The manger scene from Burnet’s wonderful “Main Street Bethlehem” was once again the best (and most popular) representation of the Christmas story in the Highland Lakes area, but there was a multitude of other celebrations. Some of them are pictured in this week’s paper, which is a sort of “Christmas card” to all our readers; you can see many, many more Christmas photos on the “Highland Lakes Weekly” Facebook page. There will not be a paper published next week; see you next year!

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men”
Luke 2:14
MERRY CHRISTMAS!
From all of us here at Lighthouse Country Club

STAY & PLAY
Golf Packages
One night, two rounds of golf: $149.95* per person
*Double Occupancy; does not include taxes and surcharges
Two nights, three rounds of golf: $199.95* per person

Concrete pads with 35/50 amp electrical hookups, sewer, water, laundry facility, showers and bathrooms. Daily, weekly, and monthly rates available.

In addition to hundreds of decorated homes and businesses, there are beautiful light displays in several towns around the lakes. From top: Marble Falls, Burnet, Llano and Granite Shoals have probably the best public displays; each will continue until year’s end.
Scatterthought

Since I still can’t afford Christmas cards for everyone (and because I won’t be publishing a paper next week), I’m using this week’s paper as a substitute card, and wishing all my readers a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

I believe something I heard on the Internet last week, and wrote that there would be a community Christmas dinner at the Red Barn in Buchanan Dam. From what I’ve heard since then, I think that was wrong. I know that Joel and Rose Depree, who had done most of the work for the past fourteen years, announced their resignation last year. I don’t think anyone has been found to take their place; I haven’t seen the usual flyers put up around town, and I’ve heard third-hand from someone who is probably right that there is not a Christmas dinner this year.

There are probably other dinners planned somewhere around the Highland Lakes, but I have not heard of them. A dinner planned at the VFW Hall in Burnet for 1 p.m. on Christmas Eve for active duty personnel, veterans and immediate family members. To RSVP or learn more, call or text 512-966-8786.

Speaking of Christmas dinners, I read somewhere that a researcher claims that “eating a salad every day could help keep your brain young.” I’m very sorry to say that I have conclusively disproved that theory; in fact, the many salads I have eaten did nothing at all to help my brain, which decided several years ago that it was too old to work full-time any longer.

That’s one reason why I decided to take a “staycation” next week; I think a break from my regular duties would be beneficial to my health. The other reason is that I think I may be able to get my Kingdoms history book done if I take a week (when there’s not a whole lot of public events going on anyway) and focus completely on the long-overdue book.

So I won’t be covering the Christmas Eve events (and probably not many of the New Year’s Eve events). This week’s paper will be almost completely Christmas pictures, and the January 5 paper will probably have a lot of construction pictures instead of my usual community event photos.

I did manage to finally finish my series of history articles from 1917 Llano. I had no idea it would take this long, but I timed the last installment (Christmas in Llano 100 years ago) pretty well. You’ll see that article on page 6.

I don’t usually cover events in Brady, but Tracy Pitcox (who does such a good job with the Llano Country Opry, and has such a loyal following in the Highland Lakes area) asked me to mention that there will be a New Year’s Celebration on Saturday, December 30 and Sunday, December 31, at the Brady Civic Center in Brady. Tickets are on sale at www.heartoftheascentcountry.com.

Faith Academy is proud to announce that a cornerstone lead gift from Ray and Rebecca Britton of Horseshoe Bay will make possible the construction of a new athletics complex.

The three-phase expansion, which will span Faith Academy’s rural campus east of Marble Falls, is estimated to cost $5.9M. It will include a football field, track, softball field, baseball field, gymnasium, tennis courts, and additional parking. According to Nunnelly, they expect to break ground on the football field, track, and additional parking area in early 2018, and their goal is to be completed with all three phases of the athletics complex within 12-18 months. Faith Academy also plans to construct a new elementary building by 2021.

I remember when Faith Academy was still in the planning stages, and a few of the organizers held a “press conference” (maybe 2001?), I wished them well, and gave them some positive publicity, but I wondered about their chances of success. A few years later, my youngest daughter was going to school there; in the years since then I’ve seen one improvement after another, and heard all kinds of success stories. I am impressed!

