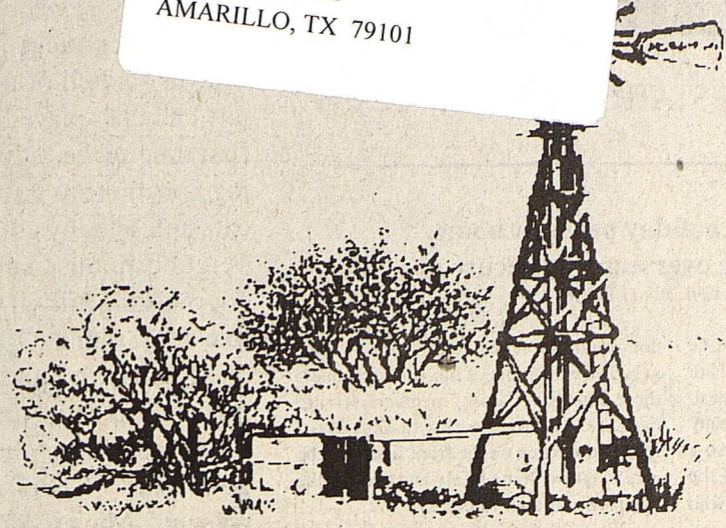


# Cowboy Country News

Published each Wednesday in the county seat of Yoakum County, Plains, Texas

Volume XI, Issue 16, December 29, 2004

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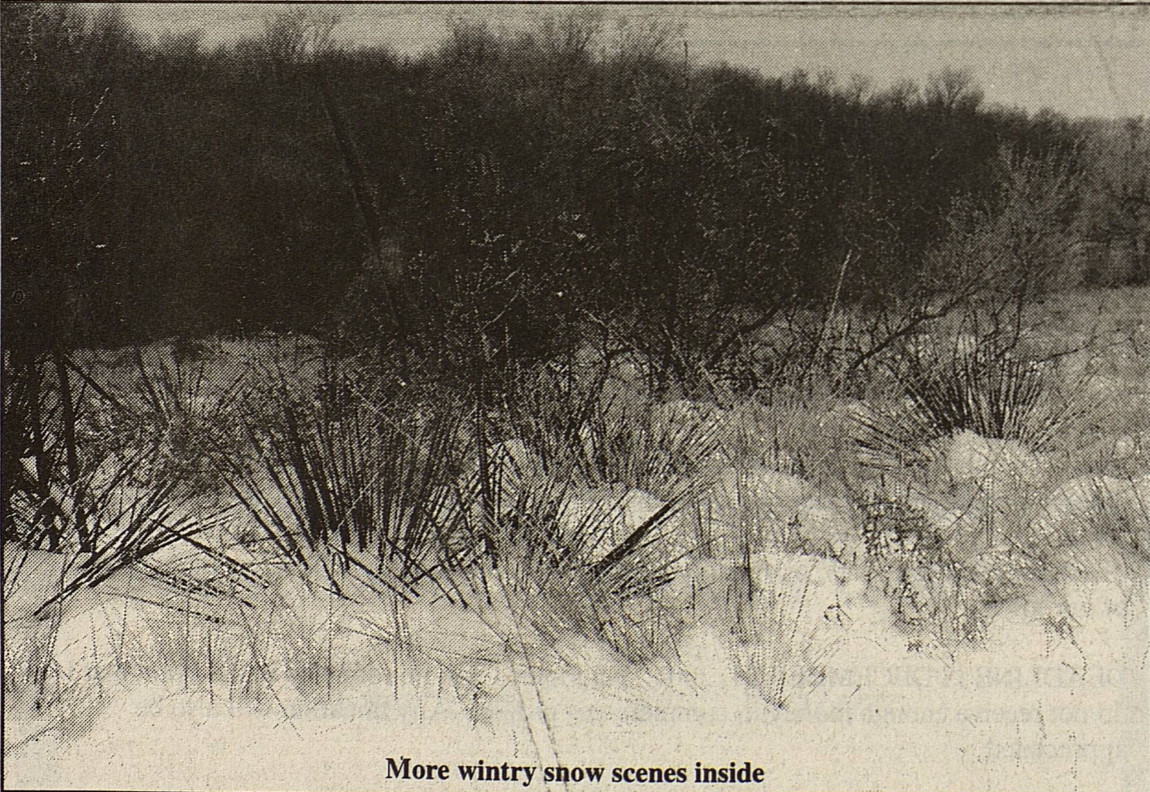


## Arctic Front Roars Through, Creates Semi-White Christmas

An Arctic blast of winter last week resulted in beautiful pre-Christmas scenes throughout the county. Official figures were not available, but most 'guessers' agreed some three to five inches of snow fell Wednesday and Thursday evening. NBC television reported Thursday night's official low in Brownfield, only 32 miles away, dropped to -2 degrees.



A festive snowman and a wintry pasture scene could have adorned Christmas cards



More wintry snow scenes inside

## Young version of "Old Blue Eyes" getting warmed up?

Was it nostalgia gripping me as I listened to the CD, the background orchestra's superb support of *THAT* voice which had moved millions, dating back to the late thirties, throughout the 40's war years, on into the 70's and even early 80's, probably the most popular, dominant male voice of the century - was that SINATRA again?

No, it wasn't the KING, (Before Elvis, of course) Frank Sinatra. It was none other than a 15 year old Plains, America high schooler, the younger Doug Conway, dubbed into a CD featuring the background orchestra accompanying old Frank years ago.

The Plains High Freshman is currently under contract with Sweetheart Records in Bridgeport, Connecticut. His recordings are currently being featured on Dick Robinson's Florida based 'American Standards By The Sea'. His work has also been featured by Dallas radio station KAAM, 770 AM on the Joe Lacina show each Monday and Tuesday from 7 to 10 PM. Young Conway said in an interview last week a number of locals have been able to get the radio station.

