



'Everything keeps going up'



On March 14, gas at the Springtown Valero cost \$3.99 per gallon for unleaded gas.

Photo by Madelyn Edwards

Gas customers in Springtown react to rising fuel prices

BY MADELYN EDWARDS
madelyn@azlenews.net

On sunny Monday afternoon, Springtown resident Jorge Leija pumped gas into his red Dodge Charger at the Valero gas station on State Highway 199.

It used to cost Leija \$40 to fill up. Now, it costs about twice as much.

"When I'm paying bills at the beginning of the month, I got to separate \$40 in and \$40 (from) next paycheck, that way I get it all together," he said.

Leija is not alone. Other gas pumpers at the Valero on Monday also reported steep markups in gas prices.

"I never really paid much attention before," Springtown resident Derek Young said while discussing how gas prices have affected his budget. "Now that it's up so high, you kind of take more notice."

Young, like others at the Valero, shops around for gas to fill up his Honda Accord. He prefers gas stations in town where there's competition rather than gas stations on the outskirts.

"When you get those outskirts

places, they're usually high," he said. "They usually charge about 10, 20 cents more."

At the Springtown Valero, unleaded gas cost \$3.99 per gallon and \$4.99 per gallon for diesel on Monday. As of March 14, gas prices average about \$4.01 per gallon in Parker County, about \$3.99

in Texas and about \$4.32 in the nation, according to AAA.

Joey Santos, who is planning to move to Springtown from the San Antonio area and comes to Springtown twice a week, said he has noticed that gas is about 10 cents

SEE **GAS PRICES**, PAGE 2A.



People fill up on gas at the Valero in Springtown on March 14.

Photo by Madelyn Edwards



Help Me Grow North Texas Regional-Statewide director Stephanie Norton outside Springtown's new Family Resource Center.

Photo by Madelyn Edwards

Family Resource Center to open in Springtown

BY MADELYN EDWARDS
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Springtown families will soon have access to a new resource for early childhood development and parenting support.

The new Springtown Family Resource Center at 314 E. Fifth Terrace, near the school district administration building, will open to the public on March 24. The grand opening will take place 2:30-5:30 p.m. and will include

child-friendly activities and food. The Springtown center will focus on supporting families and kids ages 0-6.

The center is funded by a grant

SEE **CENTER**, PAGE 4A.



Robert Bandy of Springtown caught a Legacy Lunker, a 16-pound ShareLunker 623, from Eagle Mountain Lake on Feb. 27. Courtesy Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Springtown man catches big fish

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Springtown resident Robert Bandy caught a Texas largemouth bass from Eagle Mountain Lake during the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's 2022 Toyota ShareLunker season.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife's Toyota ShareLunker program has partnered with anglers to promote and enhance bass fishing in Texas since 1986, according to the

SEE **BIG FISH**, PAGE 7A.



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Proposed Springtown Jack in the Box gets OK for parking variance

BY MADELYN EDWARDS
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Jack in the Box is one municipal step closer to opening in Springtown.

At a special meeting last week, Springtown City Council, acting as the Zoning Board of Adjustments, unanimously approved a

request to deviate from the required number of parking spaces at the upcoming Jack in the Box location.

The fast-food company has purchased the property at the corner of State Highway 199 and Old Springtown Road as the site for the proposed new restaurant. The parking lot is expected

to have 14 spaces, which is four spots fewer than what is required as a minimum by the city's parking ordinance.

Professional Engineer Matt Moore of Claymoore Engineering said at the meeting that the size of the lot is preventing the project from having the minimum required parking spots. He also said

Jack in the Box is comfortable pursuing the investment with reduced parking because the restaurant is expected to be more drive-through centric.

"(Jack in the Box) is anxious to be here," Moore said during the meeting. "The overall business has changed over the last couple of years with COVID. Everything

is a lot more drive-through centric with these types of restaurants, so that's why they're comfortable with the reduced parking that we have on the site."

Springtown Administrative Services Director Christina Derr said the next step in the restaurant's development is the approval of the proj-

ect's site plan by both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the city council. The site plan is expected to be considered by both governmental bodies later this spring, and if the site plan is approved, construction could start in the summer.

GAS PRICES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A.

cheaper in the South Texas area.

"I wouldn't say (it's) necessarily a shock, (but) more of an eye opener," Santos said about the price difference.

Because of the increase in prices, Santos said his family will have to cut back on shopping for nonessential items.

"It's been definitely an expense that we weren't accounting for, the increase, the spike in gas prices," he said.

Johnny Roberts, who lives in Boyd, manages a horse ranch and is a truck driver, said the rising gas prices have been motivation to stay home.

"Just don't go out. Stay home. Eat at home," Roberts said about the impact the rising gas prices have had on his budget.

Fort Worth Star-Telegram reported last week that recent prices are the most Texans have paid for gas in almost eight years and noted an increase of 25 cents just last week.

The increased prices that

customers are seeing can't be pinned down to one reason, but the U.S.'s ban on Russian fuel imports because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine is standing out as a prominent factor. While only about 3% of the U.S.'s oil comes from Russia, The Dallas Morning News reported last week that "the global shock from the energy import ban is anticipated to have far-reaching financial consequences," especially in Texas where more gasoline is used than any other state.

"If Russia's exports were to disappear from the market tomorrow, you would see catastrophic rise in oil prices around the world," James Coleman, a Southern Methodist University law professor who specializes in energy law and policy, told WFAA in a March 9 report. "A lot of what's happening today is just the anticipation that we may have more shortages in the weeks and months to come."

AAA reported on March 14 that the price of crude oil has fallen from more than \$123 per barrel to below

\$110, and there may be some relief from increasing gas prices if the price of crude oil continues to decrease.

Other factors that are impacting the rising gas prices are consumer demand for gas as people have returned to work and school following COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, lagging oil production, seasonal travel and other energy business factors.

The rising cost of gas are expected to affect industries that rely on fuel, like the meat industry and airlines, according to The Dallas Morning News article. Consumers' savings accounts may also take a hit.

IMPACT ON LOCAL BUSINESSES

Larry Barnard, owner of Aardvark Pumping, said the increased gas costs – which he described as having almost doubled – eventually gets passed onto his customers, even though he tries not to let that happen.

"Oil goes up, gas goes up, groceries go up, everything keeps going up, and we just got

to go up, too," Barnard said. "It's a shame; it is what it is."

Barnard said he hasn't received any complaints from customers about rising prices.

"I think a lot of people are understanding that," he said. "They don't like it, but they understand it."

