

North of the Creaux's Nest

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IT'S ALL ABOUT THE WEATHER

This is our first column of the year 2010. The big news this week will be the worst winter blast in years. On Jan. 12, 1997, we were turned into an ice bowl with the great ice storm. This is not expected but there may be a few wet snowflakes and probably it will be colder than in 1997. Eighteen degrees will just about kill any plants in the yard. Covering them probably won't save them. Three days of freezing will break exposed pipes. Business will be good for plumbers because some people will not heed the warning. Cats or short haired dogs will probably die if they can't find a warmer place to hide. I remember in the 1970s it got as low as 14 degrees here and the place really looked ugly and dead. I hope the bitter cold doesn't hurt the Orange County citrus trees. Word from Dr. Amber Dunn in Cleveland is that two feet of snow and the worst winter blast in years has moved in. Makes our cold sound minor. Don't take it lightly it will be bad. Come along, it won't do you no harm.

RECALLING BILL MADDIX

Bill died Jan. 2 in San Antonio. He was 71. We first met Bill around 1970 when he was a young editor at the Port Arthur News. Later he worked for the Lamar University system. Bill then went into the political consultant business. He was politically savvy and had great connections. He was very close to Gov. Ann Richards and Sen. Lloyd Bentsen but was also wired into many other political connections. Years ago, he and Harold Beeson wrote a book "Rags and Patches" about a boy and his dog. Those two guys were a riot to be around. I understand Bill had written another book. Bill wasn't only a smart guy, he was a great guy. He died of bone cancer after a long illness. He was married to the former Christine Stanfield, J.D.'s daughter, of Orange. The couple has one daughter, Bill had two daughters from a previous marriage. Services were held Tuesday in Van, Texas. Please see obit.

BALANCE OF POWER FOR NEXT DECADE

The die has been cast; filing deadlines for candidates ended Monday. The first elections of the new decade will set the political tone both in Texas and the balance of power in congress. Ten million more people will become Texans this decade. The state's two-year budget is projected to grow from \$182 billion to \$241 billion. Most importantly, the next legislative session will deal with redrawing legislative and congressional boundaries. No issue is more important to Orange County and many rural counties. Texas is expected to pick up four seats in congress, with population growth coming from Democratic leaning states. Democratic power in the Texas House will grow. Republican's hold only a two-vote majority in the Texas house will change and this will influence the direction of statewide redistricting. The 2010 election will impact Texans' lives for years because they will be drawing a road map and also a redistricting map. Since the Tom DeLay, Rick Perry redistricting maneuver in 2001, Texas has had the highest insurance rates in the nation and has not expanded health care. This election will be the beginning of a new Texas. Minorities will become a majority. If they step up to the plate and participate in government the tide will change. Education will be a major factor. Under Gov. Perry, we are fifth in 50 states in the percentage of adults who have high school diplomas. Mayor Bill White, Democratic candidate for governor, has made public education his primary issue. Republican U.S. Sen. Kay Bailey candidate for governor also sites education, which has dropped drastically under Perry, as her major issue. School dropout rate in Texas is one of the highest in the nation. Hutchison or White, will be the change Texans are longing for. As for us in Southeast Texas, we look forward to the day when our representatives and state senators come from our own people. Redistricting should again make Orange County whole in one state house seat. Our leaders, county and municipalities should get on the band-wagon early to see that we have local representation. I may not be here to see it with you but many of you will see a new Texas when the decade ends, a Texas that is the greatest state in the nation.

TURNING BACK THE HANDS OF TIME

60 Years Ago-1949

Sheriff Chester Holts arrested Paul J. LaFleur in a small town in Tennessee at Christmas time. A dropped bus ticket was the clue that led Holts to the small town. Holts posed as an insurance salesman to make the capture. The ticket was found several miles from the rape site of a young girl and shooting of a young man that had taken place Dec. 3. The arrest of LaFleur and filing of charges was reported to be one of the most outstanding law enforcement jobs ever in these parts. LaFleur was a transit and no one had a clue who did the crime until Holts arrested him. District Judge F.W. Hustmyre set LaFleur's rape trial for Jan. 9. Also four other cases of assault with intent to murder and three cases of robbery were scheduled for trial Feb. 6. Orange Policeman

Alton Williams joined Holts in Tennessee where the two officers transferred LaFleur to Orange County. (Editor's note: Sheriff Holts, after 21 years in office, left with no unsolved major crimes. His daughter Nova Strickland has written a book "Bug Scuffle, Are We There Yet?" now available, depicting the life and times of Orange County when Holts was sheriff.

