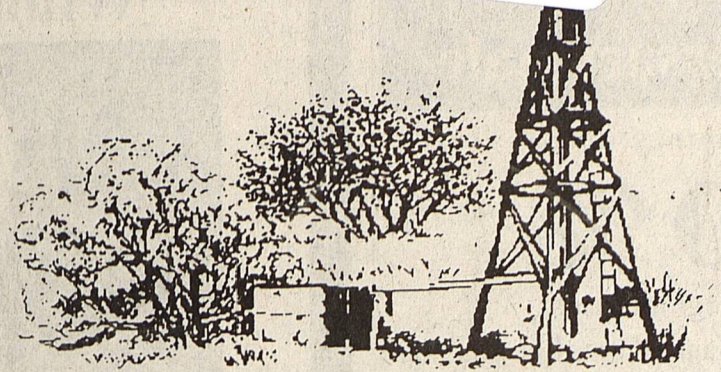


Cowboy Country News

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

Volume XI, Issue 12, December 1, 2004

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Locals daughter serves aboard "City At Sea"

Editors Note: The ongoing battle in Iraq, and our thousands of men and women in harms way there, are daily on our minds and hearts. The following US Navy press release highlights the lifestyle and duties of a young lady who is not being shot at, nor is the target of suicide bombers, yet professionally and honorably serves her country. "On any given day around the globe, thousands of stouthearted men and women live night and day aboard some of the most powerful machines ever built. While the work may be hard and the hours long, life on these hulking peacemakers is never dull.

Sailors aboard such aircraft carriers dedicate more than half their waking days to their shipmates and and to the home they must all defend. The complexity of the carrier and its around-the-clock tasks demand no less.

One of these hardworking sailors is Seaman Sharla Vantine, who serves aboard the USS George Washington, home ported in Norfolk, Virginia. Vantine, the daughter of John and Laurel Matus of Plains, is a deck seaman.

"I stand watches where I drive the ship and do lookouts. I am also a line handler, I help moor the ship to the pier, and I back up fire fighters," said Vantine.

USS George Washington is equipped with some of the world's most versatile and powerful weapons systems, and the sheer visibility of her operations is enough to deter conflicts within the ships large operational radius.

While sailors must make many personal sacrifices to defend their nation, Vantine says carrier life also presents her with a unique series of perks to enjoy. George Washington's recent deployment to the Arabian Gulf was no exception.

"I enjoyed seeing different countries and their cultures. I was also happy to become qualified in different positions aboard the ship, and I was also able to meet many new friends," She said.

With few exceptions, the George Washington has all the amenities of a small American town. More than 5,000 carrier residents have their own barbershop, library and post office just minutes from their sleeping quarters.

Amenities aside, carriers remain an instrument of projected military power wielded only by the collective elements of thousands. These sailors recognize the importance of their endeavors, and quickly proclaim the pride they feel for serving their country in the global war on terrorism.

"Without our knowledge and experience, there wouldn't be anyone to train new sailors or to drive the ship," said the 2001 PHS graduate

Without the skill and teamwork of sailors like Vantine, these cities at sea could not be the great defenders they are. Although the George Washington crew is currently taking some 'down time' from their recent deployment, they are already preparing for their next voyage."

By Christopher Okula, a journalist assigned to the Navy Public Affairs Center in Norfolk, Virginia.

