



## Springtown moves to protect kids



High school football players in Springtown are grunting and groaning before the first sliver of sunlight peeks over the horizon. In early August, the Springtown Porcupines began hitting their practice fields at 6 a.m. to beat the heat.

BY JEFF PRINCE  
jeff@azlenews.net

Springtown Head Coach Brian Hulett was watching his football team sweat through their jerseys during early morning drills and pointed out a lineman practicing his footwork with teammates. Last year, the kid had been in close contact with someone who had tested positive for COVID and was forced to quarantine for 14 days. He missed two games despite not being sick. "It's hard to understand sometimes," Hulett said. "We're sending kids home for two weeks who never had symptoms or got sick." Athletes endure practices for the glory of playing under Friday night lights, not to sit at home and listen to games on the radio while quarantined. The pandemic and its ever-evolving rules and policies put extra pressure on teachers, administrators and coaches, but they're adapting. "I think a lot about it," Hulett

said. "It's the world we live in. We've got to do the best we can to keep our kids healthy. We will live within the rules and keep going." The rules have been scaled back since last year, but that could change. For now, Springtown ISD is following the TEA's least restrictive guidance that makes masks and contact tracing voluntary. Those rules could change at any time, said school Superintendent Mike Kelley. In March the school board voted to follow TEA's least restrictive guidance when it comes to COVID. That way, district policy doesn't have to be re-written with new specifics ever time TEA's guidelines evolve, which was often last year. "It gave us some flexibility... without having to come back and meet again and take board action in what might end up being weekly decisions," Kelley said. The school district's web site contains links and information about the COVID-19 response

plan, testing permission forms, decision flow charts and other information for parents to peruse before bringing kids back to school. The pandemic is spreading quickly with the Delta variant, and this week, Kelley met with county health officials and school nurses to discuss and draft additional precautions and guidelines. Some rules will remain in place whether they are mandated or not, such as disinfecting the locker room daily, Hulett said. "We're good about that anyway because of staph and all that kind of business," he said. "We wash nonstop. Clean our locker rooms all the time. Spray down our locker room and equipment. I mean, we were already doing that kind of stuff, so we feel good about that." **CAMPUS MEDICAL RESOURCE** This year, students who do come to school and feel sick will be

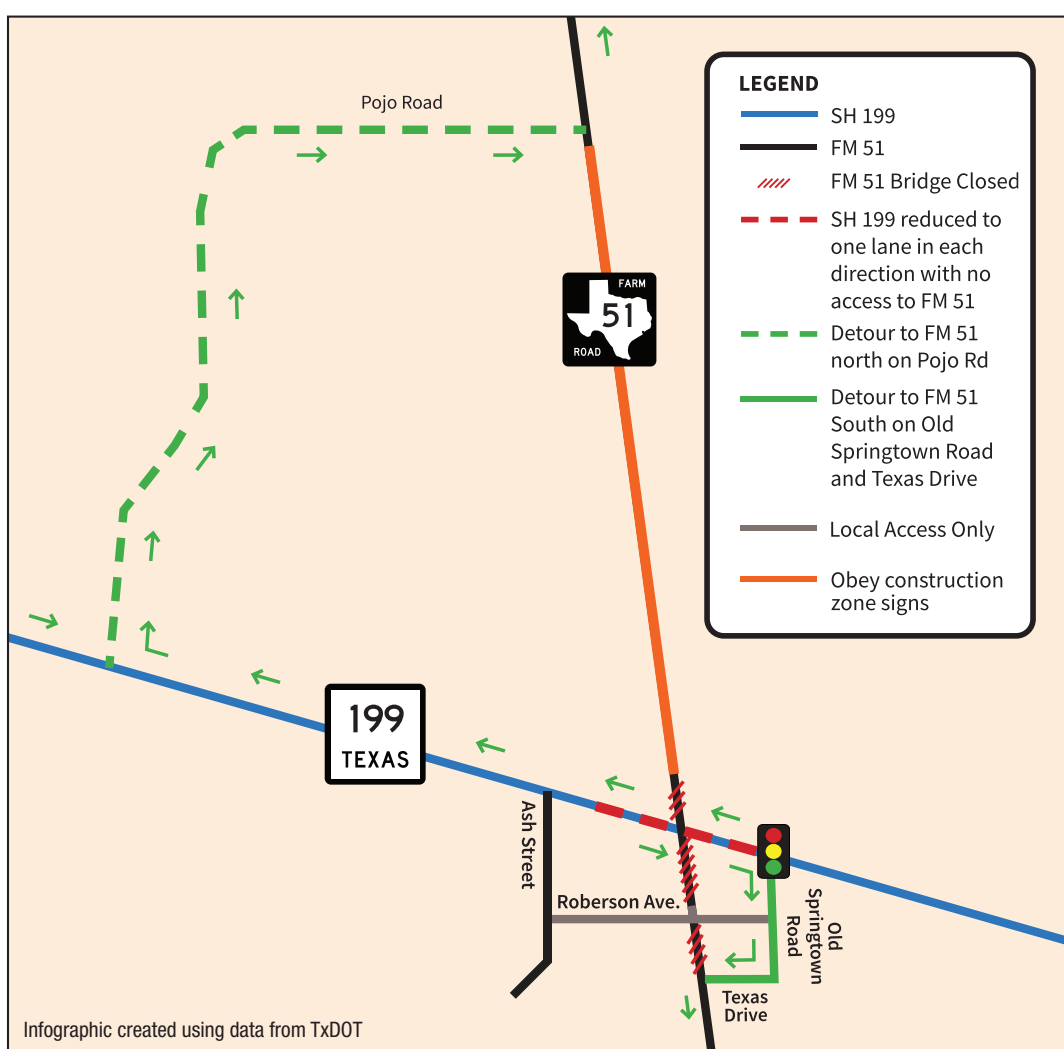
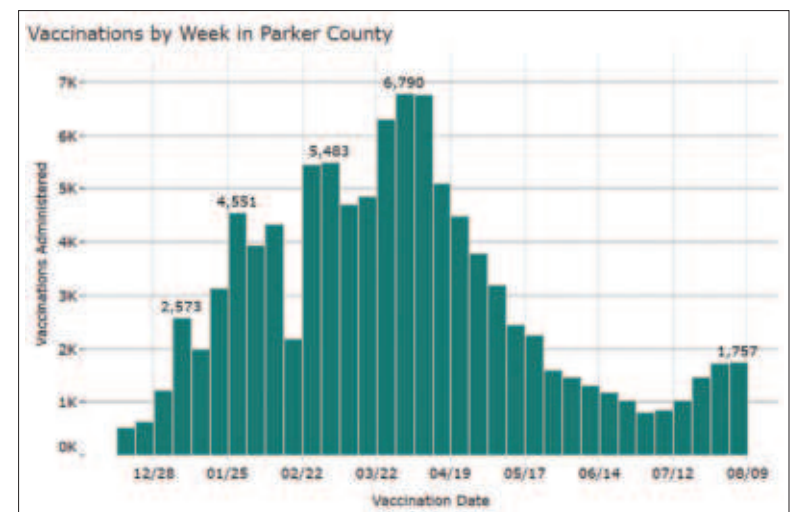
SEE BACK TO SCHOOL, PAGE 3A.

## Free testing and vaccinations offered as cases spike

BY SUSAN MCFARLAND  
sptreporter@azlenews.net

The Parker County Hospital District is offering free COVID-19 testing and vaccinations in Weatherford to help stem the tide of cases wrought by the Delta variant. Testing will be available for four Wednesdays — Aug. 18, 25, Sept. 1 and 8 — between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. at Heritage Park, 317 Santa Fe Drive. "We're seeing a rise in COVID numbers," said Sean Hughes, Emergency Management Coordinator for Parker County. Hughes said the intent is not to tell people what to do, but to provide them with options and educate them. The number of people getting vaccinated in Parker County began declining in mid-April after peaking the week of March 29 through April 4 with 6,790 vaccines administered. The week of June 28 through July 4, only 810 vaccines were administered. By the end of July, that trend began to reverse and between Aug. 2 and Aug. 8, 1,757 vaccinations were administered, according to data from the Texas Department of State Health Services. As the number of cases in-

creased, so did the number of those seeking vaccinations, according to data from Parker County health officials. In July, new positive cases were hovering at 10 to 12 cases per day, with some days seeing nearly double the average. But by mid-July, cases started increasing with 69 new cases July 14 and 56 cases July 22. This month, numbers are significantly higher. On Aug. 3, the county reported 139 positive cases and on Aug. 5 116 new cases were reported. With Tarrant County also seeing a spike in cases, health officials began offering free testing, with sites rotating throughout the county. In Lake Worth at the Northwest Public Health Center, tests are available from 8 a.m. to noon on Wednesdays. "Testing remains an important tool in our efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19," said Tarrant County Judge Glen Whitley. "The County's testing is free and easily accessible, so there is no reason not to get tested if you suspect you may have COVID-19." The Texas Division of Emergency Management had previously operated testing sites across Tarrant County but reduced their operations in June as demand slowed.



