

# Rains County Leader

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EMORY, TEXAS - THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026

PRICE 75¢

## RAINS COUNTY

### Commissioners, residents discuss green energy projects



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

Resident Jay Ford speaks to the Rains County Commissioners Court during a town hall meeting at the Rains County Courthouse on Tuesday, March 10.

By **CHUCK FITTS**  
Rains County Leader staff

A town hall on green energy projects in Rains County was held by the Rains County Commissioners Court on Tuesday, March 10, at the Rains County Courthouse.

About 100 residents attended the special evening meeting and several had questions on a 391 Commission, a battery energy storage systems (BESS) and solar farms.

Most residents were in favor of joining with Van Zandt County in a 391 Commission to regulate the green energy projects in the area. Officials in the

adjacent county are farther along in the process of creating the entity and are looking for other local counties to join to finish establishment of the group.

Authorized under Chapter 391 of the Texas Local Government Code, the entity is a regional planning commission established to foster cooperation among local governments to coordinate development like regional infrastructure. An example of this type of commission would be the East Texas Council of Governments (ETCOG).

Most residents that spoke were opposed to the construction of any BESS systems in the county citing the environmental damage that would be

caused if the system caught fire.

Rains County Judge Brent Hilliard stated that an invitation to attend the meeting to answer questions was presented to the company planning to construct the BESS facility, but no representative was present.

Representatives from the solar farm on Hwy. 69 between Point and Lone Oak were present for the meeting and answered questions and concerns about the solar project.

The representative from the owner of the facility, Grupo Cobra, explained the tax benefits to the county, the extra

see **COURT** on page 2

## POINT

### Point PD suspended due to budget crunch

By **CHUCK FITTS**  
Rains County Leader staff

The City of Point suspended their police officers on Friday, March 6, due to lack of money in the city's account.

In a letter released online by their official website, City of Point Mayor Angela Nelson announced that "all members of the Point Police Department, including reserve officers and the Chief of Police, are being eliminated."

Nelson stated in the letter that "the City of Point will not be able to meet all of its current payroll obligations past this week."

"Despite previous assurances that obligations were being met, it has been discovered that the city's payroll tax obligations were not being met," the letter continued.

Nelson noted that the city had been made aware that it is under a formal investigation and that the "obligations to the IRS dated back to 2018, but many of the payments missed are over the last few years."

"At this point, the debt, including penalties and interest, is in excess of \$300,000," the statement said. "It is likely that the IRS may seek to seize certain items that are not subject to a debt obligation, like city owned vehicles and real property."

The letter noted that certain budget line items in the general fund had been depleted and misappropriated by a former employee.

"That is not to say that these funds were used for the employee's personal use, instead it appears that the funds were moved into the general fund in order to make payroll," Nelson stated.

see **POINT** on page 2

## CITY OF EMORY

### Emory City Council conducts regular monthly meeting Tuesday night

By **TREY HILL**  
Rains County Leader staff

The Emory City Council convened for its regular session on Tuesday night, March 10, in the council chamber of Emory City Hall. The meeting included updates from department heads and a presentation of a comprehensive water study conducted by Hayter Engineering. The council also approved a zoning change for property located on Hwy. 69.

The meeting began with the pledges and invocation followed by the swearing in of Cameron Demps as Chief of Police for the City of Emory. Appointed during the February 10 meeting, the oath of office made Demps' position official.

#### Financial Overview

Janice Nobles, City Accountant, presented a financial report detailing data through February 28, which accounts for 42 percent of the annual budget. Nobles reported that general fund revenue stands at 54 percent, with expenses at 36 percent, signifying a robust financial position. The police department's revenue was noted at 69 percent, while expenses were at 38 percent.

Nobles pointed out that although the municipal court has no revenue budget, its expenses are on target at 41 percent. Public works reported no revenue, but maintenance expenses are at 34 percent, aligning favorably with expecta-

tions. In water and sewer management, water production showed no revenue, but expenses rested at 38 percent. Water distribution generated a revenue of 31 percent amid noted potential timing issues with month-end postings, while expenses were at 45 percent. Water treatment revenue was 50 percent, with expenses at 37 percent, and wastewater collection reported revenues at 41 percent and expenses at 39 percent. Overall, Nobles concluded that the city is ahead of budget on revenues and below on expenses.

#### Police Department Update

Chief Demps highlighted recent staffing developments, including the on-

boarding of a patrol officer and an ongoing background check for another candidate. He also mentioned a newly hired reserve officer. Despite issues with the Records Management System, significant progress has been achieved in the property room, with expectations of finishing under budget. Officer Anna Haner has taken on a new role as investigator within the department.

#### City Administration Report

City Administrator Leah Drown informed council members of organizational changes in the office and announced plans to allow public entry for

see **EMORY** on page 2

## SPOTLIGHT

### Dirk Schutter has had an interesting, miraculous life in his 80-something years

By **JUDY KRAMER**  
Rains County Leader contributor

Long-time readers of past *Rains County Leader* newspapers might remember articles about Dirk Schutter, a current Emory resident, in 2003, and again in 2022. The articles described his perilous life as a youngster in Holland when his parents hid a Jewish family from German troops and came close to being discovered. He was born in Wilp, Holland in 1937, shortly before the Dutch surrendered to Hitler and Holland went under German occupation. Schutter only found out about the Jewish family in his family's hay-filled attic when he followed his mother up the stairs as she went to feed the cats. He was

curious as to why cats needed silverware with their plates of food, and when he found out the food wasn't for cats he had to keep that secret for three years. In 1944, Schutter came down with polio and after a three-month stay in the hospital he lived in a tent outside the family house so he wouldn't expose others to the disease. During his stay in the tent, he witnessed the 1944 attack on Arnhem involving Allied British and Polish airborne troops parachuting from planes, and many getting killed in the process.

Schutter's family and the hidden Jewish family were able to move to the U.S. after the war settling in Mesquite and Terrell, Texas. Dirk Schutter started life anew, going to

school, getting married and spent many years working and giving back to his community.

Schutter met Patricia Moore, his future wife, when they were in high school in Terrell. He had not become an American citizen yet, but Patricia's mother insisted that she not marry a foreigner who might move to Holland and take Patricia with him. Schutter applied for his citizenship, and on their wedding day, September 30, 1960, he received a draft notice. He was sent to Germany in December and when he was settled Patricia joined him there. He served eight years in the U.S. Army, both regular and reserve status. In 1965 He took a

see **SPOTLIGHT** on page 2



Patricia and Dirk Schutter



**City Girl:**  
*Truth*  
Page 3

**Jody Dyer:**  
*Happy Hobbies...*  
page 3

**Wildcat Sports**  
page 8

#### Rain Report

Thu., Mar. 5 . . . . . 1.24 in.  
Sat., Mar. 7 . . . . . 1.07 in.  
Tue., Mar. 10 . . . . . 0.24 in.  
Total for Mar. . . . . 2.55 in.  
Year to date . . . . . 6.42 in.

# Community outreach & organizations

**ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**  
Emory - Tues. & Thurs. 7:00-8:00 p.m., open meetings.  
Emory 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** - Mon., 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., 1-3 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

**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 GARDEN CLUB** - 1st Mon., 11:00 a.m., Rains County Library, Email [TheRainsGardenClub@gmail.com](mailto: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** - July 31 & Oct. 30, 6:30 p.m., Roma Restaurant, 2450 FM 47

**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 Tues., 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., Philip Alexander Board Room Rains ISD Administration Building.