Routine session of Commissioner Court

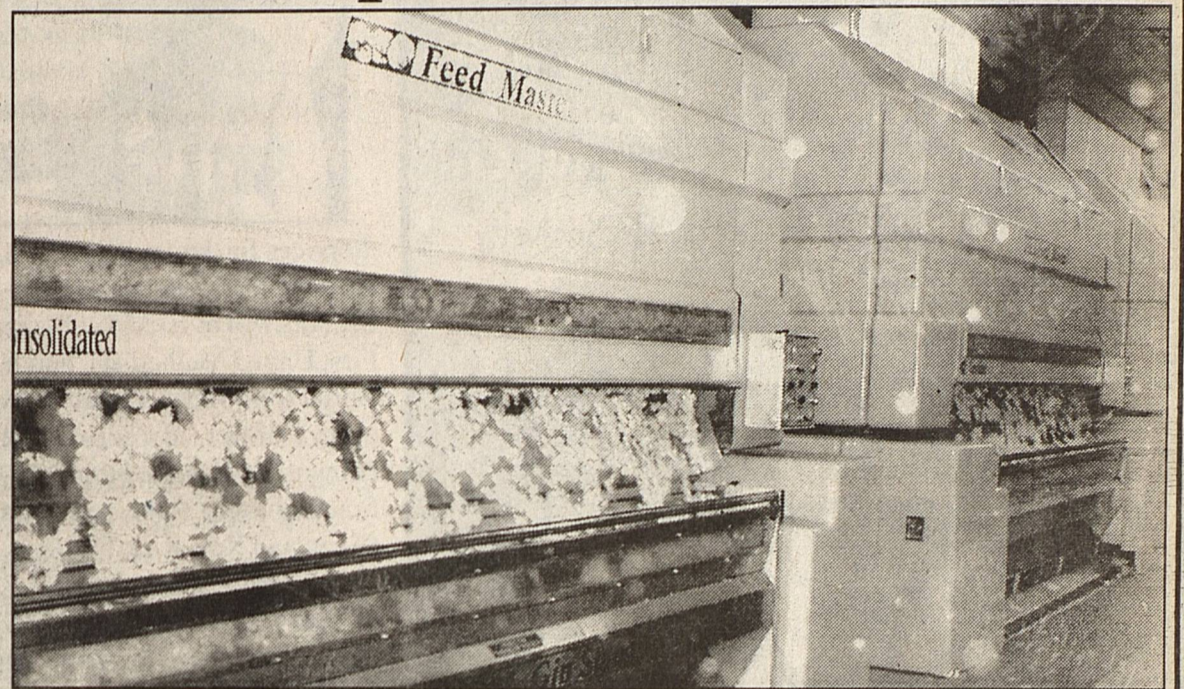
In the November 29 session of Commissioners Court, county grant writer Judy London reviewed a proposed master plan detailing county recreational facilities and programs, the finished plan to be filed with the Texas Parks and Recreation Department. London said there would be no action taken by the state office, but having it filed and on record could facilitate future grant request proposals submitted to that department. The plan was approved.

Low bids from Mustang Country in Denver City were approved for the purchase of two new Chevrolet Impalas for the Sheriff Department. With trade-in of a wrecked Impala and a 2001 Impala, the total bid price was \$33,685. Three other higher bids were considered.

The court approved advertising for bids for the painting and sandblasting of the interior of the county watertower here in Pct. 3. Specifications for the entire project were furnished by West Texas Consultants, Inc. of Andrews. Bids will be reviewed in the December 20 session of the court.

The Thanksgiving Holiday with the school, courthouse and other firms closed, and a brief day out of town resulted in this briefer issue of CCN

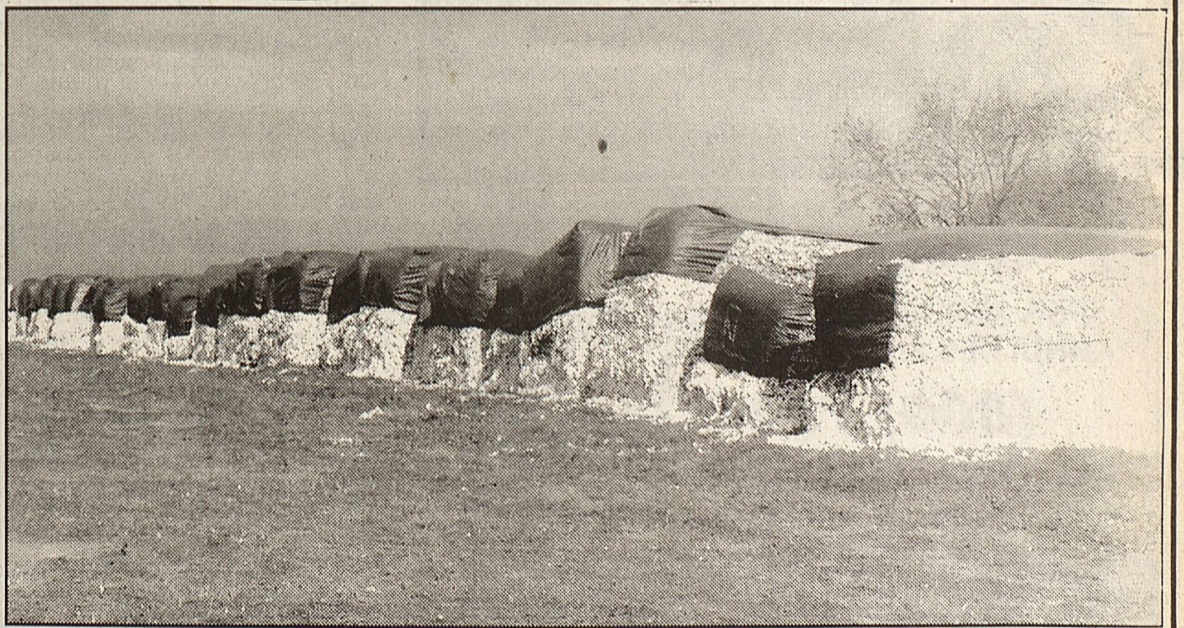
Weather creates havoc for cotton producers and gins