## FM 51 detour route in place

**FROM STAFF REPORTS** The long anticipated wait for the FM 51 detour from Highway 199 is here. The detour began Aug. 11 with east and westbound Hwy.199 reduced to one lane in each direction near FM 51. FM 51 will not be accessible from Hwy.199 while this work is underway. The detour is expected to last through the winter, according to Texas Department of Transportation officials. For southbound commuters, traffic will detour on Old Springtown Road to Texas Drive to reach FM 51. A temporary stoplight has been installed at Hwy.199 and Old Springtown Road to facilitate the detour. Those traveling north will continue to use the Pojo Road detour to reach FM 51. Local traffic will maintain access to South FM 51 within the work zone using Roberson Avenue. Signs have been placed to direct traffic.

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# Citywide memorial planned for those who died of overdose

## The event helps families heal as International Overdose Awareness Day approaches

BY SUSAN McFARLAND  
sptreporter@azlenews.net

A memorial for loved ones lost due to overdose will be held from 6 to 8 p.m. Aug. 28 at the Tabernacle on the Square in Springtown.

Organizers Joe and Jessica Castro, founders of We ARE our brothers keeper, said all of the community is invited to the event which will include speakers, free hot dogs, and a flag display with names of those who have died of an overdose.

The couple's son, Joseph Castro, died of a fentanyl overdose June 24, 2019. He was 28.

To help themselves and others, the Castro family created a support group that connects families in the community.

"We ARE our brother's keeper" was started to bring awareness and support for drug addiction and overdose prevention.

After Joseph Castro died, his mother said they "knew immediately that we must carry on his legacy of being not only his blood brothers' keeper but everyone's

keeper."

Jessica Castro said the idea for the memorial event was born while thinking about International Overdose Awareness Day which is Aug. 31.

"I'm finding myself thinking... what brought us to this place? Why am I aware of international overdose day? What is "we are our brothers keeper" about? The answer to this is tragically simple!

"When our Joseph passed away we didn't know what to make of it! We didn't know how to say the words 'he overdosed' (not to ourselves, much less anyone else). I'm not sure if it was shame, or fear of such a word as overdose. I remember kids asking me did Joseph really die from this? And then them saying I met a kid at school who's dad, mom, etc. died that way too!" she wrote on the group's Facebook page.

Castro said she realized her family was part of another "family" of people that felt alone in their grief, alone in their questions, and alone with their loss of someone they love.



"I remember the instant that I said no more feeling alone, shamed or fearful of judgment! We are in this together and as a community we should love each other through it! Joseph is our son ... he is someone's brother, friend uncle ... our loved ones are SOMEBODY'S SOMEONE! So as overdose day approaches I'd love for y'all to tell us about YOUR SOMEONE! Let's keep them alive today and everyday!" she wrote.

For those who would like their loved one's name on the flag display can send a message via the group's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/247802716917220> or send a message to Jessica Castro via text at 817-629-6129 or email at [jessicamichelle1376@icloud.com](mailto:jessicamichelle1376@icloud.com).



Joseph Castro (left) with his mother Jessica Castro

Photo courtesy of Jessica Castro

## New federal funds available for Weatherford College students

### FROM STAFF REPORTS

A third round of funding is available for Weatherford College students who have experienced economic hardships due to COVID-19, and with classes starting Aug. 23 the funding has arrived just in time to help students for the fall semester.

WC has received more than \$10 million as part of the third round of student aid from the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES). Approximately half of those funds are for college incurred, COVID-related expenses and \$5,261,403 is specifically for student aid.

Full time students, those currently enrolled in a minimum of 12 hours for the semester, are eligible for up to

\$2,000 of CARES III funds. Part time students are eligible for prorated awards.

"We are incredibly excited about the educational opportunities that these federal funds will bring to our students," said WC President Tod Allen Farmer. "Like many of our good citizens, Weatherford College students have felt the economic impact of the COVID pandemic. Many more students will now have the financial ability to earn employable skill sets."

College administrators estimate approximately 4,500 students qualify for this round of funding. Notices are now going out to student emails on how to apply.

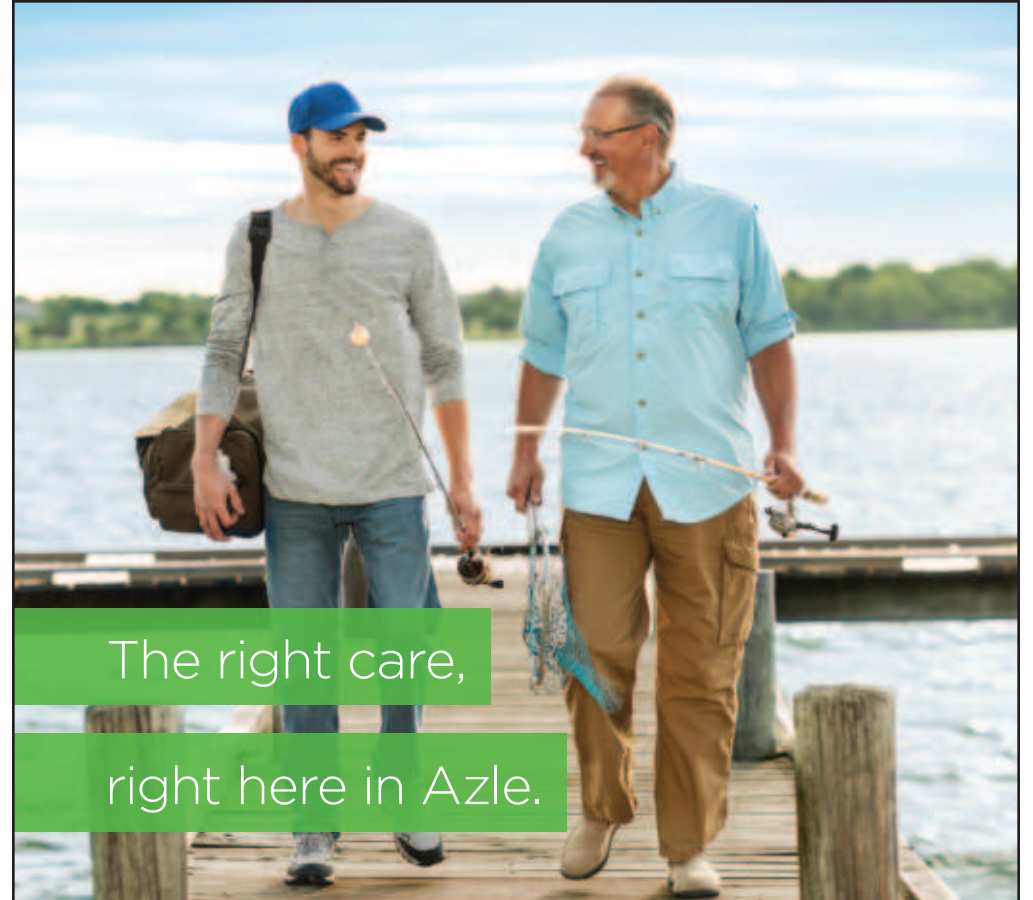
The first round of CARES Act funds were allocated to

1,283 WC students during the Fall 2020 semester. The full \$1,273,848 in student funding was disbursed to WC students as of Dec. 8, 2020.

A second round of funding was released during the Spring 2021 semester, known as CARES Act II, and the college received an additional \$1,273,848 for students. As of June 22, 1,253 students had received \$1,249,500 of those funds.

The college also used CARES funding to wipe out the debt of approximately 300 students, totaling more than \$230,000.

Find more information on CARES Act funding at [wc.edu/cares](http://wc.edu/cares).



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# Indie films, filmmakers to screen work in North Texas

Independent films and filmmakers will again be in the spotlight during the Second Annual Crazy About Film Festival taking place Aug. 20-22 in Mineral Wells. Supported by the Mineral Wells Area Chamber of Commerce, the event features filmmaking talent from all over the world. Downtown venues will be transformed into pop-up cinemas to screen a total of 35 films throughout the festival's weekend. "We could not have been happier with the festival we put on last year," said Bob Kaspar, festival co-founder and programmer. "This year is going to be even better.

