

Rains County Leader

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EMORY, TEXAS - THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2026

PRICE 75¢

RAINS COUNTY

Commissioners plan courthouse improvements, assign office space

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

The Rains County Commissioners made plans for improvements to the Rains County Courthouse and assigned offices to county departments during the regular meeting on Thursday, April 9.

During the meeting, the court reviewed a proposal to replace the windows in the Rains County Courthouse.

Phoenix 1 Restoration and Construction of Farmers Branch, specializing in historic preservation, had submitted the bid. The company follows Secretary of the Interior and Texas Historical Commission guidelines for rehabilitating historic properties and previous projects include the Texas State Capital.

Commissioners had budgeted \$150,000 for replacement of the windows and a motion to accept the bid was made. In further discussion, it was

stated that a representative from Phoenix 1 noted that the company which previously replaced the windows used the wrong wood.

This led to the current deterioration of the windows and the representative assured the court that the proper wood would be used in the renovation.

The question arose that if the previous company used the wrong wood, shouldn't they be liable for the repair work. Wanting to seek more informa-

tion, the commissioners voted against the motion to accept the bid. They agreed to place the item on the next agenda.

The court was presented with a bid to replace the sprinkler system on the courthouse grounds. A sprayer head in the current system is causing damage to the foundation of the courthouse. A bid was submitted by Hooten Lawn and

see **COURT** on page 2

Coding for success



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

Parents and Rains ISD Board Members watch a demonstration of the work done by the fourth and fifth grade robotics teams in the Rains Intermediate School. The students use computers to code the custom built robots to perform tasks in the arena on the floor.

RAINS ISD

Trustees close CDC, consider state-mandated bus upgrades

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

The Board of Trustees of Rains ISD held a regular meeting on Monday, April 13, to close the Rains ISD Child Development Center (CDC), consider plans for seat belts in district buses and recognize employees.

During the meeting, the board was presented with a proposal to close the CDC at Rains ISD effective at the end of the current school year.

"We've talked about this before," Superintendent Joe Nicks said. "We did send something out to parents right before spring break. We did offer any of those people who were working over there in the CDC if they wanted a job on one of the campuses."

Nicks stated that he did hear from a couple of community members that were upset about the closing. He also noted that administration had heard from parents of children in the CDC who were disappointed, but said they

understood.

Board members unanimously approved a motion to close the Rains CDC at the end of the school year.

Trustees considered the status of school buses in the district. Per Texas Senate Bill 546, all school buses must have three-point seat belts by 2029. Districts have until May 29, 2026 to report to Texas Education Agency (TEA) the estimated expense and

see **RISD** on page 2

POINT

Early voting for Point City Council begins Monday

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

Early voting for the May 2 election to fill three vacant seats on the Point City Council will begin Monday, April 20.

Early voting for the special election will be conducted from April 20 through April 28 in the Rains County Election office at the Rains County Courthouse Annex during regular business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Applications for ballot by mail must be received at the Rains County Election office no later than the close of business on April 20. The mailing address is 220 W. Quitman St., Ste. E, Emory, Texas 75440.

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SALES TAX ALLOCATIONS

County sees major returns, cities ahead of last year

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

Rains County saw major increases of over 70 percent in the amount of local sales tax allocations being returned from the office of Acting Texas Comptroller Kelly Hancock in April compared to last year, while local municipalities saw double-digit increases in tax revenue.

The press release from Wednesday, April 8, announced that \$1.1 billion would be returned this month to Texas cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts based on sales made in February by businesses that report tax monthly.

With 72.84 percent more to be re-

see **SALES TAX** on page 2

SPOTLIGHT

Lake Country Neighbors have raised money for scholarships since 2008

By **JUDY KRAMER**
Rains County Leader contributor

A local Mardi Gras celebration in 2007 led to the beginning of an annual fundraiser for scholarships in 2008. Lake Country Neighbors (LCN) held the first Mardi Gras charitable event that raised \$2,000 for Rains High School Seniors that year and since have awarded more than \$300,000 in scholarships to seniors in Rains and surrounding counties. The most recent event took place on February 27, and next year's event is scheduled for March 6.

Currently, Mary Hall and Denita Young are LCN co-chairmen of the event. Denita Young has provided a history of the growth of the Mardi Gras themed fundraising festivities over the years as follows:

Mardi Gras has long been a cherished Louisiana tradition, rich with color, music, and community spirit. When Howard and Kathi Ladewig moved to Texas, they found themselves missing the family customs they had celebrated for years. Determined to keep the tradition alive, they opened their home in 2007 and began hosting their own Mardi Gras festivities. For three years, the Ladewig couple welcomed friends and neighbors with warm hospitality, delicious gumbo and all the festive trimmings.

In the second year, members of Lake Country Neighbors joined the celebration – and that's when the event took on a new purpose. Mardi Gras became a fundraiser for scholarships benefiting Rains High School seniors.

As the celebration grew, so did the

need for space. In its fourth year, Ken and Carolyn West graciously hosted the event in their home. By 2012, attendance had expanded so much that the celebration moved to the Emory City Centre, where it remained through 2017. Once again, the event outgrew its venue.

In 2018, Mary Hall and Denita Young stepped in as Co-Chairmen and moved the celebration to the newly built Wildflower. With the new space came a new vision – bigger, grander, and more spectacular than ever. They also recruited LCN member Kristi Sisk as Silent Auction Chairman. Her creativity and connections with local businesses elevated the auction to new heights, curating unique and highly sought-after

see **SPOTLIGHT** on page 3



Denita Young (left) and Mary Hall



City Girl:
Spike was a good dog
Page 3

Jody Dyer:
Field of Dreams
page 3

Wildcat Sports
page 8

Rain Report
Sun., Apr. 12 0.32 in.
Total for Apr. 2.96 in.
Year to date 9.91 in.

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.

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.

Rains County Republican Meeting

Rains County Republicans will hold their monthly meeting on Thursday, April 23, at 6:30 p.m., at Roma Restaurant, 2450 FM 47, Point. Next month, on May 21, the special guest will be Pastor Kason Huddleston, State Chaplain for the Republican Party of Texas and State Board of Education District 9 candidate.

Emory Tailgate Hamfest April 25

Hamfest will be held at the Rains County Fairgrounds on Saturday, April 25, from 7:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Bring your old stuff, go home with new stuff! Vendor setup is \$10, general admission is \$5, under 17 admitted free. Bring your own table and chairs. Overnight dry camping available Friday night. The event is sponsored by the Rains Amateur Radio Association. For more information, go to www.w5ent.org.

Lone Star Cemetery Annual Meeting May 3

The annual Lone Star Cemetery Corporation meeting will be held on May 3, at 2:00 p.m. at the Point Church of Christ Fellowship Hall. If you cannot attend but would like to make a tax-deductible donation, please send to P.O. Box 141, Point, TX 75472.

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

Risks threatening Gen Z's retirement – and how to tackle them

For Gen Z workers, saving for retirement may feel out of reach.



BRANDON ROBERTS
Edward Jones
Financial Advisor

High interest credit cards and student loan payments can drain a paycheck before the month even begins. With rising rents and higher everyday prices, there's barely room for anything beyond the basics.

However, getting started with retirement savings needn't be hard.

• Begin small – even a few dollars per paycheck helps build a good habit. Small, consistent contributions can grow dramatically over time, when you have decades to accumulate them.

• If you have a workplace retirement plan, contribute at least enough to earn any employer match.

• If you have no workplace plan, consider opening an IRA.

The choices and financial jargon within a retirement plan may feel overwhelming, but options like target date funds help reduce complexity and keep you properly invested without needing expert advice.

The biggest mistake isn't choosing the wrong fund for your retirement dollars; it's not starting at all. Small steps today can build real flexibility tomorrow. Time is Gen Z's biggest advantage.

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

THE PUBLIC FORUM

Protecting the county's environment

Dear Editor

Rains County is not only beautiful countryside – it has some of the cleanest air in Texas. As a board-certified internal medicine physician with a focus on environmental health, I have studied pollution patterns across the state. Rains County sits in a unique corridor that largely avoids the oil field emissions and urban smog affecting other regions.

That makes it worth protecting.

Proposed battery energy storage systems (BESS), large-scale solar farms, and data centers raise serious concerns. These are not theoretical risks. Globally, there have been at least 63 major energy storage failures between 2011 and 2023. When failures occur, they can release large quantities of toxic metals, with airborne plumes traveling 20–50 miles.

Solar panels also contain small amounts of heavy metals such as lead. Multiplied across hundreds of thousands of panels, this creates a long-term risk of soil and groundwater contamination.

Rains County lacks the water resources and emergency infrastructure to safely manage large industrial fires or chemical releases. In

addition, fire suppression can involve PFAS “forever chemicals,” which persist in the environment and contaminate waterways.

As a physician, I have treated patients exposed to environmental disasters such as Love Canal and the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. Years later, we still see increased rates of cancer, autoimmune disease, and neurodegenerative conditions—often affecting the next generation.

Greg Abbott has already recognized concerns in East Texas by supporting investigations into regional water quality. Helen Kerwin has called for a pause on further development until communities can fully evaluate long-term impacts.

That is a reasonable and necessary step.

We urge citizens to engage, learn more, and support efforts like the Rains County Safety Coalition. www.rainscountysafetycoalition.org

The precautionary principle matters. Once these systems are in place, the risks cannot be undone.

Protect our air. Protect our water. Protect our future.

Stephanie McCarter M.D.
Point, Tx 75472

COURT

Continued from page 1

Tree Service to replace the system with a drip irrigation system. The bid was unanimously approved.

Commissioners returned to a discussion regarding assigning office space in the Hill Building. After hearing from various department heads, the court unanimously approved the office spaces for Rains County Emergency Management, the future Rains County Fire Marshal, Rains County Environmental Enforcement and Rains County Sheriff's office.

The court reviewed the application and fee schedule associated with building permits and inspections. They noted that it would only affect commercial and multi-family properties in the county. The application and fee schedule was unanimously approved as presented.