What promised to be a record cotton production season on the Plains has turned into a nightmare for many growers, as well as cotton gins. Many fields of cotton, particularly north of Yoakum County, have yet to see a cotton harvester because of boggy land. Thousands of bales of tarped modules of harvested cotton are deteriorating daily in grade and color, costing producers dearly. Gins fortunate enough to have dryers are able to process the crop, at a much slower rate, and the high price of natural gas is a serious expense. Day after day of fog or mist has even dampened tarp covered cotton, causing a 'greenhouse' effect - digging into the packed modules, one can actually feel warmth from the deteriorating, and sprouting cotton.



Photo shows sprouting cotton on top of module being fed into gin. Recent weather has caused greenhouse effect on tarped modules, shown below



The Power Of The Permian Basin

The petroleum industry's importance in West Texas and Eastern New Mexico

** Editors note : As residents of Plains, our local economy is strongly geared to the agriculture industry, our retail firms here, the school district, city and county employment and a few more sources of our livelihoods. We tend to forget the petroleum industry which has made Yoakum County a household name in the oil and gas business, one of the very top producers of crude in the state, a top player in the legendary Permian Basin. The LOVINGTON LEADER recently published their annual oil and gas edition, a 64 page salute to the industry and the people driving it. Our friend W.H. (Hop) Graham did much of the feature writing in the edition, and was gracious enough to let CCN use some of his talents. His report, naturally, centers on Lea County, New Mexico, also a major power in the Permian Basin, but the message applies equally as well to Yoakum County.

"Who would have believed, five years ago, the state of the domestic oil and gas industry

that exists today?

- Crude oil prices hovering in the \$50 barrel range.

- Natural gas prices north of \$6 a thousand cubic feet.

- Explorationists hungrily looking for more drilling prospects.

- The field service business running flat out.

- Full employment for anyone willing to work, and with minimum skill sets and experience.

- Loosening of the capital purse strings (finally) after greatly improved cash flows healed the hurts of hard times.

Will It Last?

Well, as they used to say on the original TV quiz program, that's the \$64 question. And of course no one knows the answer, even the quiz master.

But there is a consensus that

has been building, and now is pretty much accepted as an industry mantra: We've moved to a new level.

That level, after a huge jump in energy markets within the past two years, has given operators enough breathing room so they can feel comfortable with the up and down variations sure to come as normal behavior in industry conditions. But a real crash? Like back to \$10 a barrel? It ain't gonna happen.

That's because, given conditions that exist worldwide and not just in the domestic market here at home, there's just too much demand chasing too little supply. And that supply, even allowing for new production sure to come in as yet undeveloped provinces overseas, is

having a hard time catching up with the demand curve.

Sure, with much higher prices there's the ever present challenge of alternate energy sources. But as the years go by the promise of cheap, always available anywhere energy seems like a fading dream. They have proven to be no challenge to rock solid fossil fuel - crude oil and natural gas.

Oil and gas operators in North America have known from the beginning they were building an industry based on depletable assets. It's no surprise to anyone as reservoirs are exploited their rates of production are in an inevitable state of decline. That's petroleum engineering 101.

The business of spotting oil in its subterranean hideaways has

been elevated to space age science. Drilling to targets spotted by the guys with the big computers has its own new horizons. The rig may look the same but its capabilities are much greater. Steerable bits bore through formations like burrowing rabbits. The plumb hole is a thing of the past.

Then there's getting the oil to turn loose and come out. Plenty of science and new techniques in this area too. Water drive and CO2 flooding is being earned to new levels, with a degree of sophistication never thought possible. The efficiency of these techniques is going after oil and gas formerly thought uneconomical - of course it's the price that has unlocked these new possibilities.