**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

## MEMBER 2026 TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION

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**FORMER EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS OF THE RAINS COUNTY LEADER:**

H.W. Martin - 1887  
Sam Fitzgerald - Before 1900  
W.O. Heblsen - Before 1900  
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 March from 8:00 a.m.-noon. Funds go to buy food for the needy and to operate the center.

### American Legion Breakfast Mar. 14

Rabb Brothers Memorial American Legion Post #156

## How outdated beneficiary choices can derail your plans

When you open a retirement account or buy life insurance, you are asked to name a beneficiary. It may feel like routine paperwork, but this choice can shape your family's future in powerful ways.

Many people forget about their beneficiary forms after they sign them, but these instructions can override your will. If they are outdated, your money could go to someone you didn't intend, creating what experts call an accidental inheritance.

When life changes —

will hold a breakfast buffet on Saturday, March 14, 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.

### Women's Service Club Potato Dinner

The Women's Service Club will serve baked potatoes with all the trimmings and dessert on March 23, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., at the Rose Community Center. All orders will be to go only. Potato only \$10. Potato with meat \$15. Proceeds will help fund scholarships and Poppers in the Park.



**BRANDON ROBERTS**  
Edward Jones  
Financial Advisor

through marriage, divorce, children or the loss of a loved one — it's a good time to review your choices.

You'll also want to be cautious about naming minors as beneficiaries because the court would need to get involved.

And for family members with special needs, improperly naming a beneficiary could jeopardize that person's eligibility to receive government benefits.

Take time today to add beneficiary designations if you haven't already, or to confirm that your beneficiary designations still reflect your wishes.

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

## COURT

### Continued from page 1

energy on the Texas grid when it is needed, the company's commitment to the project for the next 40 years, and how the land, by state law, must be returned to original condition if the project is shutdown.

They noted that the company does own and have plans to construct BESS facilities in other areas of the United States, but no plans for that type of facility in Rains County.

The representative from DEPCOM Power, who will operate and maintain the solar farm, answered questions on the safety of the facility including maintenance of vegetation, fire concerns and responsibility

of clean up after any disaster.

Hilliard stated in the hearing that all information that the county has available will be posted to the website including the abatement agreement, emails for questions, and documents on the facility provided to county officials.

Hilliard noted that another public hearing will be held before the next commissioners court meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 12, at 10:00 a.m. and the public is invited to attend.

Commissioner Mike Willis was not present for the special meeting as he had a family emergency.

**Edward Jones** Member SIPC

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Studies show that locales with local newspapers are less corrupt. Local papers report the ins and outs of the communities that they serve and function as a beacon of truth to their communities.

**Support your local newspaper!**  
*The Rains County Leader*

## 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](http://www.sudokuoftheday.com) for further tips and help about how to play - and good luck!

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

## POINT

### Continued from page 1

According to the statement, city officials believe that the State Comptroller is owed in excess of \$200,000.

Nelson said in the letter that the council had been presented with an incomplete budget for the 2025-2026 year and more specifically, "the budget for payroll failed to include several things, like the payroll tax obligation per employee."

"After payments are made for retirement, health insurance, life insurance and the city's risk pool insurance, the city's general fund will barely be able to cover utilities this month," Nelson noted.

Nelson stated that the city is in the process of negotiating payments for the outstanding debt, but will have to make tough decisions concerning personnel. They will have to prioritize personnel that are integral to the daily operations of the city.

After consulting legal counsel, Nelson came to the conclusion that "the most straightforward and cost-effective solution to the immediate payroll deficiency is the suspension of all of the officers of the Point Police Department."

"When the new council members are impaneled," the statement continued. "Any officer subject to this lay off may apply for reinstatement to their position."

Nelson noted that necessary agencies and authorities had been contacted and

arrangements were made for securing necessary areas.

"I understand that this may cause a hardship to many of our officers, many of which have served the city in a dedicated manner," Nelson stated. "I am deeply saddened to have to make this decision and had sincerely hoped to preserve as many personnel members as possible."

The Point City Council has not been able to establish a quorum to conduct business since December of 2025 after the resignation of three council members, Donna Jones, Ray Lacy and Kim Edwards.

Nelson, Councilwoman for Place 3 Tammy Hooten and Councilwoman for Place 5 Becky Decker remain on the city council. A called election on May 2 will fill the empty seats on the city's council.

During the December 9 meeting of the council, the Point City Secretary Heather Rollins walked out of the meeting. The city's attorney stated on December 16 at a called meeting that failed to make a quorum, that the city secretary's position was vacant and would remain so until a council could be seated.

Rollins had been placed in the position of the city secretary for Point by the council in January of 2022 after serving as the city's water clerk.

## EMORY

### Continued from page 1

council meetings through the back entryway, which leads into the council chamber, starting next month.

Unfortunately, a delay in reconditioning the sewer plant headworks was reported due to receiving the wrong-sized fittings. Drown also recognized Junior Keyes as Employee of the Month.

### Comprehensive Water Study

A representative from Hayter Engineering presented an extensive water model for Emory, developed over the past few years. The study, which evaluates existing systems, indicates that as of December 2025, the city serves 1,226 connections, with an average growth rate of 2 percent annually projected to increase to approximately 2,820 connections by 2055. The city's water infrastructure spans 69 miles of mainlines and includes various storage tanks, with comprehensive data available for review.

In other actions, the council:

- approved a zoning change request for property located at 726 Lennon Drive from residential to Commercial (C1) with conditions;
- approved the minutes from the February 10 meeting with noted changes.
- approved the financial report and payment of bills as presented;
- adopted a resolution to deny an application from Texas-New Mexico Power Company to change rates within the city;
- accepted a racial profiling report from the Emory Police Department.

Council members Travis Potts, Blake Cooper, Lori Honeycutt, and Jacob Roan attended the session, which was chaired by Mayor Earl Hill III and began with a public hearing for the zoning request at 6:45 p.m. Council member Jannie Stephens was absent. The next meeting of the Emory City Council is scheduled for Tuesday, April 14, at Emory City Hall.

## SPOTLIGHT

### Continued from page 1

position with the U. S. Postal Service, and Patricia began working there some years later. They both retired in 2001.

They were church-going people. In fact, their first date was at a church service. When they were members of a Baptist church, someone asked them if they would help build church-related buildings, and they got hooked. They started out with a group of 15 adults, plus children who went with them in a caravan to build church buildings.

The Schutters spent 40 years with Volunteer Christian Builders, making building trips all over the nation. In summers, while still working for the U.S. Postal Service, they did a lot of building for Campers on Mission, traveling with other evangelical campers and RVers dedicated to sharing their faith through various mission activities. They met many of "God's People."

The Schutters ended up in Emory when they were asked to help do some church building in Miller Grove. They parked their trailer for three months where they worked on Sunday School classes and baptistry. While looking around

the area they found land on County Road 3200 with a lot of trees and Patricia said they absolutely had to build a home there. They built one home and then built a bigger one next door. Their son now lives in the first house.

The Schutters had four children and sadly lost one a short time after birth. In addition to their son, they have two daughters, two granddaughters and one great-granddaughter.

The couple lived on faith when a doctor told them their oldest daughter would not live, and she is now 59 years old. They lived on faith when they traveled around the country to build church buildings and didn't know if they would be able to afford it. Patricia said that God was with them when Schutter recovered from Polio, when their daughter survived the prediction that she would not live, and when they always received what they needed to complete church buildings.

Previous articles about Dirk Schutter, are dated September 30 and October 7, 2003; and November 20 and December 1, 2022, and may be found at <https://texashistory.unt.edu/explore/collections/RAICOL/>.



