

Rains County Leader

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EMORY, TEXAS - THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2025

PRICE 75¢

RAINS COUNTY

Commissioners name building, begin plans for remodels

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

The Rains County Commissioners Court held a regular meeting on Thursday, January 23, to begin the process of remodeling county buildings, choose an outside auditor and adopt rules for on-site sewage for Rains County.

During the meeting, the court began discussions on getting bids to begin remodeling the buildings on N. Texas St., Wood St. and Quitman St.

Commissioners started by unanimously approving the naming of the building at 239

N. Texas St. as the Hill Building. They designated that the former home of the Rains County Leader will be named in honor of the Hill family, who have owned the paper since 1904.

The court agreed that the Hill building would house the Rains County Justice of the Peace and County Constable. They determined that the county couldn't get bids for the remodels without plans.

Commissioners approved the motion to get architectural drawings for the remodeling of the Hill building, as well as the old driver license office on

Wood St.

Rains County Judge Linda Wallace explained to the court that the Rains County Courthouse Annex on Quitman St. would need some remodeling for better security for the Rains County Attorney's office.

They unanimously approved the motion to get plans for the remodel of the Courthouse annex to add a wall and a door to the building to improve security.

The court was presented with two options for an outside auditor for Rains County. The

see **COURT** on page 2

CITY OF EMORY

Emory P&Z hears request to rezone property in Katy Addition



STAFF REPORTS
Rains County Leader

The Emory Planning and Zoning committee met Thursday evening, January 23, in the council chamber at Emory City Hall. The committee heard a request to rezone two parcels of property from residential (R1) with conditional use for medical to commercial for a professional building or commercial building. The property description lists the property in block #1, lots 4 and 5 (Joseph Harges Survey).

The meeting began with all members present; however, board member Dennis Threadgill recused himself from the discussion when the request was addressed. He informed the board that he had property adjacent to the property up for discussion and stepped down for that item.

City Administrator Thad Chambers read a list of busi-

nesses that would be eligible to be located at the site if converted to commercial. He listed retail establishments (e.g., convenience stores, package stores, etc.), auto repair shops, machine shops, etc.

Brandon Roberts told the members his desire for the property was to build a professional building for office businesses, such as financial and insurance businesses.

After a brief discussion and with the agreement of the current land owner, the remaining committee members voted to recommend that the properties remain residential (R1) with the addition of conditional use for office building (such as medical, financial, and insurance use).

A public hearing on the matter will be held on Tuesday, February 11, at 6:45 p.m. in the council chamber at Emory City Hall.

How Sweet It Is



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

Rains Lady Cat Head Coach Laura Jenkins celebrates her 250th win with her players after the 69-52 victory over the Commerce Lady Tigers on Tuesday, January 28. Jenkins has been head girls basketball coach at Rains High School since 2019 with previous stops at Rockwall-Heath, Martin's Mill and Kaufman.

PREDATOR HUNT

Rains County Predator Hunt sets new records

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

The Rains County Predator Hunt set new records, as over 130 teams of hunters harvested 790 predators and over 70 feral hogs during the event on Saturday night and Sunday morning, January 25-26.

"You all accomplished a lot throughout the night," the statement on social media said. "Congratulations to all the winners and those that fell just right outside the money."

The final totals, as reported by the event's Facebook page, stated that 712 coyotes, 78 bobcats and 73 feral hogs were weighed in on Sunday morning at the Kearney Trailers facility on Hwy. 19S. The totals showed that 418 more coyotes, 30 more bobcats and 42 more hogs were harvested as compared to the 2024 hunt.

The team of Cole Lockwood, Tate Streater, Sonny Stewart and Quinn Rogers finished in first place with 35 coyotes turned in. They were awarded \$20,000 and other prizes.

The second place team of Clay Reid, Lynn Schroeder, Ozzy Clements and Nathan Cushman won \$7,400 with 29 coyotes, while the team of Wes Mallicote, Dakota McFtridge, Kris Lawson and Hayden Lane took home \$3,700 with 28 coyotes presented.

Other winners at the event included Ryan Davis, Cayden Davis, Bentley Davis and Shannon Davis winning \$3,200 for biggest coyote. Dustin Powell and Lakin Obenovsky shared \$3,200 for biggest female bobcat, while

the biggest male bobcat payout of \$3,200 was shared by two teams of Tanner Dotson, Jonathan Nolan, Phillip Robbins, Garrett Robertson and Kevin McCown.

The team of Mitch Holeyfield, Patrick Matejka, Brian Kubicek and John Kiger won \$7,000 for presenting the largest hog at 295.5 lbs.

"We are thankful for all our sponsors, helpers, fire department, softball girls, door prize donations, support from our community, the cooks, G3 equipment for weighing, friends, family, and

most importantly for the space from the original creator of the Rains Co Hunt, the Kearney trailer family," a statement from the event read.

The site reported that some of the animal carcasses had been found dumped on the side of the road on Sunday evening. The individuals and their team were identified and held accountable for the incident.

The next Rains County Predator Hunt is scheduled for January 17, 2026.

SPOTLIGHT

Kristi Ratliff is passionate about numbers, politics and small businesses

By **JUDY KRAMER**
Rains County Leader contributor

Kristi Ratliff has owned Ratliff Bookkeeping and Tax Service in Emory since 2011 and recently opened a second office in Lindale. She is particularly busy this time of year helping clients with their taxes, including many small businesses.

"I am an advocate of small businesses and like to help them whether they are trying to start a new business or just need help with tax preparation," said Ratliff. "That includes sending out W2s and

1099s for their contractors. There are a lot of small businesses who don't know how to start a business, or what forms need to be prepared for startups, or each tax year."

Ratliff said that she can give these businesses a 30 percent discount on QuickBooks to help them be proactive about their accounting and wants to work to get them low taxes and limited government overreach.

She said January is usually her busiest time of the year. Often, at the beginning of the year, businesses bring in their bookkeeping files from the past

12 months to be sorted.

In addition to local businesses, Ratliff has clients from the metroplex and Tyler. She usually helps them with taxes, payroll and higher-level executive consulting. Although these businesses may have in-house staff for finances, they need her expertise in such things as planning and forecasting perspective. She became experienced in her field when she started her career in industry doing legal accounting. She said that the law and tax code intersect, and she is trained and educated in both.

Ratliff earned her accounting degree at University of Texas Tyler in 1996. She said that numbers made a lot of sense to her all her life, she was good at math, and it is therapeutic.

She grew up in Alba and her parents live on the county line of Wood and Rains County. She has lived in Emory all her adult life near Lake Fork. She has aunts and uncles in Emory going back about three or four generations. She has two grown sons. One is a surveyor and the

see **SPOTLIGHT** on page 2



Kristi Ratliff



City Girl:
Librocubicularist
page 3

Savvy Senior:
How Seniors Can Get Help...
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Wildcat Sports
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Rain Report
Sun., Jan. 26 0.04 in.
Total for Jan. 1.21 in.
Year to date 1.21 in.

Community outreach & organizations

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
Emory - Tues. & Thurs. 7:00-8:00 p.m., Sat. 12:00-1:00 p.m., open meetings.
Emory United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall. For info call 903-243-6766 or 903-439-7573

AL-ANON - Thurs., 7:00 p.m., Crossroads Al-anon Group, 103 N. Houston St., Edgewood, 903-896-7270

AMERICAN LEGION POST 156, Rabb Bro. Mem. Rains Co. - 4th Mon., 5:15 p.m., 215 N. Duffy St., Emory, 903-438-6045. Buffet breakfast - 2nd Saturday 7:00-10:00 a.m.

ARBALA DANCE - Tues., 7:00-9:30 p.m., Arbala Community Center

CELEBRATE RECOVERY - every Tuesday, 6:30 p.m. Emory Baptist Church

EAST TAWAKONI SENIOR CITIZEN GAME DAY - every Wednesday, 9:00 a.m., 255 Oakleaf Trail.

EMORY LIONS CLUB - 1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 12:00 p.m., Dos Charros in Emory. Call for information 903-473-2311

FOOD BANK AT FREEDOM CHURCH OF GOD - 3rd Fri., 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m., 10830 FM 514, Emory. 903-473-2457

FRIENDS OF RAINS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY - 3rd Thurs., 1:00 p.m., Meadows Cultural Center, Rains Co. Public Library

LAKE COUNTRY NEIGHBORS - 1st Thurs., 11:30 a.m., www.lakecountryneighbors.com

LAKE FORK BAPTIST CHURCH FOOD PANTRY - 2nd Tues., 1-4 p.m. 9483 W. FM 515, Alba

LAKE FORK CHAPTER OF THE WELL ARMED WOMAN - first Thursday, 4-7 p.m. at Winnsboro Gun Club, Winnsboro TX. Sue Parrish 903-473-9819

LAKE FORK SPORTSMAN'S ASSOC. - 2nd Tues., 6:30 p.m. Jamie's Restaurant, Lake Fork Marina

MARS HILL MASONIC LODGE #1440 - 4th Thurs., 6:30 p.m., Lodge on Hwy. 69

NORTHEAST TEXAS DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE - 4th Thurs., 6:00-7:30 p.m., Rose Community Center

PIECEMAKERS QUILT GUILD OF RAINS COUNTY - 3rd Mon., 7:00 p.m., AgriLife Extension and Conference Center

POINT LADIES CIVIC CLUB - 1st Thurs., 6:30 p.m., Point Community Center, 903-269-8446

RAINS AMATEUR RADIO ASSOCIATION 2nd Sat. of each month 9:00 a.m. Emory Volunteer Fire Dept.,

RAINS COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - 3rd Thursday, 5:30 p.m. Visitor's Center, 903-473-3913

RAINS GARDEN CLUB - 2nd Mon., 11:00 a.m., Scarbrough Haven, Email TheRainsGardenClub@gmail.com

RAINS COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - 3rd Mon., 6:00 p.m., Jan., Mar., May, July, Sep., Nov., Emory City Hall.