Roswell independent Charlie

Read, who has recently taken the pulse of his peers at industry conventions, says, "everybody's pretty optimistic." He shares this optimism. "The demand for oil is still greater than the supply. It will take five years for this to get back in balance."

The owner of Read and Stevens concentrates on prospecting in the Permian Basin, and has no interest in spreading his wings to the Rockies or elsewhere. He is currently on the waiting list for a rig to be available to drill.

Read has experienced the benefits of technology of drilling and completion techniques.

"The last three wells we drilled would have been

TURN TO PAGE 4, PERMIAN BASIN

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Obituary

Services held for James William Warren Sr.



Services for James W. Warren, 92, were held Tuesday, November 30, 2004 at 10 AM at Plains First United Methodist Church. Burial followed in Plains Cemetery under direction of Brownfield Funeral Home. Officiating were Reverend Cam Givan and Rev. Rick Doyle.

Mr. Warren passed away at Yoakum County Hospital Friday, November 26, with his family at his bedside.

A native Texan, he was born October 8, 1912 in Runnels County, and moved to Brownfield in 1924. He married Margaret Jeanette "Jerry" Rickets Sept. 28, 1940 in Odessa.

He was a WW II Navy veteran. He was owner of Plains Oil Co. and oversaw operations of Warren Farms in Yoakum County for many years. He was a 50 year member of Plains Lions Club, as well as Plains Masonic Lodge. He was also a charter member of the Yoakum County Coop, and served on the Yoakum County Hospital Board many years. He was a member of Plains First United Methodist Church.

Survivors include his wife of Plains; two sons, Jim Warren and his wife Lela of Plains, and Jerry Warren of Tempe, Arizona; three daughters, Jana Melvin and husband Robert of Vado, NM, Joyce Pierce and husband Joe of Plains, and Joetta Willis and husband Ricky of Brownfield; one brother, Grady Warren of Lubbock; a sister, Ruth Thurman of Ft. grandchildren and 10 great grandchildren.

Pallbearers were his grandsons, Steve Warren, Russell Warren, Doug Warren, Stephen Warren, Rob Warren, Wesley Warren, Jason Warren, Monte and Marte Pierce. Honorary pallbearers were Johnnie Fitzgerald, Jim

Barron, Gary Six, Mike Blount, George Blount, Rex Swann, Ty Earl Powell and Macky McWhirter.

The family suggests memorials to Plains First United Methodist Church, PO Box 396, Plains TX 79355.

Criminal cases in District Court

In the November 23 session of County Court, Judge Dallas Brewer presiding and Criminal District Attorney Richard Clark representing the state, two cases were heard.

Sergio Vaca Luna pled true to the states motion to revoke supervision from a prior DWI case. A 90 day jail sentence had

been met with 125 days served. He must pay delinquent fine, attorney fees and supervision fees totaling \$522.

Carlos Tovar Martinez pled guilty to a DWI cause. A 60 day jail sentence had been met with 60 days served. He was held for the U.S. Border Patrol.



What about?

I was thinking about what to write this week, when I met a young man from our area, Jeremy Smith from Loop, who has also served his time with the US Army in Iraq. A nice young man, but one can only imagine the very terrible things he not only experienced, but had to witness for our sake and the continuation of our great country. He has surely paid a great price.

Then last night as I sat watching the news, they reported another young man from Lubbock had paid the ultimate price in Iraq. Being part of the great fire fights now going on over there, Freddie Valez has paid the price. His family got that most dreaded knock on the door stating their son had been killed in action.

I also know the May family in Hobbs, NM got the dreaded phone call from the State Department. They waited for about 3 days to hear the news of their son. He was in Iraq with the initial invasion last year. They

were told to stay close to home so someone could come to visit with them about the welfare of their son.

For about 3 days, they prayed, wondered and worried what the news would be. Finally, someone came. They were there to tell them that their son was only injured, but in the hospital. How lucky they were not to have to bury their son as the Valez family.

I know and have heard some of the stories about great men and women who are from our area that served overseas. Many of us think only about the men, but actually, many women have backed up those men in combat and cared for them when they were injured. Now, they fight along side the men.

