

THE KNOX COUNTY News-Courier

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Despite snow, area remains dry

Area still in need of moisture

By Hanaba Munn Welch
The Knox County News-Courier

A little snow for Christmas and a tenth of an inch of rain a few days later left Knox County wanting more of the same. Much more.

The region remains dry, gripped by a drought that shows no signs of breaking.

"The wheat's dying, there's hardly any pasture," rancher Kynn Patterson said Monday, part of the lunch crowd at the Munday Dairy Queen.

Ranchers are reducing their herds.

"I've cut back considerably on the amount of cows I've got," Patterson said.

The drought is no respecter of size. The big ranches are hurting, too.

"Wyman and I were the 26th, 27th and 28th on the Waggoner Ranch," Patterson said, referring to photographer Wyman Meinzer, seated in an adjoining booth.

The Waggoner has shipped cattle off its vast acreage, Patterson said.

Then Patterson gestured toward Doug Tidwell, vice president of Capital Farm Credit, eating lunch at a nearby table.

In the typical style of farmer-banker jokes,

Patterson ribbed Tidwell, saying, "He's seen us all on our knees the last two years."

Patterson continued in the same vein.

"I have trouble sleeping at night," Patterson said. "I can't imagine what his life is like. I've just got one loan."

Tidwell took the remarks in stride, admitting that farmers and ranchers are facing tough times. Regular government assistance to farmers is insignificant, he said. Capital Farm Credit has ties to the federal government, but raises its own funds by selling bonds.

"We're part of the farm credit system," Tidwell said.

But the organization is far enough removed from the workings of the federal government's farm program to keep Tidwell and his ilk guessing like everyone else about how things will play out with the current farm bill, extended for another year right before the government's much anticipated end-of-the-year "fiscal cliff" budget crisis.

"We didn't know what they were going to do," Tidwell said.

Disaster programs could help drought-struck farmers and ranchers, but Tidwell has no predictions as to how and when such help

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Hanaba Munn Welch/The Knox County News-Courier

Hay moved across Knox County in all directions the last day of 2012, including two round bales that went west through downtown Knox City. Feeding hay is a way ranchers are dealing with the current drought. In earlier times, a more common sight might have been cows being driven to greener pastures.

Postal service to reduce hours in Benjamin, Goree

By Hanaba Munn Welch
The Knox County News-Courier

In some ways, life begins at 10 o'clock in Goree. It's when the mail comes, unless it's late.

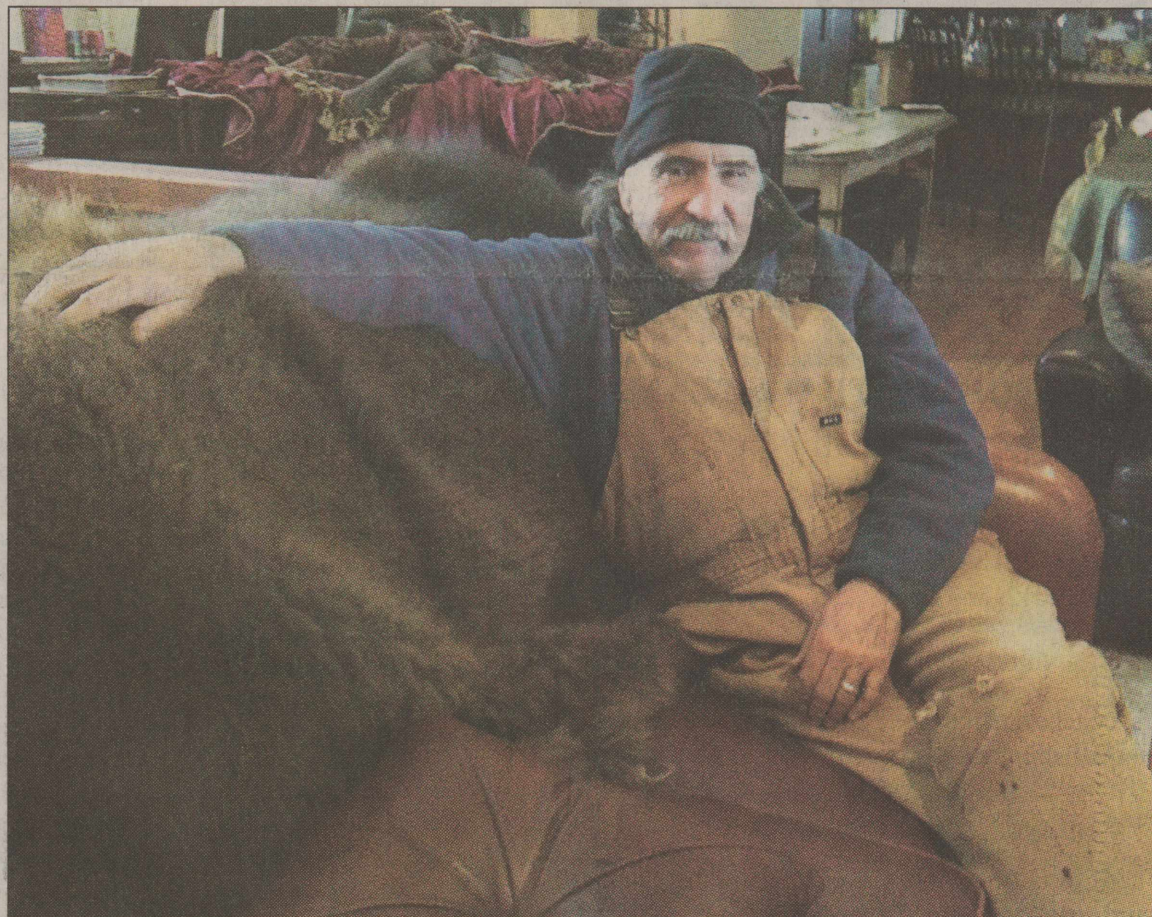
Monday it was late.

"If the mail truck is late, I can't help that," said Postmaster Janie Sanchez.

Patrons who dropped by didn't complain, glad at least Goree still has a post office and happy to say good morning to Sanchez despite the absence of fresh mail in their boxes.

Goree postal customers know that small postal operations are in jeopardy. "All my customers are very concerned about it," Sanchez said.

