

# Rains County Leader

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EMORY, TEXAS - THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2026

PRICE 75¢

## RAINS WILDCAT & LADY CAT GOLF

### Wildcats win district, Potts takes home gold medal



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

Top: Hudson Potts puts all his momentum into a drive on the par-4 15th hole at the Lake Fork Golf Course during his championship round of the District 12-3A Tournament on Monday, April 6. Bottom left: Kase Jennings watches his putt roll to the hole on the par-4 12th hole. Bottom right: Presley Kilgore hits for the fence on her opening shot at the par-4 5th hole.

By **CHUCK FITTS**  
Rains County Leader staff

The Rains Wildcat golf team were crowned District 12-3A champions and Hudson Potts won the district tournament that wrapped up on Monday, April 6, at the Lake Fork Golf Course.

The team finished 66 strokes ahead of the second place team at the two-day tournament, which began on March 30 at the same course.

Over the two days, Potts carded a 76 and 79 for a 155-total score to win the individual title on the course with a par of 72.

Case Jennings finished third with a total score of 159. He had overcome an 82 on day one with a 77 on day two to get the bronze medal.

Karson Wallace had a two-day total of 163 to finish fourth, right behind Jennings. He overcame a rough first day to card a 77 on Monday.

Daniel Alvarado placed sixth with a 164-total score over the two days, while Major Wallace ended the tournament in eighth place with a 176.

The Lady Cat golf team finished fourth at the tournament.

The Wildcat golf team will compete at the Region 2-3A tournament on Monday, April 13, and Tuesday, April 14, at the Oak Hurst Golf Course in Bullard.

## RAINS COUNTY

### Delta County man arrested in Rains County on felony livestock case

FORT WORTH — Judd Horchem Murray, 47, of Cooper, was arrested on March 31 in Rains County on charges of hindering a secured creditor following an investigation led by Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association Special Ranger Larry Hand, with assistance from Special Rangers Robert Pember-ton and Bo Fox.



JUDD HORCHEM MURRY

Murray was charged with hindering a secured creditor greater than \$300,000, a first-degree felony, and hindering a secured creditor greater than \$2,500 but less than \$30,000, a state jail felony.

During the investigation, Special Rangers and the victim bank determined Murray secured multiple agricultural loans using cattle as collateral. Authorities allege Murray defaulted on the loans in June and July 2024. Follow-

see **MURRAY** on page 2

## FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

### Friends of the Library Book Sale adds a new twist!

The Rains County Friends of the Library has an approximate forty-five-year history of book sales, and that tradition won't be broken this year. The next sale will be Friday, April 17 and Saturday, April 18 in the Meadows Room of the Library at 150 Doris Briggs Parkway in Emory. Sale hours on both days will be from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Get there early on Friday for the best selection, and take advantage of bargains all day Saturday when you can fill a bag for \$4.00 or a box for \$8.00.

As usual, there will be a wide selection of genres and authors to choose from – gently used books for all tastes, interests and ages. But instead of simply focusing on reading, the FOL added a new twist. To encourage an interest in writing, they are hosting a Rains County Writing Challenge. The rules are simple:

The writer must live in Rains County and be eighteen years old or younger.

Write an essay with a minimum of five complete sentences and a maxi-

see **BOOK SALE** on page 2

## SPOTLIGHT

### Greg and Becky Connaughton owners of Tri-Point Surveying in Emory

By **JUDY KRAMER**  
Rains County Leader contributor

Tri-Point Surveying, located at 903 E. Lennon, is a family-run business. Greg Connaughton is a highly skilled land surveyor whose business serves Rains, Hopkins, Hunt, Wood, Franklin and Van Zandt counties.

Connaughton's wife, Becky, owns the business with him, and serves as the office manager, doing some of the necessary research for her husband, as well as handling finances and taking care of customers. Their grandson works for them in the field.

The Connaughton couple met when they both worked for local surveyor Danny Beasley and they married on October 27, 2001. They thought highly of Mr. Beasley and when they opened their own business

10 years ago, they dedicated their office to him.

Connaughton began surveying while in college at Texas A&M-Commerce, working two jobs and managing to be in the National Honor Society. He was also vice president of the student advisory council, a member of the rodeo club and a member of Sigma Tau Epsilon Fraternity. He was rated as one of the top 10 seniors of the college's business and technical students. He said that he didn't have much time for sleep.

He was born in Fort Smith, Arkansas and moved to Colorado at about five years of age. Then, at age seven, his family moved to Sulphur Springs. He played tennis and was on the cross-country team in high school.

Becky Connaughton said that she grew up "everywhere" because her

family moved a lot. She graduated from Cooper ISD where she played tennis and was on the yearbook staff. She worked in the optical field for years and then at Texas Performance Diesel before joining the surveying business. She has lived in Emory for 20 years.

The Connaughton's have three grown daughters. Nichole works at Golden Water in the town of Golden; Kayla works part-time for her parents; and Britney is a part-time hygienist and school volunteer. They also have three grandchildren including one grandson and two young granddaughters in third and sixth grades. The family likes to spend time together and they travel a lot. They recently went to Gatlinburg, Tennessee, and

see **SPOTLIGHT** on page 2



Becky and Greg Connaughton



**City Girl:**  
*It happened again...*  
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**Jody Dyer:**  
*Bigfoot Visits Ohio*  
page 3

**Wildcat Sports**  
page 8

**Rain Report**  
Thu., Apr. 2 ..... 0.44 in.  
Sat., Apr. 4 ..... 2.20 in.  
Total for Apr. .... 2.64 in.  
Year to date ..... 9.59 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**

THE OLDEST BUSINESS IN RAINS COUNTY

## Rains County Leader

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<b>EDITOR/PUBLISHER</b> Earl Hill III	<b>ADVERTISING</b> Chuck Fitts	<b>CLASSIFIED SALES</b> Lea Reed
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**FORMER EDITORS AND PUBLISHERS OF THE RAINS COUNTY LEADER:**

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

## 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 April from 8:00 a.m.-noon. Funds go to buy food for the needy and to operate the center.

available early Friday, and Saturday is Bargain Day - fill a bag for \$4 or a box for \$8! This is the perfect opportunity to re-stock all your summer beach reads!

### FOL Hosts a Writing Challenge!

For Rains County writers 18 years old and younger. Write an essay beginning with "A funny thing happened on my way to the Rains County Public Library..." Write at least five complete sentences, but no more than two pages. Submit your essay during the April 17-18 book sale at the Library, 150 Doris Briggs Parkway, Emory. Prizes for each essay that meets all the requirements.

### American Legion Breakfast Sat., April 11

Rabb Brothers Memorial American Legion Post #156 will hold a breakfast buffet on Saturday, April 11, 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 toward the upkeep of the home and for veterans' projects.

### Alba Public Library Celebration Apr. 18

On April 18, from 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., the Alba Public Library & Museum will celebrate its fifteenth year in operation. Students will bring a snack from recipes from long ago and the library will offer cake and punch. On display will be local student's research, essays, recipes and artistic creations. Library and museum tours will be available and there will be a book sale until 2:00 p.m. The 5K run/walk will begin at 7:00 a.m., at the square, with the \$25 fee going towards a mural for the front of the building.

### FOL Book Sale Is Coming Soon!

The next Friends of Rains County Library Big Book Sale is almost here! The sale will be in the Meadows Room of the Rains County Public Library, 150 Doris Briggs Parkway, Emory. Dates are Friday, April 17 and Saturday, April 18, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. both days. The best selections are

## Four stages of raising confident, money smart kids

Teaching good money habits starts early and grows through every stage of life.



**BRANDON ROBERTS**  
Edward Jones  
Financial Advisor

With very young children, begin simply. Three jars labeled "Spend," "Save" and "Share" can help them understand what money is and learn that saving for something special takes patience. With tweens — or children between 9 and 12 — offer bigger ideas. They can earn money through chores or small jobs to connect effort with reward and a sense of ownership. Opening a basic savings account can

also help build their confidence.

For high schoolers and young adults, budgeting becomes essential. Tracking what comes in and goes out through an app or spreadsheet helps them stay aware, and learning how credit works can offer benefits down the road.

In their early working years, paying themselves first and building good saving habits set the foundation for long term financial freedom.

When you start strong and stay consistent, money becomes a tool that helps your children support the lives they want.

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

## MURRAY

Continued from page 1

ing foreclosure proceedings, Murray allegedly failed to return the cattle or repay the outstanding principal and interest.