Thank you to the many veteran's in our nation and especially the local areas, who have paid the price. The price with their lives, their heartaches and emotions, as well as being away from their families during the holidays.

Until Next Time!
 Mark A. Jones
 www.majonesfuneraldirectors.com. email comments to: markajones@door.net.

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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LINE 2 (16 LETTERS OR SPACES)

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Outstanding Conservation Farmer/Farm Family



The Yoakum Soil and Water Conservation District is proud to recognize Jerry and Ann Hartman as the "Outstanding Conservation Farmer/Farm Family" in Yoakum County for 2004. This award recognizes excellence in the stewardship

and conservation of soil and water resources. The Hartman's were presented with a plaque from the Yoakum SWCD to acknowledge their conservation achievements. Congratulations to the Jerry Hartman family for a job well done

From Page 1, PERMIAN BASIN

marked off as dry holes," he points out, but fortunately, "There were shows behind the pipe" which turned those dust-ers into good wells when accessed. He declares, "The Permian Basin will be good for the next 100 years."

Bruce Brady, president of Great Western Drilling, Midland, says, "We're probably at an 'all time' high for drilling. We're enjoying these prices. It gives us the ability to drill more prospects than before, say with \$20 oil. It makes a difference. It opens up some new doors, allows us to go into some older fields and do some infill drilling." He doesn't expect the price to stay at the \$50 level, but is anticipating \$30 oil.

Great Western is gravitating to more gas prospects. "All of the

experts say we are going to see \$6 gas at least through the winter. Everything points to a shortage of natural gas."

In another section of the issue, an interview with Peyton Yates, executive officer of Artesia's Yates Petroleum, New Mexico's largest independent producer.

"If we're not going full bore I'd hate to see it." That's the comment Yates volunteered when asked if his company is operating at full capacity. "The thing that may be a little different about this upturn is, there's a chance it may be sustained, such as now in the case with natural gas. We'll just have to see how it plays out. We have been this busy before, in the 80's boom," says the company exec. "but we are drilling deeper wells, higher tech wells, that are much more

Senior Citizens Corner

This has been a week of great loss for our Senior Center family. Don Blevens, Nancy Chamberlain, and Faye Black died this week leaving us to mourn along with their families. Each of these people played an important part in the life of our Senior Center through the years. Don served on our Board of Directors for several years during the 1980's; Faye was a Board member for several years, retiring a year ago. Nancy came on to the Board last year and served until she became too ill to continue, giving us her resignation in June of this year. We miss each of them and send our sympathy to their families.

We understand Moray Clark is spending some time in a Lubbock hospital this week while going through some tests. We miss this busy lady, who has become an integral part of our Senior Center family, and we hope she can return to us soon. Our annual Thanksgiving dinner hour saw a brightly shining and beautifully decorated din-

ing room filled to capacity. We served 114 people in the dining room and sent out sixty home delivered meals of turkey and dressing with all of the trimmings.

There were twenty-five of our visitors who were under the age of sixty who came to share our celebration. We cannot mention the names of each in this one column, but we want each of you to know how delighted we were to have you join us.

We were especially happy to see Mary Gibson come along with Hoot for our Thanksgiving meal. We have missed her for those weeks she has been ill and taking treatments. Her positive attitude and wonderful smile is a blessing to us all.

Danielle Swisher was also a dinner guest. She slipped down to take some photos for the Denver City Press and stayed to have dinner with us. You are always welcome, Danielle. We appreciate your interest in our Center.

Other guests we were delighted to see were Kathy Clark from the Learning Center who came with two of her teachers, Linda Harris and Keren Diaz, to share our annual Thanksgiving dinner and to bring us the wonderful news of a new Computer Lab that is located within a block of our Senior Center. It is available to all seniors on four afternoons every week. On Monday through Thursday

Page 3, Cowboy Country News, December 1, 2004 each week from 12:30-3:00 pm., the lab is available for use with an instructor standing by to be helpful. It makes no difference if you've used a computer before or if you are an experienced computer person who wants to learn new things. There is no charge for this wonderful opportunity and you do not need to have a computer at home. You may use one of these twenty-eight new Dell computers at any time. You may send e-mail letters to your friends and family; you may investigate all kinds of informational sites on any subject of your choice; you may want to do some on-line shopping; or you may just want to play a game on the computer. The opportunities are endless and are structured to fit any need you may have. These computers were made available for us through a grant. Our county is very fortunate to receive the funding necessary to open the Computer Lab and we seniors are indeed fortunate to have time set aside for our use of this fine, new facility, so don't pass up this opportunity. These young women are anxious to be of aid in helping us extend our knowledge in this area of the world of electronics. Many of the same local people who help to fund our Senior Center also are helping to pay for the Learning Center. The Learning Center is hooked up to the local Denver City ISD internet system, so anything you wish to learn or do with the computer is available with any help you need standing by with instruction. I believe we will find it more enjoyable than taking that afternoon nap, watching the soaps