RAINS COUNTY LIBRARY BOARD - 4th Mon., 5:30 p.m., Feb., Apr., June, Aug., Oct., Meadows Cultural Center, Rains County Public Library

RAINS COUNTY GOOD SAMARITANS - Food Pantry open 1:00-4:00 p.m. Mon. & Thurs.

RAINS COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY - 3rd Sat., 1:00 p.m. Meadows Cultural Center, Rains County Public Library

RAINS COUNTY REPUBLICANS - 4th Thurs., 6:30 p.m., House of Prayer 1382 FM 515

STITCH AND LEARN QUILTING CLUB - Thurs., 9:00 a.m.-noon, 903-598-3021 Miracle Faith Baptist Church

WOMEN'S SERVICE CLUB - 2nd Mon., 6:00 p.m., Rose Community Center

WOMEN IN NEED, INC. - A Battered Women's Shelter. Call 903-455-4612 or 903-454-HELP

GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

EAST TAWAKONI CITY COUNCIL 3rd Tues., 7:00 p.m., East Tawakoni City Hall

EMORY CITY COUNCIL 2nd Tues., 7:00 p.m., Emory City Hall

POINT CITY COUNCIL 2nd Thurs., 6:45 p.m., Point City Hall

RAINS COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT 3rd Thurs. of every month, Rains Tax Office at 12:00 p.m.

RAINS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT 2nd & 4th Thurs., 10:00 a.m., Rains County Courthouse

RAINS ISD SCHOOL BOARD 2nd Monday, 6:30 p.m., Rains ISD Board Room

RAINS COUNTY EMERGENCY SERVICES DISTRICT #1 3rd Monday, 6:30 p.m., Emory Fire Station

RAINS COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICE: Mon., Tues. and Thurs., 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., 110 E. North St. **TRANSPORTATION:** To schedule a ride Call 903-474-7231

RAINS COUNTY ROAD & BRIDGE Open Mon.-Fri. 7 a.m.-4 p.m. 903-473-5099 or 5098

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H.W. Martin - 1887
Sam Fitzgerald - Before 1900
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A.S. Hornbeck - Before 1900
J.H. Bradford - 1901-1904
Tom W. Hill - 1904-1937
Earl Hill, Sr. - 1937-1960
Kathleen Hill Becknell - 1962-1995
Earl Hill, Jr. - 1995-2019

NEWS BRIEFS

Good Sam Clothes/ Thrift Shop Sales

The Rains County Good Samaritan Clothes Shop will be open Monday-Thursday in the building behind the public library on Hwy. 69 in Emory. Hours for Mon.-Wed. are 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., closed noon-1:00 p.m. Hours for Thursday are 8:00 a.m.-noon. Thrift sales will be open every Saturday in February from 8:00 a.m.-noon. Funds go to buy food for the needy and to operate the center.

Rains County Republican Meeting

Rains County Republicans will hold meetings quarterly in 2025. The next meeting will be on Thursday, January 30, at 6:30 p.m., at House of Prayer, 1382 FM 515. The special guest speaker will be Rebekah Warwick, State Director of Heritage Action. She will be discussing the upcoming legislative session.

Wild Night at the Wildflower

Rains Special Needs Community is co-hosting a "Wild Night at the Wildflower" on Saturday, February 1, in Emory. The family-friendly event will be held

from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., at the Wildflower Event Venue at 1466 Hwy. 19S. Children with special needs and their siblings may attend for a night of food, dancing, games and meeting other families in the community. The children are invited to dress up as a "wild-thing," but not too scary! Reserve your spot by emailing RainsSNCommunity@gmail.com.

Emory Methodist Church Valentine Dinner

Emory Methodist Church will host their annual Valentine Dinner on Saturday, February 15, at 5:00 p.m. Reservations are required and the cost is \$20/person. Call the church office at 903-473-2411 no later than Sunday, February 9, to make a reservation.

American Legion Breakfast Sat., Feb. 8

Rabb Brothers Memorial American Legion Post #156 will hold a breakfast buffet on Saturday, February 8, from 7:00-10:00 a.m. at the Post home at 215 N. Duffy St. in Emory. Takeouts are offered. Payment is by donation, which goes towards the upkeep of the home and for veterans' projects.

When is a good time for a Roth conversion?

If you've thought about contributing to a Roth IRA, but you made too much money during your working years, you can have a second chance — through a Roth conversion.

As you may know, a Roth IRA provides tax-free withdrawals, provided you've had the account at least five years and you're at least 59.

A Roth's income limits may have kept you from contributing. However, you can convert your traditional IRA to a Roth. It's not hard to do, but there's a catch — you'll have to pay taxes on the pre-tax dollars you convert.

To help avoid a big tax bill, you might want to make the conversion during a year in which your total income is down. Another good time to convert might be when the financial markets are down. Since the value of the investments in your traditional IRA will have dropped, your conversion will generate less in taxes.

Also, you could spread the conversion over several years, reducing the tax bite in any given year.

See your tax advisor before making a conversion. If it's appropriate for your situation, you may find that owning a Roth IRA can benefit you and your family for years.

This content was provided by Edward Jones for use by Brandon Roberts, your Edward Jones financial advisor in Emory at 903-473-1592.



BRANDON ROBERTS
Edward Jones
Financial Advisor

Women's Service Club to host Sweetheart BINGO

The Women's Service Club Board of Directors hit the ground running this January, meeting several times to map out an exciting year ahead! Mark your calendars because the first official meeting of 2025 will happen on Monday, February 10, at 6:00 p.m. We're kicking things off in style with Sweetheart BINGO! Grab your favorite "Galentine" and join us at the Rose Community Center for a

night of fun, laughter, and friendly competition. As we ring in the new year, it's also time to renew your membership with the annual \$20 fee. This year promises to be one for the books, filled with meaningful fellowship, opportunities for growth, and impactful service projects that will make a difference in our community. Let's make 2025 unforgettable — together!

COURT

Continued from page 1

county solicited bids for the job after the previous outside auditor had not been prompt with the return of the previous audit.

After going over bids, Rains County Auditor Tammi Byrd recommended the county select Mike Ward Accounting & Financial of Point. The recommendation was unanimously approved by commissioners.

The court held a public hearing on adopting updated rules for on-site sewage facilities in Rains County. The new rules would require on-site sewage be done by a licensed installer, and set lot sizes for on-site sewage at one acre.

No one spoke during the public hearing, so the commissioners ended the hearing and unanimously adopted the new rules.

Commissioners were presented with an opportunity to purchase two new law enforcement vehicles for the Sheriff's department. Unlike normal vehicle purchases that would have the county

wait a year or more for the vehicles, the trucks are available and can be in service within months.

The court unanimously approved the purchase with one vehicle to be funded from a grant and the other from the county budget.

The court discussed placing the creation of a Rains County Assistance District on the ballot of the May 3 election, but tabled the item until the February meeting.

Commissioners unanimously approved the courts regular meeting dates for 2025, a final plat for Natalia Estates subdivision, an ARPA invoice from Grant-Works and a continuing education certificate for Commissioner Korey Young.

All commissioners were present for the regular meeting.

The next meeting of the Rains County Commissioners Court is scheduled for Thursday, February 13, at 10:00 a.m. in the courtroom of the Rains County Courthouse.

SPOTLIGHT

Continued from page 1

other one a lineman. They both went to school at Rains ISD and Ratliff is now hoping for grandchildren in a few years who will have a lot of family in their lives.

Ratliff was Rains County GOP Chair until recently, when she resigned because of the increase in her business from one to two offices. She also served part time as County Auditor for nine and a half years. She said it gave her the ability to look at local government.

She works a lot during the tax season and is particularly sympathetic to the needs of

the small businesses who are struggling and don't have the resources to pay for help. She works with them as they get on their feet and gives free initial consultations to all clients.

Ratliff loves animals and has six dogs, two cats, chickens and ducks. Her hobbies are gardening and woodworking, which are presently on a back burner. Her dream is to have a homestead where she can grow her own food but she is afraid that she will be too busy for that to happen.

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Welcoming a Stranger

I was a stranger in your land
I have traveled a Great Distance and am tired and hungry
Could you possibly help me find some clean water and something to eat?
You laughed at me and said "I wasn't welcome in your country and I should go back home". You did provide some dirty water and food from the garbage can
Thanks for showing your empathy towards a stranger.
You don't know my name, however I know yours
Jesus

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SUDOKU

The aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Each number can only be used once in each row, once in each column, and once in each of the 3x3 boxes. Visit www.sudokuoftheday.com for further tips and help about how to play - and good luck!

	8			5				2
	5			2		6		
3						4	7	
2			3		9			
8				7				1
			2		8			4
	6	1						9
		7		4				6
4			1			5		

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Surviving the 70s - To Catch a Thief



"The robbed that smiles, steals something from the thief."

William Shakespeare (Othello)



JODY DYER Typewriter Weekly

In the foolishness of my youth, I spent a number of years employed in the grocery business. It was a good job for young man and allowed me the ability to purchase a brand-new Chevy truck. My time was spent evenly between the check stand, the produce department, and the grocery aisles in between. Duties included filling the milk box, pop aisle, stocking shelves anywhere and everywhere as needed, and catching shoplifters, purse snatchers, and other miscreants. It was a wild time!

In recent years, it has become apparent that retail thieves these days have an easier time executing their wicked deeds. In some states, laws against shoplifting and theft have been relaxed to the point that bad folks have no fear of the law and seem to steal as they please. It is common in some stores to see many goods locked up, accessible only by summoning a high school kid with a key ring. This is because of the fear of legal issues. Now, if you chase a shoplifter, you can get sued, or fired, or both. It didn't use to be that way.

In my day (I'm pretty old), as part of our grocery work, we would hunt shoplifters. Always ready to sprint into action when needed, we were on constant patrol. Shoplifting, and the robbery of our customers, was considered a personal offense. And chasing and fighting bad guys was fun, if a bit dangerous.

Note - I am not advising anyone to practice these methods today.