A Wood County grand jury indicted Murray on the

charges March 30, 2026. Murray was transported to the Wood County Jail, where he was booked and later released on a \$90,000 bond.

Visit us online:  
[rainscountyleader.com](http://rainscountyleader.com)

**Edward Jones** Member SIPC

<p><b>Brandon R Roberts</b> CFP® Financial Advisor 132 N Texas St   P O Box 1221 Emory, TX 75440 903-473-1592</p>	<p><b>Holly Wasson</b> Financial Advisor 132 N Texas St   P O Box 1221 Emory, TX 75440 903-473-1592</p>
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MKT-58940-A-A4 AECSPAD > [edwardjones.com](http://edwardjones.com)

## 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!

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

## BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

### What to Know Before You Open the Door: BBB's Guide to Door-to-Door Sales

With warmer temperatures comes the return of door-to-door sales. From solar panels and alarm systems to landscaping services, asphalt paving, roofing contractors, and even charitable causes, solicitors are once again making their rounds in neighborhoods across East Texas. Better Business Bureau Serving Central East Texas (BBB) reminds consumers to stay alert and make informed decisions when approached at their front door.

Recent consumer reports show that home improvement and door-to-door sales scams continue to be among the most commonly reported, particularly during spring and summer months when activity increases. Scammers often take advantage of urgency, weather-related damage, or limited-time offers to pressure consumers into quick decisions.

"Many legitimate companies use door-to-door sales to grow their customer base," said Mechele Agbayani Mills, President and CEO of BBB Serving Central East Texas. "However, some individuals use this approach to take advantage of others. It's important to watch for red flags like high-pressure tactics, lack of company identification, and requests for upfront or cash-only payments."

"Many legitimate companies use door to door sales to grow their customer base," Mechele Agbayani Mills, President and CEO of BBB serving Central East Texas said. "However, there are some individuals who use this approach to take advantage of others. It's important to watch out for red flags like high-pressure tactics, absence of company branding, and requests for cash-only payments, as these could be signs of dishonest intentions."

Door-to-door sales activity typically continues through the end of September. If a solicitor visits your home, BBB recommends the following:

- Do your research**  
Visit [bbb.org](http://bbb.org) to review the company's BBB Business Profile to find out more about their marketplace performance. Consider customer reviews, complaint history, and overall company history. If you are unable to find information about the company, it may be best to look elsewhere. Remember, always look for the BBB seal. It's the Sign of a Better BusinessSM.
- Consider local companies**  
Supporting local companies not only strengthens the local economy, but also makes it easier to follow up in case of warranty issues or other needs.
- Read and understand contracts before signing**  
Get everything in writing,

including any verbal promises. Contracts should clearly state start and completion dates, and there should be no blank spaces when you sign.

#### Pay with a credit card

Credit cards offer valuable consumer protections. Avoid paying in full until the job is complete, and never pay in cash.

#### Know your rights under the "Three-Day Cooling-Off Rule"

The Federal Trade Commission gives consumers three days to cancel purchases over \$25 made at home or outside a seller's usual place of business. The rule doesn't apply to all types of purchases—such as insurance or farm equipment—so review your rights carefully. A seller must issue a refund within 10 days of receiving your cancellation notice.

#### Get multiple bids

Getting several proposals from prospective contractors based on the same specifications, materials and labor needed to complete the project gives you a better idea of what reasonable price is. Homeowners should discuss bids in detail with each contractor and ask questions about variations in pricing. Keep in mind, the lowest-priced contractor may not be the best deal. Go to <https://www.bbb.org/get-a-quote> to get a bid from a business you can trust.

#### Watch out for high-pressure sales tactics

Reputable businesses will allow you time to think through a decision and won't discourage you from doing your own research. If someone insists you act now or won't provide written details, it may be best to walk away.

#### Be Safe

Never let a stranger into your home. If a solicitor refuses to leave or you feel unsafe, call the police immediately.

#### Check local Regulations

Some cities require permits for door-to-door solicitation or may enforce rules regarding "No Soliciting" signs. Visit your city's official website to learn about local requirements.

Go to [BBB.org](http://BBB.org) to look up online marketplace business profiles, file a complaint, or write a customer review. Visit BBB Scam Tracker to research and bad behavior.

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](http://bbb.org) for more information. BBB Serving Central East Texas was founded in 1985 and serves 19 counties.

## BOOK SALE

Continued from page 1

mum of two pages. Begin your essay with "A funny thing happened on my way to the Rains County Public Library..." Submit your essay at the Library during the April Book Sale on April 17-18

from 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Each essay that meets all the requirements will be awarded a prize. Don't miss out on all the fun. Grab a pen, a pencil, or a crayon and start writing!

## SPOTLIGHT

Continued from page 1

have also visited Alaska, Galveston and Gulf Shores. The Connaughton's grandchildren call them Scooby and Boo.

Greg enjoys fishing and hunting, cooking and dabbling in AI.

Becky enjoys gardening and doing anything with her

hands such as crocheting. Her grandchildren are her pride and joy, and she spends a lot of time with them during their sports activities.

She has 13 siblings, broken up into an older and a younger group. Every summer she and her sisters go to Broken Bow.

## Advertising Works

# 903-473-2653

CITY GIRL

It happened again...

By Linda Brendle

...and this time, it happened right next door!

Palm Sunday morning, David was getting ready for church when he heard frenzied barking in the back yard. He ran out and saw a large white dog attacking one of the neighbors' goats. He began shouting and throwing sticks until the dog ran off. Then, he ran to the neighbors' house and banged on the door until he roused someone. After explaining what had happened, David and two of the teenaged daughters ran out to check on the goats followed by the rest of the family.

Shortly after the family moved in, they acquired a small goat they kept for a pet. I'm not certain, but I think he often spent a few nights in the house. Then there were more goats, and as of that Sunday morning, there were five full-sized Nubian goats and six kids. I should have suspected something when, the day before, I spotted four dogs running through our yard. I didn't think much about it at the time, but they were led by a large white dog who I now believe was planning his early morning raid.

When David returned home to finish getting ready for church, he told me what had happened. Aside from the victim, who had a gaping wound in her right flank, two of the kids were missing, and the rest of the small herd was so traumatized they wouldn't

come out of hiding so they could be checked. By Tuesday, all the kids had been located, and the rest of the adult goats were okay, at least physically. They didn't all come out of hiding until the end of the week.

One of the other neighbors recognized the attack dog, and when confronted about the incident, the owner said the dog had been disposed of. Whether that means the dog was put down or taken away is not certain, but I haven't seen him since. I did see two loose dogs running through our yard on Saturday causing the remaining goats to huddle together and stare warily at the unwelcome visitors. I wasn't too worried about these two, though. One is missing its right hind leg, and the other is a dachshund, so I seriously doubt either could make it over the fence. Still, they have no business running loose and terrorizing the neighborhood.

The wounded goat continued to go downhill, and the decision was made to put him out of his misery. Friday morning, I heard a gunshot, and looked out my kitchen window to see a man I didn't recognize standing over the lifeless body of the goat. I don't know if he was paying his respects or making sure one shot was enough, but if it was the dog owner, I hope he was coming face to face with the results of his irresponsibility. Another neighbor came with his tractor, and the two men gave the goat a decent burial.

Almost two years ago, a similar event happened to another Rains County fam-

ily. Their herd consisted of nine does, one being pregnant, nine kids, and one Billy - and then the dogs came. A pack of five made a midnight raid, killing the Billy and two kids, wounding three others, and traumatizing the pregnant doe so badly that she and the kid died during the delivery.

Both families have done their part. Their goats aren't allowed to roam the neighborhood, destroying landscaping and gardens. In the earlier case, the entire farm is fenced off, and the goats spend the nights in a special pen with a shed. And although my neighbors don't have a separate goat pen, their entire property is fenced. But determined dogs went over, under, or through to get to their prey. Maybe the dogs weren't hunting. Maybe they were just playing chase. But the results were the same. And I shudder to think what might have happened if there had been a bunch of children playing outside.

I ended the column about the first attack with plaintive question from the daughter, and that's how I'll end this one. "Land owners spend thousands of dollars, not including time and hard work, to fence their places, to keep their animals safe, and to keep their own animals in. Why should they have to also worry about the fact that you don't tend to yours?"

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).



LINDA BRENDLE  
Leader  
correspondent

Bigfoot Visits Ohio

"A guy like me is hard to find."

I have family in Ohio. The last time I visited there the scariest thing I saw, besides a



JODY DYER  
Typewriter Weekly

parking lot. Ohio is a fun place. And it seems that recently for some residents there, the volume of excitement has been turned way up. Apparently, Bigfoot has come to visit.