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*** Christmas Assistance Program ***

Applications for the 2004 Christmas Assistance Program are now available in the County Judge office in the courthouse. The deadline for returning applications is **Monday, December 13**

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From The Hack

I celebrated Thanksgiving at one of the daughters, where the game plan has everyone present make a brief statement of what they are thankful for on the special day. I managed to mumble something, but I am now fully ready for the same question next year. I am truly thankful now, and will be equally thankful next year, there is only ONE Thanksgiving Day per year. Actually, I celebrated the event six times, it seems. I stuffed on turkey and the other stuff that day, again that night on the care package I brought home, and four more times before I decided enough's enough. I truly do love turkey, dressing, gravy and the red stuff, but if periodic gluttony is truly sinful, I'm doomed. I ate so much of it I had to strip to the buff a couple of times, pirouetting before the mirror to see if I had sprouted white feathers. Come to think of it, I'll bet that was a ridiculous sight, my skinny naked butt and my over stuffed belly resembling seven months of pregnancy. On the fifth day after T-Day, I fixed a balogna sandwich for lunch - superb!

It had to happen.... it was inevitable. I heard on the radio this weekend Bulgaria has passed a nationwide law banning ALL DUMB BLONDE jokes. Normally, a routine news item from Bulgaria would not so much as raise one of my eyebrows, but this is really frightening news. What if this rash

movement appeals to other nations, spreads to the US of A? I, and thousands of other writers of miniscule talent, would be deprived of a prime source of borrowed (actually, the correct word is stealable) joke subject matter. Apparently the Bulgarian hierarchy caught so much flak from - uhh - impaired blondes they caved in to blonde pressure. Not too long ago a female blonde reader expressed her annoyance with my referral to the D. B. subject, so in this space I featured a Dumb Red-head joke. I had 19 calls from male readers, each one with the same question - "What's a dumb red head? A duck?" 15 of those calls originated from blonde headed males. So how is that for playing C.Y.A.

The teen ager had just gotten his drivers license. He asked his dad, a preacher, when he could have his own car. His fatehr said, "Son, I'll make a deal with you. Bring your school grades up a bit, read your Bible a bit more, get your hair cut, and then we'll talk about it". A couple of months later the boy confronted his dad again with the car question. His dad replied, "Son, I am truly proud of you. You've brought your grades up, you've

faithfully read you Bible, but you haven't had your hair cut!" The teen thought for a moment, then said, "Dad, I've been thinking about that. You know, Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, So did Noah, even Jesus had long hair!" His father nodded, and said, "Yes, I know, and they all walked everywhere they went."

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Sealed proposals, addressed to the Commissioners Court of Yoakum County, Texas, for furnishing all necessary materials, machinery, equipment, superintendence and labor for Interior Coating of a 50,000 gallon Elevated Storage Tank in the City of Plains, Texas, will be received until December 17, 2004 at 4PM in the Yoakum County Judge's office, Plains, Texas at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids will be considered on Monday, December 20, 2004. Bidders are expected to inspect the site of the work and to inform themselves regarding all local conditions and legislation concerning the wage and payment of prevailing wage. Plans, specifications, proposal and contract forms may be seen and examined at the office of WEST TEXAS CONSULTANTS, INC., 1720 W. Broadway, Andrews, Texas. Copies are available for a non-refundable fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) payable to WEST TEXAS CONSULTANTS, INC. Each bidder will be required to submit with his bid a certified check, cashiers check or bid bond in the amount of five percent (5%) of the total of the bid submitted, made payable to Yoakum County, Plains, Texas as a guarantee that bidder will enter into a contract and execute bonds and guaranty in the forms provided within ten (10) days after notice of award of contract. Bids without the required check to bid bond will not be considered. The OWNER reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive technicalities and to accept the proposal they deem to be in their best interests