For now, the small office maintains longer hours than some offices of similar caliber. Sanchez, who lives in Munday, is at the Goree office weekdays, from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Wednesday
See **POSTAL SERVICE**, Page 8



Hanaba Munn Welch/The Knox County News-Courier

Prepared to brave the elements on Christmas Day, Wyman Meinzer rests against a buffalo robe and waits for just the right sunlight to shoot pictures on the range. One of Meinzer's photographs of a bison herd in the snow is included in a new book on Charles Goodnight, written by Byron Price with photography by Meinzer.

New Meinzer book highlights legendary Charles Goodnight

By Hanaba Munn Welch
The Post Dispatch

BENJAMIN — Photographer Wyman Meinzer has plenty of good things to say about his new book about Charles Goodnight, still somehow managing to stay humble. It's his style.

The book is "Charles Goodnight: A Man for All Ages," 2012, Badlands Design & Production. In the first place, Meinzer didn't write it, leaving him room to praise the talents of Byron Price, the author.

"Byron is a hell of a good writer," Meinzer said. "Very thorough. Really a super writer."

And Meinzer is also inclined to shift attention from himself to Goodnight. A typical inscription from him might read "Hoping you will enjoy our salute to this great Texan!"

Meinzer's challenge when he teamed up with Price was to provide photographs for a book about a man

who's no longer around to be photographed. Goodnight, quintessential Texas trail driver and rancher, lived from 1836 to 1929. The Price account of Goodnight's long life deals with the final 50 years in 150 pages of text and pictures — some historic, but most the work of Meinzer, renowned for his photographs of Texas wildlife, cowboys and ranches.

"I realized I was just going to have to go in and hunt the locations where he lived and worked," Meinzer said, working in his comments between signing books at an evening pre-Christmas event last week at Santa Fe on the Brazos in Benjamin, his wife's clothing and gift business.

Santa Claus was there too, eclipsing Meinzer for some, including Meinzer's own grandchildren, Addison and Triston Meinzer. But Santa Claus was a

See **MEINZER**, Page 8

Knox 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 kcnewscourier@gmail.com.

Recycling center hours

The Munday Recycling Center is now open 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Thursdays and 10 a.m. to noon Fridays. Plastic grocery bags are no longer being accepted. Most other recyclable materials are accepted, including No. 1 and 3 plastic containers and most electronics, including cell phones. For information, contact Cindy Zuniga at 940-445-3666.

Munday council

The Munday City Council meets at 6:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month in the conference room at City Hall. The next scheduled meeting will be Jan. 8. For information, call City Hall at 422-4331.

Commissioners Court

The Knox County Commissioners Court meets at 1:30 p.m. the second Monday of the month in Commission Chambers at the Knox County Courthouse in Benjamin. The next scheduled meeting will be Jan. 14. For information, contact County Clerk Annette Offutt at kcdisco@sraccess.net or 459-2441.

Corrections

If you spot an error of fact, contact Editor Wayne Hodgins at kcnewscourier@gmail.com.

News on the go



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Veteran recalls WWII service

By Hanaba Munn Welch
The Knox County News-Courier

Mention the month of December to Marvin Jones, even on New Year's Eve, and he's most likely to talk about World War II.

Never mind that December ushers in a brand new year. For Jones, thoughts of 2013 pale in comparison to his vivid memories of the 1940s, specifically the years he spent as a sailor on the USS Mississippi.

During the war, Jones did more than make history; he recorded it.

"We kept the log books," he said.

As a navigator, Jones saw things happen from the ship's bridge.

"I liked to be up there with the officers on the bridge," he said.

Jones missed the bombing at Pearl Harbor. So did the Battleship Mississippi. It was anchored in European

See **VETERAN**, Page 8

Deaths

Francis Victor Redder

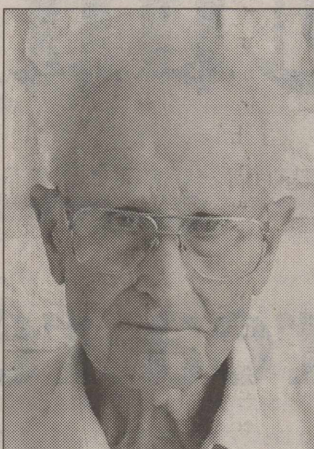
Francis Victor Redder passed away Friday, December 28, 2012, in his home at the age of 88. Francis was born October 24, 1924, in Rhineland to Victor and Angela Redder.

Francis served in the Army during World War II and received the Purple Heart. He was a lifelong member of St. Joseph Catholic Church and a member of the Knights of Columbus. Francis was the manager of the Shamrock Station for many, many years.

Francis was a kind, gentle, honest, and hard working man. He will be missed by many and will be forever in our hearts. We love you.

Francis was preceded in death by his wife, Ellen, his mother and father, Victor and Angela, one brother, John Redder, one sister, Gertrude Kuhaneck, and one sister-in-law, Reba Redder.

Mr. Redder is survived by three daughters, Laura and Bill Fiest, Stacy Latham and Lisa and Bob



FRANCIS VICTOR REDDER

Hall all of San Angelo; one son, Mark and Francine Redder of Runaway Bay; four brothers, Raymond and Maryann of Seymour, Eddie and Doris Ann of Knox City, Rhiney of Munday and Billy and Jeanene of Munday; nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Rosary was Sunday at the funeral home. Funeral mass was Monday at St. Joseph Catholic Church in Rhineland with interment following in the church cemetery under the direction of McCauley-Smith Funeral Home of Munday.

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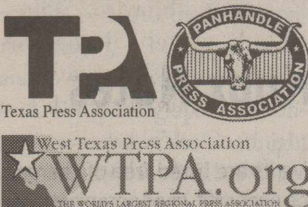
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It is the mission of this newspaper to promote the rights of individualism in the American Declaration of Independence. The right of life, liberty and ownership of property are the cornerstone of freedom. Government's sole purpose is to enhance our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

DEADLINES
Advertising: 5 p.m. Fridays
Editorial: Noon Mondays

SUBSCRIPTIONS
\$30 a year in the county
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THE KNOX COUNTY News-Courier

The paperboy Getting older

Are you going to be self sufficient at age 70, 80, 90 or 100? If you're already there, are you in pretty good shape? Perhaps good enough shape to make it another decade?