CITY GIRL

**By Linda Brendle**  
 Earlier this week, I saw a Facebook post by a special friend. Our relationship is unusual in that we don't agree on a lot of things like politics, religion, and some major social issues. Still, we love each other and respectfully stay away from those danger zones, focusing instead on our common interests like our families, books, and thrifting or shopping for those special used items you just can't find at the mall. Usually, when she posts something in one of those "zones," I pass it by, and I'm sure she does the same for me. However, this new post grabbed my attention, and I couldn't help but reply. Here's a transcript of our exchange.

*Posted Quote: I'm increasingly convinced that the willingness to change your mind is the ultimate sign of intelligence. The most impressive people I know change their minds often in response to new information. It's like a software update. The goal isn't to be right. It's to find the truth. - Sahil Bloom*

*Me: The trick is finding the right source of truth!*  
*Linda P: I think that "right" source must come from your own gut reaction, your own morality compass, your own compassion and understanding of all people and their deserved right of dignity. It's been difficult for certain.*

*Me: I guess it depends on your definition of truth. I was taught that there was "the" truth, "the" facts, "the" reality. Now, it seems that truth is believed to vary from person to person, from time to time, from situation to situation. How can anyone find the truth or agree*

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICES

Lights Out, Texas!

Texans have two chances each year to take a front row seat and witness one of North America's most spectacular events, bird migration. Beginning March 1 and lasting through mid-June, billions of birds will take flight as part of their annual spring migration; and when the weather starts getting cooler, they will begin their return trip for fall migration, starting in early September through late October.

Migration is a seasonal movement from one location to another due to instinctual survival skills. There are four general north-south migration paths, or flyways, followed by North American birds. These highway-like paths are called the Atlantic, the Mississippi, the Central, and the Pacific Flyways. Uniquely positioned where the Mississippi Flyway and the Central Flyway meet, Texas is a major migration corridor and plays an important role in migratory patterns of North American birds. Due to the expansive variety of ecosystems, Texas offers birds an abundance of options for refueling and resting while on their journey.

The Spring Migration Peak Period, when we will see the most activity by our flying friends, across Texas begins April 22 and lasts through May 12. *Lights Out, Texas!* a campaign by Audubon Texas, the state branch of the National

*on the truth if it has become a moving target.*  
*Linda P - sadly so*  
 I was pleasantly surprised that we reached a point of agreement so easily, but the question of "truth" and exactly what it means lingered in my mind. Several years ago, someone that I love and trust posted something to the effect that truth and fact are not necessarily the same thing. I guess I'm not very smart because I don't even know what that means. If you look up truth in the online Oxford dictionary it says that truth is "the quality or state of being true, that which is true or in accordance with fact or reality, a fact or belief that is accepted as true."

If you're a regular reader, you know what came next - a Google search. The first line of the response read: "No, fact and truth are not the same." Thanks a lot, Professor Google! It went on to say that facts and truth differ in scope, meaning that facts are limited to specific, objective, verifiable pieces of information while truth is broader and more subjective, taking into consideration context or the bigger picture. It also said that "Truth is often interpreted and relates to meaning, belief, and values." I didn't really understand that because it sounded a bit like "your truth and my truth" which is way out of my wheelhouse. The last sentence was a little easier to understand - facts are the "what" and truth is the "why" or the "meaning."

There were several additional links, one of which was Focus on the Family, a Christian ministry whose aim is to help families thrive. One example given was that facts are like the bricks that make up the truth which is like the building. In other words, a fact is a bit of

information which, when combined with other facts in a meaningful way, make the truth clear. Another example was a court case in which both sides have access to the same facts, but each side puts them together in a way they hope will win the decision. But the assertion is that there is only one truth, and the hope is that the jury will be able to discern the real pattern and relationship between the facts and arrive at the real meaning or truth of the situation.

After all that, and a lot more that I left out, I'm not sure I'm closer to any answers that would hold up in a social media debate about truth, but neither have I found any information that shakes my personal beliefs in the source of truth. As we move into the season in which we remember the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, I'm reminded of the trial scene described in the Gospel of John. Pilate asks Jesus if He is a king, and Jesus answers that He came to bear witness to the truth. Pilate responds, "What is truth?" People have probably been asking that question since time began, but Jesus gave the definitive answer a few hours before during His last meal with His disciples. Jesus told them He was going away but that they knew the way to where He was going. Thomas said they didn't even know where He was going so how could they know they way. Jesus replied, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." And that, I believe, is all the truth that matters.

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.LifeAfterCaregiving.WordPress.com>. You can e-mail her at [LindaBrendle@yahoo.com](mailto:LindaBrendle@yahoo.com).

Happy Hobbies for the Settled Mind

*"To be really happy and really safe, one ought to have at least two or three hobbies, and they must all be real."*

Winston Churchill



JODY DYER  
 Typewriter Weekly

A hobby is a gift you give yourself. In years past, most people enjoyed hobbies of some kind. As kids, we all had hobbies. We built model airplanes and cars, collected stamps and coins and baseball cards. Our parents, busy as they were, had hobbies as well. They enjoyed painting, gardening, and photography. They read real books, played cards and musical instruments, and donned matching outfits to go square dancing (seeing dad dressed as Slim Whitman had to be traumatic for some kids). My dad was a master woodcarver and enjoyed nothing more than time at his workbench with a knife and carving tools. Today, life seems different. I recently read an article lamenting this change in our culture. It seems that many humans today have replaced healthy organic hobbies with the digital hobby of doomscrolling. Their only hobby is scrolling on their phones, and this is not good for our brains.

It has been reported that the average person spends seven hours a day staring at screens. Consuming that much rapid and fragmented content (TikTok, Snapchat, YouTube, and more) steals your time and life, shortens your attention span, and literally re-wires your brain. Most folks reach for their phones like chain-smokers fumbling for another cigarette when bored. The internet, and especially demonic social media, has conditioned the world to crave quick dopamine hits. Our phones are like digital crack pipes demanding our full attention. This constant consumption leaves our

brains overwhelmed and hyper-stimulated, and they begin to re-wire themselves.

In the brain we have receptors that receive signals when dopamine is released. Social media and online consumption cause a flood of dopamine in our brains, and this results in maximum stimulation on those receptors. To restore balance, our brain begins to down regulate these receptors, and they become less sensitive to dopamine. Over time, the same stimulation doesn't give you the same feeling of reward. Your brain is essentially re-setting how enjoyment and rewards feel. So, when you do real-life things like reading a book, or going for a walk, dopamine release is minimal and these activities are not rewarding or enjoyable. In extreme cases this can result in digital *anhedonia*, the reduced ability to find any enjoyment in real-world and everyday experiences. Prolonged digital saturation and stimulation essentially rots your brain. Maybe this is why much of the world seems to be going crazy. But the good news is that your brain can re-set and heal itself, and old-fashioned hobbies can help in this process.

A 2023 meta-analysis found a direct association between hobbies and mental well-being. Researchers discovered that humans with one or more hobbies exhibited fewer depressive symptoms, and had higher levels of self-reported health, happiness, and life satisfaction. And it is believed that some types of hobbies, like playing an instrument or creating art, can increase the volume of your brain, fostering memory and reducing the chances of developing dementia. Hobbies can help re-train our brains to focus and enjoy life in the real world.

Engaging in an enjoyable hobby will trigger a dopamine release, just like scrolling on your phone, but it is a slow dopamine release. You get a slow burn of

happiness from your hobby activity, along with an added dose of the feel-good chemical serotonin. Hobbies offer something similar to a healthy whole foods meal as compared to online screen hyper-stimulation which is more like junk food that tastes good while at the same time destroying your health.

