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THE KNOX COUNTY News-Courier

THURSDAY, JULY 18, 2013

KCNEWSCOURIER.COM

75 CENTS

Despite rains, cotton outlook unpredictable

By **Wayne Hodgins**
The Knox County News-Courier

In the midst of the driest three-year span since the late 1800s, this week's badly needed moisture was exactly what the region's cotton crop needed to give it enough staying power to get it through the growing season.

"This is such a timely rain, especially for those dryland farmers," said Mary Jane Buerkle, spokeswoman for Plains Cotton Growers in Lubbock. "While it won't be enough to pull us out of this historic drought, it's a boost to the crop. Farmers are looking at it as real blessing."

Reports were that anywhere from 1.5 to upwards of 5 inches of rain had fallen in areas throughout the Big Country with the majority falling in areas south of Knox County.

The welcome rain was accompanied by unseasonably cooler temperatures — as much as 20 degrees cooler — brought to West Texas by an upper-level low that had originated in the Northeast.

Most weather systems in the United States move from west to east, but this wacky weather pattern moved westwardly toward the Desert Southwest. Weather experts say it's not unheard of for a weather system to move in a reverse direction, but it's certainly not uncommon.

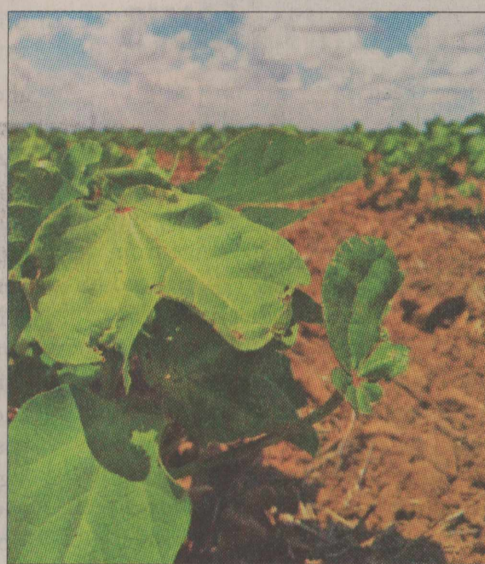
As the low continued tracking west toward New Mexico on Wednesday, beneficial rain continued to fall in areas of the Southwest that for months has been plagued by severe drought. Flash-flood watches had been posted for most of the region because the rain had

fallen so quickly on parched earth.

While the much-needed moisture was celebrated by both dryland producers and irrigators, who were allowed a brief respite from pumping, overall cotton crop conditions continue to run the gamut, making it hard to categorize.

"There are several things going on," said Dana Porter, an agricultural engineer specializing in irrigation with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Lubbock. "First of all, for a lot of the state, especially throughout the Plains areas of Texas, we're in the third year of drought. That presents its own problems, particularly where we have declining well capacities and regulatory pumping limits."

See **COTTON**, Page 3



Caleb Hudgens/The Knox County News-Courier

While not nearly enough to break the historic drought that has gripped West Texas the last three years, this week's weather anomaly brought some much-needed moisture to Rolling Plains cotton crops.

Knox Notes

Events are listed free of charge for nonprofit civic organizations, schools and community events. Submit listings at least two weeks ahead of the date. Listings will run through the date of the event. Emailed submissions are preferred to kcnewscourier@gmail.com.

Vacation Bible School

All Knox City area children are invited to Camp E.D.G.E. Vacation Bible School from 6:30 to 8 p.m. July 21-24 at the City Park. For information call Amanda Duke at 658-3517.

VBS @ Ch. of Christ

The Munday Church of Christ will have Vacation Bible School from 9 a.m. to noon July 29-31 for ages 3-12. Activities for teens 13-19 will be from noon to 9 p.m. July 29 and 30 and will include a lunch and supper. Call Becky Offutt at 940-256-4745 for information.

Rummage sale

The Knox County Aging Center will have a rummage sale from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. July 27 at 507 S. Central in Knox City to raise donations during the Watermelon Festival. Call Cassandra Sheedy at 657-3618 for information.

Alzheimer's Support

The Munday Nursing Center sponsors a support group for Alzheimer's patients, caregivers, family and friends at 12:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month in Fellowship Hall at Munday First United Methodist Church. Bring a sack lunch. Call Ronda Thompson at 940-422-4541.

Senior citizens musical

The monthly musical fundraiser for the Knox County Aging Center is from 7 to 9 p.m. the first Monday of the month. Local musicians and talent. Bring your own snacks. Tea/coffee will be served. Donations will be accepted for the upkeep of the building. All funds benefit the Aging Center. For information, contact Cassandra Sheedy at 657-3618.

