

The county had been organized about a year when changes came fast for the settlements of Picketville, Walthall, and the post office of Blue Gap moving to Content by 1881.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HISTORY OF RUNNELS COUNTY IN THIS WEEKLY SERIES BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE WINTERS ENTERPRISE AND THE RUNNELS COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
PAGE 4

The

# Winters Enterprise



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Volume 24, Issue 38

Thursday, August 14, 2014

Winters, Texas 75¢

## Six candidates in special election ballot

RUBEN CANTU-RODRIGUEZ  
WINTERS ENTERPRISE

**BALLINGER-** Six candidates will be running in the special election ballot for the unfinished term of District 28 State Senate seat, vacated by the resignation of Robert Duncan, who became the new Chancellor of the Texas Tech System in Lubbock, Texas.

In Runnels County the places on the ballot, as drawn by the County Clerk's Office, will be as follows: 1. Delwin Jones (R), 2. Charles Perry, (R), 3. Kerry Douglas McKennon (L), 4. Jodey Arrington (R), 5. E.M. Garza (R), 6. Greg Wortham (R).

Special election day will be Tuesday, September 9, 2014. Early voting will be held August 25 through September 5 with the exception being Labor Day.

Early voting will be Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. through 5 p.m. at the Runnels County Courthouse Annex, behind the Courthouse, at 603 Strong Avenue, Ballinger, Texas.

On election day polling locations will be at the Runnels County Courthouse Annex for voting precincts 1, 2, 7 and 8. Precinct 3 polling place will be located at the Winters Housing Authority. For precincts 4, 5 and 6 the polling place will be at the Winters Tax Office, and for the precincts 9 and 10, the polling place will be the Miles City Hall.

The winner of the special election will serve the rest of Duncan's term, which ends in 2017. If no candidate receives at least 50 percent of the vote, a runoff will be called at some point later in the year.



PHOTO: RUBEN CANTU-RODRIGUEZ

Heavy machinery levels the ground at new Walmart Express location, on U.S. Highway 83, just north of Novice Road.

## Walmart breaks the ground

RUBEN CANTU-RODRIGUEZ  
WINTERS ENTERPRISE

**WINTERS-** Tuesday, August 5, 2014, Walmart was issued a construction permit in Winters, Texas, and without further ceremony the crews immediately started mowing and leveling the ground for the new Walmart Express, which will be located north of the intersection of U.S. Highway 83 and Novice Road, on the east side of U.S. 83.

The store, which according to corporate

sources will be having a pharmacy among other amenities, is expected to be open by year-end.

In June, the Winters City Council approved the rezoning for a property located on NEC N. Main Street and Novice Road to C-1 to allow for development of Walmart Express.

The Winters store will be operating under a new concept, created to offer low prices in a smaller format, and provide convenient access shopping trips. The "Express"

stores give Walmart flexibility, especially in rural and urban areas where shoppers may not have access to larger stores.

Previously, on April 28, the City Council approved a variance for sell of alcohol, and on May 19 another variance to city ordinances was passed regarding the number of parking slots required for the store.

The Winters store is one of five that Walmart will be opening in West Texas before the end of the year.

## Dove Fest Queen to be crowned for the first time

WINTERS ENTERPRISE  
STAFF REPORT

**WINTERS-** The 12th Annual Winters Dove Fest will be held Saturday, September 6, 2014 with a Dove Fest Queen being crowned for the first time. Contestants must be a junior or senior at Winters High School, participate in an interview with judges, have a float in the Dove Fest Parade, and be involved in Dove Fest activities during the day. The winner of the Queen Contest will be awarded a \$1,000 scholarship to attend college.

Another new event for Dove Fest is the parade which will begin at 10 a.m. in the south part of Winters and conclude at the Winters Community Center. A new Arts and Crafts Show with a number of exhibitors will be held in the City Park beginning at 9 a.m. For more information about the pageant and the parade contact Christina Davis at (325) 977 0958.

A Dove Fest Dance will be at the Winters Community featuring Justin Kaczyc and the Natural Outlaws from 7-11 p.m. A small admission fee

and cooler fee will be charged.

The Hunters Appreciation Barbecue will be at the Winters Community Center, beginning at 10:30 a.m. and lasting until 1:30 p.m. Adult and child plates will be available. Musical entertainment and a silent auction will be held under the big tent in front of the Community Center. A live auction will begin at 1:30 p.m. under the tent with lots of nice items.

The Dovefest is collecting auction items for the live and silent auctions.  
PLEASE CONTINUE PAGE 3



Leroy Pelzel

Local WWII veteran taking the Texas Permian Basin Honor Flight

PAGE 6

## Turning on the gridiron

Saturday, August 9, the Winters Blizzards took the field for the first scrimmage of the 2014 season, an intersquad held at Blizzard Stadium. The season continues to warm up this Saturday, when the Blizzards take the road to Cross Plains for another scrimmage, aiming to fine tune their game and skills.

PHOTO: JOE GERHART



## Veterans counseling on the rise

PTSD and brain injuries leading mental health services among veterans; number of patients up 60% in five years

RUBEN CANTU-RODRIGUEZ  
WINTERS ENTERPRISE

**BALLINGER-** With the slimming-down of military forces and Vietnam veterans reaching retirement age, specialized counseling services are experiencing a boom in demand, particularly for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and traumatic brain injuries.

Dennis Wright, Readjustment Counselor for the Taylor County Vet Center, said that during the last few years counseling services went from a few hours a day once a week, to three or four times a week all day back-to-back.

During the last five years, he said, the demand of counseling services has increased "60 percent through the Veterans Centers, and we expect the rise to continue."

New research, Wright explained, shows that 68 percent of recently retiring veterans are receiving mental health services, mainly from traumatic brain injuries or PTSD.

Wright, who graduated with a PhD in Clinical Psychology and has been counseling professionally since 1994, came to Ballinger last week with the Mobile Vet Center. The center provides services for veterans and spouses of veterans in 76 counties throughout Texas.

"We focus on readjustment, helping veterans to comeback, to get assimilated back into the community," Wright said. "One thing that the vet centers got a little bit of advantage over the VA is that the VA focuses on the veteran himself, we focus on the family system."

The center, he explained, provides family counseling, marriage counseling, and will help a veteran or veteran's spouse coming in by him or herself, which they get quite frequently.

Back in the 1990s, he said, the focus was on the veteran, now they bring their spouse and the couple can start focusing on what the veteran is going through, he or she doesn't have to feel like it is all a secret, and they wind up helping each other.

"A lot of times the family is affected by PTSD, because they have to do everything around veterans... the home runs one way during the day, and when it's time for dad to come home everybody has roles they have to play to make sure everything is perfect, so they don't have that veteran exploding on them," Wright said.

"If we can get the veteran to hear this and how he is protected, then (the recovery process) is a lot faster." Recent changes in the military forces have generated a large workload in veterans related services.

In 2012 the federal government started a program to slim-down the military forces. A cut back of 27,000 soldiers and 20,000 marines was announced.

"We got so many veterans coming out of the military now, and as the military is winding down thousands of people are coming to the private sector."

All of those discharged from service have Vet Center benefits, as long as they served in a combat zone in one of the four branches of the military, and have an honorable discharge. The benefits are also extended to some people in case of a sexual assault, even if it happened while in boot camp.

The later, Wright said, have also been on the rise, not because there are more sexual assaults, but because now "it is becoming easier to stand up and talk."

Also increasing the number of PTSD cases being treated, he said, are Vietnam veterans retiring from the workforce.

"While you are able to stay busy, you can walk it out of your mind, you don't have to deal with it, but when you retire you go through an identity crisis that you no longer know even who you are. People has more time on their hands, they spend more time by themselves and that's when the memories come back. "We are seeing veterans who have never come to the VA since they came back from Vietnam, and one of the things to do is rebuild their trust," he explained.

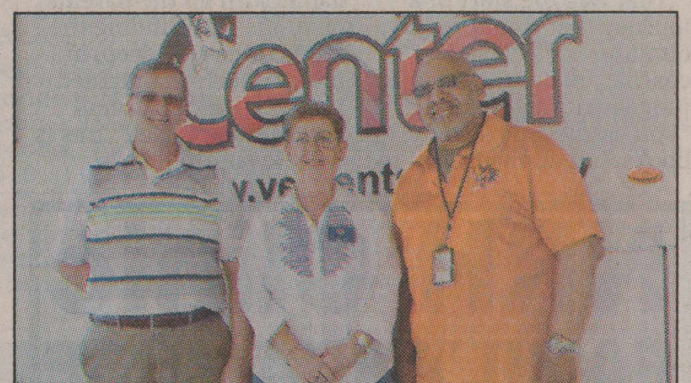


PHOTO: RUBEN CANTU-RODRIGUEZ

Readjustment Counselor Dennis Wright, Runnels Co. Veterans Service Officer Sandra Van Zant, and Outreach Technician Donovan Smith.

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# Veteran's Corner

Before recessing for a five-week break, the House and Senate passed legislation (Conference Committee report for H.R. 3230) to reform the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The legislation includes:

Requiring the VA to offer non-VA care to any veteran enrolled in the VA health care system as of August 1, 2014 or who is a newly discharged combat veteran, if such veteran is unable to secure an appointment within 30 days or resides more than 40 miles from the nearest VA medical facility; extending the pilot program to provide rehabilitation services to veterans with complex-mild traumatic brain injury (TBI); improving care for veterans experiencing military sexual trauma; allowing the VA Secretary to expedite the firing of senior VA managers who are accused of mismanagement; hiring more physicians, other medical staff, and improving VA infrastructure; providing in-state tuition to veterans and eligible dependents using the Post 9/11 GI Bill;

providing Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits to spouses of service members who died in the line of duty; establishing a Congressional Commission on Care to evaluate access to care throughout the VA health care system; and authorizing 27 major facility leases in 18 states and Puerto Rico.

The final bill cost nearly \$17 billion over 10 years with \$5 billion in offsets, making it less expensive than previous VA reform legislation passed by the House and the Senate. The bill now goes to the President to be signed into law. For more information, contact Sandra at the Veterans Service Office at 602 Strong Ave on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 3pm, or call 365-3612.

Sandra G. Van Zant  
Veterans County Service Officer  
P.O. Box 108  
Ballinger, TX 76821  
PHONE (325) 365-3612  
E-MAIL rcvso@wtxs.net



PHOTO: FILE

The gun and knife show, one of the favorites at the annual fest.

## 2014 Dove Fest: Items of all variety to be auctioned at the silent and live auctions

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Items of all variety will be auctioned off. Joel Lemley from Blackwell, Texas will be this year's auctioneer. Lemley is a member of the Texas Auctioneers Association and National Auctioneers Association. Lemley not only auctions for benefits and fund raising, he auctions for cattle sales in Ft. Worth, Lockhart, and Fredericksburg, Texas along with auctioning in Colorado Springs, Co. If you would like to donate an item, please contact Bobbie Collom at (325) 977 7379 or Teresa Walden at (325) 669 8157. Money that is raised through the Dovefest goes back to the Winters community.

The raffle drawing for guns will begin right after the live auction. Six very

nice guns valued at over \$8,000 will be given away this year and raffle tickets are available from several people in advance or can be purchased in the Community Center that day.