Back in the 70s, the stores that I worked in had two-way mirrors around the perimeter of the store. Behind these mirrors was a catwalk, accessible through a back hallway in the break-room. From the catwalk we could spy on customers and employees in the store below. It was a common practice to stay alert and when observing the furtive movements of potential thieves, we would hit the catwalk and observe. Often shoplifters could be simply confronted by the store manager just outside the door, but this was not always the case. Most fun were the runners. I can't count the number of times we chased thieves in full retreat across the parking lot headed for freedom. These chases were thrilling. Usually, when caught, the bad guys gave up. Rarely were punches thrown.

Sometimes shoplifters gave themselves away easily before leaving the store. I remember one gentleman with prime rib under his hat and blood running down his face. It turned out that he did not need medical attention after all. He was just trying to save some money.

I did work at a store in a rough part of town, and our worst shoplifting suspects were dangerous gang members. I can't believe we did this, but we chased those guys too. I remember one late night episode where a group of us clerks and box boys (the girls were wise enough to stay indoors) confronted several gang members who ran from our store with beer in their pants. We caught them, after a chase through several back alleys, but we had a bit of a scary standoff until the police showed up. I would not do that again.

Sometimes our thieves were totally brazen. One

angry group of bad guys, upset because our store was closed and the front door locked, decided to simply drive in and help themselves. They drove their car into the store's front door, but couldn't make it all the way in. No beer for them.

But the worst criminals that we had to deal with too often were the purse snatchers. One busy night, with only two check stands open and long, long lines, a bad guy stole a purse from an elderly lady right in front of our store. I heard a scream, saw him knock her down and take off. I started to run for him, paused and looked back at my long line of customers, who by this time were yelling encouragement and saying - "Get him!" I flew out the door in hot pursuit, followed by the only other clerk in the store. We left all our customers standing in line. We did catch him, returned her purse, and held him for the police. As I walked back into the store, our patient customers greeted me with thunderous applause.

The scariest purse snatching incident that we experienced, however, was harrowing. We had two guys confront a couple in our parking lot. They stole the woman's purse and stabbed her in the process. She stumbled back through the front door and collapsed in a pool of blood. I and one of the guys from the meat department were able to stop the bleeding until the paramedics arrived. We saved her life. But that was one scary night.

Sometimes I'm surprised we survived the 70s...

JODY DYER is a columnist, author, and former teacher. Described by some as a Renaissance man, he is a baseball fan, coffee roaster, and accomplished feral hog trapper. He likes to read, appreciates the outdoors, and is good with dogs and children. He is the father of three, and lives with his wife in Texas.

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CITY GIRL

By Linda Brendle

Many people in my life refer to me as a wordsmith, and since the definition of a wordsmith is a person who works with words, I guess that would be an accurate description. An article titled "How to be a Wordsmith | Nepean Tutoring" went into a little more detail:

Those who are acclaimed as wordsmiths have acquired this skill through a life that has been immersed in the printed word, who choose to contribute to discussions in different settings and are interested to research the meaning of words and their usage.

Again, that would be a pretty accurate description of my relationship with words. I can't remember when I didn't know how to read, and I used to get in trouble for spending too much time with my nose in a book instead of attending to other things I was supposed to be doing. I'm not the kind of word junkie who reads the dictionary, but when I hear or read an unfamiliar word in conversation or in print, I like to look it up so I get the full gist of what's going on. As a result, I have a pretty broad vocabulary. Still, I sometimes run across a word that throws me for a loop. The title of this column is just that kind of word.

A couple of weeks ago, Gloria posted a meme that said: Your word of the day is: LIBROCUBICULARIST n. A person who reads in bed.

Librocubicularist

At first, I thought it was a joke, and I scrolled down to find the punch line. When I didn't find anything further, I went to Google and discovered that this is a real word. The Artificial Intelligence answer was that it's a fancy word for someone who reads in bed. The dictionary added that it's a combination of the Latin words liber meaning book and cubiculum meaning bedroom. Going one generation deeper, before it came to mean book, liber meant the inner bark of a tree which has been used for centuries to make paper. And cubare means to lie or to recline, so it's easy to see how that could have evolved into a word meaning bedroom.

The word librocubicularist was coined by Christopher Morley in his novel "The Haunted Bookshop" which was published in 1919. In the novel, a bookseller asks a woman if she is a librocubicularist after suggesting she read a book in bed. There was actually a government study done to determine if reading in bed is a good thing or a bad thing. The conclusion was that reading in bed before you go to sleep can improve the quality of sleep in some cases.

When you do an online search, the search engine often pulls up information related to your original question. For example, a bookworm is someone who likes to read books - and other material with words - as opposed to a wordsmith who works with words. A bibliophile is a lover of books while a lectiphile is a lover of reading of any kind of printed material. And in Japan, a sundoku is a person who accumulates a lot of books but never reads them.

I think to some extent I fall into most of these categories.

Following these definitions was a series of words that seemed a little ridiculous even to a wordsmith like me. The word ellogofusciohuhpoppokunurious is found in Wisen's dictionary of American slang printed in 1934. It's an adjective meaning very good, very fine. Why would you use a 30-letter word to replace a 16-letter phrase that's a lot easier to pronounce? Then there's floccinaucinihilipilification which is a rarely used word - and I can see why it's rarely used - meaning the habit of estimating something as worthless - like this word. Finally, we have a 45-letter word that is supposedly the longest pronounceable word in English language - and I have my doubts about being able to pronounce it - pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanocinosis. This is a noun meaning a lung disease caused by inhaling very fine ash and sand dust. It was invented in 1930 by Everett M. Smith, president of the National Puzzlers' League, in imitation of very long medical terms.

I've mentioned before that my friend Pat says I can write about nothing and make it interesting. This column was definitely about nothing of any importance - except that it was a fun exercise in research. I am a wordsmith, and words are what I do. I hope this particular combination of words made you smile.

Linda Brendle writes a weekly column for Believers' Baptist Church. She is a published author and also writes about caregiving, faith, and family on her blog at http://www.LifeAfter-Caregiving.WordPress.com. You can e-mail her at LindaBrendle@yahoo.com.

Ethan Elliott of Emory named to University of Alabama Fall 2024 Presidents List

Ethan Elliott was named to The University of Alabama Presidents List for Fall Semester 2024.

A total of 14,631 students enrolled for Fall Semester 2024 at The University of Alabama were named to the dean's list with an academic

record of 3.5 (or above) or the president's list with an academic record of 4.0 (all A's). These driven students are making waves across UA's more than 70 undergraduate programs and 12 colleges and schools.

The UA dean's and

president's lists recognize full-time undergraduate students. The lists do not apply to graduate students or undergraduate students who take less than a full course load.

BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

Tips to Protect Your Personal Information

The threat of cyberattacks from foreign countries or domestic groups has become a real and growing concern in today's world, often making headlines in the news. While it might feel like there is nothing you can do to stop these attacks, there are simple steps you can take to protect your personal information from cyber thieves.

Sharing personal information online through phones, tablets, laptops, or any device connected to Wi-Fi or the internet. While this makes it easy to shop, bank, plan trips, and stay in touch, it also puts your information at risk. Use extreme caution when sharing your information and check regularly to see who has access to it. The Better Business Bureau and the National Cyber Security Alliance offer the following tips to help secure the privacy of critical information:

Share with care. Posts on social media last a long time. Consider who will see the post, how readers might perceive it, and what information it might reveal about the individual posting it.

Manage privacy settings. Check the privacy and security settings on web services and apps and set them to your comfort level for information sharing. Each device, application, or browser used will have different features to limit how and with whom you share information.

Personal info is like money: Value it. Protect it. Personal information, such as purchase history, IP address, or location, has tremendous value to businesses - just like money. Make informed decisions about whether or not to share data with certain businesses - just like money. Consider who will see the post, how readers might perceive it, and what information it might reveal about the individual posting it.

Pay attention to internet-connected devices. Smart thermostats, voice control systems, cars, and even refrigerators are just the beginning of the growing list of devices that watch our homes and track our locations. Read the privacy policy and understand what data is being collected and how it will be used. Read BBB's tips on smart devices and cyber security risks.

Know your rights. Familiarize yourself with data

letters, numbers, and symbols - eight characters for most accounts and twelve characters for email and financial accounts. Don't use the same password for multiple accounts, especially email and financial. Keep a paper list of your passwords in a safe place, not on or near your computer. Consider using a password vault application. See BBB's tips for creating a strong password.

Keep tabs on apps. Many apps ask for access to personal information, such as geographic location, contacts list, and photo album, before using their services. Be thoughtful about who gets that information, and be wary of apps that require access to information that is not required or relevant to the services they offer. Delete unused apps on your internet-connect devices and keep others secure by performing updates.

Lock down your login. For your online accounts, use the strongest authentication tools available. Your user names and passwords are not enough; consider two-factor authentication for key accounts like email, banking, and social media, especially for access on mobile devices.

Don't click on unfamiliar links. Whether at home or at work, don't click on links from unfamiliar sources or unexpected correspondence. One false click can infect a whole computer... or a whole business. Be vigilant about suspicious emails, messages, or calls asking for personal or financial information. Double-check the sender's address, avoid downloading unexpected attachments, and never provide sensitive information unless you're certain of the source.

Smart thermostats, voice control systems, cars, and even refrigerators are just the beginning of the growing list of devices that watch our homes and track our locations. Read the privacy policy and understand what data is being collected and how it will be used. Read BBB's tips on smart devices and cyber security risks.

Familiarize yourself with data

privacy laws and regulations, such as GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) or CCPA (California Consumer Privacy Act), which may apply to you. Understanding your rights can help you better protect your personal information and hold businesses accountable.

Charitable organizations should be aware of data privacy. Donors and others communicate online with charities via their websites, emails, and other online means and need to be informed about what policies are in place to address privacy concerns. BBB Wise Giving Alliance published a blog article containing advice for charities regarding data privacy concerns.

For more information: See BBB's Cybersecurity Resources page.

Check out the National Cyber Security Alliance's Privacy Tips, including special information for teens, parents, older adults, mobile users, and more. Likewise, businesses can learn more about BBB's tips for improved cybersecurity.

