

Jerrod Citizen

"Where cotton is King"

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Another generation takes its turn

Teens tempt the tower

"They're just damned lucky to be alive," Jerrod Fire Chief Henry Shaffer said after rescuing two Jerrod High School boys from the city water tower Dec. 8. Because they're juveniles, identities of the pair are being withheld.

"I was just part of the team," Shaffer said. "Sheriff Espinoza coordinated the effort. Those boys owe him big time."

Shaffer also credits Holman County deputy Marv Harter for his role in the rescue.

The *Citizen* arrived on the scene as the second boy was being loaded in the city ambulance and taken to Jerrod Memorial. He appeared to be in good condition, but one bystander said she thought she'd heard something about an attack of asthma before the sixteen year old was lowered by rope from the catwalk at the base of the tower's water tank..

Several witnesses said freezing rain, blustery winds and ice buildup on the ladder rungs made for several tense moments during the two-hour rescue effort.

The boys reportedly climbed the tower with cans of spray paint just after sunrise, intending to contribute to the graffiti that has traditionally decorated the 150 ft. structure erected in 1949.

"That's a dangerous place,"

Shaffer said. The city commission voted to replace the tower beginning in January. "We took the ladder away at the base of the tower so people couldn't climb it. They went right ahead and trespassed," He added.

The two boys will face misdemeanor charges in front of county judge Jimmy Akers sometime before Christmas.



Electronic pranks?

Strange messages and images have been appearing on digital billboards around Jerrod since Thanksgiving and no one has a clue what's causing the light shows.

People attending basketball games at Jerrod H.S. have been treated to displays of cartoon dogs, featherless chickens and exploding bouncing balls on the outdoor billboard next to the gym entrance.

High school principal Jerry Sievers is mystified by the changing, random display. "Our maintenance man has looked at it, we hired an electrician. Neither of them understand what's happening," Sievers said.

"I don't know. It's as if somebody is playing a prank. We've tried turning it off then back on, leaving it off. Nothing seems to make any difference," he noted.

"One time, after it started happening, we decided to just shut it down. Nothing happened for a few days, then one night, when I was working late, it comes on again with a message like 'I'm baaaaack.'"

The same goes for the digital displays in front of the Jerrod Pharmacy and Thresher's Bar-b-que. Those signs are working normally, then, without warning, change to exploding fireworks and dancing hamsters.

Sheriff Freddy Espinoza, acknowledged electronics whiz, is philosophical about the phenomenon. "If this was the only thing we had to worry about in our town," he said, it would be a perfect world. Those signs aren't hurting anybody, so I guess we should just stie back and enjoy them."

Not even the county's chief law enforcement officer is immune. Espinoza chuckled "I get those messages on my car display sometimes. Weird, that's all I can say."

insurance, including the Women, Infants and Children's plan includes coverage of the vaccine. He said he can do the inoculation in less than thirty seconds, "which just might save you from being hospitalized down the line."

CHIN: ROUGH FLU SEASON AHEAD

We may be faced with the roughest flu season in a decade, Dr. Randal Chin, medical director of Jerrod Memorial Hospital told *The Citizen* recently. "I really hope everyone has had their flu shots by now. If not, they shouldn't wait another minute," he observed.

Chin said it is an unusually potent strain of the so-called "bird flu" is being treated in

hospitals on the West Coast. It is particularly dangerous to children up to age six and adults seventy and above, he said. He said there is adequate supply of the vaccine available at Jerrod Memorial, but he cautions against relying on it once people begin to notice the classic symptoms of influenza, including extreme chest congestion, high fever and achy joints.

Jerrod Pharmacy owner Clarence Carpenter said he has an adequate supply of the vaccine on hand. He noted most health



MONDAY MORNING, I SAW Fire Chief **Henry Shaffer** and Holden County Deputy **Marvin Harter** sorting out the equipment used in the great tower rescue . . . **Nancy Jerrod Hackler** and **Alice Grimes** at the post office, supervising loading decorations for Santa's Bazaar . . . **Scotty McTague** and **Barry Childers** at the City Café, talking about their upcoming ski trip to New Mexico . . . my wife **Jean** patiently waiting for me to finish my traditional walk around the square. (Note to one of the tower-climber dads: don't be too rough on him. I seem to remember another set of initials up there.)