

Go Texan photography entries needed

The Colorado County Go Texan Committee needs photography entries for the 1998 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. Entries must be 8x10 black and white or color with no frame or matte and must have a western or Texas theme.

Call Lynda Appelt at 409-234-5878 for entry forms or information. You may also pick up entry forms at Potter's Western Store in Columbus or the *Eagle Lake Headlight*. An individual may enter as many photographs as he or she wishes by the Dec. 31 deadline.

Eagle Lake Headlight

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A different point of view

Thomas James Pirtle, 5-year-old son of Sam and Cindy Pirtle of Eagle Lake, got a very different view of this year's Lighted Parade as he travelled the route with his dad in one of the Fire Department's trucks. (See Page 3 for more pictures and results.) *Headlight Photo by Jeannine Fearing*

Multi-agency raid nets drugs, auto, cash

Last Friday, Dec. 5, at approximately 11 p.m., a multi-agency drug raid took place in Eagle Lake. Narcotic agents with the 25th Judicial Task Force lead a team of officers from Eagle Lake and Colorado County in a drug raid that netted 43 rocks of crack cocaine valued at \$860, several hundred dollars in cash and a 1987 Cadillac. Two men were taken into

custody. The team was made up of Agents with the Task Force; Eagle Lake Police Chief Keith Webb and Officers Bill Lattimore, Timothy Crume and Tobin Thomas; and Colorado County Sheriff's Department Sgt. Troy Neisner and Deputies Craig Peikert, Skip Edman and David Furrh. Task Force agents began their in-

vestigation by working with the Eagle Lake Police Department who shared information and tips. Surveillance was set up at several locations including a house located in the 300 block of W. A Street in Eagle Lake. Additional surveillance, along with a search warrant, was used when the Team conducted their search. As a result of their efforts, Pur-

"Duck" Foster of Eagle Lake was arrested on a second degree felony, possession of a controlled substance. Johnny Main Johnson, also of Eagle Lake, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and was arrested on an outstanding "blue" warrant for violation of parole.

Task Force agents seized cash and the Cadillac.

The Eagle Lake Police Department reported the following additional calls and cases for the week ending Dec. 9.

Tuesday, Dec. 2, at 3:07 p.m., Janie Schwemm of Sportman's Restaurant came to the police department and reported that someone had stolen her bank deposit bag from her restaurant on Nov. 18.

An Eagle Lake citizen had located the bag in a ditch on the edge of town and returned it to the First National Bank. The bag still contained written checks to be deposited.

On Thursday, Dec. 4, Lt. Clem Johnson secured a written confession from a female suspect in the restaurant theft. The case is still under investigation, but charges will be filed on the suspect pending review by the county attorney.

At 7:28 p.m., Sgt. Jack. Knox was dispatched to Fairview Street in reference to unauthorized persons being on the premises. No one was located at that time.

At 9:19 p.m., Sgt. Knox provided a civil standby while a complainant re-

County Commissioners, Sheriff settle problem with comp time

Colorado County Commissioners adopted a change in policy during their regular session Monday. The change makes anything over 240 hours be compensated for an employee of the sheriff's department.

The current policy called for any department personnel who received over 480 hours as being compensated

"This should help us keep our comp time in check," said Sheriff R.H. "Curly" Wied.

"I think we need this for protection in the future. If (an employee) is allowed to accumulate (hours) to the maximum, it severely ties the hands of a new sheriff when they come into office," said Precinct 1 Commissioner Richard Seifert.

"This cuts (the County's) liability in half and also puts the deputies on the same level as other County employees."

The Court also honored Wied's request to use unspent monies of the salary and benefits of former Lt. Ron Holub, as well as other unfilled positions, to pay some 20 employees of his department for comp time previously accumulated. The amount to be paid is \$18,895.

According to Wied, this will leave the department with 650 hours of accumulated comp time.

"I think we need to make it understood that this is a one-time occurrence due to a change in policy," said Seifert. "This was strictly done to accommodate the new policy."

The Court also authorized the sheriff's department to seek bids on a new computer system, estimated at \$27,400, to be opened Jan. 12, 1998. The proposal will seek a file server and eight work stations with alternate bids, limiting the number of work stations.

In another matter involving the sheriff's office, the Court approved a contract with Gonzales County to house inmates in the Colorado County Detention Facility in Columbus at \$35 (See Commissioners, Page 8)

Filing underway for 1998 primaries

The filing period for Democratic and Republican candidates began Wednesday, Dec. 3, and will continue until 6 p.m. Friday, Jan. 2, 1998, for the general primary election scheduled for March 10, 1998.

A candidate for an office filled by voters of more than one county must file with the state party chairman, while a candidate for an office filled by voters of a single county must file

with that county's party chairman. George Cason of Eagle Lake is the Colorado County Democratic party chairman; Jean Ellis, Frelsburg, is the County Republican party chairman.