About BBB: BBB is a nonprofit, business-supported organization that sets and upholds high standards for fair and honest business behavior. Most BBB services to consumers are free of charge. BBB provides objective advice, free BBB Business Profiles on more than 5.3 million companies, 11,000 charity reviews, dispute resolution services, alerts and educational information on topics affecting marketplace trust. Visit bbb.org for more information. BBB Serving Central East Texas was founded in 1985 and serves 19 counties.

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Beth Poquette Draws earns Dean's List Highest Honors at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College is pleased to announce that Beth Poquette Draws of East Tawakoni has achieved Dean's List Highest Honors for the fall 2024 semester.

Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College is Indiana's oldest Catholic college, established in 1840. SMWC is listed among the Best Regional Universities in the Midwest and Best Value Schools in

the Midwest by U.S. News & World Report. SMWC was the second institution in the nation to add distance education programming in 1973.

Advertising Works 903-473-2653

Advertisement for CBTx Commercial Bank of Texas featuring a crossword puzzle. The puzzle is titled 'TEXAS CROSSWORD by Charley & Guy Orbison' and includes clues for various Texas-related terms. The bank's contact information is provided at the bottom: Solution at www.cbtx.com, 903-473-2611, Member FDIC.

Sheriff's Report

The Rains County Sheriff's Office took the following reports of activity during the week of January 20-26:

Arrests

1-20: Russell Wayne Culpepper. Driving while intoxicated 3rd or more, \$100,000 bond; parole violation, bond denied. **1-21:** Samuel Dwayne Williams. Tamper/fabricate physical evidence with intent to impair, \$150,000 bond; possession of a controlled substance PG 1 less than 1 gr., \$150,000 bond.

1-21: Kellie Nicole Andrews. Assault causing bodily injury of family member, \$1,000 cash bond.

1-22: Thomas Fields. Possession of a controlled substance PG 1/1-B less than 1 gr. (VOP), bond denied/transported to Wood County.

1-22: Thomas Lance Childers. Family offenses Class C, PR bond.

1-24: Phillip Matthew Kleinmeier. (Bond forfeiture) assault causing bodily injury family member, \$3,000 cash only bond.

1-24: Joshua Hoover. Unauthorized use of vehicle, unknown bond.

1-25: Jimmy Darrell Curry. Assault causing bodily injury of family member, \$2,000 bond.

1-25: Tiffany Lasha Titus. Disorderly conduct, \$500 PR bond; driving with license invalid with previous conviction/suspension without financial responsibility, \$4,000 bond.

1-25: Carol Ann Bondarenko. Driving while intoxicated, \$1,500 bond

1-25: Dylan Blake Ingram. Possession of drug paraphernalia, \$500 bond.

Calls

1-20: Hwy. 276W Mutual aid for a structure fire; CR 3325 EMS call 69-year-old male with diabetic issues; FM 514 Vehicle slid off the

road and hit a sign; FM 2946 Suspicious vehicle driving around Steamboat Shores; CR 4524 79-year-old male with knee pain and lift assist; Hwy. 69 Rock from rock hauler came through windshield and hit driver; CR 2180 Female wants to know how to keep someone off her property; W Lennon Dr. Suspicious activity male and female staying in one of the storage units; FM 515 Animal welfare concern opossum trapped under kitchen sink; CR 3330 Vehicle on fire; FM 514 Minor accident swerved off the road to avoid hitting a pig and hit a sign; PR 7704 Suspicious female sitting on caller's front porch yelling and moaning; S Texas St. Male sending threatening messages to a neighbor; CR 1156 Hit and run accident; Sheriff's Office (SO) Female has some information about a male; Airport Rd. Custody issue; Hwy. 19 Brush fire caused by battery powered pole saw; Duffy St. Domestic violence; Puckett Pass Light on in home and home owner out of town.

1-21: CR 3365 EMS call 77-year-old male with trouble breathing; CR 1605 Animal welfare concern for dog tied up with minimal shelter; CR 3400 Structure fire; CR 3231 EMS call 75-year-old male fell; FM 47 EMS call 67-year-old male with difficulty breathing; N Texas St. Patient fell and has pain; Romine Rd. Meet complainant concerning a stolen motorcycle; FM 515 One vehicle rollover and Flight for Life at the scene; Ravine St. Older white Lexus speeding; CR 3380 Ems call 77-year-old female fell and hurt hip.

1-22: Garrett Ave. Wanted subject at the location; CR 1275 Female wants to know what can be done about noise and vibrations from nearby construction; Brookshire's EMS call Someone fell; FM 2946 Motorist assist and one arrested; S Texas St. Female thinks someone is coming into her apartment and replacing her shower products with cheaper versions.

1-23: FM 2946 Deer and debris in roadway; S Dunbar Ln. EMS needed for lift assist with unknown injuries; Hwy. 69 Propane exchange truck about to catch on fire; SO lobby Female giving information regarding possible forging of documents; CR 2470 Brush fire; FM 515 Suspicious person weaving in and out of traffic; FM 2946 Suspicious person wants to come in and do maintenance; FM 3299 Panic alarm mistakenly pushed; FM 2795 Livestock on the roadway; FM 515 Person dumpster diving; S 1st St. Suspicious person walking; FM 2324 Reckless driving; FM 2737 Medical assist 4-year-old with strep and flu.

1-24: Locust St. Female saw someone steal her dog; Duffy St. Medical assist 75-year-old severely dehydrated; CR 4452 Medical assist 71-year-old with breathing issues; Hwy. 69W Major two-vehicle accident no major injuries; CR 2222 EMS call 82-year-old male with possible stroke; Locust St. Medical assist 75-year-old male fell in the bathroom; CR 1536 EMS call for female who had back surgery; FM 779 Delivery driver delivering a truck made threats to the owner of the truck; S Dunbar Ln. EMS call Elderly man on the side of the road; E Lennon Dr. EMS needed for minor accident; FM 515 Male would like information regarding issues with a juvenile; FM 515 Welfare concern for an infant; FM 2795 Neighbor's dog attacked caller's dog; CR 1235 Suspicious vehicle driving up and down the road; Rhodes Dr. Issues regarding a custody battle; E Quitman St. Downed power lines; FM 2795 Grass fire; FM 2795 Medical assist female having a hard time breathing; CR 3370 Lift assist for 79-year-old male; Rains Co. Jail 67-year-old male with very high blood pressure.

1-25: CR 2120 Medical assist 62-year-old male with congestive heart failure; Point 1st St. Truck on fire; CR 3332 Grass fire; CR 1530 Vehicle struck a mailbox; N

Texas St. Funeral escort; FM 514 EMS call for person with several medical issues; FM 515 Grass fire; CR 2430 Gas leak; CR 2430 Domestic issues between father and daughter; Old Mill Ln. Fire alarm; DR 2430 More information regarding domestic issues and one arrested; CR 4320 Suspicious vehicle on the side of the road.

1-26: FM 3274 Livestock on the roadway; CR 4320 EMS call 73-year-old female having a stroke; CR 1536 Welfare concern for a male with anger issues; Duffy St.

Issues concerning harassment; Hwy. 276 Suspicious activity; CR 3333 Suspicious circumstance; CR 1495 Animal carcasses dumped on property; CR 4254 Lift assist for 79-year-old; SO lobby Male states someone recorded a conversation he had without his permission.

The Sheriff's Department reported 168 calls for the week. Among those calls were: 1 criminal trespass, 1 damaged property, 1 debris in the roadway, 1 downed power lines, 14 EMS calls, 2

brush fires, 2 vehicle fires, 3 grass fires, 1 structure fire, 2 lift assists, 1 gas leak, 7 medical assists, 2 reckless drivers, 3 suspicious activity, 4 suspicious persons, 4 suspicious vehicles, 2 thefts, 2 threats, 44 traffic stops, 2 welfare concerns, 3 accidents, 1 hit and run accident, 1 major accident, 2 minor accidents, 1 animal attack, 2 animal welfare concern, 1 burglary.

There were 19 citations issued, 7 EMS transports, 6 fires extinguished, and 23 warnings given.

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

\$1 billion for vouchers, \$5 billion for teachers?

Legislative budget writers are proposing nearly \$5 billion to increase teacher pay and \$1 billion to implement a school voucher program in the next biennium, the *Austin Statesman* reported.



GARY BORDERS
Texas Press Association

The voucher program, also referred to as school choice, would provide public money for private schooling, a key priority for Gov. Greg Abbott that bitterly divided Republican lawmakers two years ago and failed to pass.

In addition, the funding would increase teachers' pay by \$4,000 and give teachers in rural school districts an additional \$6,000, according to a statement by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick. The early release of budget drafts is a signal that both chambers are getting off to a fast start in laying out their spending priorities.

Both the Senate and House are proposing an additional \$400 million for school safety.

The Senate budget measure also contains \$402 million to hire 567 new Department of Public Safety troopers and 159 related law enforcement personnel.

Patrick backs clarifying state's near-total abortion ban

Patrick said last week that the Legislature should amend the state's near-total abortion ban to address confusion over when doctors can legally terminate pregnancies, *The Texas Tribune* reported.

"I do think we need to clarify any language so that doctors are not in fear of being penalized if they think the life of the mother is at risk," Patrick said.

The state's abortion ban went into effect in 2022. It only allows abortions when the life of the pregnant mother is at risk. A number of doctors have argued the law is unclear.

A ProPublica investigation claims at least two women in the state have died after doctors delayed treating their miscarriages because of concern about possible prosecution. Medical experts consulted by ProPublica concluded the two deaths were preventable.

Sharing chairmanships with minority party to end

A decades-long tradition of giving at least some committee chairmanships to members of the minority party is about to end under proposed rules for the current legislative session,

according to the *Statesman*. That means this session that Democrats, who hold 62 of the 150 seats, would be left out of those positions this session, though committee vice chairmanships would be given to them.

"The rule is amended to restrict the appointment of chairs of a standing committee to those members of the political party that constitutes a majority of the House membership and to provide that a majority party member may not be appointed as a vice chair of a standing committee," the synopsis of the proposed rules says.

