



Better late than never



Phillip Mayberry left SHS in 1965 and returned to finish high school with the Springtown High School class of 2022. Photo by Jim Stevens

Man left school early to serve his country, returns decades later for diploma

BY DON MUNSCH
dpon@azlenews.net

Phillip Mayberry is not the usual high school graduate.

But he's emblematic of the adage that it's "better late than never." Mayberry graduated with the

Springtown High School class of 2022 May 27 at Porcupine Stadium. He is now in his 70s. The SHS class of 2022 had 237 graduates.

At graduation, Springtown ISD Superintendent Mike Kelley introduced Mayberry, who left SHS in 1965. In November of that year, he

joined the U.S. Navy.

"He had just turned 17 and he said goodbye to his fellow sophomores at Springtown High School," Kelley said. "He began the first of 24 years of service to our country. He spent most of his career stationed in the Mediter-

anean and along the East Coast and was awarded a National Defense Ribbon, three good conduct awards and markman's medals for qualifying as an expert for both a pistol and a rifle.

"Now in his 74th trip around the sun, Phillip Mayberry's advice is

pretty simple: Finish school, learn a trade or get a degree, but most importantly, have a plan," Kelley said. "When asked what he might like for us to know about him, Mr. Mayberry replied, 'Just that I

SEE GRADUATION, PAGE 4A.

Hurley taking Tarleton to new heights

BY RICK MAUCH
Special to the Azle News

The meaning of the surname Hurley is uncertain, according to Wikipedia.

However, folks at Tarleton State University will tell you it means progress, something President James L. Hurley specializes in. For example, while other colleges were struggling during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Tarleton was experiencing 7.5% growth.

"We've been extremely blessed," the humble Hurley said. "I would attribute it to heritage, culture and tradition with this institution. We have deep respect for those, from everyone who works here to each of our students."

Hurley's addition as the school's 16th president in August 2019 has brought nothing but excitement and optimism. Tarleton is the fastest growing campus in the Texas A&M system.

Tarleton is also the third-largest university in Texas in terms of the

SEE TARLETON, PAGE 4A.



Tarleton First Lady Kindall Hurley and President James Hurley stand in the Texans' state of the art locker room that is the best in NCAA Division I FBS football, according to Hurley. Photos by Russell Huffman/Hood County News

District school chief discusses school safety after tragedy in Uvalde

BY DON MUNSCH
dpon@azlenews.net

The school shooting in Uvalde last week shocked the state and nation, with 21 victims – including 19 children – killed in the horrific incident at an elementary

school. Two teachers also died in the attack.

School leaders are now determining their next move to make campuses safer.

Springtown ISD participates in

SEE SAFETY, PAGE 2A.

Neighbors air concerns with new subdivision

Developer says all concerns have been addressed

BY MADELYN EDWARDS
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Neighbors of the in-development Boardwalk Estates housing subdivision have addressed the Springtown City Council multiple times about issues they have with the development.

However, the developer has said he's done everything he can to address the neighbors' concerns.

Neighbors to Boardwalk Estates, Beth Podell and Jesse Blakely addressed council with their issues with the development at the May council meeting.

The council approved the preliminary plat for the development in October, and the subdivision is expected to have 92 single-family residential lots. The site is located on 24 acres east of Williams-Ward

SEE SUBDIVISION, PAGE 3A.



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Springtown residents remember fallen armed service members with reverence

BY MADELYN EDWARDS
madelyn@azlenews.net

As a recording of “God Bless America” played during Springtown’s Memorial Day service, the audience sounded off in a chorus of sniffles during an emotional part of the ceremony.

Rhonda McRae, whose son Cpl. James Heath McRae died during military service, spoke during the service about not wanting her son’s sacrifice to be forgotten. McRae participated in the city committee’s fundraising efforts to create the Veteran’s Memorial Park, where the Memorial Day ceremony was held Saturday.

“With this Memorial Park, we have made it our mission to make sure that these heroes, our heroes, will never be forgotten,” McRae said during the service.

Military families were honored with red carnations if their loved one was killed in action or with a white carnation for loved ones who are veterans or active-duty service members.

The keynote speaker, U.S. Army veteran Dennis Thompson, choked up himself while talking about the risks involved for his military family.

“I played a very small part in (the Vietnam War), but like my grandfather and my uncles, I am proud to say that I served my country,” Thompson said. “Our family is fortunate to not have lost

one of its members to war, but we all served knowing that losing our life for our country was a very (real) possibility.”

Thompson encouraged the audience to remember those who sacrificed their lives during military service as well as their families.

“My prayer today is that we never forget those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and that we always remember that freedom is not free,” he said. “Memorial Day is just one day out of the year but let us all pray for the members of our military and their families for the entire year.”

James Tidwell, who served in the Marine Corps in the 1960s, became emotional while talking about the ceremony afterward.

“You hear the stories, and you see these guys choking

up, and I’m choking up myself,” he said. “It hurts them, and it hurts me, and I’m sure there are other listeners out there who had the same emotion.”

Tidwell thanked the city of Springtown for hosting the service and having the Veteran’s Memorial Park, which he called “money well spent.”

Mayor Greg Hood closed the service by asking the audience to reflect on the sacrifices made by those in the military.

“For many years, I have had the privilege of attending our annual Memorial Day ceremony, and each year, I am reminded that each of us owes a great debt of the men and women of our armed forces (who) have sacrificed their lives for our nation and for our freedoms,” Hood said.



The Parker County Young Marines hold the flags while Springtown High School choir students sing the National Anthem at the city of Springtown’s Memorial Day ceremony on May 28 at Veteran’s Memorial Park. Photo by Madelyn Edwards



Dennis Thompson was the keynote speaker at the city of Springtown’s Memorial Day ceremony on May 28 at Veteran’s Memorial Park. He served in the U.S. Army in the Finance Office of the 25th Infantry Division in Vietnam. Photo by Madelyn Edwards

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All entries must be received by 5 PM on Monday, June 13

Winner of the drawing will be announced June 15 in the Azle News.

<p>Azle Dental Care Dr. Brooke Porter 912 Boyd Rd. 817-444-1763</p>	<p>Azle News 321 West Main Street 817-270-3340</p>
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Your presence at drawing is not required to win.

LEGAL PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice to all creditors and persons having claims against DOROTHY LONG MADEWELL or her estate. On November 14, 2011, Letters Testamentary of the Estate were issued to ROBERT MADEWELL in cause #22P110, Parker County COURT. Any person having claims against the estate should present said claim to the Independent Executor of the Estate at 121 Royal Oak Dr. Aledo, TX 76008. All such claims should be presented to said Independent Executor of the Estate in the time and manner prescribed by law.

Notice to all creditors and persons having claims against JAMES E. NORMAN or his estate. On November 14, 2011, Letters Testamentary of the Estate were issued to Holly Norman Sampson in cause# 22P138, PARKER COUNTY Court. Any person having claims against the estate should present said claim to the Executor of the Estate at 112 N. Melanie Dr., Azle, TX 76020. All such claims should be presented to said Independent Executor of the Estate in the time and manner prescribed by law.

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CAUSE NO.-22P086

In the Matter of the Estate of Delina Postoak, Deceased
TO ALL UNKNOWN OR MISSING HEIRS OF THE ESTATE OF DELIMA POSTOAK, DECEASED
Barbara Deneault in the above-numbered and entitled estate filed an Application for Determination of Heirship and Order of No Administration on 02/15/2022 In the Estate of Delima Postoak, Deceased, requesting that the Court determine who are the heirs and only heirs of Delima Postoak, Deceased, and their respective shares and interest in such estate, and Determining Heirship. The court may act on said application at any call of the docket on or after 10:00 o'clock A.M. on the first Monday next after the expiration of 10 days from the date of publication of this citation, at the Parker County Court, One Courthouse Square, Weatherford, TX 76086 in Parker County, Texas. All persons interested in this case are hereby cited to appear before said Honorable Court by filing a written contest or answer to said Application before the above stated time and date should you desire to do so. To ensure its consideration, you or your attorney must file any contest, objection, intervention, or response in writing with the County Clerk of Parker County, Texas on or before the above noted date and time. Given under my hand and the seal of said Court of Parker County, Texas at the office of the Parker County Clerk, on this 15th day of February, 2022.
LILA DEAKLE, County Clerk, Parker County Texas. By: Brittany Rowe, Deputy Clerk
Applicant's Attorney: Angela Harvey, 4758 Benbrook, TX 76116. (817)560-8100.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of DEBRA E. SPAIN, Deceased, were issued on April 27, 2022 in Cause No.22P018 pending in the County Court of Parker County, Texas, to: William Jeffrey Spain. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.
c/o: William Jeffrey Spain 1117 Colina Dr. Fort Worth, Texas 76108
DATED the 25th day of May, 2022
Michele Audet, Attorney for William Jeffrey Spain
State Bar No.: 00792338 918 S. Main St. Weatherford, Texas 76086
Telephone: (817) 341-0088 Facsimile: (817) 341-0090 E-mail: micheleaudet@sbcglobal.net

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

Notice is hereby given that at the May 23, 2022, City Council Meeting of the City of Reno, Texas, the following ordinance, which may be viewed online at <http://www.renotx.gov>, was passed, approved, and adopted:
ORDINANCE NO. 2022-06 - AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RENO, TEXAS REPLACING AND REPEALING CHAPTER 3 "ANIMAL CONTROL" OF THE RENO CODE OF ORDINANCES BY CREATING NEW REGULATIONS RELATED TO ANIMALS; PROVIDING A REPEALER PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY AND A CUMULATIVE CLAUSE; PROVIDING COMPLIANCE WITH THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT; PROVIDING FOR A PENALTY CLAUSE; PROVIDING FOR PUBLICATION; PROVIDING FOR ENGROSSMENT AND ENROLLMENT; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.
PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED the 23rd day of May, 2022.
/s/Sarn White, Mayor Attest: /s/Rebekka Roberts, Interim City Secretary, Reno, Texas

Glenn Rogers wins runoff against Mike Olcott

BY DON MUNSCHE
don@azlenews.net

Glenn Rogers will return to the state House in Austin after winning a District 60 Republican primary runoff against Mike Olcott.

