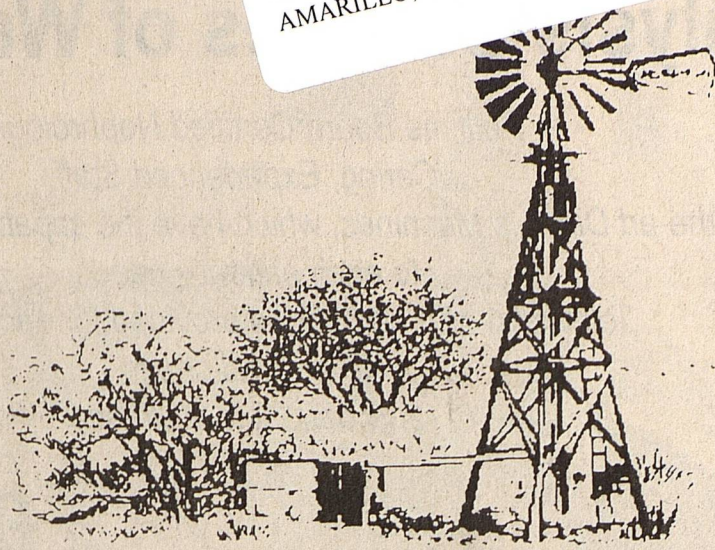


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Cowboy Country News

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

Volume XI, Issue 10, November 17, 2004



City Hires New Administrator

Terry Howard to come aboard December 13

After weeks of advertising and considering applicants, the City of Plains Council unanimously chose a new City Administrator to replace Ed Hansen, who accepted employment as city manager at Spearman last August. In the regular meeting Monday, November 8, Terry Howard, present city manager at Darrouzett, was named new City Administrator here. He expects to assume those duties around mid December.

Plains Mayor Shane McKinzie told CCN, "The council and I spent some three hours visiting with Terry Saturday, November 6, and really took a close look at his experience and background. When the vote was taken last Monday, he was our unanimous choice."

The mayor said Howard had credentials which were important to the council, including a small town job experience, and

some 15 years of municipal management experience. "He is familiar with all the many municipality laws, by-laws and all the mandatory codes and requirements, and we won't have to contend with a training or learning experience in those areas when he comes aboard here." The city officials reviewed 14 applications from job candidates, and Howard was one of three finalists interviewed for the position.

Howard's background features a number of valuable assets for his new position here. He has been a plumbing contractor, has certified classifications in waterworks and waste water operations, holds a BS degree in EMS Management from Texas Tech, and is a licensed paramedic and EMS instructor.

Howard will be in Plains December 13, and officially on the job December 15.

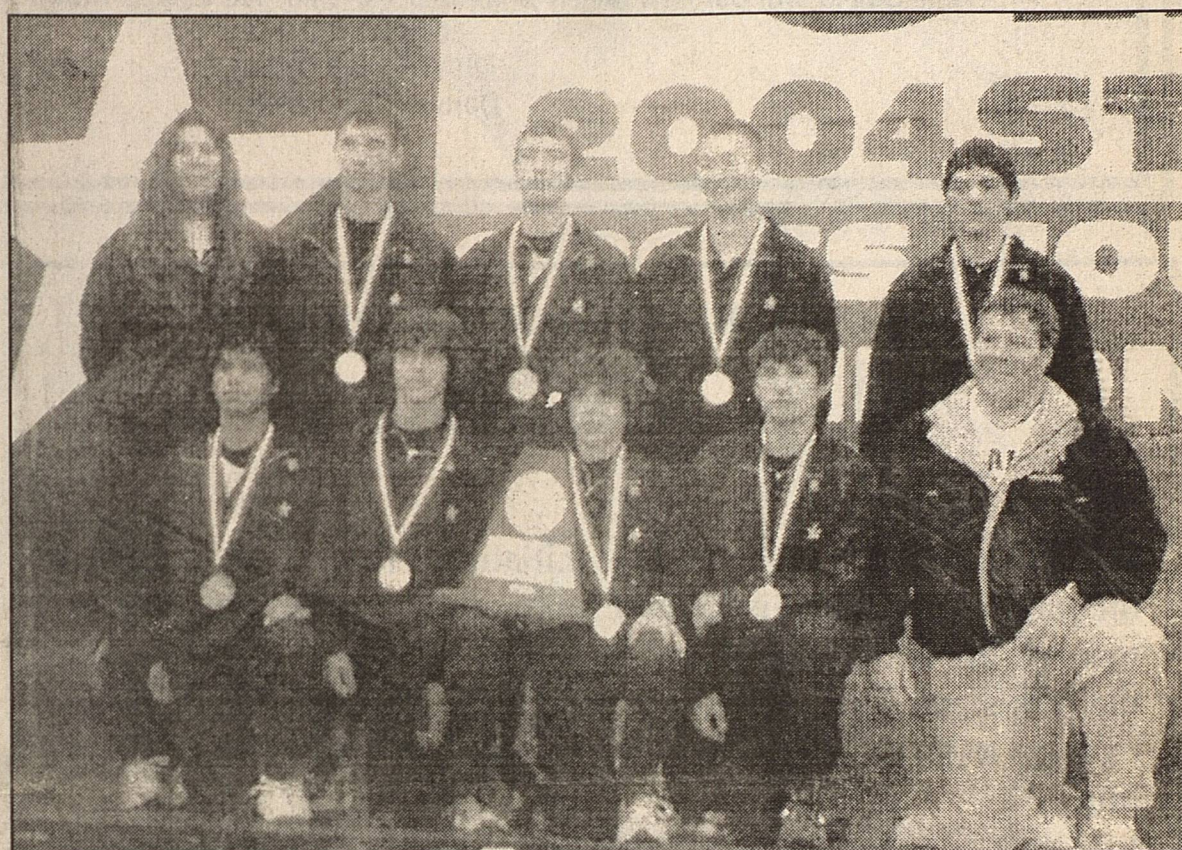
The Cowboy cross-country team capped their perfect season in the only way that seemed right - by winning the State 1A Championship! In one of the closest races of the season, the Cowboy team defeated Eula by a mere 7 points, while besting third place Leveretts Chapel by 39 points.

The Cowboys had three individuals qualify for All-State honors, as Jose Villegas finished fifth overall, while team co-captains Abel Ramos and Payton Bean finished eleventh and fourteenth respectively.

Sophomore Scott Addison finished 26th and freshman Joseph "Chris" Loya passed several competitors in the last quarter mile to captured 59th place and close out the scoring for the Cowboys.