Conway will be returning to Florida and Dick Robinson's tutelage in January for more coverage, including recordings and interviews, hopefully boosting his career.

The young man's talents aren't limited to his vocal cords. He plays piano, taking lessons in



Brownfield from Eddie Sharp, and is talented with the French horn he plays in the Cowboy Band. He has also performed on that instrument with the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra.

He credits his passion for music to his parents' enthusiastic support. Both Doug Sr. and mother Cindy Conway have encouraged him to learn and grow in the field. Doug Jr. told CCN, "My musical mentors here in Plains, band directors Georganne Weisgerber, Ray Portillo, and Byron Morgan have been very important influences on me, and local people have encouraged and supported me as well". He said he had sung with choirs at the local Methodist, First Baptist and Sacred Heart churches. "The former choir director at the Baptist Church, Patrick Hamilton,

really helped and influenced me." He also expressed his thanks to Don Caldwell's studio for recent assistance producing a CD.

Young Conway said he and Sweetheart Records will soon start work on another CD. "We don't want to limit our field to Sinatra's work. We will also take a look at country, rock and other contemporary styles.

His mother Cindy told CCN "We want the people of Plains to know how very much we appreciate their interest in and support of his young career. His dad and I think he will work hard to become a success, with the right attitude."

The young musician can be seen and heard on his website; [www.cdbaby.com](http://www.cdbaby.com). By clicking search and then typing in his name his resume will also be available.

## Commissioners OK water tank project, contract for future Ob/Gyn physician

In the December 20 session of Commissioners Court, a contract to sandblast and paint the interior of the county's water storage tank in Precinct 3 was reviewed and approved. Commissioner Ty Earl Powell reported Professional Sandblasting and Coating, an Amarillo firm had submitted the low bid of \$23,482 for the project. The firm will furnish upfront a completion bond of five percent of the bid price to ensure performance on the job. Powell said work on the storage facility would start shortly after the start of the new year.

Yoakum County Hospital Administrator Clay Taylor outlined the hospital board's efforts to secure services for a future medical school graduate with obstetrics and gynecology (OB/GYN) special training to serve patients at the hospital upon his graduation from the Texas Tech Health Sciences medical school in Lubbock. The hospital board of directors had previously negotiated for the services of Scott Frankfather, scheduled to graduate from college the summer of 2005, at which time he will start his residency training at the Health Sciences Center. He is the son of Denver City residents Norman and Mary Frankfather.

Turn To Page Two, Commissioners Court

The December 31 deadline for the Chamber's Memorial Brick Sale is almost here. For only \$50 you can honor someone - some event - someTHING. Your \$50 gesture will become an historic, lasting testimony, and hopefully, will become the foundation base for the Plains Chamber of Commerce new electronic billboard sign. Please join us in a worthy cause!!

## Christmas Spirit Ala Carte, please

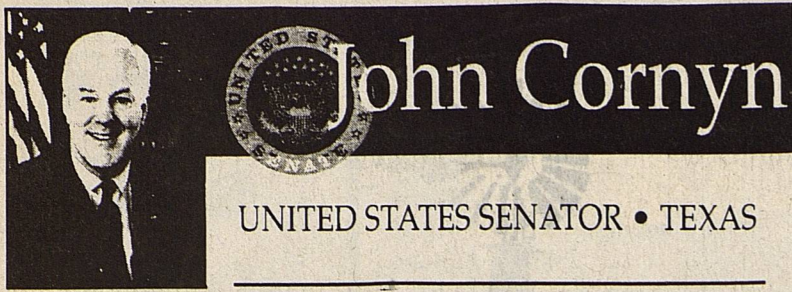


Employee Dene Rafferty and owner Dottie Mayes

"It must be hard to have the Christmas Spirit when you're hungry." That could have been what Dottie Mayes, owner of Johnnie's Restaurant here, was thinking when she made up her mind to be the driving force behind Plains first ever "Feed The Town" last Friday, Christmas Eve.

From 5 PM until near 9 PM, over 250 people crowded the restaurant for a hearty - and FREE - sumptuous dinner of smoked brisket and ham, potato salad, red and green beans, corn and dessert. Asked if she and her regular crew needed any help feeding

Turn To Page 2, CHRISTMAS SPIRIT



**John Cornyn**  
UNITED STATES SENATOR • TEXAS

**While enjoying holiday peace at home, remember those overseas who secure it**  
*By U.S. Sen. John Cornyn*

The holidays mark a time when we gather together, across the country, to share in fellowship and good cheer. It is a time to celebrate and to take delight in the company of family and old friends. Yet it is also a fitting time to pause and take note of the peace that we enjoy together, and those who have secured it for us.

The vast majority of Americans are celebrating the holidays in comfort at home. From that perspective, the world seems safe — and so it should. We must remember, though, that this peace is earned through the labor of the brave men and women of our Armed Forces, who are even today laboring overseas to defend our lives and our homeland against America's enemies.

They are sons and daughters, fathers and mothers, siblings and friends. Many of these men and women are Texans. And many are still on the front lines, prevented from enjoying any of the comforts we do firsthand — though in truth, they deserve these comforts most of all.

America cannot spare these courageous souls from the fight at hand. The foe they are battling against does not pause for the holidays, or roll back their lines to honor the peace of faith or tradition. They are fighting the enemy on their ground, so that they do not have to fight them on ours.

That is the hard truth of a critical time in our nation's history. Yet it is also true that the fundamental spirit of the holidays is embodied in the selfless commitment to help those in need, to give hope to those who despair, to reach out to the weakest among us, and to spread peace throughout the world.

