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THURSDAY, December 15, 2022 • \$1

PCSO arrests Miller in connection with construction business schemes

BY MADELYN EDWARDS madelyn@azlenews.net

The former Parker County Sheriff's Office investigator who pleaded guilty to stealing from a fellow deputy's

crued new theft charges. Aaron "Seth" Miller, 40, of Springtown was arrested by sheriff's office deputies on Dec. 5, charged with a state jail felony and a third-degree

benefit fund in 2011 has ac-

felony theft charge. He is accused of conning several victims out of more than \$100,000 in construction business schemes.

According to a sheriff's office press release, Miller had entered into contracts with people to provide construction services under the business name of WD Welding Services LLC, which is located on East State Highway 199 in Springtown.

The consolidated complaint and probable cause affidavit detailed an incident during the spring when victims hired WD Welding Services to construct a metal building and paid \$17,500. However, the job was left undone, and the victims sent a letter to Miller demanding a refund. They also reported the incident to the sheriff's deputies, with the intention of pressing criminal charges.

The affidavit also included an incident in May when Miller was paid to build a shop and fence for another victim but only completed part of the fence. The victim paid about \$75,500 in initial payments for the work. The victim in that case also attempted to get the money back and reported the incident in September with the intention of pressing charges.

The victim told authorities that Miller delayed the process and said the materials were ordered, but the investigator discovered that no construction materials were purchased during the timeline in question. Instead, Miller transferred the funds to other accounts and/or spent the money on day-today living expenses, accord-

PLEASE SEE MILLER | A4



Aaron "Seth" Miller



PHOTO BY MADELYN EDWARDS

Local children took photos with Santa Claus at Reno's Christmas event Pancakes with Santa on Dec. 10. Santa Claus is pictured with 13-year-old Izzy Wining and 4-year-old Charlie Jenkins at Reno City Hall.

Reno community comes together to bring Christmas cheer to local kids

BY MADELYN EDWARDS

madelyn@azlenews.net

With their parents and siblings in tow, young children walked into the Reno City Council chambers for the Pancakes with Santa event on Saturday and had to make a choice of which activity to

They could turn to the left and decorate Christmas cookies. If they walked straight ahead, they could work on their coloring skills. Or they could line up to see the big man himself, Santa Claus.

On the right side of the room, Elizabethe "Liz" Toms ushered in children to her table and asked them if they'd like to make reindeer food. Her recipe was simple - a scoop of dry oats in a baggie

- but the key ingredient was magic crystals (sugar sprinkles). Toms told the children that the oats would be a healthy snack for the reindeer, but the mixture serves

another function as well. The reindeer food can be placed out on Christmas Eve, and once the kids are asleep, the magic crystals glow when reindeer are nearby so the reindeer can find their home, she said.

How did Toms come up with that myth to tell the children?

"I teach second grade," she said, laughing.

Toms said she loves being involved with activities for children, but her reasoning for helping at Reno events is more personal than that.

PLEASE SEE SANTA | A5

Reno City Council moves forward on securing one home per acre rule

BY MADELYN EDWARDS madelyn@azlenews.net

Reno City Council tasked the Planning and Zoning Commission and the city attorney to come up with an ordinance to solidify the one home per acre rule.

Council member Shelli Swift brought up the topic at the November meeting to close any loopholes or contradictions in the city's ordinances.

"I am proposing that we come up with an ordinance that stops all the questions," Swift said during the meeting. "If we want homes to be on one acre or more, we need to have a blanket ordinance that says that's the way it is.'

Solidifying one home per acre in the ordinances would mean that developers seeking any variation from that would need a special use permit, Swift said.

P&Z Chairperson Brian Schrader also said during the meeting that the city's comprehensive plan and ordinances contain contradictory statements regarding how many residential units can be situated on one acre.

"I'm not going to say it's riddled with holes. I'm going to say there are enough loopholes and enough trip points that if someone wanted to

come into our community today and put in five houses on an acre, we might have a legal situation on our hands,"

Schrader said. Schrader said the council has tasked P&Z with bringing the comprehensive plan up to date and clearing up the contradictions. He recommended a joint effort between council, P&Z and city staff to clear up the loopholes and update the comprehensive plan.

City Attorney Dottie Palumbo said she could draft an ordinance based on Swift's comments, and then the ordinance would need to be considered by P&Z, which would then make a recommendation to the council. A public hearing on the new ordinance is also expected.

Swift made the motion to authorize Palumbo to draft an ordinance requiring each home to be situated on no less

than one acre throughout the Reno city limits. She added that any variations to the one home per acre rule would need a special use permit that would need to be passed by the council in a supermajority vote to move forward. Her motion also required that any changes to the ordinance would need to be approved by the council with a supermajority vote. Swift's motion was approved unanimously.



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SHS students perform at Springtown Chamber's Christmas luncheon



Springtown High School senior Madylyn Merendon, right, tried out choir directing at the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon on Dec. 8.



In the front row, Springtown High School junior Spencer Hancock and freshman Virginia Washington performed their lines as part of the theater department's skit from "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" at the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon.



at the chamber's Christmas luncheon on Dec. 8 at the Springtown ISD Administration Building. The SISD Nutrition Department catered the luncheon.



Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce members lined up to get a hot plate of food and a dessert Springtown High School choir teacher Holly Owen led her students in singing Christmas carols on Dec. 8 at the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon at the Springtown ISD Administration Building.

Wreath-laying ceremony on Saturday

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Azle Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol will host a local Wreaths Across America wreath-laying ceremony at 11 a.m. Saturday at Azleland Memorial Park, 850 N. Cardinal Road, according to a news release.

The local cemetery joins

more than 1,500 other loca-

tions across the country for National Wreaths Across America Day. Coordinated and led by the Azle Composite Squadron, Civil Air Patrol, 500 wreaths will be placed on the headstones of fallen service members. This

the Wreaths Across America mission of "Remember, Honor, Teach," ensuring that the "memory of those who served our country endures," the release stated.

All members of the surrounding communities are invited to participate in the ceremony and wreath-laying.

Civil Air Patrol was established in 1941 and is the official auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force and as such is a member of its Total Force. In its auxiliary role, CAP operates a fleet of 555 single-engine aircraft and 2,250 small

annual event seeks to further Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS) and performs about 90% of all search and rescue operations within the contiguous United States as tasked by the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center. As a nonprofit organization, CAP plays a leading role in aerospace education using national academic standards-based STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education resources. Members also serve as mentors to 24,000 young people participating in CAP's Cadet Programs.

