

Written by Bobby McDonald
Wednesday, 04 January 2012 15:46

Happy New Year! We've turned another page on the calendar, and here's hoping this finds all of you looking forward to a great new year and having enjoyed the holiday season with family and friends. We can all hope that 2012 brings a meaningful and prosperous year.

I spent a rather quiet New Year's Eve and was about played out before it was time to welcome in 2012. It isn't quite as exciting as it used to be to stay up that late, but I did stick to tradition and ate my black-eyed peas, cornbread and cabbage for dinner on Sunday, not wanting to risk any bad luck for the coming year.

I hope each of you had a wonderful Christmas and made special memories with family and friends. I traveled to the Texas Panhandle on Christmas day to enjoy part of the holiday there with family and got to actually see snow for Christmas. It began snowing on us about Snyder, and before the day was over there was nearly a foot of it in places near Jan and David's home outside Muleshoe. Monday was a day of being mostly inside, as the snow was deep and the roads were muddy and full of snow. But by Tuesday the Panhandle was gorgeous, covered with a blanket of the white stuff.

I managed to drive to Palo Duro Canyon, on Tuesday and had an awesome day photographing the canyon covered in snow, while melting snow caused crystal-clear water to fill the lower canyons. If you've never witnessed the canyon in the wintertime, make plans to put it on your list. You'll certainly be glad that you did.

I also spent some time in Hereford, Umbarger and Amarillo. We returned Thursday in time to celebrate New Year's at home.

Marilee Fishersaid they enjoyed having Martin and Betty Allain as guests for New Year's Day and cooked wild game to create a feast for dinner. Blake and Kendra joined them.

Meanwhile, Marilee reported hearing from J.R. and Vanessa in Lingleville. Things were great there, as well.

Blake celebrated his 26th birthday Saturday, Dec. 31. We wish him a very happy birthday.

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Blake and Bryant continue to process hogs and deer as hunting season continues in Hopkins County for youths.

The Reilly Springs community was saddened to hear that Hayden Smith is in a Tyler hospital and needs our thoughts and prayers for a speedy recovery. Marilee and Debbie Wilkie went to Tyler on Tuesday and visited with Dan and Danielle and reported that Hayden was somewhat improved but needs our continued prayers and support. This is telling the "knucklehead" to keep fighting and continue to improve and that we all miss him and are hoping for him a complete recovery. Get well soon, Hayden.

I visited with Rhandi Stribling Fails Monday night at the Yantis Owl-Sulphur Bluff Bears basketball match-up. The Owls won, 57-52, in Sulphur Bluff. Rhandi advised she had enjoyed some extra time off work during the holidays and that Case had been busy playing with his new toys from Santa Claus. He is especially enjoying his "PowerWheels 4-Wheeler" and may just be a speed demon before it's all over. He is quick to tell you how much fun he is having with it.

Rhandi also celebrated a birthday and enjoyed going out to eat with a friend, Sarah Wiggins, to mark the occasion. Happy birthday to Rhandi.

On New Year's Eve, Debra, Rhandi, Alexis, Joyce Gilbreath, Marcille Graham and Case all enjoyed eating out and celebrating at McCurdy's in Winnsboro and doing a little bit of after Christmas shopping. Then they enjoyed a nice visit from Baylee Gilbreath on Sunday.

I visited with Delores Miller and Tonya Ross at the Bright Star Garden Club meeting Tuesday night. They reported a great holiday celebration with loads of family and friends. "When you have a family as large as mine, it's always a huge celebration," Delores said. "Most all of them were able to make it by during the holidays."

Tuesday night's meeting was an immensely informative meeting, with the program presented by Northeast Texas author Matt White. Matt told the group about the many species of birds found in Northeast Texas. He said the region has one of the largest varieties of birds in all of North America, with more than 450 species making an appearance sometime during the year. "There is hardly a place with more species of birds than this area," Matt told club members.

Matt also discussed the native prairie areas that are still "untouched" here in Northeast Texas, including some locations in Hopkins County. He also said cemeteries that were dedicated long before the prairie was "broken up" for crops are ideal locations to hunt for native flo. "The grounds of cemeteries are ideal places to find native plants to the region and give you a window of what the nearby land looked like before it was cultivated," the author said.

White advised everyone to get outside, observe nature around them, and take advantage of the beauty of nature in Northeast Texas.

I haven't heard from Vera Harrington lately, as she just doesn't stay home anymore now that she's retired. But I'm betting she's visiting in Waxahachie. With the granddaughters out for the holidays, you can almost be certain that she's enjoying them as much as she can.

I heard from Sandra Glenn this week, and she reported a great holiday with her family and that Santa Claus had been good to them all, too.

Several of the youths in our community are with their animal projects for the upcoming Northeast Texas Livestock Association Junior Market Show in February and for the major stock shows that will soon begin.

The 90th birthday of Mrs. Oleta Coppedge McDonald will be celebrated Sunday afternoon, Jan. 8. The event is hosted in Chandler by her children and will be attended by a number of people from this community and Hopkins County.

Until next week, continue to enjoy the promises of the new year and remember our troops who defend our freedoms. Ask for them an extra measure of safety and a return trip home. Pray for love in our hearts, harmony in our community and peace in our land. God bless Reilly Springs, Hopkins County and America. Happy New Year.