In the runoff, held on May 24, Rogers received 9,261 votes, which was 52% of the ballots cast, while Olcott got 8,509 votes.

Rogers drew no challengers in the general election to be held this fall, so he takes the seat uncontested.

"I think it was an amazing victory," Rogers said. "We

had so much support from grassroots people from all over the district. (There was) a lot of money behind my opponent. He was funded by a political machine that put out a lot of misinformation about me and my views. It was a tough campaign but truth prevailed, and we're just happy to have the opportunity to serve another term."

Rogers said his campaign had people on the ground. They worked hard, and his campaign stayed on message "despite all the background noise." Olcott's campaign

did not respond to a News request for comment.

In his next term, Rogers said the big issues are the border and property taxes, and he said those topics have risen to the top among people in the district.

"I look forward to championing conservative policy solutions including using some of the surplus to buy down operation and maintenance costs for local ISDs," he said, referring to independent school districts.

He also wants to raise the state's contribution to financing public education and he

wants to see the Homestead Exemption increase.

Infrastructure is an important issue, too. Texas's population grows by more than 1,000 people a day, he said.

"Transportation and water are really important, particularly to Parker County," he said. "We just have to realize as the population increases and our supplies of potable water are limited, and roadways are needing repair and improvement that we're going to have to really invest in infrastructure, particularly in our rural and suburban areas where a lot of roadways

are outdated and need to be maintained."

Rogers was on the transportation committee last session and plans to be on that committee again. He said there's not a week that goes by that his team is not in direct communication with Texas Department of Transportation and local officials about some of the transportation/infrastructure needs of this district.

He said lawmakers have a goal to file a cost-of-living adjustment for retired educators.

"As a freshman legisla-

tor, one of my major accomplishments was getting the 13th check for retired educators," he said, adding that they need longer term protection with the rise in housing costs and taxes.

Rogers said he was excited to head back to Austin and plans to get out into the community, listen to constituents and be responsive to people's needs in Parker County and the rest of the district.

"I have a great staff, and they're excited. We're all excited about being able to serve," Rogers said.

SUBDIVISION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A.

Road and north of Walnut Creek Drive. The subdivision is expected to have 92 single family lots that will average 9,200 square feet.

Podell claimed that erosion and dirt are still coming onto her property from the subdivision, which with she shares about a half-mile property line. She said she had requested an abatement fence be put up, but only about eight feet of fence has been installed as opposed to a half-mile of abatement fence installed.

Podell brought photos to the council to show how the mud and dirt from the subdivision have affected her property, including a picture of dirt clouding her pond.

"I would like for them to be respectful of my property," she said after the meeting.

Blakely brought up concerns over runoff water drainage and mentioned is-

sues with the dust inside and outside of his home.

"There's been times that you can't even see across my property because the dust is so thick," Blakely said. He accused the developer of not watering the dirt at the development site.

Developer Don Sneed said work has been taking place offsite, and a water truck will be more present when work on the water and sewer lines begins.

"As soon as we start on the sewer lines and water lines, then we'll have the water truck going in behind them," Sneed said. "Of course, we've had three inches of rain. This time of year, there's not a reason in the world to water until we start breaking ground."

Springtown Administrative Services Director Christina Derr said Sneed has been using the water truck, though the truck is not out

there every day because it services other developments. Derr said the city has suggested to Sneed that he use the water truck more frequently as the development faces high winds.

Sneed also said that as of May 31, more silt fencing was installed, as was a temporary underground drain so that the water could go under the road.

"I've done everything that I know to do," Sneed said in response to addressing complaints. "If the code enforcer or the inspector or my engineer or the city engineer, if any of (those) guys want me to do anything else, I'm subject to that."

Derr said city officials investigate concerns from residents that are brought up. There's only so much the city can do as far as enforcement action, though the city can also suggest action, she said.

Boardwalk Estates has not been released to start construction because not all the city's questions, mostly related to future conditions, have been answered satisfactorily, Derr said. She also said the development is still involved in the city's drainage review process, which is to ensure that those downstream from the development won't be negatively impacted.

"I think that (Sneed) has made an effort to make sure that there's not a substantial impact to the property owners around him," Derr said when asked about what else needs to be done to address neighbor concerns. "I think depending on who you ask, naturally, what is that standard, what is that level, you're going to get two different answers."

During the May city council meeting, City Administrator David Miller said city

officials would continue to monitor the subdivision, and would send code enforcement and the city engineering consultant to visit the development.

"We take all citizens' complaints into account. We never discount a citizen's complaint," Miller said. "We stand ready to resolve any issues that may come up because honestly, it's within our ability to resolve."

Derr and Miller said that code enforcement has visited the property, and they are working on scheduling a time for the city engineer to go to the development.

Boardwalk Estates was also the subject of a compliance investigation conducted in December by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, which resulted in alleged violations that required corrective action. The recommended corrective action was to repair

and reinstall the silt fencing on the southern boundary, to post a site notice with the permit number in public view, submit the site map and submit the site inspection records for Nov. 1 through Dec. 21 or develop protocol for conducting site inspections. The compliance deadlines were in early March.

Sneed said the development is in good standing with TCEQ currently and that he has addressed the alleged violations, though his team is still working on delivering the correct site map.

Derr pointed out that a notice of violation is different from an enforcement action, the latter of which comes with a penalty. She said the Boardwalk Estates development does not have any pending enforcement actions as of May 31.

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TARLETON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A.

number of counties represented on campus, surpassed only by the University of Texas and the main A&M campus in College Station. Approximately 230 of the state's 254 counties have someone attending Tarleton.

"That's some elite company to be in," Hurley said. "It shows the diversity we have. We're extremely proud of that."

Hurley said the biggest changes he's seen at Tarleton are growth in budget, student population, faculty and staff, and facility growth and enhancement.

Hurley is always looking for ways to make the school better. It's a work habit he inherited from his parents, mom being a travel agent and dad an electrical lineman. He is the grandson of two coal miners.

"Hard work, that's all I know. I don't require a lot of sleep, I don't drink caffeine, I get my energy from my students' success," he said. "I came from a heritage of grinding and working hard. That's the Appalachian way."

HAZZARD-IOUS PATH

Hurley was born and raised in Chavies, Kentucky, about 20 minutes from Hazard, a name that many folks know from the classic TV show "The Dukes of Hazzard," which was set in Georgia.

"Not many people know where Chavies is, but most know where Hazard is if they're familiar with old TV shows," he said with a chuckle. "My home was 50 yards from the railroad tracks."

Hurley said he knew in fifth grade that he wanted to become an educator. It made his grandmother very happy.

"At that age, you don't think professor, but to me they're all teachers and investing their intellect in young people," he said. "I remember my fifth-grade teacher, Irene Strong, would always tell me 'You're gonna do more.'"

But it was his grandmother who had the greatest influence. A teacher's aide herself, she saw a lot of potential in her grandson.

"My grandma was always encouraging me to do more. She was big on you've got to have a college degree to make it in what she called the world," Hurley said.

Hurley follows a philoso-



Tarleton State University First Lady Kindall Hurley and President James Hurley flanked by student ambassadors Kahlen Cheatham, left, and Stephanie Council, right, play vital roles.

Photos by Russell Huffman/Hood County News

phy instilled in him by his family, which is God, country and everyone else besides yourself coming first. He and his wife Kindall are passing that same philosophy on to their children, sons Drew and Carter and daughters Blayklee and Brooklyn. Drew has been accepted to West Point.

A skilled basketball player (point guard), Hurley used that and his intelligence to earn a college scholarship. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Pikeville – located in eastern Kentucky – a master's degree from Indiana University and a doctorate in education from Morehead State University, also in Kentucky.

"Growing up in Eastern Kentucky, you didn't have (an emphasis on) football. Basketball and education were two good skills I possessed," he said.