Gospel theater

"Saint John & The Televangelist" is staged at 7:30 p.m. each Friday and at 3 p.m. Saturday through Sept. 14 at the Ragtown Gospel Theater north of Post. Tickets are available and show information online at Ragtown.com or call Ragtown Theater at 877-724-8696.

New exhibit

The OS Museum, 201 E. Main St., Post, offers "The Many Faces of Art" as its 2013 summer exhibit. Viewing hours are 10 a.m. to noon and 1 to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday. The exhibit will close Sept. 28. For information, call Marie Neff at 806-495-3570.

Corrections

If you spot an error of fact, contact Editor Wayne Hodgins at kcnewscourier@gmail.com.

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House passes farm bill sans nutrition title

By **Mary Jane Buerkle**
Special to the News-Courier

Yes, it was a nontraditional path. Yes, it was close.

But the fact remains the U.S. House of Representatives finally passed H.R. 2642, the Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013 by a vote of 216-208.

What made the process unconventional is the removal of the nutrition title from the bill, and the repeal of provisions of the 1938 and 1949 Acts, which are permanent law, but have been suspended as long as a five-year farm bill is in place.

However, the FARM Act, as it stands now, would mandate the law revert to the provisions of the 2013 farm bill should Congress fail to pass a new farm bill in the future. The rest of the bill is the same as the House Agriculture Committee-approved bill taken to the floor in mid-June, with amendments offered and passed during floor debate.

House Agriculture Committee Chairman Frank Lucas, R-Okla., said he would have preferred to keep the bill intact, minus some food stamp amendments believed to have halted passage previously, but that the split was the only way to move the bill forward and get it to the conference process.

Food stamp funding will continue at current levels under the Agriculture Appropriations Bill until Congress and the president decide otherwise.

"Today was an important step toward enacting a five-year farm bill this year that gives our farmers and ranchers certainty, provides regulatory relief to small businesses across the country, significantly reduces spending, and makes common-sense, market-oriented reforms to agricultural policy," Chairman Lucas said in a news release. "I look forward to continuing conversations with my House colleagues and starting conversations with my Senate colleagues on a path forward that ultimately gets a farm bill to the President's desk in the coming months."

No Democrats voted for the bill, and the Republicans, after a successful whip process,

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Crape myrtles and cotton



Hanaba Munn Welch/The News-Courier

Donna Albus, dressed in her best Western attire, works at the 5D Custom Hats and Leather booth at the Western Heritage Classic ranch rodeo event in Abilene. In the background, her son Darren Albus, shapes a hat. The name "5D" is the family band. (Inset photo, courtesy of the Verhalen family)

A 1950 photograph shows Mat Verhalen and his sister Lillian standing in cotton taller than some of his children. The Verhalen youngsters, from left, are Melanie, Donna, Ronnie, Bonnie and Laval. Donna Verhalen Albus to this day credits much of what she knows about life and work to her early years in the cotton patch under the oversight of her father. She remembers that her mother, Lillian Rae Verhalen, took the picture with her box camera.

Stroke of genius heard 'round the world

By **Hanaba Munn Welch**
The Knox County News-Courier

ABILENE — Never mind the first grade. It's the cotton patch that counts.

"Everything I learned, I learned in the cotton patch in Knox County," says native daughter Donna Albus.

An Abilene civic leader, Albus was the center of attention and 2013 honoree at the Abilene Preservation League's sixth annual Heritage Stewardship Awards Luncheon in Abilene recently.

A video on the life of Albus, from her

childhood in Knox County through her adult years in Abilene, gave the 200-plus luncheon attendees a look at Albus' life and achievements, including her surprisingly successful campaign in 1987 to encourage Abilenians to plant crape myrtles — a bold stroke of public-relations genius that brought her worldwide notoriety.

Albus insists she fell into that particular success more or less by accident.

As the director of Abilene Clean and Proud, forerunner to Keep Abilene Beautiful, Albus first tackled selling daffodil bulbs to

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Drilling process can hurt crop production

By **Wayne Hodgins**
The Knox County News-Courier

Experts warn the increase in drilling for petroleum and natural gas throughout the state is resulting in increased soil erosion and reduced crop production in some areas and urge landowners to be more proactive.

The disturbance caused by construction of drilling locations, including oilfield roads

and installation of pipelines, in addition to on-site disposal of drilling fluids, can create problems if not managed properly.