35 Years Ago-1975

Laverne and Hal Ridley threw one heck of a great New Year's Eve party. Phyllis and Roy Dunn were special guest celebrating their 20th wedding anniversary. (Editor's note: Roy and Phyl, on this New Year's Eve, celebrated their 55th. Most of the people who attended their 20th anniversary are now gone. Roy is now in bed long before the ball falls. The guys back then fired their shotguns to welcome the New Year. *****Wilson Roberts is Bridge City police chief. ***Leslie Jones is Orange police chief. ***Luther Seabrem is county auditor. ***Orange city manager is Louis Fox. ***Bill Townes is manager of Kroger. ***Marlin Thompson and Martin Dies III are law partners. ***Grover Halliburton is county judge. ***Clara Edwards, of Bridge City Bank, presented Arthur Farris with the first prize award in the bank's Christmas tree decorating contest. ***Allene Yokum, singer, is now selling her newest release "Jimmy's Love" for \$1.19 including postage from Orange Recording Co., Rt. 4, Box 375. ***Carl Thibodeaux says if things ever get tough – the way you make ends meet is by living on beef tongue and oxtail soup.

30 Years Ago-1980

Vickie Curtis, who for the last eight years has been the cartoonist and creator of the Opportunity Valley News "Office Hound" logo, wed Frank Brown on New Year's Eve. Vickie is completing her art degree at the University of Texas after transferring from Lamar. Vickie was once offered a job by cartoonist Al Capp. (Editor's note: Vickie and Frank are still married 30 years later and for most of those years have lived in Lawrence, Kan. Frank has been a college professor. We haven't heard from our friend in several years. She is the daughter of Betty and Earl Drake.)*****Diana, Brooks, Angie and Jim Hill joined Orangeites Louis, Beth, Reagan, Evin and Clay Dugas on the slopes of Winter Park, Colo. Also joining them were Nan, Nancy and Frank Fincham, Romey Jones, Kelly Fort, Houston Baker, Shawn Fuller and Sam and Lauren Leifeste.*****Frank Riddick is Dupont plant manager. Assistant manager is Bill Sprout.*****The Houston Chronicle chose five Bridge City players for their area 9-3A All-District Team." They include Russell Gauthier, Bryan Ward, Greg Koci, Shannon Foreman and Bucky Thompson.*****The No. 1 top 10 country song is "Happy Birthday Darlin'" by Conway Twitty.*****The Couvillion boys Mark, Keith, Craig, Steve and Ken were all prominent high school football players during the 1970s. Happy New Year. Welcome to the 1980s.

A FEW HAPPENINGS

Donnie Harmon, with his wife and two daughters, drove 3,500 miles over the holidays. They made several stops at points of interest along the way to reach their final New York destination. At the midnight dropping of the ball, through a chance of luck, they found themselves in the frozen zone reserved for special guest. They were at the foot of the ball looking straight up. The Harmons all agree they would do it all again.*****Last week, we missed the death of one of the nicest ladies we have ever known. Joyce McGraw, 54, passed away Dec. 26. Joyce was a teller at Bridge City Bank. She was so compassionate and always sincerely concerned about customers and their families. To know her was to love her. This religious lady exemplified goodness. Our condolences to husband Bruce, daughter Beth, her family, friends and brothers and sisters in the First Church of the Nazarene. She will be truly missed.*****Special friends celebrating birthdays this week are our buddy for over a half-century Skipper Free on Jan. 6.***On Jan. 8th Lanston Fall, former Bridge City and Lamar football star, will celebrate his special day. He was a member of Coach Chief Wilson's last season at Bridge City in 1973. It was a great team and a good bunch of youngsters. Happy birthday Lanston.*** Our young friend and a great guy, Collin Slade Gros, "Billy Jack" turns 15 on Jan. 10. It seems just the other day he was 2 years old and known as "Blue Eyed Bill." This kid will do to ride the range with.***Our former editor Darryl Brinson and wife Greta's son Sean Brinson celebrates this week. We haven't heard from the Brinsons in several months. I know they will drop us a line. Happy birthday Sean.***On Jan. 12 the late Shane Dronett would be marking his 39th birthday. His mother Candice Henry truly misses him everyday. The autopsy on Shane showed he had multiple scar tissue on his brain. Pro football and the blows to the head have caused many to have dementia or brain damage. We will always remember Shane as a boy growing up in Bridge City. *****The family of Judge Marlin Shelton personally requested that Constable Mark Philpott escort the judge's body and lead the funeral procession. Philpott is a great guy to ride with in life and death.*****Congrats to Christy Khoury who will be the new county treasurer replacing Vergie Moreland. Christy announced early, worked hard and didn't draw any challengers. A nice lady who will serve us well.*****The Wednesday Lunch Bunch will hold their first gathering of the year this week at Robert's. Next week the bunch will dine at Novrozsky's. Everyone is welcome.*****Peggy's on the Bayou is ready for the cold blast. She says the pot is boiling with plenty of seasoning in it. Boiled crawfish will be served Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Everyone "come pass a good time."*****Two great American institutions, the coffee break and the cocktail, originated in New Orleans. Crawfish boiling was started by some Cajuns in the bayou country through necessity to keep from starving. Now the dish is fit for a king.*****Our prayers go out to Ms. Eddie Pratt who has been under the weather lately.*****We were sorry to learn of the death of Richard Smith, 70, who passed away Jan. 4. A Port Arthur native, he was a longtime Bridge City resident. To wife Quinetta, sons and their families we send our

condolences. Services at 2 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 6, at United Pentecostal Church in Bridge City. Look for part 5 of our Orange port series next week. Robert and Port Director Gene Bouillion are working to provide a modern look at our port to follow Nina Harden's research from 30 years ago.