So for those of us who are observing the traditions of the holidays in Texas, it is good and right that we should spend this holiday season filled with gratitude and thankfulness for these brave men and women, who are spreading the light of free-

dom to lands too long imprisoned in darkness. We can go out of our way to support those who have family members serving overseas. And we can pray that the brave men and women on the front lines will be able to return home safely and soon to the open arms of their families.

Even in difficult times for the world abroad, we can learn to set those things aside. In a much darker time, Winston Churchill spent the holidays of 1941 visiting the White House. Speaking at the lighting of the national tree on Christmas Eve, he urged all Americans to "cast aside, for this night at least, the cares and dangers which beset us."

"Let the children have their night of fun and laughter, let the gifts of Father Christmas delight their play, and let us grown-ups share to the full in their unstinted pleasures," Churchill said. "Before we turn again to the stern tasks and the formidable years that lie before us — resolved that by our sacrifice and daring these same children shall not be robbed of their inheritance or denied their right to live in a free and decent world."

Today as Americans we are all joined together in pursuit of this ultimate goal: We seek a free and decent world — not just for ourselves, but for all generations. Let us renew our commitment to this noble end as we gather together in the joy of the holidays, in fellowship and celebration, and in recognition of those whose sacrifices have made this season of peace possible.

*Sen. Cornyn visited troops in Iraq and Kuwait this month. He chairs the Judiciary Committee's subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Property Rights. He also serves on the Armed Services, Environment and Public Works, and Budget Committees. He served previously as Texas Attorney General, Texas Supreme Court Justice, and Bexar County District Judge.*

**Neugebauer announces new D. C. office**

Washington, D.C. - Constituents of the 19th district planning a visit to our nation's capital should take note Congressman Randy Neugebauer has moved offices.

He announced last week he has moved out of his old office in the Longworth House Office Building and relocated to room 429 of the Cannon House Office Building. The Cannon building is located one block east of the Longworth building on Independence Avenue. "419 Cannon belongs to the people of the 19th district," Neugebauer said. "I hope everyone will stop by to see the new office when visiting Washington."

The fourth floor of the Cannon building may feel to some like a little piece of Texas in the middle of Washington D.C. Other inhabitants of Cannon's fourth floor include Congresswoman Kay Granger, TX 12, Congressman Kevin Brady, TX 8, and John Carter, TX 31.

The phone number for the new office remains 202-225-4005 and the fax number, 202-225-9615 also stays the same. Constituents can also continue to contact Neugebauer through his website, www.randy.house.gov and by e-mailing him at randy@mail.house.gov. Neugebauer also said soon he will be announcing the opening of his office in Abilene.

**From Page One, Commissioners Court**

Taylor explained the board had approved offering Franfather a \$2000 per month stipend for 48 months once he starts his residency. In addition, he would receive a \$4,000 bonus following his residency training and when he signs an employment contract with the hospital. Taylor said the board had specified an eight year employment contract. He also pointed out should Frankfather fail to return to the hospital for the contract, the \$100,000 would be considered a legal debt. The employment arrangement would be paid for from county dis-pro funds. The court approved the request.

From 1, CHRISTMAS SPIRIT the crowd, Dottie laughed and said, "Not really. We ended up with 62 folks volunteering to help. It was a great response for a first time project."

Mayes said all of the community churches played roles in the first time success, from gathering donations to working in the cafe and actually going through neighborhoods, knocking on doors asking folks if they would like a free dinner. "They found one family who told them they had not had a real meal in three days, and we sent them a really generous Christmas eve present", Mayes said.

Financial donations came from a number of businesses including Lea County Electric, Image 'n That, New Tex Gin, Crosswind, and dozens of individuals. Mayes said a special part of the evening occurred when a group from The Trinity Home For men, a rehab facility sponsored by Denver City's Trinity Baptist Church came to eat and sing Christmas Carols. Mayes answered the obvious question, "Yes, we will definitely do it again next year!"

**JP Court Summary**

The following is a summary of cases heard and fines and bonds set in Precinct 1 Justice of Peace Court, Judge Melba Crutcher presiding.

- 4 traffic cases filed
- Three issuance of bad check cases
- One felony case
- Bonds and Fines set:
- Forgery of financial instrument - \$5000 bond
- Parole violation-Ector County-bond denied
- 3 Case DWI - \$1000 bonds
- Failure to drive in single lane- \$200 bond
- Disregard stop sign- \$200 bond
- Escape from custody- \$1500 bond
- Assault causes bodily injury-family violence- \$150 bond.
- Driving while having alcohol in system when prohibited- Commercial vehicle- \$250 fine
- Possessio of controlled substance, under one gram- \$3500
- Motion to revoke probation- \$1000 bond
- Failure to stop and render aid-Hockley County- \$2500 bond
- Assault causes bodily injury-family violence-enhanced. \$5000 bond.

**County Court Case**

In County Court December 22, Victor Manuel Hurtado pled true to the state's motion to revoke community supervision ordered following a DWI first conviction. He was ordered to serve 21 days in county jail with 21 days already served. He will also pay delinquent CSCD fees. Judge Dallas Brewer was presiding officer, and Criminal District Attorney Richard Clark represented the state.

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**NOTICE**

Notice is hereby given that Plains Independent School District intends to destroy records of students who have received special education services. Records to be destroyed are for persons who received Special Education, including speech therapy services, prior to 1996-1997 school year. These records are located at

School	Plains ISD
Phone	(806)456-7498
Address	Box 479 Plains, TX 79355

Legal parent / guardian or adult student with disabilities may request copies of these records at the school.

**AVISO**

Aviso esta dado que La Escuela de Plains tiene intención de destruir documentos de estudiantes que recibieron servicio de Educación Especial. Documentos que deben ser destruidos son para personas que recibieron educación especial, incluyendo servicios de terapia de lenguaje hasta el año escolar 1996-1997. Los unicos documentos que van estar destruidos son los que estan localizados en

Escuela	Plains ISD
Teléfono	(806)456-7498
Dirección	Box 479 Plains, TX 79355

Padres / guardián legal o estudiantes adultos con incapacidades física / mentales pueden pedir copias de sus documentos en la escuela.