By the middle of this century, six million people are predicted to be living in their 100s on this planet.

By the end of the century, and perhaps much sooner, the life expectancy in this country could end up much older. Of course, that's without something cataclysmic happening.

Today, there are 340,000 over 100 years old around the globe with the highest concentrations in the U.S. and Japan, according to the latest Census Bureau figures. Their numbers are projected to grow at more than 20 times the rates of the total population by 2050, making them the fastest growing age segment.

Genetics along with medical advances and improved diets, which have reduced heart disease and stroke, are the reasons people are living longer.

Throw in cutting edge technology and the fact scientists are making incredible findings regarding the aging process and who knows how old some of us may end up being.

A while back, while checking out some show on aging, more than one scientist spoke about humans being capable of living 150 or 200 years within the next 50 years.

Can you imagine living 200 years? I suppose it would be fine, if we are talking about quality years. Of course, you might have to have all of your organs replaced (grown at an organ farm) and your bones and muscles would probably need a significant upgrade. And none of us would want to live that

long without being sharp mentally. Japan, with its low-fat staple of fish and rice, is expected to have the most centenarians in 2050 — 627,000, or nearly 1 percent of its total population, according to census estimates. That's incredible.

Japan has a thriving industry which caters to their advancing population. Personally, I think the Japanese treat their elders better than we do as well. They seem to give the proper respect to their elderly population and not cast them aside as so often happens in the U.S., but I digress.

Here, centenarians are expected to increase from 75,000 to more than 600,000 by 2050. Those hitting and passing the milestone will mostly be baby boomers.

Guess we better get Medicare and Social Security fixed for good!

That many centenarians also means considerable growth in nursing homes, assisted living centers and retirement centers.

When I moved to Childress after college, I lived with my grandfather. He was 82 and was very sharp. I actually did not realize that he was rare in terms of being that age and getting around as well as he did. He lived another three years and outside of an ongoing battle with congestive heart failure, was in good health and stayed sharp mentally.

On the other extreme, my father is 70 with dementia and he's completely dependent on care givers for everything. My mother died at age 63.

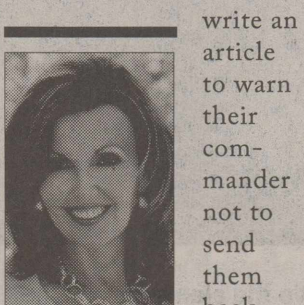
I don't know what that says about my future, but I sure hope my dominant genes come from my grandfather, if you get my meaning.

One thing I'm sure of: Regardless if you live to be 60 or 160, the days get shorter the older you get and the end will be here before you know it.

Christopher Blackburn is publisher of The Knox County News-Courier and CEO of Blackburn Media Group.

Dixie Divas The gate

It all started with a break-in then continued to a break-in point when a crazy woman showed up at my door, ranting about aliens who had landed at her house. She needed me to



RONDA RICH

write an article to warn their commander not to send them back to her house. When Tink heard I had run off a car full of Jehovah Witnesses with my shotgun, he said, "That's it. We're putting in a gate. For your safety, as well as the safety of aliens and Jehovah Witnesses."

For a while, I had demurred over installing a privacy gate but, finally, I was ready to agree. The crazy woman and her aliens had persuaded me. "But I'm not going to be in charge of construction," I warned.

We had just had to make what started as minor repair to the balcony but became major. To anyone who has ever had to work with a contractor — especially those who look at women's ideas and questions with disdain — you'll understand that my nerves were stretched to the max.

"Great," he said. It didn't work out that way. He was working 14-hour days in Los Angeles,

executive producing a television series and I was home.

"Just get it started for me. Get the quotes and I'll take it from there." I called for four quotes. I drew a picture and gave a list of what we wanted.

One contractor, the friend of a friend, came but never followed up. One — the one I thought I could count on the most — dawdled at putting the quote together, which left two vying for the job.

One man — Brian Parks — hustled to get the job and strived to get it close to our budget. Brian was going to custom weld the wrought-iron gate. Tink, who had been preoccupied with script rewrites and a star with laryngitis, suddenly arose from oblivion when he saw the gate I had sketched.

"Not arched," he said. "Something straight across and not so high." "OK, send me a sketch of what you want, and I'll give it to Brian."

After a few days of reminders and not receiving the sketch, I met with Brian and gave him a revised sketch.

"You can meet with Tink next week and go over it with him." Suddenly, out of nowhere, Tink roared to life. He got online and started looking at gates. From an airport somewhere, he texted a photo of the gate he wanted. Sit down. Get ready for this. A cattle gate. The kind that you can go to the local hardware store or farmer's supply and purchase. The kind that when I

had a board fence built, I shunned. I had a wood gate built to keep from using the plain, utility gate.

I thought it was a joke. I'm still in hopes that it was, that I haven't married a guy who was serious about using a cattle gate for an entrance gate.

"Please, baby, please," he said. "Please let me have this gate. It's perfect for the Rondarosa (which he has christened our place)." I laughed it off. "No way." I couldn't believe we were in a disagreement over such. Normally, when it comes to style issues, we agree unflinchingly.

Facing defeat, he said, "Let me send an email and ask your family to vote."

"Go ahead. We may be simple, country folks but we have class, style and taste. No one will vote for a cattle gate." I had complete confidence.

Tink attempted to win votes by offering to help get up hay. Still, one by one — with nary a word from me — voted zealously for a wrought-iron gate.

Rodney, after casting his vote, added, "See you this weekend. We're gettin' up hay."

Tink, somewhat graciously, accepted the unanimous vote. But get up hay? Huh, no. He chose a weekend at the Cloister instead.

Ronda Rich is a Southern humorist, storyteller and best-selling author. Her latest book, "There's A Better Day A-Comin'," is available at rondarich.com.