Jennifer Gowin, a Springtown resident who owns a T-shirt business, said the increase in gas prices has affected her family and livelihood in more ways than one.

"Rising gas prices have cost us our livelihood (of) not being able to get out as much as we used to," Gowin said. "I run my own T-shirt business so going to get supplies has been cut to (once) a week or getting groceries with a family of (five), we have to cut grocery shopping down as we live on the outskirts of town. Summer vacations are going to be slim pickings as it's not affordable to drive anywhere for us that are scared to fly."

IMPACT ON CITY, SCHOOL DISTRICT

Two of Springtown's major institutions – the city

and the school district – are also noticing how rising gas prices are affecting their budgets.

"The district did not plan for the significant spike in fuel prices we've recently seen, nor the general inflation all our stakeholders are also seeing," Springtown ISD Superintendent Mike Kelley said. "Every company and family across the country will probably have to adjust their budgets in response to the economy's recent changes, and public schools are no different. Where we can, we'll tighten our belt a bit. Unfortunately, the district's budget was already pretty lean, and there is not a lot of room for adjustment."

Kelley said the school district's overall budget has contingency funds that the school board can reassign by vote. Attendance waivers from the education commissioner for the first and fourth six weeks when student attendance rates "plummeted" amid rising COVID-19 rates also will impact how SISD manages its finances moving

forward, he said.

As for the city of Springtown, City Administrator David Miller and Administrative Services Director Christina Derr said as of last week, the city has spent about 52% of the fuel budget across all departments, which is about 10% more than what the expense was expected to be at this point in the fiscal year. Miller and Derr attribute this expenditure difference to the increased gas prices.

"However, due to increased revenue mainly due to growth (increased sales tax revenue and building permit revenue), we expect our operating budget to be able to absorb the increase in expenditures without significant budget adjustments," the city officials said.

Miller and Derr recommended that residents increase fuel efficiency efforts, like carpooling, taking care of more tasks in the same trip, less idling and controlling speed.

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Nine accused of sex trafficking at center

NINE ACCUSED OF SEX TRAFFICKING AT CENTER

Nine employees at a Bastrop County facility that cares for young victims of sex trafficking have been accused of trafficking those same girls, according to the Austin American-Statesman.

One employee of the state-contracted Refuge Ranch has been arrested on an undisclosed charge and more arrests are anticipated, according to Tara Olah, a director with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

The facility employed more than three dozen employees to provide 24-7 care for the girls. According to Olah, DFPS received multiple phone calls in January to the statewide intake hotline that "alleged sexual and physical abuse, sexual exploitation, neglectful supervision and medical neglect" at Refuge Ranch, according to the Statesman.

"This is appalling and is a disregard of these children," U.S. District Judge Janis Jack, who presided at a hearing Thursday evening, told state staff, including Family and Protective Services



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.

Commissioner Jaime Masters and contract monitors. "And we had to wait for eight calls to come in before we took already trafficked children out of this situation. This is a system that remains broken."

Jack pointed out it took almost six weeks and several phone calls before the girls were removed from the facility. The Texas Rangers have been called in to investigate.

Refuge Ranch opened in 2018 on 50 acres in Bastrop County and is designed to house girls ages 11 to 19. The state ordered the shelter to close on Friday.

TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS TEACHER SHORTAGES

At the behest of Gov. Greg Abbott, a task force has been created by the Texas Education Agency to address

staffing shortages facing the state's public schools.

"Teachers play a critical role in the development and long-term success of our students," Abbott said. "This task force should work diligently to ensure that best practices and resources for recruitment and retention are provided to districts to ensure the learning environment of Texas students is not interrupted by the absence of a qualified teacher."

The Teacher Vacancy Task Force is intended to ensure Texas schools are equipped to deal with these challenges, relying heavily on the input of current and former teachers. More than two dozen superintendents, administrators and teachers have been appointed to the task force.

The state has long endured a shortage of certified teachers that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. A survey

of more than 900 teachers last year by the Charles Butt Foundation revealed 68% of those surveyed were seriously considering leaving the profession.

DROUGHT CONDITIONS STABLE IN FEBRUARY

Precipitation in February was close to normal, but Andrew Weinberg with the Texas Water Development Board predicts the entire state will be in drought conditions by the end of spring.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, only a few counties in Texas, mainly in far south Texas and along the Gulf Coast, are not considered to be in drought conditions.

The most severe drought is occurring in the Texas Panhandle, through the Great Plains and into the Big Bend area.

PANEL REVIEWS ROLLING PINES WILDFIRE

An independent panel reviewing a prescribed fire that got out of control at Bastrop State Park recommends requiring more personnel present and smaller burns at the park.

The Rolling Pines wildfire

in January involved nearly 800 acres and forced about 150 households to temporarily evacuate. No private property damage was reported. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department two days later formed the panel to investigate why the fire got out of control.

The panel also recommended that bulldozers be required to be on site during prescribed burns, which are intended to lessen the risk of large-scale fires such as the Bastrop County Complex Fire in 2011, which destroyed nearly 1,700 homes and scorched almost 35,000 acres.

Members of the panel included fire experts from across the United States.

KAUFMAN WOMAN ARRESTED FOR TIMBER THEFT

A Kaufman woman has been arrested for timber theft in Hopkins County, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service.

Frances Charline Cole, 51, was charged with hiring a logging company to harvest timber on 42 acres on which she had entered into a real estate agreement but never

actually bought.

A timber deed filed with the county clerk indicates she was paid \$8,000 for the timber. However, the logger returned to cut the tract and discovered she had backed out of buying the land.

"Essentially, the logger paid her for timber that wasn't hers, that she had no rights to sell," said Jonathon Keller, Texas A&M Forest Service Law Enforcement Investigator.

NEW COVID-19 CASES RISE, BUT DEATHS, HOSPITALIZATIONS DROP

The number of new COVID-19 cases in the past week in Texas rose to 31,965, up about 5,000 compared to the previous week, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. However, the number of new deaths reported dropped to 678, down about a third from the previous week.

The number of lab-confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations in Texas dropped to 2,008, down 29% from the previous week, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.



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BOOK REVIEW

This Brighton Beach Memoir-ish tale is warm as a sidewalk knish

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

You never thought that you could tell a joke.

Oh, you'd start off right, tucking in all the funny motions and voices. You'd do the build-up like it was meant to be, and you'd pause at all the right places but much as you tried, the punchline never arrived, or it did and it was delivered wrong. Ugh. Maybe you should try writing better jokes. Just remember, as in the new memoir, "What's So Funny?" by David Sipress, some jokes write themselves.

