the lizard with it. I am being good at school. I am always on Bold Gold that means good.  
Love,  
**Maya Stringer**

Dear Santa,  
I am in Pre-K now. I am a 4 year old. This school is big. I have so much friends. I want a Thomas bed because it is blue, and I want a Razor 4-wheeler.  
Love,  
**Peyton Sawyer**

**Smith (Kindergarten)**  
Dear Santa,  
I want a new video game and new cleats and new clothes. I also want an army guy. And that will be it. I will leave you cookies and mik.  
Love,  
**Zachary Looney**

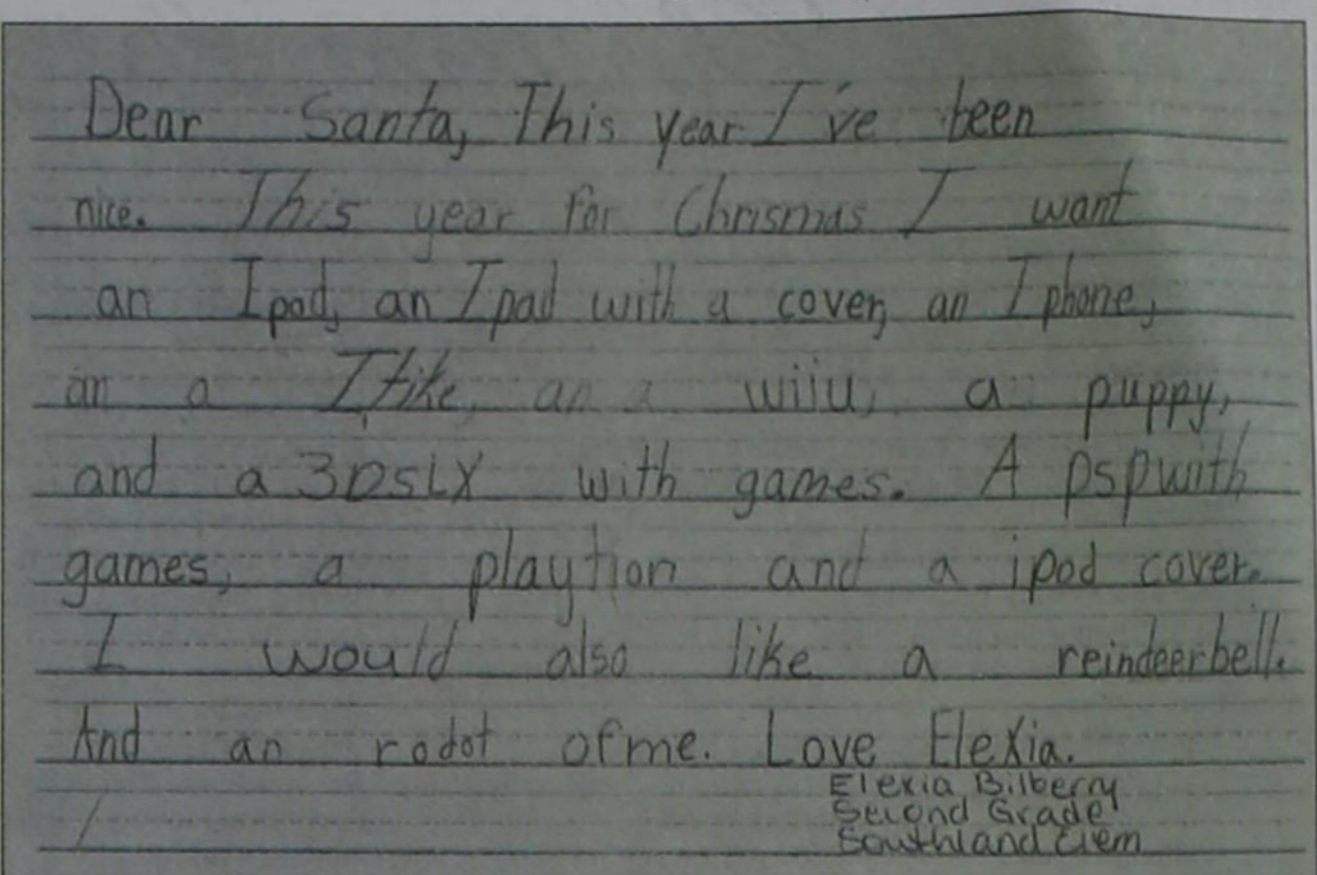
Dear Santa,  
I want a football; I also want a toy computer and a car. I want football shoes.  
Love,  
**Gabriel Perez**

Dear Santa,  
I want a football helmet and a football. I also want football clothes. The number on my shirt is 60. I want cleats too.  
Love,  
**Stephen Gamoneda**

Dear Santa,  
I want a game. I also want play dough. I will leave cookies out for you.  
Love,  
**Madison Albert**

Dear Santa,  
I want a Barbie for Christmas.  
Love,  
**Jullian Moore**

Dear Santa,  
I want a Barbie doll



## BINFORD

From Page 1

"After he had been in prison for a number of months, he began to talk to other inmates about Ms. Blodgett," Binford said. "We found an inmate willing to turn state's evidence, and he helped get us a prosecution and conviction for her murder."