2012 PROCLAMATION

MUNDAY HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM "THE MOGULS"

WHEREAS, the Munday High School Football Team "The Moguls" won the 2012 Texas High School 1A Division II State Championship, defeating the Tehaha Tigers 42-14 on December 20, 2012; and

WHEREAS; students, players, coaches, parents and supporters have all come together in making a truly championship team; and

WHEREAS; the dedication, hard work, long hours of practice, mutual support and commitment of the team and coaches exemplify the pride and heart of the Munday CISD football program; and

WHEREAS the student leaders of The Moguls have exhibited a work ethic and level of confidence that transcends the football field; and

WHEREAS, the recognition and celebration of our Championship Team serves to bring our community together in honoring our students and their coaches for a phenomenal football season resulting in an outstanding 15 and 0 record.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED by the City Council of the City of Munday that the Munday High School Football Team "The Moguls" be Honored for their success in being the 2012 Texas High School 1A Division II Champions; and

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED that City Council of the City of Munday calls on all of our community to join with family and friends in the celebration and honoring of the 2012 Munday High School Moguls as the 2012 Texas High School 1A Division II State Champions.

Dated this 21st day of December 2012

Robert Bowen

Robert Bowen, Mayor

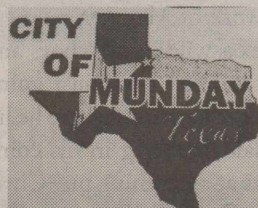
Ryan Cottingham, Mayor Pro-Tem

Keith Kuehler, Council Member

Traci Blair, Council Member

Trey Singleton, Council Member

Charles Grisham, Council Member



2012 PROCLAMATION

The 501 Spirit of Christmas and faith of a child

When little children pray, they usually thank God for some obvious things — their dog, their goldfish, the air they breathe, their parents, their grandparents, toys, whatever, not necessarily in that order. Their lists always bring a smile. When asked to be grateful,



HANABA MUNN WELCH

children rise to the task. However, back when my mother was teaching me to say a bedtime prayer, I thanked God for some stuff and then said, "But I don't thank you for the winter." Poor mother. She had to stop me at that point to say we should thank God for everything, winter included. I remember thinking I was just being honest. She was probably thinking it would have been easier to stick with "Now I lay me down to sleep." It would have.

I'm thankful I had a mother who felt obligated to go the extra mile beyond the perfunctory prayer, eloquent though it was for a child's rhyme. Maybe she just didn't want me saying the part about "If I should die before I wake..."

Being childless, I've not had to grapple with the hard questions. I just remember asking them.

When Daddy removed the chimney from our house, I was concerned about how Santa Claus would manage. Never mind the chimney was part of a flue for the wood stove that once stood in the kitchen, it's former presence marked by a pie plate-looking thing up on the wall that covered the hole where the stovepipe had been. To allay my fears about the lack of a chimney, Mother told me Santa Claus could get in no matter how small the space. I took her at her word, but I still missed the chimney. Every house should have one.

About a year later, when I was about 5, my parents and I were on a road trip of some sort. I think we were about to cross a truss bridge when, from the backseat of the '48 Chrysler, I suddenly remarked, "There's no

Santa Claus, is there?" Mother was ready. She said, "There's the spirit of Santa Claus."

I didn't quite know what she meant by that, but it worked for me. Nothing changed, and Santa Claus kept bringing me stuff for years.

When in doubt, be vague. My friend Kristin also had questions at an early age. Finally she simply told her mother she would have to level with her. Kristin explained to her mother she would someday have children of her own and she wanted to know what to tell them.

Until then, Kristin's mother had prolonged the credibility of Santa Claus by leaving gift tags on certain presents signed "Santa" in totally unfamiliar handwriting. Who but Santa could have signed them?

Well, forgive me for spending all this time on Christmas when a new year is upon us. I can't help it. The spirit of Santa Claus doesn't get dragged off into the sunrise by a team of reindeer. It hangs around a while.

I guess Mother was right.

Hanaba Munn Welch is a contributor and columnist for The Knox County News-Courier.

Benjamin News

Christmas is over, and after Tuesday, and the ushering in of another year, maybe we can settle down to our regular routine again.

The holidays were fun, though overshadowed by the deaths of several friends in the area within the past few weeks. And then the snow on Christmas Day caught several away from home and having to travel in order to be back at work on Wednesday, but it seems everyone around here made it OK. Other than being pretty cold, today (Sunday) is not too bad.

Regarding our ill

Maxine Stubbs reported Monday her brother Roy Ed Griffin, former Benjamin resident, was undergoing surgery at Scott and White in Temple for a broken neck he suffered in a bulldozer accident.

Jan Carver has been home a couple of weeks now after several weeks in Hendrick Medical Center in Abilene. She's still recovering from that broken leg she suffered on Thanksgiving Day. And though the bone (femur) is mending, she still can't put any weight on it, so she will be in a wheelchair four or five more weeks. She's willing to deal with that a few more weeks because she doesn't want to go through any more discomfort than she has already.

Randolph Barnett had arthroscopic knee surgery on Christmas Eve. He had really had trouble for several weeks, so Christmas or not, he was ready to get it taken care of. He's feeling great — glad to move his leg and not hurt. He had the surgery in Abilene and came home the same day.

Other than colds, sore throats, allergies and bothersome aches and pains of old age, everyone else seems to be making it OK, and we are thankful for that.

Here 'n there

There has been lots of visiting during the past few days. Around mid-December Susan and Hannah White made a trip to Sacramento, Calif., to visit their daughter and sister, Melissa Osborne and family. Melissa has a new baby boy, Liam Harrison Osborne. Susan and Hannah enjoyed the week they were there.

Also, on Dec. 14, Shaylee Propps graduated from West Texas A&M in Canyon with a degree in animal science. Attending the commencement program were her mom, Shannon Propps, and her brother and his wife, Trey and Carrie, of Vera. Others attending were Don and Jimmie Kaye Liles of Holly Lake Ranch, Herbert and Dickie Propps of Seymour, Cody Propps of Tarleton State in Stephenville, Nafessa Ebraheim of Wichita Falls, Jim and Susan Spake of Munday, Todd and Jill Phillips of Canyon, Gladys Miller of Green Valley, Ariz., Chance Propps of Los Angeles, Stacia and James Propps and Donnie and Barbara Ryder,

all of Benjamin. Todd and Jill hosted a pre-graduation party at their home. Hamburgers and all the trimmings and cake were enjoyed by the guests.