If you are in the mood for some brain-healing, mind settling, real-world satisfaction, consider finding a hobby (if you don't already have one or two). Start by considering what you might enjoy, or what you've always wanted to try. It is okay to try many things. Experiment with different options.

Hobbies can be loosely categorized into various categories. There are creative hobbies like art (painting, drawing, photography), music, cooking, gardening, and writing. Many prefer outdoor and active hobbies like hunting, fishing, running, hiking, biking, and dance. Intellectual hobbies like reading, learning, and traveling are especially helpful in healing your brain. Hobbies can also include social activities like joining clubs, taking classes, and hosting friendly gatherings.

Hobbies can foster a deeper meaning, purpose, and flow in your life, something the ancient Greeks called *eudaimonia*. This Aristotelian philosophy can be translated as "human flourishing and enjoyment."

Consider cultivating a creative and mindful hobby to counteract the screen tension and stress that we live with in this modern world. A sound hobby will reduce your stress and help heal and settle your mind as you pursue the trajectory of a happy life. Be happy - find a hobby!

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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SARAH LATHAM  
 Rains County AgriLife-Agms

Migrating birds often travel at night when atmospheric conditions are relatively stable, and they use natural light from the moon and stars to help guide their way. Unfortunately, migrating birds are often disoriented, by artificial lights found on homes and buildings, causing confusion and navigational errors. The additional energy needed to get back on track often leads to building collisions and fatalities.

Since 1970, North American bird populations have decreased nearly 30 percent. Birds are essential to healthy ecosystems and human communities by providing pest control, pollination, seed dispersal, and multiple economic benefits. Habitat loss, deforestation, and pesticide use continue to be major factors in declining bird populations; however, deadly collisions, due to disorientation and confusion brought on by man-made structures, buildings, and artificial lighting, are among the most preventable threats.

The Spring Migration Peak Period, when we will see the most activity by our flying friends, across Texas begins April 22 and lasts through May 12. *Lights Out, Texas!* a campaign by Audubon Texas, the state branch of the National

Audubon Society, emphasizes migratory bird safety through education, awareness, and action. *Lights Out, Texas!* encourages you to take these simple steps to help minimize migratory bird accidents.

Turn off non-essential lights from 11:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.

Avoid using landscape lighting on trees where birds may be nesting

For essential lights, try these practices to minimize light pollution:

Aim lights down  
 Use motion detectors so lights go on only when you need them

Close blinds at night to minimize lights being emitted from windows

To find out more about *Lights Out, Texas!* visit <https://tx.audubon.org/>.

The Texas A&M Department of Ecology and Conservation Biology asks Texans to report any encounters of bird-building collisions by visiting <http://tx.ag/birdreport>. Reporting bird-building collisions helps document and reduce incidents.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact me, 903-473-4580 or email [Sarah.Latham@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Sarah.Latham@ag.tamu.edu). To view upcoming events or additional information, please follow Rains County AgriLife on Facebook.

Women's Service Club

The Women's Service Club had its monthly meeting on March 9. The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m. with the Pledge of Allegiance and invocation by Robin Daughtey. Snacks were served with a St. Patrick's Day theme of pinwheels, rainbow shaped fruit platter, parfait cups and dipped Oreos. Stephanie Hurley and her daughter Kaylee did a great job with the food and decorations. There were 16 members present.

The financial report and minutes were read and approved. A rate increase for the rental of the Rose Community Center was discussed

and approved. The rental rate for Monday through Thursday will be \$100 and the Friday thru Saturday rate will increase by \$20, making it \$185. Dates already booked are locked in at \$165. Future rates will be quoted at \$185. The increase is due to insurance, cleaning supplies and utility cost increase.

Monthly activities were presented and approved with volunteers taking different months to help. The next fundraiser is a To-Go Baked Potato Bar that will be held on March 23 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Go by the Rose Community Center and grab a tater for your supper.

Reported by  
 Jeannine Hayes

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**ACROSS**

- this actor Andrews was in "Laura" with TX Gene Tierney
- Texas-based "Giant" was an film
- TX Dabney Coleman film: "\_\_\_ to Five"
- golf ball holders
- a state fair month (abbr.)
- African hunting expedition (2 wds.)
- TXism: "I \_\_\_ that like an armadillo needs an interstate"
- TXism: "hunkered down and \_\_\_ go"
- Dallas Parkland Hospital's receiving area for the injured (abbr.)
- A&M started as a \_\_\_ grant college
- Houston Oiler leag, until 1970 (abbr.)
- \_\_\_ E. Myers designed the state capitol
- bad dream
- airline headquartered at DFW Airport until 1982 (abbr.)
- "42" tile piece
- Texas "Moonraker" actress, Chile
- WW II destroyer, USS
- former ABC reporter from Texas (2 wds.)
- retail event after X-mas (2 wds.)
- most secure
- TXism: "out \_\_\_ some slack" (ease up)
- Mexican music station in California
- what the faucet did before it was fixed
- former Texas "Kid 'N Festival" for kniflers
- TXism: "let \_\_\_ rip!"
- Grapeland High football class
- steam bath
- TX Gale Storm TV show: "Margie" (1952-55)
- former San Marcos dance hall: "Cheyenne Club"
- LBJ's party (abbr)
- whiz \_\_\_ whiz
- road curve
- male sheep (2 wds.)
- Texas gas stations before Alon
- notable UT woman swimmer in 1988 Olympics, Hayes
- TX Gatin (init.)
- TXism: "call \_\_\_ day" (quit)
- Friday night precision dancers (2 wds.)
- Texas-based film: "Son \_\_\_" (1953)
- \_\_\_ foot is 12"
- TV horse: Mr. \_\_\_
- Ebanos Ferry
- Gov. Hogg's only daughter
- Texans Bowie, Hogg, and Reeves
- org. for some TX teachers (abbr.)
- \_\_\_ and ye shall receive"
- Shepherd, TX newspaper: San Jacinto \_\_\_
- TXism: "never in all my born \_\_\_"
- Texans \_\_\_ mess of chili
- TXism: "he's \_\_\_ of spit and vinegar" (energetic)
- big Texas resort cabin
- this treat preceded Texas 7-11 slurpees

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# Sheriff's Report

The Rains County Sheriff's Office took the following reports of activity during the week of March 2-8:



MICHAEL HOPKINS  
Rains County Sheriff

### Arrests

**3-5:** Jeremiah Eliajuan Mundine. Assault causing bodily injury to family member/parole violation, \$10,000 bond.

**3-5:** Joshua Kade Smith. Driving while intoxicated with child under 15 years old, \$5,000 bond.

**3-6:** Michael Wade. Assault family/house member impeding breathing/circulation, \$50,000 bond.

**3-8:** Tyler Haney. Driving while intoxicated 2nd, \$15,000 bond.

### Calls

**3-2:** CR 3425 Controlled burn; Hwy. 276 Illegal dumping; Skyline Dr. City ordinance violation; Hwy. 19 Livestock on the roadway; Industrial Park Rd. Controlled burn; Hwy. 19N Medical assist; CR 1425 Criminal mischief; Sheriff's Office (SO) Meet complainant; CR 2181 Meet complainant; PR 7709 Controlled burn; CR 4250 Shots fired; CR 2181 Civil matter; CR 1410 Animal at large; SO lobby Meet complainant; Duffy St. Meet complainant; Briggs Blvd. Medical assist.