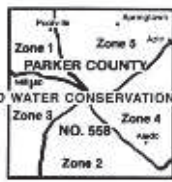
We've received literally thousands of submissions from all over the world and were absolutely blown away." The festival kicks off Aug. 20 with a screening of "Tombstone" and a Western-themed launch party at the Hole in the Wall Biergarten. The next day, the Crazy Water Plaza will host the Crazy About Short Film Competition. The fun continues that night at The Hatchet House with an "ax-cellent" evening of film and axe throwing and the screening of the Cohen brother's classic, "True Grit," starring Jeff Bridges and Matt Damon. Advance tickets for all

screenings are just \$5. They are available online at [www.crazyaboutfilmfestival.com](http://www.crazyaboutfilmfestival.com) or at the screenings themselves for \$7. "I'm so excited for this event," Kaspar said. "We received over 3,200 submissions for this year's contest. We narrowed that field down to a total of 32 and every single one of them are absolute gems. What I really love about this contest is that our audience will serve as the judges. By voting for their favorite film, they will crown the champion of this year's festival." For more information about the festival visit [www.crazyaboutfilmfestival.com](http://www.crazyaboutfilmfestival.com).

# Parker County now hiring for director of Zone 5

August 31<sup>st</sup> is the deadline to submit applications for candidacy for director of Zone 5. Under the provisions of the V.T.C.A., Agriculture Code, Chapter 201, those who hold title to farm and ranch lands lying within Zone 5, who are at least 18 years of age, live in Parker County, and are actively engaged in farming or ranching in that zone may apply to be a director or may vote in the election to determine who will represent them. Zone 5 is the wedge between Hwy. 920 to the west, Hwy. 730 to the east and the Parker County line to the north being Wise County and to the east being Tarrant County. Interested persons may pick up a packet outside the door of the Parker County SWCD office located at 604 North Main, Suite 100 in Weatherford. The SWCD is co-located within the USDA Service Center and is meet-

ing with people by appointment only. Contact may be made by email [parkercounty@swcd.texas.gov](mailto:parkercounty@swcd.texas.gov) or by phone at 817-594-4672, ext. 3. Packets will be mailed if requested. If only one candidate applies for the position of Zone 5 director an election will not be necessary. If two or more apply an election will be held Thursday, October 7, 2021 at 9:00 a.m. Parker County SWCD is a political subdivision of the State of Texas, a grass roots organization made up of farmers and ranchers who volunteer their time to take the lead in conservation activities. Established in 1941



as Hood-Parker Soil and Water Conservation, now the Parker County SWCD, the District continues to be a volunteer group made up of farmers and ranchers from each of the 5 zones in Parker County who are actively engaged in farming and ranching and are dedicated to bringing about widespread understanding of the need for conservation, not just on rural land, but on all lands in Parker County. The District operates and maintains 34 flood prevention structures, 6 grade stabilization structures, and one channel in Parker County. This flood prevention saves the county, and county residents more than two million dollars each year protecting land, roads, other property, and of course lives. Contact: Wanda Carter, Office Manager, 817-594-4672, ext. 3.

## BACK TO SCHOOL. CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A.

able to visit a doctor at the nurse's office via telemedicine and MedPod medical carts. A grant from the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund is funding the initiative along with assistance from Parker County Hospital District. The carts have been installed at each campus nurse's office at a cost of \$38,000 apiece, paid for by federal funding. "When the students come in sick, the campus nurse will evaluate them first by taking their vital signs and potentially do some rapid testing depending on their symptoms," said Dr. Steven

Welch, a licensed provider with the Parker County Hospital District in a prepared statement earlier this year. "The nurse will then notify me that they have a student ready to be seen and I will dial in to see the patient." Using the program, students can be checked for COVID-19, the flu, or strep throat and receive treatment for allergies, ear pain, eye infections, rashes, fever and sore throat. Kathleen Durham, Director of Marketing for PCHD, said that having the MedPods available for students will have a positive impact

for both students and their families. "This cuts down on so much out-of-school time," Durham said. "That means kids can get back to school sooner, and parents don't have to take off too much time from work." Parents will be asked for permission prior to every telehealth visit. Students need to be registered for the program prior to being seen. Families can sign their students up online by visiting [https://www.pchdtx.org/getpage.php?name=Springtown\\_ISD](https://www.pchdtx.org/getpage.php?name=Springtown_ISD).

## NOTICE OF PUBLIC MEETING TO DISCUSS BUDGET AND PROPOSED TAX RATE

The Springtown Independent School District will hold a public meeting at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, August 23, 2021 in the Springtown ISD Board Room, 301 E. 5th Street, Springtown, Texas 76082.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the school district's budget that will determine the tax rate that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited.

The tax rate that is ultimately adopted at this meeting or at a separate meeting at a later date may not exceed the proposed rate shown below unless the district publishes a revised notice containing the same information and comparisons set out below and holds another public meeting to discuss the revised notice.

Maintenance Tax	\$0.09603/\$100
(Proposed rate for maintenance and operations)	
School Debt Service Tax Approved by Local Voters	\$0.1825/\$100
(Proposed rate to pay bonded indebtedness)	

### Comparison of Proposed Budget with Last Year's Budget

The applicable percentage increase or decrease (or difference) in the amount budgeted in the preceding fiscal year and the amount budgeted for the fiscal year that begins during the current tax year is indicated for each of the following expenditure categories:

Maintenance and operations	3.5% increase	or	% (decrease)
Debt Service	.04 % increase	or	% (decrease)
Total expenditures	3.54% increase	or	% (decrease)

### Total Appraised Value and Total Taxable Value (as calculated under Section 26.04, Tax Code)

	Preceding Tax Year	Current Tax Year
Total appraised value* of all property	\$2,332,927,537	\$2,949,737,790
Total appraised value* of new property**	\$108,397,905	\$134,591,091
Total taxable value*** of all property	\$1,604,456,473	\$1,963,334,311
Total taxable value*** of new property	\$108,397,905	\$134,591,091

\*"Appraised value" is the amount shown on the appraisal roll and defined by Tax Code Section 1.048(8).  
 \*\*"New property" is defined by Tax Code Section 26.012(17).  
 \*\*\*"Taxable value" is defined by Tax Code Section 1.04(10).

### Bonded Indebtedness

Total amount of outstanding and unpaid bonded indebtedness*	\$47,875,000
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\*Outstanding principal

### Comparison of Proposed Rates with Last Year's Rates

	Maintenance & Operations	Interest & Sinking Fund*	Total	Local Revenue Per Student	State Revenue Per Student
Last Year's Rate	\$1.0372	\$0.20700*	\$1.24420	\$5,447	\$4,046
Rate to Maintain Same Level of Maintenance & Operations Revenue & Pay Debt Service	\$0.97263	\$0.23861*	\$1.21124	\$5,931	\$3,800
Proposed Rate	\$0.96030	\$0.18290*	\$1.14320	\$5,916	\$4,387

\* The Interest & Sinking Fund tax revenue is used to pay bonded indebtedness on construction, equipment, or both. The bonds, and the tax rate necessary to pay those bonds, were approved by the voters of this district.

### Comparison of Proposed Levy with Last Year's Levy on Average Residence

	Last Year	This Year
Average Market Value of Residences	\$188,350	\$240,152
Average Taxable Value of Residences	\$148,033	\$179,403
Last Year's Rate Versus Proposed Rate per \$100 Value	\$1.24420	\$1.14320
Taxes Due on Average Residence	\$1,841.83	\$2,050.94
Increase (Decrease) in Taxes		\$209.11

Under state law, the dollar amount of school taxes imposed on the residence home- stead of a person 65 years of age or older or of the surviving spouse of such a person, if the surviving spouse was 55 years of age or older when the person died, may not be increased above the amount paid in the first year after the person turned 65, regardless of changes in tax rate or property value.

Notice of Voter-Approval Rate: The highest tax rate the district can adopt before requiring voter approval at an election is \$ 1.176068 This election will be automatically held if the district adopts a rate in excess of the voter-approval rate of \$ 1.176068.