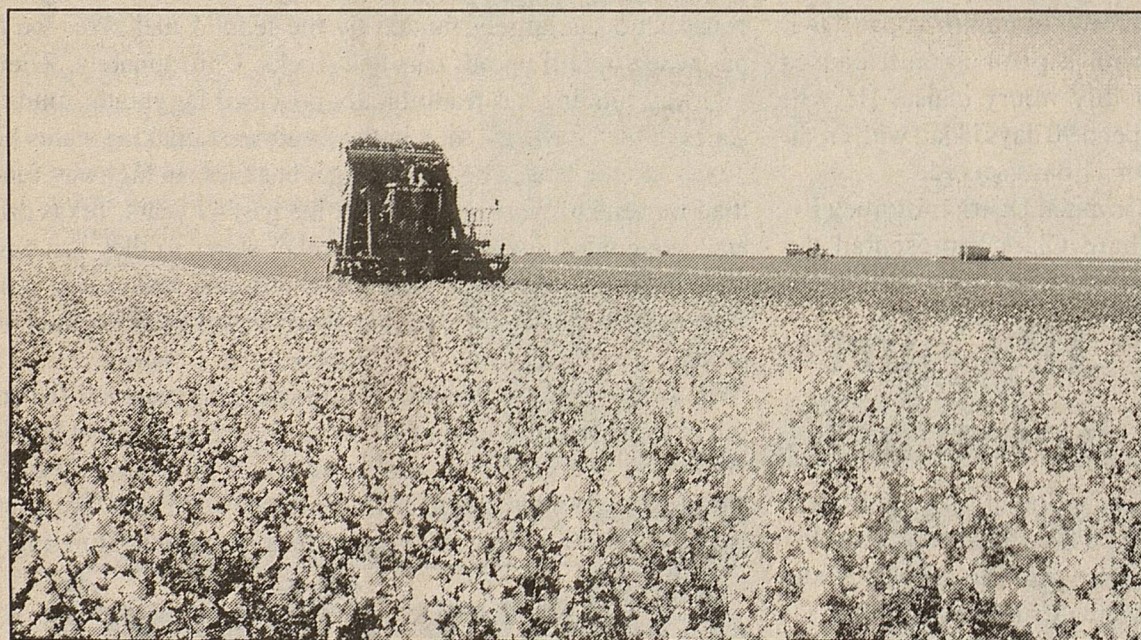
TURN TO PAGE 4, STATE CHAMPS

Cowboy Runners Win State Cross Country Title !!



The State Champs - Front, Jose Villegas, Abel Ramos, Zachary Ramos, Chandon Loya, Coach Davis. Back, Asst. Coach Shannon Caffey, Scott Addison, Payton Bean, Joseph Loya, Bradon Loya. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL!

Weather puts harvest on hold



A capricious Mother Nature is starting to worry area ag producers. What early on promised to be an all time record cotton crop, an excellent year for peanut and sorghum production could now be in jeopardy because of a lingering wet spell. At the time this is written, Monday, November 15, harvesting of all crops had come to a halt because of rain and drizzle.

Chris Elkins, manager of the new Attebury-Williams peanut facility here, reported the production of area peanuts was exceptionally good, with most producers having yields ranging from 3000 to 5000 pounds per acre, and reports of some 6000 plus pounds are circulating.

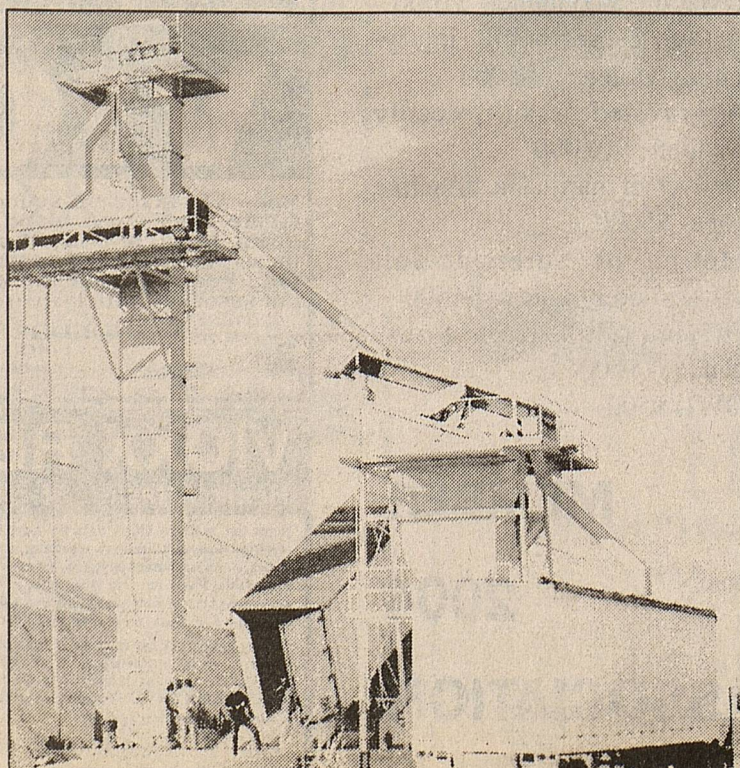
Nationwide cotton forecasts predict the 2004 crop could set an all time production record. Most county producers agree they have never seen a potential yield as promising as this year's. In the short period of

ginning the crop, reports of four to five bale irrigated yields are circulating, and in many areas of the county dryland production appears to be excellent.

While grain sorghum harvesting is still some time away, the

current dryland acreage appears very promising, and a few irrigated fields, mainly planted after hail destroyed earlier cotton, look exceptionally good.

TURN TO PAGE 4, CROPS



Buckle Up message sent to all pickup drivers

Thanksgiving campaign underway in five state region - Click It or Ticket

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is joining safety advocates across a five state region in a concerted effort to convince pickup truck drivers and passengers in Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico and Oklahoma to "Buckle Up In Your Truck," a key focus for this year's "Click It or Ticket" campaign.

Federal officials say pickup occupants in Texas and surrounding states are at higher risk of being killed in a traffic crash than in any other part of the nation. That's because one of every four registered vehicles is a pickup, and pickup drivers and passengers are less likely to buckle up than those in cars or SUV's.

State surveys show more than 500,000 pickup drivers and passengers in Texas are still not buckling up. A total of 772 pickup occupants died in crashes in 2002, the most recent year data is available. While 85 percent of Texas motorists in cars and SUV's use their safety belts, the use rate for pickups is 79 percent.

Pickups are twice as likely to roll as passenger cars in fatal crashes. About one in every four pickups in fatal crashes involves a rollover. Wearing your safety belt reduces the risk of dying in a roll over crash by

70 to 80 percent" according to Terry Pence, TxDOT's traffic safety director. "Buckling up is your only defense against being ejected from your vehicle, one of the most deadly things to happen in a crash," Pence said.

From November 14 to November 28, the two week period around Thanksgiving, state troopers, police officers and sheriff's deputies throughout Texas will be out in force, participating in the "Buckle up in Your Truck" campaign and issuing citations to those who don't.

Texas law requires drivers and front seat passengers to use safety belts. Children and teens up to the age of 17 have to be buckled up in the front and back seat. Child safety belts are required for children under four years or less than three feet tall. Fines for violations range from \$25 to \$200.

The Chamber needs your support. Buy a commemorative brick to help us buy the electronic billboard! Order form on Page Two!

District and County Court

Two criminal cases were heard in the November 9 session of District Court, with Judge Kelly G. Moore presiding.