For those who don't often ponder strange and mysterious happenings in the world and need a Bigfoot refresher, these particular cryptids are unverified creatures, sometimes referred to as Sasquatch, said to inhabit the fields and forests of North America and beyond.

Bigfoot is most often described as a large, muscular, bipedal human or ape-like creature covered in black, dark brown, or dark reddish hair, standing between six and nine feet in height. Bigfoot is often said to emit a foul dead animal or skunk-like odor. Allegedly authentic footprint casts have been made showing feet as large as 24 inches long and eight inches wide, hence the name Bigfoot.

Many indigenous cultures across North America have shared stories of mysterious giant hair-covered wild men. And as early as the 16th century, European explorers in the New World related tales of giant hairy beings prowling the forests. These stories and reported sightings continue today, most recently in Ohio.

Last month there were eight reported sightings across northeastern Ohio within just four days. All described black-haired or brown-haired creatures walking upright with long arms making "grunting" noises and looking for trouble.

The first sighting occurred near Mantua, a small village in northern Portage County

near the Cuyahoga River, 25 miles northeast of Akron. An unidentified researcher for the MTCR (Missile Technology Control Regime) described seeing a nine-foot-tall male creature. He was hiking when he spotted the critter standing about 120 yards away. It appeared to know he was there. The man paused, and then calmly retreated back to his car to change his pants.

The next day, Mantua resident Dylan Obney reported seeing an eight-foot-tall brown creature about 11 p.m. While hiking a trail near the edge of the woods Obney heard heavy un-human like footsteps and deep vibrating grunts. He originally thought he was hearing a deer or another person walking. But he said the steps were slow, spaced out, and much heavier than a human would make. Obney noticed movement minutes later. About 50 yards from where he was standing, a tall figure stepped out from between two trees. He described the brute as seven to eight feet tall, with long arms dangling low at its sides, covered with dark brown hair. Obney said the creature walked upright and seemed aware of his presence.

"The craziest part was the sound it made, a deep grunt that echoed through the woods before it stepped back behind the trees and disappeared after that," he said.

Two more intense sightings were reported to the Sheriff's Department the next day in Garrettsville, Ohio. Jacob Taylor and his friend (who asked to remain anonymous) recounted their encounter while hiking Headwaters Trail. Just before noon, Taylor and his friend noticed movement in the trees approximately 30 feet ahead of them. Suddenly, they saw a giant figure covered in black hair standing and watching them. The duo froze and looked on in awe. They said the monster had broad shoulders and unusually long arms. It walked upright on two legs, and must have been heavy, because the ground shook slightly as it passed between the trees.

"We also noticed a strong,

musky smell in the air. It turned its head toward us, let out a deep, grunt-like noise, and then quickly stepped back into the trees. We were both pretty shaken up and didn't approach the area any closer. It all happened so quick," Taylor's companion said.

Garrettsville is in Portage County. Portage County Sheriff Bruce Zuchowski said they'd received reports from ten individuals in the area who had sighted the creature. Many reported smelling a musty odor before the animal scampered back into the woods.

Another incident occurred around 6 p.m. in the evening near the town of Windham. An elderly lady looking out her living room window saw something unusual running from the woods onto her neighbor's property. She described a creature about six feet tall, completely brown, and moving with long strides.

"I know what I saw, but I don't know what I saw," the woman said.

Another encounter was reported the next day in Newton Township. In an emotional interview a man recounted that he'd let his German Shepherd out at 4 a.m. The dog immediately started "freaking out" and lunged towards some trees. In the commotion, the man described seeing a very large 9-10-foot shadow crashing away through the woods. When the man finally brought his dog inside, it was scared and shaking.

With all of these recent reported sightings in Ohio, Bigfoot enthusiasts have been flocking to the state. If you are so inclined and find yourself in the woods with a Bigfoot in sight, please grab your phone and take a picture. We would all love to see it...

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.

[typewriterweekly.com](http://typewriterweekly.com)  
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TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

TPW Commission Approves '26-27 Statewide Hunting, Migratory Game Bird Regulations

AUSTIN — The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission has approved the following changes to 2026-27 Statewide Hunting and Migratory Game Bird proclamations:

Migratory Game Bird Regulations

The South Zone dove hunting season structure during the first segment will include an earlier regular season opening date (Sept. 1 - Oct. 25), eliminate the Special White-winged Dove Days, and institute standardized daily bag limits and shooting hours across all days in the South Zone. The second segment will be December 18, 2026, to January 21, 2027.

Upland Game Bird Regulations

Chachalaca and quail

hunting season dates were aligned (November 1, 2026 - February 28, 2027).

Matagorda and Wharton counties were closed to wild turkey hunting due to the decline in wild turkey populations in the area.

Due to the overall decline in wild turkey populations across Texas, annual bag limits were changed to only gobblers and bearded hens in counties where either sex is currently allowed for wild turkey hunting.

Big Game Regulations

"Doe days" were expanded to a 16-day season that begins the second Saturday of General Season and closes the Sunday following Thanksgiving in Austin, Bastrop, Caldwell, Colorado, Comal (east of IH 35), DeWitt, Fayette, Goliad (north of U.S. Highway 59), Gonzales, Guadalupe, Hays

(east of IH 35), Jackson (north of U.S. Highway 59), Karnes, Lavaca, Lee, Travis (east of IH 35), Victoria (north of U.S. Highway 59), Waller, Washington, Wharton (north of U.S. Highway 59), and Wilson counties.

The definition of "muzzleloader" was defined to allow the use of new muzzleloading technology for the take of white-tailed deer.

Hunters hitting the field in the upcoming season should make note of these changes and follow all regulations set for species, tagging, bag limits, counties, season dates, means and methods. Hunters can check the Outdoor Annual for approved season dates for the 2026-27 season beginning in early April on the TPWD website. All other information currently in the Outdoor Annual reflects last season's regulations.

100th CELEBRATION

The children of A B Harvey would like to invite you to celebrate the 100th year of his birth. A B was born along with his identical twin brother C B on April 15, 1926. C B passed away in 1952 while serving in the U.S. Navy. A B lived to be 71 years old and passed away in 1997. For the last 15 years of his life, A B's children and grandchildren celebrated his birthday with a meal and a party. Afer he passed away, his children decided to continue to celebrate his birth as a family reunion. This year, on Saturday, April 18, we will be celebrating with a BBQ dinner from noon to 2 p.m. All relatives and friends of A B or his children and grandchildren are invited to come join us at the Rocky Point Community Center.

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TEXAS CROSSWORD by Charley & Guy Orbison

ACROSS

- 1 TXism: 'got the morals' \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 "F" of AFTRA
- 6 one Texas drought concern
- 7 Granbury is seat of this county
- 8 Pres. Trump withdrew the U.S. from the Treaty in 2019
- 9 TXism: "changes his mind \_\_\_\_\_ as he does socks"
- 16 Grand Saline is the \_\_\_\_\_ Capital of Texas
- 18 in Cameron County at U.S. 77 & 83
- 21 TX Holly's "\_\_\_\_ Boy"
- 22 actress Patricia of Texas-based "Hud"
- 23 TXism: "don't give a hoot \_\_\_\_\_ holler"
- 24 TX Ginger Rogers real name: Virginia Katherine \_\_\_\_\_
- 30 TXism: "\_\_\_\_\_ the pack"
- 34 TX Charley Pride's "Then Who \_\_\_\_\_ I?"
- 35 TX Paula Prentiss old TV show: "He \_\_\_\_\_"
- 36 Mr. Webster
- 37 unpleasant sound
- 39 TXism: 'got \_\_\_\_\_ as Texas' (kind)
- 43 TXism: 'you've \_\_\_\_\_ play the hand you're dealt'
- 44 TXism: "\_\_\_\_\_ letting" (flight)
- 45 famed TCU coach: "\_\_\_\_ 'Dutch' Meyer"
- 46 Pecos AM country radio station
- 47 in Jones County on highway 6
- 48 Arab nation residents
- 52 TX "Cactus Jack" Garner was VP for this president (init.)
- 53 Austin university (abbr.)
- 54 Santa Anna disguise at San Jacinto
- 55 Laguna Madre separates Padre Island from this \_\_\_\_\_
- 58 Diez \_\_\_\_\_ is celebrated here
- 59 Noah's boat
- 60 TX George Strail's "\_\_\_\_ Come to Expect It From You" (1990)
- 61 anti-drug agcy.
- 10 Muleshoe refuge is wintering area for these cranes
- 11 sandwich cookie
- 12 TXism: "run up a white \_\_\_\_\_" (quit)
- 13 covering with ceramic squares
- 14 Ranger sportscaster, Nadel (init.)
- 15 Texas convenience store "Stop \_\_\_\_\_"
- 17 TXism: "locked up tighter \_\_\_\_\_"
- 19 Texas hero: "\_\_\_\_ 'Deaf' Smith"
- 20 TX Audie Murphy film "No \_\_\_\_\_ the Bullet" (1959)
- 24 "\_\_\_\_ & Pa" Ferguson
- 25 TX Nimitz (init.)
- 26 muscular dystro. org.
- 27 TXism: "worthless \_\_\_\_\_ a hair-cul"
- 28 TXism: "nip \_\_\_\_\_ it in \_\_\_\_\_" (stop it early)
- 29 TXism: "it'll take a faith \_\_\_\_\_ to fix it"
- 31 \_\_\_\_\_ Fresno, TX is in the Valley
- 32 retriever for short
- 33 TXism: "search every \_\_\_\_\_ craney"
- 38 TXism: "you can write \_\_\_\_\_ ink" (certain)
- 40 \_\_\_\_\_ and reel
- 41 foot digit
- 42 TXism: "has a \_\_\_\_\_ snappin' turtle"
- 48 TXism: "his axes \_\_\_\_\_ hor" (active)
- 50 "Golden Girl" Arthur, et al.
- 51 "hither and \_\_\_\_\_"
- 56 TX Red Adair: "\_\_\_\_ maybe and that's final!"
- 57 TXism: "hit a \_\_\_\_\_" (got a reaction)