**3-3:** S Texas St. suspicious person; FM 2737 Accident; S Texas St. Welfare concern; Hwy. 69 Debris in the roadway; Smith Cir. Theft; Briggs Blvd. Medical assist; CR 2181 Damaged property; SO Meet complainant; PR 7034 Medical assist; FM 515 Medical assist; FM 515 Reckless driving; Hwy. 69 Accident; Briggs Blvd. Accident; W Quitman St. Pedestrian stop; CR 2570 Suspicious activity; SO lobby Follow up investigation; CR 1430 Medical assist; Briggs Blvd. Disturbance; CR 3202 Disturbance; W Quitman St. Civil matter; Planters St. Suspicious person; CR 1475 Accident; Smith Cir. Business alarm; CR 3210 Medical assist.

**3-4:** Briggs Blvd. Medical assist; FM 2737 Accident; FM 513 Suspicious person; PR 5501 Medical assist; Hwy. 69 at CR 2250 Suspicious person; Hwy. 69 Reckless driver; SO lobby Follow

up investigation; CR 3025 Medical assist; CR 2610 Medical assist; Ave. A Point Follow up investigation; Smith Cir. Follow up investigation; FM 515 at CR 3330 Reckless driver; E Mockingbird Ln. Follow up investigation; N Locust St. Public assist; CR 3425 Suspicious vehicle; FM 515 Reckless driver; Hwy. 276 Motorist assist provided; SO Meet complainant; Hwy. 276 Motorist assist; CR 1450 Animal welfare concern; Hwy. 69 City ordinance violation; SO lobby Agency assist; E Lennon Dr. Suspicious person; S Dunbar Ln. Criminal mischief; W Hwy. 69 Medical assist; CR 3410 Trespassing; SO lobby Meet complainant; CR 1450 Follow up investigation; Hwy. 276 Reckless driving; CR 3411 Medical assist; Hwy. 19N Medical assist; FM 2795 Hit and run accident; CR 3150 Medical assist; Hwy. 276 Power outage; W Lennon Dr. Business alarm; CR 1150 Structure fire.

**3-5:** CR 1220 Suspicious vehicle; Laresa St. Suspicious activity; Duffy St. Medical assist; SO Medical assist; CR 1520 Debris in roadway; Hwy. 69 at Hwy. 19 Agency assist; Quitman St. Escort; CR 1230 Illegal dumping; CR 3367 Medical assist; S Dunbar Ln. Follow up investigation; FM 513 Livestock on roadway; Hwy. 276 Follow up investigation; CR 1315 Welfare concern; Hwy. 276 Follow up investigation; W Lennon Dr. Assault; Hwy. 69 Accident; CR 3425 Meet complainant; CR 2181 Criminal trespass; 1st. St. Point Criminal mischief; FM 515 Reckless driving; FM 275 Reckless driving; E Lennon Dr. Drug activity; E Lennon Dr. Extra patrol; W Lennon Dr. Civil matter.

**3-6:** North St. Residence alarm; N Hwy. 19 Medical assist; FM 514 Controlled burn; CR 1308 Medical assist; Hwy. 276 Aggressive animal; Smith Dr. Damaged property; CR 3236 Domestic disturbance; N Texas St. Medical assist; Briggs Blvd. Missing person; E Lennon Dr. Suspicious person - criminal trespass warning issued; SO lobby Meet complainant; Hwy. 19S Smoke investigation; Hwy. 69 Livestock on roadway; CR 5451 Neighbor dispute; SO lobby Child custody; SO lobby Supervisor request; SO lobby Child custody; PR 5501 Medical assist; Hwy. 276

Emory Reckless driving; Smith Cir. Business alarm; Barge Point Landing Welfare concern.

**3-7:** Oak Leaf Tr. Trespassing; CR 3335 Neighbor dispute; Hwy. 19S Accident; CR 1531 Medical assist; CR 2324 Abandoned vehicle; SO lobby Meet complainant; N Locust St. Abandoned vehicle; W Lennon Dr. Criminal trespass warning; Duffy St. Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Problems with a juvenile; Hwy. 276 Animal welfare concern.

**3-8:** Hwy. 276 East Tawakoni Business alarm; CR 3346 Medical assist; Hwy. 69 Business alarm; Hwy. 69 Reckless driving; CR 1495 Controlled burn; CR 3390 Extra patrol; FM 2946 Welfare concern; CR 1301 Illegal dumping; SO lobby Meet complainant; Wood St. Follow up investigation; CR 1532 Gas leak; CR 3060 Structure fire; CR 2570 Animal at large; Honeysuckle Ln. Pedestrian stop; FM 2737 Disturbance; Two-mile bridge Assault; FM 2737 Problems with a juvenile; CR 1180 Medical assist; Hwy. 19N Reckless driving; CR 1515 Suspicious vehicle.

The Sheriff's Department reported 251 calls for the week. Among the calls were 3 criminal mischief, 2 criminal trespass, 2 damaged property, 2 debris in roadway, 3 disturbance, 1 domestic disturbance, 1 drug activity, 1 escort, 2 extra patrol, 12 follow up investigations, 2 structure fires, 1 gas leak, 3 livestock on roadway, 12 meet complainant, 2 neighbor disputes, 3 illegal dumping; 2 problems with a juvenile, 23 public service, 10 reckless driving, 2 supervisor requests, 1 shots fired, 1 smoke investigations, 1 missing person, 2 suspicious activity, 6 suspicious persons, 1 power outage, 3 suspicious vehicle, 1 theft, 4 welfare concern, 2 trespassing, 7 accident, 5 controlled burn, 1 aggressive animal, 1 public assist, 2 pedestrian stops, 2 abandoned vehicle vehicles, 1 accident hit and run, 2 agency assist, 6 business alarms, 1 residence alarm, 2 animal at large, 2 animal welfare concern, 2 assault, 2 motorist assists, 2 child custody, 2 city ordinance violations, and 3 civil matters.

There were 69 traffic stops, 48 warnings, 13 citations, 28 medical calls, and 15 transports.

### STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

## Primary turnout smashes recent midterm records

Nearly 4.5 million Texans voted in the Democratic and Republican primaries, according to The Texas Tribune,



GARY BORDERS  
Texas Press Association

surpassing recent turnout numbers. A total of 2.3 million ballots were cast in the Democratic primary and 2.2 million in the Republican primary, marking the first time Democratic turnout was higher since 2020. Texas has approximately 18.7 million registered voters, so turnout was just under 25 percent.

Voters in both parties can return to the polls in May to decide primary winners in several runoff elections where no candidate garnered a majority:

- U.S. Sen. John Cornyn faces challenger Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton. Cornyn received 41.9 percent of the GOP vote to 40.7 percent for Paxton in the March 3 primary.

- State Sen. Mayes Middleton, R-Galveston faces U.S. Rep. Chip Roy, R-Austin for the Republican nomination for Texas Attorney General. Middleton led in the primary with 39.1 percent, while Roy had 31.6 percent.

- On the Democratic side for attorney general, state Sen. Nathan Johnson, D-Dallas, faces former Galveston Mayor Joe Jaworski. Johnson fell just short of winning a majority with 48.1 percent in the primary, while Jaworski earned 26.4 percent of the vote.

- Two Democrats are headed for a runoff for lieutenant governor. State Rep. Vikki Goodwin, D-Austin, finished well ahead of Marcos Velez, a Houston labor leader, with 48 percent of the vote. Velez received 31.5 percent of the primary vote. The winner will face incumbent GOP Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick.

There are also several runoffs slated in congressional and state house races. The runoffs will be held May 26, with early voting running from May 18-22. Voters cannot cross over to vote in a runoff, meaning if they voted in the Democratic primary, they cannot vote in a GOP runoff, and vice versa. Voters

who didn't cast ballots in either March primary can participate in the runoff of either party.