The change comes after then-Speaker Dade Phelan continued the bipartisan tradition in the 2023 session and drew criticism from GOP leaders such as Patrick and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton.

RRC seeks \$100 million to fix leaky oil and gas wells

The cost and frequency of plugging leaking oil and gas wells has prompted the Texas Railroad Commission to request an additional \$100 million in funding to address the issue, according to the *Houston Chronicle*. If granted, that would increase the RRC's state-funded budget by about 75 percent for the current fiscal year.

The cost to plug wells gushing with contaminated water has risen dramatically. The commission spent about \$13 million on two plugging projects last September, according to the *Chronicle*. Fees and fines paid by the oil and gas industry have in the past covered the costs of plugging wells, but the increased costs and complexity of plugging wells has largely outgrown the revenue being received.

"The 89th Legislature will thoroughly evaluate the commission's funding request and work with industry experts to better understand this compounding problem," Sen. Joan Huffman, R-Houston, and chairperson of the Senate Committee on Finance, said in a statement.

The RRC should do more to hold operators accountable for plugging their own wells, according to the director of one watchdog organization.

"We have a robust oil and gas industry, the biggest in the country," Virginia Palacios, executive director of Commission Shift, said. "There's no reason why such a profitable industry shouldn't be able to pay for its own cleanup."

Texans urged to report winter weather damages

Abbott is urging Texans affected by recent winter weather to report any prop-

erty and agricultural damages to the Texas Division of Emergency Management's portal: damage.tdem.texas.gov.

"As communities begin the recovery process, I urge Texans to report damages to their homes or businesses or any agricultural losses through the iSTAT damage survey," Abbott said. "This will help the state determine if we qualify for federal assistance."

Winter storms brought considerable snowfall recently to areas of South Texas and the Gulf Coast that rarely see the white stuff. Several storm-related deaths were reported in Austin and Houston.

2024 was hottest on record, but rainfall totals varied

It's hardly news to Texans who lived through it, but last year was the hottest on record, according to Dr. Mark Wentzel, hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board. The previous record was set in 2023.

Precipitation proved to be a mixed bag, depending on the region, though October and August were extremely dry pretty much across the state. Twelve counties in East Texas had their wettest year in the past 130 years, while Jeff Davis and Presidio counties in West Texas, and Uvalde County in Central Texas recorded their driest year since 2011.

"Drought began the year covering 39 percent of the state and expanded to cover 44 percent by the end of the year. Statewide, storage in our water supply reservoirs saw an annual increase for the first time since 2018, up five percentage points during 2024," Wentzel wrote.

State records most tornadoes in 2024

Preliminary data from the National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center indicates the United States experienced a record 1,855 tornadoes in 2024, breaking a 20-year-old record. Texas led the nation with 169 tornadoes last year, more than doubling the 2023 total of 78.

Dozens of tornadoes were spawned by several tropical storms and hurricanes. For example, Hurricane Beryl, which landed at Matagorda in early July, spawned at least 65 confirmed tornadoes.

A total of 53 fatalities were caused by tornadoes across the U.S., including nine in Texas from three twisters.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com.

FISHING REPORT

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department released the following information for Lake Fork and Lake Tawakoni taken on January 22:

Fork: Good. Water Stained; 43 degrees; 1.68 feet below pool. Bass are very slow but the bite is fair on Alabama rigs over deeper water 20-25 feet around baitfish. Suspending jerkbaits are fair in 7-12 feet around channels and big wood.

Lake Fork crappie fishing has been up and down just like the weather the last few weeks. We have settled into the winter pattern and you can find fish from about 18 feet to as deep as you can find. Some fish are just 8-18 feet down on the timber even in sixty-plus feet deep water. You can also find fish down

as deep as 45-50 feet on the same timber. We are seeing a lot of fish but we are seeing tons of small fish. Seems like you can pick a bigger fish or two out of a group and then just find you another group of fish. Smaller baits are working well for my boat and 1/16 ounce hand ties on 6-12 pounds fluoro is my best bait in neutral colors. The key is to hold those baits very still and wait for the bite. If you move the bait or the waves move your bait that fish will most likely not bite. You will need to find fish in protected areas if the wind is blowing that day. Minnows and soft plastics will get you bit as well.

Tawakoni: Fair. Water lightly stained; 44 degrees; 1.94 feet below pool. Lake Tawakoni continues to fish

well despite dropping temperatures on the main lake. The hybrid striper and white bass bite is decent. Fishing is very technical at this point targeting schools of fish in open water. Presenting crappie jigs or small flukes and swimbaits is key suspended over deep water. If you locate the massive schools of threadfin shad, that is a great place to start. The eating sized catfish bite has been slow. The trophy blue catfish bite has been good. We are seeing fish to 60 pounds and most fish are coming from 30-50 feet. Fresh gizzard shad and drum are working best. Crappie are good on bridge pilings and deep timber in 30 feet of water. Jigs are out fishing minnows. The large-mouth bite has been very slow.

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Proper tree planting for more 'fruitful' results

AgriLife Extension expert provides tips to establish and maintain fruit trees in Texas

Winter is the time to plant most fruit trees

Establishing fruit trees in Texas takes some effort, but these time-tested tips from a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert can guide the way.

Larry Stein, Ph.D., professor and Regents Fellow in the Texas A&M Department of Horticultural Sciences and AgriLife Extension fruit specialist, Uvalde, said now is the time to plant, and homeowners should choose the right tree and take the correct steps to establish and care for their fruit trees in the first critical years.

When it comes to fruit trees, Stein said to plant in late December through February. The key is that trees be totally dormant at the time of planting.

Planting trees in early winter helps them establish some root growth before they break dormancy in the spring, Stein said. That initial root growth can make a big difference during harsh summer conditions.

"When people plant their fruit trees in the early spring, they may struggle because they haven't initiated good root growth to help them absorb moisture and nutrients during a stressful summer," he said.

Stein said while the late December through February time frame for planting works for peaches, pears, figs

and other fruit trees, he does not recommend it for planting citrus trees due to the danger of freezing. For those, he recommends planting in March or April — when the chance of frost has likely passed.

Deciding what fruit tree to plant

Stein suggests referring to the Aggie horticulture fruit site when choosing varieties for planting. The site contains comprehensive fact sheets on different trees and gives fruit tree variety recommendations based on location.

Once you've narrowed the options, visit a reputable tree nursery and choose a medium-sized tree — 3-5 feet tall — so the recommended cutback at planting is less severe, Stein said.

"I prefer planting bare-

root fruit trees rather than container trees as they are less expensive and will grow better," he said. "The challenge is that bare-root trees are getting harder to find."

Also, be sure to inspect the tree for injury or signs of stress — and don't accept a subpar tree, he said.

Where to plant fruit trees

Poor draining soil can cause problems for fruit trees, Stein said. Low spots or areas that stay saturated are poor transplant locations.

"You want well-drained soil and not a spot where water collects," he said. "That can drown the tree."

Stein said soil berms — rounded mounds of soil, mulch or other material built on a level area — can be used to encircle the tree about 18-24 inches from the tree's base to keep water at bay.

But low spots, even if they drain well, are discouraged because cold air settles there, Stein said.

Stein also recommends placing the tree on the north side of the property so it stays cold during dormancy and remains dormant longer.

"Plant fruit trees in an area where they will avoid late-day sun, which can contribute to earlier bud breaks," he said. "You want the tree to stay dormant as long as possible to avoid tree or fruit damage from any potential late-spring freezes."

How to plant fruit trees

Before planting, knock off the soil around the tree's roots, which, in container trees, typically includes peat moss and perlite or a light mix. Bare-root trees will not have any soil around the roots. Inspect the roots and cut them back if they are wrapped around the root ball to prevent the tree from becoming rootbound.

Dig a hole the size of the root system, typically 12-18 inches across, Stein said. Dig it deep enough to plant the tree so that its root collar — the distinct line where the stem meets the root ball — is level with the ground.

"There is a distinct color change at the root collar," he said. "You don't want it to be any deeper than that."

Fill in the hole with the original soil, Stein said. Water the tree well to settle the soil around the roots, and then cut the tree back hard.

He said to be sure to cut the trees back hard at planting as doing so will greatly improve tree livability.

In the case of pecan trees, cut them back to 42 inches with all side branches removed to the main stem. Fruit trees should be cut back to 18-24 inches and all limbs cut back to the stem.

"It goes against some recommendations, but the reduced root system and the cutback will force the tree to go into growth mode," he said.

Weed- and grass-free zone

Stein also recommends clearing weeds and grass from around fruit trees for at least the first five years. This reduces competition for water and nutrients critical for the tree's development.

Kill out or manually remove weeds and grass within a 2- to 3-foot diameter circle around the tree, he said.

"Use glyphosate or another herbicide that will kill all grasses and broadleaf weeds to the root," he said. "You want bare soil around the tree to minimize competition for the tree, but make sure the herbicide does not contact tree leaves."

Stein said grow tubes or aluminum foil may be used to keep the herbicide off the tree's trunk when chemicals are applied. After the first year, mulch can be added within the circle to help weed control.

Avoid killing it with kindness

After proper transplanting, cutback and weed eradication, it's important to leave the tree alone until it starts to grow, Stein said.

"It's important to just let the tree do its thing. Most people kill trees with kindness at that point," he said. "Overwatering is probably the No. 1 cause of death. Trees don't need much water while inactive. They can go 4-6 weeks without water when dormant, and normal rain usually provides the needed moisture."

When the tree begins growing, keep it well-watered — typically once a week with 1 inch of water, depending on soil type, Stein said.

"When the tree is first planted, the water needs to be placed right around the tree," he said. "As the tree grows, the roots move away from the tree. We think the best roots start at the canopy edge or drip line and go out about one and a half times the tree's height."

Fertilize, fertilize, fertilize

In May, after the tree shows 8-10 inches of growth, fertilize it with a cup of ammonium sulfate with 21% nitrogen. Organic 3% fertilizer can be used but apply 7 cups to reach the 21% nitrogen requirement.

Water in the fertilizer 12-18 inches from the trunk of the tree, he said.