# Sheriff's Report

The Rains County Sheriff's Office took the following reports of activity during the week of March 31-April 5:



MICHAEL HOPKINS  
Rains County Sheriff

## Arrests

**4-1:** Jed Rea Mason. Assault family/household member with previous conviction if at trial, bond denied.

**4-1:** Richard Alvin Gillis. Possession of a controlled substance PG 1/1-B greater than or equal to 1 gr. less than 4 gr., no bond listed.

**4-2:** Jasmine Idessa Fincher. Attack by dog resulting in serious bodily injury, \$75,000 bond.

**4-2:** Mason Eli Abernathy. Unlawful installation of tracking device, \$500 bond.

**4-4:** Matthew Glen Barnes. Possession of controlled substance PG 1/1-B less than or equal to 4 gr. less than 200 gr., no bond listed.

## Calls

**3-31:** FM 515 Traffic hazard; FM 513 Mental subject; FM 47 Medical assist; CR 3030 Controlled burn; FM 275 Livestock on roadway; Quitman St. Escort; Hwy. 276 East Tawakoni Reckless driver; Sheriff's Office (SO) lobby Meet complainant; FM 47 Accident; SO lobby Meet complainant; CR 1640 Domestic disturbance; SO lobby Report of theft; Hwy. 19S Medical assist; FM 2946 Accident; S Dunbar Ln. Welfare concern; Meadowview Ln. Animal at large; Hwy. 19S Reckless driving; Hwy. 19N Medical assist; FM 3274 Grass fire; CR 3330 Welfare concern; PR 5796 Agency assist.

**4-1:** CR 3317 Disturbance; SO Warrant service; S Dunbar Ln. Suspicious person; CR 3202 Medical assist; FM 47 Livestock on roadway; Airport Rd. City ordinance violation; S Dunbar Ln. City ordinance violation; SO lobby Meet com-

plainant; CR 1520 Medical assist; SO lobby Meet complainant; Ave. A Point Theft; SO lobby Follow up investigation; SO lobby Meet complainant; SO lobby Meet complainant; Hwy. 19N Accident hit & run; CR 1640 Medical assist; Hwy. 69 Accident; PR 7332 Reckless driving; CR 1534 Criminal trespass; FM 779S Medical assist; CR 4254 Animal at large; CR 3130 Extra patrol; CR 3040 Debris in roadway; CR 3330 Criminal trespass; Moore St. Follow up investigation.

**4-2:** SO lobby Meet complainant; CR 2400 Medical assist; FM 2737 Controlled burn; Hwy. 69 Meet complainant; FM 514 Funeral escort; W Quitman St. Abandoned vehicle; CR 3325 Medical assist; FM 275 Controlled burn; E Lennon Dr. Damaged property; PR 5501 Warrant service; Elaine St. Medical assist; CR 1310 Warrant service.

**4-3:** CR 3345 Medical assist; CR 1515 Domestic disturbance; FM 2324 Animal welfare concern; PR 5451 Medical assist; SO lobby Meet complainant; W Lennon Dr. Warrant service; E Lennon Dr. Scam; E Lennon Dr. Fraud; SO lobby Release property; Lakeview Dr. Criminal mischief; CR 3202 Controlled burn; CR 1411 Medical assist; SO lobby Meet complainant; W Lennon Dr. Warrant service; CR 1605 Animal welfare concern; FM 2946 Medical assist; N Texas St. Medical assist; Hwy. 69 Reckless driving; Hwy. 19 at Quitman St. Motorist assist; CR 1330 Child custody; SO lobby Terroristic threats; Hwy. 276 Motorist assist; Airport Rd. Welfare concern; FM 2324 Suspicious vehicle; FM 47 Suspicious vehicle; E Lennon Dr. Noise complaint; W Lennon Dr. Warrant service; SO lobby Meet complainant; CR 3150 Shot fired; E Lennon Dr. Accident.

**4-4:** CR 1640 Domestic disturbance; Hwy. 69N Accident hit & run; Hwy. 69 Reckless driver; E Lennon

Dr. Business alarm; FM 515 Suspicious activity; CR 4250 Assault; SO lobby Scam; CR 1155 Medical assist; CR 1140 Medical assist; SO lobby Meet complainant; Hwy. 69 Reckless driver; CR 3150 Public assist; FM 2324 Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Welfare concern; Hwy. 276 East Tawakoni Disturbance; Puckett Pass Medical assist; CR 2120 Burglary; Hwy. 19 Suspicious person.

**4-5:** CR 1275 Medical assist; CR 1495 Livestock on roadway; CR 1402 Mental subject; CR 3425 Suicidal subject; CR 1150 Brush fire; CR 3425 Medical assist; FM 515 Welfare concern; Barnes St. Noise complaint; Hwy. 69 Motorist assist; CR 1622 Fight in progress; W Lennon Dr. Meet complainant; Hwy. 69 Livestock on roadway; FM 2324 Medical assist.

The Sheriff's Department reported 218 calls for the week. Among the calls were: 1 criminal mischief, 2 criminal trespass, 1 damaged property, 1 debris in roadway, 2 disturbances, 3 domestic disturbances, 1 escort, 2 extra patrol, 1 fight in progress, 1 brush fire, 2 follow up investigation, 1 fraud, 1 funeral escort, 4 livestock on roadway, 13 meet complainant, 2 mental subject, 2 noise complaint, 1 grass fire, 20 public service, 6 reckless driving, 2 scams, 1 shots fired, 1 suicidal subject, 1 suspicious activity, 2 suspicious persons; 2 suspicious vehicles, 1 terrorist threats, 2 thefts, 1 traffic hazard, 6 warrant services, 6 welfare concerns, 4 accidents, 4 controlled burns, 4 public assists, 1 abandoned vehicle, 2 accident hit & run, 1 agency assist, 1 business alarm, 2 animal at large, 1 release property, 2 animal welfare concern, 1 assault, 3 motorist assist, 1 burglary, 1 child custody, and 2 city ordinance violation.

There were 74 traffic stops, 54 warnings, 16 citations, 22 medical calls, and 13 transports.

\*\*\*

The Rains County Leader tries to include a little bit of everything in each issue. For those who enjoy finding errors, we included some of those as well.

Jaxie Morgan

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Visit us online at:  
www.rainscountyleader.com

## Rains County Sheriff's Office honors telecommunicators during National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

This week, Rains County Sheriff's Office proudly recognizes National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week by honoring the dedicated professionals who serve as the first point of contact during emergencies.

Often unseen by the public, telecommunicators play a critical role in public safety. They are the calm voice in moments of crisis, the steady presence during chaos, and the link between callers and emergency responders.

"Our telecommunicators demonstrate extraordinary strength and professionalism

every single day," said Dispatch Supervisor Tiffany Andrews. "They manage high-stress situations with composure and compassion. Their impact may not always be visible, but it is immeasurable."