Sam Feagley, a state environmental specialist for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, said it is important for landowners to know what to do before and after drilling work to prevent major land damage. That damage, he noted, not only

See **DRILLING**, Page 8



Oil hands work to insert casing into a wellhead at an oil-drilling site in Haskell County. Experts warn that byproducts of the drilling process can be environmentally harmful to nearby crops and other vegetation if not disposed of properly during land application.

Wayne Hodgins/The News-Courier

GENIUS

From Page 1

raise money for the organization and to beautify Abilene yards and gardens. Sales exceeded expectations; instead of selling 10,000 bulbs as anticipated, Abilene Clean and Proud sold 25,000.

"With that success under our belt, then we decided to tackle crape myrtles," Albus said.

She came up with the initial slogan:

"Myrtle's coming. Get your bed ready."

The figure of a shapely woman illustrated the phrase, and a double entendre seemed obvious, creating a stir that drew some negative criticism to the whole campaign.

"People do not believe it, but my mind never went there," Albus said. "I promise."

Risque by design or by accident and negative criticism aside, the advertising slogan worked. Crape-myrtle sales soared. Entire neighborhoods planted crape myrtles. Some people bought the plants for the railroad right of way that bisects the city, and others bought crape myrtles and planted them to honor the memory of deceased friends and family members.

Advertising professionals in Houston, Austin and San Antonio told Albus they could work all their lives and never come up with such a clever campaign, she said. Even in far-away Sydney, Australia,

and Tokyo, Japan, her success earned her kudos.

"I fell into it," she said.

Throughout Abilene today, crape myrtles in all shades remind Albus of her most memorable marketing effort.

"Within the last five years, they have really come into their own," Albus said. "What they like is hot and dry weather, after they get established."

Regarding some of her other accomplishments, Albus is quicker to take credit where credit is due.

"I was the first woman in Texas — and the second in the nation — to drive a Tom's truck," she said, referring to her job driving a route for the snack food company. "I got chewed out so many times for doing a man's job."

Albus didn't see it that way. After all, she'd grown up on a farm in Knox County on Wild Horse Creek just off the highway between Knox City and Benjamin, where she'd done all the things her brothers did from working in the fields to playing ball and going fishing — everything but driving the tractor. So why not drive a Tom's truck?

Her standard reply to men who wanted her Tom's job was always the same. Albus said she would flash a grin and say graciously, "If you'll call 672-5000 and say you'll do a better job than me, I'll bet he'll hire you."

Also in the realm of trailblazing for women, she was the first woman Parent-Teacher Association president in Abilene at

the junior-high level. What's more, she started the PTA at Abilene High School.

Anyone who wants to know what's going on in the public schools should work with the PTA, preferably on the executive board, Albus said.

Albus served a stint at director of the Preservation League of Abilene and saw the derelict Grace Hotel, haunt of transients and a downtown hazard, restored and retrofitted to serve the city as the Grace Museum, a downtown showplace. Plaques on the building include her name.

"Two of my life's greatest moments were giving birth to my sons and rebirth to the Grace," she said.

Technically, that would be more than two moments; Albus has three sons: Darren, Dennis and Damon. But never mind the details. For Albus, life is more about the big picture — one with her in it.

"If there's something you want done, hold up your hand," she said. "Why turn it over to someone else to do? You be the leader of the band."

Albus cites her own experience with Keep Texas Beautiful as one event that reinforced her philosophy. It started when she had the idea that the organization could sell ornaments to raise money — a different ornament each year.

"The executive director told me it would never work," Albus said.

Albus wasn't dissuaded easily.

"Why doesn't somebody do something?" is the question she said she asked herself.

"I finally decided I was somebody," she said.

She managed to get the project off the ground, albeit with Nelda Laney, wife of Texas speaker of the House Pete Laney, as designer. Ten years later, the ornaments are established collectibles. The Laneyes were guests at the luncheon honoring Albus.

"The ornaments come in a presentation box," Albus said. "Each one depicts a symbol of Texas."

This year's ornament, now June, features a windmill, an oil-field pumping unit, a longhorn, a jackrabbit and an armadillo.

In 2002-2003, Albus served as president of Keep Texas Beautiful, and over a 16-year period she's served in every position on the executive board. Her status now is "emeritus."

Albus works as donor relations coordinator for West Texas Rehabilitation Center.