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Plan for Reno Vista moves in different direction

BY MADELYN EDWARDS madelyn@azlenews.net

The plan to develop a new subdivision north of Reno and annex it into the city limits has been squashed.

In early October, Reno City Council held a workshop to hear more about the potential subdivision. TA DFW Development co-owners Dustin Austin and Ben Tilley presented a residential subdivision called Reno Vista with mostly half-acre lots. This subdivision was planned to be on about 84 acres near the intersection of FM 730 North

and North Woody Road, which is north of Reno.

The subdivision would have been served by individual septic systems and water from Walnut Creek Special Utility District, according to a previous Epigraph article.

The discussion during the workshop revolved around whether to stick to the city's one home per acre rule while also seeking more revenue to fund city services.

During the workshop, Austin pointed out that the lot widths would have been more than 100 feet, consistent to the city's estate zoning. He argued that half-acre lots would still afford plenty of space for folks.

The conversation about the 111-home development continued at the November Reno Planning and Zoning Commission meeting, during which the commissioners tabled a decision until December.

"The project appeared to be a win-win, a win for us and a win for the contractor," P&Z Chairman Brian Schrader said during the Dec. 5 P&Z meeting. "We collectively asked Ben to return this month with a mature development plan

for more detailed review and discussion."

However, neither the city council nor P&Z will have the chance to make a clear decision on the subdivision because of a change in direction. Schrader reported during the December P&Z meeting that Tilley had recently informed him that the property is instead planned to be turned into a sandpit.

Tilley told the Epigraph that turning the property into a sandpit is an option because there's an interested party who may want to buy it for that purpose, but as of

Dec. 7, that deal was not finalized. Tilley added that he was working with Reno for a year and a half to get the property into the city.

Schrader described the situation as a missed opportunity, in part because of the lost revenue, which was expected to be about \$500,000 in permit fees and more than \$200,000 annually in tax revenue. He also said a potential sandpit could bring more loaded sand and gravel vehicles onto FM 730, which would raise the risk of motorists' windshields being hit with rocks.

The lesson Schrader took

away from this situation is that opportunities need to be taken with more urgency.

"The adage 'time is money' is directly applicable to this occurrence. Ben Tilley and his business partners were not willing to wait for Reno to decide if they wanted the development and increased tax base. They went with a more immediate and sure return on their investment," Schrader said. "We need to be able to strike when the iron is hot, take the information that we have, extrapolate from partial data if we need to and move forward."

Reno discusses emergency notification system

BY MADELYN EDWARDS madelyn@azlenews.net

The city of Reno is exploring the possibility of installing an emergency notification system to alert city residents of urgent situations.

Reno City Council heard a presentation about CodeRED Emergency Alerts at the November meeting from Pete Applegarth, an alert and warning consultant.

Applegarth said more than 1,200 communities in Texas use the CodeRED system. Using the system, authorized city personnel can log

in, either from an office or the field, and send alerts to either certain neighborhoods or everyone signed up in the city. Those alerts can be voicemails to landlines and cellphones, text messages, emails, social media posts and website posts.

"You can push all these different alerts out, (and) contact your entire community within minutes," Applegarth said.

The notification system can be used for severe weather alerts, locating missing persons, boil water notices, updates on power restora-

tion and helping authorities arrest criminals, Applegarth said. Certain traffic incidents or road work could also be considered emergency alerts. The system could also be used for nonemergency alerts - such as notices of city meetings and events - but that

comes with an extra cost. The CodeRED system also gathers feedback to let city officials know if the message reached a live person, an answering machine or if the line was busy, Applegarth said.

"You can send out a survey or a poll or ask them if maybe they need help or something

like that. It's not just a oneway push of information," he said. "You can get real-time feedback from your citizens that they may need help for whatever reason."

The system could be set up very quickly using a database of Reno phone records, Applegarth said. Reno residents would be able to sign up for free to receive emergency alerts and select how they want to be notified.

Council member Jeff Davis brought up a concern about how the new system could affect people without computers if the city switched to the

CodeRED system instead of mailing notices.

"I have two senior neighbors on both sides of me that I help take care of. Neither one of them are on the internet, but they do get text messages," Davis said, adding that in the past his neighbors have been notified in the mail of previous urgent situations. "I know that they check their mail more than they check their text messages."

Council member Shelli Swift reminded Davis that the alert service could also call residents on landlines or cellphones.

Applegarth said the city can get unlimited emergency alerts through CodeRED for \$2,500 annually. If the city wanted to also send out nonemergency alerts, that would cost \$3,400 annually, though costs do fluctuate from year to year. Training, customer service and setup would also be provided at no additional cost.

The council decided to further review how the expense for the emergency-only notification system would work in the budget at a future meeting.

Springtown Public Library makes \$450 from Fall Book Sale

BY MADELYN EDWARDS madelyn@azlenews.net

Springtown children will not go without summer events at the library, nor will they miss out on summer reading challenge prizes, thanks to the Springtown Public Library's recent book

The Friends of the Library earned about \$450 from the Fall Book Sale on Dec. 3, Library Director Andie D'Avignon said. In addition to books, the library sold audiobooks, DVDs and \$5bags of items, which were

Dec 19 - Dec 23, 2022

PK through 12th Grade

*Menus are subject to change.

PK - 12th Breakfast

particularly popular. All the proceeds fund the library's summer reading challenge prizes and summer events.

This total is short of D'Avignon's goal for the sale, but the library director spoke positively about the fundraiser.

"We had a wonderful turnout for the book sale," D'Avignon said, adding that more than 100 people came to the sale.

The library also recently ended its "Food for Fines" canned food drive at the end of November. Library patrons were encouraged to bring in canned food to pay off library fines, with every can of food donated paying \$1 of fines.

In total, D'Avignon said the library collected 84 cans and other non-perishable items. which she estimated at more than \$100 worth of food. She said most of the food collected was donations as opposed to payment for fines.

D'Avignon plans to donate the food to Springtown's food pantry Neighbor to Neighbors.

"It is very heartwarming to see so many people helping their neighbors," she said.

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If you or someone you know has back pain then this article is for you.

A common question we get is: Do I need to get an MRI or X-ray to determine what is wrong with my back?

The short answer is NO! Why do I say that?



By Local Health Expert Dr. Robert Moss PT, ScD, OCS, FAAOMPT

Let's start with an x-ray which looks at the bones and how they are aligned. They do not look at the soft tissue which is frequently what is causing your pain. Now if you have had a major trauma (car accident, fall etc) then an x-ray would be useful to rule out some type of fracture. A good clinician who listens to your complaints and how the pain came to be can help guide you on whether an X-ray is necessary or not.