Throughout the week, Rains County Sheriff's Office is celebrating its team under the theme "Unseen but Unstoppable." Activities include team appreciation events and opportunities for staff members to highlight one another's contributions.

Telecommunicators work around the clock, answering emergency and non-emer-

gency calls, coordinating response efforts, and ensuring accurate information is relayed quickly and effectively.

Rains County Sheriff's Office encourages the community to take a moment this week to recognize and thank the telecommunicators who serve behind the scenes — providing a vital service that supports public safety every day.

For more information, please contact Rains County Sheriff's Office 903-473-3181 option 1.

## STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

### Border wall through Big Bend apparently on hold

After public outcry, a physical border wall through Big Bend National Park appears to be on hold, The Texas Tribune reported.



GARY BORDERS  
Texas Press Association

In February, the Trump administration waived more than two dozen environmental laws in order to clear the way for a 150-mile-long wall through West Texas, including Big Bend and the adjoining state park. Opposition quickly arose from people and politicians from both parties.

The sheriffs of Brewster, Culberson, Hudspeth, Presidio and Terrell counties — a mix of Democrats and Republicans — wrote an open letter that said: "Based on decades of combined experience working with this terrain, we believe that construction of a continuous physical border wall in the Big Bend region would not represent the most practical or strategic approach to border security in this area."

Now, a map on the U.S. Customs and Border Protection website no longer indicates plans to construct a physical wall in the Big Bend region. It is unclear if those plans are final, since the map has been changed several times in the past few weeks.

The rugged area histori-

cally has been the least-busy of the nine Border Patrol sectors, accounting for just 1.3 percent of the 237,538 apprehensions recorded along the entire U.S.-Mexico border during the last fiscal year.

### State on trial for un-airconditioned prisons

The state of Texas is now on trial in an Austin federal court to determine whether it must provide air-conditioning in state prisons, *kut.org* reported. Inmates and their attorneys have argued for decades that summer conditions — where temperatures can reach 110 degrees — constitute cruel and unusual punishment.

"The Constitution requires living conditions that are not exposing individuals to high heat levels, and the evidence has consistently shown that what TDCJ has done as an alternative has just not been effective," attorney Brandon Duke said. "It's not a solution."

The state counters that it is bringing more AC online at its prisons. Plaintiff attorneys say at least five inmates have died in Texas from heat-related illness since 2023.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice says it would cost \$1.5 billion to install air-conditioning systems at all its prisons, and that state lawmakers must approve the funding.

U.S. District Judge Robert Pittman is expected to rule from the bench after the trial concludes.

### Camp Mystic files application to reopen this summer

Camp Mystic has filed an application with the state to reopen this summer, the Houston Chronicle reported. More than two dozen children and two camp counselors were killed in the July 4 flash floods that swept the camp. The Texas Department of State Health Services, which oversees camp licensing, said it has received complaints about the camp and that it will be "investigated for violations of the laws and rules governing youth camps."

DSHS has been sued by the parents of nine victims who contend the camp was wrongfully licensed just two days before the disaster last summer, even though it lacked an evacuation plan. In a separate case, a Travis County judge has ordered Camp Mystic to preserve for future examination the cabins and grounds damaged in the floods.

Camp leaders are asking for permission to open its Cypress Lake campus, which they said is "in compliance with all aspects of the state's new camp safety laws and has implemented additional safety measures that exceed the requirements of those laws."

Advertising Works 903-473-2653

## Productivity appraisal may lower the property taxes on your farm, ranch or timberland!

Texas law allows farmers, ranchers, wildlife managers and timber growers to pay property taxes based upon their land's productivity value rather than on its market value. This means qualified land is taxed based on its ability to produce crops, livestock or timber—not on its value on the real estate market. And it can mean substantial property tax savings.

### When is the application deadline?

If your land has never had a productivity appraisal or you are a new owner, you must apply to your local appraisal district before May 1 to take advantage of this benefit on your property taxes. You may get up to 60 extra days if you have a good reason and ask for it before May 1. If you miss this deadline, you may still be able to apply, but you will pay a penalty. Check with your appraisal district office.

### Do you need to reapply annually?

If your land already receives agricultural or timber productivity appraisal, you normally don't need to reapply unless the chief appraiser requires you to do so. If a new application is required, the appraisal district will notify you by mail.

For more information, call or come by:

**Rains County Appraisal District**  
145 Doris Briggs Pkwy  
P.O. Box 70  
Emory, Texas 75440  
903-473-2391  
[rainscad.org](http://rainscad.org)

A public service announcement courtesy of your local appraisal district.

## PROPERTY OWNERS HAVE CERTAIN RIGHTS THAT MAY REDUCE THEIR PROPERTY TAX BURDEN



**HOMEOWNERS** can reduce their property tax bills by taking advantage of homestead exemptions offered by counties, cities, school districts and other local taxing units. A homestead is generally a structure and land used as the owner's principal residence on Jan. 1 of the tax year or at time of purchase if acquired after Jan. 1. The homestead exemption reduces the taxable value of your home and can help lower your taxes. An individual is entitled to defer the portion of the appraised value of property they own and occupy as their residence homestead that exceeds the sum of 105 percent of the appraised value of the property for the preceding year. Although the tax collection is deferred, interest continues to run on the unpaid portion of tax at a rate of 5% per year, and the deferred tax remains a lien on the property.

**BUSINESS PERSONAL PROPERTY OWNERS** must file a rendition if you own personal property that is used to produce income — such as the inventory, fixtures, and equipment used by a business, the vehicle and equipment used to transport materials, or the equipment used to provide services. Failure to file the rendition or filing late will result in a 10% penalty. If a fraudulent rendition is filed, a 50% penalty may be imposed. A rendition can be obtained from the Appraisal District office where the property is located. Deadline to file is April 15th each year. A 30-day filing extension is available by written request prior to April 15th.

**PERSONS WHO ARE OVER 65 YEARS OF AGE OR DISABLED** persons who are over 65 years of age or persons who are declared disabled by the Social Security Administration may file for additional exemptions. They may also qualify for a tax ceiling (often referred to as a freeze) on school and locally adopted city, county, and special district taxes for their residential homestead. They are also eligible to defer paying the tax on their residential homestead but the taxes continue to accrue during the deferral along with an interest rate of 5% annually, but no attempt will be made to force payment during the deferral. In addition, a person who is disabled or at least 65 years of age and has a qualified tax ceiling on their homestead may pay their taxes in four equal installments.

**DISABLED VETERANS.** People who have been awarded by the Veterans Administration to have a service-connected disability of 10% or more are eligible for additional exemptions on property they own. The amount of exemption is determined according to the percentage of service-connected disability shown on the veteran's VA Form. A disabled veteran who is awarded from the VA a 100% disability compensation due to a service-connected disability and a rating of 100% disabled or of individual unemployability is entitled to an exemption from taxation of the total appraised value of the Veteran's homestead.

**SURVIVING SPOUSES OF U.S ARMED SERVICES MEMBER KILLED OR FATALLY INJURED IN THE LINE OF DUTY OR FIRST RESPONDERS KILLED IN LINE OF DUTY.** The surviving spouse of a member of the U.S. armed services who is killed or fatally injured in the line of duty or the eligible surviving spouse of a first responder killed in the line of duty are allowed a total (100 percent) property tax exemption on his or her residence homestead, if the surviving spouse has not remarried since the death of the armed services member or first responder.



**FARM AND RANCH OWNERS** may be entitled to receive an alternate method of appraisal determined by the farm income by the property. This method is available to farms and ranches raising crops and / or livestock or property is being used as a wildlife habitat under State guidelines. An application for productivity (ag) use value and additional information is available from Rains CAD.

**FILE APPLICATIONS BY APRIL 30.** Application for agricultural use value and for all property tax exemptions including total exemptions for charitable, religious, and other total exemptions may be obtained from:

### RAINS COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT

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THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY

Did Booth Find a Hiding Place in Texas

by Bartee Haile

On April 14, 1865, five days after Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomattox, a 26-year-old member of the "first family of the American stage" murdered Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C.

The epic manhunt for John Wilkes Booth ended 12 days later on a Virginia farm. A Union soldier under strict orders to take the most wanted man in American history alive fired the fatal shot that forever silenced the first presidential assassin.

That, in a nutshell, is the official story. But what if it's not true? Is it possible that John Wilkes Booth lived to see the twentieth century and even spent part of his extended exile in Texas?