Friday nights at Gino's on Lexington Avenue were the best of times.

New Yorker cartoonist David Sipress remembers them for their sophistication, for the celebrity-spotting opportunities, for his mother's elegant dresses and pearls, and because his father, Nat, was an important man on those evenings about town.

Nat Sipress was born in the early 1900s and immigrated

with most of his family from Ukraine as a boy, to escape prosecution for their Jewish faith. The family landed first in Brooklyn, where life was a struggle; shortly afterward, they moved to Williamsburg and Nat left home, cutting most ties with his siblings. Why, his son can only guess; Nat was silent on the subject of his life in Ukraine and his earliest boyhood.

And yet, he was open and mostly affable about many other things. The staff at Gino's apparently loved him. He gave Christmas the same weight as Hanukkah in the household, and he didn't lose control the afternoon when Sipress tossed his toys out their apartment window. He urged Sipress to go to college, was proud when he chose to major in Russian history, and urged his son to stick with it, even though Sipress knew his heart was in cartooning. It was then that Nat spoke his displeasure in a time-honored fatherly way: by cutting Sipress loose for a

while. But it was done with love. As were Sipress' mother's constant queries about Sipress' happy childhood. As were his father's weekly visits to the legacy he'd leave his children, and the surprises Sipress would find when his sister died....

So there you are, sitting anywhere but New York City. So why would you want to read the memoirs of a Jewish kid from Manhattan, circa the 1950s?

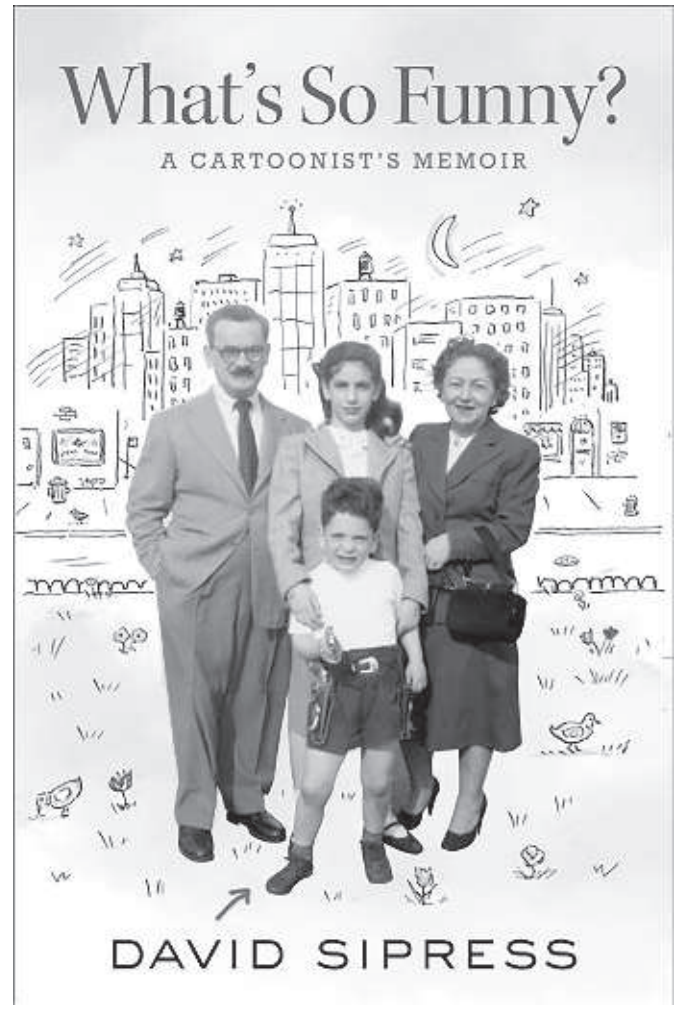
Because this Brighton Beach Memoir-ish tale is warm as a sidewalk knish, filled with author David Sipress' stories of innocent years, a quaintly overprotective mother, and memories of a New York that you'll never see again. Former children, especially those who grew up in the Eisenhower years, will recognize their own kidhood in this book; anyone who was a young adult in the 1960s will identify with memories of father-son clashes and

long-haired hippies. Most delightfully, it's all wrapped around Sipress' story of his career and his own marriage, punctuated by his cartoons.

It seems trite to say that you'll laugh at this book and you'll cry, but you will. It's like the best kind of college reunion, with a casual after-gathering in the lounge. Indeed, read "What's So Funny?" and you'll know what is.



David Sipress photo by Nina Subin



"What's So Funny? A Cartoonist's Memoir" by David Sipress c.2022, Mariner Books \$27.99 336 pages

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Obituaries

Michael Miller 1967- 2022

Michael Paul Miller, 54, passed away Tuesday, March 8, 2022 in Weatherford.

Celebration of life is March 26, 2022. Contact family for more information.

Michael was born April 24, 1967, in Fort Worth to Robert and Bonnie (Howeth) Miller. Micheal was a fireman for the City of Azle for many years. He was quite a computer buff. Michael loved spending time with his grandson.

Michael was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Kenny and Kevin Miller and grandparents William and Francis Howeth.

He is survived by his son,



Justin Miller and his wife Christina; daughter, Jessyca Miller; brother, Timothy and his wife Shonnah; grandson Kace Miller and nephew, Austin Miller.

*The Springtown Epigraph
March 17, 2022 Edition*

Larry Shoop 1952- 2022

Larry David Shoop, 70, a very kind and giving person, passed away, Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2022 in Weatherford.

Memorial is at 1 p.m., Friday, March 25, 2022 at Alexanders Midway, Springtown.

He was born Feb. 16, 1952 in Kittanning, Pennsylvania to Harry Carroll and Lois Jean (Rearic) Shoop. They both preceded him in death along with his sister in law, Audrey Shoop.

Larry served in the US Navy during the Vietnam War. He enjoyed sports, hunting and fishing. Larry enjoyed spending time with the family, looked forward to his grandkids visiting and had a love for dogs.

He is survived by his loving wife, Nancy Shoop;



sons, Aaron M. Shoop and wife, Whitney and Brian M. Shoop and wife, Kati; brothers, William Shoop and Robert Shoop and wife, Kelly; grandchildren, Brantley, Mason, Nolan and Hensley; nieces, Teri; and nephews, Jared, Harrison and Hayden; cousins, Barb Sowers and Char Hecht.

*The Springtown Epigraph
March 17, 2022 Edition*

Just one question, Dad... how did you hold your temper?