"The soil berm and weed-free zone can be useful to let you know where to spread the fertilizer," he said. "You might want to put the fertilizer outside the berm to ensure it's not too close to the trunk."

Stein said to continue to water and weed around the tree and ramp up the fertilization regimen in year two with a cup of fertilizer in March, April, May and June. In year three, double the fertilizer regimen with 2 cups of ammonium sulfate in those months to push the tree's growth.

"Follow this regimen, and you will be amazed at the tree you can grow in three years," he said.

Provide a half pound of 21% fertilizer per inch of trunk diameter at bud break in subsequent years for the life of the tree, Stein said. Give the tree another half-pound of fertilizer in May if it shows a fruit crop. Do not apply the second round of fertilizer if the tree is not showing fruit.

"Those are the recommendations for the life of the tree," he said. "There are variety-specific training and pruning regimens we recommend in the fact sheets, and you'll need to be aware of potential seasonal disease and pest issues, but that is a good start to successfully establishing fruit trees in Texas."

MY TAKE ON TECH

To The Moon

It is becoming more evident that human space travel to the Moon and Mars may happen in the next 15 years or so. It would likely be good to get some experience of having humans live on the Moon continuously for a while before trekking off to Mars.



JOHN KELLY
Certified Information Systems Security Professional

Good news for people who may want to visit the Moon is that apparently there is water there (as ice), primarily in the polar regions. People need food, water, and oxygen to live anywhere, so if there is water available on the Moon, many of these needs can be met locally.

Astronomers who relocate to the Moon may park on the other side so they can enjoy a perfect deep space view for both visual and radio telescopes, with no interference from the Earth either visually or electronically.

People going to Mars in the future will know it will be at least a half a year each way, which makes emergency rescue or prompt return to Earth unlikely, compared to our Moon. Getting emergency provisions to Mars in six months (or more) would likely be of little value, compared to 72 hours (or less) one-way to the Moon.

I'm guessing that many Moon dwellers may live underground, perhaps in empty lava tubes that might be found and built out. Underground living could also protect against harmful radiation as well as micro asteroids that can move faster than a bullet and give little notice before they show up (on Earth, they burn up in the atmosphere). Also, temperature and atmospheric control beneath the surface may be easier and less prone to failure.

Structures above ground will probably be made using 3D printing techniques on a large scale, using 90 percent local materials to generate buildings and structures without the prohibitive expense of shipping heavy building materials from Earth. That's where having water locally can make a huge difference.

Once trips to the Moon become more common, the expansion of space tourism will no doubt follow soon after. It very likely will be popular in the next 100 years, and the Moon obviously is a great destination when it comes to being able to get there quickly, return quickly, and have all the excitement of being on another celestial object.

Communications will be much better from the Moon than from Mars as we learned 50 years ago when the astronauts could communicate with NASA Control on Earth with only a few seconds delay. Internet access, and voice and video calling would be easy and likely inexpensive from the Moon. Cell phone service on the Moon would no doubt be expected to happen as more people showed up.

I think it is safe to say that one or more of you who are reading these words today will likely walk on the Moon or Mars in your lifetime. Will you possibly exclaim in 2045, "If someone had told me in 2025 I would be walking on the Moon someday, I would say there's no way!"

John can be reached at john2645@mytakeontech.net.

allow glitches and incorrect assumptions discovered to be addressed while people are still "in the neighborhood." The Moon could be our "proving grounds" to discover and fix bugs before traveling millions of miles to another planet.

The Moon's gravity is about 16 percent of Earth's, and Mars' gravity is about a third of Earth's. Lack of standard Earth gravity (1G) could be an issue for long-term non-Earth residents and would have to be addressed. International Space Station residents, with zero gravity, are demonstrating that.

For substantial stays on the Moon, many of the negative aspects of Moon living would have to be considered. A half-century ago, astronauts took with them everything they needed for their brief Moon visit. Future Moon visitors will likely attempt to set up permanent accommodations. Having the Moon so close to Earth is a great advantage over distant planets. The Moon, being about a three-day trip each way, may someday be reachable in less than two days, or a bit longer than a current transcontinental jet flight. Mars, on the other hand, is many months away, and that is not likely to change much.

WHEN PUBLIC NOTICES REACH THE PUBLIC, EVERYONE BENEFITS.

Some officials want to move notices from newspapers to government-run websites, where they may not be easily found.

Why try to fix something that isn't broken?

2 OUT OF 3

U.S. adults read a newspaper in print or online during the week.

Keep Public Notices in Newspapers.

NEWS MEDIA ALLIANCE
www.newsmediaalliance.org

RAINS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES - GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2024				
Data Control Codes		10	98	
		General Fund	onmf Other Governmental Funds	Total Governmental Funds
REVENUES				
5700	Local and Intermediate Sources	\$ 7,770,104	\$ 1,688,405	\$ 9,458,509
5800	State Program Revenues	12,013,091	810,164	12,823,255
5900	Federal Program Revenues	187,198	3,462,317	3,649,515
5020	Total Revenues	\$ 19,970,393	\$ 5,960,886	\$ 25,931,279
EXPENDITURES				
Current:				
0011	Instruction	\$ 10,275,269	\$ 1,832,786	\$ 12,108,055
0012	Instructional Resources and Media Services	199,742	-	199,742
0013	Curriculum and Staff Development	141,584	51,763	193,347
0021	Instructional Leadership	377,646	369,503	747,149
0023	School Leadership	1,096,309	39,932	1,136,241
0031	Guidance, Counseling and Evaluation Services	680,982	226,643	907,625
0032	Social Work Services	100,000	-	100,000
0033	Health Services	180,039	-	180,039
0034	Student Transportation	939,146	-	939,146
0035	Food Services	-	1,451,799	1,451,799
0036	Cocurricular/Extracurricular Activities	882,300	459,631	1,341,931
0041	General Administration	1,149,321	20,401	1,169,722
0051	Facilities Maintenance and Operations	2,421,887	193,161	2,615,048
0052	Security and Monitoring Services	143,953	21,197	165,150
0053	Data Processing Services	110,561	4,647	115,208
0061	Community Services	-	293,653	293,653
0071	Principal on Long-term Debt	-	745,000	745,000
0072	Interest on Long-term Debt	-	317,376	317,376
0073	Debt Issuance Costs and Fees	-	500	500
0099	Other Intergovernmental Charges	488,414	-	488,414
6030	Total Expenditures	\$ 19,187,153	\$ 6,027,992	\$ 25,215,145
1100	Excess (Deficiency) of Revenues Over Expenditures	\$ 783,240	\$ (67,106)	\$ 716,134
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)				
7915	Transfers In	\$ 48,908	\$ 97,000	\$ 145,908
8911	Transfers Out	(97,000)	(48,908)	(145,908)
7080	Net Other Financing Sources (Uses)	\$ (48,092)	\$ 48,092	\$ -
1200	Net Changes in Fund Balances	\$ 735,148	\$ (19,014)	\$ 716,134
0100	Fund Balances - Beginning (September 1)	3,486,796	590,687	4,077,483
3000	Fund Balances - Ending (August 31)	\$ 4,221,944	\$ 571,673	\$ 4,793,617

Believer's Baptist Church

By Linda Brendle

And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles:

Luke 6:13

This week's sermon was called "The Incomparable Christ: Twelve Ordinary Men, Part 1." 1) The Timing - From the time Jesus preached in Nazareth, He was controversial, and the religious leaders looked for ways to destroy Him. He knew His time was short. When He chose the Apostles, He had only about eighteen months left on earth. In that time, He would train them, and after He was gone, they would write most of the New Testament and spread the gospel to the world. 2) The Called - He chose twelve ordinary men out of the crowd of disciples or learners who followed Him, and He named them Apostles or sent ones. It was a sovereign choice, not because of any

uniqueness in them but for His own reasons. 3) Application - No one is naturally qualified for salvation or service. God chooses the nobodies. When we doubt ourselves, Jesus says "Perfect. That's who I want." It's not about us; it's for His glory.

- February Schedule:
- February 2 - Evening Home Groups
 - February 4, Noon - 55 - Fellowship Lunch
 - February 9, 4:45 p.m. - Berean Ladies
 - February 9, 6:30 p.m. - Sunday Night Worship
 - February 23 - The Great Commission Offering
 - February 23, 6:30 p.m. - The Church Praying

The Asking for a Friend Podcast Episode #208 is titled "Local Pastors Talk: The Call to Vocational Ministry." Find the link at www.bbcmemory.org.

Emory Methodist Church

By Mary White

He is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all creation.

Colossians 1:15

Rev. David Banks continued his series "The Theophany: Firstborn" with scripture text taken from Colossians. David brought forth a great message of Paul's shortage letter. The sites and sounds of this old world sometimes causes us to wonder what God is really up to.

We affirm our faith with creeds and confessions of faith hoping that God will shape our understanding of who Jesus really is. In the beginning was the Word, in Him was life, the light shines. I believe this tells us the mystery of who Jesus really is. We are called to be different, to not keep the Gospel to ourselves, but reach out to the lost and

share the love of Jesus.

AA meets every Tuesday and Thursday at 7:00 p.m. every Saturday at noon.

In February, The Methodist Women will host a Valentine Party on Saturday, February 15, beginning at 5:00 p.m. Everyone is invited and transportation can be scheduled with advance notice. The cost is \$20.00 per person and reservations are required. Contact Linda Ross at 214-535-3680, or call the church office at 903-473-2411.

Our MYF Youth will be taking a mission trip in February.

Pray for Lexie Alexander and the Fred Worley family.

Have a wonderful week and give someone a smile. Be kind.

SAVVY SENIORS

How Seniors Can Get Help Lowering Their Grocery Bills

Dear Savvy Senior, I would like to find out if my 72-year-old mother is eligible for food stamps or any other type of assistance program. When my stepfather died last year, mom's income dropped in half and she is having a hard time paying her grocery bills. What can you tell us?
Searching Son



JIM MILLER Savvy Senior

holds receiving TANF or SSI are also eligible.