Brock Thomas Johnston pled guilty to theft, more than \$1500, less than \$20,000. A two year prison sentence was suspended and probated 5 years. He must pay restitution of \$4711 to Allsup's, Inc., with joint and several liability for \$9423, and \$300 appointed attorney fees. He will serve 120 hours community service, testify truthfully against Linda Mendoza, return a 1995 Dodge van to the Criminal District Attorney office by November 29, 2004, with sale proceeds to be credited to restitution. His attorney was Bill Helwig, and Sheriff Deputy David Bryant was investigating officer.

Jeffrey Sanchez Lopez had community supervision from a prior cocaine possession cause revoked. He will serve 12 months in state jail with credit for 137 days jail time served. He must pay \$70 court cost, \$500 appointed attorney fees and \$194 delinquent fine.

In County Court November 10, Judge Dallas Brewer presiding, Aaron Caleb Salazar pled guilty to driving while license suspended. He was fined \$100 and must pay \$241 court costs. Investigating officer was Lupe Garcia, Denver City Police

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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.

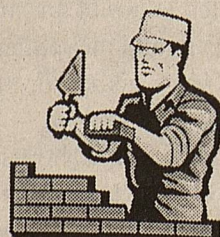
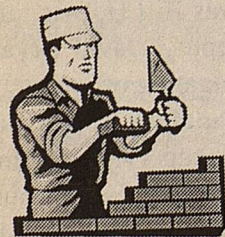
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Andres Martinez Jr. Pled guilty to a first DWI, b.t. .117/.113. A 120 day jail sentence was suspended and probated 12 months. He must pay \$326 court costs, will serve 72 hours in jail with credit for 13 hours, attend weekly AA meetings, complete the DWI first offender program, serve 24 hours community service and pay \$50 monthly supervision fees. Investigating officer was Deputy Kenley Powell.

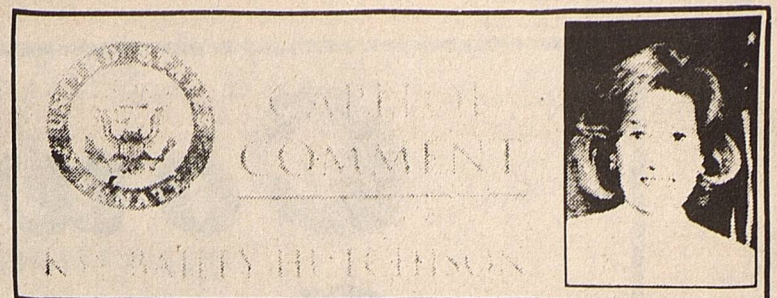
Mark Longoria pled guilty to driving while license suspended. He was fined \$100 and must pay \$246 court costs. Investigating officer was DPS Trooper Robert Munsell.

Juan Tarango Coronado pled true to the state's motion to revoke community supervision from a prior assault causes bodily injury cause. He will spend 90 days in jail with credit for 11 days served.

Criminal District Attorney Richard Clark represented the State in both court sessions.

JP Court Summary

The following is a summary of cases filed and bonds set in Pct. 1 Justice of Peace Court, Judge Melba Crutcher presiding.
 Case filed:
 60 traffic cases
 3 open containers alcohol in vehicle.
 Bonds set:
 Motion to revoke probation-bond denied
 DWI, open container- \$1000
 Assault causes bodily injury-family violence- \$5000
 Aggravated assault, deadly weapon- \$10,000
 Deliver of marijuana, drug free zone- \$5000
 Motion of Surety/assault causes bodily injury- \$1500
 Driving while license suspended- \$500
 DWI- \$500



There are elections in which everyone knows "the people have spoken" but they don't always know exactly what people have said. This November's election was different. Not only did the people speak they spoke clearly. They supported President George W. Bush and want Congress to do the people's work without political obstruction.

We have important tasks before us. First, the war on terror. President Bush believes this war is not a localized matter confined to a single country. It is a worldwide struggle. We are battling fanatics who kidnap and behead civilians and shoot fleeing children in the back. There can be no dialogue with such people, and the American people understand this. The war on terror not only involves providing our troops with everything they need, it also involves making needed reforms to our security agencies to help us defend our homeland.

The voters in this election also delivered a verdict on domestic issues. They decisively rejected obstructionism because they desire Republicans and Democrats to work together.

For instance, the Senate should take action on the President's judicial nominees. For years, qualified candidates have been denied a vote for confirmation despite having the support of a bipartisan majority in the Senate. I will work with my colleagues to ensure these nominees get a vote.

The American people want Congress to make family tax relief permanent. Texans also want us to make the state sales tax deduction permanent. Eliminated 18 years ago, I and my colleagues were able to restore it for 2004 and 2005 and save the average Texas family of four more than \$928 in federal taxes each year.

Tax simplification is also on the agenda. One proposal is the Flat Tax to replace our present multi-tiered system with a single rate. Another option is to adopt a National Sales Tax in place of income and payroll taxes.

Our country also hungers for leadership to ensure the long term survival of our Social Security system. With 70 million baby boomers in this country on the verge of retirement, we need to take action to shore up the system. President Bush's proposal guarantees those who have already retired, or are close to retirement, will receive the benefits they have been promised. His plan will also let Americans voluntarily choose to deposit part of their Social Security payments in private accounts which have historically yielded higher returns than payments into the Social Security program.

In this uncertain world, Americans want to see our nation move to reduce our dependency on foreign energy by encouraging domestic exploration and production. This will spur the growth of our economy and create jobs. Efforts to move in this direction were blocked in the past, but now we have a chance to move forward.

Another issue of special interest to me is achieving greater fairness in the federal funding of our highway systems. Highway construction is largely funded by the federal fuel taxes we all pay when we fill up our cars and trucks. Unfortunately, federal highway funding has traditionally provided far greater funds to states in the Northeast than in the Southwest, making states like Texas "donor" states because we get back less in highway funds than we send to Washington. Over the past 47 years, Texas drivers have contributed \$5 billion to other states so they can build their highway networks. This is not fair, and makes less sense than ever, because our state has more highway miles than any other.

When I first came to Washington, Texas only received 76 cents out of every dollar paid on fuel taxes. By increasing that level to 90.5 cents, we gained an additional \$1.23 billion for Texas. If we are successful in pushing the share up to 95 cents, Texas will gain over \$160 million per year additional highway funding.

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An historic gem, just 37 miles west!

For the past ten years, two and one-half months, I have been telling myself every Tuesday 'I am going to take the time to stop by that museum one of these days', referring to the Lea County Museum at 103 S. Love Street, in Lovington, NM. Tuesday is the day we print CCN, 50 times a year, therefore I have passed the site some 513 times. Last week, I did take the time to stop and visit, and I'm glad I did.

