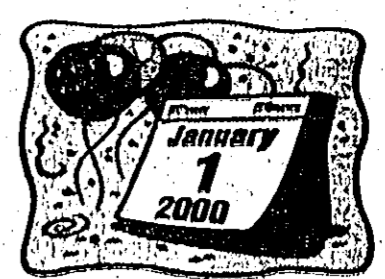




# HOOORRA

For The New Year



Panola County, Texas

# The Panola Watchman

Volume 126, Number 105 Sunday, January 2, 2000 1 Section, 16 Pages 50¢

## Attic fire destroys residence

By Sherry Koonce  
THE PANOLA WATCHMAN

An fire that appears to have started from burning coal embers Wednesday completely destroyed a home that had been in one family for several generations, but no injuries were reported.

According to Community-Four Volunteer Fire Department member Joe Harris, the home's owner, J.C. Beatty and his elderly grandmother, were able to escape the flames which totally engulfed and destroyed the frame home.

Apparently, said Harris, Beatty had raked the coals out of the fireplace to let them cool. In doing so, sparks from the embers made their way up and caught the attic on fire. "He said when he looked up, the board behind the brick on the fireplace was smoking and the whole attic was on fire," Harris noted.

The family was able to salvage a few clothes, before the home became totally engulfed.

Inter-Community VFD members were called to the fire first, and requested the assistance of Community-Four members.

Earlier in the week, on Tuesday, Carthage firefighters were called to a house fire on County Road 407, in the Antloch Community, where a chimney had caught fire.

Occurring at approximately 7:30 p.m., the fire was quickly extinguished and no injuries were reported.



Patrick Smith introduces his new bride, Priscilla, to his 100-year-old great-grandmother and asks for her sage advice on marriage. Mama Lula has been dispensing her brand of wisdom for over a century and is looking forward to continuing her duties as family matriarch.

## Calloway's long life spans three adventurous centuries

By Sherry Koonce  
THE PANOLA WATCHMAN

With both feet firmly planted in the last two centuries, Lula Calloway has a bright eye on the next 100 years that begins today for the 100-year-old lady.

With the dawning of the year 2000, she has done what few people can boast — lived in three different centuries.

Born in 1899, she barely squeaked into the nineteenth century and has lived every year of the 20th to its fullest, those who know her well say.

Lula's long life began in Louisiana 100 years ago, where she was raised an only child by her parents Sallie Mae Sims and Andrew Simmons.

Although several other children were born to the young couple, only Lula survived infancy.

Today, it is with pride that she recalls not having to work in the fields like so many others in her early life just to put food on the table.

Unlike most people of her day, Lula's father owned a general store which provided many opportunities outside the backbreaking work associated with harvesting crops.

He also worked for a lumber company which afforded opportunities for the young family to travel.

But it was her father's desire for a son that most left a lasting impression and shaped her long life

for years to come.

"Dad hunted and taught me how to hunt and shoot when I was only seven," she said. "He taught me not to take anything off of anyone — taught me to be tough."

During her long life, Lula has learned to be as tough as she needs to be, but has also has another, softer, side that evidenced at an early age.

"My Daddy had to fire me from the store because I was giving everything away to the hungry children," she remembered.

But even though her livelihood was different from many, like most young women of her day, Lula married young.

And, unlike most young ladies of her day, Lula married often, perhaps a testament to the independent spirit her father instilled in her.

In all, Lula married six times beginning with her first wedding at the tender age of 13.

It was a simple ceremony, she recalled, "I wore a plaid gingham dress for my first wedding."

By age 14, she had a baby. In the coming year's family history would repeat itself. Not only her first child, but several born after, would not live past infancy.

She stayed with her first husband for two years, before standing her ground and moving on to another phase of her life.

Likewise, for the next 24 years, Lula married and moved on. Her wedding dresses were as different as her many husbands.

From the first girlish gingham dress to a coat suit and even an elegant gown made from voile material, Lula's wedding dresses reflected the many changes in her life.

It would not be until 1948, and five husbands later, that she finally met her match.

Lula and her sixth husband, Andrew Calloway, set up housekeeping in the small rural community known as Shady Grove Gary.