On Saturday before Christmas, my family was at my house for a day of visiting, gift exchanges and food. Many family members were unable to be here due to other obligations, but those present were Diane, Mike and Ashlee Evans of Childress, Kevin and Beckie Smith and Randi of Munday, Marla Molina, Jerry Amy and Tia of Dumas, Debi and Mike Moorhouse, Dillon Keys and friend Trey Stinnett of Munday, and Cody Taylor of Benjamin.

Visiting Hazel Stockton during Christmas were Pam and Keith Conner and grandson Carson Conner of Midland, Clay and Melania Conner and baby girl of Lubbock, Blaine Neal and family of Seymour, and Steve and Judy Watson of Durant, Okla.

Wes and Erika Holmes, Jayden and Jaycee had several different Christmas get-togethers with various members of their families. They went to her dad's, Pep Nicholson at Rochester, one night, then on to Stamford the next day to be with her mom and her husband, Lexie and Kelly Williamson. Their final stop was at his parents, Alan and Jennifer Holmes at Rochester.

Susan and Tracy Cartwright were in Canyon for the commencement of West Texas A&M. Their son Lucas was a member of the graduating class.

Janet and Gary Reed hosted a Christmas party and dinner in their home on Saturday before Christmas. Attending were Blaine and Gary Neal and family of Seymour, Clay and Melania Conner and Adahlee of Lubbock, Edith Broach of Knox City, and Jimmy and Michele Barrientez and family of Benjamin.

Debbie Clodover and Sara had several Christmas guests, including Cathy Tomlinson of Denton, Betty Parker and Chelsea of Aspermont, Robert Clower of Electra, Sam and Sabra Turner of Ulyses, Kan., and Gloria West of Benjamin.

Sims Staff told me he spent Christmas Day at his family's farm near Olney with his parents and his sister and brother-in-law.

Visiting Roger and Betty Bohannon during Christmas were their daughters, Bonnie and Craig Howell and family of Nebraska, Jamie Brumley, Nicholas and Josh Tyler Ford of Munday, K.J. And Dakota (Nick and Josh's cousins) of Vernon, Debbie Stephenson of Clyde, and Mike Young of Benjamin.

Betty Lyles spent Christmas with her daughter Judy Robinson and family in Sherman.

Visiting with Doris and Sonny Bufkin during the Christmas holidays were Mike and Lorrie Bufkin of Crowell, Debbie Goforth and Megan of Fort Worth and Michele Brown, Kelsey and Emmy of Benjamin.

For Christmas Reyes Barrientez had her son Junior and Virginia of Stamford, her daughter Lupe Palacios of Johnson City, granddaughter Angie and her husband of Crowell, grandchildren Sara and Michael Barrientez and Michael's girlfriend, all students at West Texas A&M in Canyon, and Jimmy and Michele Barrientez and family of Benjamin.

James and Stacia Propps had their families at their home for Christmas get together. They were Don and Jimmie Kaye Liles of Holly Lake Ranch, Herb and Dickie Propps of Seymour, Chance Propps of Los Angeles, Cody Propps of Tarleton State in Stephenville, and Donnie and Barbara Ryder, Shannon Propps and Shaylee Propps, all of Benjamin. Shaylee has accepted a position with Lexton Animal Health as a pharmaceutical rep. She will be living in Graham. We're proud of Shaylee and her accomplishments.

Joe Nelson told me they are moving to Abilene. He and Emily have lived in Knox City for several years. He was the ag teacher, and she taught a few years before resigning a couple of years ago. He has already resigned and will be leaving soon. They are good for the community, and he's a good musician as well! Do wish them well in their new endeavor.

And finally belated but sincere congratulations to the Moguls for winning state a couple of weeks ago. You and your coaches have made us all proud!

The Idle American On getting it right ...

So far as I know, there are no findings to suggest that persons careful to "dot every 'i' and cross every 't'" get it right significantly more often than the rest of us who are more prone to be slipshod in such matters.

Such seemed even more the case in yesterday's world, when most communication consisted of complete sentences and "uncontracted" words and we dared shortening states' names to abbreviations only when feeling feisty.



DON NEWBURY

Mostly, we attempted mightily to "be ourselves," understanding that we'll make goofs, but never, hopefully, of the heart. We harbor hope readers and listeners will be charitable, understanding and — in some cases — forgiving.

An art to be practiced in such matters is merely to smile — as opposed to laughing out loud or crying — when someone stumbles.

Preachers are often "sitting ducks" — OK, maybe "standing ducks" — for a couple of reasons. They appear regularly in front of the same folks — and sometimes they try too hard.

Case in point: One parson, urging parishioners to move closer to the front, explained "the agnostics are terrible" in the sanctuary. Reckon he meant acoustics?

Another pulpit blunder — back in 1998 — likewise was caused by a single word. It occurred when Bill Clinton's name was in headlines for other than presidential reasons.

At a Waco church, the Sunday morning prayer was fervent. It centered on the importance of forgiving. "He makes mistakes, and we make mistakes. He made bad choices, and so do we. He deserves forgiveness as much as we who seek it," etc. It was a lengthy prayer, and the staffer at the lectern fully intended to end it with "So please be with our president."

Instead, he said, "So please be with our pastor."

Ministers know they're going to be second-guessed. The Rev. Dr. Travis Burleson, a Salado pastor, should be so lucky. Instead, he is "third-guessed, fourth-guessed and fifth-guessed," too.

In his flock are five retired pastors, most of them several years his senior.

Claiming they are typically gentle with him, he

prizes a hand-written note one of them slipped into a handshake following a sermon. It read: "Your material was excellent, research solid, illustrations effective. However, I could have preached it better!"

A guest preacher was not at a "loss for words" recently. Instead, he was at a "loss for electricity."

The struggling little church was in arrears on the electricity bill, and when the preacher arrived for the Sunday night worship, it was a "candlelight service" — by necessity.

His sermon notes didn't do him much good, however.

Sometimes speakers wander in where angels fear to tread. I did so at First Baptist Church in Plainview in November. I knew the Rev. Dr. Paul Armes, president of Wayland Baptist University and an FBC member there, had taken a nasty fall on his bicycle last fall.