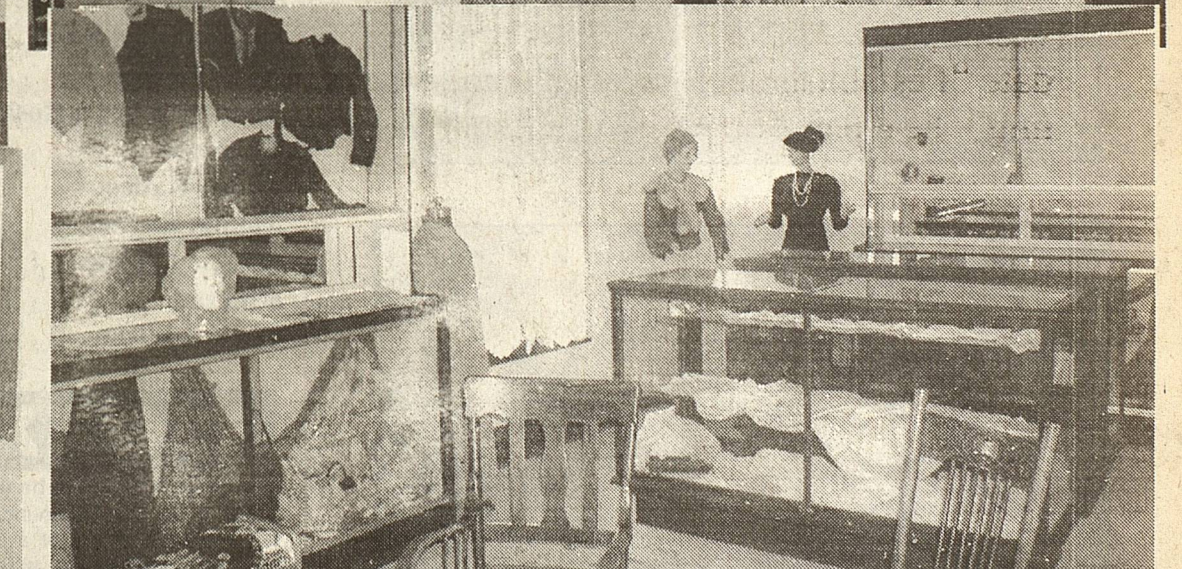
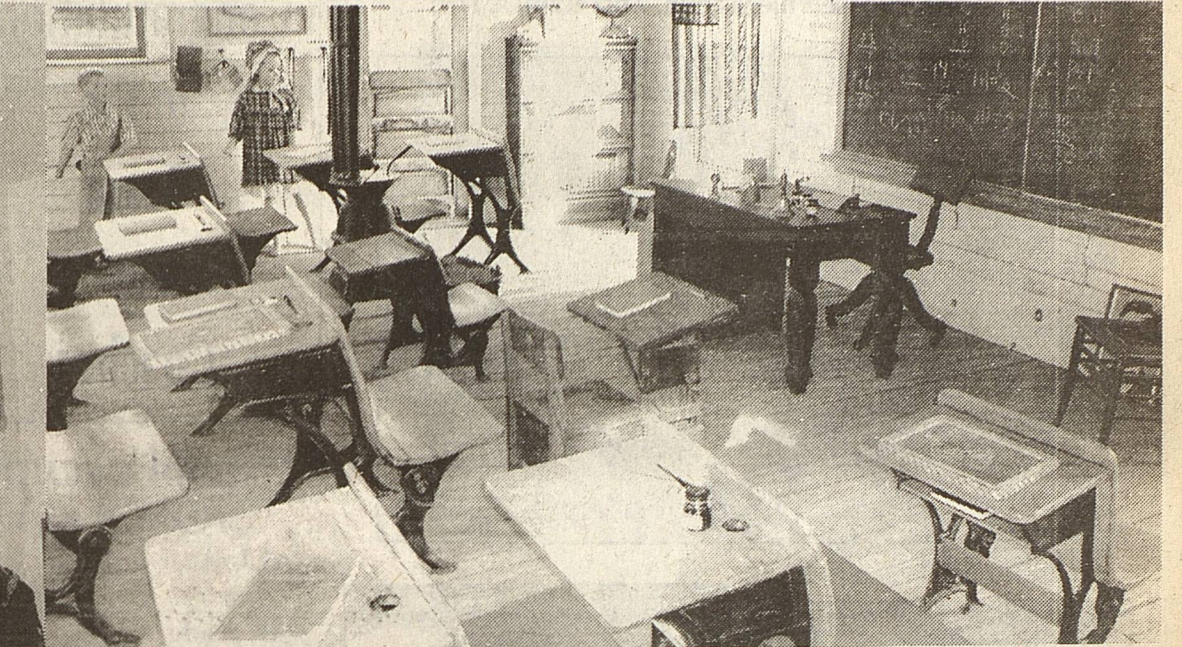
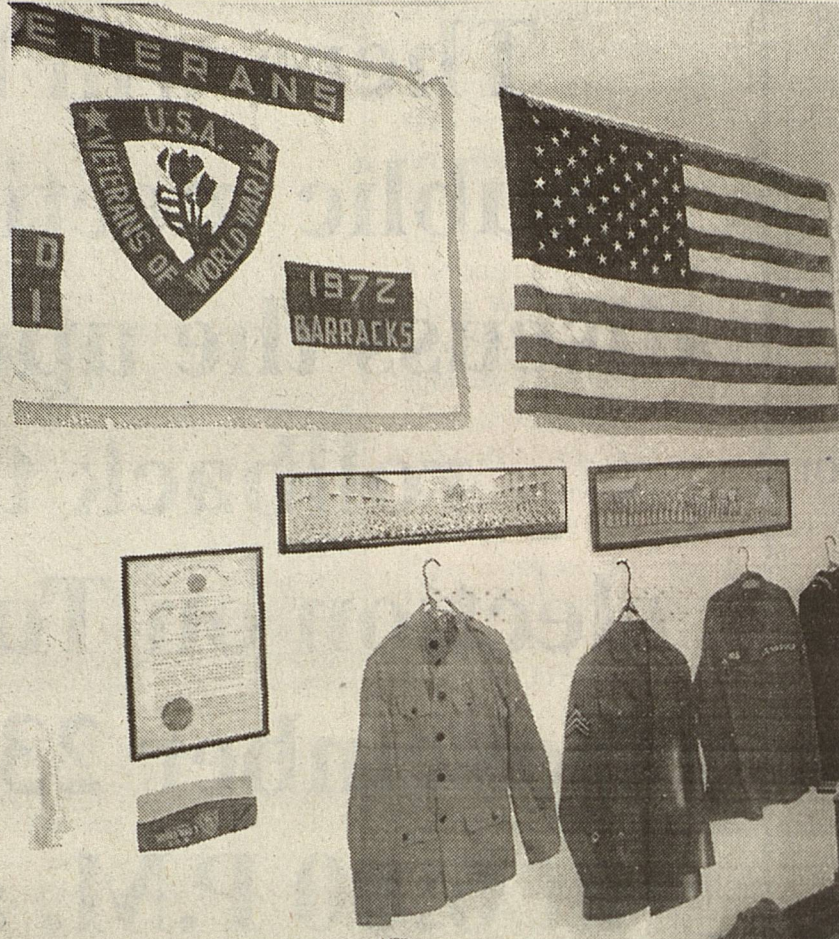
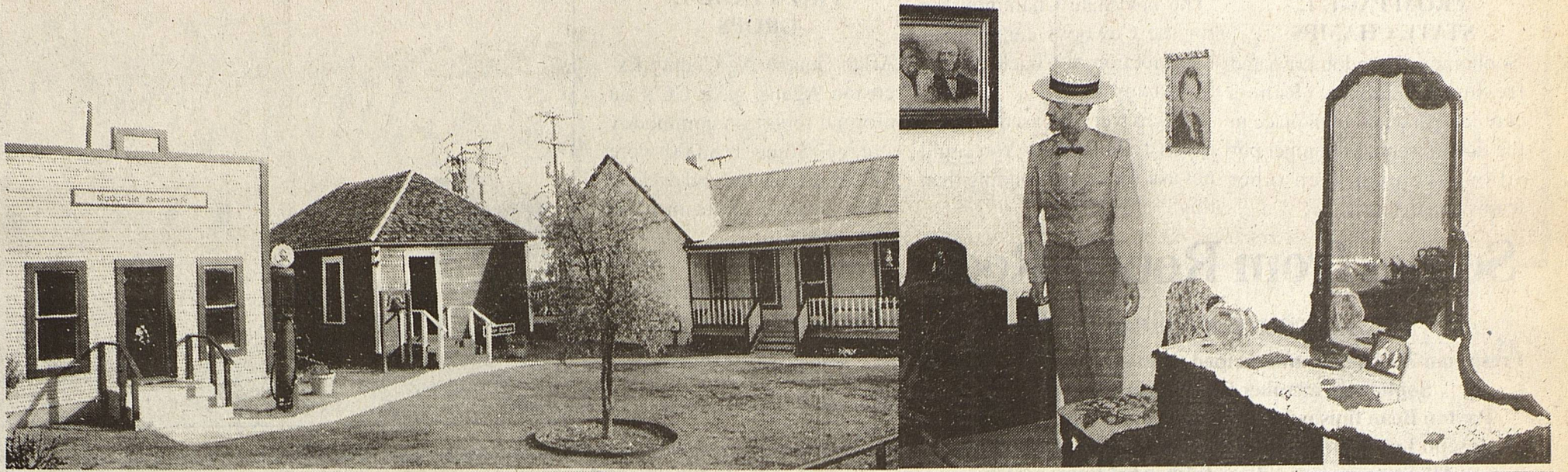
The main building, originally the Commercial Hotel, has been completely renovated, and former guest rooms are now display showcases for period furnishings, fashions, photos of families and events, all donated to the museum by locals wanting to preserve the heritage of the county, organized in 1908. Many of the donated treasures are from existing communities, and from those which are now mere wide spots in the roads.