It was the first murder case in the state, Binford said, to be tried and convicted purely on circumstantial evidence.

The body has never been found.

A few other cases stand out in Binford's mind, including the murders of Sharon Jolley, in her early 40s, in September 1997; and the aggravated as-

sault and subsequent death of Soccorra Storie in May 2005.

A man by the name of Pablo Soto would eventually be sent to prison for Storie's death, Binford said. Soto and Storie had been in an abusive relationship for a number of months prior to her death.

Binford recalled just wrapping up the case of an escaped inmate from the Garza County jail when the Storie assault first was reported. The escapee remained on the lam for a number of weeks before he was located in a border town in far South Texas and brought back to Garza County with the help of Mexican police, the U.S. Border Patrol and the Texas Rangers.

Although he's leaving the sheriff's office with mixed

emotions, Binford said it's "been a hell of an education."

"I've seen a lot of faces come and go at the sheriff's office and worked with some really, really fine law enforcement officers," he said. "Residents of Garza County and Post City are some of the best people you'll ever meet. I'll sincerely miss serving them in this capacity."

Binford's departure is joined by that of Lt. Mike Taylor and Deputy Marcus Lively, both of whom have taken on roles within the ranks of the Lamesa Police Department, and, of course, that of outgoing Sheriff Cliff Laws.

Sheriff-elect Terry Morgan will assume the reins of the sheriff's office effective at 12:01 a.m. Jan. 1.

## CURTIS

From Page 1

Curtis was arrested Nov. 7 in Lubbock County on drug charges when law enforcement officials were notified he was wanted in Garza County on an outstanding warrant issued shortly after his convictions

were overturned.

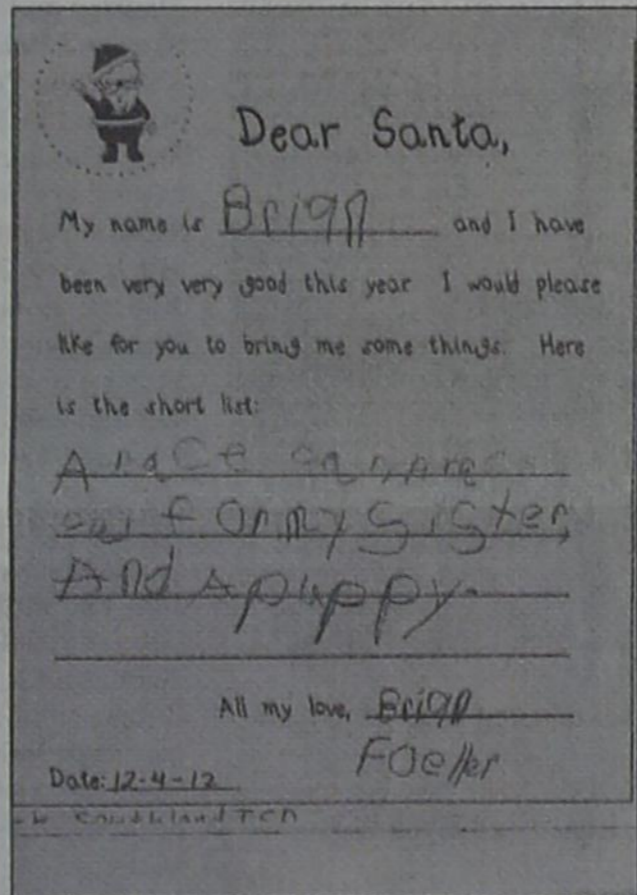
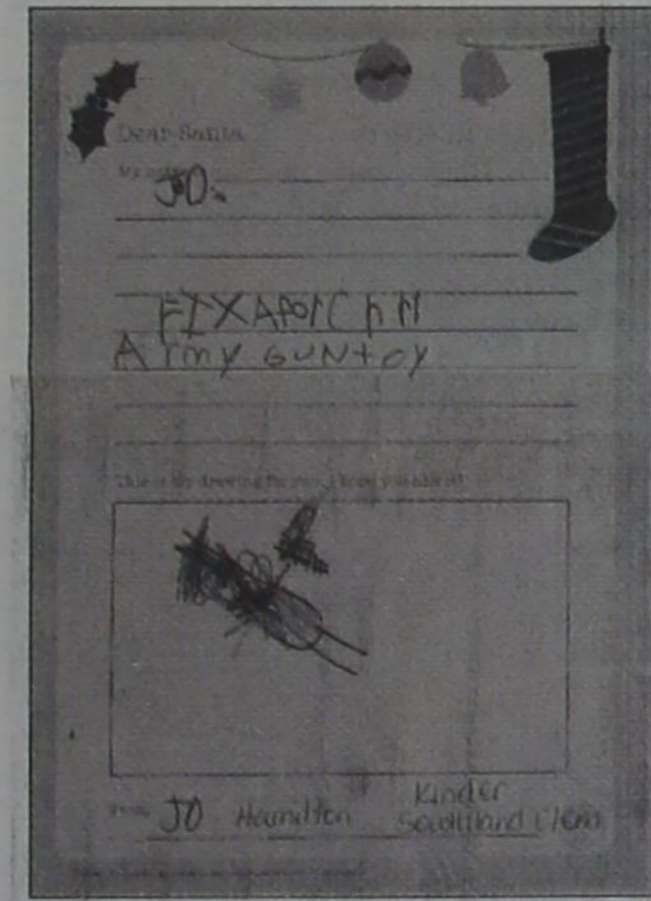
Earlier this month, County Attorney Michael Munk had said he issued a warrant for Curtis' arrest in order to re-try him on charges stemming from a September 2011 burglary of a school bus and attempted theft of a bus battery at the Post ISD maintenance facility.