MRI's - are great, almost too great. There have been numerous scientific papers that have shown up to 80% of the population has a disc herniation or bulge yet they **DON'T HAVE ANY SYMPTOMS**

What does that mean? It means it is guite likely that we are all walking around with some type of bulge or herniation in our disc but we don't have pain. Once we do start to have back pain we get an MRI and the specialist say "Ah ha" here it is, Mrs. Jones you have a herniation in your back...you need surgery. When in fact the herniation could have been present for numerous years.

As part of a routine check up we don't get MRIs on our lower back, only when we have pain. It would be most helpful if we had an MRI performed when we didn't have pain and then compare it to one when we did have pain. Then we could look at the two images and say with greater confidence "this has changed and could possibly be causing your pain".

So if I don't recommend initial imaging for your lower back, what do I recommend? Wait, begin treatment on your back and see how things go. Like I said earlier a good clinician can help determine if you need some imaging. There are certain signs and symptoms that would indicate imaging is needed and treatment should wait until certain things are ruled out.

For 99% of the people we see, imaging is not necessary and frequently delays getting in to see us so we can help you get your life back and do what you love. If you are looking for guidance on your next step to finding relief from your lower back pain then call our office to request my 100% FREE Report Top 10 Burning Questions for Back Pain and Sciatica. Or if you want the report right now, just

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owner of MOSS Rehabilitation Center in Springtown, TX. He is happy to help you with your back pain and sciatica problems either by phone or email.

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Monday Mini Pancakes, Toast, Applesauce Tuesday Chicken Biscuit, Toast, Pineapple Cup Wednesday Breakfast Pizza, Toast, Apple Slices Thursday Christmas Break Friday Christmas Break

5th - 12th Lunch

Monday Mac and Cheese, Steakfingers, Chili Beans, Garden Salad, Blueberries Tuesday Chicken and Waffles, Tator Tots, Fiesta Sticks, Strawberries, Craisins Wednesday Pepperoni Pizza, Popcorn Chicken, Roll, Green Beans, Carrots, Pineapple Cup Thursday Christmas Break Friday Christmas Break

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Retiring senator named Secretary of State

RETIRING SENATOR NAMED **SECRETARY OF STATE**

Retiring state Sen. Jane Nelson, R-Flower Mound, has been named the next secretary of state by Gov. Greg Abbott. She replaces John Scott, who announced his resignation effective at year's

Scott was the third nominee for the post not confirmed by the Senate. He was appointed in October 2021, and the Legislature has not met since then. Nelson, who is completing 30 years in the Senate, should be a strong candidate for approval because of her lengthy tenure there. A new legislative session convenes in January.

The secretary of state's office, among other duties, oversees the state's election

"I look forward to this new chapter of public service and appreciate the confidence Governor Abbott has placed in me to serve as Secretary of State." Nelson said in a statement. "Voters expect fair elections with accurate, timely results, and I am committed to making that happen. Texans with all political views should have faith in our election system."



CAPITAL 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 aborders@texaspress.com.

TIKTOK BANNED ON ALL STATE-ISSUED PHONES

Abbott last week ordered all Texas state agencies to ban use of the social media app TikTok on any government-issued device, saying it risks allowing China to gain access to "critical U.S. information."

The popular video-sharing application is owned by a Chinese company and is used by an estimated 85 million people in the United States.

TikTok maintains the Chinese government has never tried to access the data of its users, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

Abbott said he is prepared to work with state lawmakers to make the ban permanent during the next session, and to extend the ban to devices issued by local governments, such as cities and counties.

"We must work together to stop the Chinese government's efforts to collect,

store, and distribute Texans' data and personal information," Abbott wrote in a letter to Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and House Speaker Dade Phelan.

TPWD BIOLOGISTS STRESS TESTING HARVESTED DEER

The recent discover of chronic wasting disease in Kaufman County has spurred biologists with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to stress the importance of testing deer taken this hunting season to curb the spread of the deadly disease.

The neurological disease is highly contagious and affects white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, and moose. It has been found in 17 Texas counties and documented in both captive and free-ranging deer in 30 states and three Canadian provinces, according to TPWD.

Anyone hunting in an established CWD zone must bring their deer to a check station within 48 hours of

harvest for testing. There are about 30 check stations and drop boxes across the state. For more information, visit the TPWD website at tpwd. texas.gov.

STATE'S LARGEST TEACHER PREP **PROGRAM UNDER FIRE**

The Texas Education Agency is recommending that Texas Teachers of Tomorrow have its accreditation revoked after failing to improve training of teacher candidates. The Dallas Morning News reported the company, which certifies thousands of teachers mainly through online courses, failed to meet demands by TEA that it ensure all candidates receive adequate actual classroom training.

The State Board of Educator Certification met Friday to consider the company's fate. Texas Teachers of Tomorrow and TEA are expected to present arguments before an administrative judge, and the case could stretch on for months or even more than a vear.

The company has been on probation for several months, and TEA found it did not meet the terms of their agreement to improve. The state already faces a teacher shortage that could be exacerbated

if the company's accreditation is revoked.

TABC WORKING WITH RETAILERS **OVER HOLIDAYS**

'Tis the season for tippling, and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission is working with retailers to make prevent illegal alcohol sales. TABC plans inspections across the state to ensure retailers are following the law and not selling to people under 21 as well as those who are visibly intoxicated.

"Now is the best time, before the holiday season kicks into high gear, for business owners and managers to educate their staff on ways to prevent illegal alcohol sales," TABC executive director Thomas Graham said.

According to the Texas Department of Public Safety, drunk driving was a factor in nearly one-fourth of all traffic deaths last year. Businesses who violate state alcohol laws face fines or suspension of their alcohol licenses, while individuals could face misdemeanor charges resulting in a fine or jail time.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS AT STATE PARKS

State parks across Texas are hosting a variety of holi-

day events in December, including themed guided walks, scavenger hunts and more, according to TPWD. However, anyone planning to visit a state park should reserve their day pass in advance to avoid turned away from parks that reach capacity. You can do so on the TPWD website (tpwd.texas.gov) or by calling 512-389-8900.

Activity examples include elves running loose at Fort Boggy State Park on Saturday, Dec. 10, with prizes to folks who spot the first 10 elves on the Lake Sullivan Trail. At Big Bend Ranch State Park, the darkest skies in Texas provide excellent star gazing. A full list of holiday events at state parks is on the TPWD website.