LIVING TO EDUCATE

A lifetime educator, Hurley previously served as instructor, professor, dean, vice president and president of Tusculum University, with extensive experience at comprehensive higher education institutions. Under his leadership, Tusculum added its University Health Center; College of Health Sciences; College of Science, Technology and Math; and the Niswonger College of Optometry. The university is located in Tennessee.

The first big initiative Hurley set in place at Tarleton was the Distinguished High School Partners Program, with the first partner school being Granbury, followed by what is now more than 150 high schools in over 100 districts. The program guarantees admission to Tarleton for the top 25% of graduating seniors. Also,

each of those seniors will receive a scholarship to Tarleton, he said.

That led to a Distinguished College Partners Program, which includes an agreement with Weatherford College. This program guarantees that any hours a student receives at a partner school will transfer with them to Tarleton as long as it's in the academic pathway offered at Tarleton.

"You lose nine or 12 hours in a transfer, (then) that's a semester," Hurley said. "We have to make these transitions seamless."

Arguably the biggest change under Hurley is Tarleton moving from NCAA Division II to Division I as a member of the Western Athletic Conference. Hurley called it a "gamechanger."

"Not just for the school, but for the entire community we serve. The morale of the alumni is great. The value of their degree has been enhanced so much by the things we're doing," he said.

With the move came some challenges, however, Hurley said.

"The regulations and by-laws are drastically different between D-I and D-II. The academic preparation and standards are much higher. We've achieved in that area, but it was hard," he said. "We had to bring everything up to D-I standards"

For example, Hurley said the school had to bring in an additional 6,500 temporary bleachers to increase the capacity of the football stadium to 17,000. Now, renovation is being done to increase seating to 24,000.

Also, the university is presenting to the A&M Board of Regents in May for approval to build a new 7,500-seat basketball and event center. He said the school is hoping

to bring in events such as conventions and concerts.

Also, the school had to enhance its academic support staff for athletics, including doubling the number of tutors for student-athletes and hiring the first assistant athletic director for academic success. The school also renovated an on-campus facility, converting it into a student-athlete academic center.

The biggest reward of going D-I, according to Hurley?

"That's easy, the institutional profile and recognition behind Tarleton. Every time we're on CNN, ESPN, Fox, it raises our enhancement and awareness," he said.

Over the next five years, the Texans' football schedule includes games against TCU, Texas Tech, Baylor and their parent, the A&M Aggies.

Successes so far include the softball team defeating Syracuse, the baseball team taking Texas A&M to extra innings, and the men's basketball squad faring well against numerous D-I schools, including wins over Air Force (67-45) and Stephen F. Austin (77-71) with a narrow 64-55 loss to perennial power Gonzaga. Against the Zags, it was a one-point deficit at the half and only a two-point deficit with just over five minutes to play.

The Texans' schedule also included national champion Kansas.

Now, looking ahead, Hurley is pushing Tarleton 2030, the school's future-based strategic plan.

"By 2030, we want to be the top comprehensive regional university in the nation," he said. "We want to make our students, school, state and nation the best ever."

GRADUATION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A.

would have liked to finish high school."

Kelley said seniors would welcome Mayberry in their class, and then Kelley recognized Mayberry for being part of the class and that he would receive his high school diploma. Mayberry received a nice round of applause, as did other military veterans when Kelley asked that they be recognized.

"Students, when you plan your 25th class reunion, please keep in mind that you'll also have an opportunity to celebrate your new classmate's 99th birthday," Kelley said, drawing laughs. "Mr. Mayberry, we look forward to seeing you there."

At the ceremony, SHS Principal Melissa Hutchison credited high school teachers for their dedication to students.

"In addition to teaching them, for five days a week they got to know them, joked with them, consoled them, praised them, questioned, celebrated, laughed with, worried about, watched over, protected and loved them," she said. "And why? Because it's more than just teaching the content, it's about teaching the whole student, and that's what our educators do."

She then asked SHS and SISD teachers and staff to stand so they could be recognized for the effect they had on the 2022 seniors. She also recognized parents, who were applauded for their efforts.

Hutchison also praised the graduates for all their hard work in activities, both school and community activities, but also for the respect they generate from people outside the community. She said she often receives contact from someone from another school, a parent of a student from another team, or another school's teacher or administrator who praise SHS students. They contact Hutchison because of how the students represented themselves, not only for their family or school, but the community.

She said she was proud

of the character that students represent.

"How you treat people, how you make them feel - that's what people remember," she said. "That's why people want to stop what they're doing and make a call or send an email bragging on you. I know you are an incredible force for good that we're about to send into this world. Goodness is about character, integrity, honesty, kindness, generosity and moral courage. And in this day and age, your education paired with your super power of character is what we need to change the world. Class of 2022, please know that we are so proud of you. We love you and we look forward to seeing the impact you make on this world. Good luck and congratulations."

In her salutorian address, Sarah Kinnard said without ever noticing, seniors have had an effect on one another's lives.

"For better or worse, we're all bound together by this very moment," she said. "Some of us are dreading the realities of this world beyond the walls."

But others, she said, have been "running toward their futures with open arms." She said she thought she spoke for all seniors when she said they are ready to go.

"We're ready to live for ourselves and make our own path, instead of our fate being bound to each report card, each contest, or the ringing of the bell," she said.

She said the past few years have been hard, but seniors are still here and survived.

"And if we keep moving forward one step at a time, we can become whatever we want to be," she said.

She said she puts her faith in her classmates to carve a path for themselves in the world and make a difference.

Valedictorian Jacob Phillips kept his remarks brief, saying, among a few comments, that he appreciated the role his parents played in his life and "for always being there for me."

Amy Kaplan, Agent
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Ahead of the Memorial Day holiday, Randall Brown guessed that he had posted 160-170 flags on his fence. Putting up the flags along the quarter mile of fencing takes a full day, he said.

Springtown veteran decorates home with American flags to honor Memorial Day

BY MADELYN EDWARDS
madelyn@azlenews.net

Upon turning westbound onto Holbrook Road from Gilliland Road around Memorial Day, drivers could see a line of handheld American flags zip-tied to Randall Brown's fence.

Brown puts up the flags each year in honor of Memorial Day. He does the same thing for the Fourth of July and Veterans Day.

Brown adds flags each year, and ahead of the Memorial Day holiday, he guessed that he had posted 160-170 flags. Putting up the flags along the quarter mile of fencing takes a full day,

he said. He started hanging the flags about four or five years ago.

"It's just something I do, being a veteran myself," Brown said. He served in the Army in the 1970s.

The flags are Brown's way of "paying (my) respects to the ones that have already paid the price," he said.

Memorial Day is a holiday to remember the people who have died while serving in the U.S. military.

"There's so many that gave so much," Brown said.

Randall Brown poses for a picture with the flags he hung up on his fence in honor of Memorial Day. Photos by Madelyn Edwards



SAFETY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A.

a program that allows some staffers to carry firearms to protect their students and others on campus. These employees serve as "Guardians" in Springtown ISD, said Superintendent Mike Kelley.

In an email response to questions, Kelley explained that in 2018, Springtown ISD was one of several districts to adopt a Guardian program in Parker County.

"We were not the first district to do so, and there were many members of our community who encouraged us to explore options provided through (the Texas Government Code)," he said.

The shooting at a high school in Parkland, Florida, occurred in February 2018 and prompted some school districts to begin arming staffers on campuses.

Kelley said the district conducted a survey of the community and district staff and "found that a majority were in favor of the idea that at least some of our employees could be authorized to possess firearms on campus. I think it's important to acknowledge that not everyone supported the program. The Board of Trustees spent considerable time debating whether a Guardian Program might be a better fit than a School Marshal Plan." Those two plans are permitted under Texas law.

"Our program has slowly grown since inception; over the last week, several teachers have asked to be considered for inclusion," Kelley said. "Confidentiality regarding the program and our Guardians is criti-

cally important."

Guardians' identities are not shared publicly, he said.

"I'm not aware of any district that releases the names of the individuals who might be armed; doing so could put a target squarely on them," he said. "I can share that candidates must complete a psychological assessment before beginning coursework and live fire training/evaluations. The training is provided by a School Safety Certified Instructor who is also certified as an Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training Instructor."

Kelley said several weeks ago, district leaders decided to add a new "Coordinator of Counseling and Behavior Health Services" position as well as two "Behavior Interventionist" positions.

"The decision to fund these positions was made before the tragedy in Uvalde, but I think it would be accurate to say that we are now even more certain the decision is justified," he said. "Our administrative team and counselors, along with our school psychologist, have participated in 'threat assessment' trainings for several years. A second School Resource Officer was added to the payroll fairly recently (another decision easily justified)."

The district has a Stay-ALERT School Safety Program that encourages students to report threats, and more information can be found here: <https://www.springtownisd.net/Page/6134>.

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Obituaries

Bobby Mitchell

1931- 2022

Bobby Mitchell, 90, went to be with our Lord Tuesday, May 24, 2022.