### Fund Balances

The following estimated balances will remain at the end of the current fiscal year and are not encumbered with or by a corresponding debt obligation, less estimated funds necessary for operating the district before receipt of the first state aid payment:

Maintenance and Operations Fund Balance(s)	\$ 9,000,000
Interest & Sinking Fund Balance(s)	\$500,000

A school district may not increase the district's maintenance and operations tax rate to create a surplus in maintenance and operations tax revenue for the purpose of paying the district's debt service.

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[troop243azle.org](http://troop243azle.org)

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ON FISHING

# Night fishing under the lights

An alternative to beat the summer heat and to enjoy some great fishing is to fish at night. The night has other advantages such as generally less wind and no skiers or Jet Skis. A little breeze is still preferred especially on those hot humid stale nights.

Fishing under the lights has been around forever. Most folks who live on the water have lights on their docks that attract fish. I have used a lantern, hanging it off of the edge of the boat to do the same thing.

Many folks believe that the lights attract bugs (and they do) and the fish move in to feed on the bugs. Yes some of the fish do feed on the bugs, but in reality it is usually the plankton that are attracted to the light, which then brings in the small fish and then the bigger fish.

The night lights available these days come in a variety of colors, but most agree that green lights are generally the best. Science will tell you that the most penetrating frequencies of light in the water are blue and green in the spectrum of available colors. White lights are still offered and they do work, as white has all the colors of the spectrum. However, the general consensus is green is all that you need. Some folks may disagree.

Most of all the newer lights and some of the older lights are submersible. The big advantage to submersible lights is the fact that the bugs are kept at bay. Very little light is reflected up, which cuts down on the bugs. You know and I know that the bugs can get unbearable from a hanging white light.

The action can be tremendous under lights. Concentrating the baitfish will bring in the predators and at times the action will be outstanding especially if the fish are in a feeding frenzy. Many indoor fishing docks across the coun-

**MICHAEL ACOSTA**

As a licensed professional fishing guide, Michael Acosta shows you how to find them. A Granbury resident of more than 35 years, he has been fishing all of his life, and has been a licensed guide since 1998. michael.acosta@att.net

try use lights to attract fish. It is a known technique.

There are many different portable lights on the market, but there are four types I am aware of. They include floating sealed beam lights, fluorescent lights, LED lights and submersible halogen lights. All of these types of lights will do the job. There are pros and cons to each of them.

Light Emitting Diodes (LED) are lights that generally have the longest life and use the least amount of energy. They used to be priced out of the market, but currently the prices are competitive with other types of lights.

Many of these types of lights will run the night on a few dry cell batteries. LED-type lights come in a variety of colors and can be configured in many different ways. Those that I have seen are configured in a submersible vertical tube.

Submersible halogen lights operate under the surface so there is minimal im-

pact due to wind and waves and you of course minimize the bug impact with the light under the water. These halogen lights will generally draw more current for the same level of lighting as fluorescents, but they are generally smaller and you can buy replacement bulbs.

When night fishing on a boat with lights, it is a good idea to anchor the boat securely so that movement is minimized. The floating lights you choose can be placed right next to the boat. The other submersible type lights can be lowered to a desired depth around the boat.

Wait a few minutes and the baitfish will move in. The bigger predators will more than likely be under or on the edge. Be careful not to spook the predators. Work different depths until you locate the best depth. If for some reason the fish don't move in, move and find another potential spot.

**FISHING REPORT**

On other lakes, Lake Whitney striper fishing is hit and miss in the heat. Some good catches reported above the Katy bridge on feeding flats. Look for surface action on Whitney under the white cranes midlake. Lake Proctor sand bass limits are common.



**FUN DAY SUNDAY:** Granbury resident Cathy McGrath shows the two biggest striped bass she caught Sunday on Lake Granbury. She wanted to learn Lake Granbury and had a great day catching a limit of striped bass to 10 pounds, along with some catfish and sand bass. Courtesy Photo By Mike Acosta

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**LEGAL PUBLIC NOTICES**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FY 2021-2022 BUDGET**  
The City of Springtown will hold a public hearing on Thursday, August 26, 2021, at the Court Annex Building, 200 N Main, Springtown, Texas at 7:00 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the City's budget that will be adopted. Public participation in the discussion is invited. This budget will raise more revenue from property taxes than last year's budget by \$133,839, which is a 10.76% increase from last year's budget. The property tax revenue to be raised from new property added to the tax roll this year is \$88,316.

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# Delta variant spurs huge increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations

The number of Texans hospitalized with lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases is increasing faster than at any other point since the pandemic began in early 2020, due to the highly contagious delta variant.

As of Sunday, the Texas Department of State Health Services reported 8,892 people were in Texas hospitals. That is up more than four-fold from a month ago. The Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University reported 96,807 cases in the past week and 384 deaths. That is nearly eight times the number of new cases reported a month ago and more than double the deaths.

In Austin, health authorities warned the public that a surge in cases has swamped hospitals, according to a New York Times report. Intensive-care units are near capacity, with only a handful of ICU beds available.

Gov. Greg Abbott has barred local governments and public schools from re-instituting mask mandates but is urging people to get vaccinated against COVID-19. The vast majority of those hospitalized have not been vaccinated.



## CAPITOL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders

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. gborders@texaspress.com.

A total of 12.84 million Texans are fully vaccinated, about 44% of the state's total population, according to DSHS.

## SECOND SPECIAL SESSION UNDERWAY; DEMS STILL AWOL

Abbott convened a second special session just hours after the first session expired but there still wasn't a quorum present to pass bills. Many Texas House Democratic legislators remained in Washington, D.C. in an effort to both block a quorum and lobby members of Congress to pass a federal voting rights bill.

Abbott has put forth a 17-item agenda that includes the election reform bill, bail reform, border security and other issues that were presented but not passed during the regular session.

"I will continue to call special session after special session to reform our broken bail system, uphold election

integrity, and pass other important items that Texans demand and deserve," Abbott said when announcing the new session. "Passing these special session agenda items will chart a course towards a stronger and brighter future for the Lone Star State."

Texas House Democrats predictably were critical. State Rep. Ina Minjarez said Abbott is "wasting" taxpayers' money, chiding the governor in a tweet with the hashtag #StopGaslightingTexans.

## ADDITIONAL MONTH OF LEGISLATIVE FUNDING ANNOUNCED

Texas Capitol employees won't have to go without a paycheck in September after all.

Abbott vetoed a portion of the state budget that funds the Legislature and its staff after House Democrats walked out during the regular session. But Abbott, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, House

Speaker Dade Phelan and others announced an additional month of funding for the Legislature before the second special session that began Saturday.

"Texans should not have to pay for Legislators who quit their jobs and leave unfinished business," Abbott said. "...Funding is being temporarily restored for legislative staff that will be necessary to pass critical legislation..."

At least \$12.6 million will be transferred from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to both chambers and the legislative agencies that support them, the Texas Tribune reported.

The biennial budget, which is already funded, ends Aug. 31. Without the additional funding, more than 2,000 state workers might not have been paid after that date. The special session by law lasts no more than 30 days.

## PANDEMIC HELP FOR TIMBER HARVESTERS, HAULERS

Texans who make a living cutting or hauling timber, or processing wood by chipping or grinding, are eligible for grants from a fund of up

to \$200 million provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture under a pandemic assistance program. The new program, Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers (PATHH), encourages timber harvesters and haulers to apply. The deadline is Oct. 15.

"We Texans pride ourselves on our rugged individualism and self-reliance. However, when the entire forestry supply chain crashed as a result of the pandemic response, it was more than just a hurdle to overcome," said Rob Hughes, executive director of the Texas Forestry Association. "That's why TFA and Texas A&M Forest Service, along with many other partners, have been actively involved in pushing for the Logger Relief Act, which passed in the last federal pandemic relief bill."

Loggers and truckers can apply for PATHH by working with their local Farm Service Agency office. To find a local office, go to farmers.gov/service-locator or call 877-508-8364.

## AVOID SCAMS WHEN BUYING A USED VEHICLE

With used-vehicle de-

mand soaring and inventories shrinking, it's easy to fall victim to scams, according to the Texas Department of Insurance. At least part of most sales now take place either on apps or online, and a lot can go wrong. Here are some tips from TDI to avoid being swindled:

- If the price is amazingly low, odds are high that it's a scam.
- Take your time. Be skeptical when sellers claim they must sell quickly because they're moving soon, or say they need to sell the vehicle for a relative. And never pay for a vehicle with gift cards.
- Some scammers use the same photo on different sites, with different prices and contact information. This scam can be avoided by using a "reverse image search." To learn how, look up "reverse search" in your preferred search engine.
- See the vehicle in person and take it for a drive. Buying a vehicle sight unseen can lead to disaster.
- Check the VIN to make sure the vehicle wasn't stolen, flooded or totaled after a wreck. A VIN search will also ensure there isn't a lien on the vehicle you are buying.