Like most Americans north and south of the Mason-Dixon line, Finis L. Bates never questioned the official version of Booth's fate. The young Tennessean was too busy trying to make a go of his law practice at Granbury a day's ride southwest of Fort Worth.

Not until the early 1870's, that is, when a man walked into his office and introduced himself as John St. Helen. The nervous stranger said he tended bar in nearby Glen Rose and recently had been ordered to appear before a federal judge in Tyler for serving alcohol without a license.

St. Helen frankly admitted that was not his real name and went on to tell the attorney that under no circumstances could he risk revealing his true identity in open court. Bates, who had many clients living under aliases, eased the worried bartender's mind by explaining the matter could be resolved without showing his face in East Texas.

Granbury a short time later, and the two became better acquainted. Lawyer Bates noticed, among other curious things, that the well-spoken barkeep always seemed to have "more money than was warranted by his stock in trade" and possessed an intimate knowledge of "every detail of theatrical work." He could, in fact, recite most of Shakespeare's plays from memory.

Late one night in 1877, Bates rushed to the bedside of his friend and client. Gravely ill and barely able to speak between his desperate gasps for breath, St. Helen believed he was at Death's door.

He asked his attorney to remove a tintype from underneath his pillow. Bates obliged giving what he presumed to be an image of a younger St. Helen just a quick glance.

In the event of his demise, which St. Helen thought was imminent, would Bates send the tintype along with a description of the circumstances to a Mr. Edwin Booth in Baltimore? Never one to deny a last request, the lawyer promised to do so.

Seconds before losing consciousness, St. Helen suddenly grabbed Bates by the arm. It was high time he knew his real name – John Wilkes Booth, the Lincoln assassin.

Bates dismissed the deathbed confession as the delirium of a dying man. But St. Helen did not die, and once he was back on his feet he invited his confessor to take a long walk with him.

Bates expected St. Helen to retract his bizarre revelation, if he remembered it at all, but to his surprise he stuck by his statement. For the rest of the afternoon, St. Helen filled in the blanks for his spellbound companion.

Another southern sympathizer, who did not resemble him in the slightest but happened to have Booth's diary on him, perished in his place that night in Virginia.

Free to resume his flight with no one hot on his heels, he headed west and did not stop until he reached the Indian Territory.

Booth wandered through the West before going into hiding in Mexico disguised as a priest. He returned to the U.S. in 1867 for a clandestine reunion in San Francisco with his mother and older brother Junius. That was followed by a year of teaching school in New Orleans and the eventual change of address to Glen Rose, where John St. Helen was born.

At St. Helen's insistence, Bates swore he would keep his secret. That was the easiest promise the attorney ever made because at the time he did not believe a word of the fantastic tale.

Soon after their stroll, Bates moved back to Tennessee. Over the next two decades, he became a very successful lawyer and a self-made expert on the Lincoln assassination completely convinced the Texas bartender had been telling the truth.

In January 1903, Bates took the train to Enid, Oklahoma, where according to sensational newspaper reports a suicide victim known locally as "David George" had been positively identified as John Wilkes Booth. Arriving at the funeral parlor, Bates compared the facial features of the corpse with the tintype he had held on to all those years and concluded that George, St. Helen and Booth were one and the same.

That was the central premise of the 300-page book Finis Bates wrote over the next four years. *The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth* sold thousands of copies and sparked the speculation that persists to this day.

Contact Bartee Haile at [barteehaile@gmail.com](mailto:barteehaile@gmail.com) or by mail at P.O. Box 130011, Spring, TX 77393.

SAVVY SENIORS

Where to Get Help with Medicare Decisions

Dear Savvy Senior, I'll be 65 in a few months and could sure use some help sorting through all the confusing Medicare options that are available to me. Where can I get help with my Medicare decisions?



JIM MILLER Savvy Senior

- Baffled Bob

Dear Bob, With around 11,400 Baby Boomers turning 65 every day in 2026, you're asking a very timely question.

Many people approaching Medicare are confused by all the choices available today. In addition to original Medicare (Part A and B) that has been around for more than 60 years, you also have the option of enrolling in a Part D prescription drug plan, and a supplemental (Medigap) policy – both of which are sold by private insurance companies.

Another option is a Medicare Advantage plan. These plans, also offered by private insurers, bundle hospital coverage, medical care, prescription drugs, and often extra benefits like vision, dental, and hearing into one policy. Most operate as HMOs or PPOs and require you to receive care within a defined network of providers in your area.

Medicare Advantage plans have also faced increased scrutiny in recent years over prior-authorization requirements that can delay or deny certain ser-

vices. To help you determine which path makes the most sense for your situation, there are several reliable resources available, depending on how much assistance you need.

Tools and Resources

A good starting point is the "Medicare & You" handbook, which provides a clear overview of the program and your options. You can download a copy at [medicare.gov/medicare-and-you](http://medicare.gov/medicare-and-you), and you should receive a printed version in the mail about a month before your 65th birthday.

The Medicare website also features a helpful "Find a Medicare Plan" tool at [medicare.gov/plan-compare](http://medicare.gov/plan-compare) that allows you to compare health plans, prescription drug coverage, and supplemental policies available in your area. If you prefer to speak with someone directly, call Medicare at 800-633-4227, and a representative can walk you through your options over the phone.

Another excellent free resource is your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP), which provides unbiased Medicare counseling either in person or by phone. To locate your local SHIP office, visit [shiphelp.org](http://shiphelp.org) or call 877-839-2675.

You can also contact the Medicare Rights Center ([medicarerights.org](http://medicarerights.org)) at 800-333-4114 for help with specific questions.

In addition, HealthMetrix Research publishes a free Cost Share Report at [\[carenewswatch.com\]\(http://carenewswatch.com\) that compares Medicare Advantage plans by area based on cost-sharing and health status.](http://medi-</a></p>
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Get Help

If you'd like more hands-on help, you can work with a Medicare insurance agent.

Keep in mind that agents are paid commissions by insurance companies, so it's important to choose an independent agent who represents multiple insurers – not just one. That gives you access to a broader range of options.

Also understand that commissions are typically higher for Medicare Advantage plans than for Medigap and Part D policies used with Original Medicare. As a result, some agents may have a financial incentive to recommend Advantage coverage. That doesn't mean the advice is wrong, but it's wise to ask questions and understand all your choices before enrolling.

You can search for licensed agents through [nabip.org](http://nabip.org), the website of the National Association of Benefits and Insurance Professionals.

Taking the time now to compare your options carefully can help you avoid costly mistakes and give you confidence in the coverage you choose.

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

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### Believers' Baptist Church

By Linda Brendle

For I know that my Redeemer lives, and for the last he will stand upon the earth.

Job 19:25

The Resurrection Choir began the Easter Sunday service with a musical presentation titled "Arise My Soul, He Is Risen!" Pastor Jason Rolen's message from Job was called "Our Redeemer Lives." Job lost all his possessions and his children in one day and then he lost his health, but he still didn't sin. His friends came to comfort him but eventually said he must have sinned for things to have gone so badly. He complains, but in a high moment of faith, he makes a declaration about three things: 1) a promised Redeemer who is personally and practically involved in his life, 2) a time in the last days when this Redeemer is promised to return and bring a right and just end to our time on

earth, and 3) a promised resurrection at which time he will see his Redeemer face to face. This Redeemer is Jesus Christ, and if you repent and believe in Him, the grace you need to finish well will be given to you.

Student Ministry Connect Weekend, April 10-12 at Friendship Baptist Church, Conway, Arkansas. \$45 per person. See Pastor Jerod Haygood for information.

April 12, 6:00 p.m. - The Church Praying.

April 14, 12:00-1:30 p.m. 55+ Senior Food & Fellowship Potluck.

April 18, 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. - Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were. Conference Fee: \$20. Register at [www.bbcmemory.org](http://www.bbcmemory.org).

The Asking for a Friend Podcast Episode #247 is titled "Spring Puritan Conference." Find the link at [www.bbcmemory.org](http://www.bbcmemory.org).

### Emory Methodist Church

By Mary White

Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward Him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni" (which means Teacher).

John 20:16

What a great day of worship we had with the Easter Sunrise Service at 7:00 a.m. and then we had a wonderful breakfast. In our regular worship Rev. David Banks continued his series The Word Lives with a message titled "God's Promise Cannot Die" with scripture text taken from John. Mary was weeping until Jesus said her name. Jesus, the risen One, knows your name too. Listen and be still and you will know what it means for you to hear Jesus call your name. The Word

lives, Jesus is alive indeed!