COVID-19 CASES CONTINUE TO RISE

The number of new COVID-19 cases in the past week in Texas rose once again, this time to 30,096 with 91 deaths, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. The Texas Department of State Health Services reported a slight increase, with 1,977 lab-confirmed COVID-19 patients across the state.

MILLER FROM A1

ing to the affidavit.

"Miller opened several bank accounts for various businesses through numerous financial institutions then used those accounts to filter the victims' money," the sheriff's office press release stated. "A subpoena for Miller's bank records revealed he withdrew

the funds from the account(s) and closed the account(s) with a \$0 balance within days of depositing the victims' checks. Miller then ceased contact with the victims, refusing to complete the job

and did not return the funds despite letters of demand."

The press release noted that the cases will be submitted to the Parker County District Attorney's Office.

Miller was released from

jail on Tuesday, and his total bond amount was \$25,000. He declined an interview request from the Epigraph.

In 2011, Miller pleaded guilty to stealing about \$11,000 from a memorial fund for the family of Sgt. Rusty Arnold, a deputy who died in a vehicle crash while off duty, according to a Weatherford Democrat article.

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Elizabethe "Liz" Toms scoops some dry oats into a baggie to help 3-year-old Matthew Miller make reindeer food at Reno's Pancakes with Santa event on Dec. 10.



Michael Mahon volunteered at Reno's Christmas event Pancakes with Santa on Dec. 10 by serving food and flipping pancakes.

SANTA

"My mom, before she passed, was the chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, so we were really involved in all of this," Toms said. "I took about a year off when she passed and took care of myself and did the things I needed to, but I also knew she would not want me to stop participating."

Toms' mother, Alesa de Hernandez, died a little over a year ago. She had terminal cancer but also became sick with COVID-19.

"I would have gotten more time with just the cancer, but she would have been miserable, so I look at it as God just made her passing a little easier," Toms said. "She just went to sleep in the hospital and never regained consciousness. I got to sit by her side and hold her hand."

After her mother died, Toms said several members of the Reno community stepped up to support her. She described Reno as a family.

"We're here when we need each other," she said.

Along with Santa Claus and his elf, the Christmas event included a few other recognizable characters. The Grinch stood by the street outside Reno City Hall and greeted attendees as they arrived. Another Dr. Seuss character, Cindy Lou Who, helped with the event inside.

Cindy Lou Who was played by Brenda Mahon – who has previously worked with the Reno Events Committee before – and her good friend Monica Keil played the Grinch.

Reno's Pancakes with Santa event was the first time that Mahon and Keil dressed up as Cindy Lou Who and the Grinch, but the two best friends are no strangers to putting on costumes.

"Oh, we dress up all the time," Mahon said. "We do all kinds of crazy stuff, toy runs and all of that."

Mahon tried to put words to the feeling of spreading holiday cheer to local kids.

"It's just fun watching the kids' faces," she said.

Mahon's husband Michael also volunteered at the event by serving food and flipping pancakes.

"I came here for pancakes, and they told me if I wanted some, I'd have to cook them," Michael Mahon said jokingly.

The food preparation was a group effort by volunteers. Reno City Council member Shelli Swift cooked the bacon, Krizhana Lyon cooked the sausage and Keil made the cookies. Events committee members had previously decorated Reno City Hall for the event, and the volunteers gathered at 7:30 a.m. the morning of the event to set everything up. Everything needed for the event came from the committee, chairperson Ted Lyon said.

"I love these kinds of things," Swift said at the event. "I love it whenever the community comes together."



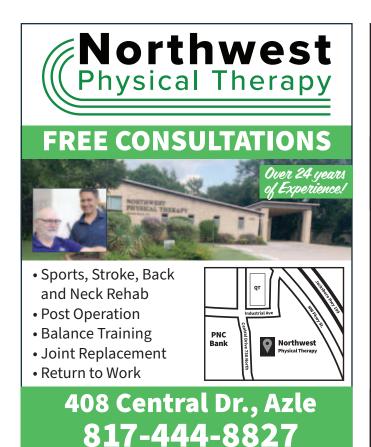
Sisters Ava Hulsey, 5, and Sara Hulsey, 4, practiced their coloring skills at Reno's Pancakes with Santa event on Dec. 10 at Reno City Hall.



Nataly Martinez, 8, decorated a Christmas tree-shaped cookie at the Pancakes with Santa event on Dec. 10 at Reno City Hall.



Some attendees of Reno's Pancakes with Santa event were greeted by the Grinch outside Reno City Hall on Dec. 10. The Grinch, played by Monica Keil, is pictured with 11-year-old Raylee Woods, who is holding 1-year-old Oliver Woods, along with 3-year-old William Woods, who is making his best Grinch face.



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OBITUARIES

Charlsta Smith 1920 - 2022

Charlsta Reynolds Smith passed away Sunday, December 4, 2022 in Weatherford at the age of

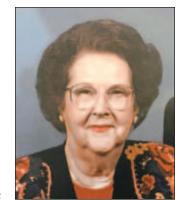
Funeral services were on Thursday, December 8, 2022 and burial was in Oakland Cemetery in Weatherford.

Memorials may be given to Couts United Methodist Church in Weatherford, the Pythian Children's Home in Weatherford, or your favorite

Charlsta was born August 21, 1920 in East Parker County to Charlie and Lula (Pearson) Reynolds. Her grandparents and greatgrandparents were some of the early settlers in Parker County, as early as 1854. She grew up east of Weatherford and attended school at Wampler and graduated from Weatherford High School. Charlsta attended a business college in Weatherford. She worked for 19 years for W. A. White of Whites Funeral Home as a secretary.

In 1947 she was introduced by her boss, W. A. White, to Wayne Smith, a former WWII POW and Rural Letter Carrier from Springtown. Wayne and Charlsta dated for 11 years and were married in 1958 at White's Funeral Home Chapel. They were married for 49 years until Wayne's death in 2008. They had twin daughters, Karen and Kathy Smith. Charlsta then became a homemaker and a stay-athome mother. They resided in Springtown.

Charlsta loved Jesus, was baptized and accepted Jesus as her Lord and Savior. She was a United Methodist and was a member of Couts United Methodist Church for most of her life. She was a member of the Stewards



for Christ Sunday School class and United Methodist Women's.

Charlsta was a charter member of Weatherford **Business and Professional** Women's Club and a member of the Springtown Extension Education Club for 50 years. She was also active in the Rural Letter Carrier's Association & Auxiliary and Weatherford College Ex-Students Association.