That’s probably all I have space for right now, so I’ll sign off. Have a Merry Christmas; I’ll be back next year!

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MERRY CHRISTMAS & Happy New Year!
(and a big “Thank You!” to all of our loyal customers and friends)
Above: A Christmas Open House at the First State Bank of Central Texas in Kingsland last Friday included visits from two long-time (but now retired) employees. From left: Carrie Young, Randa Schreiber, Shannon Ziese, Peggy Whitt and Jan Seaear.

At Right: 2nd-Grade teacher Cynthia Tripp won First Prize in the Door-Decorating contest held at the new Kingsland School last week.

Some of the staff members at Lake Life Realty in Kingsland gathered for this picture on Monday with a collection of bicycles they purchased as Christmas gifts for area children recommended by counselors at Pecos Elementary School.
Christmas 1917 in Llano

By JOHN HALLLOWELL

Christmas (or Xmas) was a big deal in 1917 Llano, but the front pages of The Llano News were still dominated by news from the war. Headlines on December 13 announced "Wilson Proclaims War on Austria" and "Germans Prepare for Big Drive in West." A little closer to home, a drive was announced to sign up 2,000 new Red Cross volunteers, and Llano was planning a "Big Mass Meeting" at the opera house to recruit "a large number" of local volunteers. All meetings were planned at eight other locations around the county (Castell, Valley Spring, Oatman School House, Field Crossing, and Bay Head, Tom Valley, Oxford and Lorne Grove).

A letter of thanks was received by the Llano Red Cross chapter, from "the boys overseas." Local chapter chairwoman E. S. (Field) Barron, paid for by the Artillery at Camp Travis, had just received their "Xmas packages." They were: W.G. Alexander, of Tow; William Smith, of Llano; A.O. Hardin, of Kingsland; and W.F. Bowser, of Llano.

The Culture Club announced that its presentation of "The Womanless Wedding" at the opera house "is one of the most delightful and altogether pleasing entertainments ever given in Llano." It had been a success, attracting a capacity crowd (despite "most disagreeable" weather) and netting $25.00, all of which would be spent on wool for "the making of knit garments for the soldier boys."

The Llano County Commissioners Court was considering the possibility of re-flooring the "river bridge," and the City of Llano was installing "Another Closer." A sign on Sandstone Street near the home of J.T. Simpson, Ransom & McMillin decided the public "My Merry Christmas." And advertised "Toys of Every Description," they had dolls, buggies and furniture, "Christmas books, mechanical toys, air guns, cap pistols, water pistols, footballs, "baseball balls," "garners," etc., plus Columbia Graffola and Columbia Records, jewelry, clothing and accessories for women and men.


The Acme Dry Goods Co., "Llano's Best Store," advertised "Practical Christmas Gifts" for "Xmas Shoppers." Wilbur T. C. Treadwell, advised, "Will there be a Victoria or Graffola in your house Christmas?" He wished everyone a "very, very merry Christmas," and offered "all the latest records in Victor and Columbia."

The banner headline on December 20 said "Be Sure and Join the Red Cross." People were called on to enlist. "A story below noted that the drive had already netted 712 "Christmas Members" and $566 in donations, "with enthusiasm growing." Workers Auto Sales reported that they had "received and delivered" 18 more Ford, mostly to citizens of Llano. In a related item, Miss Louise Pfeiffer "sought a red or a black arm" while "cranking a Ford car."

Quannell Copeland purchased his interest in his former partner, T.A. Earle, and became the sole owner of the Llano Garage. Emil Pehl, who had recently returned to Llano from San Antonio, bought a blacksmith shop from T. Cowley.

An item titled "Xmas Eve Dance" reported that there would be dance at the Don Carlos Hotel "on the night before Christmas."