**PLAINS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
P. O. BOX 364  
PLAINS, TEXAS 79355**

Plains Chamber of Commerce is initiating a fund raiser to replace the marquee sign that is located south of the courthouse. At this time we are taking orders for bricks that will be used at the base of the new sign. The price of a brick will be \$50.00. The brick can have up to three lines with a maximum of 16 letters and spaces per line.

Please complete the form below and return to the address above with your check in the amount of \$50.00 for each brick ordered. This is not a war memorial, but you can honor a veteran if you wish. We would like family names, clubs and businesses (with the date of establishment), events, in memory of, and anything that might be a part of the history of our town.

DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 31, 2004. All monies will be refunded in the event that we do not receive enough money to complete this project. Any donation will also be appreciated.

PLEASE PRINT YOUR INFORMATION IN THE BOXES. REMEMBER ONLY 16 CHARACTERS (INCLUDING SPACES) TO EACH LINE.

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LINE 1 (16 LETTERS OR SPACES)

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**MEMBER**  
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# More Wintry Snow Scenes



These two young guys were not classic "Downhill Racers"



Stanford Park was truly beautiful



## TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS

Replace Overhead Doors  
Contract Number 055XXR006

Sealed proposals to replace the overhead doors at the Yoakum County Maintenance Section Office, located on SH 214 1 mile south of U.S. 380, Plains, Yoakum County, Texas, will be received by the Texas Department of Transportation located at 135 Slaton Road, Lubbock, Texas

Proposals will be received until January 19, 2005 at 11:00 A.M. then publicly opened and read.

Proposals, plans and specifications for this project will be furnished without charge to any Contractor desiring to submit a bid. Pre-qualification is required. Contact Cat Soto at 135 Slaton Rd., Lubbock, Texas, Telephone (806) 748-4446 for proposals or any questions

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# TxDOT Approves \$600 Million in Statewide Safety Projects

## Highway Improvements Expected to Reduce Traffic Crashes and Save Lives

AUSTIN - The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is giving Texans something to celebrate this holiday season - the largest single roadway safety program it has ever undertaken. At just over \$600 million, it will include 644 safety projects all across the state. Transportation planners say the highway improvements could save as many as 90 lives and prevent nearly 1,100 injuries every year.

Bonds authorized by voters last year will be used to pay for widening narrow two-lane roadways, installing barriers in the medians of divided highways, adding left turn lanes at highway intersections and building new overpasses around the state. Work on many of the projects is expected to be underway as early as next year.

"Thanks to the voters, we are about to make safety improvements to more than 2,300 miles of state highways," said Governor Rick Perry. "That's more than the length of a road stretching all the way from Austin to New York City."

The bond program will pay for projects that safety experts say have the most potential for reducing the number of traffic crashes on state-maintained highways. TxDOT will spend \$295 million to widen narrow, two-lane roads in 90 Texas counties to lessen head-on collisions and crashes involving vehicles that run off the road. New concrete or cable barriers in the medians of heavily traveled divided highways are expected



A Safety Program As Big As Texas

PHOTO BY CHRISTOPHER BISHOP  
Gov. Rick Perry announced the largest highway safety program in state history in Austin. The Texas Department of Transportation will spend \$605 million across the state to widen two-lane highways, install concrete and wire safety barriers on divided highways, create left turn lanes at busy highway intersections and build new overpasses. Planners estimate the improvements will save 1,800 lives and prevent 21,000 injuries over the next 20 years. Also pictured are Texas Transportation Commissioner Robert Nichols, left, and TxDOT Executive Director Mike Behrens.

to decrease head-on collisions. Ten new highway overpasses will improve traffic flow and reduce the number and severity of crashes. TxDOT will also install left turn lanes at 171 locations to reduce the number of rear-end crashes.

"Safety is our top priority," said Ric Williamson, Chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission. "The improvements we can now afford to make to highways all over Texas could save an estimated 1,800 lives and prevent 21,000 injuries over the next 20 years."

In 2003, voters gave the Texas Transportation Commission

authority to issue up to \$3 billion in bonds to pay for state highway improvement projects. The unprecedented number of safety projects announced in Austin today are the first to be funded under this new financing option.

Each year, more than 3,500 people are killed and more than 340,000 are injured in motor vehicle crashes in Texas. The Texas Transportation Institute's Center for Transportation Safety estimates the annual economic cost of crashes in the state exceeds \$19.7 billion.

For a complete list of TxDOT's safety bond projects, visit [www.dot.state.tx.us](http://www.dot.state.tx.us).

## A montage of recent PHS Roundball action



# Citrus Gold - Florida's loss opens door for Texas citrus

Texas citrus farmers may strike gold in 2004. The state's citrus industry, which primarily produces grapefruits and oranges in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, has historically lagged behind Florida's which three quarters of the nation's citrus. But a series of hurricanes that struck the Southeast in September devastated Florida's \$9 billion citrus industry. In an October forecast, the USDA predicted Florida's grapefruit crop will drop 63 percent and its orange crop will be down 27 percent from the 2003-04 season.

Florida crop losses have sparked interest in Texas citrus from around the world, growers say.

As Texas citrus growers headed into the 2004-05 harvest and market season, which runs October through Mat, some expected the highest demand for their fruit in years.

Since the fourth in a series of hurricanes hit Florida in September, calls from fruit buyers to the Edinburg Citrus Association (ECA) have increased 30 percent. Buyers from Europe and Japan, Florida's greatest export market, are calling about Texas citrus. Such international interest in their fruit is getting Texas growers excited about the crop.