Charlsta was truly a wonderful wife and mother. She was very caring for others. She enjoyed taking care of her family, spending time with her sister, cousins and friends.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Wayne; her parents; and sister, Dorothy Reynolds.

Charlsta is survived by her daughters, Karen and Kathy; several nieces and nephews; and several cousins.

Thank you to Interim Hospice and Cornerstone caregivers, cousin, Jan Walker Pearson, Pastor Holly Dittrich, Dorothy Glenn, and other caring friends and family.

> The Springtown Epigraph, Dec. 15, 2022 Edition

ReMARKable moments

Pastor Joe had all the children gathered at the front of the church for the special children's sermon.

He read from Matthew chapter 2 about the events following the visit of the Magi to the baby Jesus:

"Now when they had gone, behold, an angel of the Lord *appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up! Take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is going to search for the Child to destroy Him."

In just a few sentences, he told the boys and girls how God took care of Joseph and Mary and baby Jesus by protecting them from those who wished to harm them.

Seven-vear-old Bobby raised his hand (always a scary moment for Pastor Joe during the children's sermon).

Pastor Joe: Yes, Bobby? Bobby: What happened to the flea?

(I'll wait ...)

Ok, here's the hint for those who haven't gotten it yet: "Get up! Take the Child



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.discovervouramazing.com

and His mother and flee to Egypt ..."

Sorry about that. There is a point to the story — Bobby got distracted and missed the point of the

Does that happen to us at Christmas?

Planning menus, attending parties and concerts, shopping, decorating, stressing over details — and those are the "fun" things!

There are also those among us who are grieving the loss of loved ones, struggling with broken or strained relationships, concerned that they can't afford the Christmas gifts and feasts.

Distracted.

Weighed down. In 1849. Unitarian minister Edmund Sears wrote a poem reflecting on his ministry experiences. The poem became the text for the familiar Christmas carol, "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear."

The stanza that sparked my attention today: "All ye beneath life's

crushing load

Whose forms are bending low Who toil along the climb-

ing way With painful steps and

slow Look now for glad and

golden hours Come swiftly on the wing

O rest beside the weary And hear the angels sing" The "crushing load" can

originate from too much of anything. Heavy is heavy, regardless of origin or content. And when all you can think about is the load, distraction is inevitable.

'O rest beside the weary road ...

May I encourage you right

now — just for a few moments — to lay down your Christmas burden and rest in the hope of the Christmas message.

An unexpected word caught my attention in my Bible reading this morning. The verse was Luke 5:26 -"Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, 'We have seen remarkable things today.'

"Remarkable" is the word I underlined in my reading today.

ReMARKable.

I *marked* it so I could REmember it and REfer to it again.

I want to mark the moments when I am amazed by Jesus — not just with pen in hand, but in my conscious thoughts.

When you take that moment to rest beside the weary road and contemplate the Christmas message, mark in your heart the moment of hope so you can come back and revisit it again and again.

Be amazing today, my friend.

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BOOK REVIEW

Why do your favorite songs move you?

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

Turn it up, would you? Man, that song. It reminds you of falling in love, first dates, riding around in a car, best friends. You can imagine the performance of it, the bassist's passion, the audience cheers. You know every word of that song, so read "This is What It Sounds Like" by Susan Rogers and Ogi Ogas, and turn it up.

Many years ago, when Miles Davis was working with Susan Rogers' boss, Prince, Davis seized an opportunity to shoot questions at Rogers like a machine gun. Where was she from? What did she do? Was she a musician?

She was not, but as a cognitive neuroscientist and a professor at Berklee College of Music, Rogers knows music. And she knows why we love it: seven "influential dimensions of music listening" give us our own personal "maximum gratification."

It helps to know your individual "listener profile."

"The music you respond to most powerfully can reveal those parts of yourself that are the most 'you'," said Rogers. The music that hits your "sweet spot" is what should fill your play list.

Authenticity gives you a sense that the emotions a song brings aren't forced or faked. Realism is the scratch of a guitar or the long pause that no one else seems to notice; if you're hearing the song live, it's the movement of the singer. Novelty is tricky; it must be in the "Goldilocks zone for novelty: not too strange, not too boring.'

As for the other four dimensions, they go together like a puzzle.

Rogers said, "We might say that melody serves as a record's heart ... In contrast ... lyrics serve as a record's head. Rhythm becomes a

record's hips.... Timbre is the raw quality of a musical sound... the sharp buzz of a saxophone ... or the drone of a didgeridoo. That's why timbre serves as a record's face."

These things have "the potential to bewitch you - and help you pinpoint where your own sweet spots lie.'

So what if you just like a song because you just like it and you don't care why? Go ahead, listen to it, wear the grooves off a vinyl copy, turn it up loud, and forget about "This is What It Sounds Like," because this won't sound like your kind of thing.

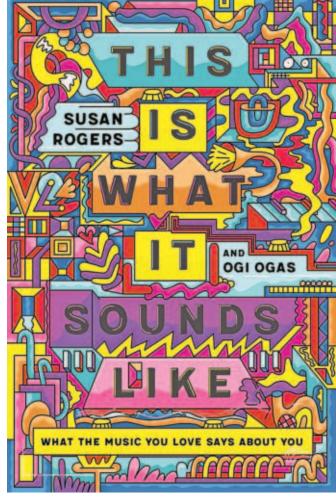
No, this book is much more for the listener for whom music is not just a hobby but a necessity, like breathing. It's for the person who shushes the crowd at concerts, so they can hear that one note. Authors Susan Rogers and Ogi Ogas explain why you feel strongly about loving one genre of music and not

another, how certain songs mean everything, how music is like conversation and why one certain song makes you feel like high school again.

This is What It Sounds Like" is absolutely for the person who buys vinyl and obsessively reads liner notes. If you're someone who can pick one chord out of a song and you wait for it, find this book. You won't turn it down.



PHOTO BY SHARONA JACOBS **Susan Rogers**



"This is What It Sounds Like: What the Music You Love Says about You" by Susan Rogers and Ogi Ogas

C.2022, W.W. NORTON \$28.95 274 PAGES

It's best to obey the law and not be a rule breaker

Our family vacations in my youth involved traveling to where the grandparents lived and going camping. It was quite an experience and something I looked forward to in excited anticipation. My father knew an old farmer who had land adjoining the Chariton River and he would allow us to camp on his property. No state parks for us! We were out in the middle of nowhere which is right where we wanted to be.