Local offices up for re-election and the incumbents include: County Judge Vince Slominski; County Clerk Darlene Hayek; County Treasurer Joyce Stancik; County Surveyor Leonard Frank; District Clerk Harvey

Vornsand; Pct. 1 Justice of Peace Dodie Dungen; Pct. 2 J.P. Ed Hanzelka Jr.; Pct. 1 J.P. Frances Truchard; Pct. 4 J.P. Mary Lou Szymanski; Pct. 2 Commissioner Johnny Elstner; and Pct. 4 Commissioner Leon "Sonny" Spanihel. Spanihel has announced he will not seek re-election.

"As a candidate or office holder, you alone, not the campaign treasurer, are responsible for filing the Designation of Campaign Treasurer as well as all candidate or officeholder reports of contributions, expenditures and loans," reported Hayek.

"Failing to file a report on time or filing an incomplete report may subject you to criminal or civil penalties," she added.

Hayek said if a person plans to run for a public office in Texas, excluding a federal office, the candidate must file a Designation of Campaign Treasurer form before accepting a campaign contribution or making or authorizing a campaign expenditure, including personal funds expenditures.

"A filing fee paid to a filing authority to qualify for a place on a ballot is a campaign expenditure that may not be made before filing this form," she stressed.

The county clerk is the appropriate local filing authority for a candidate for a county, precinct and district office (excluding a multi-county district office); and an office of a political subdivision other than a county if the political subdivision is within the boundaries of a single county and the governing body of the political subdivision has not been formed.

The Designation of Campaign Treasurer form must be filled out with Hayek, not a deputy in her office.

The Texas Ethics Commission is the appropriate filing authority for the Secretary of State and candidates or holders of the following offices: governor, Lt. governor, attorney general, (See Filings, Page 4)

\$100+K grant to support recovery of APC

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) was recently offered a grant totaling \$101,058 to support recovery efforts for the endangered Attwater's Prairie Chicken.

The matching grant uses funds from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation and a donation from Central Power & Light to the Parks & Wildlife Foundation of Texas.

The funding will support recovery efforts by TPWD, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Fossil Rim Wildlife Center, Texas A&M University and private landowners.

The Attwater's Prairie Chicken is the rarest bird in Texas.

Scientists believe the bird's population has declined in recent years due to shrinking habitat, poor habitat conditions and heavy rains during breeding seasons, which wet the birds' downy chicks causing illness and death.

Once numbering an estimated one million birds, the Attwater's Prairie Chicken has been disappearing along with its coastal prairie habitat.

However, captive breeding and reintroduction efforts carried out for the last three years have prevented almost certain extinction of the species and resulted in a population increase in the wild in 1997 for the first time in five years.

A 1997 census showed 58 wild birds remain, a 38% increase from an all-time low of 42 birds in 1996.

In 1993, biologists began breeding

Attwater's Prairie Chickens in captivity as insurance against extinction.

Captive populations now exist at four locations: Fossil Rim Wildlife Center near Waxahachie, Texas A&M University, San Antonio Zoo and the Houston Zoo.

Private ranchers and landowners are also working with state and federal scientists to restore the bird.

Earlier in this decade, TPWD biologists bought grazing leases on private land with chicken populations near the Attwater's Prairie Chicken Wildlife Refuge, worked with landowners to improve habitat and gradually reintroduce grazing.

Meanwhile, captive breeding efforts are paying off.

In late summer of 1996, biologists released 69 captive-reared Prairie Chickens on the Refuge and at a second site in Galveston.

Despite expected losses during an initial acclimation period (when the captive-reared birds are learning to deal with natural predators and food

sources) many birds released survived to interact with wild Prairie Chickens at the site.

Another 51 birds were released this past Sept.

Contributors to the Adopt-a-Prairie Chicken program get regular updates on what's happening at captive breeding sites, a photo and description of the bird's natural history, a packet of educational activities to use or donate to a school and opportunities to attend special lectures and trips at the Attwater's Prairie Chicken Wildlife Refuge and captive breeding facilities.

Anyone can sponsor a chick for \$25 per year.

All funds raised go to support efforts to raise birds in captivity in hopes of reintroducing them into the wild.

To contribute, send a check or money order to: Adopt-a-Prairie Chicken, Endangered Resources Branch, Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, 3000 S. 135, Suite 100, Austin, Texas 78704.

COLORADO COUNTY SHERIFF'S REPORT

The Colorado County Sheriff's Department reported the following cases during the past two weeks.

On Wednesday, Dec. 3, at 1 p.m.,

Deputy Mike Schleider responded to a call concerning a sexual assault in Rock Island. The case is pending.

At 2:52 p.m., Deputy Jason Pavlicek and Lt. Mike Schleider responded to a call concerning a disturbance in Rock Island. The complainant reported that the suspect did not threaten anyone. The case was closed; no offense at this time.

Thursday, Dec. 4, at 12 p.m., Lt. Schleider responded to a call concerning a theft on County Road 201. The complainant reported approximately \$1,000 worth of tin and lumber had been stolen.