Dove Hunts will be available around Winters. The cost includes a meal ticket. To arrange a hunt, contact Archie Jobe at (325) 660 8334. The Clay Pigeon Fun Shoot will kick off at 8 a.m. on Rodeo Arena Road. For more information, call Bill Bredemeyer at (325) 977 0511.

The Winters Gun & Knife Show will begin at 9 a.m. at the Old Dollar General Building in Downtown. More information can be obtained by calling Randall Davis at (325) 977 1501. A barbecue meal

will be served at the New Chick-Inn next to the Gun Show from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. The Motorcycle Fun Run will feature a "Scenic Bike Run Near Winters." Signup is at the Big Tent and begins at 9 a.m. Cost includes a meal ticket. For more information, call Elmer Buckelew at (325) 365 6124.

A drawing for door prizes will be held every 15 minutes under the Big Tent. Lunch is free to all active military — you do not have to be in uniform, just show your ID. Credit cards are welcome for all Dove Fest purchases. The Winters Dove Fest is hosted each year by the Winters Dove Fest Committee, the City of Winters, the Winters Area Chamber of Commerce, and the Winters Area Business and Industrial Corp.

Proceeds from all Dove Fest events go to support 16 local youth and non-profit organizations which work to make Dove Fest a success. For more information, visit Facebook "Winters Dove Fest."

## Pest control calculator available for maintenance professionals

WINTERS ENTERPRISE STAFF REPORT

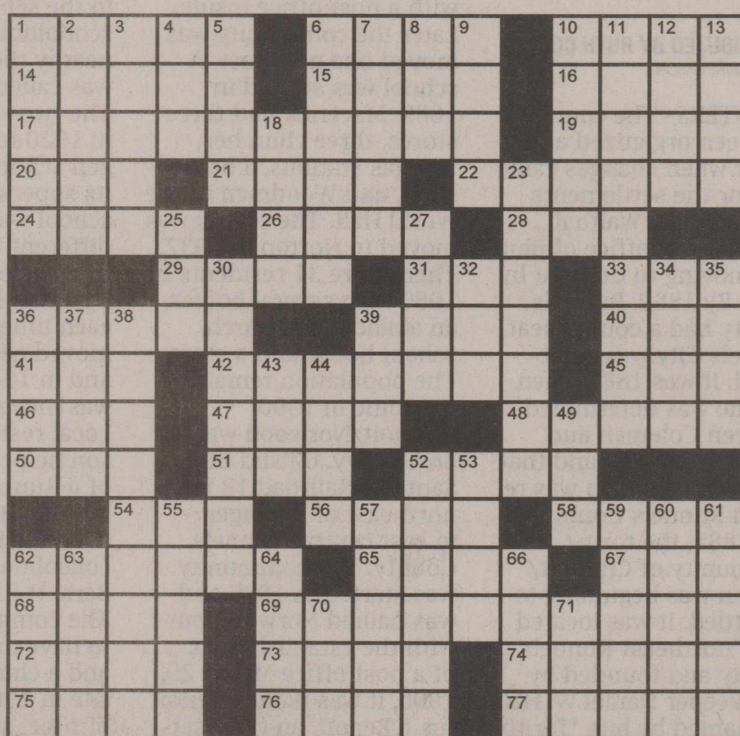
DALLAS- Maintenance professionals gearing up for the start of school now have a new tool to help defend students from the inevitable summer influx of undesirables roaming the halls. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's new integrated pest management website, <http://ipmcalculator.com>, offers school staff members in charge of pest control a wealth of practical information on managing rodents, birds, cockroaches, ants and a plethora of other unwelcome denizens, said Janet Hurley, AgriLife Extension integrated pest management program specialist at Dallas. "The cost calculator, available free on the website, allows the user to assess various pest risks on their school and district levels," Hurley said. "The resulting information will be a big help for those responsible for developing a budget for a school integrated pest management program."

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

"Royal Flush"

Across

- 1 Soft drinks
- 6 A long, long time
- 10 Light blue color
- 14 Come up
- 15 Man or boy
- 16 Do a household chore
- 17 Animal with big ears
- 19 Judge
- 20 Devoured
- 21 \_\_\_ in the blank
- 22 Goes too fast
- 24 Sneakers brand
- 26 Hazard for a ship
- 28 Big coffee holder
- 29 Angry cat's sound
- 31 Parking place
- 33 Take a chair
- 36 Rouse
- 39 Small
- 40 Nest egg shelter, for short
- 41 Boxing great
- 42 Certain bill, in slang
- 45 Zig and \_\_\_
- 46 Actor Chaney
- 47 Kitchen fixture
- 48 Unwraps
- 50 Cost an arm and a \_\_\_
- 51 Earl Grey or chamomile
- 52 Not crazy
- 54 Tax expert, for short
- 56 Former senator Trent
- 58 Low-\_\_\_ diet
- 62 Mythical creatures
- 65 Hard to find
- 67 \_\_\_ Aviv
- 68 It has a sash
- 69 Wound cover
- 72 Surrounding glow
- 73 Trick
- 74 Access Day
- 75 School orgs.
- 76 "What \_\_\_ is new?"



77 Cheese with holes

Down

- 1 Pat of "Wheel of Fortune"
- 2 Give a speech
- 3 Cut into small cubes
- 4 Inquire
- 5 Medieval worker
- 6 Walks slowly
- 7 Clark of "Gone With the Wind"
- 8 Quarterback Manning
- 9 Goes down, as the Sun
- 10 Black \_\_\_ (scary snake)
- 11 Like some beds
- 12 Not new
- 13 Bank conveniences

18 Puts on TV

23 Clothing store clerk's urge

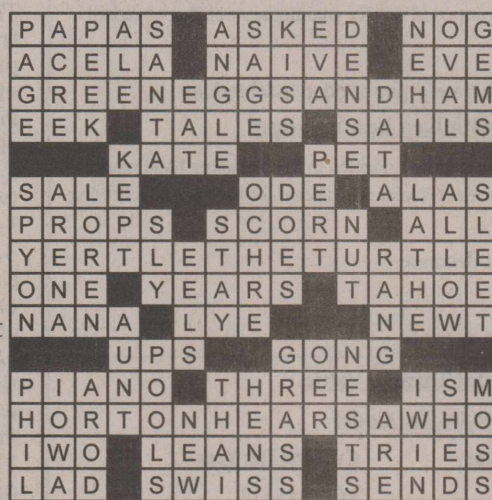
- 25 Not he
- 27 Toss (a coin)
- 30 Counting everything
- 32 Lennon's lady
- 34 Its capital is Tehran
- 35 They tell you an item's price
- 36 One of four in most rooms
- 37 Soothing plant
- 38 Snake with a hood
- 39 Bill Gates's portal
- 43 Christmas \_\_\_
- 44 Actress Patricia \_\_\_
- 49 Chest muscle, for short
- 52 Home to a horse

53 Razor brand

55 "Guilty" and "not guilty"

- 57 Two-color cookies
- 59 Video game company
- 60 TV star Philbin
- 61 "\_\_\_ you!" (words to a sneezer)
- 62 Snare
- 63 Easy victory
- 64 Place to keep valuables
- 66 Finishes
- 70 Rank below gen.
- 71 \_\_\_ Jones Industrial Average

## LAST WEEK'S ANSWER GRID



## Weather Whys

Q: What are the "dog days of summer?"

A: It's a slang term for the hottest time of the year, explains Brent McRoberts of Texas A&M University. "In general terms, it's the time between early July and early September when the highest temperatures occur in the Northern Hemisphere," he says. "The ancient Egyptians named the brightest star in the sky Sirius, which they labeled the 'dog star' after one of their mythic gods. Sirius could be seen in the sky during this time and they believed it was responsible for the intense summer heat." "The Old Farmer's Almanac marks the 'dog days' as the 40 day period occurring from July 3 to August 11, but other countries mark them differently," he says. "It is usually the hottest and most uncomfortable time of the year."

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### Business of the Quarter

The Winters Area Chamber of Commerce would like to thank the North Runnels Hospital for the hard work and great care given to the Winters and surrounding area residents.

Pictured here are Bobbie Collom, chamber President Pam Barnes, chamber Vice President Tena Gray, and hospital Administrator Sidney Tucker, taking picture Matthew Price.

The North Runnels Hospital always takes good care of their patients, they proud themselves in good food and friendly service from their kitchen staff. Nurses and nurse aides take pride on their one-on-one patient care. All departments stand by the their motto "The hospital with a big heart."

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED



PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

World War II veteran and retired Miles farmer Leroy Pelzel will be honored in September in Washington, D.C.

## Bringing back memories of WWII

WINTERS ENTERPRISE STAFF REPORT

WINTERS— Leroy Pelzel, a former Army Sergeant and World War II veteran who served from 1944-1946, is one of the two Runnels County residents who will be attending the Texas Permian Basin Honor Flight when he visits the World War II memorial in Washington, D.C., this September.

The Permian Basin Honor Flight that will take veterans and their guardians to D.C. will take place between September 17-19. During the trip, veterans and their guardians will visit the World War II, Korean and Vietnam memorials and the Arlington National Cemetery. They will also tour the U.S. House of Representatives.

At age 88, Pelzel is a retired farmer living in Miles, who was born in Westphalia, Texas. His parents moved to Rowena when he was 6-months-old. He went to school there and joined the Army in October of 1944. After receiving induction in Fort Sam Houston

in San Antonio, Pelzel was sent to Camp Wolters in Mineral Wells where he took basic training.

He saw the first in a series of unexpected changes when he was transferred to the Air Force, in Shepard, Wichita Falls. Then he and some others were sent from Wichita Falls to Amarillo, where they would attend airplane mechanic school. For some reason he never received airplane mechanic instruction while in Amarillo, and he was later sent to Biloxi, Mississippi. But the war ended while he was in Biloxi.

Pelzel was sent to Dallas, where he spent a few months driving pilots back and forth to Love Field, and then he was sent to Brazil, where he was an ambulance driver and a clerk for the medics.

His duty with the Army was due, and he was discharged in September 1946.

He came back to Rowena, and while working at a neighbor's farm he met the farmer's daughter, Elaine, his now wife for almost 67 years.

Although this will not be his first trip to D.C., the significance of the flight and the places he will visit have Pelzel very excited.

## Stores, churches: After 1920 a two-story school was built

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

as Bowman. Later after 1920, a two story rock school building was constructed east of the railroad near downtown. A Baptist Church was built near the school. With the decline of the town, the post office closed in the 1970s.

In 1900, the heirs of John Harris of Galveston offered for lease a league of land in the southeast part of Runnels County. This area was to become known as the Oxien Community. July 27, 1905 a post office was opened with W.W. McKissack as postmaster. The mail was brought from Talpa three times a week at first, but when the town grew, the mail was brought daily. Oxien had a cotton gin, a general store with a post office, a telephone switchboard and a filling station. Later another store and filling station opened. Oxien's school was built in 1909. In 1913, the Oxien school and the Dietz school consolidated. The combined school was relocated on the Jarm Morrison place. The post office closed in 1913. In 1920, a larger building was built. After this, the school was known as Dietz School District No. 31. In 1930, this was consolidated with Crews. In the early days church was held in the school house. In 1924, the Baptist Church was organized and a building was erected. It closed in 1937.