The trace of spring in the air causes me to think of days as a young man, spent fishing during the spring spawn. I would mark the calendar waiting for early spring to arrive so I could go “drown some worms.” My mind recalls those many occasions sitting patiently in a boat waiting for a bite, and the exhilaration of “getting into” a run of sand bass or crappie. These are memories that make my heart warm, bring a smile to my face and make me anxious for this spring to get here so I can do it all over again.

I learned to fish when I was very young. My dad was a busy man and, frankly, we did not have a close father-son relationship. He was a wonderful role model, hard-working and a good provider but he simply did not have in his DNA to be “close” in his personal relationships. While I have always been a blabbermouth, Dad was so quiet Grandma said they did not think he could speak until he was 17. Being distant was just his way. I knew he cared about me, but we were never going to have the sort of relationship that some fathers and sons experience. I think that was OK with both of us.

The one exception to our



MY FRONT PORCH

By Sam Houston

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

usual interaction was when we went fishing. Something about being in the great outdoors and being alone together made my dad open to the point he would talk my ears off. He spoke about work, my sisters, the grandparents and even Mom. It wasn't truly a conversation because he did not ask questions or solicit responses from me; he simply spoke. In the environment of “fishing,” he shared with me some of his feelings and gave me a sense of what was going on within him.

I still remember the very first time he took me fishing. He very methodically showed me what to do and how to do it. I was maybe 7 or 8 years old, and I did not follow his instructions very well. I would get my line caught up in a tree limb or on something in the water. He never growled or scolding me, but he solved the problem and would counsel me on what I needed to change to not have the same problem again. I caught my

first fish that day and ate it that night. Those are some of my best memories of my father.

When my son was about five, I decided to take him on his first fishing trip. I was determined to show my son the skills my father had taught me and for him to enjoy the experience. When we arrived at the lake, I opened the tackle box and started to bait the hooks, all the while explaining what my son should do and how he should do it. We had been blessed with a beautiful day and a good spot to fish, and I felt positive this was going to be a great first fishing experience.

Goodness gracious! The next two hours were the kind of torture no one should have to experience. In some ways, it was worse than a toothache. I do not think I managed to put my line in the water the entire time. If my son wasn't playing in the worms, he had his line snagged. Just as I would solve one problem,

my son would have his line backlashed, or would need to use the bathroom. I was troubleshooting one problem after the other, but it was to no avail because the issues and problems kept coming. Finally, when my son brought me his fishing pole, which was hopelessly snagged, I stopped dead in my tracks. Thinking about my first fishing experience, I looked toward the heavens and said out loud, “My goodness, Dad, I now know I must have created these very same problems for you. How is it you kept your cool and never lost your patience with me? God bless you!”

Well, Dad never answered from Heaven, but I like to think he heard me and gave me a little smile and grunt of satisfaction. I think he would have liked that I made the effort to introduce my son to something we had shared. I was using my dad's tackle box that day; the same one we used on my first day fishing. Guess sometimes we do have to “pay for our raising” and remember, patience is always a virtue.

Thought for the day: Many men go fishing all their lives without knowing it is not fish they are after.

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Reno adopts sex offender ordinance

BY MADELYN EDWARDS
madelyn@azlenews.net

Reno City Council adopted an ordinance to keep registered sex offenders out of areas where children congregate.

The council approved the ordinance at its Feb. 28 meeting. Mayor Sam White said this was an ordinance that previously was not in existence in Reno.

According to the Texas Department of Public Safety's website, the Texas Sex Offender Registration Program doesn't exclude registered sex offenders from living or going near places where kids congregate, but city ordinances and Texas community supervision and

parole laws can require such safety zones.

Reno Police Deputy Chief Nathan Stringer said the ordinance established a 1,000-foot buffer zone around city parks, schools, bus stops and other places where children gather.

"It's just creating safe zones saying that registered sex offenders can't move into those areas," Stringer said.

Before the ordinance, registered sex offenders in Reno could live anywhere they wanted. Adult sex offenders who already live in the new buffer zones prior to the ordinance being established can stay there as long as they maintain compliance with their registration, Stringer said.

"Once they fall out of compliance, they would no longer be eligible to live in that safety zone," Stringer said.

The ordinance doesn't affect juvenile sex offenders who will most likely live with their parents, he said.

At the meeting, the council also adopted the updated subdivision ordinance that adjusts road widths, requires that streets be made of concrete and requires cluster mailboxes to be lighted and moved away from the road for safety.

White said the city and council are in the process of changing water bills from an index card to a regular-sized envelope to prevent the bills from getting lost in the mail.

Ronald McDonald House scholarship applications open for HS seniors

STAFF REPORTS

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater North Texas announced the opening of applications for its Scholarship Program, which grants more than \$60,000 to 30 local high school seniors each year. Funded by North Texas McDonald's owner/operators and donations from the community, the annual scholarships recognize students for their outstanding academic achievements and community involvement.

Applications are open online at rmhcntx.org/scholarships and must be submitted by April 1, 2022. All stu-

dents can apply regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or national origin. To qualify for an RMHC Scholarship, students must:

- be a high school senior
- be younger than 21 years old
- be eligible to attend a two- or four- year college or university with a full course of study
- be a legal U.S. resident
- live in the geographic areas of the RMHC of Greater North Texas Chapter
- and submit a complete application and all required documentation by the deadline.

"Our hope with this scholarship is to help students fo-

cus on their academics and college experience without having to worry about finances," said Cliff Johnson Sr., local McDonald's owner/operator and chairman of the RMHCNTX board. "As local business owners, we understand the importance of higher education and we are proud to help students achieve their dreams."

Since the Scholarship Program was founded in 1988, more than \$2.5 million has been awarded to over 1,536 North Texas high school seniors. For more information and to apply, visit rmhcntx.org/scholarships.

BIG FISH, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A.

TPWD website.

The overall season has brought in 15 ShareLunkers. O.H. Ivie Lake, east of San Angelo, had a total of eight Legacy Class largemouth bass, while Coleman City and Eagle Mountain Lake got on the board for the first time in the collection season, according to a TPWD news release.

Bandy became only the second angler to retrieve a Legacy Lunker from Eagle Mountain Lake, with a 16-pound ShareLunker 623 on Feb. 27. When he caught the largemouth bass, Bandy was fishing a tournament that was supposed to be on Saturday but was changed to Sunday. This was fortunate for Bandy because he would not have been able to participate if the schedule hadn't changed, which allowed him to make the catch of a lifetime.