The commissioners assigned Rains County HR Coordinator as the Sick Leave Pool Administrator and accepted the 16 hours of

continuing education credits of Rains County Judge Brent Hilliard into the records of the meeting.

The court then heard an overview of the Texas Association of Future Educators and their accomplishments, and Lake Country CASA presented a proclamation recognizing April as National Child Abuse Prevention Month.

Speakers during the public forum addressed the commissioners regarding battery storage facilities and power line construction coming to the county, a plan to open a pet sanctuary in the county, information about a sister-city program and foreign entities using renewable energy projects to compromise the power grid.

Hilliard was not present for the regular meeting.

The next regular meeting of the Rains County Commissioners Court is scheduled for Thursday, April 23, at 10:00 a.m. in the courtroom of the Rains County Courthouse.

RISD

Continued from page 1

number of unequipped buses.

Rains ISD has 16 buses without restraints, two buses with lap belts and 13 buses with three-point seat belts. The cost to replace the buses was estimated at \$2.8 million dollars. The board unanimously approved a motion that the cost to comply with the law puts an undue financial burden on the district.

The school board approved recommended professional personnel contract renewals, non-renewals and terminations as presented and reviewed Letters of Assurance recommendations to paraprofessionals and support staff.

Trustees approved a resolution to pay district employees for March 3 and 4 when the schools were closed for the Rains Lady Cat playoff game in Abilene. They approved the list of library books to be purchased and entered the continuing education hours of board mem-

bers into the minutes.

During Wildcat Roar, the district recognized the Teachers of the Year and Unsung Heroes for the year. Teachers were Amy Tanton in Elementary, Tiny Jones in Intermediate, Shannon Hague in Junior High and Shanil Wallace in High School.

Unsung Heroes were Cynthia Spigner in Elementary, Ted Brannum in Intermediate, Mary Ellen Knight in Junior High, Patti Wilson in High School and Laticha Jarrett for all campuses.

The Rains Intermediate School had demonstrations from their robotics teams.

Trustee Brennan Potts was not present for the regular meeting.

The next meeting of the Rains ISD Board of Trustees is scheduled for Monday, May 11, at 6:30 p.m. in the Alexander Boardroom of the Rains ISD Administration Building.

POINT

Continued from page 1

Six candidates are running to fill the vacant seats. The council has been unable to establish a quorum to conduct business since December of 2025.

Candidates for Place 1 are Lisa Catherine Briggs and Douglas House. Candidates for Place 2 are George Judge and Susan Lacy. Candidates for Place 4 are Douglas Vines and Joseph Sterner.

Mayor Angela Nelson, Councilwoman for Place 3 Tammy Hooten and Councilwoman for Place 5 Becky Decker are the remaining

members on the council.

The special election to fill Places 1, 2 and 4 will be held on May 2 from 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.

The election will be for those residing within the Point city limits, and will be held at First Baptist Church of Point at 985 Industrial Blvd.

For more information on the special election, contact the Rains County Election office at 903-473-5009, lisa.kneifl@rains.co.tx.us or www.co.rains.tx.us/pages/rains.Elections.

SALES TAX

Continued from page 1

turned compared to 2025, Rains County, with a half-cent sales tax rate, will receive \$114,907.69. The monthly total increases the year-to-date total to \$404,066.74, which is 30.91-percent ahead of last year.

As for the cities in the county, Emory, East Tawakoni and Point saw double-digit increases in the amount of money being returned in April from the 1.5-percent sales tax rate as compared to last year.

Compared to April of last year, the City of Point moved 31.63 percent ahead the year-to-date total at \$71,584.42. They expect to receive 25.14 percent more, or \$16,603.78, from the state for sales made in February.

Emory saw an increase of 14.95 percent in the amount of sales tax allocations being returned compared to last year. The state will return \$128,423.82 in April, which increases the year-to-date total to \$573,116.97.

With an increase of 13.11 percent in sales tax revenues from this time last year, East Tawakoni is expecting \$7,264.80 from the state in April. The city remains 2.7 percent behind the total sales tax allocations for the last year at \$35,200.69.

The Texas Comptroller's office is expected to release local sales tax allocations made from sales in March for those reporting monthly during the second week of May.



APRIL '26 SALES TAX STATISTICS

County City	Taxed	Net pymt. this period	Net pymt. prior year	Pct. change	'26 pymt. to date	Net pymts. prior year	Pct chg. from '25
Rains	0.5	\$114,907.69	\$66,480.46	72.84%	\$404,066.74	\$308,650.01	30.91%
East Tawakoni	1.5	7,264.80	6,422.75	13.11	36,154.21	35,200.69	2.70
Emory	1.5	128,423.82	111,719.49	14.95	573,116.97	510,853.88	12.18
Point	1.5	16,603.78	13,267.63	25.14	71,584.42	54,379.79	31.63
Hopkins	0.5	263,426.15	267,825.45	-1.64	1,247,043.92	1,324,828.03	-5.87
Como	1.0	5,452.52	5,125.66	6.37	26,071.50	24,632.56	5.84
Cumby	1.25	10,074.35	9,460.93	6.48	60,247.64	53,814.48	11.95
Sulphur Springs	1.5	641,341.39	632,441.00	1.40	3,047,530.78	3,097,645.61	-1.61
Hunt	0.5	655,630.84	591,188.80	10.90	2,937,716.78	3,006,374.87	-2.28
Caddo Mills	1.5	96,402.35	84,333.74	14.31	455,947.49	425,966.72	7.03
Campbell	1.5	18,872.18	10,001.30	88.69	60,518.49	52,297.74	15.71
Celeste	1.25	11,989.49	11,098.65	8.02	54,050.54	60,608.10	-10.81
Commerce	1.5	194,040.22	156,087.67	24.31	894,781.12	807,206.91	10.84
Greenville	1.5	938,802.40	858,056.72	9.38	4,344,343.68	4,504,680.11	-3.55
Hawk Cove	1.0	1,878.39	2,120.76	-11.42	9,074.83	8,438.32	7.54
Lone Oak	1.5	18,304.67	15,561.40	17.62	88,104.77	85,248.68	3.35
Neylandville	1.0	1,003.91	631.59	58.94	4,382.21	2,702.20	62.17
Quinlan	1.5	151,116.47	143,431.49	5.35	685,749.77	663,085.36	3.41
Union Valley	1.0	4,977.29	3,444.53	44.49	23,144.81	17,731.02	30.53
West Tawakoni	1.5	17,516.71	12,855.19	36.26	78,979.76	67,595.26	16.84
Wolfe City	1.5	15,956.51	16,205.58	-1.53	77,343.22	79,810.96	-3.09
Van Zandt County does not collect sales tax							
Canton	2.0	387,266.62	346,195.32	11.86	1,765,333.49	1,723,599.47	2.42
Edgewood	2.0	42,740.58	38,442.81	11.17	186,040.61	185,831.82	0.11
Edom	1.0	1,688.99	1,554.59	8.64	11,311.21	8,588.46	31.70
Fruitvale	2.0	6,669.12	6,334.36	5.28	31,546.22	194,488.44	-83.77
Grand Saline	2.0	62,017.45	56,517.98	9.73	284,300.24	240,310.11	18.30
Van	2.0	111,198.20	88,203.96	26.06	465,489.73	408,651.87	13.90
Wills Point	2.0	146,124.83	148,803.85	-1.80	753,278.13	738,138.59	2.05
Wood	0.5	247,737.92	210,233.09	17.83	1,120,510.98	1,000,401.23	12.00
Alba	1.5	28,183.22	25,489.71	10.56	127,139.97	133,839.83	-5.00
Hawkins	1.5	43,153.41	35,411.01	21.86	196,407.10	176,245.09	11.43
Mineola	1.5	231,701.54	211,036.58	9.79	1,094,923.05	1,028,911.65	6.41
Quitman	1.5	74,316.86	66,098.29	12.43	330,631.41	316,550.82	4.44
Winstboro	1.5	103,638.02	102,146.21	1.46	471,137.30	475,074.56	-0.82
Yantis	1.5	11,558.78	9,452.97	22.27	51,319.84	54,057.78	-5.06

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SUDOKU

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

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

Mars Hill Masonic Lodge Annual FISH FRY IS BACK

Sat., April 25, 2026, 4-7 p.m.
at the Lodge Hall on Hwy. 69 near Rains High School

ALL YOU CAN EAT - DONATIONS ACCEPTED

CITY GIRL

Spike was a good dog

By Linda Brendle

Spike was a handsome, playful, mischievous, lovable stray who showed up at Kent and Stella's ranch in February of 2015 and never left.



LINDA BRENDLE
Leader
correspondent

The vet said the black and white pup was between six months and a year old and was a Great Pyrenees with some other breeds mixed in. He was smart but headstrong to the point that, when he was taken to obedience school, his new family was told that Great Pyrenees were infamous for having minds of their own, and training would be wasted on their new pet. Thankfully, his strong will leaned more toward the mischievous rather than the destructive. He was sometimes frustrating, but he was a good dog – and he provided a lot of good writing material.

David and I met Spike in June of 2015 when we stayed with him for the first time while Kent and Stella went out of town. By then, he was so loved that they couldn't bear to kennel him, so they asked if we would house/dog sit while they were gone. We were happy to help them out, and since they travel quite a bit, we became frequent visitors over the years. We stayed with him so often that Stella quipped that we must spoil him because he didn't seem particularly happy to see them when they came home. She even began to call us his adopted grandparents.

He was an easy dog to love, but sometimes he wasn't easy to manage. In the beginning, he was an outside dog – unless you count the barn. During the day, he was free to run the sixty-plus acres of the ranch and amuse himself by chasing the deer, wild hogs, rabbits, and other wildlife as well as the small herd of Black Angus Kent and Stella raised. If his people left the premises, however, he was tethered to a long lead that gave him access to most of the back yard and the covered patio. He spent his nights in the barn – a climate-controlled stone structure that matched the house and housed the SUV, the pickup, the tractor, an amazing number of tools, and a small office for the ranch business.

