

Christmas toy drive is underway

Members of W. Cherry-M. Perry Post 108 of the American Legion, Eagle Lake, will kick-off their annual drive for toys and/or funds for the purchase of toys this Thanksgiving weekend.

The toys will be distributed to children, ages infant through nine years of age, in needy families on Tuesday, Dec. 23. Site of the toy distribution will be

announced as soon as arrangements can be made for a suitable location.

"What better way to say 'thank you for your blessings' than to give to this annual project to make children in needy families happy at Christmas time," said Fred R. Frnka, Post Commander.

(See Toys, Page 10)

Eagle Lake Headlight

Nov. 27, 1997

(USPS 163-760)
Volume 94, No. 36
10 Pages

Eagle Publishing, Inc.
P.O. Box 67 — 220 E. Main St.
Eagle Lake, Texas 77434-0067
409-234-5521

35¢ PER COPY

NEWSBRIEFS

Area post offices schedule 'Appreciation Day'

The following area post offices will hold a "Customer Appreciation Day" Friday morning, Dec. 5: Altair, Egypt, Garwood, Glen Flora, Nada and Sheridan. All customers (route and box patrons), as well as other members of the community, are invited to join the postal workers in Christmas cheer in appreciation of their patronage throughout the year. Contact your post office for the time(s) Friday morning (each office has set up their own time).

Entries sought for Christmas parade

Entries are being sought for the 9th Annual Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce Lighted Christmas Parade next Saturday, Dec. 6. Line-up time is from 4 to 5:20 p.m.; judging, 5:20 p.m.; parade time, 6:45 p.m. The Eagle Lake Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary will sell hamburgers on the square. The Eagle Lake Pilot Club will sell snacks and hot chocolate and the Cub Scouts will sell cold drinks. Entertainment on the square by Gary Tise will precede the parade. Parade entry forms are available at the Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce, *Eagle Lake Headlight* or from Lynda Appelt. Call 234-5878 for parade information or to volunteer to help with the line-up. Parade officials hope to make this the largest ever!

Businesses closed for Thanksgiving holiday

City Offices will be closed Nov. 27 and 28 in observance of Thanksgiving. There will be no garbage pickup those two days. Normal pickup will resume Monday, Dec. 1. The Colorado County Courthouse and the *Headlight* office will also be closed Thursday and Friday and reopen for business Monday morning, Dec. 1.

Other businesses closed Thursday, Nov. 27, will be The First National Bank, Wallis State Bank, Eagle Lake Post Office and most of the other businesses in town.

Donations for Fink family being accepted

Donations for the Patricia Fink family, whose home was a total loss in a fire last Thursday, Nov. 20, are being accepted at the First National Bank of Eagle Lake. A trust fund has also been set up at the First National Bank of El Campo. Donations of clothing and other household items are also being accepted. Call Eagle Lake Middle School for more information. You may bring your donations by the school office.

Thrift Shop sale is Dec. 13

The next sale at the Prairie Edge Museum Thrift Shop will be Saturday, Dec. 13. The ladies remind you to come by and shop this day. They also extend a very "Happy Thanksgiving" to you and your family.

Defensive driving course set for Dec. 10, 11

A six-hour defensive driving course will be held in Eagle Lake Dec. 10 and 11 from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the Wintermann Library. To pre-register, call 409-234-5411. If unable to pre-register, arrive a few minutes early the first evening for registration.

Christ Church offers new Eucharist

Christ Church (Episcopal), on the corner of Lake Ave. at Stockbridge (the pink church with the belltower), is observing the beginning of the Advent Season this Sunday, Nov. 30, with a new permanent addition to its service schedule: the celebration of the Holy Eucharist at 9 a.m., in addition to the present offering at 10:30 a.m. The new service is aimed at families and will feature contemporary-type music and a more informal approach to liturgy than the present 10:30 Eucharist. Sunday School classes are offered for all grades. Call Rev. Russ Minter at 234-3437 for more information. All baptized Christians are welcome to receive Communion at Christ Church!

Crescent Country Jamboree is Dec. 2

The Wharton County Youth Fair & Exposition will host the 2nd Crescent Country Jamboree "Christmas Show" Tuesday, Dec. 2, with entertainment starting at 7:30 p.m. in the Crescent Hall at the Wharton County Youth Fair Fairgrounds, at the intersection of FM 960 and FM 961. Come out for an evening of country music, great food and good, wholesome friend/family fellowship for all ages. For more information on all the events, call 677-3350.