"My partner and I were fishing in our bow bass club tournament," Bandy said. "We came onto a point near a marina and dropped the trolling motor. I made the cast in 12 feet of water with a Texas-rig and was dragging the bait when (the fish) grabbed it. I made a few cranks and told my tournament partner to get the net. He asked if it was a catfish and I said no, get the net. When she came up, he made the perfect scoop and we got her in the net. It still really hasn't set in yet how big that fish really was."

This was Bandy's first

experience with the ShareLunker program. The largemouth bass also got Bandy a tournament championship and broke the big bass tournament record, according to the news release.

"The ShareLunker program is definitely on the ball," he said. "They were very thorough with their instructions on what to do and what not to do. We got the fish transferred safely, and I can't say enough about the program. This was an unreal experience, and I'm very thankful to have had this opportunity."

TPWD Inland Fisheries biologists collect and transport the ShareLunkers to Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens, where biologists are providing the fish top-notch care. Biologists are planning to attempt breeding them with male offspring of a prior ShareLunker to make bigger, better bass to stock in and enhance fishing in Texas lakes, according to the news release.

"It's been an exceptional two months of the 2022 Toyota ShareLunker collection season," said Kyle Brookshear, Toyota ShareLunker program manager, in the news release. "In February alone, history was made with new lake records, a pair of Top-30 fish, and fisheries that got back on the board following a gap without producing a Legacy Class Lunker. In addition, O.H. Ivie has

continued its incredible run that began a year ago, and what's even more exciting is we still have a month to go in the collection season."

Anglers who catch and donate one of these 13-plus lunkers earn Legacy Class status, receive a catch kit filled with merchandise, a 13-plus pound Legacy decal for their vehicle or boat, VIP access to the Toyota ShareLunker Annual Awards event and a high-quality replica mount of their Lunker fish from Lake Fork Taxidermy. These anglers will also receive entries into two separate drawings – a Legacy Class Drawing and the year-end Grand Prize Drawing. Both drawings will award the winner a \$5,000 Bass Pro Shops shopping spree and an annual fishing license.

Anglers who enter data for any lunker they catch greater than eight pounds or 24 inches during the calendar year 2022 also receive a catch kit, a decal for their vehicle or boat and an entry into the year-end Grand Prize Drawing to win a \$5,000 Bass Pro Shops shopping spree and annual fishing license. ShareLunker entry classes include the Lunker Class (8lb+), Elite Class (10lb+), and Legend Class (13lb+).

For updates on the Toyota ShareLunker Program, visit facebook.com/sharelunkerprogram/ or TexasSharelunker.com.

LEGAL PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice of Public Sale

Notice is hereby given that Storage Bright at 1715 N Hwy 51, Springtown, Texas 76082 will sell the contents of the storage units listed below at a public auction to satisfy a lien placed on the contents (pursuant to Title 5, Liens Chapter 59 Sec. 59.044). The sale will take place at the website www.storage-treasures.com on March 25, 2022 at 10:00 am. The sale will be conducted on www.storage-treasures.com, under the guidance of Christopher Rosa (16850) on behalf of the facility's management. Units will be available for viewing prior to the sale on www.storage-treasures.com. Contents will be sold for cash only to the highest bidder. A 10-15% buyer's premium will be charged and a cleaning deposit per unit. All sales are final. Seller reserves the right to withdraw the property at any time before the sale or to refuse any bids. The property to be sold is described as "general household items" unless otherwise noted:

Tracy Lockard--bedding, carpet and general household items.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Barbara Akin Midkiff, also known as Barbara Skinner, Deceased, were issued on March 11, 2022, in Cause No. 22P073, pending in the County Court, Parker County, Texas, to: Brandon Hueber. All persons having claims against said Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law: Brandon Hueber, Executor c/o Wendi Andino, Attorney Tate, Gowen & Wilson PLLC 777 Taylor Street, Suite 1135 Fort Worth, Texas 76102. Dated this 14th day of March, 2022.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Brief Explanatory Statements of Proposed Constitutional Amendments Special Election, May 7, 2022

Proposition Number 1 (SJR 2)

SJR 2 proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for the reduction of the amount of a limitation on the total amount of property taxes that may be imposed for general elementary and secondary public school purposes on the residence homestead of a person who is elderly or disabled in order to reflect any statutory reduction in the maximum compressed rate of the maintenance and operations taxes imposed for those purposes on the person's homestead from the preceding tax year.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: "The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for the reduction of the amount of a limitation on the total amount of ad valorem taxes that may be imposed for general elementary and secondary public school purposes on the residence homestead of a person who is elderly or disabled to reflect any statutory reduction from the preceding tax year in the maximum compressed rate of the maintenance and operations taxes imposed for those purposes on the homestead."

Proposition Number 2 (SJR 2)

SJR 2 proposes a constitutional amendment increasing the amount of the residence homestead exemption from property taxes for public school purposes from \$25,000 to \$40,000.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: "The constitutional amendment increasing the amount of the residence homestead exemption from ad valorem taxation for public school purposes from \$25,000 to \$40,000."

Published by The Office of the Texas Secretary of State, www.sos.texas.gov, 1/800-252-VOTE (8683).

SPRINGTOWN SCHOOL MENU

March 21-25, 2022
PK through 12th Grade

*Menus are subject to change.

BREAKFAST PRICES	
EC-12th Grade	\$1.75
EC-12th Reduced	\$0.30
Adult	\$2.25
LUNCH PRICES	
PK-4th Grade	\$3.00
5th-8th Grade	\$3.25
High School	\$3.00
Reduced	\$0.40
Adult	\$4.25

Students may prepay for their meals.

PK - 12th GRADE

BREAKFAST: Everyday - Various Juices & Cereals, Toast, Milk Variety, Fruit, Jelly Assortment, Buttermilk Biscuit, Variety of milk is offered every day for breakfast and lunch.

Monday Dutch Waffle, Toast, Variety of Cereal, Fruit, Juice **Tuesday** Sausage Biscuit, Toast, Variety of Cereal, Fruit, Juice **Wednesday** Scramble Eggs, Toast, Variety of Cereal, Fruit, Juice **Thursday** Breakfast Stick, Toast, Variety of Cereal, Fruit, Juice **Friday** Breakfast Sandwich, Toast, Variety of Cereal, Fruit, Juice

PK - 8th GRADE

Lunch: Everyday - Choice of one meat, two vegetables, and one grain/bread with milk. Variety of milk is offered every day for breakfast and lunch.

