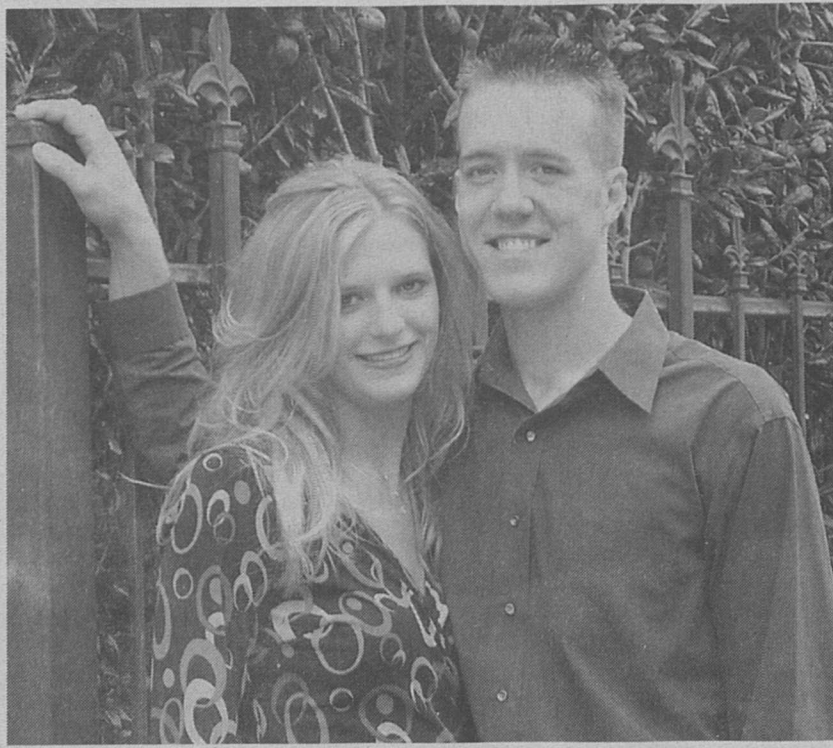




Smith, Smolik to wed

Benjamin and Sue Smith of Sheridan are pleased to announce the engagement of their daughter, Kimberly "Kimie" Suzanne, to Scott Anthony Smolik, son of David and Joyce Smolik of Hallettsville.

The bride-elect is employed as assistant general manager at Drury Hotels in Austin. She is the granddaughter of Earl and Marie Zimmermann of San Antonio, the late J. Orville Smith and the late Minnie Smith Spittler.

The prospective groom will graduate from Texas State University in San Marcos in May 2004 and is employed as a supervisor at Sam's Club in Austin. He is the grandson of Josephine Smolik of Hallettsville and the late John Smolik and Ella Sestak of Shiner and the late Joe Sestak.

The couple will be married Dec. 27 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Hallettsville.

Number nine in a series in remembrance of our World War II dead...

Remembering John Henry Stahl

By Joe C. Fling

Americans under the direction of Admiral Chester Nimitz opened the offensive that became known as the Central Pacific Campaign in the fall of 1943 with an assault on the tiny coral atoll known as Tarawa.

The campaign began with twin assaults on Tarawa and its companion island Makin on Nov. 20, 1943.

Although casualties among the U.S. Marines were heavy for such tiny specks of sand and coral (991 dead on Tarawa's 261 acres alone), the greatest loss in the attack was the loss of escort carrier *Liscome Bay*, part of Nimitz's supporting fleet.

Among the casualties of this sinking 60 years again this month, was John Henry Stahl of Rock Island.

Liscome Bay CVE-56, a *Casablanca* Class escort aircraft carrier, was built by Kaiser Ship Building Company, Vancouver and commissioned Aug. 7, 1943. Escort carriers were small, rapidly constructed support ships built as a stop-gap to fill the void left by the loss of four fleet carriers (*Lexington*, *Yorktown*, *Wasp* and *Hornet* were lost in May and Oct. 1942).