Last January, a Garza Coun-

ty jury found Curtis guilty and the maximum punishment was assessed at one year in jail and a \$4,000 fine for the burglary charge and 180 days in jail and a \$2,000 for the theft charge.

The sentence was to be served concurrently.

On Oct. 12, the Seventh District Court of Appeals in Amarillo overturned that



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Louise McCrary  
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We wish you a **Merry Christmas** and a **Happy New Year!**

**Garza County Historical Museum**

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### ALL-AMERICAN

From Page 1

helped the War Hawks team on defense, as well. He led the McMurry team in pass break-ups at 10, as well as in interceptions (4). On pilfered passes, Baiza averaged 14.8 yards per return.

Baiza rolled up a total of 29 tackles on the year, 22 of which were solo. He recovered two fumbles and blocked two kicks, among his impressive numbers.

But for Baiza—who graduated last spring with a degree in exercise science and human performance—he almost didn't get the chance to shine on the gridiron.

Baiza came to McMurry from Post. At 5-9, 135 pounds, Baiza played football, baseball and basketball at Post High School, where he was a 2007 graduate. His stature did not lend itself to that of a prototypical college football player and he was instead recruited to become a War Hawk on the baseball diamond.

Upon arriving at McMurry, Baiza was a part of the War Hawks' American Southwest Conference baseball championship team in the spring of 2008. While a member of the baseball team, Baiza became friends with War Hawks' quarterback Jake Mullin, who had only been playing baseball himself at that time.

Mullin, a standout QB at Burleson High School as a prep, had decided to give football a try under McMurry's then-new head coach Hal Mumme in the spring of 2009. Mullin had played intramural football with Baiza at McMurry, so he tried to persuade his baseball teammate to join him for McMurry's football's spring drills, as well.

Baiza declined and stuck with baseball. Or so he thought.

By the fall of 2009, Baiza had a

change of heart and wanted to give intercollegiate football a whirl. The trouble was that the start of the 2009 season was only a little more than a week away and Baiza had not been a part of any of the War Hawks' training.

Baiza approached Mumme about joining the team, but was quickly told no because he had not gone through any of the drills like the rest of the squad. After getting the thumbs down, Baiza told Mullin that Mumme had nixed the idea.

Mullin, who had already earned a starting spot on varsity as a freshman signal-caller for the War Hawks, decided to call Mumme and speak with him about Baiza. Eventually, Mullin convinced Mumme to allow Baiza to suit up for the junior varsity team in an upcoming scrimmage versus the varsity.

During that scrimmage, the junior varsity coaches called for their punt return team to take the field. The player who was slated to return punts was not paying attention and did not go onto the field when summoned, so Baiza seized the opportunity and ran out in his place.

The ensuing punt came to

Baiza, who promptly scampered 65 yards with the return, and the rest—as they say—is history. Mumme allowed Baiza to join the War Hawks in 2009 with the defined role as a punt return specialist.

Over his career, Baiza's role expanded to playing in the secondary where he quickly became an even bigger asset to the resurgence of McMurry football.

The McMurry team was 0-10 the year before Baiza began playing. Within three seasons (by 2011), the team was 9-3 and in the NCAA Division III playoffs for the first time in school history. This year—the first playing as an NCAA Division II program—the War Hawks were 8-3 and went to (and won) a Bowl game for the first time in nearly 63 years when it topped Southern Arkansas, 36-35, last Saturday in Copperas Cove.

Baiza was also a 2012 pre-season National Christian College Athletic Association All-American selection by USA College Football. In 2011, he was named both second team all-region and all-conference.

Baiza is the son of Marco and Eva Erives of Post.

### SECURITY

From Page 1

public," Comeaux said, adding that any and all visitors to local schools are required to check in with the school office before wandering around the campus and school buildings.

In the coming years, Comeaux said, and with the advent of the more than \$25 million in renovations and construction of campus facilities, security will continue to be advanced and issues addressed.

"We've already begun addressing security issues within our campus facilities and are making plans to retrofit existing buildings to ensure the safety of our students," Comeaux said.

Twenty-seven people, including 20 children between the ages of 5 and 10 years old, were gunned down last Friday when a gunman gained access

to Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., and opened fire inside the school.

Flags at all public buildings were ordered flown at half-staff across the nation Tuesday as the first bodies were laid to rest in the town of about 25,000 in the southwestern portion of the state.