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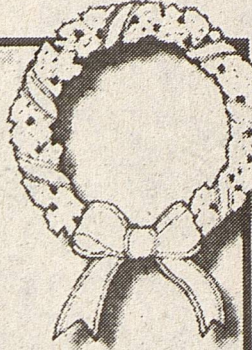
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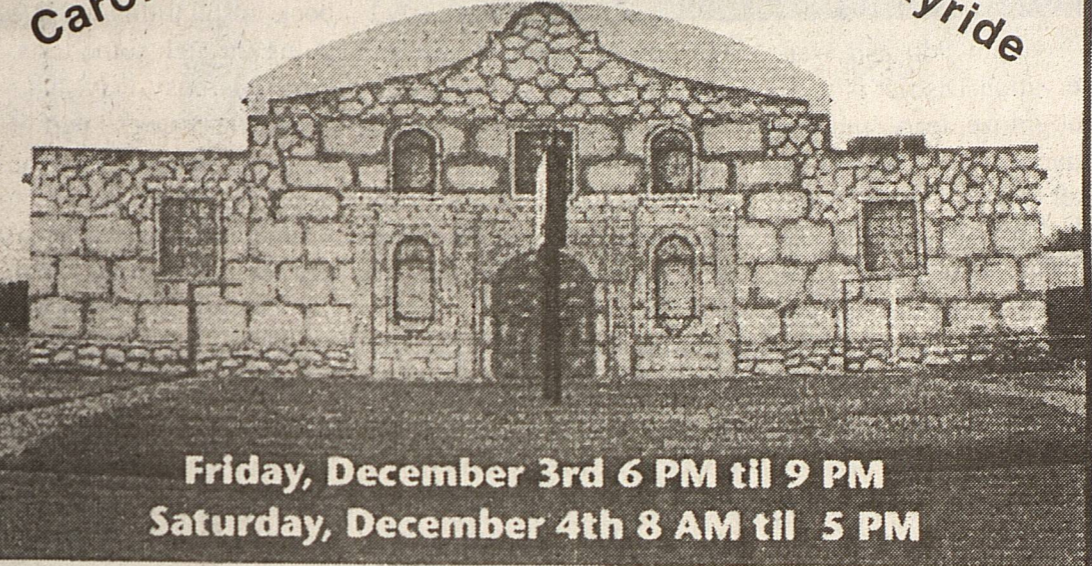
Plains Dirt Gardeners will again sponsor OPERATION CHRISTMAS CARD. All the proceeds from this project go to the beautification of the local cemetery. Projects in the past include numerous plantings of plants, the building of the retaining wall at the south entrance, placing of the street signs in the cemetery, and placing markers on unmarked graves. The next project planned is to replace trees on the borders of the cemetery. To participate in this project and have your name listed in the Christmas Card, Please make your donation to any Garden Club member, or leave it at Richardson Insurance Agency. The Garden Club appreciates all of the donors who have contributed over the years to enhance our cemetery. Deadline for this year's Christmas Card is December 19th



CHRISTMAS AT THE ALAMO



Carolers *Hayride*



Friday, December 3rd 6 PM til 9 PM
Saturday, December 4th 8 AM til 5 PM

- Collectibles • Antiques • Arts & Crafts
- Toys • Christmas Gifts • Food
- Live Entertainment