The *Liscome Bay* was 512 feet long (much smaller than the *Lexington's* 901 feet for example) and carried a comple-

ment of 916 men and 28 planes (to *Lexington's* 3373 men and 86 planes).

When *Liscome Bay* put to sea from Bremerton, Washington, in the fall of 1943, a Colorado County boy was aboard, Seaman Second Class John Henry Stahl. Stahl was the son of Lee Stahl and a resident of Rock Island.

He had attended Columbus High School but enlisted in the Navy in Feb. 1942, some four months before his scheduled graduation.

Nov. 10, 1943 *Liscome Bay* sailed from Pearl Harbor as the Escort Air Flagship of Rear Admiral Henry M. Mullinnix in support of operation "Galvanic," the invasion of Tarawa.

The last two letters that Stahl's family received from him were dated Nov. 12 and Nov. 21, even as the ship was engaged in the battle of Tarawa.

The American fleet put troops ashore Nov. 20. The Japanese put up stiff resistance, including air and submarine counter attack. Eight submarines (called "T" boats) were sent to do what damage they could to the American supporting vessels. The major damage turned out to be the sinking of the *Liscome Bay* on Nov. 24.

Japanese submarine I-175, commanded by Lt. Commander Sunao Tabata, had arrived off Makin Nov. 23.

He encountered a small task group built around Mullinnix's three escort carriers and the Battleship *New Mexico*.

Before dawn, *New Mexico's* radar showed surface contact with an unidentified target and all ships in the task group took evasive action. At 5:05 a.m., *Liscome Bay* went to General Quarters.

As the first light of day hit the sky at 5:13, a torpedo hit the *Liscome Bay* amidships. There resulted a terrible explosion, sending an orange flame a thousand feet high.

Within seconds, aircraft bombs stowed in the hold exploded and, with a mighty roar, the ship burst apart so violently that the deck of the *New Mexico*, 1500 yards away, was showered with fragments of steel, clothing and human remains.

Explosions raked the ship until she went down in 2000 fathoms of water only 23 minutes after the torpedo struck.

Admiral Mullinnix was lost along with 52 other officers and 591 enlisted men. Survivors of the explosions faced a spreading pool of oil. Only 273 men survived. The loss of a fleet admiral was a stunning blow to the Navy.

Dec. 7, 1943, Lee Stahl received a telegram reporting that John Henry was listing as missing. The news media had already reported the sinking of *Liscome Bay*, and the father was understandably apprehensive.

Lee Stahl, employed as a carpenter in Eagle Lake at the time, reported to the *Headlight* that when his son wanted to join the service in high school, he had at first refused to sign the papers permitting it, until his son's extreme dismissal disappointment caused him to relent. Now his son John was missing and his other son Elmer was in service in the Atlantic.

When the final death toll of *Liscome Bay* was tallied, John Henry Stahl was among the lost. His body never to be recovered.

Others surviving Stahl were three sisters: Marie Cooper of Rock Island,

Selma Stahl of El Campo and Emilee Newman of Yuba City, California; and one brother, Elmer Stahl who was then serving with the Navy in the Atlantic.

Stahl's mother had preceded him in death by over a year. Stahl is memorialized on the tablets of the Missing at the Honolulu Memorial in Hawaii.

So far as we know, no other stone marks his memory.

Another notable sailor lost on the *Liscome Bay* was Doris Miller, famed for winning the Navy Cross at Pearl Harbor. Dec. 7, 1941, Miller (played by Cuba Gooding Jr. in the recent movie *Pearl Harbor*), a mess attendant aboard the Battleship *West Virginia*, took over a gun that he was untrained on and shot down at least two Japanese Zeroes.

After serving aboard *Indianapolis*, Miller was still a galley attendant stationed aboard *Liscome Bay* when he met his own death, along with the captain of the ship, seaman Stahl and more than 600 of his shipmates.