Adam Lanza, 27, shot himself in the head when he heard police officers approaching the classroom where he was gunning down helpless children. The gunman had shot his mother four times in the head while she was sleeping before going to the school, where he reportedly matriculated years prior, and gunning down 26 victims there.

All the victims at the school were shot multiple times with a high-power rifle, some of them up close. All six adults were women. Of the 20 children, eight were boys and 12 were girls. All the children were 6 or 7 years old.

The Newtown massacre is the second-deadliest school shooting in U.S. history and one of the deadliest mass shootings around the world. A gunman at Virginia Tech University killed 33, including himself, in 2007. It appears that only Virginia Tech; the mass killings of 77 in Norway last year; and a resort massacre with 35 victims in Australia had greater death tolls across the world over the past 20 years.

#### BID NOTICE

Shelby County offers for Oil and Gas Lease the following described tract in Garza County, Texas: The North One Half (N/2) of the County School Lands, as shown in Abstract 397, Patent 610, Volume 22, containing 679.3 acres of land, more or less.

Sealed bids should contain the following information: Bonus money amount, term of lease, royalty amount, a copy of the proposed lease, including any special provisions desired by the lessee. The County will provide its addendum or exhibit clauses upon request.

Bids must be received at the Office of the County Commissioners Court, 200 San Augustine Street, Center, Texas 75935, prior to January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Bids will be received by the County Commissioners Court at its regular meeting beginning at 9:30 a.m. January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The County reserves the right to refuse or reject any and all bids, as well as the right to negotiate all terms of the lease.

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Robert Hall Discount ..... \$1,645  
Factory Rebate ..... \$3,500  
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MSRP ..... \$38,240  
Robert Hall Discount ..... \$2,140  
Factory Rebate ..... \$3,000  
All Star Edition ..... \$1,000  
Bonus Cash ..... \$1,000  
Trade-In Rebate ..... \$1,000\*  
\*Must Trade-In 1999 or Newer to Qualify

**SALE PRICE \$30,100**

**2012 Chevrolet 1500HD Reg Cab 4x4 Z71**

Black-Gray Cloth, 5.3 V8 Auto, LT Package, Chrome Package, Power Seat  
#8261

MSRP ..... \$34,705  
Robert Hall Discount ..... \$2,005  
Factory Rebate ..... \$2,000  
Bonus Cash ..... \$1,000  
Trade-In Rebate ..... \$1,000  
\*Must Trade-In 1999 or Newer to Qualify

**SALE PRICE \$28,700**

2002 Chevrolet Tahoe, white/gray cloth, 5.3 V8, LS pkg, cargo doors, 103k, #50817 ..... **Reduced \$7,900**  
 2002 Ford F350 Crew Cab 2WD Flatbed, white/tan cloth, diesel, manual trans, 208k, #50698 ..... **\$9,850**  
 2005 Lincoln Towncar, Signature 4 Series, V8, Auto, White/Tan Leather, 68K #50604 ..... **\$12,950**  
 2007 Dodge Durango SLT 4x4, gray/gray leather, all power, V6 Auto, 78K, #50695 ..... **\$15,000**  
 2007 Chevrolet 1500 Crew Cab 2WD, white/black cloth, 5.3 V8, 107K, LT1, New body style, #50806 ..... **\$15,500**  
 2007 Chrysler Pacifica SUV, silver/gray cloth, V6 Auto, 6 passenger, aluminum wheels, touring edition, 86k, #50782 ..... **Reduced \$9,995**  
 2008 Chevrolet 1500 Crew Cab, 2WD, white/charcoal cloth, 5.3 V8, Auto, LT Pkg., Steering Wheel Controls, Pwr Seat, 62K, #50865 ..... **\$19,995**  
 2008 Buick Enclave CX AWD, gold/tan leather, power seats, V6, aluminum wheels, 66k, #50843 ..... **\$19,500**  
 2008 Chevrolet 1500 Ext Cab 4x4, white/black cloth, 4.8 V8, grille guard, tow pkg, 97k, #50678 ..... **\$13,950**  
 2008 Chevrolet Colorado Crew Cab 2WD, red/ebony cloth, 1LT, 71K #50606 ..... **\$14,950**  
 2009 Chevrolet 1500 Ext Cab 4x4, white/black cloth, 4.8 V8, grille guard, 106k, #50679 ..... **\$17,750**  
 2010 Chevrolet Equinox LTZ, white/charcoal cloth, 4 cyl, XM, power windows & locks, 40k, #50839 ..... **\$19,500**  
 2010 Chevrolet 1500 Crew Cab 4x4, white/charcoal cloth, 5.3 V8 auto, pwr seats, remote start, all power, 49K, #50869 ..... **\$24,500**  
 2002 Ford F250 Ext. Cab LB 2WD, 7.3L Diesel, Manual Transmission XLT Pkg., White - Gray Cloth, #50787 ..... **\$6,995**  
 2007 Hummer H2 SUT, White - Black Leather, New After-Market Tires & Wheels, 72K, Nice! #50863 ..... **\$29,500**  
 2006 Subaru Outback, Gold - Tan Leather, Nice! #50808 ..... **\$12,500**  
 2010 Chevrolet Avalanche 2WD, black/black leather, bucket seats, Texas Edition, heated seats, 82K, #50840 ..... **\$21,500**  
 2010 Chevrolet 1500 Crew Cab 2WD, silver/ebony cloth, 5.3 V8 auto, pwr seat, steering wheel controls, 27k, #50819 ..... **\$24,900**  
 2010 Chevrolet Malibu LS 4DR, silver/gray cloth, 4 cyl, auto, pwr windows/locks, cruise, power seat, 21k, #50762 ..... **\$15,500**  
 2010 Chevrolet Equinox LTZ, maroon/brown leather, dual dvd, tow pkg, 19K, #50634 ..... **\$28,000**  
 2010 Chevrolet Traverse, silver/gray cloth, Bluetooth, rear view camera system, 71K, #50545 ..... **Reduced \$19,250**  
 2010 (2) Chevrolet Impalas LT, V6, 26,000 miles, goldmist/charcoal cloth ..... **\$18,075**  
 2011 GMC Sierra Denali Crew Cab AWD, diamond white/tan leather, 6.2L V8 Auto, Bose stereo, 16k, Like New, #50827 ..... **\$40,500**  
 2012 Chevrolet Suburban 2WD, white/tan leather, 2nd row bench, steering wheel controls, Bose stereo, 22k, #30087 ..... **\$34,500**  
 2012 Chevrolet 3500HD Crew Cab, dually 4x4, diesel, white/charcoal, work truck pkg, pwr windows & locks, tow pkg, 14k, #50852 ..... **\$41,500**  
 2012 Chevrolet Traverse, gray metallic/gray cloth, V6 Auto, pwr windows & locks, 14k, #30083 ..... **\$24,500**  
 2012 Chevrolet Malibu LT, Sedan, White/Black Cloth, 4 Cyl, Auto, 15K, #30072 ..... **\$18,750**

