

ABP hires Dallas-based news editor

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JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (ABP)—Associated Baptist Press has hired Hannah Lodwick Elliott to become the organization's Dallas-based news editor. Elliott began her new duties Feb. 1.

Elliott's hiring fills a position left vacant since the fall of 2002, when cuts in funding from many of the news service's traditional sources forced it to lay off long-time Managing Editor Bob Allen.

"After three years of carrying the daily responsibility of the news service, I am more than a little pleased and relieved to have Hannah's help," Executive Editor Greg Warner said. "This will allow me to focus more on writing, while giving better leadership to the rest of the staff. We are all going to benefit from restoring our staff to nearly full strength."

Elliott, 24, graduated magna cum laude from Baylor University in 2004. Since then, she has been employed by Weber Shandwick, a public relations agency, working out of the company's Dallas office on its American Airlines account.

Around the State

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Around the State

- The fifth annual Baylor University Sacred Harp Singing will be held Feb. 11 in the Great Hall of Truett Theological Seminary. For those new to Sacred Harp singing, a singing school will be held beginning at 9:15 a.m., with the official sing starting at 10 a.m. After a lunch break, singing will begin again and conclude at 3 p.m. Singing from the Sacred Harp, or shaped note singing, was a method used widely in smaller Protestant churches in the South to teach church members to sing parts. At this free event, all are welcome to come and go. For more information, call (254) 710-2360.



Bernard
McCoy of
Troup
listens as
East Texas
Baptist
University
President
Bob Riley
speaks
prior to
awarding
McCoy an
honorary
doctorate
in divinity.
McCoy, a
1956
graduate of
the school,
served
many years
as a pastor
before
retiring as
director of
missions
for Sabine
Neches
Baptist
Area.
(Photo by
Mike
Midkiff)

- Dallas Baptist University will hold its Patriot Preview Weekend for

prospective students Feb. 11. At the one-day event, high school juniors and seniors have an opportunity to experience campus life and learn more about choosing a college. Students and parents are offered a series of informative seminars, as well as fellowship opportunities with other families and DBU faculty. Information on financial aid options, the admission process and campus life are highlighted. The cost is \$25 and includes two meals for students and their parents. For more information, call (214) 333-5360.

- Baylor University history professor Thomas Kidd has been named the recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities fellowship. The \$40,000 stipend will allow him to work full-time on his forthcoming book *Awakenings: The First Generation of American Evangelical Christianity*, which is under contract with Yale University Press.

- Ron Brown has been named associate vice president for enrollment management/ director of financial aid at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. Brown has worked at the university more than 17 years.

Anniversaries

Baptist Briefs

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Baptist Briefs

Challenge grant to benefit Richmond seminary. Harwood and Louise Cochrane of Tabernacle Baptist Church in Richmond, Va., have agreed to match every gift, dollar-for-dollar, contributed to the Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond's "Building our Future ... Together" fund-raising campaign through July 31, 2007, up to \$3 million. Gifts and pledges already received for the campaign total \$8.4 million toward a base goal of \$15 million and a challenge goal of \$19 million. The Cochranes' matching gifts will be earmarked for renovating a dormitory building with an eye to creating more of a residential campus community, seminary spokesman Nathan Taylor explained. Other gifts given in response to the challenge will be applied to the fund-raising campaign's other goals. The seminary's three other buildings currently are undergoing major renovations. For more information on the campaign, call (804) 355-8135.

GuideStone assets reach record high. GuideStone Financial Resources—formerly known as the Southern Baptist Annuity Board—closed 2005 with an all-time high in total organizational assets of \$8.9 billion. In addition, the 13 GuideStone funds available to Southern Baptist participants turned in a positive performance for 2005 as well as positive returns since their inception on Aug. 27, 2001, agency officials reported.