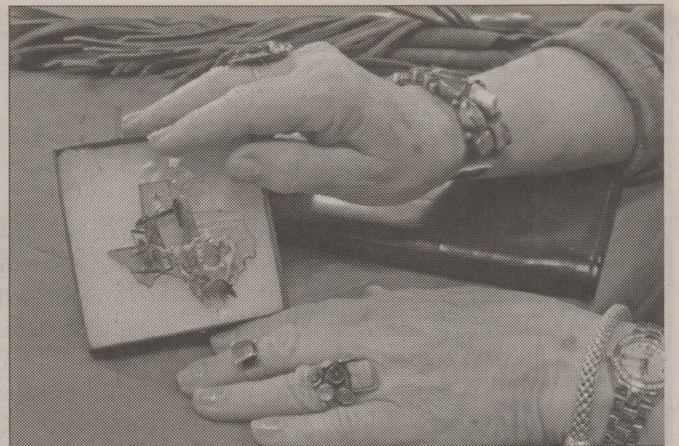
The job suits her, but it's not the career she had in mind for herself when she was a student at Knox City High School.

"I was going to be a basketball coach," she said. "That's all I ever dreamed of."

An incident her senior year burst that bubble.

"I got thrown off the basketball court because I challenged the boys' coach for being un-sportsmanlike," she said.

College lost its appeal, and Albus, then Donna Verhalen, headed to nearby Abilene to



Hanaba Munn Welch/The Knox County News-Courier
Hands that once pulled bolls in Knox County hold a mock-up of the 2013 Keep Texas Beautiful ornament. The hands belong to Abilene resident Donna Albus, Knox County native and architect of the ornament project, a fundraiser for the state beautification organization. The new ornament was issued last month and is now available.

work, married two years later and soon enough found a place in the life of the city, starting with PTA and moving into other areas of leadership.

But she never forgot her upbringing.

Her father, Mat Verhalen, taught his children to work, especially in the cotton fields.

"He taught us to work hard and to play hard," Albus said.

The going rate for pulling bolls was two cents a pound, and chopping cotton in the summer earned Albus and her siblings 60 cents an hour. When all the work was done on the Verhalen farm, there was more to be done elsewhere.

"Daddy would hire us out to Sam Emory Clonts and my Uncle Ted Hertel to chop their cotton," she said. "We got to keep our own money."

In the fall, the cotton patch

money paid for school supplies and new clothes, teaching Albus the value of a dollar.

"I never had a banana split 'til I was grown, because it cost 25 cents," she said. "I wasn't going to spend that much money."

One other experience Albus postponed 'til adulthood was driving the tractor. It happened after she returned to Knox City and spoke at the Chamber of Commerce banquet. Albus mentioned she got to work in the hot sun alongside her brothers but that the equality stopped when it came to driving the tractor.

Mat Verhalen heard the remark. The following day he took Donna Albus to the field and let her drive the tractor.

There are still a few things Donna Albus hasn't done.

Driving a tractor isn't one of them.

COTTON

From Page 1

All these things have come together to amplify the importance of increasing irrigation efficiency.

For years, irrigators throughout the area have been converting to highly efficient low-pressure systems, such as low-energy precision application, commonly known as LEPA, low-elevation spray application and subsurface drip irrigation.

"We have a very high adoption rate of these systems, and we have the technology to be very efficient, so mainly we're fine-tuning the management these days," she said. But irrigation is most always supplemental, Porter said, especially across the Plains regions of Texas. It depends upon help from Mother Nature, and that help has been limited for years.

"As far as annual rainfall, we're still way behind — about half what we should have," she said.

These recent good rains will help the crops, but the outlook

is still going to depend upon its growth stage, its foundation of soil moisture and how well it had been irrigated.

"On a case-by-case basis, at the field level, it's all over the map," she said. "We have some fields that are in pretty good shape and others that are really stressed."

Prior to this week's rains and cooler weather, the region was experiencing typical summertime conditions with temperatures reaching 100 degrees and no precipitation.

Extension experts had

reported that cotton crops were looking stressed, and producers were reporting concerns of well reliability, flea hoppers and weed pressure. Corn also was beginning to burn up from the heat, and grasshoppers were taking a devastating toll on crops, trees and shrubs.

Hay was being baled and rangeland and pastures were in fair condition, though in need of moisture, and water tanks were drying up.

With reports from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

BILL

From Page 1

only had 12 defectors — none from Texas — who voted against the bill. Eleven members did not vote, including Gene Green, D-Texas. Republican representatives from Cotton Belt states who voted against the bill were Ron DeSantis of Florida; John Duncan of Tennessee; Trent Franks of Arizona; Phil Gingrey of Georgia; Tim Huelskamp of Kansas; Walter Jones of North Carolina; Tom McClintock of California; Matt Salmon of Arizona; and Mark Sanford of South Carolina.

The bill still has a relatively tough path through conference, and the White House already has threatened a veto.