Spike knew the routine and usually came when called unless he had better

things to do. One morning, it was time for us to leave for my hair cut appointment followed by my part-time job at the church. Of course, since we were on a schedule, he decided to play hard to get. David decided to start the car and roll slowly up the quarter-mile driveway toward the front gate to see if we could entice him to follow us. He showed up, but when I tried to catch him, he stayed just out of reach. We were finally able to catch him with the help of a neighbor who was out for a drive in her four-wheeler. She had her cute little white female canine with her, and Spike stopped to say hello. Then he rode back to the house with her and submitted to the tether without further drama.

After a while, our visits took on a familiar routine. Stella discovered that Spike would do just about anything for a hot dog or a slice of bologna. One evening when he wouldn't come, I waved a piece of the lunch meat in the air and immediately caught his interest. His eyes grew big and he headed for me at full speed. Have I mentioned that he weighed in at about eighty pounds? All eighty pounds of him flew straight toward me, and although I was braced for impact, when he connected, I was knocked a couple of steps backward, straight out of my shoes. I did, however, get hold of his collar while he wolfed down his treat, and he was in for the night.

Like Kitty, Spike had a way about him, and as he matured and settled down a little, he became a house dog, at least part of the time. He still liked to run and play and make his presence known around the ranch. And he still got into mischief. He sometimes came home covered in mud and grass after taking a swim in the pond and then rolling in the dirt to dry off. And there was the time when Kent had his hay fields fertilized while he was gone, and Spike decided chicken manure was even more fun to roll in than the dirt. Needless to say, he didn't spend that night in the house – and both incidents made my column. In fact, I wrote about him so often that the last thing Kent would say to him before he left was "Try not to make the newspaper this week."

Through the years, Spike grew a little thicker around the middle and a little slower when he raced around the fields. He still liked to walk out the door at sunrise and

announce his presence to the world with a lot of barking. Sometimes he jumped on top of the hay bales lined up outside the barn so he had a better view. But then, he'd hop down, take care of his business, and wander back to the patio for a nap. His muzzle began to gray, and he preferred to spend his evenings napping in front of the TV with his adopted grandparents rather than trying to slip out the door to go chasing the night critters. But as he aged, so did we, and we retired from our position as dog sitters, leaving it to younger, more able dog lovers.

Then, about a year ago, he found a wild persimmon tree, and he ate a LOT of persimmons. I'm not sure of all the medical details, but he was a very sick puppy for a while. He couldn't keep food down and was on several medications. He finally recovered, but he never seemed quite the same after that. He was still lovable and handsome in a distinguished kind of way, but most of the mischief and playfulness were gone. When we visited, he wandered into the room and leaned against us for some petting before returning to his nap.

On March 10, Stella texted me these words, "We almost lost Spike last night." She and Kent were on a cruise, and while his new caregiver was walking him, he went down for no apparent reason and had trouble breathing. With a combination of prayer and Prednisone, he seemed to recover somewhat, and they decided he might have been stung by a bee. But he continued to have breathing difficulties, and the vet said it was bronchoconstriction. When they returned from their cruise, Kent and Stella did what they could to ease his breathing and make him feel loved and cared for. Then, on Tuesday, April 7, I received this text from Stella: "Our precious Spike has passed on."

I sent words of consolation, but mere words can't fill the emptiness left by a long-time companion. The memories will live on, though, and in time the pain will fade a little. We'll laugh and tell stories about his antics, and we'll all agree on one thing. Spike was a good dog.

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.

Field of Dreams



JODY DYER
Typewriter Weekly

"Ray, people will come Ray. They'll come to Iowa for reasons they can't even fathom. They'll turn up your driveway not knowing for sure why they're doing it. They'll arrive at your door as innocent as children, longing for the past. Of course, we won't mind if you look around...you'll say it's only \$20 per person. They'll pass over the money without even thinking about it, for it is money they have and peace they lack. And they'll walk out to the bleachers, sit in shirtsleeves on a perfect afternoon. They'll find they have reserved seats somewhere along one of the baselines, where they sat when they were children and cheered their heroes. And they'll watch the game and it'll be as if they dipped themselves in magic waters. The memories will be so thick they'll have to brush them away from their faces. People will come, Ray. The one constant through all the years, Ray, has been baseball. America has rolled by like an army of steamrollers. It has been erased like a blackboard, rebuilt and erased again. But baseball has marked the time. This field, this game, it's a part of our past Ray. It reminds us of all that once was good and it could be again. Oh...people will come Ray. People will most definitely come." And people do come...

Perhaps the most iconic baseball movie ever made is *Field of Dreams* (1989). In the movie, the words above were spoken by James Earl Jones' character writer Terrance Mann. What Terrance predicted has indeed come true. People do come. They come to Iowa to visit Ray's ball field in the corn. I have been there. And it is wonderful.

Field of Dreams relates the

story of Ray Kinsella (played by Kevin Costner), an Iowa farmer who hears a mysterious voice one night coming from his cornfield. The voice keeps saying, "If you build it, he will come." Ray decides to act. Despite taunts of lunacy, with the support of his wife Annie (played by Amy Madigan), Ray tills under a large part of his cornfield and builds a baseball diamond, believing this is what the voice is telling him to do. Soon after the field is finished, ghosts of great players start emerging from the corn to play ball. First to appear is White Sox star "Shoeless" Joe Jackson.

In the movie, Joe asks Ray, "Is this heaven?" Ray answers, "No, it's Iowa."

For anyone who loves the game, this nostalgic baseball movie is golden. But it's about more than baseball. It's about fathers and sons. The deeper story centers on death, regret, and Ray's strained relationship with his deceased father. Watching this movie makes me ache for my dad. In the end, one of the players that shows up to play is Ray's father, giving them both the opportunity for needed reconciliation. And they have a game of catch on Ray's ballfield. You can visit the *Field of Dreams* today. Recently, I had the opportunity to do just that.

Last October, my wife and I took a road trip, traveling from Texas to Michigan to attend a friend's wedding. On the way home we detoured through Iowa to visit family, and at the prompting of a dear friend (thank you John Soto!) we decided to include a visit to the *Field of Dreams*.

The *Field of Dreams* baseball diamond has become a pop-culture tourist attraction. It was built by *Universal Pictures* in 1988 for the movie, and is located in a cornfield outside of Dyersville, Iowa (a good name for a town). When the movie production was completed, the field was left

behind. Most of the field, along with the farmhouse seen in the movie, was owned by Don and Becky Lansing. Don's grandparents bought the farm in 1906. The Lansing's neighbors, the Ameskamp family, owned the adjacent property, covering left and center field. The ball field was built across two properties so that sunset shots in the movie would have a clear line-of-sight.

For several years, both families accepted visitors, even setting up small souvenir stands to accommodate the public.

In 1990, neighboring farmer and friend Keith Rahe, organized a baseball team dubbed the "Ghost Players" to entertain visitors once a month. These games drew thousands of fans to the ball field. In the years since, several celebrity and special MLB games have been played at the field, along with concerts and other events.

In 2007 the property was sold to *Go the Distance Baseball*, a private partnership committed to preserving the movie site. New events continue to be held at the venue, and the field is open to visitors year-round, sunrise to sunset, weather permitting.

Additional development is in progress nearby with a 24-field youth baseball and softball complex planned. The complex is known as *All-Star Ballpark Heaven*.

For 150 years baseball has been perhaps the most positive constant in American life. And one small ball field nestled among the cornfields in Iowa can remind us of that...

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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SPOTLIGHT

Continued from page 1

items each year.

No Mardi Gras celebration is complete without dazzling décor. LCN member Cindi Williams joined the team to lead the Decorating Committee, transforming the venue into an immersive Mardi Gras experience reminiscent of New Orleans itself. Many of the decorations were lovingly sourced from Louisiana, adding authenticity and flair.

Behind the scenes, Pam Bowden worked her magic as the marketing lead, creating signage and PR in 2025. The event received a fresh twist

with the theme Boots, Buckles, and Bourbon Street – a lively blend of Cowboy Chic and classic Mardi Gras style. Guests embraced the theme wholeheartedly, arriving dressed to impress.

This year's celebration was another unforgettable evening, featuring delicious Cajun cuisine catered by Fusion in the Woods, bar service by Blazin Pizza, and lively entertainment from Jason Waldon and the Alibis Band. The Silent Auction set a record with \$9,190 raised, and the Live Auction surpassed all previous years

with an impressive \$17,000.

The success of this event is made possible by the dedication of LCN members, the generosity of local businesses, and the support of individuals throughout the community. Thanks to this collective effort, the proceeds will once again fund scholarships for graduating seniors.

A tradition that began in one family's home has grown into a beloved community celebration – one that continues to change lives, year after year.

Advertising Works 903-473-2653

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. After 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.