Illinois Baptist executive director elected. The Illinois Baptist State Association board of directors unanimously elected Nate Adams as executive director during a special meeting. Adams, vice president for mission mobilization at the North American Mission Board, begins his new duties March 1. He succeeds Wendell Lang, who left the Illinois state convention last May to become senior pastor of West Jackson Baptist Church in Jackson, Tenn.

Louisiana College plans preview events. Louisiana College has

scheduled two “Walk Like a Wildcat” preview events, Feb. 9-10 and March 9-10, to allow high school students to spend the night on campus in a residence hall and attend classes and extracurricular activities with current Louisiana College students. Students interested in participating in one of the events should contact the admissions office at (318) 487-7259 or (800) 487-1906 or register online at www.lacollege.edu/campusvisit.

Waco foundation pledges grant to heritage society. Christian Missions Concerns, a Waco-based foundation, pledged a \$15,000 matching grant to the Baptist History & Heritage Society for the October 2006 publication of a series of pamphlets on Baptist origins. The pamphlets will be distributed free of charge to churches to educate Baptists about their origins in England and history in America. For more information, contact Charles Deweese at cdeweese@tnbaptist.org, or (800) 966-2278.

Youth Ministry Lab scheduled. Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary’s annual Youth Ministry Lab, April 7-8, will include a conference for volunteer-led youth ministry programs in small churches. Other sessions will focus on youth ministry in large churches, student ministry, student praise bands, student leadership, adult volunteers in youth ministry and training for international missions experiences. Youth Ministry Lab speakers include Doug Fields, student pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest, Calif., near San Diego; Ken Davis, a motivational speaker and communicator from Nashville, Tenn.; Allen Jackson, professor of student ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; Mark Matlock, founder of Wisdom Works Ministries; and Emir Caner, a former Muslim who is now dean of The College at Southwestern. The Joel Engle Band will lead the lab’s worship sessions. For more information, call (817) 923-1921 ext. 6239 or visit www.swbts.edu/youthlab or www.sbcstudents.com.

N.C. retirement homes to name own trustees. The Baptist Retirement Homes of North Carolina has adopted bylaw amendments that allow the corporation’s trustees to elect their own successors. Previously, the bylaws

called for trustees to be elected by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, which also had the power to remove trustees. Baptist Retirement Homes, founded in 1951, operates retirement communities in Albemarle, Asheville, Concord, Hamilton and Winston-Salem. A letter mailed to more than 9,000 Baptist leaders, residents and others said the criteria for choosing trustees has not changed—they still must be Baptists, with at least three-fourths holding membership in North Carolina Baptist churches. The changes were approved during a December meeting of the Baptist Retirement Homes trustees.

News of religion, faith, missions, Bible study and Christian ministry among Texas Baptist churches, in the BGCT, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and around the world.

Internet porn a click away for teenagers

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Internet porn a click away for teenagers

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

An increase in the number of computers around the house may lead to a higher number of marital problems for the first generation of adolescents

maturing with Internet access in their rooms, some youth ministry specialists assert.

For many young people, pornography is simply a click away as an increasing number of teenagers can surf the Internet without supervision in their rooms, said Leighton Flowers, who leads the Baptist General Convention of Texas' youth ministry efforts.

DOWN HOME: Is talking to God like c-card fiasco?

February 3, 2006

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DOWN HOME: Is talking to God like c-card fiasco?

We must've overlooked some fine print.

Maybe it was written just above a space we initialed, or below a dotted line we signed. Perhaps it was printed in 2-point type in a box we checked. Or didn't check.

Somehow, Joanna and I signed up for a set of new his-n-hers credit cards.

Hill Country church gains from exchange

February 3, 2006

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Pastor
Lonny
Poe and
his
family
welcome
Spanish
exchange
student
Maria
Lopez to
the
Austin
airport.

Hill Country church gains from exchange

By George Henson

Staff Writer

DRIPPING SPRINGS—Participation in an international student exchange program provided Pastor Lonny Poe of Sunset Canyon Baptist Church with a real-life example of the effectiveness of worldwide Texas Baptist missions.