When the family set up camp, there were tents to be erected, firewood to be gathered, latrines to be dug, and a host of other chores and activities to undertake. Looking back, it took a lot of work, but it was something the entire family enjoyed. We fished and swam during the day, played cards, and during the evening we would sit around the firepit and roast marshmallows or chase lightning bugs. There was no TV



FROM MY FRONT PORCH

By Sam Houston

Sam Houston is a syndicated columnist and newspaper executive. He is also an author, actor, playwright and

and of course no phones, but we did have a radio so we could hear the weather and the Cardinals baseball game. Each night my grandparents would drive over to have dinner with us and then join us as we sat around the fire and traded stories.

While we did fish with rods and reels, my dad also enjoyed setting bank and trotlines to catch catfish. We would get in the aluminum canoe and go down the river, baiting the lines and checking to see if we had caught any fish since the last time we had "run our lines." Most of the time we were successful, and it was not unusual to catch three or four nice cat-

fish each time we checked.

Of course, to catch fish we had to have bait, so we seined for minnows. Seining is the process of having a big vertical net with sinkers along one edge and floats on the other edge, with a couple of long poles attached to the ends. We would walk into a shallow part of the river and while Dad grabbed one end of the net, I would grab the other. We would walk through the water for a short distance and then lift the net to hopefully find we had caught a generous quantity of minnows. The minnows we caught were then used as bait for our fish-

ing lines. I thought seining was as much fun as fishing because you never knew what you might catch. There could be a turtle or even a snake mixed in with the minnows.

During one episode of seining, we lifted the net and found we had managed to corral four little catfish. They were maybe 4 inches long. I immediately said to my dad, "Look Dad, baby catfish! Let's put them in the bucket and have Granddad take them to his place and put them in his pond." Granddad had a small tank and I had visions of stocking the pond with fish, giving them a chance to grow, and catching them at some future time.

My dad replied to my inquiry by saying, "Son, that would be against the law. The state wildlife code says you must return any fish under six inches in length to the water immediately upon catching it." I heard what my father had said, and I immediately started searching for excuses. was, what a waste!

"But Dad, it is not like we are going to eat the fish, or kill them, we are just going to transport them to water in a different location. What could be the harm? No one will catch us."

Dad nodded his head and said, "I understand what you're thinking, son, but we would be breaking the law, and that makes it wrong. If a man starts rationalizing, he can always come up with an excuse to not follow the rules. It is best to simply do what the law requires. Once a man finds he can break the law and get away with it, it makes it that much easier to cross the line and break the law in another situation. Where does it stop?"

As Dad released the small fish back into the river, I shook my head seeing my dream of stocking Granddad's pond fly out the window. All I could think of

I never knew my father to break the law or attempt to work around it. I never saw him not follow a rule. To him, adherence was a citizen's responsibility. It was what made society work. It took me a few years and a few practical lessons to realize the power of my father's

Unfortunately, it seems like there are people in our society who do not think rules apply to them. They spend the bulk of their time trying to twist the law to their advantage. The ends seem to justify the means. It happens every day, and we often witness the turmoil it creates.

Like my wise father said, once it starts, when does it stop?

Thought for the day: I busted a mirror and got seven years bad luck. My lawyer thinks he can get it down to

Until next time.

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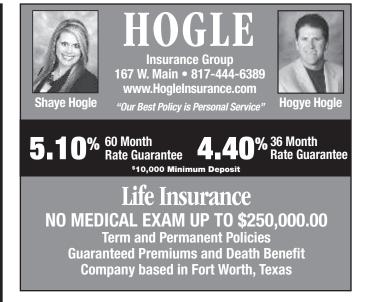
Thank You! Abby Kennedy

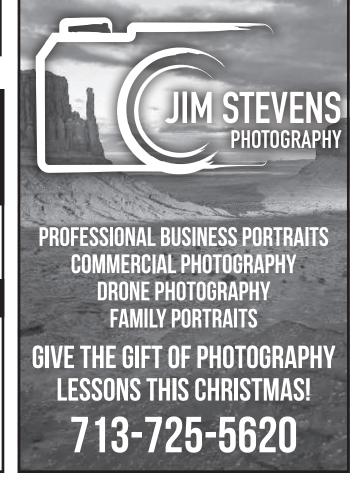
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Springtown Porcupines sharpen their quills for district

BY JEFF PRINCE

jeff@azlenews.net

A month ahead of its district opener, the Springtown Porcupines have been enduring losses recently while trying to improve their defense, passing and shooting.

The Porcupines hope to propel themselves into the win column Friday when they play Wichita Falls Rider at home in front of friendly faces.

Springtown coaches remain upbeat, reminding players and fans that this season's nonconference portion of the schedule was purposely loaded with strong opponents. Recent losses came to the likes of Fossil Ridge, Aledo, Wimberly and Glen Rose.

Future games won't be picnics in the park, either. Friday's matchup pits the Porcupines against Rider, a team that plays in the same District 5-5A as Azle. After that comes an even bigger Class 6A foe – Paschal – with a strong record.

Challenging themselves with Goliaths in preseason is expected to toughen up Springtown for upcoming District 8-4A battles against Castleberry, Lake Worth, Decatur, Krum and Bridgeport. Those games determine whether the Porcupines make the playoffs.

Last year, Springtown entered the final game of the regular season in a win-andin position. Beat Castleberry, and Springtown would make the playoffs. Lose and the Pines would go home.

The Porcupines came close but fell 59-57.

They are determined to make the playoffs this time around.

This season's district opener is Jan. 13 at Krum.

The district home opener is Tuesday, Jan. 17, against Bridgeport.

The boys get their first chance for revenge against Castleberry Jan. 20 at the Lions' home gym.



Dylan Crutchfield, a sophomore, is one of several football players now transitioning to basketball.

Stoli Cox, Brinklee Dauenhauer earn all-state recognition

STAFF REPORTS

The Texas Girls Coaches Association has recognized Stoli Cox and Brinklee Dauenhauer for their strong performances on the volleyball court this season.

Braylon Easter goes high for a layup against Western Hills.

Cox earned all-state recognition, while Brinklee Dauenhauer earned all-state and academic all-state.

Cox and Dauenhauer led the Lady Porcupines in kill shots and were overall team leaders who guided Springtown to an area championship.

Volleyball coach Leighann Strickland said she has nominated Dauenhauer for all-state several times over the years. This season, Dauenhauer's teammates elected her as captain, and she broke school records for career digs with 2,180 and career aces with 199.

In her senior year, Dauenhauer made 562 kills, 78 aces, 27 blocks, 559 digs and boasted a serving percentage of 91.8%.