In those days, couples did not

“I was a bootlegger, but I was my own best customer,”  
LULA CALLOWAY

From her mother, Lula learned the art of making feather light pastries which to this day are the delight of her many friends and relatives.

"She is a dynamite cook, always has been," said her granddaughter Consuella Smith.

Complimenting her own mother, Lula recalled how mother's pastries were so in demand that she could practically name her price and often commanded top wages for the delicacies.

JAN 2 2000



Beckville Boosters selling fireworks this week warned customers to use extreme caution because of fire danger.

## Local grass, woods fires threatening community

By Sherry Koonce  
THE PANOLA WATCHMAN

Continued dry weather patterns combined with high winds and colder temperatures has contributed to a rash of grass and woods fires in the county, prompting the city of Carthage to reinstate its burn ban.

And on Monday, Panola County commissioners will consider reinstatement of its moratorium on all outdoor burning until the fire danger has decreased.

According to Panola County Commissioner Joe Harris, most all rural fire departments have been busy this week combating pasture and woods fires.

On County Road 326, Sonny Gull lost between 40-45 acres of pastureland and almost lost his entire hay crop and stand of pine trees.

"The flames licked 10-feet from getting into Mr. Gull's Plantation Pines. If it had not been for Basil Gibbs, who was beating the fire out with a pinetop, the trees probably would have been lost," Harris noted.

The fire started, said Harris, when winds picked up and a brush fire very quickly got out of control.

Recent high winds have been blamed for fires all over the county and often fool people who believe they can burn their trash safely.

"These winds will pick-up so fast. People will start burning when there is no wind and without warning, the wind will pick up, causing the fire to get out of control," he said.

Community-Four Fire Department, of which Harris is a member,

## Pitts case agreement decided

By Elaine P. McPherson  
THE PANOLA WATCHMAN

Beckville ISD's long running legal battles with former elementary school teacher, Doris Pitts have been settled, but both the district and Pitts have declined to divulge how much the agreement will cost taxpayers.

On Tuesday, BISD board members met in closed session to discuss the case and according to their attorney have reached a settlement agreement.

But in terms of how much money it will cost to settle the matter for once and for all it seems nobody is will to talk.

Jay Youngblood, the district's attorney stated, "Per the agreement, the case was resolved to all the parties satisfaction. That's all that I can say."

The Panola Watchman also contacted Pitts, who referred all calls to her attorney, Tim Garrigan.

Superintendent of Beckville Schools John Booth was out of town and could not be found to comment on the settlement.

Garrigan was also out of town for the rest of the week and could not be reached for comment.

Originally, the attorneys met last Friday to reach a settlement on the case but could not come to an agreement.

Although everyone seems to be mum, the settlement is most probably somewhere between the \$1.3 million originally awarded Pitts by a Tyler jury and the \$283,000 figure that was reduced by Judge Hannah.

In September, a jury awarded Pitts \$1.3 million for retaliation from Beckville ISD. In early October, U.S. District Judge John Hannah reduced the award to

## Smith's retirement from medicine leads 1999 spring headlines

May through August news recapped in year end review

*(Editor's Note: This is the second in a three-part series reviewing major Panola County events over the last year. Today's article covers January, February, March and April, 1999. Watch the next two issues of The Panola Watchman for more.)*

May

Three methamphetamine labs were discovered by members of the Northeast Texas Narcotics Task Force.

The labs were capable of producing more than \$90,000 worth of the illegal drug each month.

A 28-year-old female, 38-year-old male, 34-year-old male, and a 32-year-old female were arrested on drug charges.

Carthage High School DECA

students honored their employers at an awards luncheon.

Named as Employers of the Year were Mike Williams of Brookshire Brothers and Tommie Ritter Smith of the Panola County Chamber of Commerce.

In observance of National Child Abuse Prevention Month, a candlelight vigil was held on the courthouse lawn.

Judge Cordray said that the service had the best crowd yet.

After presenting some harrowing statistics, guest speaker, Freddy Mason urged those in attendance to not be silent any longer and get involved at the grass roots level to help eradicate child abuse.

New school board members were elected to seats in area

schools.

Those elected for new terms were: Beckville, Calvin Whiddon, John Hudson, Don Harris; Gary, Mike Stutes, Rodney Hammers, Donnie Shrell; and Elysian Fields, Lisa Thomas, George Hickey, David Calhoun.