"The spider looks for a merchant who doesn't advertise so he can spin a web across his door and lead a life of undisturbed peace!"
-Mark Twain

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TEXAS CROSSWORD
by Charley & Guy Orbison
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ACROSS

- 1 TXism: "a Johnny ___ lately"
- 5 TXism: "active as ___ in a hen house"
- 6 Texas hardwood tree: boss
- 7 TXism: "he'll kick you ___ a funeral home" (mean horse)
- 8 Texas "Watergate" prosecutor (2 wds.)
- 17 this Tinkle wrote Alamo book "13 Days to Glory"
- 18 TX Buddy's widow: "Maria"
- 21 TXism: "bend elbow" (drink)
- 22 famous Uvalde cowgirl, Evans
- 23 Bobbie Gentry hit: "Ode to ___ Joe"
- 24 "P" of Texas DPS
- 29 TX Martha Hyer film: "The ___ of Katie Elder"
- 30 TXism: "mighty ___" (okay)
- 31 UT dog, e.g.
- 32 TXism: "useless ___ on a sow"
- 34 first performers of "Eyes of Texas": UT ___ Club
- 35 TX George Jones' "He Stopped Loving ___ Today"
- 36 TXism: "confused as ___ astroturf"
- 37 TX ZZ Top album: "___ Hombres"
- 38 TXism for "females"
- 39 not informed
- 41 Palo ___ County
- 42 Texas actress Cyd married Charisse
- 43 TX "Spanky" McFarland of "Our ___"
- 44 state park near Zapata
- 45 not found in Texas restaurants anymore: ___ trays
- 46 TXism: "he's earned ___ spurs" (achieved)
- 47 Texas, in the Union
- 48 boat haulers
- 50 preoccupied with
- 51 go get it dog,
- 52 decompose
- 53 urgent appeal for help, esp. at sea
- 9 cowboy pants
- 10 "___ well that ends well"
- 11 pee ___ football
- 12 TXism: "stands ___ his own two feet"
- 13 "Old Yeller's" disease
- 14 Texas pitcher's Dave Danforth's pitch: "___ ball"
- 15 Port Arthur AM
- 16 TXism: "___ rattle your teeth" (threat)
- 19 TXism for "might do it" (2 wds.)
- 20 TX Bob Phillips' VHS: "Twenty ___ the Backroads" (1992)
- 22 rock group: "Three ___"
- 24 Gov. "___" Ferguson
- 25 Texas' country (abbr.)
- 26 TXism: "I'll ___ monkey's uncle"
- 27 Padre Island lagoon: "___ Madre"
- 28 TXism: "strike while the ___ hot" (act) while you can)
- 29 TXism: "___ rag" (handkerchief)
- 30 ran away
- 33 me also (2 wds.)
- 34 Cowboy star DE Ellis (1998-2008)
- 35 this Kent was the only person to beat George W. in an election (1978)
- 37 silver swords?
- 38 gold layers
- 40 "State ___ Texas" (in October)
- 41 two Jacks and two Aces in poker, e.g.
- 44 TXism: "he's a good judge of horse ___"
- 47 puts into office
- 49 "life ___ short"

Solution at www.cbtx.com 903-473-2611 Member FDIC

Sheriff's Report

The Rains County Sheriff's Office took the following reports of activity during the week of April 6-12:



MICHAEL HOPKINS
Rains County Sheriff

Arrests

4-6: Donald Eugene Phillips. Driving with license invalid with previous conviction/suspension without financial responsibility, \$2,500 bond.

4-6: Lindsey Brian Wolfe. Driving while intoxicated, \$5,000 bond.

4-7: Russell Wayne Alexander. Driving while intoxicated, \$1,500 bond.

4-7: Jesarae Renee Garner. Possession of drug paraphernalia, \$100 bond.

4-10: Ryan Scott Blodgett. Aggravated assault date/family/house member, \$150,000 bond.

4-11: Emmanuel Granados Mendoza. Driving while intoxicated, \$1,500 bond.

4-11: Jeremiah Elijahuan Mundine. Burglary of habitation, assault of family member, escape while arrested, interfere with emergency call, \$175,000 bond.

4-12: Justin T. Holder. Liquor violation Class C, no bond listed.

Calls

4-6: S 1st St. Noise complaint; FM 2946 Accident; CR 1402 Suspicious vehicle; Industrial Blvd. Business alarm; CR 2220 Debris in roadway; FM 3299 Fire alarm; CR1308 Fraud; CR 2430 Follow up investigation; CR 1307 Medical assist; N Texas St. Medical assist; Hwy. 69 Reckless driver; W Cedar St. Agency assist; CR 1310 Controlled burn; Smith Cir. Child custody; FM 515 Brush fire; CR 4480 Theft; FM 2795 Controlled burn; FM 514 Pedestrian stop; W Hwy. 69 Accident; Smith Cir. Meet complainant; Hwy. 19N Welfare concern; FM 515 Welfare concern; E Lennon Dr. Assault.

4-7: Sheriff's Office (SO) Meet complainant; Hwy. 276 Motorist assist; PR 6180 Medical assist; FM 2324 Grass fire; N Locust St. Medical assist; Duffy St. Animal at large; CR 1610 Environmental; N Texas St. Funeral escort; CR 2540 Follow up investigation; CR

1402 Livestock on roadway; CR 3317 Medical assist; CR 4481 Disturbance; CR 4320 Livestock on the roadway; CR 3030 Warrant service; Hwy. 19 Warrant service; E Lennon Dr. Accident; E Lennon Dr. Follow up investigation; CR 4250 Courtesy transport; S Texas St. Medical assist.

4-8: Medical assist; CR 1605 Suspicious vehicle; FM 2795 Brush fire; PR 5441 Medical assist; Hwy. 19 Livestock on the roadway; Egret Cir. Paper service; FM 3274 Livestock on the roadway; FM 515 Reckless driver; SO lobby Meet complainant; Honeysuckle Ln. Vehicle in roadway; CR 4452 Livestock on the roadway; E Lennon Dr. Accident; E Lennon Dr. Abandoned vehicle; S Texas St. Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Criminal mischief; E Lennon Dr. Controlled burn; FM 2324 Reckless driver; Hwy. 19N Structure fire; CR 1503 Medical assist; S Texas St. Welfare concern; CR 4500 Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Suspicious vehicle.

4-9: E Lennon Dr. Welfare concern; E Hwy. 69 Livestock on the roadway; SO lobby Meet complainant; CR 3330 Controlled burn; CR 3040 Grass fire; Hwy. 69 Welfare concern; S Dunbar Ln. Medical assist; Garrett Ave. Follow up investigation; CR 1690 Welfare concern; Hwy. 276 Reckless driving; CR 1525 Medical assist; Fish Point Rd. Noise complaint.

4-10: CR 2355 Noise complaint; CR 4250 Suspicious activity; S Dunbar Ln. Medical assist; W Lennon Dr. Accident; CR 3231 Reckless driver; CR 4481 Warrant service; CR 3045 Civil matter; W Quitman St. Animal welfare concern; CR 1425 Damaged property; Barge Point Crossing Animal at large; Ave. D Point Medical assist; Hwy. 19S Reckless driver; E Lennon Dr. Reckless Driver; FM 47 Theft; PR 7119 Medical assist; Dunbar Ln. Harassment; PR 7707 Domestic disturbance; FM 47 Livestock on the roadway; CR 2946 Reckless driver; Hwy. 69 Extra patrol; SO lobby Warrant service.

4-11: FM 515 Suspicious person; S Texas St. Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Welfare concern; FM 514 Controlled burn; SO lobby Meet com-

plainant; Hwy. 19N Assist motorist; FM 2946 Meet complainant; Locust St. Medical assist; CR 3430 Medical assist; FM 515 Disturbance; N 1st St. Medical assist; Hwy. 276 Reckless driver; CR 1605 Theft; CR 4252 Reckless driver; Hwy. 69 Motorist assist; FM 47 Livestock on roadway; W North St. Harassment; CR 1540 Welfare concern; Hwy. 276 Medical assist; E Lennon Dr. Motorist assist; Meadowview Ln. Damaged property; CR 1410 Medical assist; Skyline Dr. Medical assist; North St. Burglary; FM 275 at FM 514 Noise complaint; FM 515 Accident; CR 1525 Medical assist.

4-12: Briggs Blvd. Medical assist; S Texas St. Medical assist; FM 47 Accident; CR 1330 Medical assist; CR 3333 Medical assist; Hwy. 19S Welfare concern; Hwy. 69 Reckless driver; FM 2946 Welfare concern; DR 3327 Medical assist; N Texas St. Follow up investigation; Lake Fork Dr. Suspicious activity; 2nd St. Emory Disturbance; CR 3150 Medical assist; CR 3040 Power outage.

The Sheriff's Department reported 271 calls for the week. Among the calls were: 1 paper service, 1 criminal mischief, 2 damaged property, 1 debris in roadway, 3 disturbance, 1 domestic disturbance, 4 extra patrol, 2 brush fire, 1 fire alarm, 11 follow up investigation, 1 environmental, 1 fraud, 1 funeral escort, 2 harassment, 1 structure fire, 8 livestock on the roadway, 6 meet complainant, 4 noise complaint, 2 grass fires, 20 public service, 11 reckless driving, 2 suspicious persons, 1 power outage, 3 suspicious vehicles, 3 thefts, 1 vehicle in the roadway, 4 warrant service, 10 welfare concerns, 1 trespassing, 9 accidents, 5 controlled burns, 2 public assists, 1 911 hang up call, 1 pedestrian stop, 1 abandoned vehicle, 1 agency assist, 1 business alarm, 2 animal at large, 2 animal welfare concerns, 1 assault, 4 motorist assists, 1 burglary, 1 child custody, 1 civil matter, and 1 courtesy transport.

There were 96 traffic stops, 75 warnings, 18 citations, 31 medical calls, and 17 transports.

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

Patrick warns GOP could lose state House majority

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick warned last week that the GOP risks losing its majority in the state House this November and urged party unity behind the winner of the May runoff U.S. Sen. John Cornyn and Attorney General Ken Paxton.

Without that unity, Patrick said that state Rep. James Talarico, the Democratic nominee, could win, The Dallas Morning News reported.

House Speaker Justin Burrows said he believes the GOP will keep its majority in the chamber but agreed unity is critical.

"We've got to be on the same page," Burrows said. "We've got to be working and rowing in the same direction."

Democrats, who have not held a majority in either chamber in more than 20 years, would have to flip 14 Republican seats to achieve a majority in the 150-member House.

Data centers set to get billions in tax breaks

An exemption for the state's booming data center industry means Texas will lose \$3.2 billion in sales tax revenue over the next two years, The Texas Tribune reported.

Lawmakers say they will consider proposals to either limit the tax break or eliminate it altogether when they meet in January for the next legislative session.

"These new numbers are extremely concerning, and I will say they're unsustainable," said state Sen. Joan Huffman, chair of the Senate Committee on Finance. "I plan to look at filing legislation to either repeal the exemption or take a very close look at it and see."

The tax break was approved by lawmakers in 2014, when there were far fewer data centers and they were much smaller. If nothing changes, exemptions could reach \$1.75 billion annually by 2030.

The state already has more than 300 active data centers, with more than 100 additional projects either under development or planned.

Texas could face \$700 million in SNAP penalties

New federal rules designed to cut waste in the

nation's food stamp program means Texas taxpayers will have to pay \$700 million more each year to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, The Tribune reported. Officials with Texas Health and Human Services disclosed this to lawmakers at a recent committee hearing.