The community of Marie was located in west central Runnels County. It was named for the wife of Walter (Buck) Gentry, a local landowner. The post office was established in 1906. Walter C. Bass was the store keeper and first postmaster. A gin was built in 1904 and operated until 1916. A school was started in 1901. A Woodman Hall was built above the school. The churches met in the building. A Baptist church

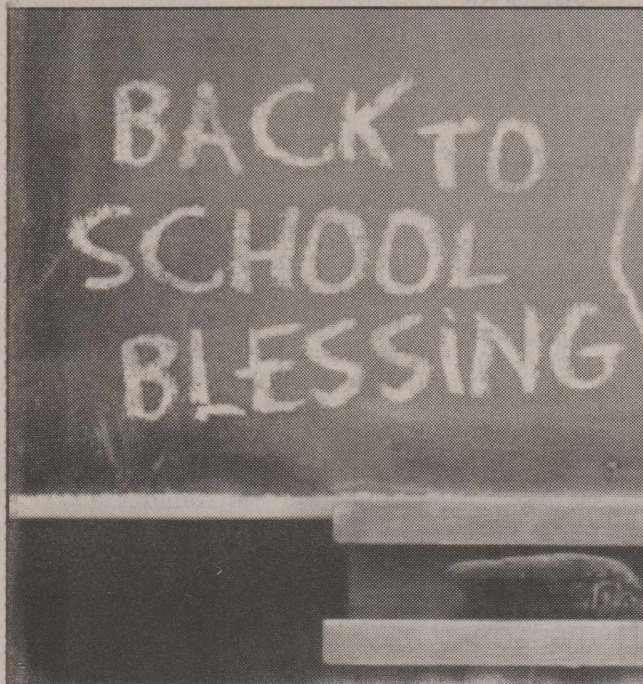
was organized in 1903 and later a Methodist Church was started when the Baptist dissolved in 1916. A new two-teacher school was erected that same year and was then moved to Bronte, Texas in 1938. The post office was discontinued June 14, 1941.

It was once called County Line because of its location near the Taylor County Line. The name of the town would be Drasco in the north central part of Runnels County. Its name was derived from letters taken from names submitted by the residents. The community's name was changed because there was another place by that name in Texas. The post office was then granted in 1909 to Drasco but was discontinued in 1911. A school was started in 1903 and in February of the same year, a Union Sunday School composed of Methodists and Baptists was also formed.

The Methodists organized in 1904 and built their first church in 1912. The Baptist organized November of 1907. They built their first building in 1908. Those churches have all closed. The community supported several businesses but then all either closed or moved except for the Drasco Baptist Church building that is now active with the Bluff Creek Cowboy Church meeting there.

Each community of Runnels County almost always established a post office, a school and churches. Cemeteries were established in almost all of the communities and to date, only a very few are not active and maintained.

Resources: Runnels County Historical Commission Histories Eighteen Ghost Towns of Runnels County, Texas, Alton O'Neal, Jr.



Date: Sunday August 24th

Time: 5:00 pm

Where: North Main Church of Christ

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**THERE IS SKILL TO  
HITTING A FLYING BIRD**  
PAGE 2

**TEXAS SETS DOVE,  
TEAL SEASONS**  
PAGE 5

**TO SHOOT OR  
NOT TO SHOOT**  
PAGE 12

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**PAGE 4**

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GLEN ROSE REPORTER  
**GLEN ROSE REPORTER**

# There is skill to hitting a flying bird

By Kevin Holamon

kevin.holamon@brownwoodbulletin.com

It's common practice, particularly among new dove hunters, to simply pick up a few boxes of the cheapest shells on the shelf. It's easy to fall into the mindset of, "The more I shoot, the better chance I have of limiting out, so cheaper is smarter."

Rare are the hunters who can fill their limit of 15 birds, with 15 shots; and then only under optimal circumstances. You'll likely never meet one of them.

There is skill to hitting a flying bird with consistency that only comes from doing it . . . repeatedly. That may sound like it supports the originally stated assumption, but by adding the element of using the proper ammunition, the ratio of bagged birds to shells can be dramatically increased.

Here is a down and dirty explanation of the whats and whys of shotshell selection, starting with a brief description.

The sides of the boxes pictured here are examples of what decisions face the shopping hunter. Of course, the first in the line is pretty self explanatory. Being sure it

matches your gun is about all that needs to be said.

The next number, in this case 2 3/4, is the length of the shotshell and it is imperative it matches the shotgun's chamber. That information is found on the barrel of the firearm, along with the gauge identifier. If yours says it's a 3 inch chamber, you can shoot either 2 3/4 or 3 inch shells. The reverse is not an option, unless you'd care to find out what it's like to have a shotgun explode in your hands.

On the 12 gauge box, the next number reveals the "dram equivalence" that indicates how the performance compares to older shells, which were measured by the weight of black powder in drams, rather than grains. Most consider it an antiquated measure of performance, but today the only people who might be concerned with it are reloaders. The only thing that may be important to everyone else is that the number has a direct correlation to the size of the bruise on the hunter's shoulder, at the end of a long day of shooting. The larger the number, the larger the bruise. Here endeth the lesson.



PHOTOS BY KEVIN HOLAMON

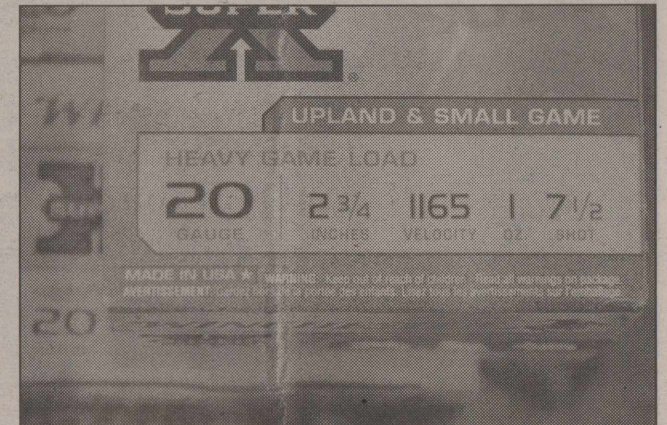
On the 20 gauge box, the third number — 1165 — is simply the approximate velocity in feet per second. Since most shots with a 20 gauge will be around 50 yards or less, it means the shot and the bird will arrive at the same location (if all goes as planned) in about 0.13 seconds. Keep that in mind when judging how far to lead a bird.

The fourth number is the combined weight of all of the shot in the shell, which should be considered with the last number. The 12 gauge shells pictured have 1 1/8 ounces of size 7 1/2 shot. Each lead shot, in 7 1/2, is 0.095 inches in diameter and weighs 1.46 grains. An ounce of 7 1/2 shot is 338 individual pellets. In this case, the 12 gauge shells contain about 380 pellets.

Now, if you've made it this far, or just skipped ahead of all that technical stuff and wound up here, what does all of that mean when it comes to buying shells that will help put birds on the grill or in the skillet?

According to long-time manager and 32-year employee of Weakley-Watson Sporting Goods, Gerry Laing, shells with the specs in the two photos are the most popular.

"If you're carrying one box of shells to the field, I'd suggest 1 1/8 ounce 7 1/2 shot," Laing said for those shooting a 12



gauge, "That's our number one seller."

In 20 gauge, Laing suggests 1 ounce 7 1/2 shot.

In areas where white-winged dove are more prevalent, Laing says "heavy sixes" will produce better results. The number six shot is significantly larger and heavier, relatively speaking of course. While the pellets will produce greater force on impact, more easily bringing down the larger birds, the downside is there are far fewer of them — 218 per ounce — making accuracy much more critical. These shells are easily identifiable by the longer brass on the end.

"More and more people are using 1 1/4 ounce for white-wing," Laing said. "One ounce aren't heavy enough for white-wing. 1 1/8 is the minimum and we recommend 1 1/4."

Laing suggests 1 ounce 6 shot for 20 gauge shooters in areas of high white-wing populations.

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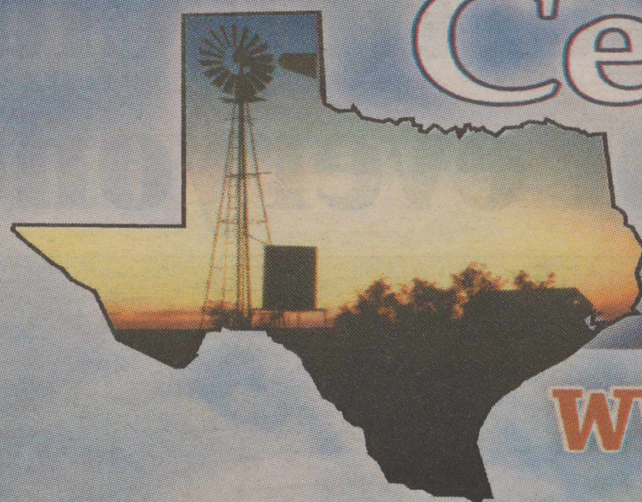
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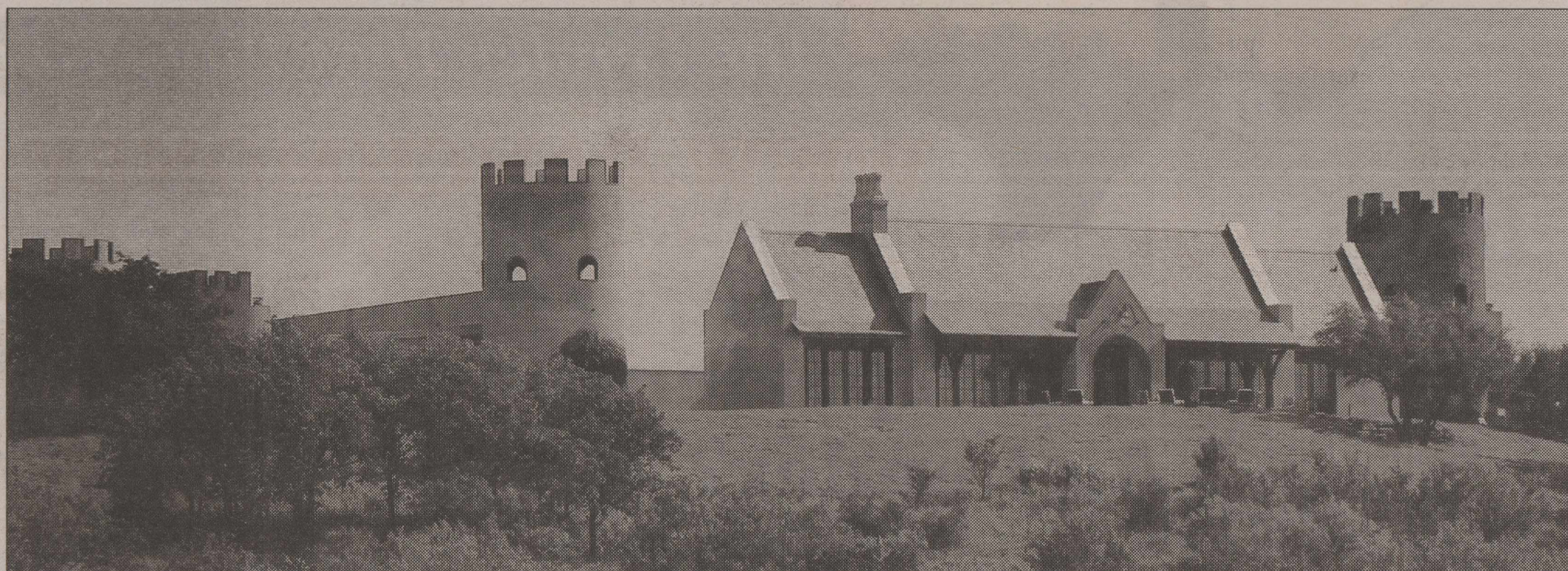
# Greystone Castle Sporting Club offers something for everyone

By Phil Riddle  
phil.riddle@empiretribune.com

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PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

SEE GREYSTONE, 17 The outline of Greystone Castle Sporting Club graces the country side on Interstate 20 near Thurber.