Dr. W.C. Smith, 79, retires from practice after 50 years of medicine.

Several local doctors spoke, of how Dr. Smith had helped them and the county through rough spots in their lives.

Union Pacific Resources weathered the oil and gas price storm to show a profit in the first quarter of 1999.

Net income for the first quarter of \$175 million on revenues of \$415 million.

Panola County peace officers gathered to pay tribute to fellow officers who lost their lives in the line of duty.

A new memorial marker with the inscription of the four officers slain in the line of duty since 1960 was unveiled.

Gary ISD named their valedictorian and salutatorian for the 1998-99 year.

Valedictorian Shelby Porter is the daughter of Ronnie and Donna Porter and the granddaughter of Nellie Porter and Clarence Otterman of Shelbyville.

Salutatorian was named as Heather Pierce.

Texas Utilities under went a name change from Texas Utilities Company to TXU.

Another name changed was TU Electric/Lone Star Gas to TXU.

Electric & Gas.

Carthage ISD board considered student uniform policy which was taken under advisement for possible future consideration.

Also mandated was the use of clear back packs for safety considerations.

Property values in general went down due to a downturn in petroleum markets.

The decline was markets as almost nine percent for county taxpayers.

Elysian Fields honor grads were named for the year.

Valedictorian Juliet Williams is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Williams, and she had a 96.4 grade point average.

See END OF YEAR, page A2.

MAMA LULA

Continued from page one.

take honeymoon trips like they do today, she recalled. "With all of my husbands, I never had a honeymoon. We would just get married, I would cook supper, we'd eat supper and then go to bed," Lula noted.

Honeymoon or not, Mr. Calloway did something more of the others had. He not only provided a home for his new bride, he also gave her something she had missed through the years — children, lots of children.

When the couple married, Lula took over management of the large household which included some of his 11 children who were still at home and even some grandchildren.

"From that point on, I became Mama Lula," she recalled. Through the years, she earned the respect of her new family and the love of her new husband's many children.

"Legally, she was everybody's stepmother, but from the love she gave us, she earned the right to be called Mom," said Consuelia.

Of Mr. Calloway, Lula still has his picture hanging on the wall and fondly remembers her thoughts when they first met.

"He was a little, ole, bitty, low man," she recalled. Although short in stature, Lula recalled how much he liked to eat her cooking.

"He liked just about whatever I cooked. My favorites was dressing, dumplings, greens, fried chicken," Lula recalled of the many meals she prepared for the Calloway family.

"Most of the fish she prepared were caught on her own line. I loved fishing — wish I was down at the creek today," she said of her favorite pastime.

"Aside from being one of the best cooks in the area and one of the most successful anglers, Mama Lula earned another reputation through the years.

Whether she came by it honestly or dishonestly, Mama Lula is known far and wide as the lady with the moonshine.

"I was a bootlegger, but I was my best customer," she candidly stated of her many years spent supplying liquor to anyone with the money to purchase her husband's homemade brew.

It was only 12 years ago that she retired from selling booze, she said, but that did not stop people from coming to visit the little house on Shady Lane Drive.

"People have always been drawn to Mama Lula. Whether they were coming to share a drink with her, or coming to play dominoes or just visit, her house has always been full," noted Consuelia.

Through the years, Mama Lula has worked hard, but witnessed many changes in the way household tasks are accomplished.

"When I was young, we would wash our clothes on a rub board down by the spring. We made our own clothes and they were better than any storebought clothes," she noted.

Other changes over the years were not always for the better, she said. "I always kept my kids in line. They know I would whip them if they didn't mind me. They boys kept them in line all these years."

The respect Mama Lula commanded from her children still stands today. "She can still whip any one of us and we all know it," said Consuelia.

As she looks into the future, Mama Lula is conscious of other changes in her life. "I remember when I first married Mr. Calloway and came to Panola County, it was so much colder in the winter. Back then there was a lot of snow and sleet."

Christmas has changed over the years too, she said. "When I was young, we were lucky to get one little doll and some fruit. We would go to our neighbors and play with that same doll all year and be thankful to have it."