Retired teachers to meet Dec. 1

Retired teachers will meet at Schobels' Restaurant in Columbus Dec. 1 at 12 noon. The host town is Columbus. The organization hopes that retired teachers and school personnel will come and support this fine group that works hard for your benefit. Please, help us keep this organization strong.

Study Club Christmas party is Dec. 10

The Eagle Lake Study Club Christmas Party will be held at Keiler's Hotel in Fayetteville Dec. 10. Members will meet at the library at 1 p.m. The speaker will be Louis Polansky.

Little League meeting Dec. 4

The Eagle Lake Little League will meet Thursday, Dec. 4, at 7 p.m. at City Hall. Anyone and everyone interested in the 1998 season needs to be at this meeting including T-ball, minor, major, softball coaches and parents.

Sealy Fantasy of Lights Parade is Dec. 6

The Sealy Chamber of Commerce announces the 11th annual "Fantasy of Lights Parade" and "Fantasy Park" on Dec. 6. Beautifully lit floats, a marching band, local service organizations and other exciting entries will parade through Sealy's delightfully decorated homes and businesses. The city is truly an awesome inspirational sight for the holidays. Contact the Sealy Chamber of Commerce for additional information, 409-885-3222.

Blood Drive scheduled in Nada Dec. 7

Nada Knights of Columbus will sponsor a blood drive on Sunday, Dec. 7, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Nada in the church library from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Contact Richard Lesak at 409-282-2706 or Betty Webb at The Blood Center, 1-88-GV-BLOOD, ext. 234. The holiday season is a critical time for those in need of blood. Usage is typically up, while donations, nationwide, tend to be down. Please give the gift of life.

'A Huge Christmas in a Tiny Town' is Dec. 6

"A Huge Christmas in a Tiny Town" will be held in downtown Garwood Saturday, Dec. 6, starting at 10 a.m. Arts and crafts booths, country store, tea room and entertainment will be held. Hamburgers will be sold from 4 to 8 p.m. by the Garwood Volunteer Fire Department. A drawing and dunking booth will be sponsored by the Garwood Lions Club. A live nativity will be held at 6 p.m. followed by Mr. and Mrs. Santa. For booth space information, call 409-758-3476.

Merchants... check your lights

Downtown Eagle Lake merchants are reminded to check their Christmas (See Newsbriefs, Page 10)

1997 'Spirit of Christmas' Parade is Saturday

The 1997 Eagle Lake 'Spirit of Christmas' parade is next Saturday, Dec. 6, starting at 6:45 p.m.

Line up time is from 4:30 to 5:20 p.m. Judging will take place from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

The deadline for entries is Wednesday Dec. 3.

Entries after Dec. 1 will not be mentioned in the *Eagle Lake Headlight* with a line-up number. But, late entries will be accepted.

Categories are Service Organization, Chamber of Commerce, Decorated Auto, School Organization, Church, Marching-Twirling Unit,

Individual Family and Commercial.

Judging will be done in each class, plus best overall Christmas theme.

Rules for this year's parade are:

In order to be judged, an entry must have lights on it; you are responsible for providing your own power source; throwing candy will not be allowed;

Santa Claus will be provided by Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce; no other Santas allowed.

For more information call Lynda Appelt at 409-234-5878 (after 4:30 p.m. and weekends) or the Chamber Office at 409-234-2780.

'Retired Santa' named 1997 Parade Marshal

By Lynda Appelt
Contributing Writer

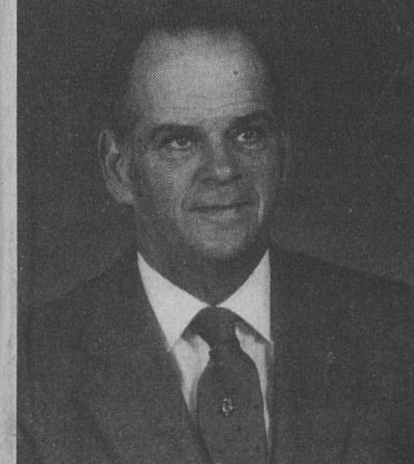
The holidays are upon us and, with that thought in mind, the Jolly Olde Elf who spreads the spirit of Christmas is making his list, checking it twice and finding out who's naughty or nice.