Texas Baptists built this church in Spain about 40 years ago.

When Poe read an e-mail soliciting host homes for international high school students, he told his wife, Deanne, “I’ve got something for you to think about.”

That conversation started a process that brought 15-year-old Maria Lopez of Castellon, Spain, to live with the Poes and their four children in Dripping Springs.

EDITORIAL: Qing vases and

teen sexual purity

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EDITORIAL: Qing vases and teen sexual purity

Sometimes, personal decisions and individual carelessness create catastrophic consequences.

Ask the staff of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, England. A shoelace cost the museum three priceless vases.



On Wednesday, Jan. 25, a visitor walked around the museum with at least one of his shoelaces untied. Eventually, he tripped on the shoelace, stumbled down a flight of stairs, slammed into a wall and sent the Chinese Qing-dynasty vases crashing to the floor.

The vases are—were—about 300 years old. They sat safely on a window sill beside the staircase for decades. They were among the museum's best-known artifacts. Nobody knows how many people admired their porcelain beauty through many generations. And a guy who tripped on his untied shoelace reduced them to shards in an instant.

Trial by fire

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Trial by fire

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

RINGGOLD—When Kristi Caldwell talks about the fires that torched Ringgold, she doesn't mention the size of the flames or the extensive damage they caused.



A
Cameron
University
student
cleans a
ceiling
fan of a
Ringgold
home that
was
damaged
by
wildfires.
Smoke
filled the
house and
blew a
wall off
the
structure.
(Photos
by John
Hall)

She names nearly every family affected by the fires—the Andersons, Grissoms, Dukes and Moraleses, just to name a few. She remembers each of their stories and knows where they currently live.

Caldwell recalls children looking for a sense of normalcy at school, days after their families lost everything. She remembers her second- and third-grade students crying in her classroom. Some wept all day long.

The images are stuck in her head and her heart.

“I’ve just gotten to know these people. It’s a wonderful community. The people are nice. They will go out of their way to help you. When you see people hurting, your heart goes out to them,” she said.

Caldwell was joined by many other kindred spirits in her congregation, First Baptist Church in Henrietta. While she and her fellow elementary school teachers collected clothes, furniture and toys, church member Mike Campbell began recruiting volunteers to remove debris and repair buildings in Ringgold.

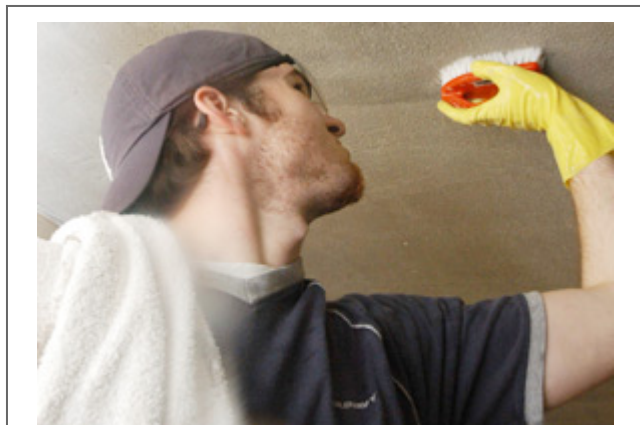


Two Cameron students clean the bathoom of a home damaged by smoke.

Word spread quickly about what the church was doing and soon volunteers were calling from as far away as Wichita Falls and Lawton, Okla. On Jan. 28, more than 100 people—as many people as live in Ringgold—showed up to pitch in.

“It’s overwhelming,” said Tracy Douthitt, secretary at First Baptist Church in Henrietta. “There’s a lot of love there. Our church has been really good at supporting everyone inside the church, but to see them reach out is phenomenal.”