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Stop by and see what they have to offer at 500 B N. Stewart Street in Azle, across from Brookshire's.

## Texas Designer Flooring

Growing up, Jessie Boyd knew he wanted to own his own business someday. In 2013, his determination paid off and he was presented with the opportunity to purchase the store he was working for at the time, and Texas Designer Flooring was born.

Eight years later, Texas Designer Flooring has two established locations — the original store, located in the beautiful Fort Worth historical district off of Camp Bowie, and their newest location located right in the heart of Azle.

Project and store manager Haley Miller brings 10 years of experience in all aspects of construction to the team. She has worked in economic development, design and architecture, and project management. Haley has worked in retail for the past five years, helping homeowners bring their visions to life.

"Seeing the light in my homeowner's eyes when they see their new space is what really drives me," Haley says. "I love my job!"

Texas Designer Flooring specializes in new construction and remodels. Whether you want tile, hardwood, vinyl, carpet, or natural stone, the team will work to help you create the look you want.

Over the years, Texas Designer Flooring has evolved from servicing only retail

customers to incorporating custom home build projects and larger commercial opportunities. The team's dedication and attention to detail has led them to be part of popular Fort Worth, Texas magazines, HGTV's Dream Home, and multiple other collaborations with HGTV shows. They have received multiple awards for Best Flooring in Fort Worth.

Jessie Boyd and his team of sales associates and skilled installers are what make Texas Designer Flooring your top choice flooring store. You can browse their inventory at [www.texasdesignerflooring.com](http://www.texasdesignerflooring.com).

Take advantage of their new customer special with \$1,000 off your project. Restrictions apply: Must be on material and installation projects with a \$2,000 minimum purchase. They also pass on any vendor discounts to their customers.

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They are open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Need a special appointment? Call 817-752-2065 to schedule a time that works for you.



Haley Miller, project and store manager for Texas Designer Flooring.

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Or call 817-220-7828 for more information

## Showstoppers just getting started

BY JEFF PRINCE  
jeff@azlenews.net

Dancers in the Springtown Showstoppers jumped when Bijou Cates told them to line up for a drill at a recent practice.

“Yes, ma’am!” they said in unison.

Cates is a senior and a captain on the dance team, and the girls call her “ma’am” even though she’s barely any older. Co-captain Regan Burdick is a junior, but she gets the ma’am treatment, too.

Showing respect is a requirement to be on the team.

“They have to be good girls,” said Head Coach Jammie Horton. “I’m really strict on them. I really watch their social media posts and things to make sure they are being appropriate and acting like ladies.”

For generations, younger girls in town have watched the Showstoppers perform and imagined being on the team one day. Horton wants to make sure her dancers serve as good role models for the “little eyes that look up to them.”

The Showstoppers, established in 1968, perform throughout the year at foot-

ball halftimes, pep rallies, competitions, musicals at the high school, Christmas on the Square and other events. The girls host car washes to raise money to help cover the costs of competitions and enjoy plenty of community support.

“We have a great booster club,” Horton said.

Horton began something new this year. Each girl must try out on a weekly basis to perform.

“Making the team does not guarantee they perform on the field or for pep rallies,” Horton said.

To perform at events, the girls must show they know the choreography and techniques.

“They try out two or three at a time,” the coach said.

“They are given constructive criticism, and then I watch them again as a group and see if they blend and no one sticks out. In other words, do they catch my eye in a good way? Or, unfortunately, do they stand out because they are not dancing at the same level as the majority of the team?”

The pressure of trying out every week helps the team improve, she said.

“The goal is for the entire



Emma Patton and Rachel Houk

Photos by Jeff Prince

team to perform at every performance,” she said. “This process keeps them practicing and continuing to improve their dance technique.”

Being on the dance team can boost self-confidence, said Burdick, the co-captain. Showstoppers has become a second family for her.

“We support each other and have fun together and

make memories,” she said. “Sometimes we cry. Sometimes we laugh. Sometimes it gets hard, but we feel comfortable enough with each other to open up about things in our lives.”

This year’s team is composed of about 18 dancers and a manager, one of the largest teams Horton has coached in a while. Previous

teams had closer to a dozen members.

“More people tried out, and the quality was better,” the coach said.

Three of five seniors from last year’s team went on to dance in college after receiving scholarship offers.

“That’s exciting when it helps them further their college careers,” Horton said.

Cates, the team captain, hopes to ink her own letter of commitment soon.

“You learn a lot of responsibility from being on the team,” she said. “We always have to look put together – make sure our hair looks well, makes sure our face looks well. We have to practice a lot, and I feel it’s going to prepare us for college.”



Ka'Aliyah Odom



Kayden Kennedy



Zarai Neri



Coach Jammie Horton



Bijou Cates



Hailey Hughes

# Gridiron glories begin in August



Coach Brad Legan with a Springtown linebacker.



Coach Brian Hulett.

**BY JEFF PRINCE**  
jeff@azlenews.net

High school football players in Azle and Springtown are grunting and groaning before the first sliver of sunlight peeks over the horizon. In early August, the Azle Hornets and Springtown Porcupines began hitting their practice fields at 6 a.m. to beat the heat.

The Hornets will be the first to crack helmets in a real game. Azle kicks off its season on Thursday, Aug. 26, a day before most other schools begin playing. The Hornets take on Fossil Ridge in an away game.

Springtown opens its season at home by facing Glen Rose on Friday, Aug. 27.

Azle Christian plays Fandindel at 7 p.m. Friday, Aug. 27 on the road.

Watch for previews of these teams in next week's editions.



The Springtown Porcupines running drills with a blocking dummy.

Photos by Jeff Prince

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## Make New Friends Game!

Try this fun back-to-school activity. You might spot a new friend!

### BACK TO SCHOOL BINGO

A Make-New-Friends Game

Favorite subject: _____ Initial: _____	Birthday: _____ Initial: _____	Favorite ice cream: _____ Initial: _____	Where I was born: _____ Initial: _____
Favorite color: _____ Initial: _____	Favorite team: _____ Initial: _____	Favorite book: _____ Initial: _____	Favorite movie: _____ Initial: _____
Pencils or pens? _____ Initial: _____	Dogs or cats? _____ Initial: _____	Place you want to visit: _____ Initial: _____	Something you're good at: _____ Initial: _____
Favorite snack: _____ Initial: _____	Famous person you admire? _____ Initial: _____	Number of pets you have: _____ Initial: _____	Favorite game: _____ Initial: _____

**HOW TO PLAY BACK TO SCHOOL BINGO:**

1. Make copies of the Back to School Bingo Game and pass them out among a group of kids around your age. These could be classmates, teammates, members of a club or even kids who live near you.
2. Each kid completes the information in each square. When you finish this, the Bingo Cards will have a lot of information all about each of YOU!
3. Share your cards with other kids and spot kids with similar answers.
4. When you spot a match, put your initials on each other's cards.
5. How many matches can you find?

### Kid Scoop Puzzler

**Missing Vowels** The vowels are missing from this famous quote about kindness. Can you replace them all?

A = ☺ E = ☆ I = ⚙ O = ♥ U = ☾

“H \_ m \_ n k \_ n d n \_ s s h \_ s \_ n \_ v \_ r \_ w \_ k \_ n \_ d  
th \_ st \_ m \_ n \_ r \_ s \_ ft \_ n \_ d th \_ f \_ b \_ r \_ f  
fr \_ p \_ pl \_ . A n \_ t \_ n \_ d \_ s \_ n \_ t h \_ v \_  
t \_ b \_ cr \_ l \_ t \_ b \_ t \_ gh .”

—Franklin D. Roosevelt  
32nd President of the United States

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

### Kid Scoop Together: Funny Fill-In Story

Ask a family member for each kind of word to fill in the blanks. Then read the story aloud for lots of laughs!

On the first \_\_\_\_\_ of school, I made a new friend.

We have a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ in common!

We both love to eat \_\_\_\_\_ for lunch almost every day.

And we both carry our lunch in identical \_\_\_\_\_.

My friend is the only person I've met who enjoys watching "The \_\_\_\_\_ Show" more than I do! We also like a lot of the same music, and our favorite sport is competitive \_\_\_\_\_ racing.

Yesterday, I forgot to bring my \_\_\_\_\_ to school. Guess who had an extra one? That's right, my new friend! So I was able to finish the \_\_\_\_\_ book report I'd been working on.