Funeral was held at 10 a.m. Saturday, May 28, 2022 at Hawkins Funeral Home Chapel in Decatur with burial at Oaklawn Cemetery. Family received friends 6-8 p.m. Friday at the funeral home.

Kevin Moore officiated. Pallbearers include Brandon Taylor, Brent Plumlee, Justin Mitchell, Justin Reynolds, Dani Peterson, Chip Eason and Keylan Watts. Honorary Pallbearer Eric Watts.

Bobby was born July 14, 1931 to J.C. and Ava (Givens) Mitchell in Ft. Worth, Texas. He was united in marriage December 30, 1954 to Claudine Ethridge in Haltom City, Texas. Bobby was a family man. His wife, Claudine, of 65 years, his kids and grandkids always came first in his life before his own needs.

Bobby proudly served our country in the United States Air Force and was a Mason. He worked for National Life and Accident Insurance Company for the best part of his career. As a top salesman, he was awarded many trips for Claudine and himself to places such as London, Greece, Austria, Mexico and numerous others. In retirement he discovered Las Vegas and Laughlin, Nevada which became his favorite destination.

As for hobbies, Bobby was an excellent carpenter and loved to build. He also



enjoyed buying land, making improvements and selling to move on to the next land venture. He even toyed with cattle for a few years. Simply said he was doer.

With Bobby's large family and many friends, you will find anyone you ask will say he was there for them when they needed it. We love and will sorely miss the core of our family.

He was preceded in death by his parents, J.C. and Ava Mitchell; his wife, of over 65 years, Claudine Mitchell; his brother, W.E. and wife Virginia; his sister, Elizabeth Back and husband Jay, and son-in-law, Wes Burchfield.

Those left behind to cherish his memory are his son, Terry Mitchell and wife Renee; his daughters, Teresa Thomas and husband Damon, Wendy Bennett, and Gwen Burchfield; 13 grandchildren; 27 great-grandchildren; numerous nieces, nephews, and a host of friends.

The Springtown Epigraph
June 2, 2022 Edition

Amber Marie Linehan-Lemke

1982- 2022

Amber Marie Linehan-Lemke, 40, was a wandering spirit and she left this earth a free spirit May 19, 2022.

Funeral services will be held on Saturday, June 4 at 11 a.m. at 10400 Jacksboro Hwy. Fort Worth, Texas 76135 with a Celebration of Life following at El Paseo 100 W. Main St., Azle, Texas 76020 at 1 p.m.

Amber was born to parents Curtis and Carol Linehan May 19, 1982.

She is survived by her husband Edward Lemke, her parents Curtis and Carol Linehan, daughters Brittany and Skye, three grandchildren, brother Joshua Linehan (Lara) nephew Joshua



Linehan, and many other relatives and friends.

Friends and family give a special thank you to the Azle and Springtown police departments.

The Springtown Epigraph
June 2, 2022 Edition

Norma Bereuter

1943- 2022

Norma Christine (Stambaugh) Bereuter, 78, passed away May 5, 2022 in Decatur.

A Homegoing/Celebration of Life to be held at the families residence on Saturday, June 4, 2022 at 10 a.m. Please contact family for more information.

In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the church. Any donations received will go towards planting trees in Norma's honor, and we will also help local families and single mothers in need.

She was born Sept. 13, 1943 in Browning, Illinois to Merlin and Louisa (Stevens) Stambaugh who both preceded her in death.

Norma was a beloved mother. She was a lifetime horse trainer, cowgirl and



award winning equestrian.

Norma is survived by her son, Dallas Bereuter, and his wife Sandra; sister, Alice Dolezal, and her husband, Ralph; brother, Darrell Stambaugh and many extended family and friends. She will be dearly missed.

The Springtown Epigraph
June 2, 2022 Edition

Jessica Walsh

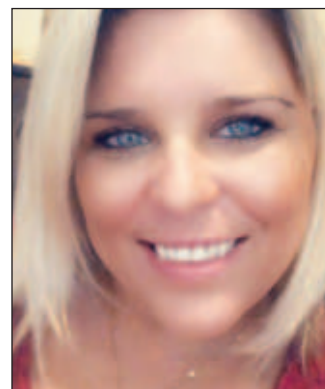
1982- 2022

Jessica JoAnne Markgraf Walsh born Nov. 9, 1982, went to be with the Lord May 23, 2022.

Jessica "JJ" touched the lives of so many people.

She was a loving wife, daughter, sister, mom, aunt and friend.

She is survived by parents, Mike and Shari Markgraf; husband, Jim Walsh and children Cayden and Rylee Walsh; sisters, Brandy Chazarretta and husband Pete, and their children, Jessie Garcia and Jacob Chazarretta; Candice Bohannon husband Tim and their children Caleb Bohannon and Audrey Bohannon, Shawn Markgraf and wife Denise, their children Ashley Bailey,



Riley Markgraf and Austin Marley; uncle Danny Markgraf and his son, Jesse Markgraf.

She will be dearly missed by many friends and family. Rest in peace.

The Springtown Epigraph
June 2, 2022 Edition

Katie Williams

1949- 2022

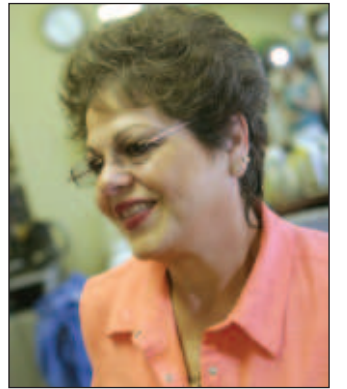
Katie Marie "Kay" Williams, 72, passed away Friday May 27, 2022 in Weatherford.

Graveside Service: 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, June 1, 2022 at Veal Station Cemetery.

Visitation: 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at White's Funeral Home, Springtown

Kay was born Sept. 6, 1949 in Paducah, Texas; daughter of Sylvester and Katie Bell (Ross) White. She married the love of her life, Freddy Arnold Williams on June 11, 1973, and they would go on to spend nearly 50 years together raising their family.

Kay was a homemaker, caregiver, cosmetologist, and an avid quilter. She spent many Tuesdays in the fellowship hall of First Methodist Church of Springtown with other quilters of the community.



She is preceded in death by her parents; son, Travis Williams; brothers, Hank, Edward, and Jerry White; and sisters, Jean Vanderbeek and Melba Jo White; seven nieces; and five nephews.

Survivors include her loving husband, Fred Williams; daughter, Katie Catron (Eric); grandchildren Sarah and Travis; and a host of other extended family and friends.

The Springtown Epigraph
June 2, 2022 Edition

David Baxter

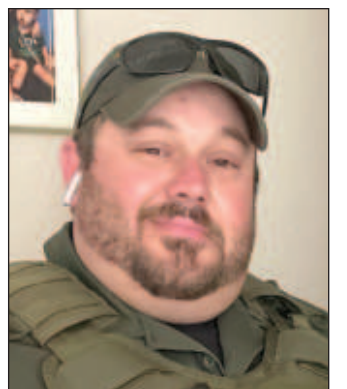
1987- 2022

David Andrew Baxter, age 34, passed away Sunday, May 22, 2022 in Parker County, Texas.

David served as a Jack County Sheriff's Deputy and was a Class of 2006 Springtown High School Graduate.

Funeral Services will be held at 10 a.m., Thursday, June 2, 2022 at Walnut Creek Baptist Church in Azle, Texas. Interment will follow the service at Jaybird Cemetery.

Visitation will be held at Biggers Funeral Home, 6 – 8 p.m., Wednesday, June 1, 2022.



More Information online at biggersfh.com.

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Springtown Chamber of Commerce luncheon



The Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce held a ribbon cutting for Strong Construction & Hail Claims at last week's luncheon at Hilltop Family Church. Strong Construction & Hail Claims is led by project manager Nelson Bran. For more information, contact brannelson@yahoo.com.



John Hammond spoke at the May 26 Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon at Hilltop Family Church. Hammond promoted the Christian drama series "Pax Regnum" and invited luncheon attendees to the show's pre-launch event at 7:30 p.m. on June 10 at the Covered Bridge Venue in Springtown. For more information, call 682-258-3445.



Jessica Castro was one of the guest speakers at the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon on May 26 at Hilltop Family Church. Castro discussed the organization she founded with her husband, We ARE our brothers keeper, to raise awareness about drug overdoses. More information about We ARE our brothers keeper is available on Facebook.

Photos by Madelyn Edwards

Spotlight on BUSINESS

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Owner Bill Nash, seen here with Azle Area Chamber Ambassador David Shaffer, is a master instructor who has been diving all around the world. He discovered his passion for diving in 1992 while serving in the U.S. Navy and has been training divers for 10 years.

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"Scuba diving to me is a social sport," said Nash.

"I have made many amazing friends from all around the globe whilst scuba diving. Divers are a friendly and pretty laid-back bunch of people. We're united by a love of the ocean."

Future divers can become PADI certified in open water diving and many other certifications. Training dives are done at a private pool in Springtown plus the pool at Texas Wesleyan University in Fort Worth.