Museum Director Jim Harris was my hospitable and knowledgeable guide through the site for over an hour, a man obviously content with this calling. He explained the museum property belongs to the City of Lovington, but Lea County helps fund the operation. He credited private donations with making future projects possible.

The old hotel, built in 1918 with poured concrete walls, is also the host site for history theme meetings, art exhibits, ranchers roundups, presentations by school groups, and the attractive grounds around the hotel have served as the site for 'fiddling and two-stepping'.

I was impressed with the three building "community" just outside the main building; The original McDonald Mercantile, complete with tiny post office, the little red Baker School building, old, bolted down wooden desks in place and original black chalk board, and the historic Love house, furnished as the very early resident family lived and for whom the City of Lovington is named. Very interesting, and no admission free. Closed Mondays. Photos L-R, top down, Historic buildings, hotel guest room, Veterans room, Baker School, mannequins wearing Dessie Sawyers 'Democrat' gowns and dress from Neiman-Marcus, Native American room, ladies showcase room

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**FROM PAGE 1.
STATE CHAMPS**

Sophomore Chandon Loya and freshman Zachary Ramos claimed 82nd and 85th place in the field to serve as bumper positions, helping keep other teams at a distance.

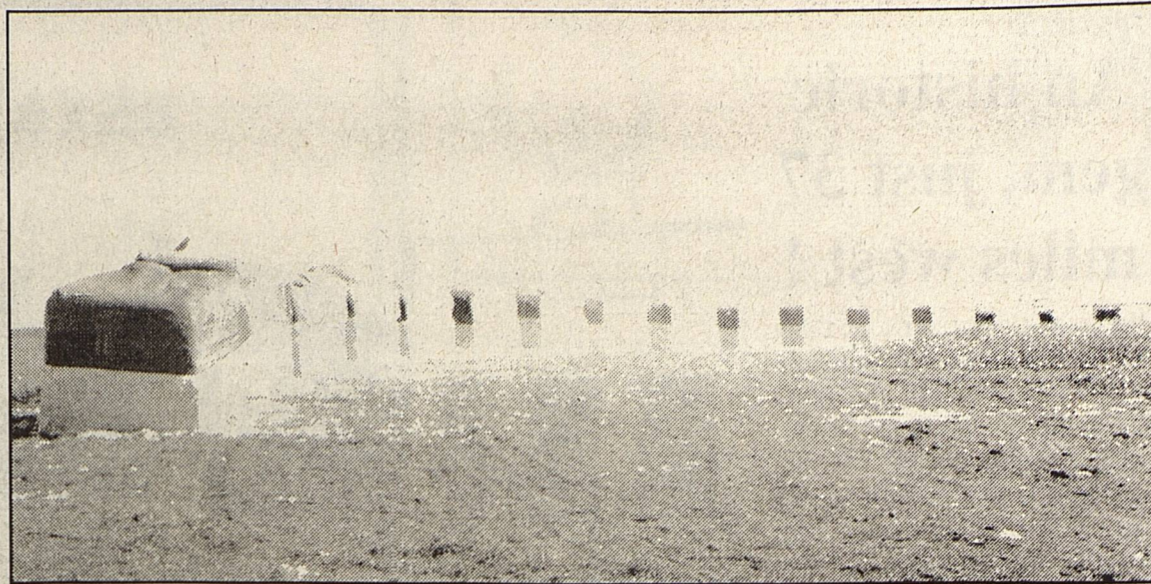
The last State Championship for the Cowboys came under the direction of Coach Everett McAdams in 1993.

"I was very pleased," noted coach Todd Davis. "You could not ask for a better ending than this!"

**FROM PAGE 1.
CROPS**

Arlan Gentry, Ag County Extension Agent, gave CCN an informal report on commodity acreage. Some 118,000 were planted in irrigated and dryland cotton fields, a slight increase from 2003.

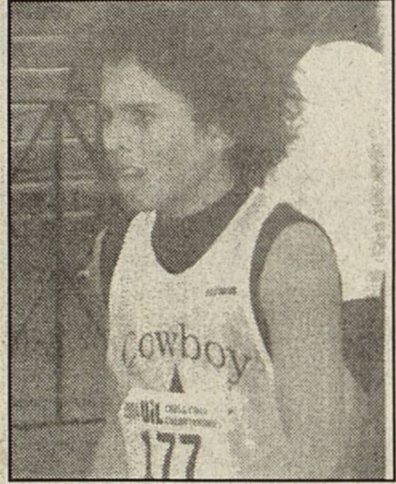
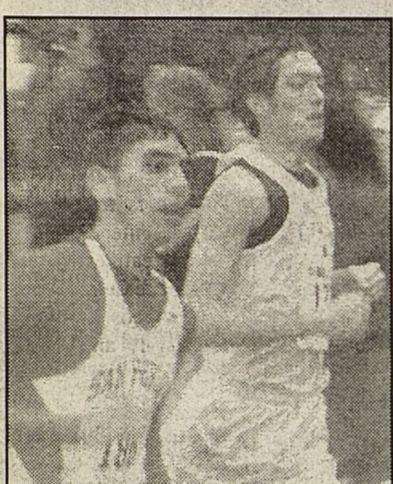
Almost 18,000 acres were planted in peanuts, slightly below last year, and some 35,000 acres were planted in wheat and rye, predominately grown for cover crops.