### Double Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

S	F	I	G	A	M	E	N	S	D
S	G	F	E	R	I	M	D	A	K
S	N	O	A	B	I	N	G	O	P
U	M	E	D	V	E	I	O	B	E
B	O	N	P	I	O	B	O	G	T
J	V	F	R	S	E	R	A	H	S
E	I	F	R	I	N	I	E	N	
C	E	D	S	T	E	A	M	T	N
T	F	A	M	O	U	S	O	W	E

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

### FROM THE LESSON LIBRARY

## Same or Different?

Cut out two photographs from the newspaper. Study each photo. Make a list of ways the photos are the same. Then make a list of ways they are different.

Standards Link: Observe and compare using detail.

### Spot the Similarities

Sofia and Soren have a lot in common. Circle the things that are the SAME about Sofia and Soren.

**I'm Sofia.** These are just some of the things I enjoy.

**I'm Soren.** These are some of my favorite things.

### Extra! Extra! All About Me

Look through the newspaper for pictures and words that describe you and things you like and cut them out. For example, if you see a picture of a taco, and that is a food you like, cut out the picture. Glue the pictures and words on a piece of paper and title it, "All About Me!"

Standards Link: Use a variety of media for art projects.

### Write On! Best Friend

What makes a best friend? Write about the things that make a best friend so special.

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For more information about our literacy non-profit, visit [kidscoopnews.org](http://kidscoopnews.org)

# Obituaries

## Dorothy McCall 1953- 2021

Dorothy Dee Rennick McCall, 68, went home to be with her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, Monday, July 19, 2021 at home.

A Memorial Service/Celebration of Life will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, August 14 at Agnes Baptist Church located at 350 Agnes Rd. N. in Springtown.

It will feature the music that Dorothy loved to hear her husband sing, and The Texas Backroads Trio will also perform. There will be a meal at the church following the service.

She was born January 13, 1953 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Her parents, Burel Lawrence and Jewel Irene (Wilkins) Rennick were there to welcome her home.

Dorothy loved the Lord and attended Agnes Baptist Church. She enjoyed gardening and NASCAR. Dor-



othy served in the US Army and retired after 22 1/2 years of dedicated service.

Left to cherish fond memories are her loving and devoted husband, John McCall; siblings, Nancy, Irene, Donald, Sheila and Eva; lifelong friend, Cynthia Price and extended family and many friends.

*The Springtown Epigraph  
Aug. 12, 2021 Edition*

## Spencer Verden 1963- 2021

On August 8, 2021, Spencer Lee Verden, 58, passed away in Springtown, Texas.

He was born on March 24, 1963 in Borger, Texas, to James Verden and Diane White. He attended school at Springtown High School graduating in 1983.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Deborah Verden; mother, Diane White Verden and brother, Wade Verden.

Spencer is survived by his father; James Riley Verden and his wife, Ila of Springtown; sister, Dusty Liles; son, Riley Spencer Verden; and many nieces, nephews,



and friends.

He was loved dearly and will be missed by all who knew him.

*The Springtown Epigraph  
Aug. 12, 2021 Edition*

# Water Conservation tips for late summer

Although we have been experiencing a milder and wetter than normal summer, in Texas drought, which can have a long-lasting effect on many aspects of the environment - including our groundwater, always seems to be lurking around the corner.

Even though, according to the National Integrated Drought Information System, North Texas is not currently experiencing drought conditions, water conservation should still be on the forefront of everyone's mind. Often during wet years, when the lakes are full, we tend to lose sight of the importance of water conservation, but, for a number of reasons, groundwater levels don't always react the same way to rainfall as surface water levels.

Whether you rely on groundwater or surface water, water conservation is always crucial for the future of Texans. Saving water now can have a tremendous impact on our groundwater resources and our communities in the future. Some of the small everyday changes you can make to help are:

- Check for toilet and faucet leaks and repair immediately
- Install aerators on faucets and remember to turn them off when not in use
- If you do not have a low-flow toilet, use water displacement device in the tank
- While waiting for hot water to reach faucet, catch cold water in a container to



Utilize supplemental water sources, such as collected rainwater, where possible. Shown: the rain barrel on campus at UTGCD for rain collection. Photo courtesy UTGCD

- water potted plants
- Only run the dishwasher and the washing machine with full loads
- Reduce shower time- On average, a shower uses about 2 gallons of water per minute. If you take a 30-minute shower, that's 60 gallons of water; vs. a 5-minute shower, which uses 10 gallons.
- Because a large percentage of annual residential use is outside, especially in the summer, here are some small things that you can do to help reduce your outdoor water use:
  - Watering between 8pm and 8am
  - Not over watering plants

- (According to the EPA, up to 50% of water is lost to evaporation, wind, or runoff due to overwatering)
- For automatic sprinkler systems:
  - Check sprinkler heads regularly to prevent clogging
  - Adjust to eliminate overspray and adjust run times and frequency to respond to water schedules, changing rainfall, and temperature conditions
  - For hose-end sprinklers: use sprinkler timers to limit water duration
  - Use hand-held hose, drip irrigation, or soaker hoses for trees, garden, non-turf areas, and bedded plants
  - Cut lawns on highest set-

- ting and leave lawn clippings on lawn instead of bagging
- Use mulch to preserve soil moisture
- Utilize supplemental water sources, such as collected rainwater, where possible
- These small shifts in daily routine can affect big change, and every individual can make a difference by conserving. Help us to ensure that future generations will have the water they need.
- For more information, call the Upper Trinity GCD office at 817-523-5200 or check out our website at [www.uppertrinitygcd.com](http://www.uppertrinitygcd.com) for more information.

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# Is it Environment or Is It Genetics?

When we last visited, we were discussing generalities of and moral issues surrounding genetic research/scientific work. And, of course genetics cannot be mentioned without two of the most famous pieces of genetic research being highlighted, those being the work of Gregor Mendel with pea plants and the cloning of Dolly the Sheep.

Dolly was always referred to as “Dolly the Sheep”; I always thought this a little odd and wondered if “the” was her middle name? Also notice that I said these were two of the most famous pieces of genetic research, not the most important, I’ll leave it to you to make up your own mind on that one.

A principle that was always put forward when the discussion of genetics would begin seemed to simplify the topic for me. That principle is: humans, animals, plants and all organisms are



## AG 101

By Jack DeShazo

Jack DeShazo has decades of experience in the agriculture field.

what they are because of two things, environment and genetics.

Environment being the things that have happened to us in our surroundings since birth and even before birth or germination in the case of plants. These traits will not be passed down to the next generation of offspring genetically. If a person has an arm that is misshapen because it was broken and not perfectly reset is environmental, it will not be passed to their offspring. The same goes for a person whose toes might be misshapen because of growing up having to wear shoes that were too small.

Habits that a person grows up with are just that, a habit that was learned because of the environment that the person grew up in. A plant growing crooked because it had to do that in order to get closer to the source of light is also an environmental influence, it will not pass that trait on to the next generation.

Now on the other hand if you can see your father’s nose shape in the reflection of yourself in the mirror this is more than likely a genetic trait that was passed down to you from your father. The same can be true with humans concerning height, hair color, eye color, hair

thickness, baldness, etc., etc.

Let’s use peach trees as an example in the plant kingdom; color of the fruit, size of the fruit, free-stone vs. cling, early ripening or late ripening and even days required from bloom to ripening of the fruit are all genetic traits. Certain breeds of beef cattle are capable of producing a higher quality of meat, Black Angus being our best example of this.

So much so that feeder calves and slaughter cattle that show the black color trait of the Black Angus breed will bring a higher price at the sale barn because of the higher quality beef trait of the breed. The Black Angus producing a higher quality beef product is considered a breed trait, but it is still a genetic trait that is passed down to the next generation.

In fine wool sheep breeds, which are predominantly used for wool production the

amount of wool produced, staple length, amount of lanolin produced and crimp of the wool fiber are all genetic traits.

However, there are some traits that are questionable between being environmental or genetic. The failure of body systems and/or organs such as heart conditions can be genetic or environmental.

Behavior is a questionable trait, Brahma influenced cattle tend to be a little “flighty” or “high headed”, most people think this is genetic. Or is it the influence of the cow’s temperament from the birth and forward OR it could be both?