Open water training is done in three Texas lakes: Wheeler Branch in Glen Rose, The Scuba Ranch in Terrell and Twin Vee Key in Weatherford.

Ascubadiving is veteran owned and operated by Nash, who served in the Navy from 1990-1997 as a special operation corpsman.

Ascubadiving is located at 142 Park Place in Azle, near Palio's Pizza Café and C.J.'s Café. They are open Monday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sunday noon to 4 p.m.

Call 817-406-4080 for information about dive training and equipment and ask about a free introduction to scuba diving!

"Diving takes you to some of the most fascinating and interesting places on earth," said Nash.

"The ocean covers 71% of the earth's surface and 95% still remains unexplored ... There's a lot still to be discovered!"

JIM STEVENS PHOTOGRAPHY

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For those who gave it all

Memories. You never know when an experience—a sound, a smell, an image—is going to remind you of something from long ago.

And sometimes the facts and events we “remember” are not things we actually experienced, but stories that we remember being told.

I have an old manual typewriter that I bought at a thrift store a few years back. I thought it would make a cool display with some of my books stacked around it. (Boy, am I glad I didn’t actually have to use a typewriter to write those books!)

My grandkids think it is a really cool toy. They almost always ask me to take it off the shelf when they’re at our house so they can type on it.



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.

They have no real “typewriter” memories. I, on the other hand, actually used one very similar to that when I was a kid. When I graduated from high school, my parents bought me an electric typewriter to take to college. Every paper I turned in for four years of college and one semester of seminary was written on that typewriter.

Then, I bought my first computer with a “word processing” program and the world began to change.

My Granny Lewis could type over 120 words per minute on a manual typewriter. She worked as

a secretary for an insurance agency until she was in her 70s. She retired when she started making typing mistakes on the electric typewriter because the sensitivity of the keyboard was so much different than the manual typewriter.

I don’t have any real memories of Granny’s typing (other than a few typed notes she sent me). My “memories” are of the stories I was told of her typing prowess.

Memorial Day.

The United States has three holidays related to recognizing military service. Armed Forces Day

recognizes those who currently wear the uniform of the various military branches. Veterans Day recognizes those who hung up the uniform and no longer actively serve. Memorial Day recognizes those who never took off the uniform because they died in service.

I personally have no real memory of someone who died in service of our country, but I “remember” all those through the history of our nation who gave their last drop of blood and their last breath to make possible many of the freedoms I far too often take for granted.

But there are a few principles I must never forget.

These who I “remember” today did not give it all so I can have things my way, have the America that I want, have my tribe as the dominant force, or require anyone

else to conform to my worldview.

Their sacrifice actually gives people with whom I vehemently disagree the same inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Their sacrifice actually gives people the right to point out the ways that we have failed to implement the ideals of liberty and justice for all without having their love and respect for America questioned.

I want to be a better listener — especially to those whose voices have been marginalized, silenced and ignored.

I owe it because of those who died to make it possible. I owe it because I want future generations to remember that my generation handled our time well.

Be amazing today, my friend.

What will those tattoos look like in 30 years?

I am all for individual expression. It is the American way. My dad and I had crew cuts and it was a little unsettling back in the 60s when boys started to grow their hair long. It was different and not something I was accustomed to. With time my acceptance grew. I never wanted a ponytail for myself, but if someone else wanted to do so, more power to them. I accepted the other guy’s right to express himself and realized character and appearance are not necessarily the same thing.

Over the course of my life, I have seen lots of fads come and go, like polyester leisure suits, platform shoes, velour track suits, and the forgettable parachute and cargo pants. Some of these trendy fashions are looked back on with disdain and disbelief — but trust me, in their heyday they were popular and quite the rage. I had no interest in participating in most of them, but I continued my mindset of “to each their own.” Sometimes



FROM MY FRONT PORCH

By Sam Houston

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

I chuckled or laughed at the “latest” but I never threw folks under the bus for their choices.

I am here to confess I am having a hard time with tattoos. When I was not more than 4 or 5 years old, I vividly remember my mother telling me to never join the Navy because they would make me get a tattoo. Mothers have a lot of power over their young sons, and she sure made an impression on me. I did not really conceive what a tattoo was except Popeye had one on each of his forearms. Once Mom made her statement, I never again thought tattoos were cool.

Almost no one had tattoos when I was growing up except for a few military guys who came back from

Vietnam or bikers. One rarely saw a woman with a tattoo and if we had, she would have been held up to scorn and public ridicule. There was an attitude that getting a tattoo was just not something reasonable and intelligent people did, though there was an exception if you were in the military. I remember a teacher of mine once saying, “I prefer my artwork on the wall,” and I guess I felt the same way. Tattoos were far from mainstream and general acceptance non-existent.

Today, everyone from 70-year-old grannies to teenagers go to tattoo parlors and get themselves adorned with artwork. When the craze initially started, many who

got a tattoo did so on a location of their body that would be out of sight to the public at large. All of that has changed. Now I see young people with tattoos adorning their legs, arms, neck, and every other body part. Girls or guys, it doesn’t seem to matter because most young people are tattooed up. There are an increasing number of older adults who are joining in.

I was in a local restaurant recently when a woman in her mid-50s, entered. She was wearing shorts and a summer top and clearly had a large tattoo on her thigh and a “sleeve” on one arm. It was colorful and it would be fair to say the artistry was excellent, but it was not anything I would want to have done. I kept saying to myself, what is her artwork going to look like when she is 70? How do you explain tattoos to your grandchildren when the pendulum swings back around, and no one wears a tattoo? What about the young woman who gets tattooed and then

has three or four children or puts on 50 pounds? Is the artwork still going to look “hot” or “exciting”? How about a guy like me who goes from a 32-inch waist to a 42 inch as they age? Is that tattoo going to still shine?

Please understand, if you want to go through the pain and expense of having a tattoo, I will stand aside and let you walk to the front of the line. I accept that you believe they look beautiful and create an image you want to project to the world. I have friends, coworkers and family members who have tattoos. I love them as they are. For me, I will stick with the image I have. It is not much, but it is mine. Maybe I will put some money in a company that does tattoo removal. I have a feeling there is going to be a big demand someday.

Thought for the day: A fella ran a café called Tattoos. The man didn’t have any tattoos, but then again, I never saw his wife.

Until next time.

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Summerfest to take place June 4 on the square

BY MADELYN EDWARDS
madelyn@azlenews.net

To ring in the start of summer, the third annual Summerfest will return to the Springtown Square this weekend.

The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, and the festivities include a car show, live music, face painting, disc golf and food and retail vendors. The event is organized by Sweedee Sweets and Pojo Coffee Shoppe as well as AV Ranch Fine Western Wear and sponsored by the city of Springtown, said Curry Herrin, founder and owner of Pojo Coffee Shoppe.

"The first annual Summerfest event was held in June 2019 to help celebrate and spread awareness to all the businesses on the Springtown Square," Herrin said. "As Summerfest has grown each year, its focus remains not only on the Springtown Square, but the surrounding businesses and communities, as well."

Herrin said at least 50 vendors are expected to participate in this year's Summerfest and offer food, bou-



Summerfest is scheduled take place from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, June 4 on the Springtown Square. The festivities include a car show, live music, face painting, disc golf and food and retail vendors.

Courtesy photo

tiques and jewelry, plus arts and crafts.

The car show is expected to have at least 100 participants – up from more than 70 last year. It will include a variety of vehicles, "ranging from classic cars and trucks to modern sports cars," Herrin said. Car show participants have the chance to win one of the 30 class awards as well as the Best Car award, Best Truck award, Springtown Choice Award and Sweedee's Choice Award.

The musical acts expected to perform at Summerfest include Justin Contreras, Sam Randles, Deric Merrill and

the Troy Allen Band, Herrin said.

"Summerfest is always a friendly-family event for people of all ages," Herrin said. "With a car show, live music, lots of food, treats, and shopping, there's something for everyone. There will also be cooling stations and areas with shade. Summerfest is the perfect time for families to come out and support the Springtown Square."

For more information about Summerfest, visit its Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/summerfestevents>.

Center of Hope offers classes for anxiety

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The Center of Hope will host a free five-week class to aid people dealing with anxiety.

The CALM class will be held from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays from June 6 through July 6. The Springtown Center of Hope office is located inside Agnes Baptist Church at 350 Agnes North.

The class follows the curriculum of Max Lucado's "Anxious for Nothing" book and study guide, which is a Christian approach to dealing with anxiety. The class includes vid-

eos, group discussion and life application to help participants gain coping skills and strategies for handling life's pressures.

"We are much more than a food pantry," Springtown Center of Hope coordinator Misti Johnson said in a news release. "I hope people will come to see all the things we provide and let us walk with them through hard times."

For more information or to reserve a spot, call Center of Hope in Springtown at 817-771-0789. Seats are limited.