SPORTS OF LOCAL INTEREST

After a great season TCU fell 17-10 to Bosie State in the Fiesta Bowl. A fake punt did them in. Orangeite and former TCU running back Carlos Vasek made the trip to Glendale, Ariz., for the game. Hornfrog coach Gary Patterson was named Coach of the Year.*****The next big game in the headlights for we Texans is the Jan. 7 national championship game with Texas facing Alabama. Here's where folks will think Creaux and I have gone nuts. We believe Colt McCoy and company will put it altogether for a 10-point win. Vegas odds have Alabama a 4-point favorite. If we hit on this prediction, no one will remember; if we miss and Texas loses, everyone will remember. Texas 27-Alabama 17. We will all be pulling for our local guy Earl Thomas.*****Orange native coach Wade Phillips, whose first coaching job was at Stark High right here in Orange, takes his Dallas Cowboys into the playoffs Saturday against the Eagles. The game will be aired on NBC at 7 p.m. Dallas shut out Philadelphia 24-0 Sunday. Phillips' record as a head coach, with stops in New Orleans when dad Bum left, Denver, Buffalo and Atlanta, is 81-54. Wade has never gotten the credit he deserves by the national sports media. A defensive genius, Wade has never been recognized right here at home either. He and Bum deserve a lot more credit than they have been given here. They are major stars and our community should be proud.

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

David Orton, Clint Reves, Louise Dubose, Marvin Ziller, Skipper Free, Betty Jagen, Carl Floyd, Jo Green, Libby Campbell, Michael Collins, Ted Arnold, Teresa Collins, Joey Halliburton, Nadine Whitsett, Philipp Hunt, Sandra Cole, Sean Brinson, Ken Steppe, Pat Gunstream, Ralph Buker, Susan Kelly, Evelyn Duncan, Frank Skeeler, Sandy Uzzle, Scott Gerrald, Emily Breaux, Ann Olliff, Ashley Rion, Davie Thompson, Fermin Brown, Grant Gilson, John Craus, Madeline Dawn Evans, Teresa Franklin, Beth Lindner, Bill Braus, Charles Pou, Dana Sandlin, David Pendergast, Jimmie Allen, Lynnette Lothman and Susan LeBlanc.

CELEBRITY BIRTHDAYS

On Jan. 6, Nancy Lopez will be 53; Joey Lauren Adams, 39; Bonnie Franklin, 66 and Rowan Atkinson, 55;***Jan. 7, Nicolas Cage, 46; Katie Couric, 53; Kenny Loggins, 62 and Paul Revere, 72.***Jan. 8, R. Kelly, 43; David Bowie, 63; Bob Eubanks, 72 and had he lived Elvis Presley would be 75.***Jan. 9, Dave Matthews, 43; Joan Baez, 69; and Susannah York, 69.***Jan. 10, Pat Benatar, 57; George Foreman, 61 and Rod Stewart, 65.***Jan. 11, Amanda Peet, 38; Naomi Judd, 64; and Rod Taylor, 80.***Jan. 12, Kirsti Alley, 55; Howard Stern, 56; Rush Limbaugh, 59; Joe Frazier, 66; Ray Price, 84 and had he lived Shane Dronett, football star, would be 39.

CAJUN STORY OF THE WEEK

Clovis Comeaux is a faithful New Orleans Saints fan him. He wouldn't miss a game at da Super Dome for nuttin. Comeaux him, had 50-yard line tickets for da undefeted Saints and da Dallas Cowboy game. As he sits down wit his beer a man comes down and axe Comeaux if anyone is sitting in the seat next to him.

"No," Comeaux say, "Da seat is empty."

"Dis is incredible," da man say, "Who in dere right mind would have da best seat in da house for da New Orleans-Dallas game, da biggest sporting event of da season and not use it?"

Comeaux say, "Well, actually, dat seat belongs to me. I was suppose to come wit my wife but Anges, she passed away her. Dis is da first Saints game we haven't been together since 1987."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear dat me, dats terrible. Couldn't you find someone else, a friend or relative or even a neighbor to take her seat hanh?"

Comeaux him shake his head, "No, dem, dey all at da funeral."

C'EST TOUT

Temperatures dropping to 22-19-18 Friday, Saturday and Sunday is what grandma would call "Gumbo weather." Don't forget to check the coolant in the car and if you use space heaters be extra careful. I'll bet we will have one or more house fires due to heaters. *****After this week I'm going to miss college football -- even though we will have pro playoffs I prefer college ball. *****I won't be able to pick on Judge Janice anymore. As long as she didn't know if she was going to have an opponent or not I could get away with it. Now that she will be our judge for four more years, I'll have to behave. Congrats to Janice and all of our good office holders who got to slide by without having to run a race. Next January Judge Carl Thibodeaux will officially be the longest-serving judge. Judge Sid Callivet served four terms, eight years twice with a four-year break in-between.***** There is a lot of good reading inside. Read us cover to cover and please shop our family of advertisers. Stay warm and take care. God bless.