Monday Crispy Chicken Tenders, Stuffed Breadsticks, Chili Style Beans, Roll, Mixed Vegetables, Pine-apple Cup **Tuesday** Spaghetti w/ Meat Sauce, Corn, Broccoli, Applesauce **Wednesday** Crispy Chicken Sandwich, Tater Gems, Green Beans, Blueberries **Thursday** Chicken Alfredo w/ A Twist, CK Fried Steak Sandwich **Friday** Pepperoni Pizza, Potato Crunchy Fish, Mashed Potatoes, Roll, Cucumber & Tomato Cup

9th-12 GRADE

Lunch: Everyday - Choice of one meat, two vegetables, and one grain/bread with milk. Variety of milk is offered every day for breakfast and lunch.

Monday Regular or Spicy Chicken Tenders, Tater Gems, Roll, Mixed Vegetables, Blueberries, Peaches **Tuesday** Chicken Alfredo w/ a Twist, Popcorn Chicken, Broccoli, Roll, Glazed Baby Carrots, Tropical Fruit Salad **Wednesday** Crispy Chicken Sandwich, Cheeseburger, Tater Gems, Fresh Broccoli **Thursday** Nachos (beef or chicken), Refried Beans, Corn, Banana **Friday** Pepperoni Pizza, Fish Tacos, Cucumber & Tomato Cup, Green Beans, Coleslaw, Blueberries, Orange Smiles

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Springtown middle schoolers, high schoolers win at FCCLA Conference

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Three teams of students from Springtown Middle School competed and placed first at the Texas Association of FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America) Region II Leadership Conference, according to a news release.

The conference and STAR (Students Taking Action with Recognition) Events were held March 3-5 in Waco. The student teams that placed in the top five will advance to the state competition April 7-9 in Dallas.

The SMS team winners, advised by Natalie Hill and Britaney Foster, include:

- Chapter Service Projects Portfolio – Kylie Altom, Aubrey Hallum and Faith Styles;

- National Programs in Action – Savannah Hall, Dakota Pippin and Rylen Passmore; and

- Professional Presentation – Skylar Albright, Kallie Gray and Wesley Wyatt.

Those competing at state will have a chance to advance to nationals in San Diego from June 29 to July 3.

SMS students also won 11 gold medals for individual performances on FCSA (Family Consumer Science Assessments) tests, which determine the students' knowledge about FCCLA and its purposes. Earning these medals were Skylar Albright, Maryann Babcock, Chassidy Gage, Kallie Gray, Savannah Hall, Aubrey Hallum, Dakota Pippin, Rylen Passmore, Bethany Smith, Faith Styles and Wesley Wyatt.

Springtown High School FCCLA students also competed in Waco and several of them advanced to state, according to the high school's FCCLA Facebook page. The high schoolers also brought home seven medals from the FCSA tests.

The high school students who placed include:

- Abby Schoenfeld, placed



SHS FCCLA students compete in Waco.

Photo courtesy Springtown High School FCCLA Facebook page



Springtown Middle School students compete at FCCLA conference.

Photo courtesy Natalie Hill

first in Cupcake Battle

- Erin Hall, placed second in Career Investigation

- Regan Burdick, placed second in Nutrition and Wellness

- Jonah Nadeau, placed third in Job Interview

- Rose Poe, placed third in Career Investigation

Springtown Middle School also received two awards

for most pre-registered attendee for the conference and most members in the Middle School Division for the region. In addition, parents Becky Smith and Pat and Lisa

Hall were awarded Honorary FCCLA Membership.

“They have not only supported our students locally, but they have also evaluated at Region, State and Nation-

al Levels as well,” according to the news release. “We are so very grateful for the help these three individuals have given us in the past eight years.”

Parker County extension service hosting fall prevention classes

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Parker County office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will host weekly classes to help people prevent themselves from falling.

The free class takes place every Monday until April 18 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Coats United Methodist Church, 802 N. Elm St. in Weatherford.

According to a flier about the class, “Many older adults experience concerns about falling and restrict their activities. A Matter of Balance is an award-winning program designed to manage falls and increase activity levels.”

The program includes learning to view falls as controllable, setting goals to increase activity, mak-

ing changes to decrease fall risks at home and exercising to increase strength and balance, according to the flier. People encouraged to attend are those who are concerned about falling, have fallen before, are limiting activities because of falling concerns or want to improve strength, balance and flexibility.

For more information or to register, call 817-598-6168.

The Springtown Epigraph
Your trusted news source

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Springtown bats come alive against Lake Worth

BY DON MUNSCH
editor@azlenews.net

Springtown's softball team bounced back nicely at the plate Tuesday night at home after losing 2-1 to Decatur just a few days prior.

The big bats emerged for the Lady Pines in the first inning, as they scored 15 runs and went on win 21-1 over Lake Worth in a three-inning game because of the mercy run.

Lake Worth scored its lone

run in the first inning. In Springtown's first inning, Angelina Ray had five runs batted in, with three coming home on a triple. Eighteen batters came to the plate in the inning.

The Lady Pines moved to 1-2 in district and 7-7-3 over-

all on the year.

"I thought we put the ball in the play like I asked them to do, and we pitched the ball real well," head coach Scott Mann said.

Pitcher Noelle Fernandez was in the circle for Spring-

town.

Mann said Lake Worth was missing some players Tuesday, and Mann said expects some players to be back for the next matchup with the Lady Pines, with that game played March 16.

Noelle Fernandez throws a pitch during the first inning.

Photo by Don Munsch

Springtown benefits from timely hits, good pitching in district opener



Cristian Hernandez pitched well for Springtown, helping the team earn a district-opening victory over Lake Worth.

Photo by Don Munsch

BY DON MUNSCH
editor@azlenews.net

Springtown picked up a district opening victory over Lake Worth at home Tuesday, winning 3-0 on the

strength of some clutch hits and 5 2/3 innings of strong starting pitching from Cristian Hernandez.

"We had some missed opportunities, and we felt like we could really jump on

them a little bit, but district games are tough and with spring break getting them out of routine, sometimes for these guys it's hard to

SEE **BASEBALL**, PAGE 2C.



Alee Stiles and the Springtown Porcupines take on Lake Worth at 6 p.m. March 21 at Azle High School.

Photo by Jeff Prince

Springtown girls to battle for soccer playoff berth

BY JEFF PRINCE
jeff@azlenews.net

Springtown's soccer girls have faced a litany of challenges this season and grit week in and week out no matter the score.

Their effort has put them in position to make the play-

offs despite a 1-6-1 record.

"Our season is not over," said head coach Katherine Kummerfeld.