Center of Hope is a Christ-centered ministry

that aims to equip and empower people to live successful, joy-filled lives, according to the news release. The basic assistance program provides services such as meals and groceries; financial assistance for utilities, rent, dental and medical needs; counseling; and life coach sessions. Its Education and Career development program offers long-term solutions to help individuals reach self-sufficiency and achievement of career and life goals. For more information, visit centerofhopetx.com.

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Kid Scoop

THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE



© 2022 by Vicki Whiting, Editor Jeff Schinkel, Graphics Vol. 38, No. 27

Stars of the Sea

The ocean is full of amazing creatures, and one that is unique is the sea star or starfish. It is a sea creature, but it lives close to the shore. Sometimes they are washed up on the beach or stranded in a tide pool, giving people a chance to see this mysterious creature up close.

Seeing Stars

What is a sea star and what is it not? A starfish is not a fish at all. Many marine biologists want to change its name to a **sea star**, because most of them look like stars. Sea stars are **echinoderms** (eh-keen-oh-durmz)—animals that lack a back bone.

Sea Star's Rays

Sea stars have arms but no legs. Their arms are called **rays**. Some sea stars have five rays, some have six, ten or twenty.

Glow Time!

Sea stars have no eyes, no ears, no nose. They do have a _____ on their underside. To eat, a sea star _____ on top of, and slowly wraps its _____ around its food.

One thing sea stars like to eat is clams. Once one has wrapped its rays around a clam _____, its hundreds of tentacles _____ to the shell and hang onto it as it pulls and pulls until the shell opens. As soon as it opens just a little, the sea star _____ its stomach out of its body and into the shell and _____ the clam. This can take an hour or two.

No Bones About It

Sea stars don't have skeletons. Their spiny, tough skin gives them their shape and protects them.

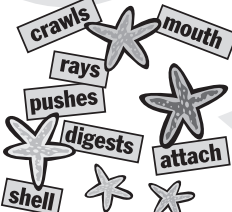
Neat Feet

Sea stars have feet but no toes. If you look on the bottom of a sea star's ray, you will see rows of soft tentacles called **tube feet**. The sea star slowly creeps along on these feet.

Sea Star Search

How many sea stars can you find on this page in 30 seconds? Now have a friend try. Who found the most?

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.



14 + 6 + 7	37 + 17 - 6	5 + 6 + 7	42 - 26
9 + 16 + 7	11 + 5 + 9	24 - 12	29 - 7

Star Match

Do the math to match each sea star to its name.

- 25 = chocolate chip star
- 22 = sun star
- 18 = candy cane star
- 18 = basket star
- 27 = cushion star
- 12 = fat star
- 32 = comb sea star
- 16 = sunflower sea star

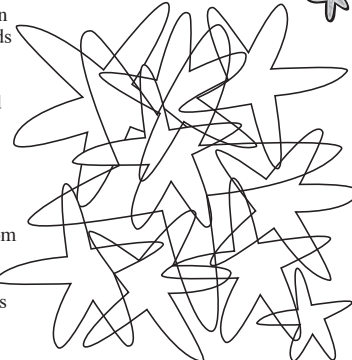
Standards Link: Life Science: Students know examples of diverse life forms in different environments; physical structure or behavior may improve an organism's chance for survival.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

A Galaxy of Sea Stars

There are more than 3,600 different kinds of sea stars. They come in lots of different colors and shapes. Some sea stars are colored to match the surfaces on which they live. This camouflage helps them hide from predators.

How many sea stars are hidden here?



Standards Link: Life Science: Animals have structures that serve different functions.

Kid Scoop Together: Proof It!

Are you an eagle-eyed reader? Read the story below and circle the nine errors you find. Then rewrite the story correctly.

Amazing Sea Stars

Sea stars do something nearly no other animal. Can do. If a sea star loses a ray, it will grow another ray. Not only that—the ray that broke off can become an entirely new sea star. In fact, if a sea star is broken into pieces, each piece can become a whole new sea star.

While sea stars love eating clams, they will also eat a dead fish or dead crab, if it is lucky enough to crawl over one.

Double Double Word Search

- SEA
- STARS
- SKELETONS
- TENTACLES
- CREATURE
- PREDATORS
- CRAWLS
- RAYS
- SHORE
- TUBE
- CREEPS
- TIDE
- POOL
- ARM

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

E	T	C	S	H	O	R	E	S	P
H	I	E	S	Y	A	R	N	N	R
S	S	E	N	E	U	O	R	M	E
L	S	T	D	T	T	U	B	E	D
W	P	I	A	E	A	S	E	A	A
A	T	E	L	R	T	C	A	S	T
R	R	E	A	R	S	F	L	H	O
C	K	C	R	E	E	P	S	E	R
S	A	R	M	I	P	O	O	L	S

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

FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

Little-Known Facts

Look through today's newspaper and find three to five facts that you think not too many people know. Create a question for each fact. See how many people know these facts.

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Ask questions to demonstrate comprehension.

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SHS grads celebrate by throwing their caps into the air.

Photo by Jim Stevens



Maci Patterson, Erikson Perdomo and Jose Perez-Gomez check their phones in the hour before the graduation ceremony began.

Photo by Don Munsch



Adrianna Myers and Caleena Malpass share a moment before the graduation ceremony begins.

Photo by Don Munsch



Springtown High School valedictorian Jacob Phillips speaks to his classmates.

Photo by Jim Stevens



SISD Superintendent Mike Kelley turns the tassel for graduate Katharine Johnson.

Photo by Don Munsch



Railey Druxman laughs shortly before the graduation ceremony began at Porcupine Stadium.

Photo by Don Munsch



Springtown High School salutatorian Sarah Kinnard delivers words to her classmates.

Photo by Jim Stevens

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Railey Druxman leaves volleyball in good hands - including those of siblings



The Porcupines will miss their captain's big plays at the net.

BY JEFF PRINCE
jeff@azlenews.net

A kill shot in volleyball is like hitting a double in baseball or tossing a 40-yard pass in football.

A big play.

Crowds roar when someone smashes a volleyball so hard across a net that other players can't return it and end up flailing, falling, skidding and squeaking across the hardwood court.

Springtown's all-time leader in kill shots is Railey Druxman, with the season record (500) and all-time record (1,583).

On May 24, the graduating senior announced that she

will leave her hometown in July to play volleyball while attending Park University in Gilbert, Arizona. Teammates, friends and family gathered at the Pojo Room inside the high school to eat cookies and wish her well.

The crowd grew quiet when head coach Leighann Strickland began speaking to honor the departing volleyball captain.

"I could go on and on and on about Railey," she said.

But she couldn't. Emotions rushed over Strickland, and her words froze for long seconds while she covered her mouth with her hand.

Druxman is a hometown girl, star athlete, commu-

nity volunteer and mentor to many area youngsters. A long list of people support and care about her.

"She's grown up so much," the coach said.

As a freshman, Druxman made the varsity team and was plucky and unafraid to speak her mind. By her sophomore season, she'd been elected team captain by the other players, a rare feat for a 10th grader.

"Look at her now," the coach said. "She walks into Brookshire's, and I guarantee there are 10 kids in there that know her and just run up to her and hug her

SEE DRUXMAN, PAGE 2B.



Four sisters with mad skills - from left, Kylie Druxman, Railey Druxman, Kelbie Druxman and Libby Tedder - make volleyball exciting in Springtown.

Photos by Jeff Prince

AzTex Arena almost ready for its close-up



A vintage photo shows a bull rider competing at AZTEX Arena.

Courtesy photo

BY JEFF PRINCE
jeff@azlenews.net

The near-forgotten rodeo arena has stood for more than 50 years, but passersby might not have noticed it behind the green cloak.

Until recently, a jungle had overtaken AzTex Arena, located on Park Street in Azle near the wastewater plant.

"We had trees and vines grown up," said Jeremy Sheriff, warehouse foreman at Azle ISD. "You couldn't even hardly see the pens, the announcer's stand or the

arena itself."

The arena, built in the 1960s, had fallen victim to nature, gravity and neglect.

A few months ago, Sheriff and others began leading an effort to clean up the grounds, refurbish the arena and its amenities and establish a permanent home for the high school rodeo team and Future Farmers of America members.

The property includes an arena about the size of a football field, pens for



Jeremy Sheriff and volunteers have been cleaning up debris from the arena grounds.

Photo by Jeff Prince

SEE AZTEX, PAGE 2B.

Landree Merriman to play volleyball at Bethel College



Landree Merriman

Photo by Jeff Prince

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Springtown senior Landree Merriman has announced her intention to study academics and play volleyball at Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas. Last year, the Bethel Threshers went 23-7 on the volleyball court. While playing for the Porcupines, Merriman was among the leader in blocks. The Porcupines

were 25-16 this season and 9-3 in district competition. It was the first time in several years that the Lady Pines had reached 25 victories.

Strickland characterized Merriman as an "incredible joy" to coach over the years.

"She has worked hard to be where she is and continues to put the work in

to keep being successful on the court," Strickland said. "Landree is passionate about what she does. She brings a spunkiness to everything she is involved in, and we just love her. Landree has grown so much through the years and has been such an influential leader to many. She is off to great things."