Almost 9 percent of the state's SNAP payments had an error, slightly better than the national rate of 11 percent. Texas has until October 2027 to bring the error rate down below 6 percent. The error rate is based on unintentional mistakes by either the agency or the client receiving the benefits that result in an overpayment or underpayment.

Nearly one-fourth of the state's population gets some type of assistance from Texas Health and Human Services.

"We are dealing today with a health care epidemic, but not from a disease or virus," said Sen Lois Kolkhorst, R-Brenham, the committee chair. "With scandals in places like Minnesota and California drawing national attention, we, as Texans, must examine our own system and see how we measure up to other states."

Court pauses smokable cannabis ban, higher fees

A Travis County district judge has temporarily lifted a statewide ban on the sale of smokable hemp products, The Texas Tribune reported. The temporary restraining order is in effect until at least April 23, when another hearing is scheduled.

Texas hemp companies sued to block new state rules that have wiped out a huge portion of the legal cannabis market, the Texas Standard reported. The rules took effect March 31 and prevented stores from selling smokable hemp products and vastly increased licensing fees. Smokable products make up the vast majority of hemp sales in the state.

"I estimated that flower is about half the market and smokable products put together including vapes are about two-thirds of the market," said Robin Goldstein, a University of California economist who researches cannabis markets. He said the Texas market had about \$4 billion in retail sales annually.

The plaintiffs are also suing over a jump in annual licensing fees for manufacturers from \$250 to \$10,000. Retailers must now pay \$5,000 per store, up from

\$150. "These provisions function not merely as regulatory tools, but as significant economic barriers not authorized by statute," the lawsuit contends.

The suit was filed by the Texas Hemp Business Council, the Hemp Industry and Farmers of America, and eight Texas-based hemp companies.

State to launch statewide food permit July 1

The Department of State Health Services will begin offering statewide operating permits for food trucks in Texas beginning July 1, the Austin American-Statesman reported. Food truck owners currently must pay each city's permitting fees to operate there, which discourages them from traveling to other places to sell their food.

"It's a hassle to take time off to go and do that where we have to stop what we're doing and lose money that day," food truck owner Eloisa Schessler, of Dallas, said.

Some cities opposed the new law, fearing they may lose control of how mobile food trucks operate in their jurisdictions. They will still be able to control where and when food trucks operate, but they will not be able to collect permit and inspection fees.

Texas' job growth continues to outpace national rate

Texas added 40,100 non-farm jobs in January to reach 14,379,500 positions, outpacing the national growth rate by 0.6 percentage points, according to the Texas Workforce Commission.

"Texas employers continue to spur our state's economic momentum, adding more than 40,000 jobs across a wide range of major industries," said TWC Chairman Joe Esparza. "TWC remains committed to supporting Texas' pro-growth policies and world-class talent pipeline that make Texas the best place to do business."

The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in the state remained at 4.3 percent, which is below the national jobless rate of 4.7 percent.

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.

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BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU

'Tis the Season for Your Annual HVAC Tune-Up

Temperatures are already on the rise, and blazing East Texas temperatures will be here before you know it. The best way to deal with air conditioning issues is to prevent them before they start. With proper maintenance and preventive care, your HVAC system can run more efficiently, last longer, and help you avoid costly breakdowns during the hottest months of the year.

Routine HVAC maintenance – at least once a year – improves efficiency, reduces energy costs, and helps prevent unexpected repairs.

"Residential heating and cooling units can last up to 20 years depending on maintenance and usage", said Mechele Agbayani Mills, President and CEO of BBB East Texas. "Yearly pre-season tune-ups can prevent future problems and unwanted costs so that your unit can provide comfort for years to come."

BBB recommends the following tips to make sure your AC services go off without a hitch:

Research the company's background and licensing. While friends, neighbors and colleagues are often a source for referrals, make sure you also review a prospective company's BBB Business Profile at bbb.org as part of your decision-making process.

BBB recommends the following tips to make sure your AC services go off without a hitch:

Research the company's

background and licensing. While friends, neighbors and colleagues are often a source for referrals, take time to review a company's BBB Business profile on bbb.org.

Also confirm that the company is licensed and insured. Consumers can check the status of a license at the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation's (TDLR) website at www.license.state.tx.us or through TDLR's customer service lines at 1-800-803-9202 or 1-512-436-6599. In addition, state-issued license numbers, which begin with TACL, must be on all print advertisements, company vehicles, business cards, work proposals, and invoices. If no license number is evident, the contractor is most likely not licensed to work in the state.

Compare prices and service packages. Get at least three estimates for any air conditioning repair work or maintenance work. All bids should be in writing and should provide a full description of the services to be provided and the materials to be used. Compare more than just cost. Check the size and rated efficiency of the equipment each contractor recommends. Ask each contractor how they arrived at recommending a particular sized system.

Review warranty coverage. Find out if the company offers any type of warranty or guarantee. Make certain you understand the terms and conditions of the coverage. Also, be sure to check the

warranty on your current air conditioning unit to determine whether any repairs or replacements may be covered.

Ask about energy efficiency. Many new air conditioning units are manufactured to be more energy efficient than others. Look for the ENERGY STAR label to find out more about products that may cost a little more up front, but save you in energy costs over time. Some models may even be eligible for a tax credit. Ask your HVAC contractor (heating ventilation and air conditioning) to verify tax credit eligibility and provide the Manufacturer Certification Statement for the equipment you plan to purchase.

To find a HVAC expert near you, go to bbb.org. To report fraudulent activity or unscrupulous business practices, call BBB at 903-581-5704 or report it via BBB ScamTracker.

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

Visit us online at: www.rainscountyleader.com

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

Saving the queen: Scientists study bee reproduction to strengthen colonies

Texas A&M AgriLife explores how environmental pressures disrupt the biology of honey bee colonies

One-third of the food we eat depends on a tiny worker most people rarely think about – the honey bee. But across the U.S., beekeepers have seen honey bee colonies collapse at alarming rates.

Now a team of Texas A&M AgriLife Research scientists is looking inside the hive for answers. A new research effort is exploring how the reproductive health of honey bee queens and their mates, or drones, shape and strengthen the survival of colonies.

The AgriLife Research team will look at parasites, disease and environmental stressors like weather and chemicals that are putting growing pressure on the important pollinators supporting a significant share of the nation's food supply.

Juliana Rangel, Ph.D., AgriLife Research entomologist and professor of apiculture in the Texas A&M Department of Entomology in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, leads the new five-year, U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded project fittingly named SWARM – Sustainable Ways to Advance Reproductive Management in Honey Bees.

The project brings together researchers across disciplines and continents to better understand how environmental stress affects the way queens and drones grow, mate and ultimately keep colonies healthy.

"This couldn't have come at a timelier moment because of issues with high colony losses," Rangel said. "If we can help improve the

reproductive health of the queens that head these colonies, then we can help improve colony health, productivity and sustainability."

Rangel is joined on the project by department colleague and assistant professor Erick Motta, Ph.D., AgriLife Research scientist whose research focuses on microbial communities and their dynamic relationships across ecological and agricultural systems, and Nancy Ing, Ph.D., AgriLife Research scientist and professor in the Department of Animal Science and Department of Veterinary Integrative Biosciences, whose expertise includes genetics and reproductive biology.

International collaboration to improve beehive health

The project also includes collaborators in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, where scientists face other environmental challenges affecting bee reproduction.

Rangel and team are partnering with Irish colleagues to identify reproductive characteristics across in the Irish bee population that could help colonies in the U.S. remain more resilient under environmental stress.

A honey bee colony depends on one queen, who mates with 12-15 drones during brief, risky flights early in her life. According to Rangel, the number of drones she mates with, the quality of their sperm and the viability of what she stores in her reproductive organ, known as a spermatheca, determine how long she can sustain the colony.

But environmental pressures can disrupt this delicate process.

In Texas, Rangel said obstacles often include high pathogen levels in develop-

ing colonies, nutritional stress and pesticide residues in the nectar, and pollen that the bees forage. The team will examine how each of these factors affects both queens and drones — from nuptial flight behavior to sperm count and viability.

In Ireland, honey bees face a different challenge. Queens have a very short mating season due to frequent rain, which limits the opportunity for mating flights. The short window and challenging conditions decrease the likelihood that queens travel far, often leading to inbreeding, which weakens colonies over time.

New tools and practical solutions for beekeepers

Beyond advancing scientific understanding, Rangel believes the project could provide practical applied science and tools for beekeepers.

One of the project's most groundbreaking components is the search for molecular "marker RNAs" inside queen-laid eggs. These tiny biological signatures could allow beekeepers to assess queen fertility without harming her. A reliable queen fertility test would be a significant advancement for beekeepers, Rangel said.

This project also includes an outreach component. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service specialists will develop beekeeper surveys, expand queen-rearing workshops and deliver new training in Texas and Ireland based on the research findings.

"The goal is to continue improving the reproductive health of queens and drones," she said. "Healthier queens mean healthier colonies, and that strengthens the pollination systems that our food supply depends on."

THIS WEEK IN TEXAS HISTORY

UFO's Common Sight in North Texas

by Bartee Haile

A breathless farmer burst into the Stephenville office of the *Dallas News* on Apr. 17, 1897 and excitedly announced, "I have found it!"



BARTEE HAILE
Historical Columnist

"Found what?" asked the local correspondent for the big-city paper.

"Found the airship the 'Dallas News' has been talking about!"

The mysterious airships, presumed to be plural because of the many sightings, were the talk not only of Texas but the western half of the country. First observed over Sacramento, California on Nov. 17, 1896, the phantom fleet had since moved steadily eastward reaching the Lone Star State in early April 1897.

The initial report came from Denison, where a man claimed to have spotted a "brilliantly illuminated" object while walking home at three o'clock in the morning on Apr. 5. His attention attracted by a strange "swishing" sound, he looked up to see one of the incredible intruders a quarter of a mile above him.