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<p>Rio 28ga Ammo #7.5</p>  <p><b>\$10<sup>99</sup></b></p>	<p><b>Stoeger \$299<sup>99</sup></b></p> <p>P-350 Pump Action Shotgun 12 Gauge 28 Inch Vent Rib Barrel Black Finish Red Bar Front Sight Metal Bead Mid-Sight Back Synthetic Stock 2.75-3-3.5 Inch Shells</p> 	<p>Rio Ammo Game Load 410ga 3 in #7.5</p>  <p><b>\$10<sup>99</sup></b></p>	<p>Winchester SXP 12ga 28" Max 5 Camo</p>  <p><b>\$399<sup>99</sup></b></p>	<p>Rio Ammo Game Load 16ga #7.5</p>  <p><b>\$9<sup>99</sup></b></p>	<p>Portable Camouflage Stool</p>  <p><b>\$14<sup>99</sup></b></p>

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# Hunting licenses currently on sale

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

AUSTIN — New licenses for the 2014-15 hunting and fishing seasons went on sale Friday, Aug. 15. The current year Texas hunting and fishing licenses (except year-to-date fishing licenses) will expire Aug. 31.

Every year, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department issues about 2.5 million hunting and fishing licenses through the agency's 28 field offices, more than 50 state parks and at over 1,700 retailers across the state. Licenses may also be purchased online through the TPWD website at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/buy](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/buy) or by phone at 1-800-895-4248. Call center hours are Monday through Friday, 8 p.m. to 5 p.m. and there is a required \$5 convenience fee for each phone or online transaction. The online transaction system is available 24/7. For online and phone orders, a physical license will be mailed within three business days. During that time period, a transaction receipt will be provided via email that will be sufficient proof of hunting license that can be used



for dove hunting, though it will not be allowed for the take of fish or wildlife that require a tag.

Hunting and fishing regulations for the new season can be found in the 2014-15 Outdoor Annual, available at license retailers now and online at [www.txoutdoorannual.com](http://www.txoutdoorannual.com). Starting this fall, hunters and anglers can take the Outdoor Annual with them in the field or on the water via a new app available by the end of August for free download on iPhone

and Android platforms.

In addition to a hunting license, anyone born after Sept. 1, 1971, must successfully complete a hunter education training course or purchase a one-time deferral good for one license year in order to hunt legally in Texas. The certification is valid for life and is honored in all other states and provinces.

Hunters who need hunter education certification now have expanded contemporary options including a streamlined,

one-day basic course and an option for anyone 17 years of age or older to take the hunting safety training completely online. A combination online home study and 4 to 5 hour skills field day course is also offered. More information on hunter education certification is available online at [www.tpwd.state.tx.us/outdoor-learning/hunter-education](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/outdoor-learning/hunter-education).

A Migratory Game Bird endorsement and Harvest Information Program (HIP) certification are also required to hunt dove or teal in September. HIP certification involves a brief survey of previous year's migratory bird hunting success and is conducted at the time licenses are purchased. Duck hunters also need to purchase a Federal Duck Stamp.

There are other mandatory endorsements to consider at the time of license purchase. An Upland Game Bird Stamp (\$7) is required to hunt all non-migratory game birds, including turkey, quail, pheasant and chachalaca.

SEE LICENSE, 6

## SEARCHING FOR DOVE HUNTING EQUIPMENT?

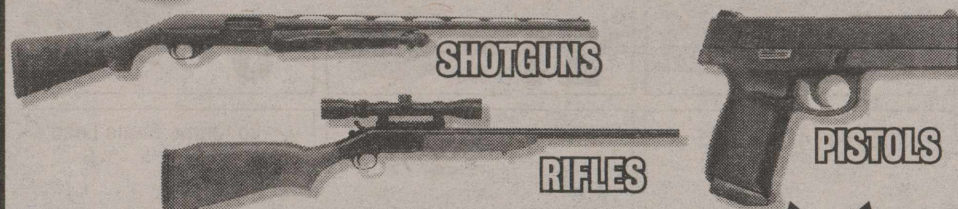
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# Hunter's practice shots reminder fall isn't far away

Well, it's happening — fall is on the way. Back-to-school sales are running full force, preseason football is scratching the itch of fans who have been watching high school playoff reruns and Canadian football since February, and the sound of hunters practicing their shots for dove season is crackling through the Central Texas air.

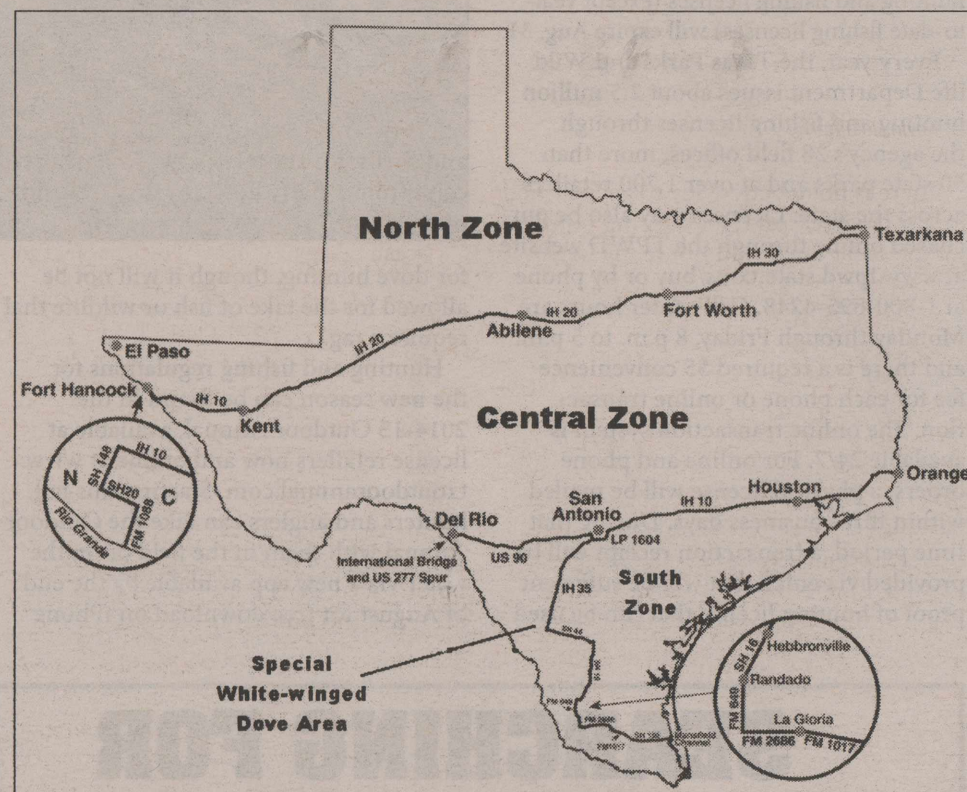
Dove season opens in nearly all of the Lone Star State's 254 counties Sept. 1. Unlike the old days when hunters had to wait in line to get their licenses on the morning of opening day, technology and a receptive ear from state wildlife officials have allowed hunters to get the formalities out of the way ahead of time and watch the sun rise on opening day from the comfort of a sunflower field.

Licenses go on sale Friday at retail outlets across the state, and they're also available online through the TPWD website. Or if you want to go old school, you can order a license by calling 800-895-4248, Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

If you don't own hunting land or have access through family or friends, you've got other options to get afield. A number of leases can be found throughout the region, and public hunting access is available through TPWD. The annual public hunting permit costs \$48 and provides access to nearly a million acres of land, a good chunk of it right here in the Heart of Texas.

It's always a good idea to shake the dust from your gun and off your shot before setting up for the first hunt of the year. The Central Texas area has a number of shooting ranges to accommodate hunters. Check the Centex Outdoors website for a link to area ranges.

Be sure to pick up a copy of the TPWD Outdoor Annual, the guidebook to Texas hunting and fishing. It contains both informational articles and the year's rules and regulations. They're free, and a game warden will have no mercy on ignorance of fishing and hunting law violations. These books are available online and anywhere that sells licenses.



## LICENSE

Continued from 5

Big Time Texas Hunts provide opportunities to win one or more of eight premium guided hunt packages with food and lodging provided, as well as taxidermy in some cases. The crown jewel of the program is the Texas Grand Slam dream hunt package, which includes four separate hunts for Texas' most prized big game animals — the desert bighorn sheep, white-tailed deer, mule deer and pronghorn. There are several quality whitetail hunt packages available, as well as opportunities to pursue alligator, waterfowl, upland game birds, wild hog and exotics. Big Time Texas Hunts entries are available online for just \$9 each at [www.tpwd.texas.gov/buyentry](http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/buyentry), or for \$10 each at license retailers or by phone.

There is no limit to the number of entries an individual may purchase and all proceeds benefit conservation, wildlife management and public hunting. The program is made possible with support from Toyota, Texas Trophy Hunters Association and the Texas Bighorn Society. More details on all eight premium hunts can be found online.

Hunters and anglers can also take care of their licensing requirements for life with the purchase of an \$1,800 Lifetime Super Combo, or enter for a chance at winning a lifetime license through the Lifetime License Drawing. Entries for the drawing cost \$5 each and may be purchased wherever licenses are sold. There is no limit on the number of entries that may be purchased. Winners will be drawn on Dec. 30, 2014 and June 30, 2015. If you enter by Dec. 27, you will be eligible for both drawings.

# Warmup and activities before season opens

By Kevin Holamon

There is not a better way to get warmed up for dove season than burning powder on the skeet range and not many better ways to kick off the season than with a "World Championship Barbecue Goat Cook-Off."

On Aug. 23, the Early Chamber of Commerce, Weakley-Watson Sporting Goods, Heart of Texas EMS, Mike Hall State Farm, and Tracer will sponsor the Second Annual Skeet Shoot.

Registration is only \$15 per round, on a five-station range. The fee includes the clays and shells, as well as a hamburger lunch and cash and door prizes. Perfect for the out of town guests, the Chamber

offers two free rounds, including clays and shells, for shooters who present a receipt from a Early hotel for the weekend of the event.

A cash prize of at least \$100, subject to an increase dependent upon the number of shooters participating, will be awarded to the top adult shooter.

Raffle tickets are available now and the day of the skeet shoot, for a Beretta 12 gauge shotgun, for \$10. The winner need not be present to claim the prize.

New shooters should never be intimidated by a skeet shoot. It's a great opportunity to pick the brains of the experienced, getting tips on improving accuracy and putting more birds in the bag.



Registration forms are available at [www.earlychamber.com/events/skeet-shoot](http://www.earlychamber.com/events/skeet-shoot).

The range is located on Brown County Road 315, off of FM 2525. Signs will be posted to guide guests to the range.