Dauenhauer "works hard on the court, in the weight room, and in her studies," Strickland said. "She is a leader to all within her school, and others look to her for

guidance in all areas of life."
Dauenhauer has taken
many dual-credit courses and
advanced placement classes
while also starring on various
sports teams.

"She truly is just a great kid to have in a program, and we have been blessed to have her in ours," Strickland said.

Dauenhauer is planning to play volleyball at Southern Arkansas University in 2023.

Cox, a junior, impressed coaches and teammates with her leadership and work ethic.

"She has worked hard to be one of the top players for our team," Strickland said. "She takes charge and really stepped up this season, leading the way in several games for us. She is one of our top 2 players, and she really shone this season."

Cox excelled around the net, where she recorded 425 kills and 53 blocks. She added 174 digs, 29 assists and 17 aces and had a 96.2 serving



 $From \ left, Brinklee \ Dauenhauer, Kylie \ Druxman \ and \ Stoli \ Cox \ enjoy \ a \ moment \ on \ court \ together.$

percentage.

Cox began the season focusing on the front row but "quickly became a 6-rotation player," the coach said. "She simply stepped up and led all season long for us."

Cox should return to the

court next season as the Porcupines' top kill queen and fiery leader.

"Her future is a very bright

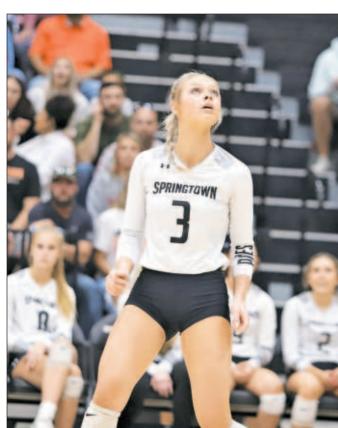
"Her future is a very bright one, and I can't wait to see it continue to develop," Strickland said.

PHOTOS BY JEFF PRINCE **Right: Stoli Cox helped lead**

Springtown volleyball to an area championship.

Left: Stoli Cox was dangerous around the net all season.







PHOTOS BY JEFF PRINCE

Kelsey Beaman, a senior and team leader, fights for a rebound.

From freshmen on up, Springtown hoop girls ready to rumble



BY JEFF PRINCE

jeff@azlenews.net

Playoff appearances have been few in recent years, and the Springtown basketball girls knew this season might be the toughest one yet.

Freshmen make up a third of the roster. Most of the rest are sophomores or juniors. Ashlynn Dickey and Kelsey Beaman are the team's only seniors

The Lady Porcupines are still learning the game but playing with fun, excitement, and passion while doing it. They've lost more games than they've won but have built a respectable 7-11 record five weeks into the season

Beaman transferred from Weatherford Christian this year. She grew up in Springtown and went to public schools until her sophomore year, when she began commuting to the Weatherford-based private school.

my friends."

She misses her Weatherford friends but was weary of the extra driving and wanting to finish high school closer to home.

A tough start awaited her. Early in the season, Beaman felt rusty on the basketball court. Then, she battled a stomach illness and a staph infection. She feels more confident these days.

"I'm getting back into the groove," she said.

Helping her do battle on the court is Brooklyn Quintanilla, a freshman who barely tops 5 feet in stockings but makes a statement on the court.

"She plays like she is 6 feet tall," Beaman said. "She is little, but she has a big heart."

Quintanilla is most often the youngest and smallest kid but among the first to dive for a ball or jump into the fray for a rebound or turnover. Jumping through the air and landing on hardwood courts can hurt, but she said. "You have a lot of upperclassmen in front of you. You've got to make sure you are on your game and keep hustling and being coachable and just to have fun with each other."

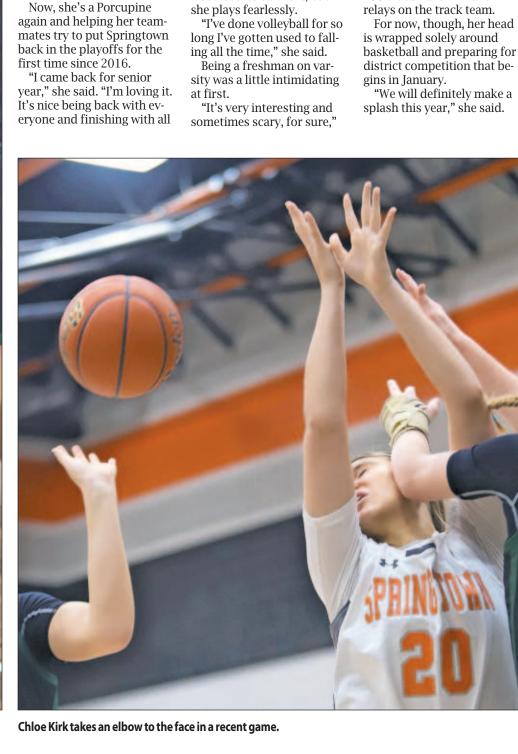
She has become more comfortable in recent weeks after going elbow-to-elbow with older girls for several weeks now.

"It doesn't faze me," she said.

The freshman grew up in Springtown and began playing basketball in junior high. She figured she would spend a year on JV before making varsity but was thrilled to be called up right away

"I love the competition, and I love how we all merge together, and we're getting our groove this time around," she said.

Basketball isn't her only athletic passion. She made varsity volleyball as a freshman and competes in the long jump, triple jump, 100m dash and 4x1 and 4x4 relays on the track team.



Brooklyn Quintanilla is usually the smallest and youngest girl on the court but doesn't shy away from larger opponents.