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Snowflake Shortbread Cut-Out Cookies, Mint Chocolate Chip Truffles, Chocolate Raspberry Chip Truffles, Parmesan Pepper Spritz Crackers, Merry Mushroom Bites and Savory Southwest Donuts

# HOST A..... HOLLY JOLLY PARTY

**FAMILY FEATURES**

When it comes to celebrations, there's no season quite like the holiday season. The celebration experts from Wilton share party tips and irresistible recipes to help create a fabulous cocktail buffet complete with all the trimmings. "It looks like it would take lots of time and effort, but it really doesn't," says Nancy Siler, Vice President of Consumer Affairs at Wilton. "We've worked out all the details to make it easy, elegant and delicious." Siler suggests setting up a beverage station so guests can serve themselves, or recruit a friend to help prepare and serve your signature cocktails — sugar-rimmed Cheery Cranberry Mojitos and colorful All Aglow Melon-tinis that twinkle with sparkle gel. And for a warm beverage choice, offer rich, thick hot chocolate garnished with frothy snowmen, peppermint curls or chocolate candy-coated marshmallows. "When it comes to the food, a mix of savory and sweet is a must," Siler adds. "Tree-shaped Merry Mushroom Bites and tiny Savory Southwest Donuts piped with avocado to resemble a wreath will wow both the eye and the palate. For another unexpected twist on tradition, stack peppery spritz crackers in a clear glass canister." And for the sweets, beautifully decorated snowflake shaped holiday butter cookies are displayed on stacked pedestal plates alongside a bowl of truffles adorned with festive candy drizzles and luminescent pearl dust. Both treats make a fitting finale — and can be made in advance. For more holiday recipe and decorating ideas, visit [www.wilton.com](http://www.wilton.com).

**Parmesan Pepper Spritz Crackers**

Makes about 7 dozen crackers

- 1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground white pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups (about 8 ounces) grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1/3 cup milk

Preheat oven to 375°F.

In small bowl, combine flour, black pepper, white pepper and salt. In large bowl, beat cheese, butter and garlic until smooth. Gradually add flour mixture to cheese mixture. Mix until dough forms a ball. Gradually add milk, mixing until fully incorporated. Shape into small logs and place in Cookie Master Ultra II. Using desired disk, press crackers onto ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake 11 to 13 minutes or until edges are light golden brown. Cool 2 minutes on cookie sheet on cooling grid. Remove from sheet and cool completely. Store in airtight container up to 1 week.

See step-by-step instructions for Mint Chocolate Chip Truffles, Chocolate Raspberry Chip Truffles and Snowflake Shortbread Cut-Out Cookies on [www.wilton.com](http://www.wilton.com).

**Merry Mushroom Bites**

Makes 24 bites

- 1/3 cup diced yellow onion
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 12 ounces portobello or baby portobello mushrooms, coarsely diced
- 4 teaspoons finely chopped fresh rosemary
- 1-1/4 teaspoons black pepper
- 3 eggs
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1-1/4 teaspoons salt
- 1 package (4 ounces) water or other favorite crackers
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1/2 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- Chopped rosemary or parsley (optional)

Preheat oven to 350°F. Prepare Bite-Size Silicone Tree Mold with vegetable pan spray.