On March 8, the Lady Porcupines played the final game of the regular season, losing 1-0 to Lake Worth. The loss put Springtown in a tie for fourth place with Lake Worth. So, the Lady

Pines and Bullfrogs will play a tiebreaker at a neutral site to determine who makes the playoffs and who, as the saying goes, runs track.

Kummerfeld is excited about her soccer team's effort and promise this season. After losing seven

SEE **SOCCER**, PAGE 2C.



The 13 qualifiers for the state powerlifting meet from Springtown High School are, front row, Kylie Wear, Brianna Graham, Britney Tyree, Myra Castro, Caitlyn Coleman, Angela Pando, Sarah Self and Skyler Tyree. Top row are Macy Chavez, Savannah Gomez, Reaghan Fortner, Angela Chavez and Abigail Rodgers. Photo by Don Munsch

Springtown powerlifters seek state crown in Corpus Christi

BY DON MUNSCH
editor@azlenews.net

Missy Castro has high hopes for the Springtown High School's girls powerlifting team as the Lady Porcupines head to state this Friday in Corpus Christi.

But the coach knows her lifters will be facing a juggernaut, Port Lavaca Calhoun, this week. Calhoun is the defending state champ.

Springtown won the regional title in Gainesville. State qualifiers are Sarah Self, Myra Castro, Brianna Graham, Caitlyn Coleman, Britney Tyree, Skyler Tyree, Macy Chavez, Kylie Wear,

Angela Pando, Abigail Rodgers, Savannah Gomez, Angela Chavez and Reaghan Fortner.

Castro said her team competed well at regionals, where she wanted the girls to perform the opening lifts and "then just kind of go compete from there." There's a lot of pressure at regionals because all the lifters are trying to qualify at state.

"I thought that most of the girls landed where I thought that they would," she said. "We took 17 to regionals, and all 17 medaled."

She said the goal is to reach state.

"Our goal is to get as many girls to state as possible," she said. "Winning regionals is just a bonus, really, in my opinion."

At state, the girls just have to "keep doing what they're doing," Castro said.

"They have to really focus on getting low, getting our first lifts," she said. "We get our first lifts, then we get the pressure off and go compete. We're really underdogs going into state. Port Lavaca is who won state last year and we got second to them by six points."

Port Lavaca has won many times, while Springtown has one title, in 2019.

"They're going to be really, really good, and we're just going to have to stick to our game plan and keep getting our lifts," Castro said. "If we can get our third lifts, those are bonuses, really. ... You get three chances to get as much weight as possible, and if you get your third lifts, that's where you start picking up a lot of points."

She said while she considers her team the underdogs, she possesses some hope and said "crazy things happen at state" while stating that judges are "super hard"

Castro, Chavez, Rod-

gers, Pando and Graham discussed competing at state and how they got involved in powerlifting. Castro expects lifters to do better at state, and Angela Chavez said that while the girls performed well in regionals, she thinks she "could have done a little bit better, but I did the best that I could."

The lifters look forward to competing again at state.

"Regarding state, I'm excited to be able to go back," Pando said. "We did second last year and I'm excited to have the opportunity to win hopefully, and I think this team is probably one of the best teams we've had in

the program. So hopefully, we can pull out the win. We have a bunch of people that are in top rankings right now, so we're feeling like a pretty good team."

Pando, now a senior, placed second in state last year. She said powerlifting has inspired her to work out in the offseason of other sports she's involved in. She played volleyball and was in cheerleading.

"I like working out now, all the time," she said. "Definitely keeps me in shape, gives me something to work for. You always want to get better lifting weights as an athlete."

BASEBALL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1C.



get them going a little bit," Springtown head baseball coach Josh Ward said.

But the team came up with timely hits, and reliever Marco Barrera did an effective job of closing the game.

"Playing these guys is tough - all district games are tough," Ward said. "We know these guys pretty well, and they know us. We feel like we should be playing at the top part of the district and so we handled business at the top part of the district (tonight)."

Hernandez worked his way out of a fifth-inning jam in which the Bullfrogs loaded the bases with no outs. Perfecto Sanchez lined

out to first, and the runner, too far off the bag to retreat in time, was doubled off.

With two outs, Gage McNally hit a comebacker to the mound to end the inning.

Ward lauded Hernandez and said his team expects to "be in the ballgame and win the ballgame" whenever Hernandez takes the mound.

The Porcupines (7-4) scored their runs on an RBI single from Todd Smith in the second inning, a William Gleason RBI triple in the third and an RBI triple from Brayden Fox in the fourth.

Springtown is scheduled to play Lake Worth again this Friday.

Matt Lockard recovers after a hard slide into second base.

Photo by Don Munsch

SOCCER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1C.

starters to graduation last year, a scrappy bunch of underclassmen have filled the void.

"They really have great team chemistry and a very positive attitude overall throughout the season," she said. "They are also very coachable and a joy to coach. When I would ask them to change something - how they were playing or the intensity level - they would go back out there and do it."

The coach has high expectations for the future of the program based on what she has seen this season.

"The girls I have right now keep on improving, and I believe the girls to come play at the high school level next year will just add to the talent," she said.

The Lady Pines take on Lake Worth in a tiebreaker to determine who makes the playoffs at 6 p.m. March 21 at Azle High School.



Reagan Kelley, center, and her Lady Porcupine teammates have played with enthusiasm and determination this season. Photo by Jeff Prince



DEVOTIONAL PAGE



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817-221-5683

HERITAGE BAPTIST CHURCH
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817-564-3946

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817-237-8441

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817-523-0376

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817-444-7117

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817-444-3268

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817-521-4694

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817-221-2551

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817-909-5627

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032 For Sale

For Sale, Bugundy chair and Ottoman \$100, Whirlpool Upright Freezer \$200, Powerlift Recliner \$300. 817-454-3798.

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034 Garage & Estate Sales

Church Sale Friday-Saturday 8am-4pm 1356 S Reno Rd, Reno. Last weekend cancelled due to weather

Multi Family Garage Sale, Thursday-Saturday 8am-3pm Rain or shine 908 Jarvis Ln, Azle.

Estate Sale, 705 Phillips Dr, Azle. Friday- Sunday 7am-? Furniture, Glassware, Copper Bakeware, Copper Collectables, some tools.

Garage Sale - Moving Sale Thursday-Sunday 1012 High Crest Dr. Azle

Covered Yard Sale, lots of everything! 133 Lowrey Cir. Springtown. 17th-20th 8am-5pm.

035 Garden/Mowing

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COWBOY LAWN CARE. Residential, farm, gardens, landscaping, tree trimming. Free Estimates. 817-271-0450. Spring Specials.