On top of his regular duties, he recruits helpers throughout the world to help him fulfill goodwill toward men.

John Parker, with a gleam in his eye and a down-home biscuits and gravy accent, is one of those brave souls who donned a red uniform for the Santa Claus cause and served as Eagle Lake's Santa from 1970 to 1995.

In the 1997 Eagle Lake Chamber of Commerce's Lighted Christmas parade, Parker, who is from Pasadena, will lead the parade as its Grand Marshal.

"I really started in a South Houston bank" said Parker, "and I decided to



play the part even though I had never done it before.

"You know, the bank was mobbed with 300 to 400 children the first day!"

And some people don't really believe in Santa Claus!

"It's a really rewarding profession," said Parker, who took his role-playing seriously, "and I don't mean

monetarily. I did it for free!

"I just hate to think of those who take advantage of people by playing Santa and charging an arm and a leg - I can't see somebody getting money just for having kids sit on his lap," he added. "It just takes away from the spirit of the whole thing!"

Parker has the spirit, as well as a sense of humor. He teases his wife about being a Mrs. Santa. "She never would go near Santa Claus when she was little - now she's married to one!"

Parker was born and raised in New Orleans, Louisiana and is a veteran of World War II, having served in the Marine Corp.

He moved to Houston in 1947 and worked for Railway Express for 23 years.

In 1968, Parker moved to Pasadena. He owned and operated two eating establishments in Pasadena and South Houston for a number of years. He retired in 1990 after working for

Harris County for 17 years.

Parker is active in Chamber of Commerce activity and the La Porte Rotary Club. He has received the Paul Harris award three times (the highest award given by Rotary).

He served as Democratic Executive Committeeman and Precinct Election Judge for 25 years.

Parker relates memories of the many brave children who sat on his lap and asked for some strange things.

"I had one little boy who kept asking and asking for a saddle. I asked him if he wanted a big one or a little one and after he replied "a big one", I naturally figured that it was for his horse.

"So I asked him if he had a horse and he shouted, "No, stupid...you've got to bring me the horse to go with the saddle!"

Another time Parker had a little girl sit on his lap and ask for an electric stove.

"I asked her if her mom was going to teach her to cook and she said, "Heavens no! My mom can't cook! My dad's gonna teach me how!"

Sign of the times!

Of course, his favorite reply was when another little girl sat on his lap. "I asked her what she wanted for Christmas and she looked at me like I was crazy!" Parker related.

"She just doubled up her fists and started hitting my leg, saying "See??? Santa, I told you last night when I saw you the first time if you didn't write it down, you wouldn't remember!"

Playing Santa has its sad times, as well. "I've had children come up and ask me why they didn't get what they ask for. I've learned from that experience that I never tell kids they will get what they ask for. I just tell them Santa will do his best.

"And that's all anybody can do," he concluded.

APC Festival sets committees

The Attwater's Prairie Chicken Festival is scheduled for March 27 and 28 in downtown Eagle Lake. The 1998 Festival will be organized by a Steering Committee consisting of organizations who have pledged 100% support of the Festival and its activities.

The Steering Committee consists of:

Committee
Advertising
Booths
Sponsors/Grants
Media
Events
Auction

Chairman/Co-Chair
Bill Harrison Jr., Lynda Appelt
Becky Anderson
Lisa Rose
David Keith, Toni Jackson
Laura Myres, Tanya Wiese
Ernie Sommerlatte

Supporting Organization
Chamber of Commerce
Garden Club
Museum
Rotary Club & Rice Medical Center
Alpha Delta Phi
Xi Pi Psi

The Festival will open on Friday with booths, displays and a Street Dance on the square with music by Colorado, The Band.

All calls and questions regarding the event should be directed to the Chamber of Commerce or to the individuals on the appropriate festival committee.

County is one of first to implement property rights law

Colorado County Commissioners' Court labored through a routine agenda during its session Monday morning, Nov. 24.

The item creating a lengthy discussion stemmed from a law that went into effect Sept. 1 in regard to impact on private property rights.

According to the new law, if the Court makes any decision that could affect real property rights by as much as 25%, Commissioners would have to conduct a "takings impact assessment."

"The law was intended for municipalities due to annexation procedures, but they managed to get exempt and it hit us right on the head," said County Judge Vince Slominski. "The intent of the law was to help, but it could cost the taxpayers more money."

"It could force the County to have to hire outside counsel, as well as possible appraisers, and also publish public notices (in the local media) in regard to public hearings."