Early registrants will be entered in the shotgun raffle. The event begins at 9 a.m.

For more information or to purchase raffle tickets, visit the Early Chamber at 104 E. Industrial, call (325) 649-9300 or email [ecoc@earlytx.com](mailto:ecoc@earlytx.com).

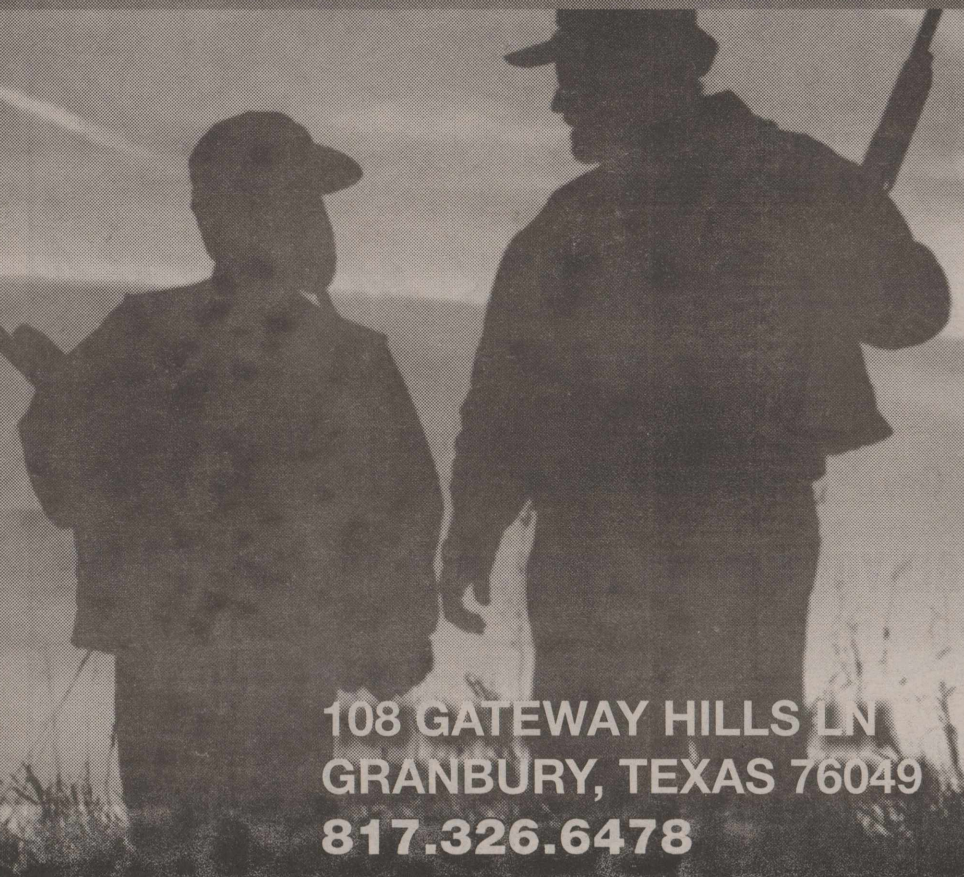
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# Organizers gear up for 41st Annual World Championship Barbeque Goat Cook-Off

By Kevin Holamon

The weekend before opening day, Aug. 29-30, in excess of 15,000 will descend upon Richards Park in Brady for the 41st Annual World Championship Barbeque Goat Cook-Off.

Visitors can witness 206 cooking teams prepare a half of a goat for judging, which takes place at 3 p.m. on Saturday. To get an idea of how popular this Central Texas event is, organizers are already registering teams for 2015. The cook-off and festivities have been featured in Texas Monthly, Bloomberg, USA Today and many other publications.

Throughout the weekend there are plenty of events and activities for the entire family, from washer pitching to special kids games and nightly dances to the Goat Gallop 5K and 1K Fun Run

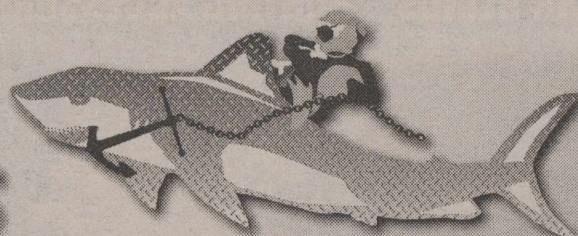
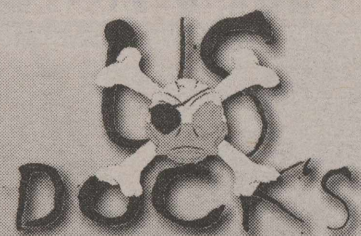
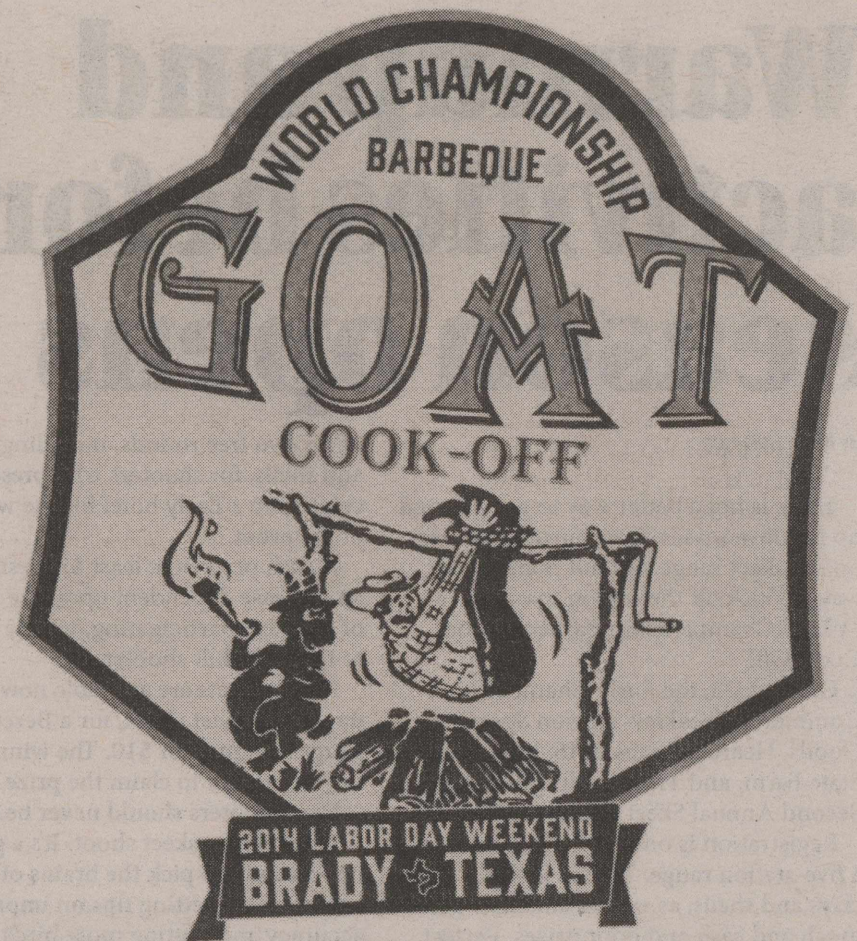
and Walk.

There is always a large variety of food vendors and a goat meal will be served beginning at 11 a.m., until it's all gone.

The Friday night dance begins at 8 p.m. with country music from Amber Digby. Saturday's dance also begins at 8 and features Dolly Shine, Brandon Rhyder and Cody Johnson and the Rockin' CJB.

Everything starts at noon Friday and ends after the Saturday night dance, which gives you all day Sunday to recuperate and get all the gear together for the Monday morning hunt.

For more information, visit the Brady/McCulloch County Chamber's website at [www.bradytx.com](http://www.bradytx.com), email [info@bradytx.com](mailto:info@bradytx.com) or call them at (325) 597-3491.



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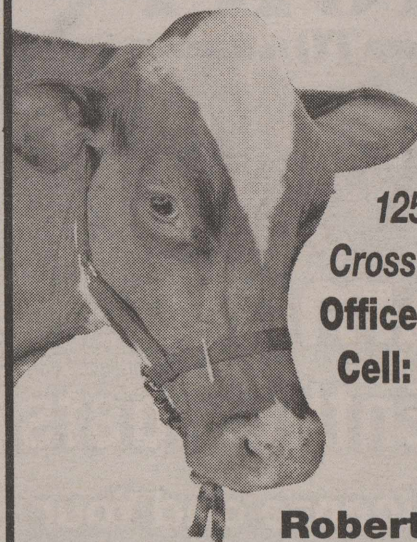


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# Understanding the bag limits and other migratory bird regulations

By Ruben Cantu-Rodriguez

**BALLINGER**— Dealing with different species, new regulations and hunting zones on top of a split season, sometimes is hard to keep up with norms and regulations regarding dove hunting in Texas. But if a hunter wants to avoid fines, and most importantly always practice safe hunting, there are a few key considerations to keep in mind for the upcoming Sept. 1, 2014, opening day.

One of the most common violations found among hunters is the lack of the Hunter Education Course, a requirement for all hunters born on or after Sept. 2, 1971.

Lane Pinckney, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Game Warden in Runnels County, said that hunters sometimes forget, ignore or neglect this requirement with the result being citations or fines.

“You may think this is a requirement for younger hunters, but as of this year hunters up to the age of 43 are required to have their Hunter Education Course,” Pinckney said.

Every hunter, regardless of being a Texas resident or not, born on or after Sept. 2, 1971, must successfully complete a Hunter Education Training Course. The minimum age of certification is 9-years-old and through 16 the hunter must successfully complete the course, or be accompanied by

a person who is at least 17 and has successfully met all the requirements.

Some other violations often found among hunters pertain to the bag limit and the lack of the migratory stamp or endorsement. Having a hunting license is not enough to go after all species.

“The bag limit applies to all species combined,” Pinckney explained. “You may have any combination of mourning doves and white-winged doves in your daily bag limit of 15.”

Understanding the difference between the daily bag limit and the possession limit is also key for a successful and trouble-free hunt.

The 15-dove bag limit is the maximum number of dove that may be taken in one day. Some hunters, Pinckney explains, think they can go in the morning and harvest 15 doves, and then go out in the evening to get 15 more.

Others may know the rules but simply choose to ignore them.

Regarding the possession, Pinckney said the limit applies until the hunter arrives to his or her final destination, which means a permanent residence.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approved the 2014-15 Texas dove season with a 15-dove daily bag and a possession limit of 45.

“The hunter cannot have doves in excess of the possession limit at any time, with

the only exception being when they have Eurasian doves,” Pinckney said. “Eurasians are considered an exotic species and there is no season or bag limit for them.”

If the hunter has Eurasian doves, Pinckney recommends leaving a wing on the dove for identification purposes although it is not required by law.

In the event of a hunter wanting to transfer his or her doves to another person, there is a permitted way to do so, they need to fill out the proper paperwork.

“There is a document called a Wildlife Resource Document that the hunters need to fill out,” Pinckney said. “Both donor and recipient need to state their information and details of the donation, it doesn’t have to be a particular form, it can be any piece of paper as long as it contains the required information,” Pinckney said. Hunters should also be mindful of commingling harvested birds while in the field. Just

remember each person should be in possession of only his or her birds and be within the bag limit.