Scenes from Round Rock

Photos courtesy Tina Davis

Freshman Zachary Ramos helped team as a 'blocker' runner
Soph team member Scott Addison was 26th
Payton Bean finished 14th in huge meet, made All State
Joseph Loya came from behind to score valuable points
All Stateers Jose Villegas, 5th. Abel Ramos, 11th



**Congratulations
to the
Team
and
Coaches**

**MIDDLE SCHOOL
HONOR ROLL
ALL A**

- 5th grade
Mayra Cueto
Dakota Earnest
Brooke Wilson
- 6th grade
Forrest Booth
Hannah Crump
Cody Friesen
Hunter Welch
- 7th grade
Brandon Craft
Nathan McCravey
Troy Parrish
- 8th grade
Holden Welch

All A, 1 B

- 5th grade
Taylor Fitzgerald
Denise Tarango
- 6th grade
Stephanie Addison
Kelbi Bartley
Samantha DeLa Rosa
- 7th grade
Emilia Gallegos
Natalie Haynes
Ignacio Lozano
- 8th grade
Chris Addison

**There will be a
public meeting to
discuss the upcoming
rollback tax
election on Tuesday,
November 23, 2004
at 6:00 P.M. at the
Plains ISD Resource
Center. All residents
of the school district
are encouraged
to attend**

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Hoby and Boys State candidates guests of Tsa Mo Ga



Abel Ramos and Kerry Sisson

Plains High school students Kerry Sisson and Abel Ramos gave Tsa Mo Ga members a look into their summer trips to American Legion Boys State and the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Seminar at the club's November 8 meeting. Celebrating "Concepts of American Patriotism," the two were recognized for their leadership roles at the conferences.

Sisson said his week-long trip to Austin for Boys State that focuses on how government works turned from "skepticism" to winning a seat as a county commissioner. He said he learned how much work goes into organizing and running a political campaign. He said he got to know a lot of people and he still keeps in touch with his roommate.

Ramos attended the three day Hoby event in Austin. Part of the weekend included career sessions with panelists from the media, volunteer organizations, environmental issues and education. The group also toured a dam operated by the lower Colorado River Authority.

Actor Hugh O'Brian, who be-

gan the program for high school sophomores in 1958, visited the seminar and spoke for over an hour. Ramos said O'Brian came to Austin because it was the first year for a HOBY meeting there. The seminar ended with skits and a slide show. "I think I became more open and confident, and learned about leadership," Ramos said.

During the business meeting, members voted to begin collecting recipes for a county centennial celebration cookbook, with proceeds going to finance a gazebo for Pioneer Park. Members were also reminded to bring gifts to be taken to the veterans hospital in Big Spring. The box for the gifts is located at the library. They were also reminded to bring canned goods to support the Christmas Tree Lighting on December 1. The December 13 Christmas Dinner will be held at the fellowship hall of the Methodist Church.

Hostesses for the meeting were Ann McGinty and Connie McWhirter.

Seniors Corner

As we pause to celebrate Veterans Day once more, we find our country actively involved in armed conflict. This holiday was first known as Armistice Day which celebrated the end of World War I when at eleven o'clock on November 11, 1918, the Armistice was signed by the Allies and the Germans. In 1918 President Woodrow Wilson issued his Armistice proclamation. In 1927, President Calvin Coolidge issued a proclamation calling for officials to display the flag on all government buildings, but it was not until 1938 that it was officially named "Armistice Day".

After World War II, many of the new veterans knew little of World War I, so on November 11, 1953, a "Veterans Day" celebration was observed in Emporia, Kansas. Then on May 24, 1954, it officially became "Veterans Day", by an act of Congress, and President Eisenhower called on all citizens to observe the day by remembering the sacrifices of those who fought so gallantly in all of America's wars. So today we say a prayer for those young men and women who are fighting for us in the Middle East and remember once again that "Freedom Is Not Free."

Ladies, have you ever noticed how all of women's problems start with MEN? Give a thought to the following; MENTAL illness, MENstrual cramps, MENTAL breakdown; MENopause, GUYnecologist - and when we have real trouble it is a HISTERectomy. A friend told me last year she gave up trying to get her husband to mow the lawn and decided to make her point by trying to humiliate him. When he arrived home he found her sitting in the tall grass, snipping away with a tiny pair of sewing scissors. He watched silently for a short time then went into the house. He was gone only a few minutes and came out again. He handed her a toothbrush, saying, "When you finish cutting the grass you might as well sweep the sidewalk, too."

We hear many comments about the Art Class plans being made. Again we remind you the class will be made available only if there is enough interest to make it a feasible undertaking. Stop by the office and let Rosa or Ann know if you are interested. We will let you know as plans are formulated as to the time, place and supplies need to participate.

Tuesday afternoon saw Charle Gillis and Chris Humphries emerge as the winners in the 42 Tournament. Probably if you meet either of them on the street you will hear about their victory before this paper comes out.

Halloween decorations are being stored again and we are being greeted with "Thanksgiving" as we enter the dining room. Again, we thank our thoughtful and talented Site Council ladies for this pleasant reminder to be thankful for all our many blessings during this month of November.

How nice to see two of our former seniors visiting us from their respective areas of Texas this week. Shirley Mosser has shared lunch with us several times this week and Ireta Davis is back in Seminole for a few weeks. We hope to see a lot of her before she returns to her home in Frankston.

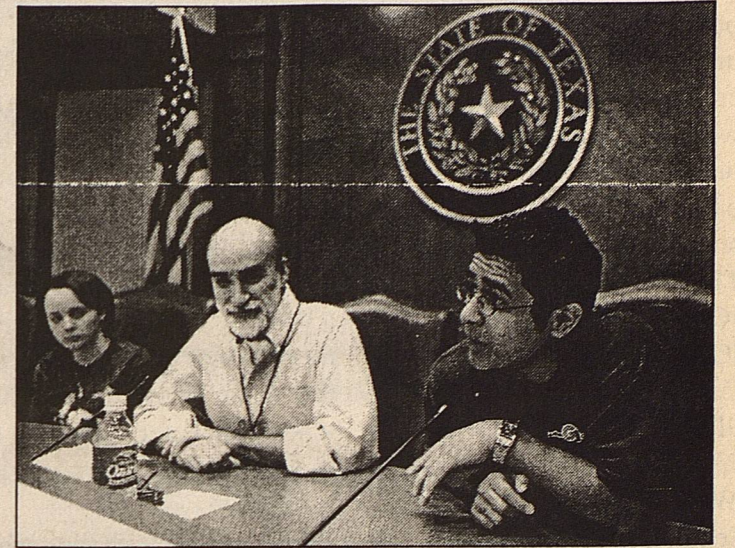
Word has come to us from Opal Jefferson she is recovering well from the heart surgery she underwent a few weeks ago. We send "get well" greetings to her in eastern Texas. She is still sorely missed at table three during the lunch hour.