In large skillet, cook onion and butter over medium-low heat stirring occasionally until soft, about 5 minutes. Add mushrooms, rosemary and black pepper; cook until liquid has evaporated, about 10 minutes; cool slightly. Transfer mixture to food processor. Add eggs, flour, and salt. Pulse until mixture is pureed with no large pieces of mushroom or onion. Fill cavities of silicone mold completely with mushroom mixture, patting flat.

Bake 15 to 18 minutes or until top of the mushroom mixture is firm. Cool in pan 15 minutes; carefully remove and place on cracker. Top with sour cream, sliced red pepper and, if desired, rosemary. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**Savory Southwest Donuts**

Makes about 36 mini donuts

- 1 tablespoon ground paprika, divided
- 1-1/2 cups cake flour
- 1-1/4 teaspoons baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 to 3/4 teaspoon ground chipotle chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 garlic clove, finely minced
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro

**Topping**

- 1 ripe avocado
- 1 teaspoon lime juice
- Salt to taste
- Additional chopped cilantro

Preheat oven to 400°F. Spray Mini Donut Pan with vegetable pan spray. Lightly sprinkle wells with some of the paprika.

In large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, cumin, chili powder and salt. In second bowl, whisk together milk, egg, oil, garlic and cilantro. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients and stir just until flour is moistened. Fill each donut cavity about 1/2 full.

Bake 5 to 7 minutes or until the top of the donuts spring back when touched. Let cool in pan 4 to 5 minutes before removing. Wash pan, dry thoroughly and prepare with pan spray and paprika. Repeat with remaining batter.

For topping, mash avocado with lime juice and salt; stir until smooth using a whisk or in a food processor. Pipe avocado mixture over top of cooled donuts. Sprinkle with cilantro. Serve immediately.

**All Aglow Melon-tinis**

Makes 1 cocktail

- Wilton Red Sparkle Gel
- 2 ounces green melon liqueur
- 1 ounce lemon flavored vodka
- 1 ounce bottled sour mix
- 2 ounces club soda
- Maraschino cherries (optional)

Squeeze Wilton Red Sparkle Gel around the inside of a martini glass.

In cocktail shaker filled with ice, combine melon liqueur, vodka, sour mix and club soda; shake well. Strain into martini glass. Garnish with maraschino cherries.

**Cheery Cranberry Mojitos**

Makes 1 cocktail

- 6 fresh torn mint leaves, plus additional sprigs for garnish
- 1/2 lime, cut into four wedges
- 1 tablespoon dried cranberries
- 2 tablespoons Wilton Red Colored Sugars, plus additional for garnish
- 2 ounces rum
- 3 ounces cranberry juice
- 2 ounces club soda

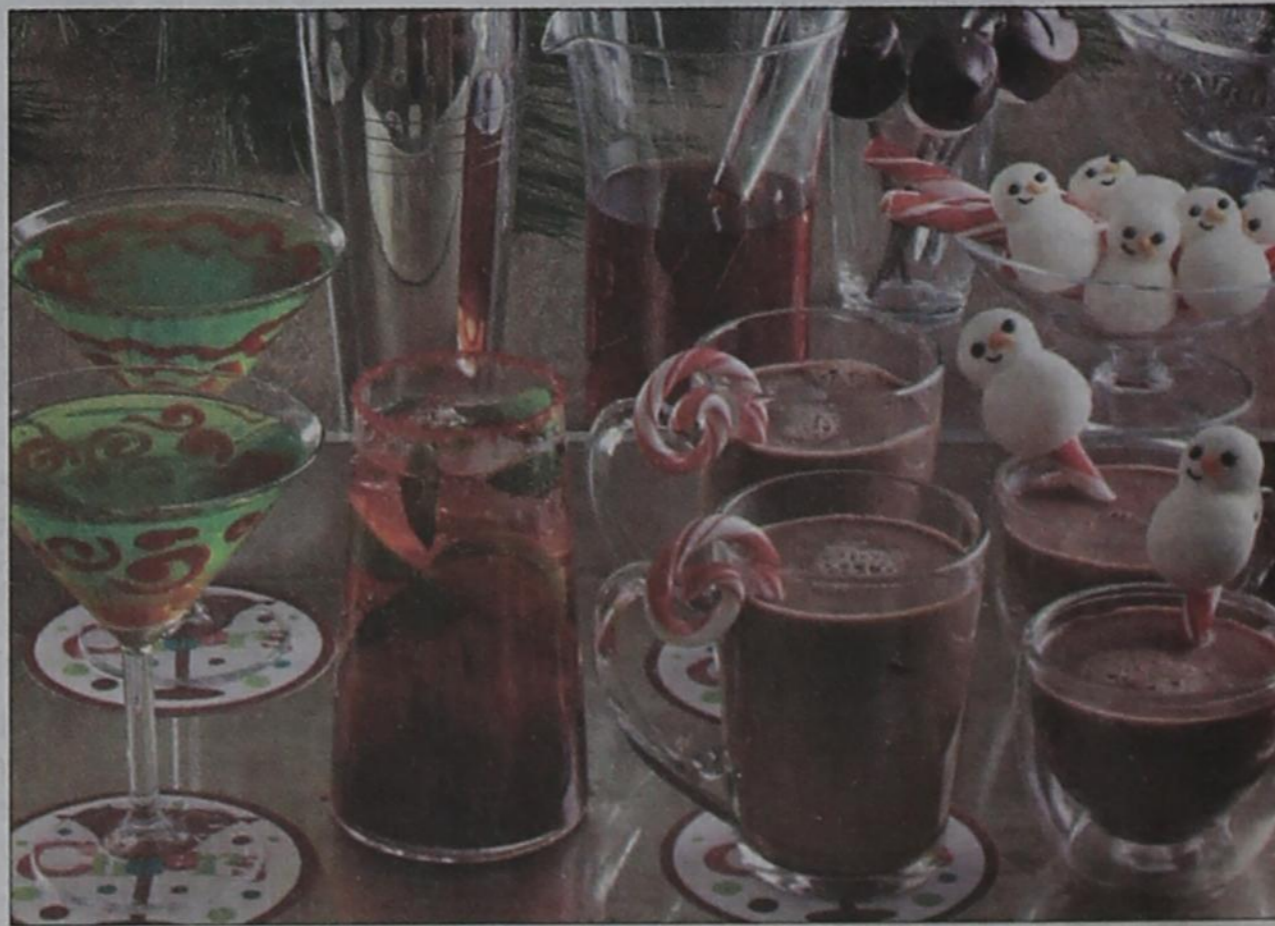
In tall glass, thoroughly muddle mint leaves, lime wedges, cranberries, and red sugar. Add rum, cranberry juice and club soda and stir. Add ice and additional club soda to fill glass.