## Gas prices spike sharply in wake of Iran war

The price of gasoline rose nearly a dollar per gallon in some cities after the joint U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran last week. The Dallas Morning News reported gas prices are now at their highest level since President Trump took office in January 2025. Oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz have been largely stalled, greatly reducing production by Asian refiners.

U.S. crude oil prices topped \$89 late last week. Since the Friday before the attacks, Brent crude oil, the global benchmark for oil prices, has increased by 24 percent.

Trump said Friday there will not be a deal to end the U.S.-Iran war without an "unconditional surrender" by Iran.

## Huffines says he would not change voucher program

Former state Sen. Don Huffines, who handily beat Gov. Greg Abbott's hand-picked candidate for state comptroller in the GOP primary, said he does not intend to change the state's \$1 billion voucher program if he wins election in November. Huffines, who challenged Abbott for the governorship in 2022, praised the current handling of the program, according to the Houston Chronicle.

"We're not here to be disruptive," Huffines said. "I don't see a big disruption in the process that's already started, as long as it's going smoothly and being run effectively and managed."

Huffines will face State Sen. Sarah Eckhardt, D-Austin, in the fall. The comptroller's office has been tasked with overseeing the voucher program, which is in its first year.

## Gonzales ends reelection bid after admitting affair

U.S. Rep. Tony Gonzales, R-San Antonio, withdrew from his re-election race after admitting to an extramarital

affair with an aide who later died by suicide, The News reported.

"After deep reflection and with the support of my loving family, I have decided not to seek re-election while serving out the rest of this Congress with the same commitment I've always had to my district," Gonzales said in a statement posted on social media.

The House Ethics Committee announced a probe into his conduct after the primary ended. Gonzales finished second to challenger Brandon Herrera in the Republican primary for the state's 23rd congressional district, but the race was headed to a runoff until Gonzales withdrew.

Herrera will face Democrat Katy Padilla Stout, an attorney, in the general election.

## SpaceX beach closure fight reaches Texas Supreme Court

The Texas Supreme Court heard oral arguments last week in a fight over whether counties can temporarily close a beach for a space flight, The Tribune reported. Rio Grande Valley environmentalists and indigenous groups have sued over a 2013 law that allows some counties to close a beach.

The dispute primarily concerns SpaceX, which operates a launch site near Boca Chica Beach in Cameron County. The Federal Aviation Administration has authorized the company to launch rockets up to 25 times a year, prompting the closure of roughly eight miles of beach adjacent to the launch pad.

Attorneys representing the plaintiffs argued the Open Beaches Amendment to the state constitution grants the public an unrestricted right to use public beaches. The state contended that the amendment does not guarantee unlimited, unfettered access.

"It is a more limited right," said Beth Klusmann, deputy solicitor general for the Texas Attorney General's Office. "The question, of course, then is what are those limits."

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](mailto:gborders@texaspress.com).

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### Believers' Baptist Church

By Linda Brendle

And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?

Luke 13:16

This week's sermon from Luke was titled "The Nature of Judgment." Jesus was preaching with a sense of urgency about the coming judgment, but He preached with mercy.

Coming Events:

Every Sunday until Easter, 4:00 p.m., Easter Choir rehearsal

Every Sunday in March, 9:30 a.m. – Prospective Members' Class  
 March 23, 4:00 p.m. – Bibles & Bogeys, see Duffey Henderson for information  
 March 29, immediately after church, Youth Paintball or Crafts  
 March 29, 6:00 p.m. – Members' Meeting  
 April 3, 6:00 p.m. – Good Friday Service  
 April 5, 10:30 a.m. – Resurrection Sunday Service  
 The Asking for a Friend Podcast Episode #243 is titled "Book Club #7, Spurgeon the Pastor – Chapter 6." Find the link at [www.bbcmemory.org](http://www.bbcmemory.org).

### Emory Methodist Church

By Mary White

When Elijah heard a gentle whisper, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

I Kings 19:13

Rev. David Banks is back from Israel and what experiences he had. Like Elijah David and his group had to flee. His message, titled "Shaped by God's Voice" with scripture text taken from I Kings, tells how we have to learn to listen for the Shepherd's voice. With

all the noise of this world we have to strain to hear the one voice that matters.  
 This Friday, March 13, we will have game night at 5:00 p.m. Bring your favorite game and a snack. All are invited so come and enjoy fun and fellowship with us.  
 This Sunday the Methodist Women will have their lunch meeting after worship. Birthday wishes go to Lori Thomas. Pray for Dale Steed, Lolene Roye, Paulette Davis, Adrian Shipp, the Sam Sorsby family and Jonathan Edwards.  
 Have a great week and as always be kind.

### TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

## Lake Tyler, Lake Fork Bump ShareLunker Collection Total to Double Digits

ATHENS – The 2026 Toyota ShareLunker program collection season reached double digits with 11 Legacy Class entries on Thursday and Saturday afternoon thanks to Lake Tyler and Lake Fork.

Lake Tyler was back on the board for the second consecutive year while the legendary Lake Fork returned to the ShareLunker Legacy Class stage for the first time since 2021. With the addition of these two Legacy Class ShareLunkers, 10 different waterbodies have now recorded a Legacy Class largemouth bass in 2026.

Jack York of Emory reeled in 13.45-pound ShareLunker 693 Thursday afternoon, his second overall Legacy Class fish. York landed 13.51-pound ShareLunker 634 on Jan. 23, 2023, at Lake Nacogdoches and returned to the spotlight with his Legacy Class entry from Lake Tyler.

"Every Legacy Class entry tells us something about the health and potential of a fishery, including the quality of its habitat and forage base," said Natalie Goldstrohm, TPWD coordinator for the Toyota ShareLunker program. "We're thrilled to see these reservoirs contribute again in 2026. It's encouraging to watch that progression, and we appreciate the anglers who help us capture and celebrate these achievements."

Dale Washington of Godley landed 13.38-pound

ShareLunker 694 at Lake Fork Saturday afternoon. This is his second overall Legacy Class catch. Washington submitted his first on April 10, 2007, 13.05-pound ShareLunker #436 from legendary Lake Fork. At the time, 13-plus-pound largemouth bass were picked up through the month of April by the program.

Out on Lake Fork, Washington had been fishing for three or four hours and had caught a few fish, but the bite wasn't great. Washington then decided to change things up a bit with his approach.

"It was around 2 p.m. and I decided I was going to try and fish a tree line," said Washington. "I'd been throwing a jig all day but decided I would pick up a chatterbait and literally on the second cast on this tree line, this fish hit it and the fight was on at that point. The fight was pretty phenomenal. Thankfully, I had it on braid because when it hit, it took off. I was fishing by myself and had a rough time getting my net on it because it was so big. I was finally able to get it in the net, put it in the bottom of the boat and I almost passed out at the point."

Washington knew it was well over 10 pounds but not exactly how heavy it was. He called a friend who was on another boat to let him know about the catch and asked him to come to his location. They weighed the fish on Washington's scale and

when it registered over 13 pounds, they headed to Lake Fork Marina to get a verified weight.

"The experience with the ShareLunker program was great," said Washington. "Natalie told me exactly what to do. We took really good pictures and they were there within an hour or hour and 15 minutes to collect the fish. I think you all [TPWD] have done a great job and I think Lake Fork is really on the comeback because it went through a little slump there. I think with the grass growing back the fish are really getting healthy again and you are starting to see a lot more eight, nine, ten, eleven-pound fish and hopefully some more 13 pounders and bigger. I think you all have done a great job."