Net income is figured by taking gross income minus allowable deductions including a standard monthly deduction, medical expenses that exceed \$35 per month out-of-pocket, rent or mortgage payments, utility costs, taxes and more.

In addition to the net income requirement, some states also require that a senior's assets be below \$4,500, not counting the home, personal property, retirement savings and most vehicles. Most states, however, have much higher asset limits or they don't count assets at all when determining eligibility.

To apply, you or your mom will need to fill out a state application form, which can be done by mail, by phone, or online, depending on your mom's state of residence.

If eligible, her benefits will be provided on a plastic Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card that's used like a debit card and accepted at most grocery stores. The average SNAP benefit for 60-and-older households is around \$105 per month.

To learn more or apply, contact your local SNAP office - visit fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory or call 800-221-5689.

Other Programs

In addition to SNAP, there are other food assistance programs that can help lower-income seniors like the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP).

The CSFP is a program that provides supplemental

food packages to seniors with income limits at or below the 150 percent poverty line. And the SFMNP offers coupons that can be exchanged for fresh fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets, roadside stands and community supported agriculture programs in select locations throughout the U.S. To be eligible, your mother's income must be below the 185 percent poverty level. To learn more about these programs and find out if they are available in your mom's area, visit fns.usda.gov/programs.

There are also many Feeding America network food banks that host "Senior Grocery Programs" that provide free groceries to older adults, no strings attached. Contact your local food bank (see feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-food-bank) to find out if a program is available nearby.

In addition to the food assistance programs, there are also various financial assistance programs that may help your mom pay for medications, health care, utilities and more. To locate these programs, and learn how to apply for them, go to BenefitsCheckUp.org.

Send your senior questions to: Savvy Senior, P.O. Box 5443, Norman, OK 73070, or visit SavvySenior.org. Jim Miller is a contributor to the NBC Today show and author of "The Savvy Senior" book.

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Obituaries

Robert Diggs

1948 - 2025

A celebration of life for Robert (Bobby) Diggs, 76, of Emory, will be held on February 8, at 2:00 p.m., at New Hope Southern Baptist Church located at 1119 CR 278, Kaufman, TX 75142.

Mr. Diggs died on January 22, 2025. He was born on December 17, 1948.

He was a Vietnam veteran and worked as an electrician with six of his nephews. He was a loving husband, dad, grandpa, papaw and uncle to a host of nieces and nephews.

Mr. Diggs is survived by his wife, Anita; son, Lonnie and wife, Amy; daughter, Shelley; thirteen grandchildren, Lonnie Jr., Scott and wife DD, Hannah, Gabby, Scott and wife Kristan, Taylor and wife Cassy,



Kevin, Korey, Taner and Shelby; seven great-grandchildren, Aubrey, Rhett, Ryder, Levi, Hayes, Karson and Kori; sisters, Linda and Betty; sisters-in-law, Jeanie, Peggy, Charlotte, Joann and Carol; and brothers-in-law, Ken and wife Prissy, Billy, Gerald and Weldon.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sisters, Doris and Patsy; brothers, Bradford and Tommy; brothers-in-law, Gayle, Bo and Terry; and nephew, Steve.

Flowers may be sent to 1137 Rolling Cedar Ln., Kaufman, TX 75142. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to New Hope Southern Baptist Church.

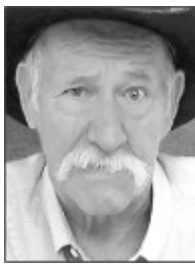
Fred Ray Worley

1949 - 2025

Funeral services for Fred Ray Worley, 75, of Emory, will be held on January 31, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., at Amazing Grace Fellowship Church in Alba with Pastor Byron George officiating.

Mr. Worley died on January 25, 2025, at his home surrounded by his family. He was born on May 19, 1949, in Greenville. He was a member at Amazing Grace Fellowship Church in Alba and was a devout Christian and he loved his church family.

He met Sue in elementary school and knew even then that he would be with her for the rest of his life. They were married on August 31, 1967. He worked at E-Systems, Sabine River Authority, Greenville Fire Department, was a truck stop manager, and a ranch foreman. Firefighting was his passion and he dedicated his life to serving others through his career as a firefighter, paramedic and community advocate. In August 1973, he became one of the first State of Texas Certified Firefighters. In 1978, he was one of the first certified paramedics/firefighters for the Greenville Fire Department and Hunt County. He earned numerous honors throughout his life.



He cherished the time spent with his loved ones, creating memories that will be treasured forever. Fred and Sue could be seen at all of their children's and grandchildren's activities. He enjoyed coaching youth sports and did so for over 20 years.

Mr. Worley is survived by his wife of 57 years; children, Shane Worley, Misty Mattson and Tyson Worley; daughter-in-law, Jennifer Worley; like family, Ron Kelley, Shannon Orloff, Kelly Worley; grandchildren, Jacob Singleman, Trenton Worley, Ty Mattson, Caden Worley, Emily Worley, Kennedy Worley, Brooks Worley and Cannon Worley.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Gladys McBride Barker; father, Jesse James Worley; stepfather, Steve Barker; and children, Brian Worley and Hapi Worley.

A visitation will be held one hour prior to the service at the church.

Donations may be made in Mr. Worley's name to your local fire department. Funeral arrangements are under the direction of Wilson Orwosky Funeral Home.

Church Directory

EMORY
METHODIST CHURCH
We All Matter To God
Dr. David Banks
456 Texas St.
One Block from the Square
Sunday School 9:30 a.m.
Worship Time 10:30 a.m.
903-473-2411 • EmoryMC.org

MIRACLE FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH (Independent)
820 SH 276 • Emory
Sunday School 9:00 a.m.
Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
Wed. Night Youth 5:30 p.m.
Wed. Night Service 6:30 p.m.
Pastor: Robert Burns II
Church: 903-473-3238

Pilgrims Rest Baptist Church
1140 FM 2964, Emory
Sunday School.....9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship..11:00 a.m.
Evening Worship....6:00 p.m.
"Reaching Out Because We Care"
Pastor Keith Prather
www.pilgrimsrestbaptistchurch.org

Point Church of Christ
Bible Classes 9:00 a.m.
Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.
Wed. Eve. Service 7:00 p.m.
Everyone welcome!
Richard Kellam
www.pointchurchofchrist.org

County Line Baptist Church
Bro. Wayne Darty
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.
Sunday Evening 6:30 p.m.
Wednesday Night 7:00 p.m.
nursery available
HWY. 275, 3 miles south of Miller Grove
903-994-2125 • 903-459-3219

Calvary Baptist Church
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTAL BAPTIST
10:00 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Worship
6:00 p.m. Worship
Pastor: Jimmy Jarrett
Hwys 515 & 779
2-1/2 Miles East of Emory
903-474-9463

Daugherty Baptist Church
2 miles west of Hwy 19N on FM 514
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.
Morning Worship ... 11:00 a.m.
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.
Pastor Joe Pierce
903-259-1147 & 903-259-0348

St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church
Rev. Michael Ledesma
551 East FM 2795
903-473-5116
Visit stjohnemory.org for Mass times.
From Brookshires, go east 1.2 miles. Turn right onto FM 2795

Freedom Church of God
10830 FM 514
6 mi. N on Hwy. 19, east on 514
Sun School 10:00 a.m.
Sun Worship 11:00 a.m.
Sun Evening 6:00 p.m.
Wed Evening 7:00 p.m.
Nursery ~ Children's Church
Come Worship With Us
Pastor David Hamm
Church 903-473-2457

We invite you to study God's word with us soon.
CHURCH OF CHRIST
Hwy. 69 N. • P.O. Box 68
Emory, TX 75440
903-473-2658
Sunday Bible Classes 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Morning Worship 10:00 a.m.
Sunday Evening Worship 4:00 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study 7:00 p.m.
emorychurchofchrist.org

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
Point, TX
9:45 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Morning Worship
6:00 p.m. Evening Worship
6:00 p.m. .. Wednesday Service
903-598-3220

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Downtown Emory
903-473-3357
emorybaptist.org
Dr. Richard D. Piles—Pastor
Chris Henderson—Minister of Music & Sr. Adults
Ronnie Witt— Minister of Youth & Education
Sunday
Sunday Morning
Small Groups 9:15am
Morning Worship 10:30am
Evening Worship 6:30 pm
Wednesday
Wed. Worship 6:30pm (Adults, Youth, Children)
Choir Practise 6:30pm

Believers' Baptist Church
Sunday
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
MorningWorship 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday
Adult Bible Study 6:30 p.m.
Student Ministry 6:30 p.m.
Dr. Jason Rolan — Pastor
Jerod Haygood — Student & Family Pastor
Duffey Henderson — Music & Media Minister
www.bbcmemory.org 903-474-0027
903-473-2653 to have your church placed in this directory

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Wednesdays - 7:00 pm
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<http://clarkschapelcog.org/>
<http://www.facebook.com/clarkschapelcogemorytx>

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SALES

For Sale Dual split King Size bed, in storage, only used once, \$500, in Emory. Please call 469-432-3675, leave message and the call will be returned.

Teacup Chihuahua puppies, 1 male left. \$100. Ready for sale in January. 903-474-0265.

PLEASE DON'T LITTER
Keep Rains County Beautiful

SALES

Good Samaritan's Thrift/Clothes store will be open Saturdays in January from 8am - noon. Clothes sale is open Mon.-Wed., 8 am -12 pm, and 1 pm-4 pm. Open 8 am - noon on Thurs.

HOOTEN'S HARDWARE, LLC
 Browse our wide selection of RV Parts and Accessories. Hwy. 69N in Emory. 903-473-8788.

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EMORY SELF STORAGE, Hwy. 69S, 410 E. Lennon. Now offering climate-controlled units. 903-474-9150, 903-348-5459.

HELP WANTED

Looking for someone to answer phones, do scheduling, run errands, 5 days/wk, 903-473-1404, L&L Plumbing.

RENT/LEASE

RAINS ISD NEEDS: Custodian/Custodian Substitutes, Bus Drivers/Substitutes, Food Service Employee/Substitutes, Child Development Center Employee/Substitutes. Salary based on experience. \$320/month of full-time employee health coverage paid. Apply on-line at https://www.rainsisd.org Equal Employment Opportunity.