039 Help Wanted

Looking for mature people to work with small animals. Must have reliable transportation. Call for more information 817-926-3300.

Auto Techs and Transmission Rebuilders and R&R Men, Top Pay for Top Skills. Call or come by 201 E. Hwy 199, Springtown, 682-615-7250. Rainwater Transmission & Auto Repair.

MAINSTREAM (group home for adults with developmental disabilities) is hiring part-time Direct Contact Staff for 17-hour weekday shifts (2nd & 3rd shifts) or 24-hour weekend shifts. Paid training, starting pay is \$7.75 hourly. Good potential for full-time employment. Call 817-270-2747, Monday-Friday, 9A-3P.

Springtown ISD is accepting applications for Bus Drivers and Monitors. Training available. Contact the Transportation Dept. 817-220-1418.

The City of Reno is hiring Water/Street Personal. Applicants must have valid DL, drug testing is mandatory. No calls, applicants must apply in person only at the City of Reno, 195 W. Reno Rd.

039 Help Wanted

Eagle Crest VILLA SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY NOW HIRING Activity/Marketing Director Full-time, Mon-Fri 8 AM - 5 PM. Some weekends required. Pay based on experience. Company benefits: PTO, Medical, Dental and Life Insurance. Must be a self-starter, fun, energetic and a team-player. Please apply in person 113 Denver Trl. Azle.

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088 Rent Unfurnished

FOR RENT

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068 Storage

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081 Business/Commercial

40x50 building For Rent, 3 miles west of Springtown. 817-713-7495.

3-2 Duplex for Rent in Springtown. \$1,200/mo. \$600 deposit, no pets. Available Feb 1st 817-980-3066.

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Azle News
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SELL IT IN THE CLASSIFIEDS!

Rent unfurnished continued on next page...

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Deadline:
 4:30 PM Monday

Classifieds

088 Rent Unfurnished

Cross Companies Residential Properties

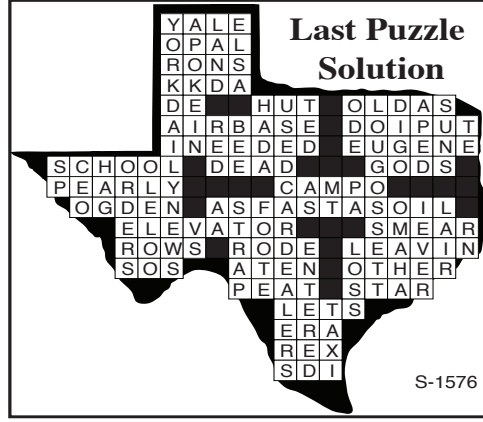
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 March 13-19, 2022

EVENT

South Texas Home and Garden Show, Saturday, March 19, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. 15th annual. Free Admission - Plants - Concessions - Kids Activities. Floresville Event Center, 600 Hwy 97 W, Floresville.

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Indian Arrowheads Wanted - Point Type: Clovis, Yuma, Firstview & Eden. Must be old, authentic & unbroken. Absolute TOP DOLLAR paid - up to 5 figures for one point. I am a very serious high-end collector. Call 979-218-3351.

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Karnes City Auction Special Sale - Sat., March 19 @ Noon, Regular Saturday Sale to follow. 200+ head: Hereford, Tiger Stripe, Santa Gertrudis, Brangus, Brahman, Young Bred Cows & Pairs, Heifers & Bulls. Call Josh 830-623-2855, 1918 Hwy 80, Karnes City, TX. Pictures: www.karnescityauction.com/special-sales

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Check out our Home Improvement Section to find a Remodeling Specialist in the classifieds.

ACROSS

- 1 TX George W. got a B.A. from here
- 5 gem found in Texas
- 6 TX Tarzan Ely, et al
- 7 a Dallas FM radio
- 8 the fleur-de-lis once flew over Texas
- 9 TX-based eatery: "Pizza _____"
- 12 TXism: "_____ dirt" (elderly)
- 17 what USAF has in Abilene (2 wds.)
- 20 TX Charley Pride's "Where _____ Her Memory?"
- 22 TX Willie Nelson's "Last Thing _____ the First Thing This Morning"
- 23 TX Roddenberry's full first name
- 24 TXism: "_____ marm" (teacher)
- 29 TX Dan Jenkins novel: "_____ solid perfect"
- 30 title of TX George Jones tribute album: "_____ Country"
- 31 TXism: "_____ gates" (heaven)
- 32 in Wharton County: El _____
- 36 UT has collection of poet _____ Nash
- 37 TXism: "_____ from a gusher" (quickly)
- 43 it gets you up in Reunion Tower
- 45 TXism for a bad defeat

DOWN

- 1 former newspaper for TX columnist Liz Smith: New _____
- 2 TXism: "beats _____ the eye with a sharp stick"
- 3 TXism: "_____ office business"
- 4 in Hidalgo County on highway 107
- 9 TX Trini Lopez's "If I _____ Hammer"
- 10 sellers of preowned autos (3 wds)
- 11 TX senator Cruz
- 47 braided hair: corn _____
- 48 TXism: "been _____ hard and put up wet"
- 50 TX Guy Clark's "She's Crazy for _____"
- 51 help needed signal
- 52 TXism: "wouldn't touch it with _____-foot pole"
- 53 TXism: "six of one, half a dozen of the _____"
- 54 _____ moss
- 55 Lone _____ State
- 56 TXism: "_____ dance!" (fight invitation)
- 58 Astro pitcher stat
- 59 TX film critic Reed
- 60 "Star Wars" defense proposal (abbr.)
- 12 TX Benson film: "_____ to Billie Joe"
- 13 actor in "Return to Lonesome Dove" (2 wds.)
- 14 Yo Lo _____ Creek
- 15 imitated
- 16 TXism: "working between _____" (night work)
- 18 _____ River
- 19 quilting or spelling
- 21 Cowboy Dalton Schultz pos. (abbr.)
- 24 George W. HUD sec., Preston (init.)
- 25 bidness "big dog"
- 26 nickname of country singer Merle
- 38 leather strip
- 39 TX writer Horton
- 40 in Morris County on U.S. 67
- 41 TXism: "beats anything _____ saw"
- 42 lion's den
- 44 flag-burning case: Texas _____ Johnson
- 46 nurse (abbr.)
- 49 Cowboy Bob Lilly _____ the NFL Hall of Fame in '80
- 50 Dak Prescott sack is a _____ of yards
- 57 airport transport

TEXAS CROSSWORD
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P-1576

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