About the ShareLunker Program

During the first three months of the season (Jan. 1 through March 31), anglers who reel in a 13-plus pound bass can loan it to TPWD for the ShareLunker selective breeding and stocking program. These anglers can call TPWD on the ShareLunker hotline at (903) 681-0550 to report their catch 24/7 through March 31, 2026.

Legacy Class ShareLunker weights are all verified using a certified scale, but anglers may use a digital scale to get an initial weight to inform the ShareLunker response team. Once the TPWD team arrives, they can take a certified weight on site.

## Obituaries

### Ronald R. Dager

1943 – 2026



Ronald R. Dager, 82, of Alba, died on Thursday, March 5, 2026. He was born on April 18, 1943, in Lynn, Massachusetts, to Bert and Mae Dager.

As part of a military family, he lived numerous places around the country during his early years. His exposure to the military inspired a desire to serve, and he later joined the U.S. Navy.

After his service, he spent many years in Texarkana and Emory. In recent years, he made his home in Alba, where he was grateful for the friendship and support of the neighbors who became his friends.

He is survived by his sister, Bonnie Lamb; son, Richard Dager; daughter, Debra Dager; granddaughters, Dani Ortiz and Roxi Dager; grandson, Jimmie Brenton; and great-grandchildren, Serenity Dager, Maximus Ortiz, and Nicklaus Ortiz.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Lynette.

A celebration of life will be held at a later date.

Please consider donating in Mr. Dager's name to The Elephant Sanctuary, a cause that he has supported for years.

### Joshua Phillip Matthews

1986 – 2026



Funeral services for Joshua Phillip Matthews, 39, of Alba, will be held on Saturday, March 14, at Sand Springs Baptist Church, Mineola, with Bro. Brandon Gray, Bro. Greg Wright, and Bro. Kevin Wright officiating, under the direction of the church and family.

Mr. Matthews died on March 4, 2026, in Mineola. He was born on March 11, 1986, in Victoria, to Danny and Genny Matthews.

He was raised in Victoria and graduated from Victoria High School. Thirteen years ago, he made his home in the Alba area. On February 8, 2014, he married the love of his life, Ashley Erin Scogin, in Mineola.

He was a devoted member of Sand Springs Baptist Church and had a heart for serving others. He was both musically gifted and technically skilled. He faithfully used his abilities to serve his church and those around him. He will be remembered as a loving husband, devoted father, and cherished son-in-law whose life was centered on his family and his faith.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 12 years, Ashley Erin Matthews; son, Jackson Matthews; daughter, Audrey Matthews, all of Alba; brothers, James Matthews and wife Donna of Katy, Timothy Matthews and wife Kerry of Anchorage, Alaska, and Nathan Matthews and wife Rachel of Katy; in-laws, Marvin and Althea Scogin of Alba; nephews, Trevor, Evan, Lucas, and Noah; nieces, Ava, Dayleigh and Olivia; great-nephew, Jackson Lee; and numerous other relatives and friends.

Mr. Matthews was preceded in death by his parents; grandparents; sister, Cindy Colson; and brother-in-law, Marvin Ray Scogin.

Memorials can be made to Sand Springs Baptist Church Youth Camp, P.O. Box 467, Mineola, Texas 75773.

A visitation will be held on Friday, March 13, from 6:00-8:00 p.m., at Sand Springs Baptist Church.

### Sam O. Sorsby

1932 – 2026



Sam O. Sorsby, 93, a devoted husband, father, grandfather and retired Dallas police officer, died peacefully on March 5, 2026. He was born on May 14, 1932, in Texarkana, to Ben and Lorene Orr Sorsby.

He was raised in the Texarkana area and began working at the Lone Star Ordnance Plant in 1950. In October 1959, he became a Dallas police officer. He was in the Class of 1967 which consisted of 19 recruits.

He began patrol duty in February 1960, working out of the White Rock Substation before later transferring downtown, where he patrolled Old Districts 103 and 104.

On November 23, 1963, he was assigned to a security detail at Love Field at 7:00 a.m., along with approximately 40 other officers, to help protect President John F. Kennedy upon his arrival in Dallas. He was stationed under the left wing of the presidential aircraft as President and Mrs. Kennedy greeted several hundred people gathered behind a chain-link fence. Along with two

supervisors, he remained at the airport until the press plane departed. In the days following the assassination, he was also assigned to help guard the body of Lee Harvey Oswald.

In 1966, he was assigned a walking beat in downtown Dallas to help store owners and security officers deter shoplifters. In 1968, he became an investigator in the Crimes Against Persons section.

He was a loving husband, father, and grandfather who enjoyed hunting and fishing and spending time with his family.

Mr. Sorsby is survived by his wife, Judy; sons, Mitchell Allen (Tori), Dale Sorsby (Christina), and George Sorsby (Lindsay); grandchildren, Tony Sorsby (Erica) and Andrea Quantie (Kenneth); and 11 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and his son, Sam Sorsby Jr.

A memorial service honoring Sam's life will be held at a later date.

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 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

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 Sunday School.....9:45 a.m.  
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[www.pilgrimsrestbaptistchurch.org](http://www.pilgrimsrestbaptistchurch.org)

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 6:00 p.m. Worship  
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 903-269-8737

**Daugherty Baptist Church**  
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**Pastor Joe Pierce**  
 903-259-1147 & 903-259-0348

**St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church**  
 Rev. Michael Ledesma  
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[emorychurchofchrist.org](http://emorychurchofchrist.org)

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 6:00 p.m. .. Wednesday Service  
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[www.fbcpoint.com](http://www.fbcpoint.com)

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# Sports

## RAINS LADY CAT & WILDCAT BASKETBALL

### Thompson earns All-State, Lady Cats, Wildcats honored



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

Senior Lady Cat Kenzy Thompson side steps the Lady Raider defender for a basket during the victory over Winnsboro on January 30 in Talkington Gym.

By **CHUCK FITTS**  
Rains County Leader staff

Senior Kenzy Thompson was selected to the Class 3A-DI All-Tournament Team while other members of the Rains Lady Cat and Wildcat varsity basketball teams were honored.

Thompson was one of six girls selected to receive the honor as well as athletes from state qualifiers Hitchcock, Shallowater and Bishop.

Thompson was selected as the District 12-3A Offensive Player of the Year, while senior Presley Kilgore was recognized as Co-Defensive MVP for the district.

Junior Annie Piechota was named the Co-6th Man of

the Year for the district.

All-district selections for the Lady Cats included senior Caroline Piles, junior Jaycee Phillips and junior Arianna Philson to the first team.

Senior Taytum Osornio, senior Kamara Ragsdale and senior Shaylee Stracener were selected to the second team.

Honorable mention selections were senior Izzy Aldaco, senior Isabella Marrone and junior Peyton Bryant.

As for the Wildcat All-District selections, sophomore Tristan Hurley was named the 6th Man of the Year for District 12-3A.

First team All-District selections for the Wildcats included senior Gunner Cook

and junior Jabari Shields.

Sophomore Major Wallace and sophomore Kase Campbell were selected as second team all-district.

Honorable mentions to the team were senior Jordan Hobbs and sophomore Adam Colson.

Academic All-District team selections for the Lady Cats were Thompson, Kilgore, Piles, Stracener, Marrone, Osornio, Ragsdale and Aldaco.

Wildcats selected to the Academic All-District team included Cook, Hurley, Wallace, Campbell, Hobbs, Colson, Rodney Gilcrest, Cohen Witt and Kade Sustaire.

## LUKE CLAYTON

### Turkey is not just for Christmas!

I know that as a lifelong outdoors person that loves hunting and fishing, I'm lucky to also enjoy cooking the fruits of my outings. As a



Luke Clayton  
Outdoor Columnist

teenager, my uncle who was a great 'camp cook' spent a lot of time teaching me the basics of cooking fish and game and the rest...well I learned through trial and error these past six decades!