Coming up this week we have game night on Friday at 5:00 p.m. Bring a snack and your favorite game and enjoy real fellowship.

The Methodist Women will have their annual plant sale on Saturday, April 11, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., and Sunday, April 12, from noon to 3:00 p.m.

AA meets in the fellowship hall every Tuesday and Thursday at 7:00 p.m.

Pray for Kenneth Neinast, James McMah, Bill Manning, Jessie Carpenter, and the family of Mary Cash.

Have a wonderful week and don't forget Be Kind!

## Obituaries

### Bob Hoshor

1940 - 2026



Funeral services for Bob Hoshor, 85, were held on April 3, at Freedom Church of God in Emory. Interment followed at Emory City Cemetery.

Mr. Hoshor died peacefully on March 31, 2026, in Sulphur Springs. He was born on December 11, 1940, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Robert and Ethel Hoshor.

Mr. Hoshor spent much of his working years as a truck driver. Later, he took on the solemn role of a gravedigger, a job that reflected his quiet respect for life and those

who had passed.

He met the love of his life, Mrs. Linda, through a computer match and they shared 56 years of partnership filled with love and mutual respect. Though they never had biological children, Mr. Hoshor embraced his role as a stepfather wholeheartedly, loving and raising his stepchildren as his own.

He lived a full and vibrant life that was centered around his faith and belief in Jesus Christ. He was a proud member of Freedom Church of God in Emory.

### Michael Gordon Moody

1952 - 2026



Funeral services for Michael Gordon Moody, 73, were held on April 7, at Wilson-Orwosky Funeral Home. Interment followed at Smyrna Cemetery.

Mr. Moody died peacefully on April 2, 2026, at the VA Hospital in Dallas. He was born on September 4, 1952, to Riley Gordon and Anna Pearl Moody in Dallas.

Mr. Moody's career was deeply intertwined with his love for animals and he managed a pet store. He also served in the United States Army where he was a cook responsible for preparing meals for over 300 men while also managing the kitchen.

He found joy in music and his love for the

outdoors reflected his adventurous spirit and appreciation for the simple beauties of life. His proudest accomplishment was his deep devotion to his son, Sean, and his grandchildren, who meant everything to him. He was also cherished as a wonderful uncle.

Mr. Moody is survived by his son, Sean Moody and Febra; grandchildren, Cody Moody and Alexis King; sister, Kara Stevens and Randall; nephews, David Stevens and Daniel Stevens; niece, Carrie Holtzclaw.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and his sister, Theresa Joestein.

### SAVVY SENIORS

#### Low-Cost Smartphone Plans for Budget-Minded Seniors

Dear Savvy Senior, What are the absolute lowest-cost smartphone plans for seniors who mainly talk and text but need a little cellular data for email and occasional use? I'm currently paying \$40 a month and hoping to cut that down.

Looking to Save Dear Looking,

You're asking a smart question. Many seniors pay far more for smartphone service than they actually use. If most of your phone activity is calls, texts, email, and light web browsing, there's usually no need to spend \$40 or more a month. The good news: plenty of low-cost carriers now cater to light users who want reliable service without the extra cost.

The cheapest plans today mostly come from mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs) - smaller carriers that lease coverage from major networks like T-Mobile, Verizon, and AT&T. Because they don't run their own towers, MVNOs can offer basic service for a fraction of the cost of major carriers, while still providing nationwide coverage. Here are some of the best options available now.

#### Cheapest Wireless Plans

According to Consumer Reports, one of the best

overall values among low-cost smartphone plans is Mint Mobile. Mint offers a \$15-per-month plan that includes unlimited talk and text plus 5 gigabytes (GB) of high-speed data each month. The catch is that you must pay for a full year upfront, which is \$180 plus taxes and fees. For seniors who are comfortable paying annually, this can be an excellent way to lock in long-term savings. Mint runs on T-Mobile's network and works with most unlocked smartphones.

If that's more service or commitment than you want, the absolute cheapest wireless plan currently available is Ultra Mobile's PayGo plan. For just \$3 per month, plus fees, it provides 100 minutes of talk, 100 text messages, and 100 megabytes (MB) of data. Additional usage costs 3 cents per minute or MB of data and 1 cent per text. This plan is best for very light users or those who primarily want a phone for emergencies. Ultra Mobile also uses T-Mobile's network.

Another solid budget-friendly choice is Tello, which allows you to customize a plan to fit your specific needs. Plans start at just \$6 per month and include unlimited texting, 100 minutes of talk time, and 1 GB of high-speed data. If your usage changes, you can easily add more minutes or data in affordable \$1 monthly increments. This flexibility makes Tello especially appealing to seniors who want control over their costs. Tello also operates on T-Mobile's network.

Other super low-cost plans for digital minimalists include US Mobile, which offers a light plan starting at \$8 per month (when paid annually) for unlimited talk and text plus 2 GB of data. Tracfone is another long-standing option, offering very basic 30-minute talk, text and web plan, for \$9 per month with auto-refill.

#### Lifeline Program

If your budget is especially tight, be sure to check into the federal Lifeline Assistance Program. Lifeline provides a \$9.25 monthly discount on phone or internet service.

You may qualify if you receive benefits such as Medicaid, SNAP (food stamps), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), public housing assistance, or Veterans Pension. You may also qualify based on income alone if your household income is below 135 percent of the federal poverty level - currently \$21,546 for one person or \$29,214 for two.

To learn more or apply, visit [lifelinesupport.org](http://lifelinesupport.org). If approved, you can choose from participating providers in your area, and in some cases even apply the discount to service you already have, if your provider participates. Before switching plans, make sure your phone is unlocked and compatible with the new carrier's network. A quick compatibility check on the provider's website can help ensure a smooth transition and keep your savings on track.

### TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

#### Put a Bluebonnet on It!

There is nothing better in the springtime than driving down a Texas roadway seeing fields of beautiful, blooming bluebonnets. Capture that flower power when you put a bluebonnet license plate from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department on your vehicle, trailer, RV or motorcycle.

The plate costs just \$30 (yearly fee in addition to

regular vehicle registration fees.), and \$22 of every purchase goes directly to Texas State Parks to help fund educational, cultural and natural resource projects, as well as to preserve the unique natural beauty of the 93 state parks, historic sites and natural areas across Texas.

Disabled symbol: This symbol can be displayed on

plates for those who are eligible. Form VTR-214 will be required - contact your local county tax office for more information.

Order today - no need to wait for your vehicle registration renewal, the cost will be pro-rated, and your plates will be ready in just a few weeks.

### I Am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

John 14:1-7

# 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](http://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](http://www.pointchurchofchrist.org)

**Calvary Baptist Church**  
INDEPENDENT FUNDAMENTAL BAPTIST  
11:00 a.m. Worship  
6:00 p.m. Worship  
**Pastor: Jimmy Jarrett**  
Hwys 515 & 779  
2-1/2 Miles East of Emory  
903-269-8737

**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](http://stjohnemory.org) for Mass times.  
From Brookshires, go east 1.2 miles. Turn right onto FM 2795

**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**

*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 6:00 p.m.  
Wed. Bible Study 7:00 p.m.  
[emorychurchofchrist.org](http://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  
**Pastor Dan Wynn**  
903-598-3220  
[www.fbcpoint.com](http://www.fbcpoint.com)

On The Square  
Corner Of North & Planters  
Downtown Emory  
903-473-3357  
[emorybaptist.org](http://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 Practice 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 Rolen - Pastor**  
Jerod Haygood - Student & Family Pastor  
Duffey Henderson - Music & Media Minister  
[www.bbcmemory.org](http://www.bbcmemory.org) 903-474-0027  
**903-473-2653 to have your church placed in this directory**

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## FOR SALE

### SALES

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

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## SERVICES

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**HOOTEN'S HARDWARE, LLC**  
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**HOOTEN'S LAWN & TREE SERVICE, LLC**  
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### 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

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**Remember to Render!**  
 Taxable property renditions are due April 15.

**Does this apply to you?**  
 If you own tangible personal property that is used to produce income, such as the equipment or inventory owned by a business, it does.

**What is a rendition?**  
 A rendition is a report to your appraisal district that lists all of the taxable property that you owned or controlled on Jan. 1 of this year. This often applies to furniture, fixtures, equipment or inventory owned by a business.

**What are the advantages of filing?**

- You give your opinion of your property's value.
- You record your correct mailing address so your tax bills will go to the right address.
- If your property's value depreciated, you can file a report of decreased value.