DRUXMAN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B.

neck. She's made an impact not just within our volleyball world. She's made it throughout our entire Springtown community."

On May 6, the Springtown Lions Club awarded Druxman a \$3,000 scholarship for her volunteer efforts and established the annual Railey Druxman Scholarship college fund.

Druxman's statistics tell the story of her volleyball prowess. In addition to her records in kills shots, she logged a 93% serving percentage with 810 career assists, 172 aces, 219 blocks and 2,277 digs.

"She has been a dynamic player that brings excitement to the court," Strickland said. "To this day, she is still that player. She plays with intensity."

Her teammates will miss Druxman's trademark move after a big point, when she would toss her hands high in the air while sticking out her leg.

"She gets fired up - not just for her but for everyone else, too," the coach said. "That makes her the leader that she is."

For three years in a row, the team elected Druxman as its captain, and she represented the team with style and ferocity.

"She has the ability to step up and take control of the game," Strickland said. "Everyone saw that through the season and through. She is full of silliness but even

more full of competitive spirit and work ethic. She communicates on and off the court and works hard to be as good as she can."

SISTER SUPPORT

Among the people gathered to celebrate the departing captain were numerous younger players. Three of them were sisters. Junior Kylie Druxman, freshman Kelbie Druxman and seventh grader Libby Tedder hate to see their oldest sister leave, but they appreciate what they've learned from her.

Kylie will be a senior and probable starter and team leader when volleyball season begins in August.

"We look pretty good so far," Kylie said. "We have a lot of incoming freshmen that will be super good. I think it will be a good season."

In addition to losing Railey Druxman, other departing seniors include playmakers Skylar Holland, Emma Martinez, Landree Merriman and Angela Pando. That means most of the starting unit will need to be replaced.

"They played a big role in our season this past year, but I think we have enough talent coming up that we should be OK," Kylie Druxman said.

Part of that talent pool on the horizon includes Railey and Kylie's younger sisters, who shine on the



Railey Druxman is taking her volleyball skills and community volunteerism to Park University in Gilbert, Arizona. Photo by Jeff Prince

volleyball court on the junior varsity and junior high teams.

Springtown's volleyball program appears to be on sturdy ground with Strickland as coach overseeing a talented varsity roster.

"We have two good seniors, and the younger group is really good," Railey Druxman said.

One of those seniors is the dynamic kill-shot maker Brinklee

Dauenhauer, who tallied 268 kills, 50 aces, 46 blocks, 383 digs and 56 assists as a junior. She is the most likely candidate to take over Railey Druxman's fireplug role.

PREPARING FOR FUTURE

The volleyball players will participate with other athletes in the Pojo Maker speed and strength camp that starts in June. The sessions involve lifting weights and

performing agility drills beginning at 8:30 a.m. Mondays through Thursdays at the indoor facility.

After Pojo Maker sessions end, the volleyball players will congregate to work on skills specific to their sport. Volleyball is just two months away, and the girls are working hard to prepare for this season. And the next. And the next.

AZTEX, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1B.

stock, areas for roping, a pavilion with picnic benches and a barn for FFA events. Volunteers have landscaped the grounds, painted the rusted metal, replaced rotted wood and made the old arena grounds presentable again.

"We still have a lot to do, but we're getting there," Sheriff said.

Next on the schedule is hooking up electric, water and sewer services and installing an out-building to serve as a meeting room.

More rotted wood will need replacing around the arena, although any old wood that remains solid will be kept or repurposed. The volunteers will upgrade the lighting fixtures and install new bleachers.

"A lot of this old wood we want to keep," he said. "We want to keep the look of the way it used to look."

Sheriff's daughter, Mattie, is a member of the rodeo team, and Jeremy Sheriff has enjoyed watching her and her friends compete for the past few years despite not having a permanent place to practice.

The North Texas High School Rodeo Association hosts a weekly rodeo where high school kids compete on weekends. During the week, however, the cowboys and cowgirls must find their own place to practice.

"The team currently has nowhere to practice," said Kristy Scribner, the team sponsor. "We pay for arena rentals or haul to local jackpots. The fees for the arena rentals vary but can range anywhere from \$20 a horse to \$250 for several hours."

Often, the team sponsor and other parents cover the rental costs.

"People just do what they can to help pitch in to rent an arena," Sheriff said. "We don't have a set place that we can go together and practice together as a team."

AzTex will solve that problem.

"The school has allowed us to have this and get it cleaned up for a place for the rodeo team to practice and to call home," he said.

RODEO GROWTH

The need for a permanent practice home has become more apparent in recent years. This year's team has more than 30 members - the most in years.

This season's fund-raising rodeo raised more than \$8,500 for the team - more than double the previous year's take.

One reason for the growth in rodeo's popularity is the inclusion of events that don't require students to own a horse. Chute dogging for the boys and walk-up goat tying for the girls is done on foot.

A new and improved AzTex will "give the team the opportunity to

practice together," Scribner said. "It will give us a place to host team meetings and functions. The team would love to start hosting events at the arena again."

Supporting kids who show interest in a positive hobby keeps them focused, Sheriff said.

"I want something that keeps the kids busy," he said. "These kids love rodeo. Even though Mattie is graduating this year, I still want to be involved and help these kids to do what they love to do. We want a place to call home and to be able to come out and practice and meet and grow the team."

About 20 years ago, Azle's team hosted NTHSRA rodeos at the AzTex.

"Over the years, it just stopped being allowed," Scribner said. "I think the last rodeo hosted there was 2004."

Scribner's memories of the arena run deep. She and her parents and grandparents grew up competing at this arena.

"AzTex Riding Club was one of the largest playday groups years ago, and they called AzTex Arena home," she said.

Memories remain vivid for Royce Daniels, as well. The founding member of the Aztex Saddle Club recalls the arena being built and hosting rodeos, horse shows, stock shows and FFA events.

"We had some big crowds down there during rodeos," he recalled.

Scribner and previous sponsors had toyed with refurbishing the arena for years, and this year "we were told to go for it," she said. "Tons of work has already been done to the arena and the grounds, but there is still lots of work to be done. The school district is helping with some of the facility updates, and we are hoping to have electricity out there soon. We will need to completely redo the announcer stand and work on getting arena lights replaced, but the team is willing to put the work in."

What's needed are time and labor but not much money.

"Most of it is volunteer work," Sheriff said. "If we do need to buy anything, we'll try to get donations."

Sheriff had known about the old arena for years. He expressed gratitude to school administrators who approved the rehabilitation of the property.

"Once the rodeo team started growing, I just always envisioned somewhere that we could call home and that we could all come and practice," he said. "I started talking to the superintendent and assistant superintendent about getting this thing going, and they allowed me to get it cleaned up and



The AzTex arena grounds have become visible from Park Street after volunteers have spent months cleaning the property. Photo by Jeff Prince



A calf roper plied his trade at AzTex Arena in one of the early rodeos. Courtesy photo

to get it to this point."

ARENA DAYS

A big pile of cut tree limbs and vines was piled in a large mound not far from the arena, a testament to the landscaping that has been underway.

"We've cleaned vines out of fence rows, cut trees out of fences, cleared trees out of the arena and pens and just cleaned the grounds completely where you can get in here and have a functioning arena," Sheriff said. "We have piled it up and cleaned it up. The community has loved it so far just from us getting everything cleaned up."

Working hard in the outdoors is a familiar feeling for Sheriff, who grew up in a ranching family and learned early about sweat equity.

"I've always been around horses," he said. "Before my kids were grown, I would team rope and so forth. Out of my kids, Mattie, is the only one who has rodeoed. The rest of my kids wanted to be in the cheerleading competition world, so we did a lot of cheerleading as they were growing up, but when Mattie came up and was interested, I was happy to help her to get going in it."

He worked at Azle ISD, knew about the arena, knew the right connections, and decided to help improve the grounds. He is unsure when the project will be completed but sees the end in sight.