SPRINGTOWN

Game Faces



Springtown basketball player Jake Chaires

Short-eared elephant shrews

How many words can you make using

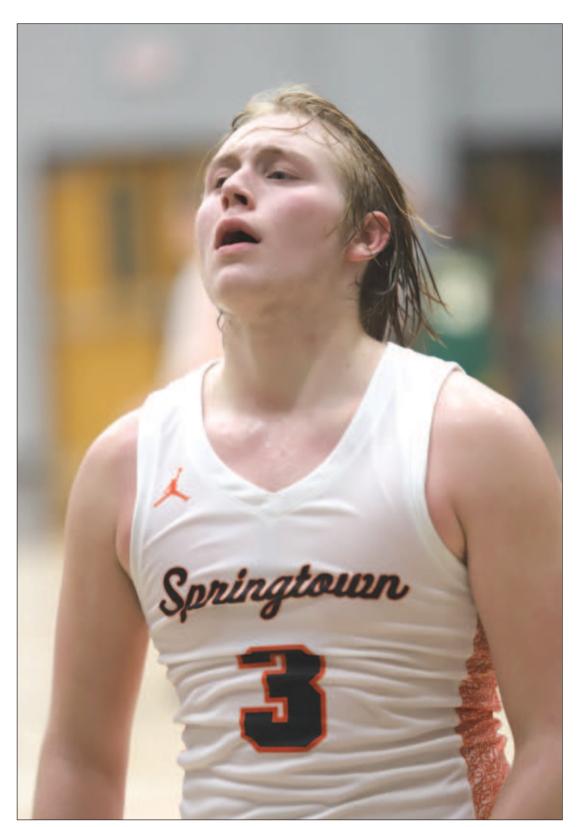
the letters in ELEPHANT SHREW?

live in southern Africa in

Namibia, Botswana

soil, dry grass and shrub land.

and South Africa. They like to live in sandy



Springtown basketball player Drake Doggett



Cut and paste these sentences in order to

even eat small worms.

Some elephant shrews will

tender shoots of young plants.

Short-eared elephant shrews eat

ants, termites, berries and the

Small and Speedy An elephant shrew is small but speedy. Color in the spaces with two dots red to find out how many miles per hour an elephant

Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle. **AFRICA** How many of them can you find on this page? **ANTS CRITTER** B K S S O I L X E V **ELEPHANT** REHPAANTSO **LEGS** ETVBEFOQUU **MOUSE** TRSUSERHON **OUNCE** TUNRGHDIMC **SHREW** INOHEHRYCE **SHRUB SMALL** RKUSLMBEKA **SNOUT** $C\ M\ T\ L\ L\ A\ M\ S\ W\ F$ **SOIL** XMELEPHANT **SPEEDY** ATERMITESI TERMITES

They baited a traps with peanut butter, oatmeal and yeast and caught a sengi. This was the furst recorded sighting in 50 years.

Kid Scoop Together

Circle the 9 mistakes in this article. Then rewrite it correctly on the lines below it. Have a family member check your work.

Lost and Found

For nearly 50 yeers,

scientists thought a kind

of elephant shrew, the

Somali sengi, had gone

extinkt, or disappear

forevur.

In 2020, scientists

travel to Djibouti, a

country next two Somalia

in Africa. They went to

look into reports that

peopul had seen the tiny

Somali sengi.

FROM THE

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

"Sh" is a Blend

TRUNK

Critter Combos

Look through the

newspaper for pictures of animals. Cut out

parts of different

animals and put them together to make up a

new animal. Give

your animal a name

and describe where it

lives, what it likes to

eat and how it behaves.

A **blend** is when two or three consonants are put together to make a sound. On one page of the newspaper, circle all of the examples you can find of two consonants put together in a word. Make a list of the blends you found. Standards Link: Language Arts: Recognize the sounds created by consonants in blends.

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B.J. Clark



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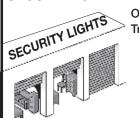




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Classifieds

086

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057

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062

066

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- **ACROSS** Garden City is seat of Glass____ County
- 5 archaic "soon" 6 softest mineral
- found in Texas 7 TXism: "got _ _
- the oven" (pregnant) 8 British mother
- 9 org. for academic psychology 12 TXism: "skinny as
- 17 "trees" in Spanish
- 19 military NCO 21 Stamford's "Texas
- Cowboy 22 TXism: "tight enough to pick a_
- (good fence) 23 Texas tennis teams can raise funds with
- 28 ooze
- 29 catch one's breath 30 Queen Elizabeth II had _ ___
- vears 31 audience reaction at a comedy club 35 TXism: "got_
- under his saddle" (irritable) 36 "The Big Tree" at
- Goose Island is the state (live oak)
- 42 TXism: "numerous as ants on _
- 44 rub out
- 46 TXism: "about _ Red River 11 fed. ID no. mud" (confusing)

- 48 TX-born Ann Doran 1955 film: "Rebel Without _
- 49 dir. from Buna to Orange
- 50 prefix meaning "large"
- 51 TXism: "down to _ and bones" (thin)
- 52 TXism: "shin___" (party) 53 TX "Cactus Jack" said
- the vice-presidency worth a bucket of warm spit"
- 54 TX Garrison who won
- 1988 Olympic medals in tennis
- 56 TXism: "__ _ New York second" (quick)
- fought, for short
- 58 lamb's mom
- 1 Ruff Rider Regatta, e.g. (2 wds.)
- 2 TXism: "loud as boot heels _____ floor"
- 3 seat of Colorado County 4 Corpus Christi FM
- 9 falsehood (2 wds.) 10 TX Patrick Swavze
- was this periodical's 1991 "Sexiest Man Alive" (2 wds.)
- 12 Texas "fire

13 drilling rig workers

18 TXism: "more than

- 57 where many Texans
 - 14 Santa_ 15 a lake in South **DOWN** Texas never
 - over in the winter 16 many Texas towns are encircled by one
 - _ way to skin a cat" (alternative) 20 Texas "Monkee,"
 - Nesmith (init.) 23 "Alamo City" init. 24 Astro Verlander stat.
 - 25 country singer McEntire 26 "widow" in Spanish
 - 27 fancy word for "exit" 32 TXism: "old __ sin"
- 33 Longhorn univ. in Austin 34 U.S. Army soldier

58

- 36 "O" of IOU 37 good farming soil 38 a Houston doctor
- who had a national television spot:
- 39 TX Sam Bass was robber

P-1615

do in the house where he died? 41 suffix denoted the female gender

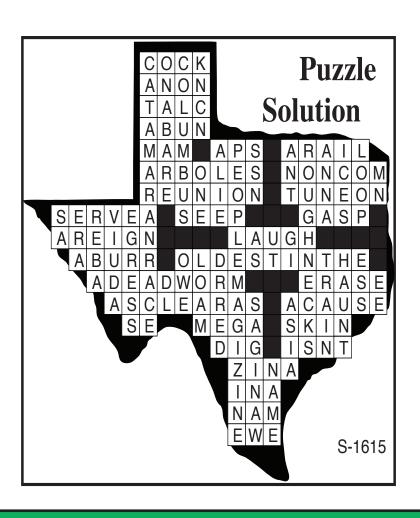
40 what a ghost might

- 43 state LD 45 boot width
- 47 on highway 496, ten miles northwest of Fort Worth
- 48 largest continent 55 TXism: "he's on a first __ basis with the bottom of the deck" (card cheat)





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