Members of the conference committee are chosen by Agriculture Committee leadership in both the House and the Senate, and it is highly likely the High Plains will have representation in that group. The conference committee is charged with combining the two versions of the bill into a final, five-year legislative package that can be approved by the Congress and presented to President Barack Obama for a deci-

sion. However, with the expiration of the one-year extension looming, conference committee leaders will have more pressure to craft a bipartisan bill relatively quickly.

"We have said from the beginning that this is not a perfect bill, nor was this a perfect process, but we cannot let perfect be the enemy of good," said Steve Verett, executive vice president for Plains Cotton Growers in Lubbock. "The House Agriculture Committee has worked diligently to put together a bill that reduces spending and offers significant reforms, and we thank Chairman Lucas, Subcommittee Chairman Mike Conaway, Reps. Randy Neugebauer and Mac Thornberry, and all of the members who helped get us one step closer to having a five-year comprehensive bill."

"We also thank Ranking Member Collin Peterson from Minnesota for his efforts, even though he could not support final passage because of the food stamp split," Verett said. "He is a tremendous friend to agriculture, and he and Chairman Lucas will continue to stand together, along with the rest of the conference committee, to move this bill across the finish line."

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The 501 Good hearing can greatly limit imagination

If you're not hard of hearing, you miss a lot. Say what? You heard me. When something is said and you hear it perfectly, many interesting thoughts never happen.



HANABA MUNN WELCH air. But my mind was already in the Caribbean. I imagined air blowing across the Island of Cuba and wafting next across the southeastern United States, carrying the Latin sounds of Havana street

musicians into Georgia (if Havana still has street musicians), faint but audible to anyone who might be listening when the Cuban air blew by. Smells of Cuban food would also be carried aloft and would confound the sensory perceptions of the Georgians.

What about Florida? They're already Cubanized, so the air wouldn't be noticed until it hit Georgia.

Then I realized my hearing deficiency had kicked in. It's not that I don't hear. I hear just fine. I just don't always understand.

Makes me think of the old guy who explained the phenomenon so well: "I'm not hard of hearing. People have gone to mumblin'."

Sure enough. Could be I've always had some hearing difficulties. I didn't do so well on a hearing test in the fourth grade. After a trip to an audiologist, it was deter-

mined I just had a cold. But my mother was in a tizzy for a while. Me, I was feeling somewhat grown up and proud of myself to have inherited one of my father's traits. Now that I don't have a cold to blame for my poor hearing, maybe that's how I should handle the situation. I'm all grown up and proud to be like Daddy. I could do worse.

Years ago I worked with a man named Fred whose hearing was worse than mine. Nothing beats a conversation between two people who don't hear well. Fred was a rural letter carrier, and I was a city letter carrier. We were working across the mailroom from each other prior to hitting the country roads and city streets, respectively. He said he'd heard about somebody who had a lawn mower for sale, knowing I was interested in buying a used riding lawn mower. I told him that I would be interested in buying a longhorn and

asked him who was selling a longhorn, inasmuch as I wanted to acquire some longhorns. Fred told me who was selling the lawn mower, and I asked him if he knew how much they wanted for the longhorn. And so it went, back and forth, until Fred's colleague Leroy stopped casing mail and turned to Fred and said, "Fred, she's saying 'longhorn' and you're saying 'lawn mower.'" One postal clerk expressed dismay that our conversation had been interrupted. He'd wanted to see how far we'd go.

If I've previously recounted the longhorn-lawn mower story, sorry. Maybe you don't remember either.

A little memory loss can make things new.

Hanaba Munn Welch is a columnist and contributor to Blackburn Media Group newspapers.

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Dixie Divas

Whatever happened to old-fashioned harmony?

One day over lunch, my new-to-the-South-but-thoroughly-loving-it husband commented on the choir singing at our church as led by my brother-in-law Rodney.

"Among the several things I love about the music at church is that people sing different parts," he said. "At most churches today, everyone sings together."



RONDA RICH

True. Many churches have turned away from hymn singing and toward what is known as praise worship. In doing so, an important feature of Southern history is falling to the wayside. As an advocate of our history and legacy, I chose a church that honors that tradition.

I smiled. "It's four-part harmony. Alto, soprano, tenor and bass."

Without request, I launched into a history lesson on shape-note singing and the importance it had to the rural South, especially the Appalachian Mountains.

The early colonists in New England had sought religious freedom in a new land called America. From the onset, they celebrated congregational singing with harmony. It is, indeed, very pretty, as the higher-pitched voices of women sing notes that compliment their sound while the lower-pitched voices of men stay on their notes. Harmony singing filtered down through the mountains and stuck hard in the Southern Appalachians.