Friday, Dec. 5, at 1 p.m., Deputies Skip Edman and Craig Peikert and Sgt. Troy Neisner responded to a call concerning an aggravated assault on Reichardt Lane. The case is pending, due to further investigation.

At 7:44 p.m., Deputy Doug Peterson responded to a call concerning a family violence assault in Vox Populi. One suspect was arrested.

Saturday, Dec. 6, at 12:59 a.m., Peterson responded to a call concerning family violence on County Road 194 in Altair. No arrest was made.

At 8:28 p.m., Deputy Peikert and Sgt. Neisner responded to a call concerning an attempted burglary of a (See Sheriff, Page 8)

Sheriff's Office initiates 'Deputy Santa' program

Colorado County Sheriff R.H. "Curly" Wied announced last Thursday, Dec. 4, that his department will sponsor the very first "Deputy Santa" program this year for Christmas.

In a press release, Wied said the Sheriff's Department is attempting to spread a little "Christmas cheer" to the less fortunate families of Colorado County.

Wied said his department will be collecting gifts to give to needy children, who, without their help, might have a less than cheerful holiday season.

He also stated that since this is the first year for the program and it's so close to Christmas, this year's recipients will be limited to children age 10 and under.

The Sheriff's Office will soon be contacting local and state authorities in an attempt to identify the families in the most need in the area.

Wied said he's hoping by next year, the "Deputy Santa" program will



No, that's not Santa, but one of his helpers from the Colorado County Sheriff's Office, Sheriff "Curly" Wied. *Photo Courtesy of the Banner Press*

be expanded.

Anyone wishing to donate items to the program may drop off the toys at the Colorado County Detention Center, 949 Hwy. 90 west in Columbus.

Wied said his office will be accepting toys through Dec. 20.

The Sheriff's Department plans to have all toys wrapped by the delivery date of Dec. 22.

Museum now open daily for visitors

The Prairie Edge Museum is now open for visitors every day, Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 2 to 5 p.m.

Donations for Fink family being accepted

Donations for the Patricia Fink family, whose home was a total loss in a fire on 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 is open this Saturday

The next sale at the Prairie Edge Museum Thrift Shop will be Saturday, Dec. 13, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The ladies remind you to come by and check out the bargains at the Thrift Shop for an easy way to do your Christmas shopping!

RMC Pink Ladies need volunteers

The Rice Medical Center Ladies Auxiliary (Pink Ladies) needs volunteers. You may talk to any Pink Lady or come by the Hospital auxiliary room for more information.

SBE seeking high school seniors to compete

San Bernard Electric Cooperative (SBE) is sponsoring a Safety Poster Scholarship Contest. The first place winner will receive a \$500 scholarship, second place a \$200 scholarship and third place a \$100 scholarship. To be eligible, you must be a high school senior for the school year of 1997-98. The deadline for this contest is Jan. 1998. All interested seniors may acquire detailed information and an entry form from your high school counselor or principal or at any SBE Inc office. To acquire by phone, please call the Bellville office, 1-800-364-3171 or 409-865-3171.

East Bernard EMS schedule blood drive

The East Bernard EMS will hold a blood drive on Sunday, Dec. 21, at the high school cafeteria on Fitzgerald from 7:30 to 1 p.m. Contact Fate Breedlove at 409-335-6174, Gloria Buxkemper at 335-7318 (platelets and plasma) or Betty Webb at The Blood Center, 1-888-GV-BLOOD, ext 234. Whole blood, plasma and platelets will be collected. All donors will receive a "Holiday Hero" t-shirt. The Blood Center will offer their 1998 calendar, "All Walks of Life", as an appreciation gift to all donors in Dec. The holiday season is a very 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.

Concert at First Baptist Church is Dec. 21

The children and grandchildren of Maxine and Bob Griffith, including Bob and Denise Griffith, will lead a concert of special music Sunday, Dec. 21, at 7 p.m. at First Baptist Church in Eagle Lake. The public is invited to attend.

American Legion still collecting toys, cash

Members of the American Legion Post #108 are still collecting new toys and cash with which to buy new toys for the distribution to children of needy families on Tuesday, Dec. 23. The toys will be distributed to parents or guardians of youngsters from infant through nine years of age from 9 a.m. to 12 noon at The Depot (former Santa Fe Depot) on E. Main Dec. 23 only. More toys are needed for the 200 plus children in need. If you can help, leave toys at Struss Auto Supply, B&B Grocery or Laker Printing before Dec. 23. If you want to have toys picked up, call Fred Frnka at 234-2065 or W.L. Bauer at 234-2478.

Would you attend non-denominational services?

Rev. J.V. Hamman B. Min. of Columbus is interested in holding non-denominational Full Gospel Church services in Eagle Lake. But, there has to be enough interest throughout the community for him to hold these services. If you are interested, call him a 409-732-9170.