Join Us On The Square

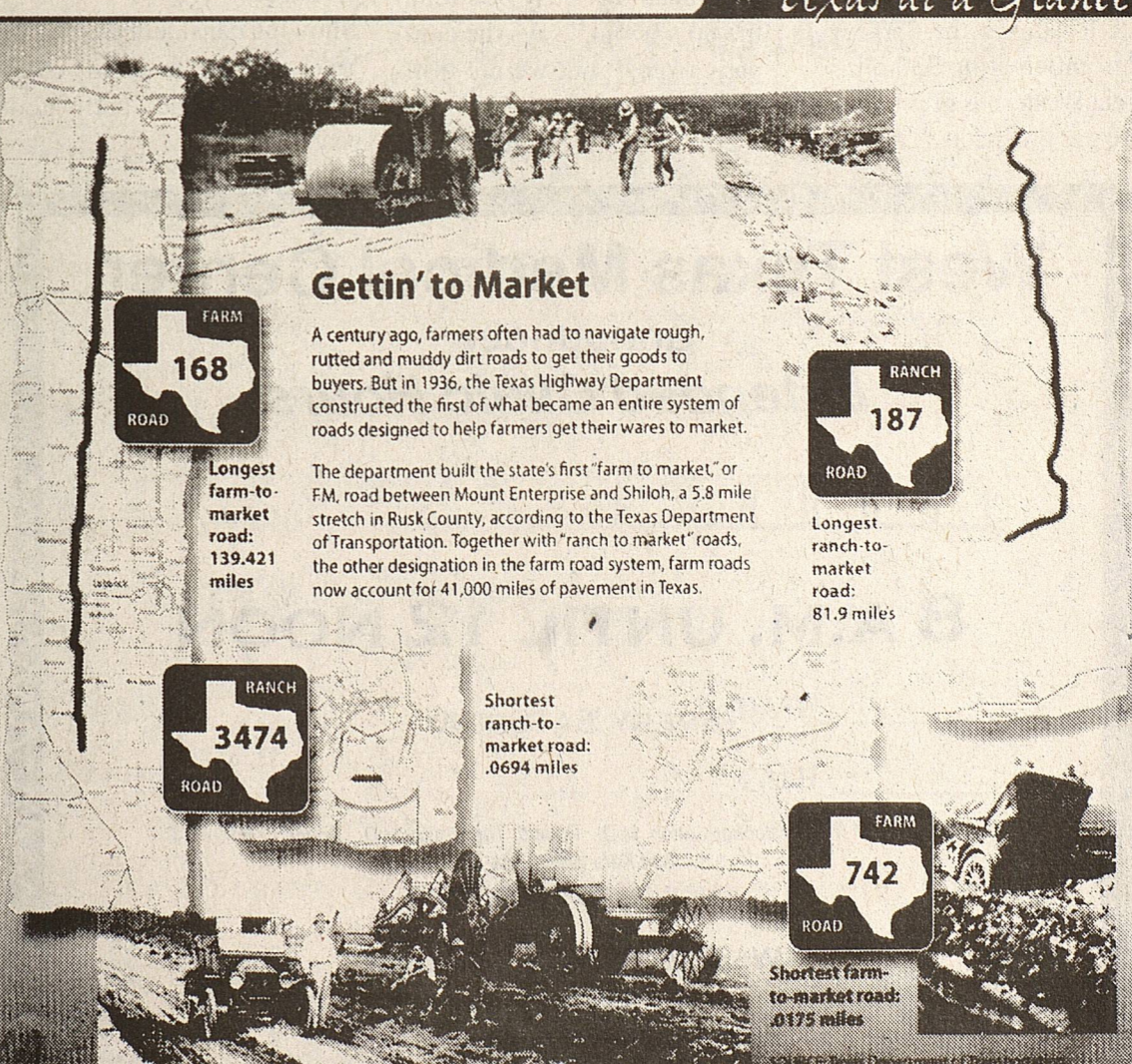
Santa Claus will arrive in front of the Courthouse Friday, December 3rd at 5:30 PM to lead the Christmas Parade to the Alamo.

Christmas at the Alamo

301 East Broadway - Brownfield, Texas

Sponsored by the Brownfield Chamber of Commerce

Texas at a Glance



Gettin' to Market

A century ago, farmers often had to navigate rough, rutted and muddy dirt roads to get their goods to buyers. But in 1936, the Texas Highway Department constructed the first of what became an entire system of roads designed to help farmers get their wares to market.

The department built the state's first "farm to market," or FM, road between Mount Enterprise and Shiloh, a 5.8 mile stretch in Rusk County, according to the Texas Department of Transportation. Together with "ranch to market" roads, the other designation in the farm road system, farm roads now account for 41,000 miles of pavement in Texas.

- 168 ROAD** (FARM): Longest farm-to-market road: 139.421 miles
- 187 ROAD** (RANCH): Longest ranch-to-market road: 81.9 miles
- 3474 ROAD** (RANCH): Shortest ranch-to-market road: .0694 miles
- 742 ROAD** (FARM): Shortest farm-to-market road: .0175 miles

SOURCE: Texas Department of Transportation

VIOXX/BEXTRA NO FEE FOR FIRST VISIT

have been linked to **heart attacks and strokes.** If you or a loved one have suffered a heart attack or stroke which may be linked to one of these drugs, call us for professional insight.

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1-800-460-0606
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Heart Attacks, Strokes & Deaths

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