I discovered this week studies show the average American is 10 to 20 pounds overweight. I was pleased to read I am finally above average in something! The years really change us. About half a century ago, around 1950 B.C. (Before Cholesterol), I remember dreaming of sweeping into a room, head held high, stomach in, flawlessly attired, not a hair out of place. Women would seethe with envy, gentlemen would leap to their feet and offer a chair, and I would smile regally and sit down, knees together and slender feet crossed at the ankles. My gown would be the latest fashion, spotless and wrinkle free. When I spoke my voice would be soft but sure and I would not stammer nor hesitate. I don't dream those dreams anymore. I can't imagine why. Some wise person said, when reflecting on aging, "aging requires great courage, but it can come with dignity. The difficulties of old age give us challenges to find out who we really are. We can learn how to go with the flow of life and grow old gradually".

Thought for today: We can be artists in the understanding of our own lives. Solitude, silence, and slow time have many gifts to give us. And so, my friends, 'Let Evening Come.'

New book for kids encourage college attendance

college for Texans campaign employs unique strategy to increase college participation



Angel Saucedo addresses a question from the audience about his new book *Wiley's Way* at the Texas Book Festival at the State Capitol. From left: Samantha Owens, author; Tom Grimes, project director; Angel Saucedo, author. Photo courtesy of Alan Pogue.

(Austin, Texas) — "Not so long ago, in a world beneath the sea ... there lived a crab named Wiley." So starts the new book *Wiley's Way*, an inspiring and witty tale of a curious and courageous crab named Wiley who escapes from the boiling pot to pursue college. Written and illustrated by twelve high school students in Kyle, Texas, *Wiley's Way* teaches fourth and fifth graders about the benefits of a college education.

The book debuted at the Texas Book Festival at the Capitol in Austin where the student authors participated in a panel discussion and book signing event. Afterwards, a life-sized, costumed Wiley character entertained children and adults while student singers performed music written and produced to accompany the book.

"It's heartwarming to know that a child might read our book and identify with a character that I wrote and be inspired to go to college," said Bliss Blumenthal, one of the student authors. "Many of us that worked on the book learned about and were inspired ourselves to go to college just by participating in this project."

Angel Saucedo, another author, was thinking about being a grocery clerk before getting involved in the book writing project. "I thought working in a grocery store was a pretty good idea, but after working on this book and learning so much about college, I decided to give it a try," said Saucedo. He is applying to Duke University to study journalism.

Part of the *College for Texans* campaign to motivate 300,000 more students to enroll in college by 2015, *Wiley's Way* is a unique collaboration. The Texas Legislature first directed the Higher Education Coordinating Board to increase higher education participation rates through an awareness campaign - dubbed *College for Texans*. The board then used a grant from the *College for All Texans Foundation: Closing the Gaps* to commission twelve students from the Academy@Hays of the Hays I.S.D., who also participated in the Katherine Anne Porter Literary Center's Young Writers Program, to write an original book to inspire elementary

school kids to go to college. The Hays student authors were guided by Master of Fine Arts students from the creative writing program at Texas State University-San Marcos.

"It was definitely an out-of-the-box strategy, but the Higher Education Coordinating Board envisioned reaching younger students about the college experience and how that experience could impact their lives through a book," said Professor Tom Grimes, who managed the project for Texas State. "With the publishing of *Wiley's Way* and the authors being featured by Barnes and Noble, the idea has become a reality."

"If Texas is going to be prosperous in the future, more of our children must obtain an education beyond high school," said Raymond Paredes, Texas Commissioner of Higher Education. "We must start at an earlier age by planting the seed and expectation that college or technical school should be a part of everyone's future."

The *College for Texans* campaign also developed a *Wiley's Way* curriculum to accompany the book that is tied to Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) objectives to encourage teachers to use the book in the classroom.

The book project even inspired David Day, a Texas State graduate student, to create a documentary, "Creating Wiley" to capture the development of the project. A limited number of free copies will be distributed to schools and other campaign partners.

The University of Texas Press published *Wiley's Way*, which is now available at Barnes and Noble Booksellers. In addition, the Rose Foundation, The USAA Foundation, Barnes and Noble and Laredo National Bank have donated several thousand books to schools and libraries.

For those interested, the *College for Texans* website (www.CollegeForTexans.com) provides extensive information about planning for college and financial aid. Financial aid information is also available by calling 1-888-311-8881 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and until 5 p.m. on Friday. Bilingual counselors are available.

**Bridal Shower Honoring
Meghan Allsup
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605 4th Street on Nov. 20, 2004
at 9:30 am to 11:00 am
Selections at:
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* HELP WANTED *

Yoakum County Tax Office in Plains, Texas has an opening for a Full Time position. Computer experience, typing and math skills are required. Strong people skills and good interpersonal skills are a must. Applicant must have minimum of high school diploma or GED. Must be willing to learn and perform all job duties and be able to work 8:00 AM till 5:00 PM, Monday - Friday

Qualified candidates should submit a: (1) Cover letter (2) Resume, including education, skills, employment history, and three references with names, addresses and phone numbers. (3) Yoakum County Employment Application - Employment Application may be picked up at the Human Resources Office in the Courthouse or the Tax Office in Denver City, 122 W. 4th Street.

Applications and other requirements should be mailed to Jan Parrish, PO Box 922, Plains, Texas 79355. These must be received no later than November 30, 2004.

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From The Hack

Faithful reader Dianne Wilson of Stephenville sent me the following, for which I am eternally grateful; It explains away MANY of the questions I had during the recent election nonsense. She clipped it from The Empire-Tribune, found in publisher Mike Coggins column, who wrote, "I can't take credit for this week's tidbit, but with last Tuesday's election behind us it's very interesting, particularly the disclaimer - read it as intended... enjoyment. THIS IS A NONPARTISAN JOKE THAT CAN BE ENJOYED BY BOTH REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS, SINCE IT'S TRUE OF BOTH PARTIES....."

While walking one day, a U.S. Senator is hit by a truck and tragically dies. His soul arrives in Heaven and is met by St. Peter at the gate. "Welcome to Heaven," says St. Peter. "Before you settle in, it seems there is a problem. We seldom see a high official around these parts, so we're not sure what to do with you."

"No problem, just let me in," says the senator, "Just let me in."

"Well, I'd like to but I have orders from higher up. What we'll do is let you spend one day in Hell and one in Heaven, then you can choose where to spend eternity."

"Really, I've already made my mind up, I want to be in Heaven," says the senator.