Not long ago, I ran across a tablet of mine from my 11th year of life. There, in my tiny cursive writing, were the notes I had taken during our annual singing school at church. It was taught by a local legend named Hyman Brown, a short, rotund man with lots of black, wavy hair and a big laugh that echoed as pretty as the piano sounded when his fingers danced across its keys. And when he sang? Oh my. It was the purest tenor. If his voice was an image, it would be a sparkling, clear, cool river.

He was an insurance salesman by trade, but he spent most of his weekday evenings teaching singing schools at churches. He and Daddy were great friends. When Hyman was killed by a drunk driver one cold January night, it fell to Mama to break the news the next morn-

"The Scotch-Irish people believed steadfastly in storytelling, whiskey-making and music-making. My family, down through the generations, has fervently practiced all three."

ing. She had taken the call, roused me, a college sophomore, from bed and told me what happened.

"Get up and come to breakfast," she told me. "I want you to be with me when I tell your daddy. He'll take it hard."

She waited until he had finished eating, pushed his plate aside and was stirring his coffee. When she gently broke the news, unfiltered sadness fell across his face, aging him noticeably. After a long moment, he spoke.

"I knew somethin' was wrong when I heard the phone. It had a sad ring to it," Daddy lamented.

On the day of the funeral, Daddy stood on the front porch of the old Victorian-style funeral home. He watched as the casket of his dear friend was carried out, and he heaved the heaviest, most mournful sigh I had ever heard. I cried for my Daddy's great sorrow.

Hyman had been a formidable disciple of the Scotch-Irish practice of singing schools and shape-note singing. Our people believed steadfastly in storytelling, whiskey-making and music-making. My family, down through the generations, has fervently practiced all three. Singing schools were a tradition where harmony and sight reading with shaped notes were taught. I sing and play the piano — both woefully bad — by reading the shape of notes.

In churches like ours, the men gather on one side and the women on the other so they can sing parts and blend deliciously together. To me, it is simply beautiful to hear songs like "I'll Fly Away" or "When We All Get To Heaven" sung with such gusto, almost always ending with a soprano refrain.

"We need to have a singing school," I said to Rodney one day. "Otherwise, the kids comin' up won't know how to sing shape-noted harmony."

And that, to me, would be a tragic loss to our culture.

Ronda Rich is a Southern storyteller, humorist and best-selling author. Her latest book, "There's A Better Day A-Comin'," is available at rondarich.com.

The Idle American

Oh, Canada! — or bust

If "getting there is half the fun," our recent Canada/New England cruise from Quebec City to Boston defies the long-held belief that two halves make a whole. With multiple highlights on board equaling or surpassing the "getting there," there were several "halves!"

It was a storybook adventure, book-ended by two of North America's most historic cities. Weather was near-perfect — daily temperatures in the low 70s — and the scenery, spectacular.

The four stops on Holland America's weeklong cruise on the midsized Veendam offered enticing ports. So, any thought of skipping even one was quickly dismissed.

To fully enjoy any vacation, one needs to shift into neutral — a gear I strive for routinely. (Some people find it easier to find reverse gear on a stick-shift car than neutral in leisure time.)

We've yet to cruise without experiencing unanticipated delights. This time, a fellow cruiser's question — "Reckon they'll dance the 'Hucklebuck?'" — should have been a tip-off.

Upon boarding with some 1,400 other guests, we learned this was one of six Holland America cruises featuring "Dancing with the Stars at Sea." The popular TV show's personalities were on board to entertain, teach and visit. Then, the "Hucklebuck" question made sense — remember the 1960s song? Chubby Checker claimed those who couldn't do it "might be out of luck."

Vacationers choosing this cruise are awash in choices — even before Veendam boarding. Both Quebec City and Boston are steeped in history. However, the recommendation is to spend extra days in QC, since most Americans aren't aware of its history, charm, beauty and marvelous blending of old and new.

England prevailed in the Battle of 1759, but French influence remains strongest. Sounds of the beautiful French language sweeten the air. (Their written words have bunches of extra letters — such as "eaux," which is pronounced simply "o." A Canadian woman called her dog "Fido," uh, "Phydeaux.")

Indeed, Galinda, the "good witch" in Broadway's "Wicked," might be confounded there. She asked her prof, "Why you can't just teach us history instead of always harping on the past?"

Quebec City, now 405 years old, is an all-season favorite, appropriately called North America's most European city.

All was pristine; we found nothing in need of paint during our four-day visit. We understand, too, why winter sports enthusiasts pray for snow to come early and stay late in this winter wonderland.