Some other restrictions/regulations to consider include the shooting hours, which are 30 minutes before sunrise until sunset. “A lot of people don’t realize that the shooting hours are different for migratory birds,” Pinckney said.

Recommendations also include being mindful of your surroundings because dove season has always been a social sport.

“In dove hunting we have a lot of people in close proximity and sometimes alcohol is involved,” Pinckney added. “Game Wardens typically see the most hunting accidents in September. Also be aware that the hunter is responsible for any projectile that is shot across a fence line they don’t have permission to hunt on.”

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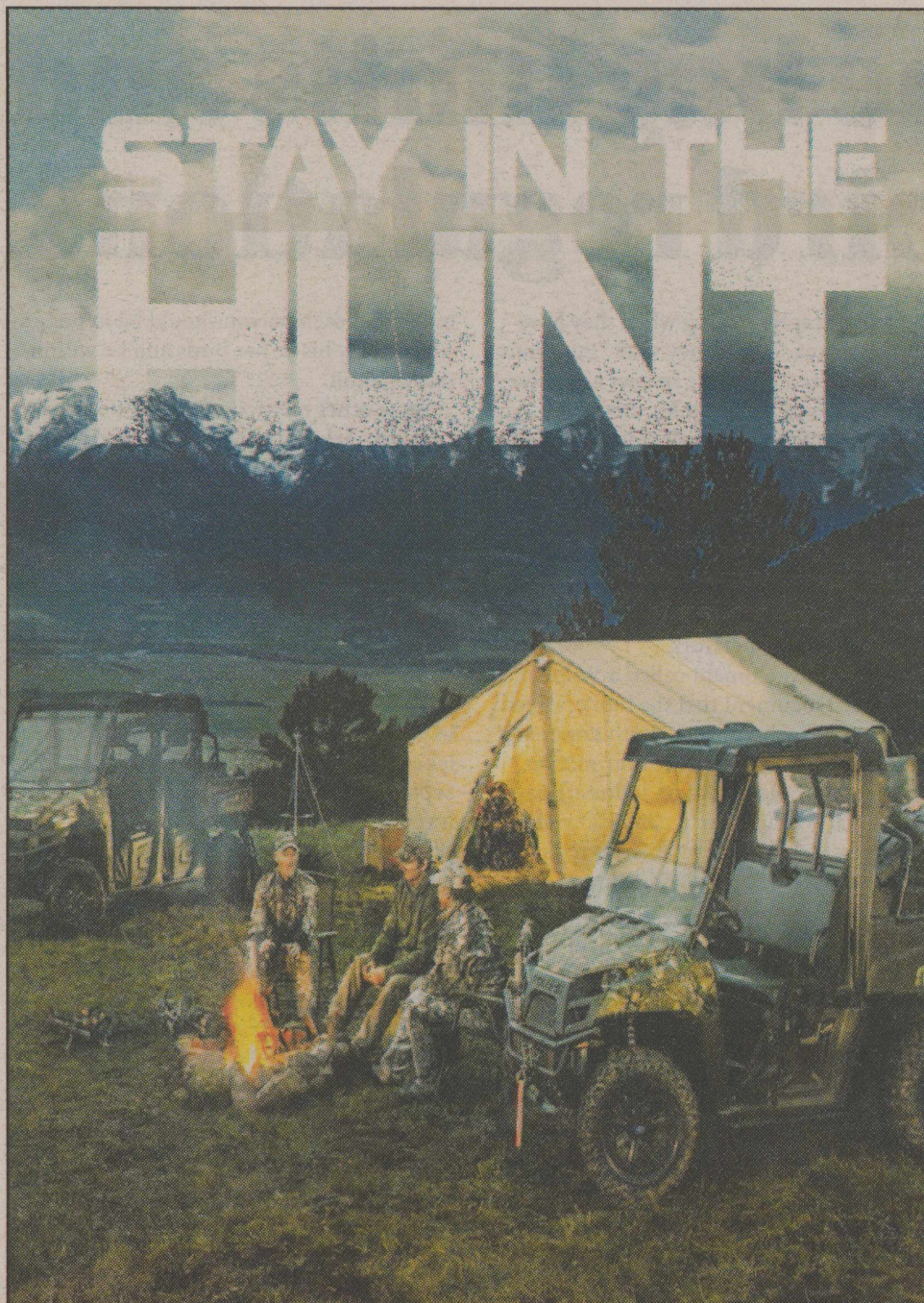


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# Texas sets dove, teal seasons

TPWD News Release

AUSTIN — Dove hunters will have more opportunity later in the season with dates and bag limits finalized recently by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has approved the 2014-15 Texas dove season, including a 70-day season and 15-bird daily bag limit statewide, and a 16-day early teal and Canada goose season.

The traditional Sept. 1 dove season opening day in the North and Central Zones remains; this year falling on Labor Day Monday. However, the first segment in those zones will be shorter than last season, closing on Monday, Oct. 20. The season will reopen Friday, Dec. 19 and run through Wednesday, Jan. 7, 2015, in the North and Central Zones.

In the South Zone and Special White-winged Dove Area, the first segment will be shortened by five days compared to last year, and those days would be added to the end of the second segment. The South Zone opens Friday, Sept. 19 and runs through Monday, Oct. 20. The second segment will run Friday, Dec. 19 through Sunday, Jan. 25, 2015.

The daily bag limit for doves statewide is 15 and the possession limit is 45.

The Special White-winged Dove Area will be restricted to afternoon only — noon to sunset — hunting the first two full Sep-



tember weekends — Sept. 6-7 and 13-14. Hunting in this area will reopen Friday, Sept. 19 and continue through Monday, Oct. 20, and then reopen Friday, Dec. 19 through Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2015. During the early two weekends, the daily bag limit is 15 birds, to include not more than two mourning doves and two white-tipped doves. Once the general season opens, the aggregate bag limit will be 15 with no more than two white-tipped doves.

A 16-day statewide early teal and Eastern

Zone Canada goose season will run Saturday, Sept. 13 through Sunday, Sept. 28. The daily bag on teal remains six, with a possession limit of 18. Bag limit for Canada geese will be three and a possession limit of 6 in

## What you need to bring along

The No. 1 thing to take to the field is SAFETY

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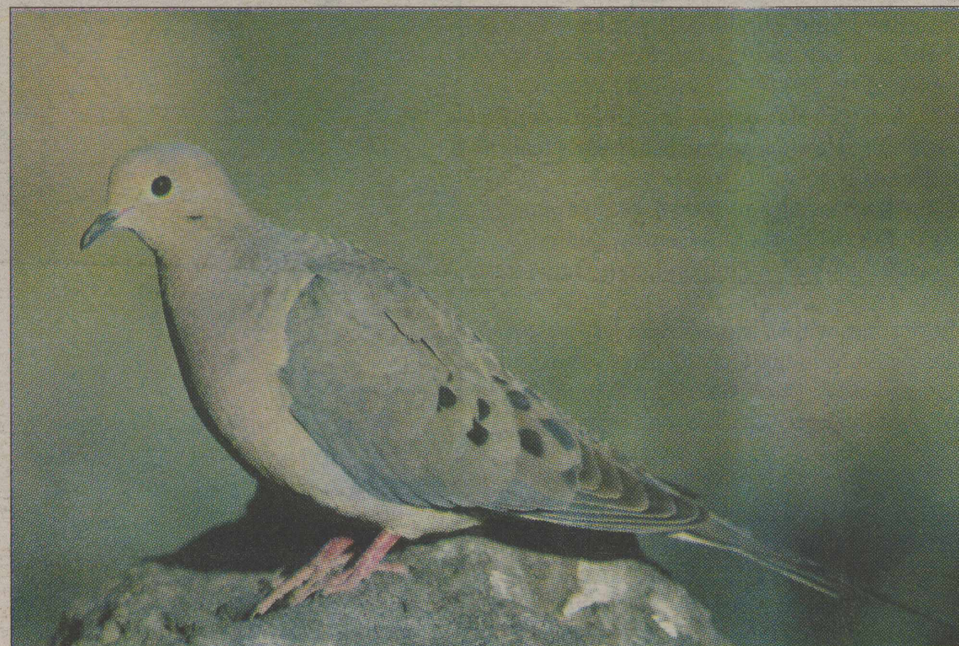
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# To shoot or not to shoot?



Mourning dove

By Kevin Holamon

kevin.holamon@brownwoodbulletin.com

Identifying dove in flight can be a challenge for even the most experienced hunter, especially when the sun is low in the sky, during the popular times for hunting — in morning and evening.

In this area, demarcated as the Central Zone by Texas Parks and Wildlife, hunters will find mourning, white-winged, white-tipped (rarely) and Eurasian Collared dove. The first three are considered protected, thus subject to regulation by state and federal law, including bag and possession limits.

Although the Eurasian collared dove, commonly called the ringed-neck, are not protected, it is important to know them on sight; mainly because they can greatly increase the weight of your bag at the end of the day, while still obeying limits. Because they are not considered protected, there is no closed season and no limits on their possession. Second, being much larger than resident mourning dove and a little larger than white-winged, it doesn't take as many to make a meal.

Looking at the ringed-neck closely, it is easily identified by the white outlined, dark

band around the back of the neck. It stands out against the pale gray, almost light tan body and slightly pinkish head. As mentioned already, their size is also quite distinctive. The latter characteristic lends itself to identification of an in-flight bird, but look for the white color under their tails, which are squared off at the end.

Mourning dove represent the largest population of any of the species in Central Texas. These smaller dove are generally seen in singles or pairs, but are present in larger groups during migration. In flight, their wing beat is more rapid and their speedy flight is often marked by sudden directional changes. The mourning dove's wing color is a darker gray, with black spots, but an easily identifiable characteristic in flight is the pointed tail.

The white-winged dove is very easy to identify on the ground or a perch. In flight, it gets a little more tricky. Each wing is marked with a white bar across the middle, seen along its edge when folded. The tail also has a white bar across the end. Unfortunately, these can only be seen in flight, if the the bird is climbing away from the hunter, unless the tail is fanned, exposing

SEE SHOOT,13

# SHOOT

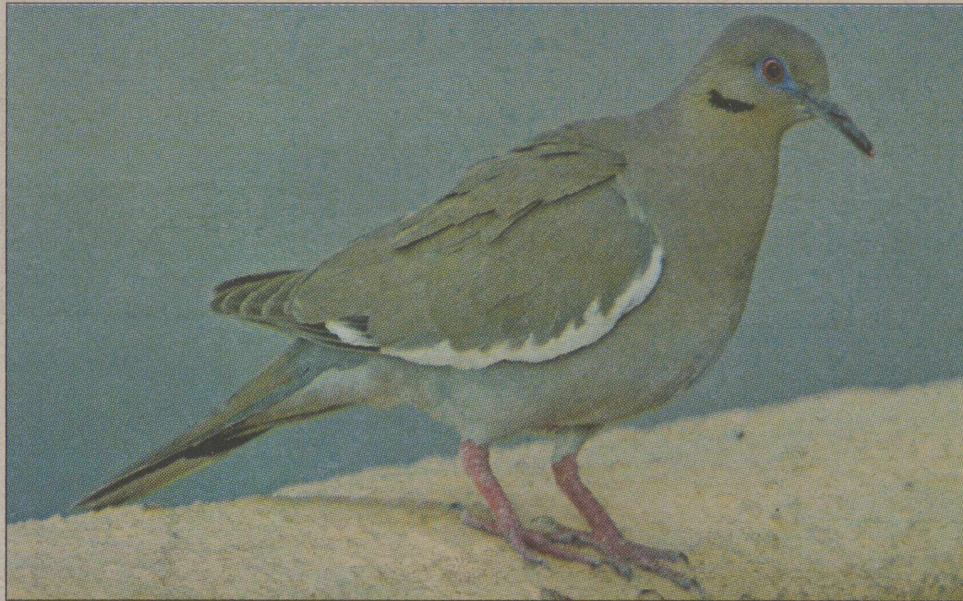
Continued from 12

the white along the end of the tail. But, watch for the long, rounded tail, unique to the white-winged.