Cooking venison is really pretty easy once one understands it's a very dry meat that has to be seasoned and cooked properly to retain the moisture it does have. Just about anyone can season a piece of backstrap, dust it with flour and fry it to a golden brown. If smothered steak is on the menu, all that's necessary is to add gravy, mushrooms, onions, etc. to that fried steak and bake or simmer until tender.

The majority of my hunting friends enjoy venison cooked to medium rare and I understand their reasoning. If left on the grill too long, venison will dry out. I like all meat cooked very close to well done, not cooked to the consistency of cardboard, but no juices running. I sear venison steaks in a cast iron skillet with butter, salt and pepper, jalapeno and fresh garlic. This method keeps the meat moist and flavorful. My friends enjoy it prepared this way as well, but they just want it pulled out of the skillet a bit before mine!

Game birds require little or no marinating, with the exception of waterfowl. The trick to cooking most ducks and geese is removing the blood by soaking in a saline solution of some sort. Oh, I've cooked wood duck and teal that were shot that very day without marinating that were absolutely delicious, but snow geese, gadwall or widgeon require a bit of marinating to suit my taste.

Spring turkey season opens in a few weeks and my favorite game bird, hands down, is wild turkey. So many hunters have been taught that the only edible part of wild turkey is the breast meat, which is absurd. I love chicken fried or baked turkey breast but the 'running gear' on wild turkey is my favorite. A wild turkey walks untold miles each day from the time it flies off the roost in the morning until returning just before dark. As a result, it has

some very muscular (tough) legs. Penned domestic turkey get very little exercise thus their legs require much less cooking. Turkey legs have six or eight feather bones that are a challenge to many game cooks. The trick to cooking turkey legs is long, slow and with moisture. This can be accomplished in a slow cooker or simmering for several hours or in a pressure cooker.

I love fajitas made from wild turkey legs/thighs and have developed a method of making them very tender and flavorful. You turkey hunters listen up, now! This information is worth the price of admission! Place the leg/thigh meat in an aluminum pan or sheet of heavy-duty aluminum foil, coated with olive oil and seasoned heavily with Fiesta Brand Fajita seasoning. Then smoke with pecan wood for a couple hours. At this point the legs will probably be above 160 degrees but so tough a grizzly bear would have a tough time eating them. I use a Smokin Tex electric smoker but if you use a conventional smoker, pull them after a couple hours of smoking, add more olive oil, wrap or cover with foil and bake in the oven or damper the smoker down to low heat and cook a couple more hours until the meat pulls easily off the bone.

Then simply pull the little feather bones out, cut the meat into fajita-sized pieces, place in a skillet with onions, peppers and anything else you might like in fajitas. I usually throw in a couple of pieces of chopped bacon to add more flavor. If you ever have wild turkey legs prepared in this manner, I bet you will find yourself offering to clean your buddies' birds for the legs and thigh meat as payment!

SEVENTH ANNUAL LUKE CLAYTON'S OUT-DOOR RENDEZVOUS IN GREENVILLE- On March 28 at the Top Rail Cowboy Church in Greenville we will enjoy our seventh annual outdoor event hosted on the beautiful oak covered grounds owned by the church. My name is attached to the event and years ago my friend Lee Buffington, better known as "Friendlee," and I decided an annual spring event would be well received in northeast Texas. The first couple years, Mr. Randy Koon offered his four acres and then we moved to the more spacious 18 acres of church owned land. Every year the weather has been perfect but there is a big covered arena at the Top Rail

Cowboy Church just in case of rain. A lot of folks ask me what the event is like. Picture campfires, chuck wagons, booths offering everything from jewelry to fishing lures, live music by The Top Rail musicians and blues music by Phillip Farmer. This year our guest entertainers Dodge City Marshal Allen Bailey and his wife, Cowgirl Janey, will travel down from Kansas to be with us.

If you are interested in having a booth there, we just ask for a donation to the outdoor ministry please call the church ahead of time if possible but don't hesitate to just show up early in the morning of the event. Google gives great direction, just search Top Rail Cowboy Church Greenville, Tx. Admission is free, come sit around the campfire with Luke and his friends, and make sure and bring a lawn chair! Larry Weishuhn, aka "Mr. Whitetail," has been present at all but the first event, and Jeff Rice, the producer of our weekly TV show "A Sportsman's Life" will be filming the event for a future show. Feel free to quiz Jeff with any questions you might have about video photography. We changed the name of the event this year to "Luke Clayton's FRIENDLEE Rendezvous" in honor of our friend "Friendlee" who passed away this past year.

Listen to Luke's hour long outdoor show "Catfish Radio" on the radio or podcast just about everywhere Podcasts are found. Email Luke through his website, [www.catfishradio.org](http://www.catfishradio.org).

## RAINS LADY CAT SOFTBALL & WILDCAT BASEBALL

### Wildcats, Lady Cats ready for district

By **CHUCK FITTS**  
Rains County Leader staff

The Rains Lady Cat softball team and Wildcat baseball team log lots of tournament games as district gets underway.

The Lady Cats opened the season on February 17 with a 24-3 win over the Paris Lady Cats in Paris.

The softball team competed in a tournament in Arp February 19-21. Game one saw the Lady Cats fall to Arp, 5-0.

They would suffer a 5-4 loss to the Frankston Lady Indians later that day.

On February 20, the Lady Cats lost to Brook Hill, 12-2, but beat the Venus Lady Bulldogs, 5-4.

They wrapped up the tournament with a 14-4 loss to the South Hills Lady Scorpions.

The Wildcats opened their season at a tournament in Caddo Mills February 19-21.

They lost game one of the weekend to the Canton Eagles, 12-2.

They fell to the Rusk

Eagles, 12-0, and the Life Waxahachie Mustangs, 8-4, on February 20.

They wrapped up the tournament with a 18-6 loss to the Gilmer Buckeyes and a 14-5 loss to the Terrell Tigers.

The Wildcats competed in a tournament in Cooper and started with a 5-3 victory over the Rivercrest Rebels on February 26.

On February 27, they scored a 17-0 win over the Leonard Tigers, and then finished the tournament on February 28 with a 3-1 loss to the North Hopkins Panthers and an 11-3 victory over the Sam Rayburn Rebels.

The Lady Cats were scheduled to start district on March 3 against Winnsboro, but the game was rescheduled due to the basketball playoff game in Abilene.

On Thursday, March 5, they competed at an abbreviated tournament in Edge-wood, as it was cut short by the weather.

The girls scored a 3-1 win over the Hughes Springs Lady Mustangs, and tied the

De Kalb Lady Bears, 4-4.

The Lady Cats opened district with a 5-4 victory over the Mount Vernon Lady Tigers on Friday, March 6.

The Wildcats traveled to Canton for a tournament March 5-7. They opened the weekend with a 5-0 loss to the Sunnyvale Raiders.

On Friday, March 6, they lost to the Canton Eagles, 6-4 and fell to the Jacksonville Indians, 6-5.

The Wildcats lost to the Hughes Springs Mustangs, 7-1, on Tuesday, March 10.

The Lady Cats are 5-4-1 for the season and 1-0 in District 12-3A. The Wildcats are 3-11 for the season.

The Lady Cats will continue district play against the Commerce Lady Tigers on March 11 at Rains High School.

The Wildcats will wrap up non-district play Thursday, March 12, in Mineola against the Yellowjackets.

They will start District 12-3A play with a series against the Chisum Mustangs on Tuesday, March 17.

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