Churches around the Highland Lakes held a variety of Christmas celebrations; the cantata at Kingsland Community Church is pictured above, and others can be seen on page 7. The celebrations continue next week, and almost every church in the area will hold some kind of special service on the Christmas weekend. You can see many more Christmas photos on the "Highland Lakes Weekly" Facebook page all this month.
The Christmas season is in full swing, and there are some fabulous lighting displays all around the Highland Lakes. Our informal "top four" would be: The Walkway of Lights in Marble Falls, Starr Stary Night in Llano, Wallace Riddell Park in Burnet and Christmas by the Highway in Granite Shoals, but the town squares in Dripping Springs and Llano are spectacular as well as those many great displays at private homes and neighborhoods—most notably the home of Charles Hunger in Burnet (106 Fox Circle, near the Delaware Springs Golf Course). He is collecting nonperishable food items for the Llano food bank, so bring some along when you visit.

The Llano County Community Theatre in Cottendorf will host two showings of "The Nutcracker" on Saturday, December 17. The showings will be at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday and 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 18.

The Highland Lakes United Methodist Church choir performs Part 2 of the Christmas cantata "Winter's Grace" on Sunday, December 18. The service begins at 11:00 a.m.

The choir at First Baptist Church in Bertram will present A Night of the Father's Love on 6 p.m. on Sunday, December 18.

The Llano Library will host a showing of the movie "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" with special appearances by Santa, Mrs. Claus and the Grinch at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 22.

Almost every church around the Highland Lakes will hold some kind of special Christmas Eve service. Several of the services are advertised in this paper. Two of the most unique are: Christmas Eve Eve services hosted by First Baptist Church in Marble Falls on December 23 (see ad on page 12) and a Christmas Eve service with live nativity at Main Street Baptist Church in Burnet at 6 p.m. on Saturday, December 24.

On New Year's Eve, kids are invited to the Llano Library for a "Kids Rockin' New Year's Eve Bash," from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. New Year's balloons drop at NOON.

On New Year's Eve, there will be a party at The Place Downtown in Kingsland across from the post office. Jasa Lake State Park will host its annual "First Day Hike" on New Year's Day. Hikers should gather by 10 a.m. at the trailhead adjacent to the park headquarters.

By JOHN HALLIDAY
Photo of the Week

While I think my favorite part of the “A King is Born” program at Smoking for Jesus Ministry last Sunday evening was the rendition of “Mary, Did You Know?” by Joshua Brown and Zyanarae Johnson (not pictured), my favorite photo from that evening was this picture of three girls in the choir. You can find a whole lot more pictures from that wonderful event on the “Highland Lakes Weekly” Facebook page.

Scatterthought

I won’t pretend that everything went according to plan this past week, but fewering the third-hardest weekend of my year, after Aqua Room and the Bluebonnet Festival I still managed to get a whole lot more pictures than I could fit in one week’s paper. That, coupled with the fact that there won’t be nearly so many public events this coming weekend, means that I’m going to hold back some of this week’s pictures for a special feature next week. I’ll get back to doing history articles and such after Christmas (when my business generally slows down a little).

I have a policy of avoiding bad news in this paper, but I do want to mention a benefit for a friend who had some bad news lately. Jay Pellicone, a popular busis of Fuel Coffee House and a remarkable good actor at the Live Theatre Company, has been diagnosed with a very rare form of bone cancer. He is seeking treatment at M.D. Anderson in Houston, and his friends in Llano are trying to help any way they can. There will be a fundraiser at Fuel on Monday evening, and everyone is invited. You may be able to find more details on the “Fuel Coffee House” Facebook page by the time you read this (more as of press time). One thing that is on their Facebook page is a Christmas Day community meal, with homemade tamales, rice and beans and a variety of desserts. Fuel will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. (serving online all day) and will start serving food about noon. Everyone is invited.

Two days earlier, there will be a free Christmas Lunch at Mason’s Marble Falls (St. Frederick Baptist Church, on Avenue N). That will be open to all from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday, December 23.

If early rains would like to help, they will still be accepting donations of green beans, canned tomatoes, potatoes, fruit and even cash through Friday (December 16) at the Church Kiosk.

I’ve been really pleased to see so many efforts around the Highland Lakes to help those less fortunate among us. In Kingsland there have been several events to benefit Sharron the Harvest, a local food bank (the Lions-Turkey Trot and the Jingle Mingle both raised hundreds of dollars); and the Salvation Army, the Kingsland MDA and the Llano County Sheriff’s Department have all been collecting around town for various local charities. All the other towns have similar good things happening.