I thought I'd kid him gently, noting Wayland's next catalog will include a course called "Bicycle Safety 101." There were polite smiles, but little laughter. What I did not know is that a Wayland student had been struck and killed while bicycling a few weeks following Dr. Armes' mishap.

The lesson there, of course, is to avoid trivializing someone else's mishaps. Speakers typically are much better off being their own "fall guys."

Long-ago banter can produce smiles. A friend attended a baseball game at Fort Worth's LaGrave Field around 1930. A World War I pilot was performing daring aerial maneuvers above the field. Two wide-eyed 14-year-olds focused intently on the aerial show.

"Can you imagine anything worse than being up there in that airplane?" one asked. "Oh, yes," his friend answered, "Being up there without that airplane!" It may be one of these youngsters who, upon finishing a theme assignment, bunched several commas and periods in the corner on the last page — "extras" the teacher was free to "place wherever needed."

Next week, I'll begin my second decade of weekly column-writing. Some of it will be "on a wing and a prayer." The prayer will be for your continued indulgence, forgiving attitude and charitable nature. I hope some of my stories will make you smile and sometimes even serve to inspire.

Don Newbury, former chancellor at Howard Payne University, is a humorist and motivational speaker.



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DROUGHT

From Page 1

could occur. He just knows that too many years of low yields can hurt farmers by lowering their government crop insurance payments when crops fail.

"We've had so many bad years," he said.

Rain would help more than anything.

"If it would start raining, we would be OK because we

could produce," he said.

Spray pilot Terry Porter sees a similar picture — just from a different angle.

"I see dry tanks," he said. "I see fewer wildlife. A lot less wildlife."

On a positive note, even wild pig numbers seem to be down, he said.

Porter sees dirt where there should be grazing.

"I don't know if some of this country is going to recover or not," he said.

Porter normally flies out of Knox City for Air Ag Inc., a company owned by Stan Wojcik. But he's had to travel to other agricultural regions to find demand for spraying.

One trip took him to Illinois to spray corn and soybeans. In the Texas Panhandle, he sprayed corn, black-eyed peas, watermelons and pumpkins — irrigated crops dependent on the limited supply of water from

the Oglala Aquifer.

"They're getting the last," he said, referring to the depletion of the aquifer.

Groundwater is diminishing in Knox County too, although enough rain over a long enough time could ostensibly bring the water table back up. For now it's not happening.

Bryan Kuehler farms cotton, mostly in Knox County and also in Haskell County, mostly irrigated. The smattering of moisture at the end

of December hardly helped.

"What it takes to grow cotton, you've got to have some underground seasoning, some moisture profile, whether it's irrigated or dry land," he said.

Meanwhile, irrigation wells are weakening. Wells that pumped 600 to 900 gallons per minute six or seven years ago are doing well to pump 200 to 300 gallons now, Kuehler said.

Farmers continue to drill irrigation wells, but some-

times only to run other wells dry, Kuehler said.

"You're drinking out of the same bowl," said Konnie Kuehler, his wife. "Everybody just keeps putting another straw in."

It's a situation that doesn't look much different through the photographer's eye of Meinzer, who sums up the drought with just one word: "Despair."

"It's like we're locked into some kind of weather pattern," he said. "It's a constant toll."

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Little Adam Myers tries on a winter coat on a cool December afternoon to illustrate "Coats for Kids," a yearly project of Rhineland Council 1766 of the Knights of Columbus. Helping him don the coat is Joyce Sanders. Distribution of the coats to the Knox County Welfare Board came in time for the cold snap that ended the year. Also on the front row are Olivia Myers and Billie Myers. Back row, from left, Kevin Myers, Nancy Tidwell, Tammie Pienaar, Diana Moore, Tara Cottingham.

Knights collect coats for children

The Knox County News-Courier

Coats for Kids is a nationwide project of Knights of Columbus that benefits children everywhere, including Knox County.

Locally, it's a project that visibly links the fund-raising sausage dinner held each October by the Rhineland Council 1766 of the Knights of Columbus with Christmas — one way the Knights turn the money they raise in the fall into good works that benefit the community.

"It's an annual event that's been going on for 35-plus years," said Richard Albus, council member, referring to the Sunday sausage dinner, an event that's typically

held on the Sunday closest to Columbus Day.

As 2012 drew to a close, the Knights used some of the sausage feed proceeds to donate 120 coats to the county welfare board.

"Rhineland Council 1766 supports many projects," Albus said, naming St. Joseph Church youth, the local food bank and the ministerial alliance.

When people ask Albus what the Knights do with all the money they raise from the sausage dinner, he likes to be able to give specific answers, he said. One of those answers is Coats for Kids.

In 2011, the Rhineland Council provided 96 coats for local distribution.

Lawmakers prepare to take on water projects

By Kate Galbraith

When the 83rd legislative session begins in January, Texas lawmakers will return to a city of brown lawns and low lakes. Austin has withered, getting just 3 percent of its normal rainfall for the past two months, and Lake Travis has fallen to 36 feet below normal. Most of the rest of the state is also still struggling through a severe drought.

If there is a silver lining, it is that after years of hand-wringing from water experts, Texas seems poised to get serious about financing water projects. Top officials, including House Speaker Joe Straus, have said water legislation will be a high priority.

Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst recently proposed tapping the state's Rainy Day Fund for \$1 billion to finance water projects. Other proposals around the Legislature have even higher figures.

But details are scarce and the stakes are high. Texas' population is poised to grow by more than 80 percent over 50 years, according to the Texas Water Development Board, the state's water-planning agency. Some small communities have nearly exhausted their water supplies. Fears are growing that companies and factories will stray to other states.

"Clearly not having an adequate water supply will harm us in terms of bringing jobs to Texas and is doing so now already," said Bill Hammond, president of the Texas Association of Business.

The question around the Capitol is how to finance Texas' water plan, which assesses water needs far into the future. The most recent version of the plan, published in January, cites \$53 billion of water-supply projects seeking money, including reservoirs, wells, pipelines

and desalination facilities. Local authorities would put up roughly half the cost, and the state would provide low-interest loans to the local groups.