On page 2, the "Weekly War News Digest" (from the Committee on Public Information) was accompanied by another "Altar of Freedom ad & Byfield, plus generic ads from B.R. Miller Vaulcanizing at Llano Bauch Co., Llano National Bank, Rockwell Bros, & Co Lumber, and turkey buyer Ed Mclaren, for L. Frank.

Classified ads on page 3 (a well-built, 7-room house with two porches, a good well and a windmill, on six lots just north of the Don Carlos Hotel, was listed for sale at $2,250 or for rent at $15 a month) were accompanied by another large Christmas ad from Corner Drug Store and a medium-sized ad from Watkins Auto Sales Company asking, "Is Your Car Out of Adjustment?"

Local news and letters to the editor shared a broader Christmas ad from jeweler D.L. Carl and a smaller announcement of a "Special Christmas Dinner" (including "Xmas pudding a la Don Carlos") for dinner just 75 cents at the Hotel Don Carlos dining room.

Ransom & McMillin took all of page 3 and "in Christmas spirit" Company advertised reduced clothing prices in "Three Big Special Sales" — Friday, Saturday and Monday on page 6. Other ads on page 6 were from T.S. Parker (Repainted Trucks), Delton the Tailor (Suits from $15 to $27.50), J.J. Fry (Furs Wanted) and Miles Battery (Undertaker and Embalmer).


A few news items and classified ads were sandwiched between two gun ads on the back page. Large Christmas ads from Acme Dry Goods and Wilbur C. Treadwell, Christmas was obviously a big business opportunity in Llano a century ago.

A small announcement noted that there would be "no paper next week," as "the force will take the time off to en- joy Christmas." Apparently, that was custom long established in this office, the Highland Lakes Weekly plans to adopt that "custom" this year, and there will be no H.L.W. on December 29.

Thank you for reading the Highland Lakes Weekly!
Marble Falls’ First Baptist Church presented “The Best Christmas Play Ever,” based on the book by Barbara Robinson, in three wonderful shows last weekend. The Hodeman family (Aria Stubblefield, Charis Stubblefield, Tess Chandler, Reese Barnard, Lilly Coleman and Reese Barnard, pictured at right) are “the worst kids in the history of the world,” but a miracle occurs when they take over the annual Christmas pageant at the local church. It was a funny, moving and heart-warming experience.
Christmas may not always be a unanimous choice for "the most wonderful time of the year" in the Highland Lakes area (Spring, Summer and Fall have some very positive points of their own), but there ARE some amazing events around the lakes every Christmas season. Above: Llano’s “Starry Starry Nights” lighting display, on the north side of the Llano River, is not quite as big as the Walkway of Lights in Marble Falls, but it is a spectacular attraction in its own right (and it’s easy to photograph). At night: Camels, donkeys and sheep assist costumed volunteers in creating an authentic-looking town in Burnet’s wonderful “Main Street Bethlehem” each year, and thousands of guests enjoyed the live presentation the first two weekends of December.

At lower right: These angels were part of Harmony School of Creative Arts’ excellent production of the Nutcracker ballet this year. Studio 29 Dance Centre in Burnet and Wildflower Dance Studio in Llano did their own versions of the traditional Christmas show.

Below, right: Volunteers, including firefighters and Aqua Boom beauty queens made this year’s Kingsland Christmas event a big success.

From left: Jalynn Clark, Robert Barnett, Michael “Q-Ball” Aponte, Amber Dyess and Ciara Hays, volunteering at the Kingsland Community Center for Kingsland Christmas.
The Wildflower Dance Studio presented another very impressive rendition of The Nutcracker last weekend at Llano High School, with two shows on Saturday and another on Sunday afternoon. Felicia Patterson (Sugar Plum Faerie), Tristan Villings (The Nutcracker), Lilly Cooper (Clara) and Gillian Fletcher (Snow Queen) were among the stars in a well-rounded cast.

Come Celebrate Christmas with us!

Share the warmth of comfort and joy!

Make Christmas meaningful for your loved ones by being part of our Candlelight Christmas Celebration.

May your family be richly blessed this Christmas!