In this war, the famous and mighty and the small and insignificant often shared honor and, too often, a watery grave.

Thousands of America's heroes lie at the bottom of the seas or in unmarked graves. We must remember them as well as the many who have fine marble and granite monuments and plaques to their honor. Their sacrifice is just as great and their memory just as important.

Historic characters to visit Columbus

Historic characters such as Sam Houston, Deliens Rose, Dilue Rose Harris, Ingrid Koerling and members of the Texas Shootists will visit Columbus during its Christmas on the Colorado celebration December 5-7.

Sam Houston has been called an American Giant, the Great Designer, Colossus in Buckskin, the Tallest Texan and the Empire Builder, and was

certainly one of the most colorful, influential men in the history of Texas and the United States. He is the only man in U. S. history to have been governor of two states.

Bob Welch, current president of Texana Living History (TLH), portrays Sam Houston on Saturday, Dec. 6, as a member of TLH re-enactors. Welch and his entire family are involved in

TLH as performers or campsite workers. His wife Barbara portrays spinner Ingrid Koerling, while his children Jane and Robby are active junior members who have performed at several events.

LaJuanna Faught, TLH re-enactor, portrays Deliens Rose, mother of Dilue Rose Harris. Faught has been a faithful TLH member for over 10 years and also does five extraordinary Texas ladies. Her first, and probably favorite, is Deliens Rose who tells her "teacup stories" about early Texas characters.

Barbara Welch is our German spinner and comes by her German language naturally as her mother was born in Rechlinghausen, Germany. Barbara took up spinning soon after husband Bob began performing with TLH. She soon learned about the German culture in Texas and began her studies to depict hardships these important Texas individuals suffered to come to Texas and learn a totally new culture.

Mary Lynn Skinner has portrayed Dilue Rose Harris many times for visitors to Columbus. Mary Lynn brings a familiarity to Harris that helps visitors feel the presence of this courageous

pioneer woman in the Dilue Rose Harris house museum.

The Texas Shootists, in their period costumes, will make young children stare with interest as they gather around the Alley Log Cabin and Antique Tool Museum.

Visitors can meet all of these characters at the Heritage Homes Tour, sponsored by the Columbus Historical Preservation Trust, on Saturday afternoon, Dec. 6, from 1:00-5:00.

Other festivities of the Christmas on the Colorado weekend include a Candlelight Christmas Homes Tour on Friday evening, Dec. 5, from 6-9.

Private homes which will be open are the 1887 Ilse-Rau House, 1100 Bowie Street; 1882 Simpson-Williamson-Rankin House, 630 Milam, hospitality house with wassail and cookies available; 1861/88 Merlaine, 236 Preston; Steiner-Hastedt Home, 1336 Milam; and 1885 Smahlik-Haluska Home, 1503 Milam.

The 1867 Senftenberg-Brandon House Museum, 616 Walnut, will be decorated in authentic 1900 holiday style including an early 1900's toy ex-

(See Columbus, Page 6)

A NEW ARRIVAL



Dylan Botero Farris

Rich and Carolina Farris of Houston have announced the birth of their second child, a son, Dylan Botero Farris.

He arrived October 23, 2003 at Southwest Memorial-Hermann Hospital at 12:52 p.m. weighing seven pounds, 14 ounces and measuring 20-1/2 inches.

Dylan's big sister, Nicole, age five, is very excited about her new brother.

Also enjoying her excitement are maternal grandparents, Rodrigo and Beatriz Botero of Calli, Colombia, S.A., paternal grandparents, William and Helyn Farris of Eagle Lake, and great-great grandmother, Evia Hobbs, a resident of River Oaks in Columbus.

Dylan is the first male grandchild for the Boteros and first male grand-

child with the Farris surname for Bill and Helyn.



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Continued from Page 2

mother of Mrs. J.T. (Iris) Danklefs of Garwood...