"I'm sorry but we have our rules." And with that St. Peter

escorts him to the elevator and the senator goes down, down to Hell. The doors open and the senator finds himself in the middle of a green golf course. In the distance is a clubhouse and standing in front are all the senators friends and other politicians who had worked with the senator. Everyone is very happy, and dressed in evening attire.

They run to happily greet the senator, shake his hand, and reminisce about the good times they had while getting rich at the expense of the public. They play a friendly game of golf then dine on lobster and champagne.

Also present is the Devil, who really is a friendly guy who has a great time dancing and telling jokes. They are having such a good time that before the senator realizes it's time to go. Everyone gives the senator a hearty farewell and wave as the elevator goes up, up, and the door opens on Heaven where St. Peter waits for the senator, saying, "Now it's time to visit Heaven."

24 hours pass with the senator joining a group of contented souls moving from cloud to cloud, playing harps and singing. They have a lovely time, and before the senator realizes it, 24 hours have gone by and St. Peter returns.

"Well now, you've spent 24 hours in Hell and 24 hours in Heaven. Now, choose your eternity."

The senator reflects a moment, then says, "Well, I never would have said it before, I mean, Heaven has been delightful, but I think I would be better off in Hell."

So St. Peter escorts him to the elevator, and he goes down, down. When the door opens the senator is in the middle of a barren land covered with waste and garbage, and he sees all his

friends, dressed in filthy rags, picking up the trash, putting it in black plastic bags.

The Devil comes over to him and puts his arm around his shoulder. "I don't understand," stammers the senator. "Yesterday I was here and there was a golf course and club, and we ate lobster and caviar, drank champagne and danced and had a great time! Now there's only a wasteland full of garbage and my friends look miserable. What has happened?!"

The Devil looks at him, smiles, and says, "Yesterday we were campaigning.... today you voted!"

.....
Heard on the local golf course; "You fool! You almost hit my wife with that shot!" "Hey, I'm real sorry. Go ahead and take a shot at mine."

.....

NOTICE FOR BIDS THE STATE OF TEXAS COUNTY OF YOAKUM

The Commissioners Court of Yoakum County will receive bids until 4 PM Friday, December 3, 2004, for the purchase of: (1) new 2004-05 extended cab pickup with or without trade-in of (1) used 1990 Chevrolet C10 Pickup for Precinct 4. Bid will be reviewed with contract to be awarded in Commissioners Court on Monday, December 6, 2004.

For specifications and more information, please contact Darinda McWhirter, Yoakum County Auditor, 806/456-2422 or PO Box 516, Plains, Texas, 79355. Sealed bids should be marked "NEW PRECINCT #4 VEHICLE" 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 accept bids until 4 PM Friday, December 3, 2004, for the sale of (1) Used 1990 Chevrolet C10 Pickup for Precinct 4. Bids will be reviewed with contract to be awarded in Commissioners Court on Monday, December 6, 2004.

For specifications and more information, please contact Darinda McWhirter, Yoakum County Auditor, 806/456-2422 or PO Box 516, Plains, Texas, 79355. Sealed bids should be marked "USED PRECINCT #4 VEHICLE" 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.

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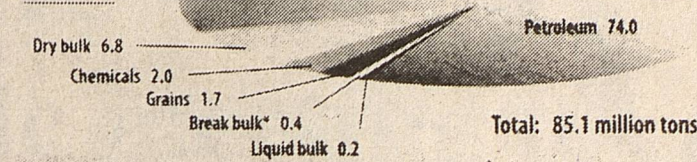
South Texas Ports Bouy State And Local Economies

A ton of tonnage

More than 85 million tons of petroleum, grains, chemicals and other cargo traveled through the Port of Corpus Christi in 2003. About 87 percent of the cargo was petroleum.

All tonnages below are given in millions of "short" tons. A short ton is 2,000 pounds.

Tonnage (in millions)



* Break bulk refers to loose cargo stowed directly in a ship's hold. SOURCE: Port of Corpus Christi, 2004.

new trade Meccas, which are the Caribbean nations, Mexico, Central and South America," Bonilla said.

Just 125 miles south of Corpus, the Port of Brownsville straddles the southernmost tip of Texas at the end of a 17 mile channel meeting the Gulf of Mexico. The port facilities help move cargo from the U.S. and Mexico to Europe, Asia and the rest of the world.

The port has more than 274 related businesses that provide more than 7,000 jobs, making it one of Brownsville's top employers.

Jason Hilts, president and CEO of the Brownsville economic development council, said "Being that it's the only port along the U.S.-Mexico border is a tremendous asset," Hilts said. "It means jobs for Brownsville because of the proximity to Mexico. That's where our future is at the Port of Brownsville."

About 90 percent of the cargo delivered to the port goes to Mexico. Petroleum and related products account for most of the port's cargo, and 628,000 metric tons moved through the port from January 2003 through May 2004. Steel is the second most common product shipped, with 420,000 metric tons moved through the port for the same time period.

Home to more than 275 shrimp boats, Brownsville's port harvests the fifth largest amount of shrimp in the U.S. The shrimping industry adds \$80 million to the Brownsville economy, said Raul Besterio, the port's director and CEO.

In recent years, however, South Texas shrimpers have lost business due to rising fuel prices and foreign shrimp sold at below market prices,

Besterio said. In July 2004, port officials sent letters to U.S. Senators asking for legislative solutions to help the ailing industry.

Steel prices, which have risen 76 percent since January to \$617 per ton in June, have also hurt Brownsville. The price hikes reflect soaring Chinese demand for steel.

Mexican automobile plants buy the bulk of the steel shipped to Brownsville's port, said Bob Ostos with Brownsville based Dix Industries, a terminal operator and stevedoring company. "The primary user of the Port of Brownsville, the Mexican steel users, were not importing," Ostos said. "It's really cut into the amount of vessels handled the first half of the year." During that time his company handled about 10 percent of the

Port officials are seeking federal funds for deepening the eight mile entrance to the port's channel from 42 feet to 55 feet. The proposed \$200 million project could take 10 to 12 years to complete, Besterio said. A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers feasibility study of the project could take five years.

Smaller than ports in Corpus Christi and Houston, and not having refineries, the Port of Brownsville must work hard to be competitive. "We compete with everybody," Besterio said. "If I don't make the effort to make the best pitch to my customers to get the material here, someone else will. We have to make sure our prices are the prices that will bring the material to Brownsville."

Material for this article courtesy FISCAL NOTES, a publication of the Texas Comptroller Office.

Supreme ports

Texas is home to three of the nation's 10 busiest ports in terms of total cargo volume, according to the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA). In 2002, Houston's port was the second-largest in the United States, with more than 161 million metric tons* of cargo.

Ranking	Port	Metric tons (in millions)
1	South Louisiana, La.	196
2	Houston, Tx.	161
3	New York/New Jersey	122
4	Beaumont, Tx.	78
5	New Orleans, La.	77
6	Huntington, W. Va.	74
7	Corpus Christi, Tx.	65
8	Long Beach, Ca.	62
9	Baton Rouge, La.	55
10	Plaquemines, La.	54

* One metric ton is equivalent to 2,205 pounds. SOURCE: AAPA, 2004.

**** NURSES NEEDED ****
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