**Peppermint Blitz Hot Chocolate**

Makes about 4 servings

- 1 quart (4 cups) milk
- 1 cup (about 6 ounces) Wilton Dark Cocoa Candy Melts, roughly chopped
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 teaspoon peppermint extract
- 3 ounces chocolate liqueur (optional)
- 1 ounce peppermint liqueur (optional)

In a large pot over medium-low flame, heat milk and Candy Melts, whisking frequently, until boiling. Remove from heat. Stir in extracts and liqueurs, if using. Garnish with peppermint sticks or curls or snowman decorations and serve immediately.



All Aglow Melon-tinis, Cheery Cranberry Mojitos and Peppermint Blitz Hot Chocolate

# Post Classifieds

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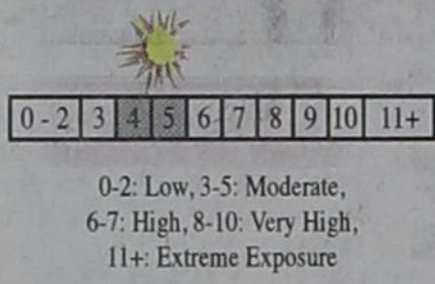
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**Post Dispatch Weather Summary**

**Post's Seven Day Forecast**

						
<b>Friday</b> Sunny 60 / 29	<b>Saturday</b> Sunny 64 / 33	<b>Sunday</b> Mostly Sunny 65 / 33	<b>Monday</b> Mostly Sunny 61 / 32	<b>Tuesday</b> Mostly Cloudy 40 / 28	<b>Wednesday</b> Partly Cloudy 44 / 25	<b>Thursday</b> Partly Cloudy 48 / 29

**Local UV Index**



**Weather Trivia**

Does weather affect appetite?  
**?**  
 Answer: Yes. In cold weather, your body requires more calories to heat itself.

**Weather History**

**Dec. 21, 1929** - A tremendous storm produced snow from the Rio Grande Valley of Texas to southern Arkansas. The storm produced 26 inches of snow at Hillsboro, Texas, 18 inches at El Dorado, Ark. and 14 inches at Bossier, La.  
**Dec. 22, 1983** - On the first day of winter, 75 cities reported record low temperatures for the date. Twelve of these reported record lows for the month. The mercury plunged to 51 degrees below zero at Wisdom, Mont. Waco, Texas set an all-time low at 12 above zero.

**Detailed Local Forecast**



Today we will see sunny skies with a high temperature of 60°, humidity of 15%. South southwest wind 10 to 15 mph. The record high temperature for today is 80° set in 2010. Expect mostly clear skies tonight with an overnight low of 29°. South southwest wind 10 mph. The record low for tonight is 9° set in 1983. Saturday, skies will be sunny with a high temperature of 64°, humidity of 17%. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph. Skies will be mostly clear Saturday night with an overnight low of 33°. Southwest wind 5 mph.