Not everyone, however, is so excited or optimistic. John McClung, Pres. of Texas Produce Association, warned it is too early to make predictions. Even with 60 percent of Florida's 800,000 acres of citrus destroyed by hurricanes, Florida still produces far more fruit than Texas, which grows citrus on 27,000 acres, he said. In 2003-04, Texas produced 5.7 million boxes of grapefruit, compared to Florida's 41 million, according to the USDA. For the same year,

Texas produced 1.6 million boxes of oranges, compared to Florida's 242 million. In the wake of the 2004 hurricanes, USDA predicted Texas in 2004-05 would produce 5.9 million boxes of grapefruit, compared to 15 million for Florida. Texas' orange crop was expected to hit 1.9 million boxes, compared with 176 million in Florida.

In 2003-04 Texas growers received about \$30 million for their oranges and grapefruits. The citrus industry has an estimated \$82 million impact on the Lower Valley economy, said Ray Prewett, president of Texas Citrus Mutual, a non profit trade association in Mission.

The state's citrus industry markets grapefruit under two trademark categories - Rio Star and Ruby Sweet - according to Texas Sweet Marketing, marketing agency for the Texas Valley Citrus Committee. Rio Star accounts for 98 percent of the state's grapefruit, while Ruby-Sweet accounts for 2 percent.

Texas oranges consist of early and mid season varieties, including Marrs, Hamlin, and Pineapple oranges, available from October to February, and Navel and Valencia oranges from mid-February through May.

The state's citrus season lasts through May, but with increased demand, Texas growers say they might run out of fruit sooner than usual. One producer said, "This year everybody's expecting to be out of fruit by January". A grower of 200 acres of grapefruit near Harlingen thinks "Everybody is expecting to be out of grapefruit by March."

Late reports indicate producers of both grapefruit and oranges can expect appreciable higher prices for their fruit.

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# Lifelines & Styles

## PHS Ex Earns Degree From Lubbock Christian

Lubbock - Chase Clark Clanahan of Plains was one of 201 graduates who participated in commencement exercises for Lubbock Christian University December 11, 2004. Clanahan graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies in Secondary Education. He is the son of Beth and Noel Clanahan of Plains. LCU is a liberal arts institution of higher learning dedicated to providing a quality education in a Christian environment. LCU was among only six Texas schools to be named in the John Templeton Foundation Honor Roll of Character Building Universities. LCU offers 43 bachelor's degree programs and eight master's degrees with an enrollment of almost 2,000 students.

## SPC regular Spring registration dates set

South Plains College's regular Spring registration will be January 12 - 13. Sign up at SPC Levelland will be 12:30 - 1:30 PM January 12 in the Administration Building for orientation students. Regular registration will be 1:30 - 6:00 PM in the Administration Building. Registration at the SPC Reese Center campus in Lubbock will be 8:30 - 11:30 AM and 1:30 - 6 PM January 13 in Building 8. Sign-up is for classes at Reese and the Byron Martin Advanced Technology Center. Registration permits are required. New student orientation at the Levelland Campus will be 8 AM - 4 PM January 11, with

new student registration January 12. SPC's Spring 2005 classes begin January 18. Late registration is January 18-21. Web registration is currently underway through January 5 for currently enrolled SPC students who have met requirements for registering online. SPC's Spring class schedules and general information about the college are available on line at [www.southplainscollege.edu](http://www.southplainscollege.edu). For a registration permit, contact SPC's Admission offices in Levelland at 806-894-9611, ext 2578 or Reese at 885-3048, ext 2902 or 4660.

**Thank You For The Support Which Made It Such A Great Year For Johnnie's, For Me, And My Family !  
Dottie Mayes**

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## Senior Citizens Corner

On the sunny and windy morning last Monday, two bus loads of tiny "Christmas Carolers" came from our schools to entertain us with familiar caroles presented to us in English and Spanish. 135 children, accompanied by seven teachers, filed into the dining room bringing with them the true spirit of Christmas as they shared their music. We enjoyed it and thank every teacher and child for coming to share with us. We spotted some little folks we know personally and had some grandchildren pointed out to us by proud grandmothers serving on our kitchen staff. We will look forward to their visit again next year when it is time to sing the familiar Christmas tunes.

Visitors this week include Wanda and Tex Hunt, who came with Wynelle Lewis. Wanda and Wynelle are sisters. Irteta Davis came one day for lunch and a good time of dominos. David Bruton came several different days, accompanied by his mother in law Laura Bowen. The Carlsons came from the north country for an extended visit at Ione and Peter Johnson's home. We are always glad to have them stop on their annual sojourn to and from the warm climes of South Texas. Welcome to each visitor.

This week saddened to lose another of our Senior Center family. We expressed our sympathy to the family of Jean Poage. My life has been intertwined with Jeans for more than four decades. We played softball together in the early years when we were both young, and followed that with bowling on opposing teams. After coming together at the Center, we competed at the pool table as well as in 42 competition. Everyone will miss Jean.

Reports from Moray Clark are she is out of ICU but is till very ill. Keep her on your prayer list. Becky Cryer also did some time in the local hospital but is back with us this week. We were glad to see her at her usual place Monday.

Christmas vacation days at the Center were Thursday and Friday so our staff could have some time to prepare for their personal family holiday. We hope this has been a truly blessed Christmas time for each of them and for each member of our Senior Center Family.

We want to remind you again to take time after the holidays to check out our wonderful Learning Center, whose staff members have so graciously offered to help us learn more about our computers, or in some cases to discover the magic of the computer world by using the computers they have there. I have received reports there have been one to five students taking advantage of this opportunity on seven different days since it has become available. Mark it on your calendar for the coming year.