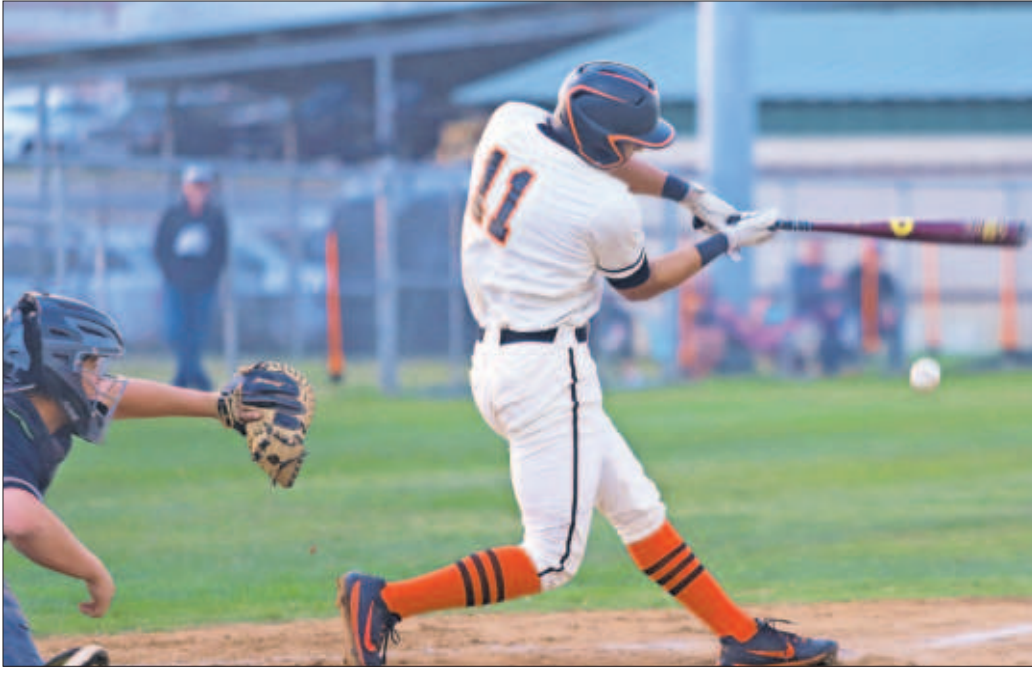
"Certain things you have to wait on when it comes to electricity and supplies because that's just the way it is nowadays," he said. "You

have to wait on everything. We are getting it slowly but surely. I don't have an exact time on when we'll get it ready, but we are to a point now where we can at least practice out here in daylight hours. Eventually we will get to where we can have our meetings out here and practice on a regular basis."

The lot is large enough to provide plenty of parking, even for the big trucks and trailers that come to the events. The arena and grounds will provide the rodeo team with opportunity to make money through rodeos, roping events and barrel races.

"You could have a full rodeo if you want to," Sheriff said. "If the team keeps growing like it is, it's a good way to raise your own money for your team."

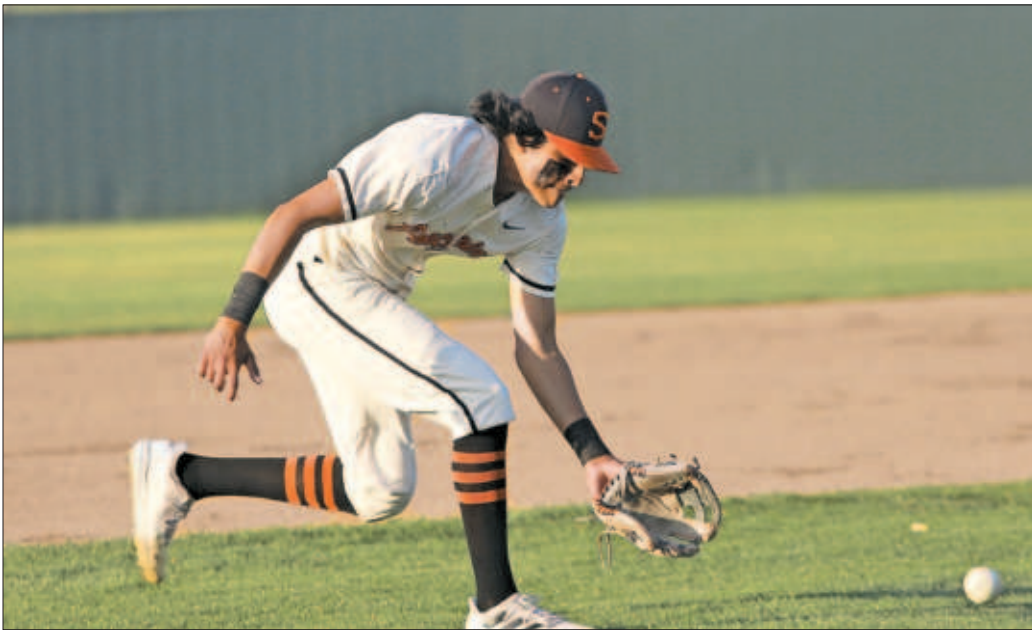
2022 Springtown Porcupines



Cristian Hernandez



William Gleason



Seth Lopez



Aiden Vickers

Historic season

No other baseball team at Springtown High School has gone deeper in the playoffs than the 2022 Porcupines. This year's team set a school record by winning an area championship. The Porcupines made it all the way to the regional quarterfinals before falling to Argyle. The chemistry and work ethic of the team's six seniors – Marco Barrera, William Gleason, Cristian Hernandez, Matt Lockard, Seth Lopez and Aiden Vickers – helped make this team one for the history books. "We appreciate all that they've done for us," said head coach Josh Ward. "The seniors set the bar high and set the standard for where our expectations are going to be now."

PHOTOS BY JEFF PRINCE

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 817-246-4646 gtax.com

088 Rent Unfurnished

FOR RENT

1 Bdrm Springtown FOR RENT

Water • Furnished NO PETS

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Will pay top dollar for grazing and hay leases. Call 940-389-1936.

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INNERSPACE STORAGE. Hwy 199, Springtown. Now renting all unit sizes, 24-hour access. 682-842-1414.

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519 W. Main St. • Azle

1 Bed with bonus room \$925/mo. All Bills Paid

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Quality Rentals
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 Weatherford, TX 76086

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 Horses Follow
 Stephenville Cattle Co.
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1350 Liberty School Rd
 5x10 Units \$45/mo.
 10x10 Units \$70/mo.
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GRAHAM PLUMBING CO.

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 Hwy 199 Frontage Near Hospital
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 Clean office space
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088 Rent Unfurnished

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817-220-7217 - SPRINGTOWN

Deadline:
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Classifieds

088 Rent Unfurnished

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Family-owned, family-run



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Barton Cottages Tiny Home Community: COMING SUMMER 2022! Email BartonCottages@gmail.com



IN THE CLASSIFIEDS

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TexSCAN Week of
 May 29-June 4, 2022

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 817-220-7217
Hometown Papers!

TEXAS CROSSWORD

by Charley & Guy Orbison
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ACROSS

1 "Old Yeller" TX actor _____ Parker

5 in Cherokee County on U.S. 69

6 Dallas' "_____ Bang Theater" (1959-72)

7 pickup rubber

8 TXism: "play possum"

9 Dallas-born Bebe of 1941 "Hi Gang!"

16 prophet

18 across Rio Grande from Eagle Pass: _____ Negras

19 TX singer Roy (init.)

20 Willie's "Blue Eyes Cryin' in the _____"

21 TXism: "tax wrangler"

24 TX Tanya's "San Antonio _____"

30 casino in Pocasset, Oklahoma

34 TXism: "the fat _____ in the fire" (in trouble)

35 TXism: "like _____ afire" (fast)

36 TXism: "it's Katy bar the _____"

37 cavalry sword

39 late Texas rock singer: "_____ Loaf" (big event)

40 "The Heart of _____" is in exact center of our state

44 declared after Battle of San Jacinto

45 "I" topper

47 TXism: "shin _____" (big event)

48 Santa _____, TX

49 TV's talking horse (2 wds.)

50 parties in Mexico

53 Perot freed employees from this Iranian city

56 TXism: "never in _____ my born days"

57 TXism: "high tail _____" (flee)

58 Brownwood university: Howard _____

59 Texas schools try to ensure that _____ gets lost in the crowd

62 Ruby got infamous gun at a Dallas _____ shop

63 "get _____ of it!"

64 TX "Cowpokes" artist Reid

65 His/_____ towels

DOWN

1 TXism: "_____ greased lightning"

2 TX Cyd Charisse real name: Tula _____ Finklea

3 the best eleven Cowboys

4 TXism: "cut me _____ slack"

9 soft drink invented in Waco (init.)

10 USS San Jacinto: _____ carrier

11 TXism: "it's _____ bout" (about)

12 TX Tanya sang "Texas When _____"

13 TX singer Tubb

14 "hasta _____ vista"

15 aborted atom smasher in Waxahachie (abbr.)

17 TX Willie hit: "On The _____"

22 TXism: "_____ of cake" (easy)

23 TXism: "as clear _____ River mud"

24 Gen. _____ Houston

25 El Paso: "_____ Pass"

26 TXism: "hot as _____ tar in July"

27 TXism: "could talk a wagon _____ ditch" (persuasive)

28 jeans maker (init.)

29 TXism: "_____ the cat out of the bag"

31 _____ Fresno, TX

32 TXism: "_____ big for his britches"

33 former VW sports car: _____ Ghia

38 county and county seat on U.S. 281

41 TX Perot's old co.

42 big historic TX ranch

43 TXism: "a hard dog to _____ the porch" (good dog)

46 "shop" _____ you drop"

51 _____ Paso

52 TX store: _____ 'n Go

54 TXism: "I _____ my boots retreaded"

55 TX cover crop

60 Judge Hughes who gave oath to LBJ

61 how many times the Cowboys beat each divisional foe in 2021

P-1587



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S-1587



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