Pet of the Week

Hill Country Humane Society would like to introduce you to Owen, a Lacy mix who weighs about 41 pounds and is about 2-years old. Owen is a very sweet boy who came to us as a stray and really needs a home full of love and affection. Owen is very friendly and is good with other dogs and cats, too. He likes to go for walks and is good on a leash. He deserves a home where he can be spoiled and be treated like a king. To meet Owen, please call us at 512-793-3463. We are open Thursday through Monday from 11am to 4pm. You can see all our wonderful animals at www.HillCountryHumaneSociety.org.

SUN, DEC. 24th
5:30pm
“Family Friendly” Community Christmas Eve Service

Silent Night by Candlelight

Highway 29 @ Buchanan Dam
512.793.2453
hillcountrychapel.com
The gymnasium at Bertram Elementary School was filled to capacity as 3rd, 4th and 5th-Graders presented a good-humored Christmas Program called “A Party in a Pear Tree” on Tuesday evening. The program was loosely based on the well-known song, “Twelve Days of Christmas.”
Runners, including eventual winner Alex Castelan (at left), got off to an enthusiastic start at the Marble Falls High School Band Boosters’ “Reindeer Run” 5K, held on the cross-country trail behind the tennis courts on Manzano Mile last Saturday morning.

The runners at last Saturday’s Reindeer Run 5K were followed (at a more leisurely pace) by groups of cheerful walkers who also wanted to support the Marble Falls High School Band. All the participants were issued a set of “reindeer antlers,” but most apparently chose not to wear them on the course!

Rev. Donna Shaw (wearing reindeer antlers) presided over Weakday Ministries’ Holiday Trio event last Saturday, which featured a chili cook-off, a pie contest and old-fashioned caroling at the First United Methodist Church in Burnet. A good crowd attended the festivities, and a few of them braved the rain to sing carols at neighboring homes.

The First Baptist Church of Granite Shoals hosted a multi-church Christmas program and Cantata on Sunday evening.
Left: “Diva Dawgs” and “Bulldog Bros” (and a few friends) gathered at the BCISD’s Parent Resource Center before fanning out around Burnet to sing Christmas carols last Sunday evening.

Right: Dr. Robert Sawyer continued his recent tradition with beautiful Christmas decorations at his dental office in Kingsland.

Above: Volunteers from Granite Shoals Christmas Outreach gathered last Saturday morning at Grace United Methodist Church to distribute the hundreds of gifts that had been donated by the community.

Left: Elevate Church will repeat its new tradition by taking “trainloads” of gifts to lower-income neighborhoods in Granite Shoals on Christmas Day.

Area history buffs gathered at the Llano County Historical Museum in Llano on Tuesday evening for the museum’s Christmas Open House.

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Music around the Lakes

The Heart of Texas Orchestra serenaded the audience at Marble Falls First Baptist’s “Best Christmas Play Ever” with great Christmas music during the intermission at last Friday’s performance.

Texas Crossing, featuring husband-and-wife duo Colt Buckelor and Tiffany Valentine, brought their “old-fashioned country music with a modern twist” to the stage at Brass Hall in Marble Falls last Friday night.

“Bubba and the Boys” (Andy Lewis, Bubba Clark and Bob Helms) made their final public appearance as a group at the Trailblazer Grille in Burnet last Saturday evening, attracting a capacity crowd to the restaurant (and popular music venue) on the square. The group has been playing its classic country music in the Burnet area for many years.

Deb’s Doggy Bath and Boarding House would like to say THANK YOU! and MERRY CHRISTMAS! to their valued customers (3007 W. RR 1431) next to Crazy Gals Cafe Open 8-5 Mon - Fri • 325-388-0147

Chapman Docks

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325.388.6545
The high school band (pictured above and below) and the 6th-grade band attracted a capacity audience to the at Burnet High School auditorium for their excellent Christmas Concert (and a cake auction fundraiser) on Sunday afternoon.

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At the corner of Highways 29 and 1431 in Buchanan Dam

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**Christmas Eve**

At **Elevate**

20 17

5pm and 6:15pm @ 307 Buena Vista Dr.

www.ChristmasinMarbleFalls.com

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