Something else that I was really pleased with was the news that I just had a winning raffle ticket for a ride in the Commemorative Air Force’s C-47 Skytrain “Blackcomb Belle,” and I found a dozen other winners, got the ride on Sunday afternoon. It was quite an adventure to fly, navigate and land over Lake Buchanan, but the aging plexiglass windows (and the wing right next to my seat) made it hard to get any good pictures. I didn’t have room to fly around any this week anyway, but I put some pictures on Facebook (along with hundreds of Christmas pictures that didn’t make the paper). If you’re ever on Facebook, be sure to check out the “Highland Lakes Weekly” page.

The downside to that ride is that Sunday ended up being another 1-hour day—never work hard, but I’m not out always “at work.” I seem to need some extra sleep every now and then, and Sunday is usually when I get it. I was really tired when the weekend was finally over.

That’s probably the busiest I’ll be for the next two months, so I guess I deserve it. I hope you aren’t finding too many mistakes in this week’s paper, and I hope you’ll have a great week!
Kingsland Lions Club members John McWilliams, Jim Chapman and Ron Hall were ringing the bell for the Salvation Army at the Kingsland post office on Wednesday morning, while other “Lions” collected donations at different businesses around town.

Volunteers from the Granite Shoals Christmas Outreach took some time on Wednesday evening to “shop” for local children on their list from the mountains of donated toys at Grace United Methodist Church.

Ron and Kristi Poole (at center) hosted a group of employees and their families from Kingsland and Austin for a Christmas party at the Kingsland Community Park. They own three businesses in Kingsland (Clean Channel Driveway, Premier Leather Restoration and Ron’s Tire & Battery) plus a tire store in Austin. Ron is the new president of the Kingsland/Kicks Lake Chamber of Commerce.

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Above: Cub Scouts and adult leaders sang Christmas carols for residents at Kingsland Hills Care Center on Monday. At left, Volunteer firefighters in Kingsland collected funds on Saturday for their annual Toy Drive, providing gifts for kids who might otherwise have gone without this Christmas.

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Remember Pearl Harbor
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Post 10376 (and Auxiliary) in Marble Falls held a Pearl Harbor memorial
service of their own on Saturday morning.

These festively-garbed members of Buchanan Arts & Crafts treated a
steady stream of guests to some fine art and delicious refreshments
during their Christmas Bazaar and Bake Sale last Saturday.

Volunteer firefighters welcomed a crowd of Cottonwood Shores children
to “Christmas for Kids” at the fire hall last Saturday night. After having
tickets taken with Santa, children were able to choose gifts, take a
hayride and enjoy tasty treats.

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Christmas around the Lakes

The First Baptist Church of Marble Falls gave an excellent presentation of Handel's "Messiah" last Friday and Saturday.

The choir at Chapel of the Hills in Buchanan Dam told the story of Christ's birth in "Joy, Unspeakable Joy!" on Sunday morning.

Students from Smoking for Jesus Ministry's Christian School in Hoover Valley presented "Birth of A King" last Sunday evening.

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Kids of all ages had a wonderful time at Llano's amazing "Snow Day," sliding and playing in trucked-in snow for one whole afternoon last Saturday.

Artists and enthusiasts gathered for a party at the Llano Fine Arts gallery last Thursday night to kick off the weekend's successful Bazaar, held there on Friday and Saturday.

Keeping Bethlehem safe, Main Street Bethlehem security personnel and Burnet police officers gathered for a photo as a crowd began to gather an hour before the popular dramatization of life in ancient Bethlehem began last Friday evening. From left, Clayton Smith, Larry Landa, Lance Desanco, Brandon Bertelson, Haylee Smith, Matt Inrie, Steve Vollmar and Myron Hall. The group worked together to direct traffic and avoid any trouble inside Bethlehem or outside in the long waiting lines.
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Tyler Smith was one of the musicians who provided live entertainment in front of the Burnet County courthouse last Saturday for Burnet’s “Christmas on the Square.”

Above: The Jason Roberts Band delighted the crowd at Bertram’s Globe Theatre in a special Holiday Show last Saturday night. At left: Three young musicians displayed their considerable talents with original compositions and arrangements of Nunnoos Coffee Roasters in Marble Falls last Friday evening. They are: Ocean Fillingim, Jeffrey Boyd and Anne Everett.

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Thank you for reading the Highland Lakes Weekly!
Visitors streamed into the Trenz boutique on Main Street in Marble Falls last Friday evening for a special photo exhibit called “A Slice of Marble Life,” from a group of Austin photographers who toured Marble Falls earlier this year.

The new “Galleries at Pecan Creek,” in Old Oak Square on Main Street in Marble Falls, held an Open House last Friday evening. It is owned by Debbie and David Heatley.

Charles Watson gave a fascinating talk on the history of Granite Mountain at the opening of a new display at the Falls on the Colorado Museum in Marble Falls last Saturday.

Downtown Marble Falls was filled with booths and vendors with interesting wares for Main Street Market Day last Saturday.

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