But while other things have changed, marking the passing of time, one thing has remained constant in her long life — Mama Lula has remained true to her father's teachings her entire life.

"Oh, we all know her personality is like an outlaw and outlaw and nobody is going to push her around. She does the pushing in this family, and we are just glad to just get back and ride as the lady with the moonshine."

Of her own long life, spanning three centuries, now, Mama Lula simply reflected, "I've had a good life so far."

END OF YEAR

Continued from page one.

Salvatorian Collin Jones, whose grade point average was 96.3, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Elijah L. Jones.

Carthage Improvements Corporation purchased property that provided expansion of museum exhibits currently in the Panola County Chamber of Commerce.

Top students of Carthage High School were named for the 1999 school year.

Valdicatorian was James White, of Gary, and salutatorian was Rachel Parks, of Carthage.

Favorite teachers of the two were Stan Davis, Ruby Mangrove, Bud Worley, and Pat Murry.

49th Panola County Cattlemen's Rodeo ran for three nights featuring professional rodeo competition in all standard events.

1999 PCCA Rodeo Queen was named as Paige Parker with Layne Wilddon and Abra Soupe as runners up.

The rodeo was moved from hot and humid July days to cooler May days.

Panola County audit received a clean review with no exceptions. Auditing firm of Robinson & Williams credited the county's auditor Sidney Burns and his staff for the reason the books were in such good shape.

Bockville highest graduates were named for the 1998-99 school year.

Honors went to valdicatorian, Clint Weaver, and salutatorian, Travis Wilcox.

Weaver is the son of Kirk and Rene Weaver and the grandson of Phillip and Alice Weaver and Ray and Wynna Jones.

Wilcox is the son of Lloyd and Theresa Wilcox of Beckville and Debra Tieg of Gillette, Wyoming.

Attorneys for a Logan Community unit who is accused of fatally shooting two of his neighbors indicted an insanity plea will most probably be raised.

The case was specially for Oct. 4 by 123rd District Court Judge Guy Griffin, who allowed the extra time so court-appointed attorney Rick McPherson could offer psychological testing for his client.

Ernest Michael Gillispie, 27, of Carthage was taken custody in Rusk County to face charges of intoxication manslaughter in connection with the death of a Panola County wife and mother who was killed near Tatum in a two-vehicle head-on collision.

A former rodeo clown and bull-fighter who was residing in Carthage in the mid-1990's was sentenced to a 10-year prison term for purchasing sexual favors from two Carthage teenage brothers whom he had befriended while teaching them the ropes of the rodeo circuit.

Terrill Wayne Thomas, of Liberty County, appeared in Panola County where he entered a guilty plea to sexual assault, a second degree felony.

State Senator Drew Nixon (R-Carthage) responded with disdain to criticisms made by the state's Republican party leader. The state chairman noted her hope last week that Nixon would not consider running again in the year 2000.

Local teachers were glad to see a \$3.8 billion education bill, signed into law by Texas Governor George W. Bush.

In the May 1995 case of Jane Doe v. Santa Fe ISD, Federal Court Judge "Samuel" Kent placed restrictions on voluntary, student-initiated prayer at graduation ceremonies and athletic events.

The judge ruled that prayer was permissible only with restrictions on the prayer content.

On February 26, 1999, a three-judge panel of the 5th Circuit of Appeals agreed with Judge Kent's ruling, but went further by banning prayer at high school football games.

BECKVILLE COURTNEYS WORK, PLAY AS ALL-STAR ATHLETIC FAMILY

By Elaine P. McPherson THE PANOLA WATCHMAN

In high school, another Smith introduced the oldest Courtney child.

Denits Smith, who is now the ladies basketball coach at Panola College, is well remembered by Shane.

"He taught me a lot. He's the reason I enjoyed football in high school," Shane stated.

Denits Smith said that some kids stand out in your mind after coaching so many years and that Shane is one of them.

"He was the hardest worker that I ever coached. He set a good precedent for his brothers to follow. He had a lot of athletic ability and went on to kick for Kilgore College," he added.

Denits Smith also attributed Shane's success to his parents. Smith stated, "His parents were and still are big boosters and a great family of athletes."

Shane graduated high school with numerous athletic awards — all district three years, all Cypress Valley, and all East Texas.