In short, to answer the original question, if in doubt, don't shoot. A 19th century

French composer, Hector Berlioz, once said, "Time is a great teacher, but unfortunately it kills all its pupils." Forget the last part, but remember, time in the field will greatly improve the ability to quickly and accurately identify a dove in flight, making for an overall better hunting experience.

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# NRA Foundation gives back

By Kevin Holamon  
kevin.holamon@brownwoodbulletin.com

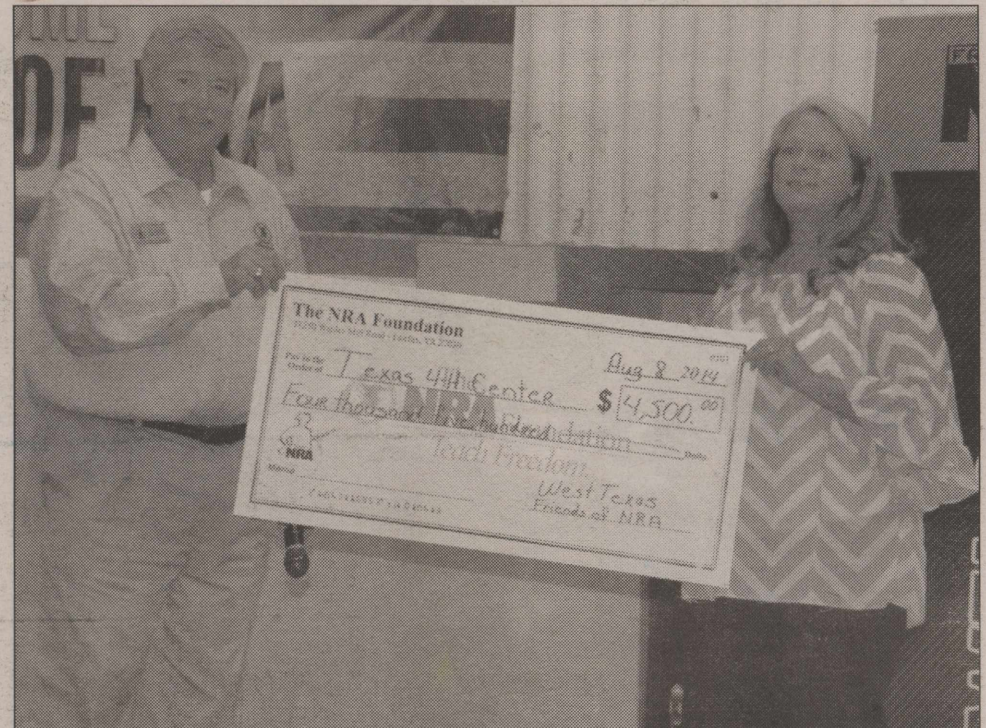
The Heart of Texas Friends of NRA held their 2nd annual banquet, Aug. 8 at the Brownwood Coliseum, to raise funds for the NRA Foundation and shooting sports, and to gather for an evening of fun and food with like-minded people.

Since its inception, Friends of NRA has held over 16,000 banquets and raised over \$230 million. Every year, over half of the funds raised are returned directly to the states from where they come.

At this year's banquet, NRA Senior Field Representative Jack Cannon publicly acknowledged the presentation of two checks, from the NRA Foundation. The first was to Lake Brownwood's Texas 4H Center, represented by director Darlene Locke, for \$4,500.

"We used the money to buy archery equipment for the center," Locke said.

The second was a scholarship of \$5,000 to Kyle Locke, who plans to attend Texas A&M University, beginning this fall, seeking a degree in Allied Health for a career as a Physician's Assistant.



KEVIN HOLAMON/BROWNWOOD BULLETIN

Darlene Locke (right), director of the Brownwood Texas 4H Center, received a mock check at the 2014 Heart of Texas Friends of NRA banquet.

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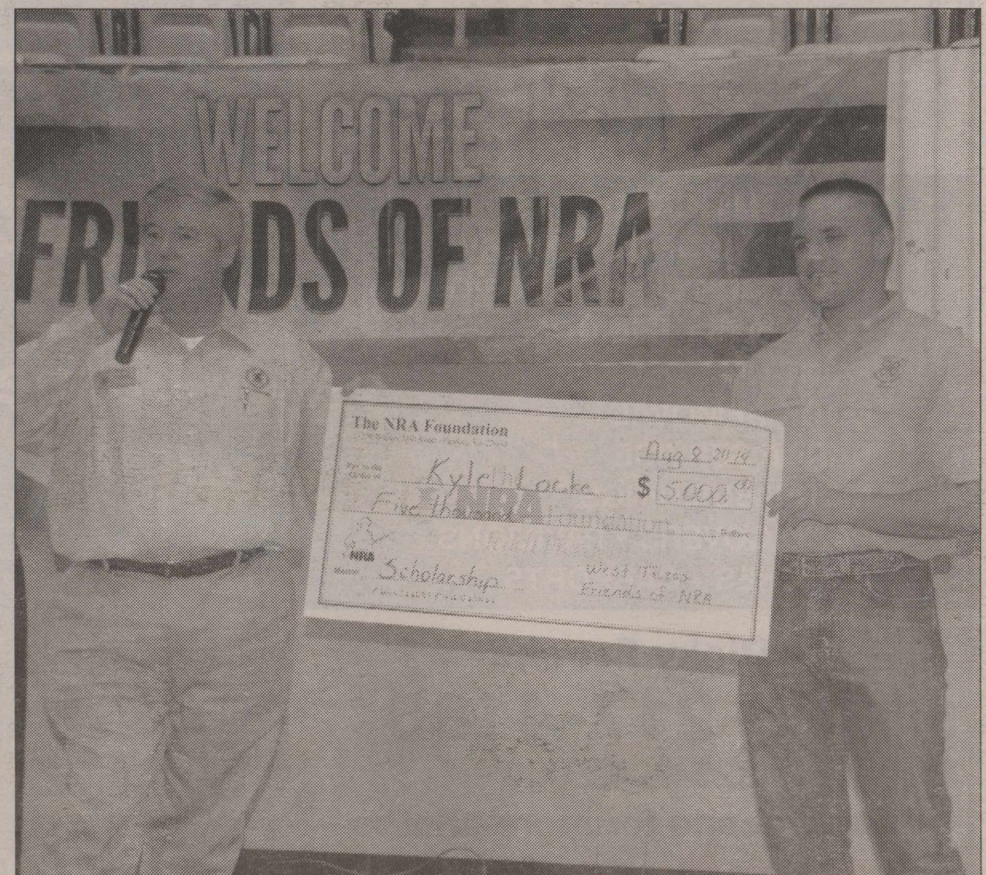
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NRA Senior Field Rep. Jack Cannon (left), presents a mock check to Kyle Locke, representing Locke's receipt of a \$5,000 scholarship from the NRA Foundation.

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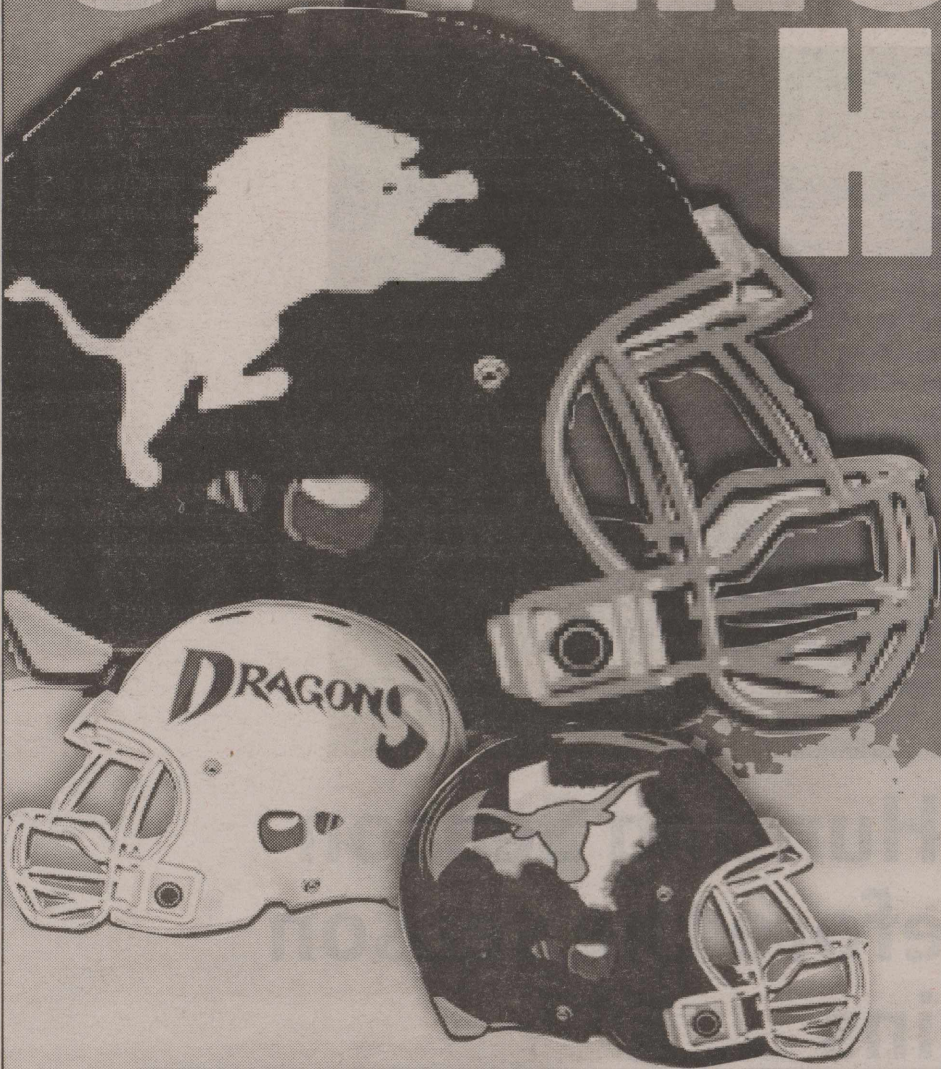
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## GREYSTONE

Continued from 4

The Castle is a two-time winner of the Orvis Endorsed Wingshooting Lodge of the Year, including most recently, this year. Making the honor all the more impressive for the Palo Pinto County hunting lodge, is that there are only about 30 Orvis awardees in the nation.

Making the land a suitable and attractive habitat for more than 40 species of wild game, including dove, requires a huge investment of time and effort.

The terrain features oak woodlands, which incorporate bass fishing ponds, cattail marshes and strips of sorghum, cane and corn, planted specifically to draw wildlife. Manipulation of the grounds includes continuously planting and pruning.