Mr. & Mrs. Steven Urbin of Glidden announced the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Michelle Marie, to Gary George Kulhanek, son of Mr. & Mrs. Joe A. Kulhanek of Columbus. The wedding is set for Dec. 15 at St. Wenceslaus Catholic Church in Houston...

Miss Terese Alene Gold of Nada and Steven Aaron Faas of Edna exchanged vows Oct. 27 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Nada.

Nov. 10, 1955

W.A. Schneider, partner in the Schneider Ware Company, says people will be able to view the gigantic display of \$200,000 worth of International Harvester trucks, tractors, and farm and industrial equipment...

Misses Mary Ann Korenek, Lillian Swoboda, Bernita Gold, Mary Ann Popp and Rita Frnka will be competing for the title of Harvest Queen at the Nada KJT Hall...

Bubba Sparks, son of Mr. & Mrs. E.M. Sparks, was honored on his seventh birthday, Nov. 3rd, with a party...

Graveside services were held for Mrs. Carrie M. Sledge in the chapel of the Freeport Funeral Home. Inter-

ment was in the Lakeside Cemetery...

Judge Rutta and Commissioners Albert Hahn, A.J. Kainer and A.J. Aschenback attended the convention of the County Judge and Commissioners Association of Texas in Austin...

Mr. & Mrs. Alfred Marx hosted a surprise birthday party for Alfred Marx Jr. on his 12th birthday...

Funeral services were held for James Burns at the Second Baptist Church in Alice. Interment was in the Alice Fraternal Cemetery...

Mr. & Mrs. Billy Joe Williams are proud of a son born November 8 and they named him Jerald Dale...

Graveside services were held for William Thomas Garnett Sr. at the Porter-Loring Funeral Home; interment was in the Myrtle Cemetery...

Miss Grace Jeanette Campbell, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. M.F. Campbell of Eagle Lake, is to wed Erwin Clowe, son of Mr. & Mrs. Virgil Clowe, on Nov. 26...

Ruby Lee Perry, daughter of Mrs. John H. Perry of Lissie, has been named as the Gallardian, nominee of the Alpha Chi Society...

Mrs. R.T. Westmoreland attended installation of Dr. Barnaby C. Keeney as president of the Brown University.

Highlights

Continued from Page 2

following the recent economic slowdown," said Diane Rath, commission chair.

Thanksgiving debate continues...

Massachusetts claims the honor, as does El Paso, of having hosted North America's first Thanksgiving feast. Now, according to the Texas Department of Transportation's Travel Division, Palo Duro Canyon also figures in the debate.

On May 23, 1541, historians say, Spanish explorer Francisco Vazquez de Coronado attended a feast put on by a group of friendly Teya Indians in the big canyon south of the future location of Amarillo. That, they assert, was a celebration of Thanksgiving.