So far, the plan has been financed in a limited fashion. Last year, lawmakers and voters authorized the water board to issue up to \$100 million in bonds to finance water-plan projects. (The total sum authorized last year, \$6 billion in bond authority, included wastewater and other infrastructure projects also overseen by the water board.)

Some experts question whether the water plan is the best blueprint for Texas. Mary Kelly, a principal at Parula, an Austin environmental analysis firm, said the water plan, which essentially cobbles together 16 regional plans, overstates Texas' overall water needs by not projecting lower per-capita usage in places like Dallas.

There is a risk that policymakers could "toss money at projects that aren't really needed," like large and costly reservoirs, Kelly said. She emphasized that conservation projects should come first.

Carolyn Brittin, who oversees water-supply planning for the water board, said conservation was a key criteria for communities seeking financial assistance from the board.

Lawmakers are focused on how much money the state will need. Dewhurst's proposal has accelerated the debate. He proposed providing money from the state's Rainy Day Fund, which is supplied by oil and gas taxes, to create a water infrastructure bank. Local communities could presumably borrow from the bank at low interest rates to help finance water projects. When they repaid the money, other projects could get

financing.

State Rep. Lyle Larson, R-San Antonio, has already filed a bill to pull \$1 billion from the fund.

State Sen. Kel Seliger, R-Amarillo, says \$1 billion is not enough, and has proposed drawing \$1.6 billion. State Rep. Allan Ritter, R-Nederland, said he believed \$2 billion in seed money would be needed to create a self-supporting infrastructure bank.

Rainy Day Fund expenditures must be approved by a two-thirds majority of both legislative chambers. Once routine, tapping the fund has become politically tougher as more conservatives have entered the Legislature. The state's comptroller estimates that the fund will hold \$7.3 billion by the end of fiscal 2013, though experts say that figure could be higher.

Straus has said he is looking to the leadership of Ritter, who chairs the House Natural Resources Committee, on water financing. However, neither Ritter nor Seliger, who sits on the Senate Committee on Natural Resources, has filed water bills, reflecting the number-crunching going on. Ritter said he plans to file bills that would offer various options for financing sources, which include the Rainy Day Fund and a fee on Texas water users. (Similar legislation did not pass last session.)

A key question is whether a water infrastructure bank would be fully financed up front and be able to make new loans as local utilities pay off old ones, or whether it would need subsequent infusions from the state budget's general revenue. Tapping general revenue, large chunks of which go to health care and education, carries extra political challenges.

Michael Quinn Sullivan, the president of Texans for Fiscal

Responsibility, a small government group, said in an e-mail that although conservatives are unenthusiastic about using recurring general-revenue expenses for water, the idea of an infrastructure bank with a one-time draw on the Rainy Day Fund "certainly is worth exploring, but the devil always remains in the details."

He added: "Governments don't have a good track record as venture capitalists or investors, but increasing water infrastructure capacity ranks as one of the few 'investments' for which government expenditures might actually pay off when done right."

In a potential complication for those who want to tap the Rainy Day Fund, the Legislative Budget Board says that the fund's dollars would count toward Texas' spending limit, which Gov. Rick Perry wants to tighten next year. Some lawmakers, like Seliger, do not believe this is the case.

Lucy Nashed, a spokeswoman for Perry, said that water would be a continuing priority for the governor. "As we move forward, it's imperative that our state policies incent water suppliers and users to find new ways to clean, convey and conserve water," she said in an email.

Meanwhile, the weather is not poised to improve. Federal scientists on Thursday forecast that West Texas had a strong chance of receiving below-normal rainfall during the usually wet spring and that temperatures statewide are likely to be warmer than normal. That raises the specter of another summer like 2011, when reservoir levels dropped worryingly low and water supplies grew tight.

"People can't argue with the fact that we need to do something and start with it now," Seliger said.

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Math-A-Thon raises money for St. Jude

The Knox County News-Courier

This past October, math students in fourth, fifth and sixth grades at Munday Elementary School participated in the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital Math-A-Thon.

Students had to complete various math problems on their grade level while col-

lecting donations for St. Jude.

A total of \$1,030.80 was collected by the students.

"They did a wonderful job, as they always do," Principal Kristi Bufkin said.

Participating students included sixth-graders: Edgar Araujo, Ayleen Arellano, Alex Flores, Josh Hernandez, Carolina Hilario, McKenna Zeissel, Micaela Arri-

eta, Emanuel Gonzalez, Sidronio Rangel, Emily Scott and Abby Walker; fifth-graders: Monse Cedillo, Emily Cottingham, Bryanne Cude, Zoe Harris, Rianna Manning, Christian Nunez, Ana Sanchez, Sara Anderson, Belle Dutton, Evan Hunter, Madelyn Mendoza and Isabella Nunez; fourth-graders: Jonah Hernandez, Carmen Llamas, Angel Marmalejo, Destyn

Mauldin, Claire Redwine, Trinity Rodriguez, Alexa Vega and Carlie Willison.

"Thank you to all of the students who participated," Bufkin said. "A special thanks goes out to all of those who donated. Without your donations, the children and their parents of St. Jude Children's Research Hospital would have a difficult time paying for their medical bills."

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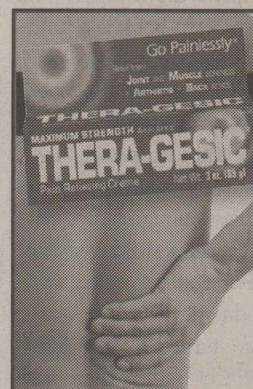
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MEINZER

From Page 1

secondary figure for Meinzer fans who had driven from as far as Plano just to meet the photographer and get their own signed copy of the Goodnight book.

"One of the dentists I work with has the book," said Vicki Lawson of Wichita Falls.

Now she and her husband, David Lawson, have their own signed copy.

"I'm honored that they would drive from Wichita Falls — that they would take the time to drive out here," Meinzer said.

The Lawsons were happy enough to make the trip for the book, even on a week night, to meet Meinzer and then to brave the dark road home, watching for deer and wild hogs, living elements of danger that have a way of tying the present to the past.

Similarly, Meinzer plugs into the past when he photographs bison descended from the Goodnight herd and when he visits sites connected to the history of the West, including some famous sites outside his native Texas.