Our journey to Oklahoma City for the wedding of our granddaughter was safe and wonderful. The bride was beautiful, the groom was handsome, and the great grandchildren who were involved stole the whole show! The young people are off to the Rockies for a few days of skiing then to the warmer climes of Aruba for awhile before heading back to the class rooms where they teach. Family members from other states surprised us by joining us there, so it was a joyous time of celebration and reunion, reminding us anew, "family" remains our most priceless treasure.

All kinds of delectibles tempted us as Harley Evans auctioned off our Christmas bake sale items Monday. The Site Council reported it was a very satisfactory endeavor. Thanks to everyone who participated.

Monday night was party time at the Center. Once again the Site Council ladies won our praise for a well planned evening. A quartet from the high school, along with their teacher, entertained us with Christmas music. A potluck meal was enjoyed by everyone. Donated door prizes were won as luck names were drawn, and gifts under the tree were exchanged. **JUNE HANNEMAN**

The season wouldn't be complete without a touch of Christmas humor (?) as we bring this to a close:

Twas the night of Christmas  
I tried counting backwards.  
I tried counting sheep.  
The leftovers beckoned,  
the dark meat and white  
I fought the temptation  
with all of my might  
Tossing and turning  
with anticipation,  
the thought of a snack  
was infatuation.  
So I raced to the kitchen,  
flung open the door,

and gazed at the fridge,  
full of goodies galore.  
I gobbled up turkey  
and buttered potatoes,  
beans and tomatoes.  
I felt myself swelling  
so plump and so round,  
till all of a sudden  
I rose off the ground.  
I crashed thru the ceiling,  
floating into the sky  
with a mouthful of pudding and a  
handful of pie,  
but I managed to yell  
as I soared thru the trees....  
"Happy eating to all!  
Pass the cranberries please!"

*Some people are more turned on by money than they are by love. In one respect they're alike - both wonderful as long as they last*

## Plains Acrospirit gymnasts in action, score wins

The Plains Acrospirits Team attended their first competition at an in-house meet of the Acrospirits Teams from Levelland, Brownfield, Lamesa, Muleshoe and Plains, with 150 athletes competing. The group holds four in-house meets annually and starts their USAG season in January in Dalhart and ends at Houston in July. The team trains together on the weekends at the different gyms and will carry about 100 athletes in the competitive programs. The cheerleaders, recreation and twirlers number around 400 students from all the towns. The Acrospirits have been competing some 25 years. Kellie Earnest, who heads up the Plains Team is excited about her group this year, which will compete in Division 1 and 2. Individual winners from Plains included; Morgan Dugger 1-1, Bailey Mills 1-1, Melanie Sandejo 3-7, Mackenzie Patton 2-1, Morgan Fadke 1-1, Marke Streamer 1-1, Kalei Martin 1-2, Amanda Dusek 2-1, Kendall Dusek 1-1, Landon Earnest 1-1, Dakota Earnest 1-1.

## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH Plains, Texas

### Sunday School

9:30 A.M.

### Morning Worship

10:45 A.M.

### Evening Program

6:00 P.M.

### \* NOTICE \*

Both Yoakum County Tax offices will be open on December 30th to accept tax payments **ONLY**. No motor vehicle business will be transacted on the 30th, because of the change of Tax Assessor Collectors

Thank you,  
Betty Rivas

Tax Assessor Collector

### \*\* NURSES NEEDED \*\*

Yoakum County Hospital is seeking LVN's or RN's for day and evening shifts, 7am until 7 pm and 7 pm until 7 am. \* Free membership to West Texas Lifestyle and Rehab Center \* Two week vacation \* Annual leave days \* Great Insurance \* Shift differential. Great working environment  
Call Joyce Tedford, 806 - 592 - 2121

Urgent news for people who took

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# From The Hack

I was very perturbed when I read the Christmas Eve edition of the Lubbock A-J and learned Finland lays claim to the home of Santa Claus. Yes, the Finns annually lure hundreds of thousands of tourists, 99.5 % of which are dragging along youngsters to Rovaniemi, on the Arctic Circle and which is the capitol city of Finland's Lapland. What Heresy! What Gall! What Mockery of Truth!

Even a senile toadstool KNOWS Santa Claus lives at the North Pole, which is a far piece from Lapland! I personally have known where Mr. and Mrs. Claus keep house together for 72 years and a few months, where they use several million Elves (politically correct term for dwarfs) to build toys which Santa himself delivers in just a few hours the night before Christmas to an estimated 317 billion kids around the globe.

While it may be partly true he may utilize reindeer which may have originated in Lapland, HE and SHE have been inhabitants of the North Pole FOREVER! They don't even speak Finnish or Finlândish, whatever. This I KNOW, because when I was around six or seven I distinctly heard Santa Claus one night. He was loudly using language my mother threaten'd my life for should she ever hear me say those or similar words, and I have NEVER heard of a Laplander using #!@\*\*#<+\*#! in any conversation.

Tourists, save your bucks..... don't go looking for the Clause's in LAPLAND, They ain't there, they never were there. They're due north of us, way, way due north. True, there may not be any reindeer there, for it's common knowledge the Polar Bears ate all of them centuries ago, but that's where you'll find the Clause family. Yes, I am still a bit fuzzy how they feed and keep up the millions of dwarfs, but that would be easier to explain than Santa Claus with FINNISH blood! BAH, HUMBUG!

Christmas breakfast. She had a winning sales pitch: " Oh, I hope and pray you will be able to help, with the holidays and all, I just don't know if we'll be able to find enough volunteers to help feed all those sweet little children and our precious seniors'.

I was sorely tempted to yell "Bah, Humbug , I know plenty of those kids, 97 percent of which are not SWEET, and the same could be said of at least 89 percent of those seniors, of which I AM ONE, and you KNOW I'm not precious," but I controlled my self and finally let her sweet talk me into the Heculean task.