Nine nights later, a "machine" with a bright light resembling that of a locomotive passed over Weatherford. Later that evening, the same or a similar craft visited Corsicana according to several prominent citizens. In the opinion of a doctor, "it was certainly not a meteor, for the reason that the light was intermittent appearing to come and go."

Neither these first-hand accounts nor the hundreds of others in Texas and elsewhere could be explained by man-made craft. The Wright brothers' breakthrough at Kitty Hawk was six years in the future, and balloons were still rare and restricted to daylight ascents.

The inhabitants of Farmersville got a much closer look on Apr. 15. "Fully two-thirds of the citizens

were out looking at what they supposed to be a large planet or meteor" but "in a very few moments...the queer thing was almost hanging over the city."

The city marshal said the contraption came within two hundred feet of the ground, and he could plainly see three occupants – two men and a big dog. Another observer swore he heard a clearly visible trio singing the hymn "Nearer My God to Thee."

That same night 75 miles to the west, the Texas and Pacific operator at the Cresson depot on the outskirts of Fort Worth saw what he described as "the top of a passenger coach...long and pointed at both ends with (a) powerful searchlight in the front (and) several smaller ones on the side." "This is dead straight," he said without a trace of doubt. "I am now convinced there is something in this airship business."

Most of Granbury had turned in for the night on Apr. 16, while the editor of the *Hood County Truth* continued to drill the volunteer rifle company. The citizen soldier was so shaken by the sudden appearance of an "air machine" that "he ordered the company to fire on the object, which it did."

On the 17th, the aforementioned farmer provided the Stephenville representative of the "Dallas News" with details of the most amazing encounter to date. Early that morning, he had come upon an airship "on the ground." Two strangers, who introduced themselves as the pilot and the engineer, told the Texan they had been forced to land in order to make emergency repairs.

The farmer hurried into town, rounded up 23 individuals and led them back to the site "to view the aerial monster." The members of the well-behaved mob included two newspapermen, three judges, the district attorney, the mayor and three physicians.

Although the travelers refused to allow the delegation on-board the cigar-

shaped contraption, apparently powered by a pair of metallic windmills, they spoke at length about their "experimental trip." Working under contract to "certain capitalists of New York," the cloud-hoppers rated their adventure "a great success" and predicted "that in a short time the navigation of the air will be an assured fact."

With that the two thanked the throng for their interest and hospitality, cranked up the flying cigar and floated away on a southwesterly heading toward Comanche.

At almost that exact hour, a Waxahachie judge was having a close encounter of his own. The jurist and a fishing companion happened upon "five peculiarly dressed men...stretched out full length on some furs" and puffing on their pipes.

Parked close-by was an airship roughly half the length of the Stephenville vessel but considerably wider and with room enough for all the conveniences of home. The judge's impression of the accommodations was based not upon speculation but a guided tour of the interior on which he saw "bunks, cooking department (galley), gasoline stove" and other necessities of life in the Gay Nineties.

These passers-by also hailed from the North – the North Pole. They provided a crash course on the history of their "splendid country" from the original settlement by the wandering tribes of Israelites to the accidental arrival of several "lost" polar expeditions.

The rash of UFO sightings in the Stephenville area in the early years of the current century, 200 in a two-month period, is nothing to sneeze at but hardly the first of its kind. Judging from the newspaper accounts of the 1890's, unidentified flying objects are a common sight in North Texas.

Contact Bartee Haile at barteehaile@gmail.com or by mail at P.O. Box 130011, Spring, TX 77393.

Women's Service Club

The Women's Service Club gathered on April 13 for their monthly meeting at the Rose Community Center. They recited the Pledge of Allegiance and had prayer for the members, the community and the nation.

The hostesses for the month outdid themselves with chicken salad, broccoli salad, spinach dip and dreamsicle fluff, along with homemade springtime cupcakes. The drink was a strawberry aqua fresca punch, and it was all wonderful. Fifteen members attended as well as four new members. The financial report and minutes were approved.

The Rose Community Center needs repairs to a section of the floor, and bids have been put out to have it

repaired. It is hoped that the repairs can be made in May.

There are several upcoming events, starting with the Founders Day Chicken Roast at the Emory Volunteer Fire Department. The Women's Service Club will help provide desserts again this year. Come out on May 2 for a delicious chicken lunch with homemade desserts at the Emory Volunteer Fire Station located on Hwy. 69.

Poppers in the Park will be held on July 4th at the Heritage Park from 6:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. The Women's Service Club will be providing another free fireworks show. This year's show will be the 12th annual free show for the community. It is also the 250th Anniversary of America, 1776-2026,

so come out to celebrate our great nation. The American Legion, Whitecap Shaved Ice, and Gingers Lemonade will be ready to serve you.

The Veterans Day Parade and Program will be held on November 7. More information from Ms. Lana Carlisle will be coming. The WSC will be responsible for the parade line up and anything else Ms. Lana needs.

The club is excited that their membership is building back up. Members that have been on vacation from the club are invited back and if you're new to the area, come attend a meeting on the second Monday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the Rose Community Center.

Reported by Jeannine Hayes

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Believers' Baptist Church

By Linda Brendle

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Luke 14:11

Pastor Jason Rolan returned to The Incomparable Christ series from Luke with a sermon titled "Where's the Best Seat?" There were two stories in the text. First, compassion should come before legalism: The leaders tried to trap Jesus by bringing a sick man into the synagogue on the Sabbath. Second, humility should come before pride: He noticed they all looked for the most honorable seat. He said they might be asked to move for someone more important. Today we must make sure our hearts are truly humble, thinking of others as more important than ourselves.

The Student Ministry returned from their

Connect Weekend Sunday evening after a busy three days. One crew painted a biblically-based women's addiction recovery home, a second crew cleared the playground for a ministry that supports foster and adoptive families, and a third group power washed bleachers at the local school.

Sunday, April 26, immediately following morning worship will be the Student Ministry Super Informal Fellowship. Pick up lunch or brown bag it, then enjoy pickleball and hula hoop golf.

Sunday, May 3, 9:30 a.m.-10:15 a.m. - Baptism Class for anyone interested in being baptized. Please contact the church office if you plan to attend.

The Asking for a Friend Podcast Episode #248 is titled "Book Club #8, Spurgeon the Pastor (Chapter 7)." Find the link at www.bbcmemory.org.

SAVVY SENIORS

Understanding the Social Security Breakeven Age

Dear Savvy Senior,
I'm trying to figure out the best time for my wife and I to start taking our Social Security retirement benefits and would like to understand the breakeven age. What can you tell me?



JIM MILLER
Savvy Senior

- Strategizing Sam

Dear Sam,
As you approach retirement, one of the most important financial decisions you'll face is when to begin collecting Social Security retirement benefits. A useful concept to guide your thinking is the "breakeven age," which helps you evaluate the trade-off between taking a reduced benefit early versus a higher one later. Here's what you should know.

SSA Waiting Game

The Social Security Administration allows you to start collecting your retirement benefits as early as age 62. However, your monthly benefit will be permanently reduced - about .5 percent each month - if you claim before your full retirement age (FRA), which is 67 for those born in 1960 or later. Conversely, for every year you delay claiming beyond your FRA - up to age 70 - your benefit amount increases 8 percent each

year. Your benefit maxes out at age 70, so there's no financial incentive to wait longer.

Breakeven Age

The breakeven age is the point when the total benefits from waiting to claim equal the total you would have received by starting earlier. Live longer than that age and delaying pays off. Live shorter and claiming early pays more. It's a simple benchmark for retirement planning.

The exact breakeven age varies based on individual circumstances, but a common comparison is between claiming at age 62 versus waiting until FRA. For most people, the breakeven age for this scenario is around 78. Another common comparison is claiming at FRA versus waiting to age 70. The average breakeven age here is around 82.

Other Considerations

Keep in mind that while the breakeven age is a powerful tool, it is just one piece of the puzzle. It doesn't account for other crucial factors like your health and family longevity. If you have chronic health problems or a family history of shorter lifespans, taking a reduced benefit early might be the most prudent choice to ensure you receive a significant number of payments.

On the other hand, if

you're in good health and expect to live a long life, delaying your benefits to age 70 can provide a much higher income stream that acts as a form of longevity insurance. To estimate your life expectancy, try the online tool livingto100.com.

Furthermore, a married couple's claiming strategy can be complex. The higher-earning spouse's decision can significantly impact the survivor benefits for the lower-earning spouse. Waiting for the higher earner to claim at age 70 can provide a larger benefit for the surviving spouse for the rest of their life.

In the end, there is no one-size-fits-all answer. The breakeven age provides a useful framework for comparison, but the decision of when to claim your benefits should also consider your health, financial situation and family.

Online Calculators

There are several online calculators that can help you and your wife figure out the best time to claim your benefits. One that's completely free to use open-socialsecurity.com. Or for a more thorough analysis use maximizemysocialsecurity.com. This tool, which costs \$49 for a year, will run what-if scenarios based on your circumstances to find your best strategy for getting the highest possible lifetime payout.

Obituaries

Mary Ann Neria Kepner

1942 - 2026

Mrs. Mary Ann Neria Kepner, 83, died on March 27, 2026, at her residence in Alba. She was born on September 14, 1942, in Coffeyville, Kansas, to Alfred and Josephine Anaya Neria.

On May 14, 1965, she married Lewis Jerome Kepner in Miami, Oklahoma. She moved from Terrell to Alba five years ago. She and her husband were members of the VFW and American Legion. She loved to fish with family, enjoyed dancing, and was always the life of the party. Above all, Mary Ann cherished time with her family. She was a member of Center Point Church in Mesquite.



Mrs. Kepner is survived by her daughter, Rhonda LeBrun of Alba; son, Richard Kepner of Wichita, Kansas; sister, Joann Payne and husband Keith of Oologah, Oklahoma; sister-in-law, Judy Gilman; three grandchildren, Brandon LeBrun, Shanda Kepner, and Breanna Kepner; four great-grandchildren; and numerous other relatives and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband; two brothers, Richard Neria and Rick Neria; and her sister, Shirley Ann Grover.

The family will have a memorial service honoring Mary Ann at a later date.