He talked at the book signing about a trip to Wyoming, where he stood at the location of a Dec. 21, 1866, battle between Crazy Horse of the Oglala Lakota and Lt. Col. William J. Fetterman of the U.S. Cavalry.

Meinzer criticized Fetterman for leading his troops into the perfect place for an Indian ambush, imagining how the Indians were able to attack and wipe out the entire Cavalry contingent.

For the Goodnight book, Meinzer was on familiar Texas turf instead, shooting the broad vistas that haven't changed much since the days Goodnight's herds grazed the range and photographing much of the same wildlife — bison, the lesser prairie chicken, a bobcat, antelope and so on.

A key photograph is Meinzer's night shot of the Goodnight ranch house just off U.S. 287 between Clarendon and Claude. The house, essentially restored



Hanaba Munn Welch/The Knox County News-Courier

Anne Christian, a guide at the historic Charles Goodnight House near Claude, listens as Holle Humphries of Lubbock recalls when she herself suggested Benjamin photographer Wyman Meinzer could help produce a book about Charles Goodnight. Humphries was part of a Texas Plains Trail Region group that toured the house earlier this month. In the background are two of the second-story rooms of the famed ranch house. Both feature period furnishings and wallpaper.

after six years of renovation by the Armstrong County Museum, anchors the Charles Goodnight Historical Center. A separate building under construction nearby, slated to open in April, will complete the complex. The new Goodnight book is a fund-raising tool for the projects.

Meinzer's shot of the house looks similar to nocturnal work he does with a special "light painting" technique. Instead, he captured just enough fading natural light to get a striking shot of the eastern elevation of the two-story landmark.

"They'd turned all the lights on," Meinzer said. "There was just enough reflection in the eastern sky at sunset. It was everything I needed."

Anne Christian, one of several Armstrong County residents who has been involved with the Goodnight Historical Center, is especially happy with the picture.

"Every once in a while, someone takes the ultimate photograph," she said. "He did it for the book."

Christian had other good things to say about Meinzer.

"He's very good to work with," she said. "The book is going to be a nice profit for us."

Many of Meinzer's fans follow his life and activities on Facebook, among them Jill Murphy, a nurse who lives in Vernon. Murphy was at the book signing to meet Meinzer in person.

"You just don't know what to expect," she said.

Meinzer likes the way Facebook lets him interact with his followers.

"I don't consider them my followers on Facebook," he said. "I consider them contributors."

By some standards, Meinzer is outspoken.

"I feel obliged to always be honest, regardless of who it might hurt, but on the other hand, to be polite to everybody," he said. "I always try to address everybody who takes the time to write me."

"Charles Goodnight: A Man for All Ages" is for sale in Benjamin at Santa Fe on the Brazos, where proprietor Sylinda Meinzer is the power behind Badlands Design & Production.

Also for sale are other books featuring Wyman Meinzer's photographs, including some with texts he has written.

Meinzer has been recognized as the office state photographer of Texas.

POSTAL SERVICE

From Page 1

and Friday and from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday. O'Brien resident Shelly Williams, her relief, works every Saturday from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.

By September 2014, the office is slated to reduce the time it stays open.

"Two hours a day is what I've heard," Sanchez said.

Until then, unless a better position beckons, Sanchez will continue to enjoy her job and the people she serves.

"Most of them are elderly here," she said. "I just love them to death."

Farell Ezell, a retired firefighter from Midland, moved to Goree because he likes to fish Millers Creek Reservoir. He's not the fisherman he used to be.

"Too old," he said.

But a trip to the post office is an outing he manages nicely, both to retrieve the mail and to exchange a few words with

Sanchez. Mike Hord is one of Sanchez' younger box-holders.

"Great post office," he said Monday. "We don't want to lose this."

In an era when email has supplanted regular mail and the Internet competes with direct mail as an advertising medium, U.S. Postal Service revenue is down. Reducing hours is one way the

postal service has been able to keep small offices open.

In Benjamin, the post office will reduce the hours the window is open to four hours a day, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., starting Jan. 12. Current hours are 8 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and noon to 3:30 p.m.

In both post offices, access to boxes will remain the same — 24 hours a day.



Hanaba Munn Welch/The Knox County News-Courier

Dressed for a chilly Monday morning, Farrell Ezell visits across the counter with Goree Postmaster Janie Sanchez. The small office is open six days a week despite postal service cutbacks in services.

VETERAN

From Page 1

waters when the Japanese attacked on Dec. 7, 1941, destroying much of the U.S. Navy's Pacific fleet docked near Honolulu.

But the Mississippi made its way to the Pacific and, by June 1942, so did Jones. He was just 17.

"I loved the Navy," Jones said late Monday afternoon, wearing a cap identifying him as a veteran.

Embroidered above the bill of the cap was the name of his ship and also the name of a battle he and the Mississippi survived — the battle of Surigao Strait in the Philippines.

"I was up there taking bearings," Jones said. "I was topside all the time most of the battle."

Jones was required to be an expert helmsman.

"Sometimes during the battle I was steering the ship," he said.

Like other young men of his time, Jones had been eager to enlist.

"I wasn't old enough when the war broke out," he said.

The Mississippi carried Jones in wartime from warm equatorial waters north to the Bering Sea.

There's no place on earth colder than the Bering Sea, Jones said, perhaps another reason December makes him recall the war.

Sailors on the Mississippi were short of clothing for the colder climate, meaning that clothing got traded at shift changes, Jones said.

After the war, he stayed in the Navy and spent two years on the USS Astoria, a cruiser.

Reunions with his Navy comrades have brightened recent years, particularly a reunion in Fredericksburg at the Nimitz Museum.

"I won't make it to Missouri," Jones said, referring to an upcoming reunion and citing his health as the reason he can't attend.

Besides his USS Mississippi souvenir cap, Jones' attire Monday afternoon also included a special jacket from his former peacetime employer, Amoco.

"I was a shooter on a seismic crew," he said. "I handled dynamite."

Either way, military or civilian, Jones stays in touch with his past in a positive way. He's been glad to see other people recognize veterans and honor them for their place in history.

"This year has been the best year for recognizing the military," he said.

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