Volunteers divided into groups and worked in multiple locations throughout the town, each time at the request of residents. Some picked up barbed-wire fence and cleared land. Others cleaned homes. Caldwell manned a gym filled with items for those affected by the fires.



A Cameron University volunteer scrubs the ceiling of a Ringgold home that sustained substantial smoke damage.

“This is our Katrina,” said Ricky Guenther, pastor of First Baptist Church in Henrietta, referring to the hurricane that ravaged the Gulf Coast. “We wanted to get involved and help.”

Texas Baptist churches provided most of the volunteers. Leaders from several congregations replaced ceiling tiles in Ringgold Baptist Church. The congregation’s facilities were surrounded by fire but sustained only minor smoke damage.

Volunteers promoted the work of Ringgold Baptist Church everywhere they went. The workers may have a quick impact, but Ringgold Baptist Church will continue to be with the residents, said Doyl McMurry, pastor of Joy Baptist Church near Henrietta. Members of the church can continue ministering to those in need.

“I hope we can represent Christ well enough that they will take notice of

the church and possibly be reached for Christ," McMurry said. "More than anything, they need to know they are loved by God, the Creator of the universe."

Eldon Johnson, pastor of Ringgold Baptist Church, said the volunteers are inspiring for his congregation and other congregations in the area. Believers are moved to action when they see other Christians living out their faith, he said.

"It's a real boost not just to our people, but also to people in surrounding areas," he said.

Cooperative efforts like this encourage Caldwell, as well. She sees people working across denominational lines to improve the community. Companies donated equipment. People without a connection to Ringgold wanted to help.

With the help of many who care, Ringgold can rebuild, Caldwell said. Workers cleared much of the debris. Some structures already have been replaced with portable buildings. Families are preparing to reconstruct their homes.

"I think this community is going to come out and be far better," she said.

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Republic of Georgia getting heat again; Needs still remain

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Bishop
Malkhaz
Songulashvili
of the
Baptist
Union of
Georgia
gathers
around a
wood stove
to stay
warm. At one
point, an
energy crisis
left half the
country
without
power.

Republic of Georgia getting heat again; needs still remain

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

TBILISI, Georgia - A supply of natural gas into the Republic of Georgia has been restored and parts of the country's capital city again have heat and electricity.

Online pornography: Helpful tips for parents

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Online pornography: Helpful tips for parents

Parents to be involved in their children's lives, urges Leighton Flowers, who leads the Baptist General Convention of Texas youth ministry efforts. Internet activity is one area where parental guidance can be especially helpful.

He recommends parents follow these tips if they are concerned about their children viewing pornography:

- Keep the computer with Internet access in a public location such as the living room or den of the house.
- Have set times of the day that the Internet can be accessed. For example,

cut off the computer by 10:30 p.m. and limit the amount of time each child spends on the computer.

Video shows peace activists held hostage in Iraq still alive

February 3, 2006

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Video shows peace activists held hostage in Iraq still alive

By Robert Marus

ABP Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON (ABP)—New video footage of a British Baptist and three other Christian peace activists held hostage in Iraq has buoyed hope among their friends and loved ones—weeks after their captors' deadline for executing them.

After more than a month of silence, their abductors released a videotape Jan. 28 showing all four Christian Peacemaker Teams hostages alive. It was aired on the Arabic satellite news network Al-Jazeera, warning American and British officials to seize their last opportunity to save the captives by releasing all Iraqis detained by U.S.-led forces.

Restorative justice consortium proposed

February 3, 2006

Posted: 2/3/06

Restorative justice consortium proposed

By John Hall

Texas Baptist Communications

SAN ANTONIO—The Baptist General Convention of Texas and the University of Texas at San Antonio's community and restorative justice office may create a consortium of restorative justice leaders.

The group would fall under the university's College of Public Policy and would be a place to bring together academics and practitioners in restorative justice for discussion and research, said Tomi Lee Grover, restorative justice specialist for the BGCT.