Noted outdoors broadcaster Billy Kinder, called the layout, "A beautiful ranch, a 365-day lesson in biology."

In a broadcast of Big Bill Kinder Outdoors, hosted by Greystone Castle, the radio personality noted the constant care taken planning.

"Everywhere you walk, everywhere you

look on the 6,300 acres, it has been carefully manicured and planned for the wildlife," Kinder said. "On the ranch biologists study and plan the weeds, the brush, the cover, the fish, the water, the soil, and the ranch crew follows through with hard work in every detail."

Another of the facility's bragging points is its location.

Not only convenient for hunters, the Castle's acreage is directly on the migratory central flyway, attracting huge numbers of dove during the September and October season, as well as quail and other birds year-around, and deer.

In addition, Greystone offers expert guides who are familiar with the grounds, as well as the prey, along with what its web site calls, "masterful gun dogs" to help in a bird hunter's outdoor quest.

When the sun sets on a successful day of Central Texas bird hunting, retire to accommodations that include five separate lodges within the Castle walls. Suites feature up to five bedrooms, four bathrooms, a living area and a fully stocked kitchen and bar.

Orvis, in its 2014 endorsement of Greystone Castle, reports the hunting, as



A happy hunter poses with his trophy following a successful trek at Greystone Castle.

anticipated, is excellent, however the accommodations and gourmet dining appeal to everyone, hunters and non-hunters, alike.

"There are five elegantly decorated suites capable of hosting more than 30 guests, a dining room complete with a full-time executive chef, spacious conference facilities, a swimming pool with hot tub and just outside the castle walls, a scenic lookout affords a breathtaking vista of the entire estate," Orvis wrote in its review.

The décor of the suites, not surprisingly, features dark, masculine wood furnishings, accented by overstuffed leather chairs. Bookshelves, holding hunting literature, and wildlife art and taxidermy mounts line the walls.

The dining hall is similarly decorated and includes royal seals along each wall.

For more information or for reservations, visit [gresystonecastle.com](http://gresystonecastle.com), call (800) 399-3006 or e-mail at [info@GreystoneCastle.com](mailto:info@GreystoneCastle.com).



The interior décor of Greystone Castle features heavy wood and leather furniture and outdoors-inspired art work.

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# Time to polish shooting skills

Every sport has its champions and all-time great players. Michael Jordan, Joe Montana, Serena Williams and Greg Maddux are all names that rarely need explaining for what they are famous for. All of these athletes are considered to be at the top of their chosen sport long after they have retired.

In fact some seem to defy the aging process.

Others are held to standards these athletes set. LeBron James is an awesome NBA star but until he garners more rings he will never be "THE MAN" as Jordan is considered.

There is one common trait among all of these athletes and that is their drive for excellence.

Practice, practice, practice.

All great athletes, business professionals, and successful people will attest to the fact that practicing and perseverance got them where they are. Hard work is hard

work but the rewards are in the results.

Shooting is no different than any other hand to eye coordinating activity. Without practice shooters cannot hope to improve, and unless you are already gifted with a shotgun, practice will help you.

Dove season will start on Sept. 1, and this gives the rusty shotgunner five weekends to get their practice in. The national average for dove hunters is in the neighborhood of two birds for every 25 rounds of ammunition. In other terms, a limit of dove will take roughly seven boxes of shells.

It is never too early to take out the shotgun and throw a few clays. Sporting clay courses are an awesome way to spend the afternoon to sharpen the skills. One hundred clays over the course will enable the dove or teal hunter to get the timing, lead and pattern-

ing skills back in order. If a bad habit has developed the clays can help correct these.

Mechanical throwers are great and can be set at different angles and speeds to reproduce a shot that is giving the shooter more trouble than most. I prefer the hand thrown clays and can have nearly as much fun throwing a clay as shooting them.

The sporting clay course is set for the shooter so this adds to the attractiveness, especially for shooters limited on time and space. All the gear necessary is available at Walmart or Academy and is relatively inexpensive.

However you choose to practice, doing it is rewarding. It also helps to introduce the new shooter to the shotgun and familiarizes them in a non-hunting scenario. You wouldn't take a first time shotgunner to a dove or duck hunt without ever shooting their gun.

It's a recipe for failure or struggling to learn in a real time hunt. Load the family up this week-

end and make some time for practice and help raise the average on your shot/hit ratio.



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# Swimming at a state park this summer

Texas Parks and Wildlife

AUSTIN — From spring fed rivers to Texas-sized lakes, open ocean swims to diving in a pool, Texas State Parks offer a full range of swimming options to beat the heat. Parks around the state offer a variety of swimming options such as spring-fed rivers, lakes, and gulf water to help the entire family stay cool and enjoy what Texas' natural resources have to offer.

In the Austin area, state parks such as McKinney Falls, Inks Lake and Pedernales Falls offer an array of rivers and lakes in the heart of the Hill Country. Lyndon B. Johnson State Park and Historic Site opened its public swimming pool last month for the summer. Pool hours are from noon to 8 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday. Lockhart State Park located east of San Marcos also has a public swimming pool.

Near Houston, Huntsville State Park and Lake Livingston State Park are ideal destinations for river and lake swimming. If wading close to shore on the open ocean seems more appealing, Galveston Island State Park offers beach access to the Gulf of Mexico. After being battered by two hurricanes, Sea Rim State Park has reopened just in time for summer and is sporting improvements to be enjoyed for years to

come.

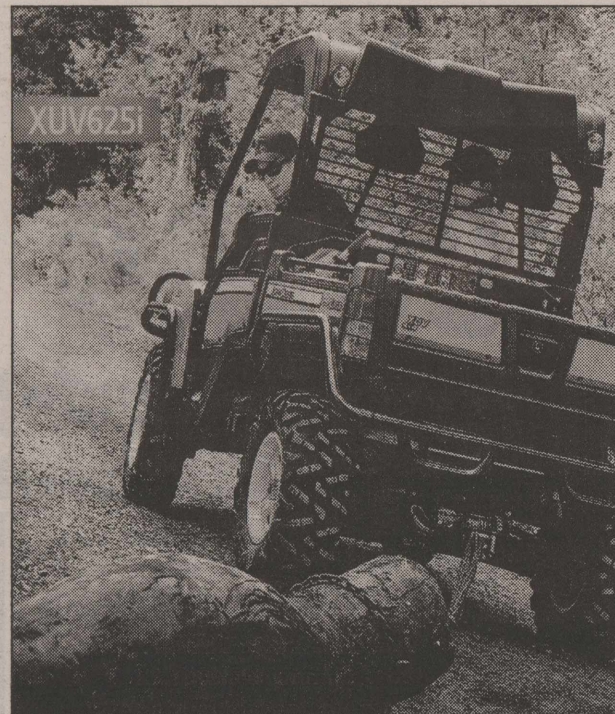
Near Dallas, Eisenhower State Park, Fairfield Lake State Park and Lake Mineral Wells State Park and Trailway offer park visitors a chance to swim in the lakes soothing waters, cool off and enjoy a break from the bustle of the city.

In the San Antonio area, Guadalupe River State Park and Palmetto State Park give park visitors a chance to go for a dip and beat the south Texas heat.

In West Texas, Balmorhea State Park, home to one of the world's largest spring-fed pools, with water so clear that many people bring their snorkel gear to experience the underwater world firsthand. The pool stays busy during the summer, so it is best to call the park and make sure the pool is accepting visitors.

No matter where you choose to swim, always be aware of your surroundings, environmental conditions and follow basic swimming safety tips include recognizing the importance of wearing a life jacket, staying hydrated and swimming in designated swimming areas, and heeding signs in parks about hours when swimming is prohibited.

Visit the Texas Parks and Wildlife website for a list of parks around the state that offer swimming.



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# Staying safe in the water

## Follow these tips every time you go on the water:

• First and foremost, learn to swim before heading out to any swimming area. If you are not a strong swimmer, or you are getting tired, wear a life jacket. Children are strongly encouraged to always wear life jackets while swimming in lakes and rivers.

• Be aware of your surroundings. Lakes, rivers and streams are natural environments. Watch for sudden drop offs, changing bottoms and potential for unseen limbs, rocks, and other objects.

• Stay hydrated. Summer heat can contribute to dehydration, even when you are swimming. Take frequent breaks, wear sunscreen, drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol.

• Never swim alone. Even the most experienced swimmers can tire or get muscle cramps, so having a buddy can be helpful.

• Supervise children at all times. Drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death among children, so keep your eyes on your kids. It only takes a moment for a child to slip below the surface.

• Assess your skills and don't take chances. Know your swimming skills and don't rely on flotation devices. If you don't know how to swim, do not get in the water, even with a raft or other flotation device.

• Swim in designated swimming areas. Park staff members have made careful decisions about the safest and best places for swimming. Please swim only in designated swimming areas.

## Consider Currents

• Water can look calm on the surface, but be aware of currents under the surface. Whether you're swimming in a lake, river or ocean, underwater currents exist and can put you in danger. If you find yourself in a current, do not swim against it. Instead, swim with it until conditions are calm enough for you to swim to safety.

## On the River

• Be aware of changing river conditions. Swift currents from flash flooding can happen in an instant. If you notice the water

rising, turning muddy or changing, leave the area immediately.

Wind, tide and currents all contribute to water's conditions. If you have questions or concerns about swimming conditions, ask

park staff.

## In Case of Emergency

Contact park staff or call 911 immediately if anyone is having trouble in the water.



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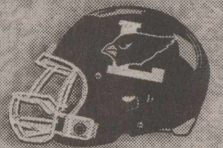
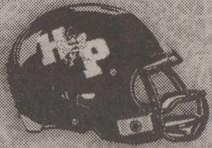
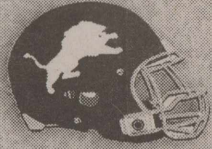
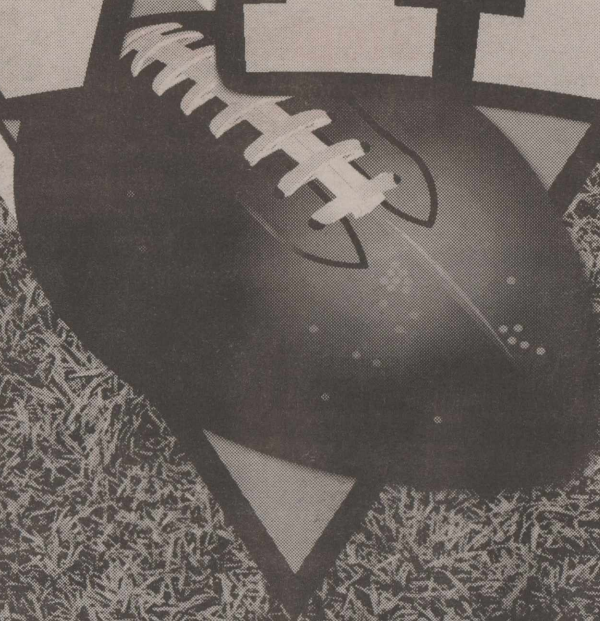


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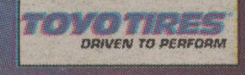
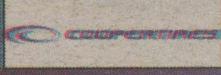
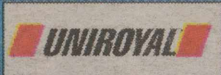
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