Montmorency Falls beckons. Raging from a drop-off 100 feet higher than Niagara Falls, it provided lighting to Quebec City's historic Le Chateau Frontenac Hotel when hydroelectricity was harnessed 100 years ago. The hotel, imposed against an azure Canadian sky, is within yelling distance of the Veendam when the vessel is in port.

On board, we were as active — or vegetative — as we chose. Often, we wound up in the ship's impressive library, sometimes awake.

With the Stars' presence, many legs were shaken and "light fantasies" tripped. (Truth to tell, some "heavy fantasies" danced, too.)

About 200 vacationers chose this cruise because the stars were on board. Some, though — like me — admitted limitations. I'd finish second in a dance contest against a person with two left feet.

Of great intrigue were ports of call up the St. Lawrence River into the Gulf of St. Lawrence and finally the Atlantic Ocean. We treasured time at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Sydney and Halifax, Nova Scotia, and Bar Harbor, Maine.

We were never disappointed; flowers were everywhere; yards, well-groomed. "We'd spend our last two bucks on gasoline for the mower," one resident said.

In Sydney, Nova Scotia, the world's largest illuminated "fiddle" — 10 tons and 42 feet tall — was an "eye-catcher." Yep, they called it a "fiddle" — like we do in these parts, where "if you're gonna have a hit in Texas, you gotta have a fiddle in the band." (Bagpipes are big there, too. However, a man of Scottish descent claimed the Irish gave the Scots bagpipes as a practical joke!)

Before boarding a plane in Boston, we toured that historic city, where facts memorized decades ago came alive.

Back home, we hear Canada calling, and we intend to return, perhaps next time enjoying vivid fall foliage from the Veendam's deck.

If fanciers of polka, jive, samba, waltz or even the "Hucklebuck" choose the deck, we'll move to the side.

Don Newbury, former chancellor of Howard Payne University in Brownwood, is a Christian humorist and motivational speaker.

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San Jacinto Battleground

New exhibit showcases awards, rewards, medals

Special to the News-Courier

LA PORTE — An intricately crafted medal awarded for valor or service in the field; a jeweled crown worn by a beauty queen; a silver cup given for meritorious actions; and scholarship medals designed by well-known artists are a few items on display now at the San Jacinto Museum of History's free lobby exhibit "Relics of Achievement." Now on display until the fall, this lobby exhibit features artifacts awarded for a variety of reasons and actions throughout Texas and U.S. history. These include county fair ribbons, a silver napkin ring won as a prize for needlework at the Texas State Fair in 1878, a commemorative medal marking the Sesquicentennial of the U.S. Military Academy in 1952, certificates awarding land and funds to veterans of the Texas Revolution, and a crown worn by the Duchess of

San Jacinto in the 2009 "Court of the Century" at Fiesta in San Antonio. Be they made of precious metals and gems or as simple as a sheet of paper, items of thanks and appreciation have a history that stretches back to early civilization, with evidence of these relics found in almost every ancient culture. In its first hundred years as a nation, the United States awarded few decorations or medals, as the American people generally considered them to be undemocratic in nature and the symbols of European monarchies. While the government did not begin awarding decorations on a large scale until World War I, secular groups in the U.S. offered numerous awards for merit or to confer authority before then. Visitors to the monument can enjoy plenty of free activities on the grounds of this state park: free admission to the park; free parking; free to walk the San

Jacinto Battleground and relive the famous battle for Texas Independence; free picnic tables, grills and water faucets; free to explore the 1,210-foot-long marsh trail and boardwalk to see the native prairie, tidal marsh and bottom-land forest as it appeared at the time of the historic 1836 Battle of San Jacinto; and the permanent exhibit at the Museum. Individual or combo tickets can be purchased to enjoy the "Making a Mark ... Leaving a Legacy" special exhibit, the elevator to the observation deck, and/or movie "Texas Forever!! The Battle of San Jacinto." All exhibits are located on the first floor of the San Jacinto Monument.

For information about this exhibit or the San Jacinto Museum of History, call 281-479-2421 or visit sanjacinto-museum.org. Also visit the museum's Facebook page for additional information about artifacts in the collections.



Courtesy photo
Booming cannons, cracking musket fire, thundering hooves and battle cries resound across the San Jacinto Battleground as hundreds of history re-enactors recreate the events leading up to Texas winning its independence at the decisive Battle of San Jacinto. This year marked the 177th anniversary of Texas independence.

USDA News

Grant to fund household water well systems

The USDA Rural Development announces the availability of Rural Utilities Service grant funds to be competitively awarded for the Household Water Well System Grant Program for Fiscal Year 2013.

RUS will make grants to qualified private non-profit organi-

zations to help establish lending programs for homeowners to borrow up to \$11,000 to construct or repair household water wells for an existing home.