How about the Pit Bull Terrier/Staffordshire Terrier? The opinion of many people is that meanness and fighting is bred into Pit Bulls and so it’s genetic. Well, I’m not so sure of that. Yes, toughness and durability were bred into them, but fighting I’m not convinced

of. I have had three at least half Pit Bull bred dogs in my life and they could not have been sweeter, kinder or gentler. Personally, I think it is mostly the environment in which they are raised with a tad bit being genetic.

My next example may be one that school teachers, retired and active may agree with me on. Occasionally, I would have a student in one of my classes who would have a problem with discipline, I would consider what the problem was, why he/she was like that and how I might be able to help him/her. And then I would meet the parents and I would wonder to myself, “hmmm, environment or genetic?”

Well, I have tried to keep this series on genetics simple and short, but it can’t be done in only two weeks’ worth of columns. So next week we’ll see if I can get it done in three.

‘til next week.

# Here’s my “expert” opinion.

In case you have missed it, there seems to be a difference of opinion about what “experts” you should listen to.

If you have indeed missed that, where the heck have you been hiding?

According to [dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com), an expert is “a person who has special skill or knowledge in some particular field; specialist; authority.”

According to one old definition, an “expert” is “a person carrying a briefcase who is more than 50 miles from home.”

Another of my favorites: “ex” means “former.” “Spurt” is a “drip under pressure.”



## BE AMAZING

By Gerry Lewis

Azle resident Dr. Gerry Lewis guides explorers to discover their AMAZING. He is an author, musician, and speaker, and a coach-sultant for individuals, churches, and organizations. More at [www.discoveryouramazing.com](http://www.discoveryouramazing.com).

All joking aside (or at least most joking aside), to be considered an expert means that you have specialized training, knowledge, and skills that allow you to speak into a particular area with qualified authority based on said specialized training, knowledge, and skills.

There are certain areas in which I could possibly be considered an expert. It’s a really short list and mostly limited to the prac-

tical aspects of church and ministry. That’s the context where most of my education and training have been and where I have almost 44 years of leadership experience. (That being said, I’m still pretty uncomfortable with being labeled as an expert at anything).

There are other areas where I know quite a bit. I’ve read a lot, listened to a lot of podcasts, and gone to a lot of conferences.

But I can’t speak with the authority of specialized training, knowledge, and skills. Nor am I in a position to refute those who can speak with that authority.

Here are two things I know for certain about real experts:

- 1) They are not infallible.
- 2) They are not wrong or right based on whether or not I agree with them.

It is my observation that most people have no problem with the first statement. There is near universal agreement that experts sometimes make mistakes.

It’s the second statement that gives us trouble.

It seems that we will give people a pass on the most ri-

diculous statements as long as they are “our” people.

But if they are not “our” people, we should question anything they say because they are biased and have some sort of subversive agenda.

And, truth be told, we are not even sure who “our” people are, because our definition of what is true is filtered through our own personal biases (which we always believe to be right) and our personal “rights.”

The words of Judges 17:6 ring in my ears: “everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

This seems like a really long (over 420 words so far) introduction to tell you that

my “expert” opinion is that:

1) We probably shouldn’t base our trust of experts on our own preconceived biases.

2) We probably shouldn’t give advice or make pronouncements on things we really don’t know much about.

3) We probably should have a whole lot more grace with each other.

4) We probably should decline most invitations to argue.

Let’s keep our eyes and ears open for opportunities be a blessing (and develop the expertise to really do it well).

Be amazing today, my friend.

# Dealing with death a painful reality we all face sooner or later

This past week a young friend of mine had the unfortunate experience of having their grandmother pass. By the time a person reaches my “ripe old age” of 65, a close family member’s death is something you have experienced multiple times. I have lost all my grandparents, my folks, and most all my aunts and uncles. It is never a pleasant experience.

Undoubtedly there is sadness and grief, and many times there is remorse for not having invested more time and effort into a relationship with the person who passed. Dealing with death does become easier with each occasion. A person starts to understand passing on is part of the natural process and the eventual end for all of us. We grieve, we re-



## MY FRONT PORCH

By Sam Houston

Sam Houston is a newspaper executive, a columnist, author, actor and entertainment promoter.

member, we rejoice, and we move on with living the rest of our lives. Watching my young friend this week, it was both painful and enriching to see her pass through her “first loss.”

The young woman’s grandmother had been her babysitter a great deal when she was little and the two undoubtedly had a very close connection. I heard my friend say to several others, “My Granny raised me.” I know for a fact the young woman comes from a good home with two hardworking parents and the statement

was not intended to take away from her parents at all. Rather it reflected how important her grandmother was to her growing up and how impactful the relationship was to her becoming the outstanding young woman she is today.

I saw the anxiety on this young woman’s face as her Grandmother entered hospice, and when the declaration of death was made, with all its sudden finality, I could feel her pain and sense of loss. I spoke to her and counseled with her, hoping somehow my many experi-

ences of dealing with the death of others would somehow comfort her.

I am very fond of this young woman, and it pained me to see her in agony. I hoped kind words, and relaying to her what I had learned in the journey of life, might comfort her. I am prayerful my words helped, but a big part of me knew the only solace she would find would be in her personal faith, in her understanding of the inevitability of all our deaths, and the joyful memories she would always carry with her.

As I drove to the funeral, it was raining in Hood County. I prayed it would be sunny when I arrived at the funeral’s location. Nothing more depressing than a dark, rainy day for a funeral. Fortunately, when I arrived at the fu-

neral home, the sun was out, the day was beautiful, and I found my young friend surrounded by a loving family and friends. She smiled and appeared to be at peace with what she had been forced to experience.


During the service, my friend spoke and read a special poem for those in attendance. I knew it would be very difficult for her to speak and to read the poem and I understandably feared she might break down or be unable to finish. My mind even created contingent plans in my brain to leave my seat and come assist her if she could not get through the reading. My young friend made me very proud. She read the poem with conviction, passion, and clarity; just as her grandmother

would have wanted.

After the service, my friend told me she appreciated me coming to the service and smiled at me. I could see in her eyes she still had grief, but she had come to grips with her first experience with death. It is a sad and unfortunate part of life but a road all of us travel. While I feel sadness for her loss, and I am so pleased with the outstanding young woman she truly is, and the way she handled herself. She had a learning experience, a difficult but necessary one. One we all have if we are blessed to be on this earth for very long.

Thought for the day: It is hard to forget someone who gave you so much to remember.

Until next time.



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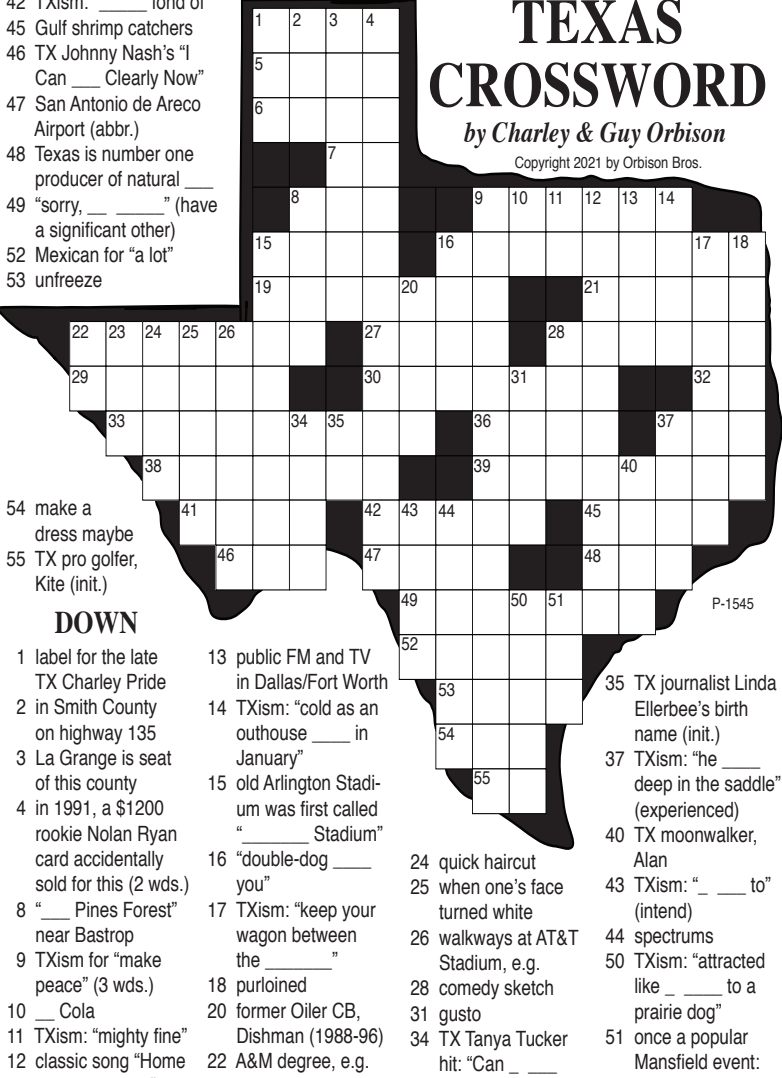
**ACROSS**