Pauline Senter Stacks

1935 - 2026

Funeral services for Pauline Senter Stacks, 90, of Emory, were held on April 12, at Wilson-Orwosky Funeral Home. Interment followed at Clifton Cemetery.

Mrs. Stacks died peacefully on April 8, 2026, at her residence, surrounded by her loving family. She was born on August 11, 1935, in Emory, to J.R. "Dock" Senter and Inez Ely Senter.

Mrs. Stacks was a loving and nurturing caregiver. She lived a life marked by devotion to her family, faith, and community.

She was a school bus driver in Houston and Emory. She also served as an Air Coach bus driver, a role that included the memorable transport of the Houston Rockets basketball team. Later in life, she worked as a medical assistant and spent several years as a compassionate home caregiver.

She earned her GED, completed EMT



training, and obtained her Commercial Driver's License. She was devoted to caring for the sick, and her work for the Lord, including driving the church joy bus. She found joy in gardening and had a tender affection for wildlife.

She is survived by her children, Eugene Kelley, Randy Kelley, Paulette Nation and husband Johnny, Ricky Kelley, Donna Raper, Karen Brimer and husband Billy, and Patricia Marroquin and husband Roland; sisters, Wanda Yarborough, Imogene Donaghey, and Peggy Bagley; sixteen grandchildren; thirty-two great-grandchildren; eleven great-great-grandchildren with two on the way; and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, Chester Lee Stacks; parents, Dock and Inez Ely Senter; brothers, Oscar Ray Senter, Jimmy Allen Senter and Ray Senter; sister, Geneva Whisenhunt; and great grandson, Steven Minton.

Larry Douglas Warren

1948 - 2026

Larry Douglas Warren, 77, died peacefully on April 8, 2026, in Sulphur Springs. He was born on May 4, 1948, in East Texas, to Henry Leon Warren and Margie Patrick Fritchman.

Mr. Warren grew up in East Texas with a strong work ethic that would define his life. Immediately after completing high school, he joined the United States Marine Corps, a chapter of his life he regarded as his proudest accomplishment.

Following his honorable service, he pursued a career as a general contractor, where he was known for his diligence and



commitment to his work. His contributions to the field reflected the same sense of discipline and integrity that characterized his military service.

He was also a passionate sports enthusiast. He found great joy in following the Dallas Cowboys and the Texas Rangers.

He is survived by those who cherish his memory and honor his life. Larry's story remains a powerful example of commitment and pride, inspiring all who had the privilege to know him.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Henry and Margie Warren.

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT

Palo Pinto Mountains State Park Celebrates Grand Opening with Ribbon Cutting, Special Guests

AUSTIN - Palo Pinto Mountains State Park officially marked its grand opening April 10 with a special ribbon cutting event. Governor Greg Abbott, Secretary of State Jane Nelson, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Executive Director David Yoskowitz, Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission Chairman Emeritus Lee Bass, Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation Chairman Michael S. Greene, and Texas State Parks Director Rodney Franklin were in attendance and spoke.

"The Palo Pinto Mountains State Park is one of the most majestic of them all," said Governor Abbott. "Preserving our lands is crucial. It allows communities to reconnect with the land that made Texas, Texas. We are going to live up to our commitment to preserve our state parks so that future generations have access to the beauty of Texas that was originally seen by Sam Houston and Davy Crockett."

Located between Abilene and the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, the Palo Pinto Mountains State Park offers Texans 4,871 acres of former ranch land to hike, bike, fish

and explore on the juniper-topped hillsides and hardwood bottomlands of the Cross Timbers.

"It's a shining day for the department and the state of Texas as we officially commemorate the opening of Palo Pinto Mountains State Park," said Yoskowitz. "We could not be more grateful for the support from numerous partners and the Texas Legislature in their commitment to bringing these special places to the people of Texas. This park is truly a jewel, and we are excited to see visitors traversing the trails, fishing from the pier, and experience this special slice of North Texas."

The park opened its gate to visitors on March 1, making it the first state park to open in North Texas in more than 25 years. In its first month of operation, the park welcomed more than 15,000 visitors for day use and overnight camping.

"Everyone has been really excited and impressed," said James Adams, Superintendent of Palo Pinto Mountains State Park. "We've had a ton of comments about how well done and thoughtful the design was. They love everything from the Headquarters

to the campsites and day use areas."

The park, which was purchased by TPWD in 2011, was originally slated to open in 2023, but completion of construction projects was delayed. Funding for park construction was supported by the Texas Legislature and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation (TPWF). Funding for the park came through special legislative appropriation, the Sporting Goods Sales Tax and federal funding along with \$10 million in private philanthropy raised by TPWF.

True to its namesake, Palo Pinto Mountains is home to a kaleidoscope of color with year-round green foliage, blue colored, berry-like cones and tinted red bark. The park's visitors this spring could see the landscape go technicolor with blooming wildflowers like Indian blankets, yellow coneflowers, white prickly poppies, lemon beebalm, evening primrose and more.

With more than 16 miles of trails ranging from easy, family-friendly paths that can be explored in about half an hour, to more moderate trails of a much longer length, there are routes for everyone to explore and enjoy.

Church Directory

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

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

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

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

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 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

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

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emorybaptist.org
EMORY BAPTIST CHURCH
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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.
Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday
Adult Bible Study 6:30 p.m.
Student Ministry 6:30 p.m.
Dr. Jason Rolan - Pastor
Jerod Haygood - Student & Family Pastor
Duffey Henderson - Music & Media Minister
www.bbcmemory.org 903-474-0027
903-473-2653 to have your church placed in this directory

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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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HOOTEN'S LAWN & TREE SERVICE, LLC.
 Tree trimming/removal. Credit cards, insured. LI0019094. 903-473-8706, 903-474-4402.

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NOTICE BY PUBLICATION FOR VEHICLE OWNER OR LIENHOLDER

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 VSF# 0651725VSF
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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

NOTICE OF ELECTION FOR PUBLICATION (AVISO DE ELECCIÓN PARA PUBLICACIÓN)

To the registered voters of Alba-Golden Independent School District:
 (A los votantes registrados en el Distrito Escolar Independiente de Alba-Golden):

Notice is hereby given that the polling place at Alba-Golden ISD Administration Office, 1373 County Road 2377, Alba, Texas 75410, will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on May 2, 2026 for voting in a special election to consider the following:
 (Se da aviso de que el lugar de votación en el Alba-Golden ISD Administration Office, 1373 County Road 2377, Alba, Texas 75410 estará abierto de 7:00 a.m. a 7:00 p.m. el 2 de Mayo, de 2026 para votar en una elección especial para considerar la siguiente):

PROPOSITION A: THIS IS A PROPERTY TAX INCREASE; the issuance of bonds in the amount of \$20,600,000 for school facilities and the levy of taxes sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on the bonds.
 (PROPOSICIÓN A: ESTE ES UN AUMENTO DEL IMPUESTO A LA PROPIEDAD; la emisión de bonos por un monto de \$20,600,000 para instalaciones escolares y la imposición de impuestos suficientes para pagar el capital y los intereses de los bonos.)

Location, days, and hours for early voting by personal appearance:
 (Ubicación, días y horas de votación anticipada en persona):
 Alba-Golden ISD Administration Office, 1373 County Road 2377, Alba, Texas 75410

April 20, 2026	(20 de Abril de 2026)	8:00am-4:00pm
April 22-24, 2026	(22-24 de Abril de 2026)	8:00am-4:00pm
April 27-28, 2026	(27-28 de Abril de 2026)	7:00am-7:00pm

Applications for voting by mail should be received no later than the close of business on April 20, 2026 (Las solicitudes de votación por correo deben ser recibidas a más tardar al cierre de operaciones del April 20, 2026). Applications should be sent to (Se deben enviar las solicitudes a): Laura Wise; mailing address (dirección postal): P.O. Box 970, Quitman 75783; physical address (dirección física): 200 West Bermuda Street, Quitman, Tx 75783; phone (teléfono): (903)763-2400; fax (fax): (903)763-2401; and email (correo electrónico): wise@mywoodcounty.com.)

Polling sites subject to change. (Los lugares de votación están sujetos a cambios.)

District's website (sitio web del Distrito): https://www.agisd.com/
 Wood County's website (sitio web del Condado): https://www.mywoodcounty.com/
 Rains County's website (sitio web del Condado): https://www.co.rains.tx.us/

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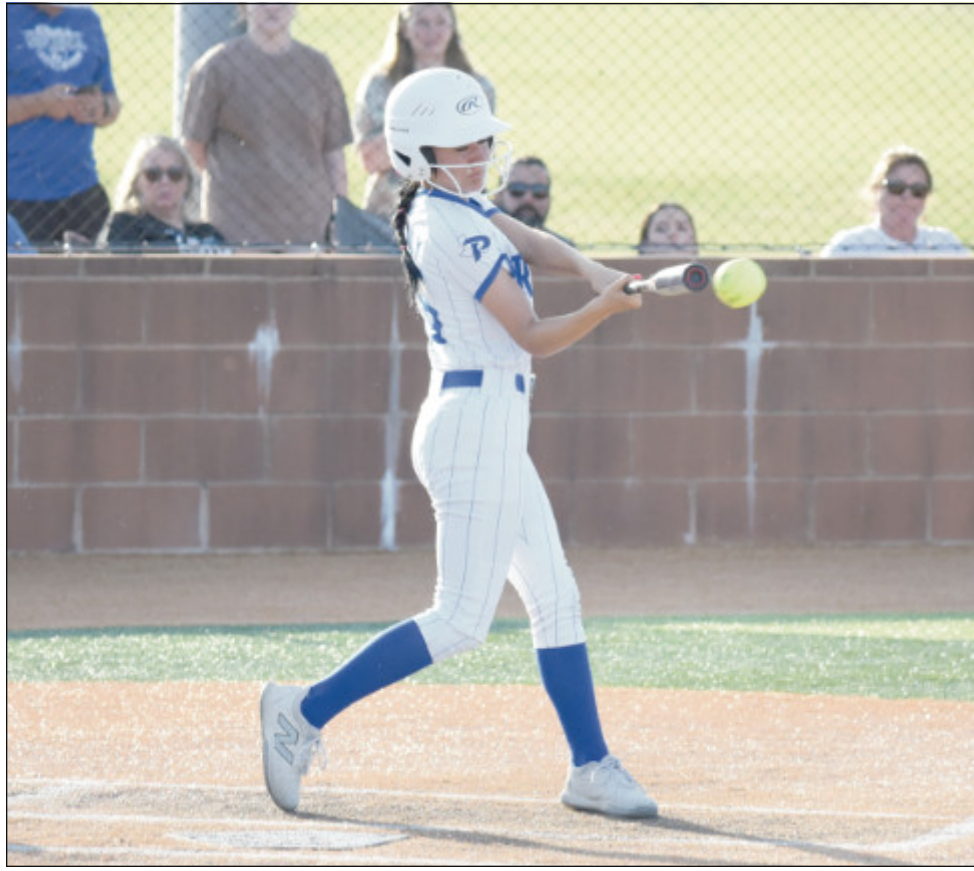
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Sports

RAINS LADY CAT SOFTBALL & WILDCAT BASEBALL

Lady Cats fall to Buffaloes, Wildcats extend win streak



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

Lady Cat Izzy Aldaco drives the pitch from the Lady Mustang back through the infield during the 13-1 district win over Paris Chisum on Friday, April 10.