Being somewhat of a veteran of the breakfast featuring a small army of dysfunctional males, I knew it was important to show up early; The early arrivals got the cushier jobs, while those sleeping in a bit usually ended up scrubbing pots and pans, mopping or emptying about 47 smelly garbage cans. Because of my vet status and superb manual dexterity, I got possibly the loftiest position in the 'army' - I was one of only a very select few allowed to lay slices of uncooked bacon in huge pans in which they would be carefully incinerated in a twelve tray oven. I was so skilled at mastering the difficult bacon task I next advanced in rank to number two egg cracker, the first and crucial first step towards Scrambled Eggs Magnifico. When Cracker # 1 ( I've always suspicioned he had something on one of the church secretaries ) and I completed the task of cracking open 841 eggs... maybe it was 148... we had only dropped 14 on the floor, not bad at all.

Unfortunately, the first Egg Cooker, a completely undeserved title, poured about 36 eggs in one King Kong size skillet, and began stirring, stirring, stirring, while a bit more professional approach resulted in a couple of guys dumping about the same amount of eggs on the huge grill top, and in seconds began turning out TRUE scrambled eggs, not just stirred eggs. I recall finally leaving the kitchen, and the first egg STIRRER was still stirring away, and it was hours later, when the plate was being passed in the auditorium, in fact, we heard this faint cry from the kitchen....." Praise God, They're Done At Last, Done At Last!" The voice strongly reminded me of Martin Luther King.

### NOTICE FOR BIDS THE STATE OF TEXAS COUNTY OF YOAKUM

The Commissioners Court of Yoakum County will receive bids until 10 AM, Monday, January 3, 2005, for the purchase of Gravel, Hot and Cold Mix, and Asphalt for all four (4) Precincts and Yoakum

County Parks for calendar year 2005.

Bids will be reviewed with contract to be awarded in Commissioners Court on Tuesday, January 4, 2005.

For bid forms and specifications, please contact Darinda McWhirter, Yoakum County Auditor, 806/456-2422 or PO Box 516, Plains, Texas 79355. Sealed bids should be marked " BID-ROAD MATERIALS" on the envelope and mailed or delivered to County Judge, Dallas Brewer, PO Box 456/ Cowboy Way and Avenue G., Plains, Texas 79355. NO FAX COPIES WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Commissioners Court reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

### NOTICE FOR BIDS

### THE STATE OF TEXAS COUNTY OF YOAKUM

The Commissioners Court of Yoakum County will receive bids until 10 AM, Monday, January 3, 2005, for the purchase of Unleaded and Diesel Fuel for all County Departments for Calendar Year 2005.

Bids will be reviewed with contract to be awarded in Commissioners Court on Tuesday, January 4, 2005.

For bid forms and specifications, please contact Darinda McWhirter, Yoakum County Auditor, 806/456-2422 or PO Box 516, Plains, Texas 79355.

Sealed bids should be marked " BID-FUEL" on the envelope and mailed or delivered to County Judge Dallas Brewer, PO Box 456/ Cowboy Way and Avenue G, Plains, Texas 79355. NO FAX COPIES WILL BE ACCEPTED.

Commissioners Court reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

### Notice To All Persons Having Claims Against The Estate Of Marguerite Knox Barron, Deceased

Notice is now given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Marguerite Knox Barron were issued on December 20, 2004, in Cause No. 1459, pending in the County Court of Yoakum County, Texas, to: **James Albert Barron and Sue Mitchell Barron**, The residence of such Executor and where claims may be presented is as follows:

**James Albert Barron**  
PO Box 120  
Plains, Texas 79355

**Sue Mitchell Barron**  
PO Box 310  
Plains, Texas 79355

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them within four (4) months after the date of the receipt of this notice and in the manner prescribed by law or the claim will be barred by the general statutes of limitation.

Dated December 20, 2004.

**Warren New**  
Warren New, Attorney for the Estate, PO Box 670, Denver City, Texas 79323  
Phone (806) 592-2129  
Fax: (806) 592 7733

# Keep On Tracking !

Web site aims to help students pass TAKS test

Usually, when high school students compete in track, they're running races, jumping hurdles or pole vaulting. Now, the term has a whole new meaning - at least for Texas 11th graders.

These days, TRACK, which stands for TAKS Readiness and Core Knowledge, is an interactive web site, www.track.utelcampus.org., launched by the University of Texas (UT) System in February 2004 to help Texas 11th graders prepare for the state's exit level exam, the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills, commonly called TAKS.

Until 2004, to graduate from high school in Texas, students had to pass TAKS in the 10th grade as well as complete all their required classes. In 2004 the state began administering TAKS in the 11th grade and requiring students to pass it in the 11th grade instead of 10th grade to receive their diploma. Students can take the test up to five times.

Texas is one of 20 states administering a mandatory exit level exam, according to Susan Barnes, associate commissioner for standards and programs at the Texas Education Agency (TEA).

In 2003 UT officials learned preliminary test results showed only about half of all 10th graders were likely to pass the new, exit level TAKS when they became 11th graders in 2004. Moreover, it looked like only 36% of minority students and 12 percent of those not proficient in the English language would pass.

That performance was a wakeup call, and UT System moved quickly to create Track, according to Pedro Reyes, the UT System's associate vice chancellor for academic affairs. The System obtained \$850,000 in grants from the Meadows Foundation and the Houston Endowment to create and operate the Web site for three years, Reyes said. System staff consulted testing and subject matter experts at TEA and at districts throughout the state, and the site was up and running in less than a year.

### Tracking the TAKS

The number of 11th-grade students taking the exit-level TAKS increased between 2003 and 2004, as did students' scores. In 2004, the state began requiring students to pass the TAKS in 11th grade to receive their high school diplomas.