- Guadalupe River floater
- TXism: "that sticks in my \_\_\_"
- former SMU pres., Kenneth \_\_\_
- TX-based \_\_\_ Chico
- large TX conglomerate (1961-2000)
- Falfurrias is seat of this county
- TXism for "carry"
- TXism: "I need that like a \_\_\_ umbrella"
- preowned vehicle (2 wds.)
- characteristic
- tiny film role (2 wds.)
- TX Patrick Swayze was \_\_\_ Main in "North and South"
- in Columbus, TX: "Preston Kyle \_\_\_ Wildlife Museum"
- TX-filmed "The Andromeda \_\_\_"
- this Bruce won the Byron Nelson twice
- Cloris of TX-based "The Last Picture Show" (init.)
- Gulf contaminations (2 wds.)
- inheritor
- TX George Jones "\_\_\_ Thinks I Still Care" (1962)
- TX-born "Supergirl," Benoit
- TXism for "good" (2 wds.)
- astronaut Slayton

**DOWN**

- label for the late TX Charley Pride
- in Smith County on highway 135
- La Grange is seat of this county
- in 1991, a \$1200 rookie Nolan Ryan card accidentally sold for this (2 wds.)
- "\_\_\_ Pines Forest" near Bastrop
- TXism for "make peace" (3 wds.)
- \_\_\_ Cola
- TXism: "mighty fine"
- classic song "Home \_\_\_"
- TXism: "\_\_\_ fond of"
- Gulf shrimp catchers
- TX Johnny Nash's "I Can \_\_\_ Clearly Now"
- San Antonio de Arco Airport (abbr.)
- Texas is number one producer of natural \_\_\_
- "sorry, \_\_\_" (have a significant other)
- Mexican for "a lot"
- unfreeze
- public FM and TV in Dallas/Fort Worth
- TXism: "cold as an outhouse \_\_\_ in January"
- old Arlington Stadium was first called "\_\_\_ Stadium"
- "double-dog \_\_\_ you"
- TXism: "keep your wagon between the \_\_\_"
- purloined
- former Oiler CB, Dishman (1988-96)
- A&M degree, e.g.
- OJ's judge
- quick haircut
- when one's face turned white
- walkways at AT&T Stadium, e.g.
- comedy sketch
- gusto
- TX Tanya Tucker hit: "Can \_\_\_ You Tonight"
- TX journalist Linda Ellerbee's birth name (init.)
- TXism: "the \_\_\_ deep in the saddle" (experienced)
- TX moonwalker, Alan
- TXism: "\_\_\_ to" (intend)
- spectrums
- TXism: "attracted like \_\_\_ to a prairie dog"
- once a popular Mansfield event: "\_\_\_ Bell Rodeo"

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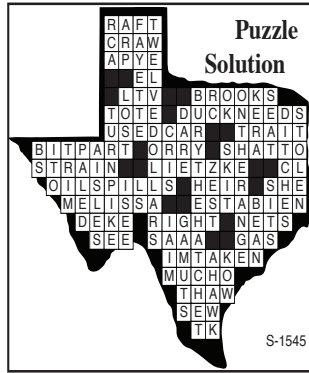
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# Horse Girls

**GLORIA HINOJOSA**

You were determined not to get bit.

But in a totally different meaning of the word, you were equally determined that your horse would accept one. Without a bit in his mouth, he wouldn't turn, slow down, or stop when you wanted to ride – and of course, as in "Horse Girls," edited by Halimah Marcus, the ride's the thing.

Or is a sense of freedom the best part of owning a horse? Many girls think so, while others just want their very own Flicka or Ginger or Pie. Whatever it is, Marcus says that there's a difference between "horse girls" and "a horsewoman." The latter, she writes, is "tough, no-nonsense... riding every day... unsentimental about horses but devoted to them for life" – unlike many of the women in this book who gave up riding as young women and re-established

their love for it later in life.

But what makes a horse girl?

Marginalization, in the stories here. These horse girls often felt shame for not fitting the norm, for being queer, Black, "chubby" or poor – but they still loved horses. Some of the writers are lesbians, but they didn't understand it until their girlhoods were over. Alex Marzano-Lesnevich writes of cross-dressing cowboys in history; Sarah Enelow-Snyder writes about Black cowboys and of "curly Afros shoved into unaccommodating cowboy hats." C. Morgan Babst writes of cruelty and anorexia, a two-pronged part of her childhood.

Horse girls worry. A lot. They worry about where their horses went after they were sold or given away. On the day she got it, Adrienne Celt worried about how she was going to bury her horse if it died. They worry about

disappointing horse-loving parents, and they fret about the best way to introduce their daughters to riding.

They ride with joy. They met spouses through horses. They remember the smell of a box that once contained a plastic horse – because, says T Kira Madden, "the thing about a horse is, it's never about the horse."

Nope, it's also about stories. Fifteen of them, to be exact, all inside "Horse Girls," but unless you're the horsey-type, you grew up in a saddle, or your shelves once held plastic 1:9-scale horses, you can just mosey along. In that case, you'll haaaaate this book and that's okay. It's not for you anyhow.

If you fit the former, though, pommel, stirrup, and all, then editor Halimah Marcus offers stories you'll devour, stories of loving horses, even when (especially when!) doing so made you an anomaly. There's strength



Halimah Marcus  
Portrait of author by Bryan Derballa

in that but loss also looms large here, particularly loss of childhood, innocence, or imagination. Fortunately for many of these storytellers and for the readers invited along on this ride, though, recollections are resolved, reasons for them are reconciled, and the endings are mostly satisfying.

If you ever trotted around the yard, pretending to be a horse, or if you actually spent your girlhood in a saddle, this book will bring back memories. "Horse Girls" is a book you won't want to miss, not even a little bit.



"Horse Girls: Recovering, Aspiring, and Devoted Riders Redefine the Iconic Bond," edited by Halimah Marcus  
c.2021, Harper Perennial \$17.00 / \$21.00 Canada 304 pages

# Texas-size Palo Duro Canyon 'recharges me'

**BY TUMBLEWEED SMITH**

The Palo Duro Canyon is the second largest canyon in the United States. It is 1,200 feet deep, 120 miles long and over 20 miles wide in some areas. It covers parts of four counties in the panhandle and the number of visitors is increasing.

"Its popularity grows by leaps and bounds," says Eric Miller, a tourist expert in Amarillo, "especially now that the pandemic is on the decline and people are starting to travel again." He goes to the canyon weekly and has studied it for years.

"The canyon has caves and columns of weathered rock called hoodoos. The major landmark that people want to see is called the Lighthouse. It's a sandstone structure about 300 feet tall. You have to take a 6-mile round trip hike to get to it. In the summer

heat you better take precautions like some sort of headgear, sunscreen and plenty of water. The sun can really sap your energy. Morning is the best time to go."

The canyon is believed to be 90 million years old. The name Palo Duro is from an Indian term meaning hard stick.

"The legend is that Coronado led some conquistadors to the area in about 1540. It was his group that discovered the juniper cedar trees that are still there on the walls of the canyon. Juniper trees have an incredibly hard wood."

Indians made arrows from juniper wood. There are several hiking trails in the canyon. One is called the Rock Garden Trail.

"It starts on the floor of the canyon and goes all the way up to the rim, so it's nearly a quarter of a mile gain in el-

evation going up"

The canyon has a replica of a dugout like the one Charles Goodnight, a pioneer rancher used in 1876, two years after the Indians left. He moved 1,800 head of cattle into the canyon in partnership with John Adair and founded the JA Ranch,

There is a state park that covers a small part of the canyon. Concessions include jeep rides, a zip line and the outdoor musical drama TEXAS that begins in May and runs through mid August. It has special lighting and sound effects.


"The lightning at the end of the first act will have you believing that it's raining."

Eric thinks the canyon is a special place.

"Palo Duro is my go-to place because it just recharges me. There is a deep serenity that comes with breathing in the clear panhandle air."




Photo credit: Texas Parks & Wildlife



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