**Peak Fishing/Hunting Times This Week**

Day	Peak Times		Day	Peak Times	
	AM	PM		AM	PM
Fri	6:31-8:31	6:01-8:01	Tue	9:36-11:36	9:06-11:06
Sat	7:15-9:15	6:45-8:45	Wed	10:24-12:24	9:54-11:54
Sun	8:01-10:01	7:31-9:31	Thu	11:13-1:13	10:43-12:43
Mon	8:48-10:48	8:18-10:18			

www.WhatsOurWeather.com

**Sun/Moon Chart This Week**

Day	Sunrise	Sunset	Moonrise	Moonset	
Fri 12/28	7:45 a.m.	5:43 p.m.	1:19 p.m.	1:46 a.m.	 New 1/11
Sat	7:45 a.m.	5:44 p.m.	1:53 p.m.	2:42 a.m.	
Sun	7:46 a.m.	5:44 p.m.	2:29 p.m.	3:37 a.m.	 First 1/18
Mon	7:46 a.m.	5:45 p.m.	3:09 p.m.	4:31 a.m.	
Tue	7:47 a.m.	5:45 p.m.	3:52 p.m.	5:23 a.m.	
Wed	7:47 a.m.	5:46 p.m.	4:39 p.m.	6:14 a.m.	
Thu	7:47 a.m.	5:47 p.m.	5:29 p.m.	7:02 a.m.	

**Last Week's Almanac & Growing Degree Days**

Date	High	Low	Normals	Precip	Farmer's Growing Degree Days	
					Date	Degree Days
12/11	50	17	54/27	0.00"	12/11	0
12/12	63	26	54/27	0.00"	12/15	0
12/13	65	26	53/26	0.00"	12/16	0
12/14	66	44	53/26	0.14"	12/17	0
12/15	56	37	53/26	0.00"	12/18	5
12/16	61	34	53/26	0.00"		
12/17	62	30	53/26	0.00"		

Growing degree days are calculated by taking the average temperature for the day and subtracting the base temperature (50 degrees) from the average to assess how many growing days are attained.

**Dixie Divas Appalachian Christmas**

When Mama was a small girl growing up in the Nimblewill Valley in the Appalachian foothills, it was the midst of the Great Depression. As she often said, "Times were hard, but it's all we knew so we didn't know how poor we were."

Mostly, they were a self-sufficient bunch, growing most of what they ate and bartering for what they couldn't produce on the little rented farm they had. My grandmother had been gifted a



**RONDA RICH**

small farm from her father, a mountain merchant and postmaster, but when times turned bad, the farm was lost to taxes. My grandparents, hard working and earnest, spent the rest of their lives, living in small rented houses.

"I would walk a couple of miles to the store, carrying a chicken or fresh eggs, and trade them for coffee, tobacco or flour," Mama once said. That is all to explain that each year when Christmas arrived for Mama and her family, there was no money for gifts. They celebrated the holidays with a fresh-cut tree and

focused on what they, as born-again Christians, believed the day to commemorate: the birth of Jesus in a stable in Bethlehem.

"We'd usually have a stocking — really a sock — filled with fruit and nuts," she remembered. Once her little brother, Doyle, who at 3, mixed up his consonants as kids sometimes do, delivered a memorable line. He had poured out his sock and was delighted with the treats because fresh fruit and a couple of pieces of hard candy were a bounty to those who seldom knew treats. A bit later, he discovered a large orange had stuck in the toe of the sock. It was as though he had found a new toy.

"Wook!" he exclaimed, clapping his little hands together and dancing around with joy. "It's another wrangle!"

Daddy, raised in an adjoining

mountain county, was not as rich. He seldom received anything for Christmas, therefore, tainting his view of Christmas gifts for the rest of his life.

"Bunch of foolishness," he often said about exchanging gifts.

Practical man he was, though, when his kids insisted on giving him gifts, he asked only for necessities like underwear and socks. One year when he needed a new pasture fence, he, in an unusual manner, embraced the tradition of exchanging gifts.

"I want bob wire," he said, using the rural slang for barbed wire. We laughed off the request, but his green eyes sparkled with deep seriousness. "Do you know how much a roll costs? I've got to put in a new fence at the farm. It's what I need."

So, on that memorable Christmas day, Ralph Satterfield was gifted with enough rolls of barbed wire to build his fence. It was the only Christmas where I saw his eyes dance with pure joy over gifts.

When Tink suggested we not exchange gifts this year, I was unruffled by it. "That's fine," I said, smiling. "I have Christmas every day." For it's true. Unlike my parents back in those days, I can buy a new dress I fancy if I'm willing to spend the money or whatever groceries we want. A day or two later, I decided to take a page from my parents' book.

"I need a new pair of running shoes," I said. My others have holes in the soles and are coming apart at the seams. "And I need some lip balm." I figured I was going to have to buy them anyway so I might as well get them for Christmas.

Tink nodded. "I don't need anything so don't buy me a gift. Promise?" I refused, though, to promise, because I know exactly what Tink needs — a big box of Dove soap bars and antibacterial liquid soap. He likes clean better than anyone I've ever known.

And, maybe if he's really good, I'll throw in a couple of oranges.

Ronda Rich is a Southern storyteller, humorist and author. Her latest book, "There's A Better Day A-Comin'," is available at [rondarich.com](http://rondarich.com), where you also can sign up for her weekly newsletter.


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