No matter where the first Thanksgiving was celebrated, it is irrefutable

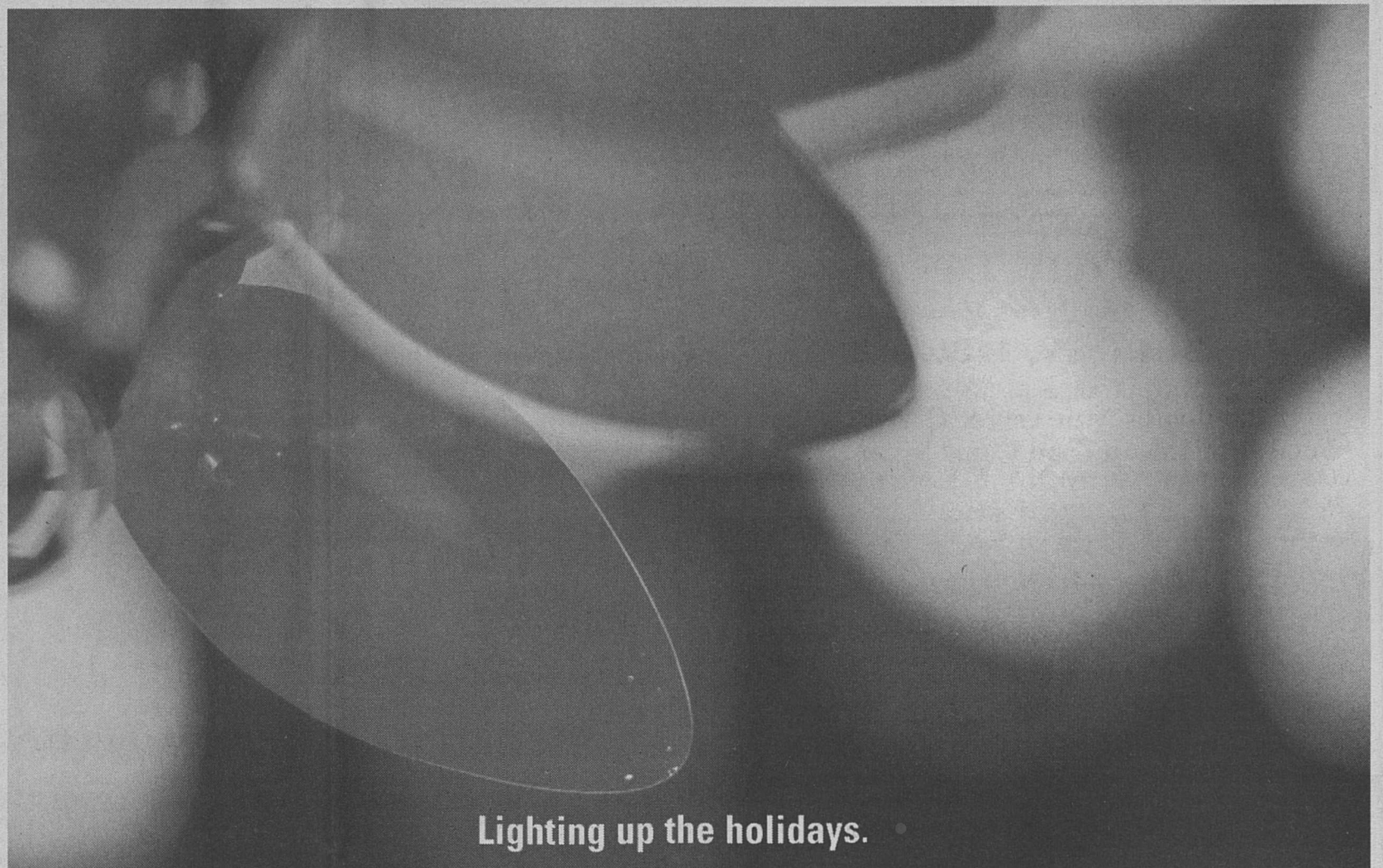
that Texas was the first southern state to call for a formal day of Thanksgiving.

Influenza 'widespread' across state
The Texas Department of Health classified last week's flu activity in Texas as "widespread," the fifth consecutive week for the highest classification.

The agency still is urging people to get a flu shot and to take other precautions against the highly contagious respiratory illness.

TDH reports that most of the influenza in Texas has been caused by type A of the influenza virus. This season's vaccine is formulated to protect against the A/Panama, A/New Caledonia and B/Hong Kong strains of the influenza virus and against other similar strains.

5:35 p.m. Thursday



Lighting up the holidays.

As you begin using decorative lighting in and around your home this holiday season, AEP reminds you to keep safety in mind. Check light strings for frayed cords, and use only UL-approved lights and extension cords. Remember not to overload circuits, and remind children not to touch lights or outlets. And on behalf of all of us here at AEP, please enjoy a safe, bright holiday season with your family and friends. **AEP is there, always working for you.**

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Happy Anniversary

Love, Daegen & Noah

Happy Birthday, Dad!