2003		
Number taking TAKS	Subject	Percentage of students passing
183,011	English	69
198,622	Mathematics	68
196,731	Social Studies	90
187,214	Science	67
2004		
217,408	English	87
216,083	Mathematics	85
217,710	Social Studies	97
217,738	Science	85

NOTE: The number of students tested varies because some students are exempted from taking some tests because they are classified as special education students or as students with limited English proficiency.  
SOURCE: Texas Education Agency.

TRACK, which follows the state's curriculum, offers students free diagnostic tests in four subject areas: English and language arts, math, social studies and science. The Web site is designed to help students learn their strengths and weaknesses in each area.

"It's not a practice test - it's a diagnostic tool, and not all students need to take it, Reyes said. "It's an online tool to help students focus on what they need to study to pass TAKS."

Students can log on to TRACK, and so can parents and teachers who use it to help students prepare. Between February and September 2004 the TRACK web site had more than 5 million hits. Some 60,000 students logged on to take the exam, and about 50,000 used the online learning materials, said Melarie Pritchett, another UT official.

"While there is only one test per subject area now, there are plans to expand TRACK to include several others for each subject area by the 2005 school year," Pritchett said. She reported UT is using TEA funding to develop additional materials for teachers so they can use achievement data to help tailor instruction for individual students. UT System staff also plan to provide some free online materials to teachers, particularly those teaching outside their areas of expertise, said Reyes. "There is a need for this

type assistance. In some school districts you have up to 30 percent of the teachers who are not certified to teach that subject."

TRACK is not considered a magic bullet for improving student scores on the TAKS. "It is impossible to attribute improved scores at any one school or district to any single change in the classroom", Munoz said. In spring 2004 he went to every 9th, 10th, 11th grade classroom in San Antonio's Thomas Edison High School, to present a slide show on TRACKs and explain why students have to take the exam. The Principal printed cards with the TRACK Internet address and urged students to use it to find their strengths and weaknesses and report them to their teachers.

Student performance at Edison improved substantially in all four subjects after the students were introduced to TRACK. In 2003, 63 percent of Edison's 11th graders passed the English exam, but in 2004 some 88 percent passed. In math, 49 percent passed in 2003, but by 2004 that figure jumped to 85 percent.

"TRACK was part of our TAKS action plan, our menu to help students. I think it, our teachers and tutoring helped our students pass," Munoz said.

Pam Wagner, of the Texas Comptroller's office staff, authored this article in the December 2004 issue of that office's FISCAL NOTES monthly publication.

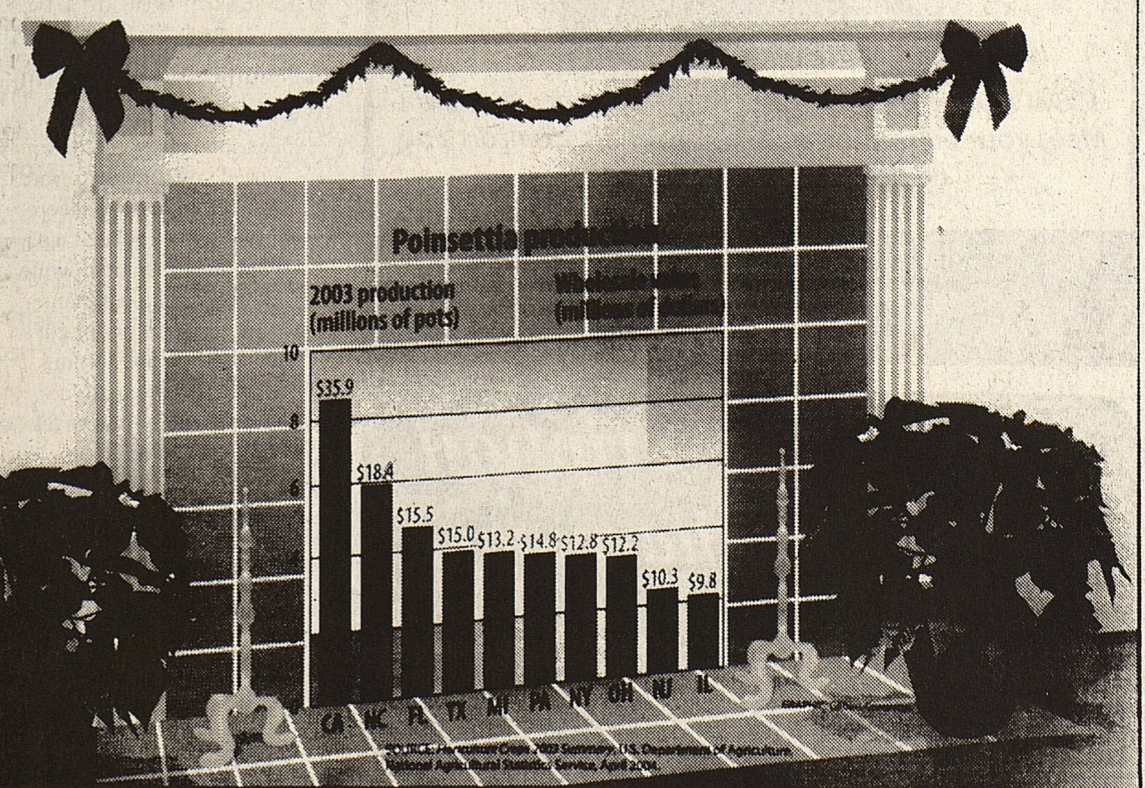
### Texas at a Glance

### Poinsettia Passion

Poinsettias aren't just a seasonal novelty—they're big business in Texas. In 2003, the state's 81 producers sold 3.8 million pots of the bright holiday plants, which had a wholesale value of \$15 million.

Nationally, about 1,600 growers put nearly 63 million pots on the market every year, worth about \$252 million.

Most Americans prefer red poinsettias, which accounted for 76 percent of poinsettias sold in the United States in 2002, according to the Society of American Florists. Pink came in a distant second at 7 percent, followed by white.



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