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

The Rains Lady Cat softball team suffers their second district loss of the season, while the Wildcats extend their winning streak to three.

On Friday, April 10, the Lady Cats hosted the Chisum Lady Mustangs. They allowed one run before rolling to a 13-1 district win.

Gage Cook struck out 12 Tigers and the Wildcats notched another win over Commerce, 10-0.

In Lone Oak on Tuesday, April 14, the Lady Cats

battled back and forth with the Lady Buffaloes, but an error allowed the winning run to cross the plate for a loss, 9-8.

Wildcat pitching remained top notch in Lone Oak on the same night. Jayden Sheriden recorded 11 strikeouts in the 7-1 win over the Buffaloes.

The Lady Cats fall to 7-2 in District 12-3A and 13-7-1 for the season. The Wildcats improve to 5-4 in district and 8-16 for the season.

The Lady Cats will wrap up the regular season on Friday, April 17, when they host the Prairiland Lady

Patriots. It will be senior night with the recognition of the three senior Lady Cats before the game at 6:00 p.m.

On the baseball field that same night, the Wildcats will look for another sweep as they host the Lone Oak Buffaloes.

On Saturday, April 18, Rains baseball will host the Malakoff Tigers for an extra, non-district game with first pitch at 11:00 a.m.

They will start their final series of the season on Tuesday, April 21, when they host the Winnsboro Red Raiders at Rains High School.

LUKE CLAYTON

Spring turkey season is special

Ask me in October what I love best about the outdoors and I will probably say that nothing compares to the preparation before archery



Luke Clayton
Outdoor Columnist

whitetail season and then settling into that blind on opening day with hopes of arrowing a mature buck. Ask the same question a month or so ago and I'd probably be bragging about how much fun it is to walk a remote creek with moving water tossing jigs along the bank for spawning white bass. Ask me now and, hands down, I will talk your head off singing the praises of heading out to the woods and fields in quest of a big turkey gobbler.

Truly there is nothing quite like spring turkey hunting. There's something very special about being out when the woods are coming to life, replacing the drab grey colors of winter with shades of green that even the great artist Monet couldn't accurately capture on canvas. Deer hunting is largely a waiting game where one sits in a ground blind or tree stand and patiently waits for the buck to present an ethical shot. Turkey hunters also have to be patient but usually are not relegated to staying in one place. Hunting turkey is a run and gun endeavor with the hunter staying on the move with his or her call, mimicking a lovesick hen in hopes of getting a response 'gobble' from a big gobbler somewhere back in the woods.

On a calm spring day, it's possible to hear a gobbler sounding off through the woods from several hundred yards. This is the stuff great hunting memories are made of. I usually begin the morning hunt well concealed before daylight near a turkey roost area or a field edge where I've seen turkey feeding. With my old hen decoy, Heneretta, positioned about 25 yards out from my position, I sit quietly. Sometimes, when I am lucky, I will actually hear a gobbler sound off from the roost and on occasion, I can hear the wings flapping as the birds set their wings and soar down to the ground.

To be perfectly honest, that first hour or so of daylight seldom results in a

bagged gobbler but we turkey hunters have to be out there at first light just in case. Very often gobblers are roosted near hens and there are easier things to do than entice a lovesick gobbler away from what he has his eyes on. But sometimes I get lucky and when the gobbler hits the ground and spots my decoy and hears my plaintive hen yelps, he comes trotting to the 'new' hen (my decoy Heneretta)! I drop the hammer on the shotgun or release my arrow and its time to turn the bird into turkey nuggets and fajita strips. But more than likely the bird's attention is focused on the hens he has spent the night with and after a brief courtship, the flock disappears into the woods or feeds its way slowly down the field out of sight, stopping occasionally to nip a bit of clover along the way.

At least three-quarters of the spring gobblers I've killed were taken from about 9:00 a.m. until early afternoon. After Gobblers mate with receptive hens during early morning, the hens feed and then go to their nest. Gobblers are then left alone but are still looking for love. They roam the woods, grabbing a bit of fresh greenery here and there as they feed. But courtship remains paramount on their mind, and this is when the sound of what they think is a receptive hen yelping back in the woods is more than they can take. When things go perfectly as scripted, the scenario goes something like this - the gobbler hears the hen yelp made by the hunter's call and instantly stops to strut and gobble. The hunter gets a rough idea of where the bird is from the direction of the sound and quickly locates an open spot to set the decoy and conceals himself in the brush, facing the direction he expects the bird to approach from.

If things go as planned, as they sometimes do, the hunter then calls again, and the gobbler once again stops, struts and replies with a gobble. This time, the hunter can tell he is closer and adjusts his position to face the approaching gobbler. It's a good idea to keep calling but not too much, just a few yelps every couple minutes. But sometimes the gobbler will sneak in quietly without making a sound. If you hear a responding gobbler with

every series of hen yelps, you are working with a 'hot' gobbler and your percentages of success are high. But don't be disappointed if one minute you are staring at your decoy and the next you see a gobbler in full strut. I've killed as many 'quiet' gobblers through the years as I have those that gobble their way to my set up.

This week, I'll be hunting with my long-time friend Bill Carey, owner of Stripper Express up on Lake Texoma. This will be our second year to open the season together. Last year I lucked out and bagged a big gobbler the first thirty minutes of the hunt. Bill and I both enjoy camp cooking and last year, I butchered the gobbler and we enjoyed a tasty lunch of grilled asparagus and turkey nuggets at a little makeshift camp we set up near a pond on the ranch. This year I've changed the menu to wild turkey fajitas and seasoned camp beans. But as all turkey hunters know, it is remotely possible a bird won't be bagged before lunch. Not to worry, I have some chicken breast meat strips marinating just in case. Of course, if the stars are aligned, and I get a gobbler early, we will save the chicken for later and dine of very fresh wild turkey. Better to be safe than sorry though, fajitas are pretty bland with just veggies and no meat!

CAMP BEANS Open a can of the no brand Dollar Store baked beans-they are pretty bland tasting right out of the can but become a gourmet delight when 'doctored' up. In a skillet fry a couple pieces of chopped bacon, add a diced jalapeno, one onion and several cloves of fresh garlic. Heat until the onions are soft then add the canned beans and a little BBQ sauce and a handful of brown sugar, let simmer for a few minutes. This makes a great side dish for an impromptu wild turkey lunch. LC

Listen to Luke's weekly podcast, "Catfish Radio with Luke Clayton and Friends" just about everywhere podcasts are found. Email Luke through his website www.catfishradio.org.



Leader photo by CHUCK FITTS

Wildcat Cash Jennings comes up throwing to get the runner out on first base during the 10-0 district win over the Commerce Tigers on Friday, April 10, at Rains baseball field.

RAINS LADY CAT & WILDCAT TRACK

Lady Cat relay sets school record

By **CHUCK FITTS**
Rains County Leader staff

The Rains Lady Cat 4x200 meter relay won gold and broke the school record at the District 12-3A Track & Field meet in Winnsboro on Wednesday and Thursday, April 8-9.

The relay team of Jaycee Phillips, Landry Hodge, Amie Patterson and Ali Chastain finished first with a time of 1:46.46. The previous Rains ISD record set 14 years ago was 1:48.79.

Lady Cat Kinzey Woods won gold medals in shot put and discus for the Lady Cats with throws of 36'-0" and

109'-7", respectively.

Lady Cat Elizabeth Roan captured gold in pole vault with a height of 9'-0", while Chastain leapt 36'-7" for the gold medal in the Triple Jump.

Lady Cat Harper Jones won the gold medal in the 800M Run and received the bronze medal in the 400M Dash.

Lady Cat Avery Dempsey finished with a silver in the 800M Run and the 400M Dash, while Phillips placed third in the 200M Dash.

The Lady Cat 4x400M Relay team of Jones, Dempsey, Chastain and Paterson won the silver

medal.

Qualifiers for the area meet for the Lady Cats included Patterson after landing fourth in the Long Jump and the 4x100M Relay of Phillips, Hodge, Patterson and Chastain who finished fourth.

The Lady Cats finished second in district with 130 while Commerce won the title with 132 points.

For the Wildcats, Triston Hurley was awarded the silver medal in the 800M Run.

Bronze medalists included Kade Sustaire in the 1600M Run, Andrew Roach in the 110M Hurdles and the 4x200M Relay team of Jordan Hobbs, Kenneth Griffith, Taisean Shields and Nate Scott.

Wildcats that qualified for the area meet were Shields in Long Jump, Sustaire in the 3200M Run and 800M Run, Roach in 300M Hurdles and the 4x400M Relay team of Ryan Hodge, Griffith, Zach Drummond and Cooper Combs.

The Area Meet, featuring the top four finishers from District 11 and District 12, will be held on Thursday, April 16, at Wildcat Stadium.

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