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 For info, call 903-473-2653

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CONSTRUCTION

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DODSON AND SONS
 Painting, drywall, carpentry and more. 903-259-8541. For plumbing needs call Scott Trieb 903-474-4129.

DIRT & TRACTOR WORK

G&G GRAVEL - All types of gravel, chipped asphalt, available for spreading, free estimates. Miller Grove. Bret Garrett 903-268-6910.

LAWN/LANDSCAPE/MOWING

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PUBLIC/LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF BIDS
 The Hooker Cemetery Association is seeking bids for mowing and trimming of the cemetery located on FM 513. Deadline is February 10, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. For bid packets contact: Donna Fletcher 819 RSCR 4470 Point, Tx. 75472 (903) 268-0412 The board reserves the right to accept or reject any bid.

PUBLIC/LEGAL NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS BUYING PROPERTY IN THE VICINITY OF THE SHIRLEY WATER SUPPLY CORP.
 Shirley Water Supply Corp. urges any prospective buyer to verify with the manager at the office, located on FM 1567, east of Hwy. 19, north of Emory, Tex., or south of Sulphur Springs, Tex., whether or not water is available at the tract of land in question. Shirley Water Supply Corp. 6684 FM 1567W Sulphur Springs, Texas 75482

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS
Rains County

Rains County is soliciting service providers for one or more FEMA Public Assistance (PA)/Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Texas Division of Emergency Management, Texas Water Development Board and/or other sources, including FEMA Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, and/or Flood Mitigation Assistance. Accordingly, Rains County seeks to contract with a qualified engineering/architectural firm(s). Please submit 3 copies of your proposal of services to the following address: Rains County Attn: Kristi Hopkins 167 E. Quitman St. Ste. 102 Emory, TX 75440. Statements of Qualifications must be received by Rains County no later than 4 PM on February 10, 2025 to be considered. Rains County reserves the right to negotiate with any and all proposers, as per the Texas Professional Services Procurement Act and the Uniform Grant and Contract Management Standards. Minority Business Enterprises, Small Business Enterprises, Women Business Enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are encouraged to submit proposals. Rains County is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Servicios de traducción están disponibles por petición.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Rains County

Rains County is soliciting service providers for one or more FEMA Public Assistance (PA)/Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) grants from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Texas Division of Emergency Management, Texas Water Development Board and/or other sources, including FEMA Public Assistance, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, and/or Flood Mitigation Assistance. Accordingly, Rains County seeks to contract with a qualified service provider for disaster recovery management services. Please submit 3 copies of your proposal of services to the following address: Rains County Attn: Kristi Hopkins 167 E. Quitman St. Ste. 102 Emory, TX 75440. Proposals must be received by Rains County no later than 4 PM on February 10, 2025 to be considered. Rains County reserves the right to negotiate with any and all proposers, as per the Texas Professional Services Procurement Act and the Uniform Grant and Contract Management Standards. Minority Business Enterprises, Small Business Enterprises, Women Business Enterprises, and labor surplus area firms are encouraged to submit proposals. Rains County is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer. Servicios de traducción están disponibles por petición.

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8	9	5	6	7	4	3	2	1
6	1	3	2	5	8	7	9	4
5	6	1	8	3	7	2	4	9
9	8	7	5	4	2	1	6	3
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Sports

RAINS LADY CAT & WILDCAT BASKETBALL

Coach Jenkins adds 250th career win, teams eye playoff return

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

Coach Laura Jenkins secured her 250th career win as a head girls basketball coach, while the Rains Wildcats and Lady Cats move closer to a return to the Class 3A playoffs.

On Friday, January 24, the Lady Cats trailed by two points at half time, but a bad second half doomed them to a 61-32 loss to the Lady Raiders in Winnsboro.

The Wildcats beat the Raiders, 49-32, in the second game of the evening.

At home on Tuesday, January 28, the Lady Cats fell behind early, but bounced back to seal the 69-52 victory over the Commerce Lady Tigers.

The victory marked the 250th career win for Jenkins in her coaching career that included stops in Rockwall-Heath, Martin's Mill and Kaufman.

The Wildcats and the Commerce Tigers battled back and forth all night with the Tigers stealing the one-point win, 55-54.

The Lady Cats improve to



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

Madison Moczygemba (5) finishes the fast break during the 69-52 district win over Commerce on January 28.

27-4 for the season, and 8-2 in district. The Wildcats fall to 18-7 and 5-3 in district.

The high school teams will travel to Mount Vernon to take on the Tigers and Lady

Tigers on Friday night, January 31.

They will host the Prairiland Patriots and Lady Patriots at Talkington Gym on Tuesday night, February 4.



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

As his Tiger defender watches on, Gunner Cook (4) takes the ball to the hoop over another Tiger defender during the 55-54 district loss on Tuesday, January 28.

LUKE CLAYTON

If you've been following along with my column the past few weeks, you might remember my mention of an upcoming late season deer hunt out in west Texas with my friends Jeff Rice and Larry Weishuhn.



LUKE CLAYTON
Outdoor Columnist

Deer can be harvested through February on many TPWD managed lands ranches and the lease Larry is on still has a number of does and a few bucks that need to be taken. Our goal is to put some late season venison in the freezer and generally have a great time hunting and enjoying camp life for a couple days.

We head out to west Texas early in the morning but today is prep day and I will be working on getting some of our 'grub' ready. I learned a long time ago that after a day of hunting and coming back to camp after dark, the last thing I want to do is spend an hour or two preparing dinner. Oh, I've been in many hunting camps where we 'lived out of the can', eating everything from canned soup to cold cut sandwiches. Nothing wrong with that, but for those of us who enjoy cooking and happen to have plenty of game in the freezer, why not put our cooking skills and game to good use! Let me give you a 'run down' of some of our meals that I will prepare today. I will chill them in the fridge and into the cooler they will go early in the morning when we head out.

BREAKFAST FIRST No time early in the morning for cooking a big breakfast before heading out to hunt. I will fry a couple of pounds of freshly made breakfast sausage, made from the lean meat from that Choctaw mule foot hog I shot a couple months ago up on the Choctaw Hunting Lodge, owned by the Choctaw Nation up in southeast Oklahoma. Of course I will need biscuits which I will prepare with an easy recipe using two ingredients, self rising flour and cream. Several of these 'sausage biscuits' wrapped in foil will make a quick and easy meal each morning before heading out on the hunt.

THE MAIN COURSE I have a couple of wild pork backstraps marinating and will put them in my Smokin Tex electric smoker in a couple hours. With the thermostat set at 225 degrees, I will use hickory wood to give the backstraps a good smoke flavor and then add some barbecue sauce and wrap in foil and allow them to slow cook for about 4 hours until the meat is very tender. This will become the main event for the first evening meal when sliced thick and served on hot bread. The remainder of the meat will be chopped and made for lunch time

sandwiches when we come back to camp for a few hours between hunts.

Next comes what might just be my favorite camp-or-home-meal of all, skillet baked beans. I've enjoyed many recipes for baked beans through the year but the one I am about to tell you about is the tastiest of all and very easy to prepare. First, you will need a couple cans of what is called "Baked beans". These beans are well done of course but far from what I consider tasty baked beans. Buy the cheapest ones you can find, I usually stock up at the Dollar Store. These rather bland beans can easily be transformed into a side dish you that will likely become one of your favorites. Begin by putting a bit of cooking oil in a skillet and add chopped onion, chopped peppers (jalapeno or poblano) and cook until soft. When the veggies start to soften, add several cloves of chopped fresh garlic and continue cooking a couple minutes. Don't overcook the garlic. Next add the canned beans, the amount can vary to suit the number of folks at camp. Add a can or water and bring up to a simmer. I love brown sugar and probably use more than most so add as much as you wish as well as a couple tablespoons of your favorite thick barbecue sauce. These ingredients transform those bland canned beans into a very tasty side dish. If you prefer, you can cook northern beans and use them in this dish but canned beans are cheap and easy and work well for me. I expect these will go well with the pork backstrap.

DRUMSTICK SNACKS I often buy the weekly meat specials at the grocery store and this week chicken drumsticks were on sale. I bought a big package, seasoned them with Cajun seasoning and smoked them with pecan wood until they were fall-off-the-bone tender and a bit crispy on the outside. These can serve as appetizers at camp and possibly be munched on our drive out to west Texas.

STIR FRY AS WELL Our friend Jeff Rice has a stir fry planned with marinated wild pork sliced very thinly. I'm not sure whether it will be cooked in a conventional Asian stir fry or sweet and sour pork with Jasmine rice. I've tried Jeff's stir fry dishes and eagerly look forward to whatever comes out of his wok.

FRESH STEAKS Larry Weishuhn is a master at grilling everything from boneless chicken thighs to thick cut venison steaks. There's a big fire pit right behind the old stone camp house and I expect Larry will be working his magic on some pieces of very fresh venison backstrap cut about three-quarters of an inch thick. It's hard to beat fresh backstrap cooked over a very hot mesquite wood fire especially from those west Texas deer. Larry taught us

that venison from deer that live on a winter's diet of a plant called filaree are exceptionally tasty. I remember the venison we enjoyed out there about this time last year and it was exceptionally good.

It appears we will be doing a great deal of eating on this

little three day hunt. Hope we can find time to do a little deer hunting!

Remember our 6th Annual Outdoor Ron-de-Voux at The Top Rail Cowboy Church in Greenville on March 1. There will be plenty of campfire cooking at my little

camp, the chuck wagon teams as well as the Purts Creek Dutch Kettle Cooks. So far, we have enjoyed great weather for the event on the beautiful 12 acres, but if it rains, there is a big covered arena we can use. There will be live music and lots of booths with vendors offering

all kinds of items. A chili cook off is scheduled for this year which promises to be lots of fun. For more information or to secure a booth, contact James Carr at 903-426-2045 or Marshal Jarvis 903-461-9917.

The camp menu - Will there be time to hunt?

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