Precinct 1 Commissioner Richard Seifert presented the Court a list of categories that would not affect real property rights and they were unanimously adopted by the Court.

Among those were board appointees, budget items, lease or use of County property, bonds to protect the County, interlocal agreements, resolutions of support, awarding of bids and personnel issues. The Court will add to the list as it is warranted.

"I think the law had good intentions. Its intent was to protect property rights, but we will now have to hire people to determine if it will affect those property rights," said Seifert.

"It also could cause a delay in certain projects by as much as 30 days due to publication of a public hear-

ing," said Precinct 3 Commissioner Tommy Hahn.

"We don't do very many things to affect a person's property rights by 25%, but if that assessment is not done, we are in violation of the law," said Seifert.

Slominski pointed out, as an example, that widening a County road

could affect real property and have an impact on property values.

The Court had discussed impact assessments with Stan Reid of the Texas Association of Counties in a special session last Thursday and it was indicated that Colorado County would be among the first counties across the state to implement the new

agenda item.

In other business, the Court: Reappointed Leslie Heinsohn as the County's representative on the Colorado County Central Appraisal District board of directors;

Authorized payments in the amount of \$324,502.14 to Drymalla (See Commissioners, Page 10)

EAGLE LAKE POLICE REPORT

The Eagle Lake Police Department reported the following cases and calls for the week ending Monday, Nov. 24.

On Nov. 18, 1997, at 1:23 p.m., Officer Brian Ochoa was called to the Middle School in reference to a possible disturbance. Upon his arrival, Officer Ochoa was advised of the situation, but the problem was handled by the school.

At 4:29 p.m., Sgt. Jack Knox was dispatched to 801 S. McCarty in reference to a gas drive off. Sgt. Knox arrived, spoke with the clerk and filed a report.

At 8:22 p.m., Sgt. Knox was dispatched to Norris Street in reference to a disturbance. Sgt. Knox arrived and settled the verbal dispute between the parties. No other action was necessary.

On Nov. 19, at 8:23 p.m., Sgt. Knox was dispatched to W. State Street in reference to harassment. Sgt. Knox arrived in the area, but suspects never returned. No action was taken.

On Nov. 20 at 5:37 p.m., Officer Tim Crume was dispatched to the Middle School in reference to a juvenile disturbance. Officer Crume contacted the resource officer who hand-

led the matter.

On Nov. 21 at 3:45 p.m., Officer Crume was contacted at the police department in reference to disorderly conduct. A report was filed. The case is under investigation.

A bar check conducted by Officer Crume on Boothe Drive at 9:10 p.m., resulted in the arrest of Cleveland Hurd for public intoxication and resisting arrest. After processing at the police department, Hurd was transported to the county jail for confinement.

On Nov. 22 at 9:40 a.m., Officer Ochoa was dispatched to Raezer Street in reference to criminal mischief and criminal trespass. Information was gathered and a criminal trespass warning will be issued to the juvenile.

At 11:08 a.m., Officer Ochoa was advised of a gas drive off at 800 S. McCarty. Officer Ochoa gathered information and searched the area, but was unable to locate the vehicle.

At 7:28 p.m., Officer Crume was dispatched to Church Street in reference to a disturbance. Officer Crume arrived and talked with both subjects, who advised that they just had an argument. No offense occurred and no ac-

tion was necessary.

At 11:44 p.m., Officer Bill Lattimore was advised of a fight in progress on N. Lake. Upon his arrival, Officer Lattimore was unable to locate anyone fighting.

On Nov. 23, at 1:30 a.m., Officer Carl Risk received a call of a disturbance on Norris Street. Officer Risk arrived and spoke with the reportee and the victim and filed a report. The case is under investigation.

At 9:38 a.m., Officers Ochoa and Reserve Brian Baklik were dispatched to Keith Street in reference to criminal mischief to a vehicle. Information was gathered, and a report was submitted.

At 3:31 p.m., Sgt. Knox responded to a call on East D Street in reference to criminal trespass. Two criminal trespass warnings were issued to the suspect.

At 10:56 p.m., Officer Risk located a subject with an outstanding warrant. Michael Paul Rico was arrested, processed and transported to the county jail for confinement.

On Nov. 24, at 4:55 p.m., Sgt. Knox was contacted at the police department in reference to a juvenile problem. After speaking with the (See Police, Page 10)