**What is the deadline?**

- For most property types, renditions must be filed with the appraisal district after Jan. 1 and no later than April 15. Different deadlines apply in certain appraisal districts. A property owner may apply, in writing, for a mandatory extension to May 15.
- Different deadlines apply for regulated properties.
- The chief appraiser may extend the deadline another 15 days for good cause shown in writing by the property owner for each type of property.

**REMEMBER!**  
 Filing is your responsibility. If you render late, don't render, or file an incomplete or false rendition, you may face a 10 to 50 percent penalty.

File renditions with your local appraisal district at:  
**Rains County Appraisal District**  
 145 Doris Briggs Pkwy  
 P.O. Box 70  
 Emory, Texas 75440  
 903-473-2391  
[rainscad.org](http://rainscad.org)

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3	9	2	7	8	4	6	5	1
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# Sports

## RAINS LADY CAT & WILDCAT TENNIS

### Seven qualify for regional tennis tournament



Contributed photo

Keegan Wray and Blanton Mayes show off their gold medals after winning the Boys Doubles title at the District 12-3A tournament in Sulphur Springs on April 1.

By **CHUCK FITTS**  
Rains County Leader staff

Seven Rains Wildcat and Lady Cat tennis players qualified for the Region 2-3A tournament in Tyler next weekend.

The high school team won gold medals in girls doubles, boys doubles and mixed doubles at the two-day tournament in Sulphur Springs on Monday, March 30, and Wednesday, April 1. Kenzy Thompson and Alli

Wallace won the gold medal in girls doubles and the team of Kamara Ragsdale and Shaylee Stracener captured the bronze medal.

In boys doubles, Blanton Mayes and Keegan Wray were crowned the District 12-3A champions.

Finishing the sweep of gold medals in the doubles events, Kaliyah Ragsdale and Kade Sustaire won the title for Rains in mixed doubles.

Individually, Isabella Marone finished with a silver

medal in girls singles and will represent Rains at the regional tournament.

Wildcat Cam Reaves won his final match of the tournament to claim the bronze medal for the team.

Ragsdale, Stracener and Reaves qualified to be alternates to the regional tournament.

The Region 2-3A tennis tournament is scheduled Friday and Saturday, April 17-18, at the tennis courts of Tyler Junior College.

## LUKE CLAYTON

### Outdoor folks make friends fast

Our Seventh Annual Outdoor Ron-de-Voux took place at the Top Rail Cowboy Church in Greenville recently and, as the saying goes, a good time was had by all.



Luke Clayton  
Outdoor Columnist

The idea for the event started with a visit with the late Lee Buffington, a well-loved radio personality better known as "Friendlee." Friendlee passed away not long ago and we renamed the event "Luke Clayton's "Friendlee" Outdoor Ron-de-Voux in his honor.

Newcomers to the event often ask me what goes on there on the 18 beautiful acres owned by the church and I tell them it's like a big family reunion. The church has a chuck wagon team and they are busy baking biscuits, serving coffee and providing a spot to 'warm up' if the weather is a bit chilly. We usually schedule the Ron-de-Voux the first Saturday in March but this year, we changed the date to late March because of scheduling at the church. I was 'sweating' things a bit this year.

We choose early March because the temperature is usually just a little chilly, much like fall weather and the warmth of a crackling campfire feels good. The daytime high temperature was in the upper eighties several days before this year's event and I thought of not having my usual campfire. Campfires, warm sunshine and wood smoke just don't seem to fit. But about a week before the event every extended weather forecast I saw predicted the high to be in the low to mid-sixties on our appointed day.

I would like to thank each and every one that helped make this year's event so much fun but naming everyone would take up all the space I am allotted for my column. The event is a great way to sit around campfires and visit, and a whole lot of that took place. But visiting with vendors at the various booths is fun as well as sampling the food at the chuck wagon, the Dutch Kettle clubs, and the big fish fry our fish cooking team prepares. In previous events, we used cast iron pots and skillets over propane burners to fry fish but were always

challenged to have the potatoes, hush puppies and fish ready at the same time. This year my good friends David and Edgar Cotton brought their big outdoor fish fryers and greatly sped up the process. Conversations about everything from training squirrel dogs to fishing the crappie spawn were going on and I even took center stage around the fire relating a humorous tale that centered around a conversation on the phone with a new friend. Let me re-tell it, I think you might also get a laugh.

I was cruising down Interstate 30 a couple days before the event. My plan was to get everything set up and ready. I had wood to unload, a few banners to set up and chairs to assemble. Off to the side of the road, I saw a billboard advertising cremations for a bit over a thousand dollars. I pulled over and jotted down the phone number. I'm not known to be 'cheap' but the idea of paying over ten grand for a 'lay away plan' is something I definitely wish to avoid, many, many years from now of course. But when one is in his or her seventies, it's a good idea to give thought to such things, right?

I pulled into a parking lot and dialed the number, no time like the present to save several thousand dollars I was thinking. A couple of rings on the phone and I was greeted by a very friendly guy that was a pleasure to talk with. I was visiting with Bill from Peters Funerals & Cremations in Greenville. I introduced myself and as luck would have it, he knew about my weekly outdoor column and was a regular reader. The subject went quickly from saving dollars with a cremation to where is the best place to catch catfish. Bill was my kind of man and he had the ability to save me several thousand dollars with my "Luke Clayton lay away plan," and...he loved fishing! After a discussion of everything from the best rigs to catching catfish to a little Lake Texoma striper fishing talk, we discussed my reason for the call. I'm pretty good at getting straight to the point and my question was, "So for a bit more than a thousand bucks, you can implement my 'lay away' plan? Oh yes, says Bill that is basically all it costs but you

do need an Urn. No, I explained I don't need an urn, even at the reasonable price of a few dollars he offered. A two-minute job with post hole diggers and its dust to dust for me buddy, I replied. Not to be cheap but no, I don't need an urn. Just the basic plan. Well, there is one other possible added cost. Transportation to pick you up is free and ten miles back to the funeral home is included but over ten miles is a few bucks per mile. I did the math in my head and figured the added "travel" cost would be only a few more dollars. Heck this was more economical than an Uber trip! The more I learned from Bill the better this deal sounded. How about paying you? Need all the money up front? No, says Bill, You can pay as you go, so to speak, whatever amount you wish. Then the full amount is due of course when the time comes to implement your 'plan'.

After our little phone visit, I was all in and I invited Bill and his office manager out to our event this past weekend. I must say I was pleasantly surprised when a very friendly guy walked up and introduced himself. I had made a new friend that I was anxious to introduce to the crowd. I had quite a group setting around my campfire and began to relate the tale of how Bill and I met and the layaway plan I chosen. At first everyone was a bit serious but as my humorous tale unfolded, I saw my plan was resonating with several folks. I've always said sportsmen are never at a loss for words and no other group in the world makes friends faster.

Email Luke through his website, [www.cafishradio.org](http://www.cafishradio.org).

## RAINS LADY CAT SOFTBALL & WILDCAT BASEBALL

### Lady Cats continue fight for title, Wildcats fall into slump



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

Hunter Chandler secures the pitch for a strike while the umpire verifies the call during the district game against Mount Vernon on March 31 at the Rains High School.

By **CHUCK FITTS**  
Rains County Leader staff

The Rains Lady Cat softball team continued their quest for another District 12-3A championship with a win, while the Rains Wildcats broke a losing streak in a big way.

The Lady Cats had an open date in district on Friday, April 3, so they filled it with a game against the Rockwall Lady Jackets. They scored first, but Rockwall pulled away to secure the 14-3 victory over Rains.

In Mount Vernon on Friday, the Wildcats wrapped up their series with

the Tigers. Rains got on the board first, but were held scoreless the rest of the game as they lost to Mount Vernon, 5-1.

The high school teams traveled to Commerce on Tuesday, April 7, for district games against the Tigers and Lady Tigers.

The Lady Cats built an early lead and held the Lady Tigers to a single run for the 6-1 victory.

The Wildcats opened their weekly series against Commerce with a blow off win over the Tigers, 21-0.

The Lady Cats are 6-1 in District 12-3A and 12-6-1 for the season. The Wildcats

fall to 3-4 in district and 6-16 for the season.

The high school teams will be at home on Friday, April 10, with the softball team taking on Chisum Lady Mustangs and the baseball team will face the Commerce Tigers.

The Lady Cats and Wildcats hit the road again on Tuesday, April 14, for games against Lone Oak. The girls game against the Lady Buffaloes starts at 6:00 p.m. on the softball field, while the boys game against the Buffaloes starts at 7:00 p.m. on the baseball field.



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