Chance, 22, played football and baseball for Beckville as well. His most memorable game was when, in his junior year, he totaled 18 tackles in the Hawkins game.

Also remembered by Donna was when Shane was senior catcher and Chance was a freshman pitcher.

In the Gilmer tournament, the pitching went south. Chance was brought in and threw two dirt balls and then hit the batter. The batter would not take the base, Shane walked out to the pitching mound to talk to his younger brother.

Donna said Shane was laughing, and it was a priceless sight to see them out there together.

Donna related that Chance's favorite coach was Robert Wilson. "He was a fine man, and he was tough too," she said.

Chance was named leading tackle his senior year and played linebacker on defense and center on offense.

Chad, 21, also played both football and baseball for Beckville. Chad's most memorable games happened during his senior year.

Donna said, "Beckville beat Blyssian Fields 35-20 at Beckville. Chad had over 100 yards that game. Another time, Chad, my uncle, was the fastest guy in the district." Donna added that he got his speed from running from his older brothers.

Chad's favorite coach was Tommy Hood. Coach Hood, who is now athletic director in Whitney, Texas, near Waco, stated, "I remember Chad. He was a joy to coach, always hyper, and had great speed. He was a very coachable young man. It's easy on coaches when the kids do what you ask and learn from you."

Hood also commented on how supportive the Courtney parents were. "It all comes from your mom and dad. Those are some good folks," Hood concluded.

Cody, a senior, played football this year and plans to play baseball and track.

Cody has several good memories about his athletic career at Beckville.

This year Beckville defeated Harleton 54-7. Cody ran a 50 yard touchdown run on a sweep. "That game I realized what our team could do," said Cody.

Cody was named as an all state football player this year.

He also remembers being undefeated his 7th grade year and his senior Ore City game when his helmet was ripped off by a Ore City boy.

Cody likes all his coaches, but has special feelings for Coach Ken Little, athletic director and head football coach.

SPREADING TO OTHER PARTS OF THE PIPELINE SYSTEM

Panola County received the last of its big lease payments from ETMC-Carthage recently and are planning to pay off a note for renovations to the facility made prior to its lease to the Tyler-based health care organization.

Hospital Administrator Gary Hudson presented a \$633,300 check to County Judge John Cordry.

According to Cordry, approximately \$350,000 from the lease payment will be added to monies already in the interest and sinking fund to pay off bonds left owing from the \$4 million 1991 hospital expansion project.

Inmates from Henderson's Bradshaw Unit became a welcome sight at the city's recycling center, where a mountain of newspaper, cardboard and plastic milk containers proved to be more than a part-time staff could handle.

The inmates agreed to volunteer their time to help pull the center out of dire straits since recyclable materials were piling up faster than the part-time crew from the John Logan Workshop could sort through them.

A former Carthage ISD student and her family have received \$260,000 in total payments from CISD and Panola College after all parties involved agreed to settle two lawsuits out of court.

CISD's portion of the settlement was \$30,000 while the college paid out \$180,000.

The student, Janet Coughlin, along with her mother and step-father, Nora K. and Steve Conroy, and the two schools, reached the settlement agreement.

A near-capacity crowd gathered to honor area agriculture and those who make a living working the fertile lands of Panola County.

During the 15th Annual 1999 Agriculture and Forestry Appreciation Banquet, Minnie Lou Bagley was named USDA Producer of the Year.

Carthage's oldest bank merged with the oldest bank in Center and underwent a name change.

Now known as Farmers State Bank, former customers for Carthage's First National Bank were expected to benefit from the merger.

More than \$200,000 wrapped in bundles that were laced with chili peppers proved to be too hot to handle Saturday when a Chicago couple denied ownership of the large cash haul discovered hidden inside their car.

While on the money side of the road this time around, the recent drug bust netted close to a quarter of a million dollars for use in the fight against crime while the suspected drug dealers were sent home empty handed.

A \$1,000 worth of fireworks was stolen from a local stand.

The thieves took about 39 separate items from Emma's Fireworks stand on the Carthage Loop.

According to Emma, the theft could not have come at a worse time.

Sporting kills and woolen knoo socks, a troop of Scottish lads and lassies braved 90-degree temperatures during their Fourth of July march to Panola County's Camp Parle.

Fresh from Scotland, where the Emerald Isle country's weather is a balmy 60-70 degrees during summer months, the troop of 13 boys and three girls invailed across the ocean to the United States for their long-awaited trip to the East Texas boy scout camp.

A Beckville pipeline explosion set the sky aglow and brought 911 call from witnesses as far away as Longview and Silverport. Though significant in scope, rattling homes for miles around, no one was injured in the blast.

Larry Pierce, a spokesman for the National Gas Pipeline Company of America, owner of the pipeline, said that all the automatic valves and safety features worked properly and prevented the fire from

SPREADING TO OTHER PARTS OF THE PIPELINE SYSTEM

throughout the state, in an effort to help families with school-aged children cope with getting ready for school. Since local taxes were included in the "tax holiday," Panola Countians were able to see an automatic savings of more than eight percent. Many local stores featured sales in connection with the tax holiday.

By Elaine P. McPherson THE PANOLA WATCHMAN

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CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

prevalent August 23 as Panola College board members unveiled a budget balanced without raising the amount of revenue required from local taxpayers.

Several county residents had pleaded with the board at earlier public hearings, to change their minds about increasing the budget and local taxes.

Sales of bottled water were booming at local stores this week. From Carthage customers who noticed something fishy at their faucets. Much of the city's drinking water supply was plagued with a foul odor and taste. Though safe to drink, the unpleasant smell and taste prompted city workers to allow access to the city's well water supply, something they haven't resorted to in 15-20 years.

Parents of students attending Carthage schools were asked to dig deeper into their pockets each school day to help shore up a long-running deficit at the school's cafeterias. Lunch prices increased by 25 cents for the 1999-2000 school year.

Clear book bags, which were selling out faster than local retailers could keep them in stock, were available at the Carthage High School DECA store in time for school.

Panola County Commissioners raised tax rates by almost four cents to meet an increase in the county budget. This year's tax rate was calculated at 39.26 cents per \$100 of property valuation, an increase of 3.37 cents. The \$9.5 million county budget proposed earlier by the commissioners, is an increase over last year's budget of \$9.1 million.

Following a public hearing, Carthage City Commissioners adopted an \$8.8 million budget that will not require an increase in taxes.

Parents came out in force the first weekend of August to take advantage of the first "tax holiday" on school clothes. Texas congressmen set aside the first weekend of August each year as a tax-free clothes shopping period.

The case came to trial with a jury panel finding that Pitts had not been the victim of retaliation, but not of discrimination.

The jury found that because she had not received a recommendation letter while in the earlier trial, the evidence established retaliation.

Pitts then accused her former employer of discriminatory practices and alleged that she had been retaliated against.

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CONCERNS OF THE PEOPLE

prevalent August 23 as Panola College board members unveiled a budget balanced without raising the amount of revenue required from local taxpayers.

Several county residents had pleaded with the board at earlier public hearings, to change their minds about increasing the budget and local taxes.

Sales of bottled water were booming at local stores this week. From Carthage customers who noticed something fishy at their faucets. Much of the city's drinking water supply was plagued with a foul odor and taste. Though safe to drink, the unpleasant smell and taste prompted city workers to allow access to the city's well water supply, something they haven't resorted to in 15-20 years.

Parents of students attending Carthage schools were asked to dig deeper into their pockets each school day to help shore up a long-running deficit at the school's cafeterias. Lunch prices increased by 25 cents for the 1999-2000 school year.

Clear book bags, which were selling out faster than local retailers could keep them in stock, were available at the Carthage High School DECA store in time for school.

Panola County Commissioners raised tax rates by almost four cents to meet an increase in the county budget. This year's tax rate was calculated at 39.26 cents per \$100 of property valuation, an increase of 3.37 cents. The \$9.5 million county budget proposed earlier by the commissioners, is an increase over last year's budget of \$9.1 million.

Following a public hearing, Carthage City Commissioners adopted an \$8.8 million budget that will not require an increase in taxes.

Parents came out in force the first weekend of August to take advantage of the first "tax holiday" on school clothes. Texas congressmen set aside the first weekend of August each year as a tax-free clothes shopping period.

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