Of particular note this year, in an effort to address the extreme drought conditions in rural areas, RUS will assign ad-

ministrative discretion points to applications proposing to serve areas with severe, extreme or exceptional drought, as reported by the U.S. Drought Monitor.

The deadline for completed applications for a HWWS grant is July 26.

Applications in either paper

or electronic format must be postmarked or time-stamped electronically on or before the deadline. Late applications will be ineligible for grant consideration.

Applications may be submitted to the following addresses:

• Grants.gov.

• Water Programs Division, Rural Utilities Service, STOP:1570, Room 2233-S, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20250-1570.

For additional information, contact the Rural Development State Office at 254-742-9789.

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Capital Highlights

Lawmakers pass new abortion regulations

By Ed Sterling
For the News-Courier

AUSTIN — Legislation relating to the regulation of abortion procedures, providers and facilities was passed by the Texas Senate on July 13, and now moves to the governor's mansion to be signed into law.

Thousands of demonstrators journeyed to the Capitol, hoping to influence the outcome and witness the proceedings.

House Bill 2 amends various sections of the state Health and Safety Code and the state Occupations Code, requiring clinics that provide abortions to meet ambulatory care standards and doctors who perform abortions to obtain admitting privileges at a nearby hospital.

HB 2 also requires that abortion-inducing medications such as RU-486 be administered in person by a doctor and prohibits an abortion past the 20th week of pregnancy.

Also under the bill, pregnancies resulting from rape or incest would not receive special consideration on medical, psychological or moral grounds.

Proponents of HB 2 argued the legislation would improve women's health care by raising clinic standards and prevent fetal pain they believe is felt when an abortion is performed.

Opponents argued HB 2 would abridge the constitutionally protected right of a woman to choose, intervene in the doctor-patient relationship and impose a burden on women who do not live within a reasonable distance of a licensed facility.

Final passage in the Senate came on a 19-11 vote, matching earlier votes in which a Republican majority tabled some 20 amendments offered by Democrats during the course of a 10-hour floor debate.

HB 2 was passed by the House on July 10 on a partisan vote of 96-49 before moving to the Senate for consideration. Rep. Jodie Laubenberg, R-Parker, carried the bill in the House, and Sen. Glenn Hegar, R-Katy, carried the bill in the Senate. Laubenberg and Hegar failed to move the same legislation in the 140-day regular session, which ended May 27, and in the 30-day first called session, which ended June 25.

Hegar issued a news release July 13 soon after HB 2 passed, saying, "This new law adds a critical protection for a new class of citizens, preborn children who have been proven to feel pain" and "the provisions of the bill will make abortions safer procedures, lowering the risk of harm to the pregnant mother or to any

live-born children by increasing accountability and standards for abortion providers."

Sen. Wendy Davis, D-Fort Worth, led Senate opposition to the abortion-restricting bills in the first and second called sessions. "The law passed last night will undoubtedly be challenged in court. It's unconstitutional and bad for our families," she said.

Gov. Rick Perry called the special sessions, ordering lawmakers to pass new abortion restrictions. He praised the passage of HB 2, as did Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst and Attorney General Greg Abbott, the state's chief legal officer.

New paths for Perry, Abbott

Perry on July 9 announced he would not seek another term as the state's chief executive in 2014, and Abbott on July 14 announced his plan to seek the governorship.

Perry's announcement fueled speculation of a second run for the presidency. Perry ran unsuccessfully as a presidential candidate in the 2012 election, losing to former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney.

If Perry runs, he may have a GOP primary challenger in fellow Texan Ted Cruz, a freshman U.S. senator from Houston and a former state solicitor general under Abbott.

With Abbott's announcement made, attention turns to Dewhurst, who as lieutenant governor is in line to be interim governor should Perry resign from office to concentrate on a presidential run.

No Democrat has announced for governor, but Sen. Davis reportedly is exploring the possibility.

Givebacks total \$1 billion

Texas Comptroller Susan Combs on July 10 reported she has returned \$1 billion in unclaimed property to rightful owners since she took office in 2007.

This is the largest sum of money ever returned by a Texas comptroller, she said, adding that since she took office in January 2007, she has been committed to return as much unclaimed money as possible to owners who may have forgotten about it.

While unclaimed property payments began in 1962 and about \$900 million was returned in the 44 years prior to her taking office, about 1.1 million claims have been approved since 2007, totaling \$1 billion over six and a half years, Combs said.

Combs recently said she would not seek another term as comptroller.

Nancy's Notions

Slow cooking saves time, energy all year

Do you remember when you were younger and coming home to the smell of a home-cooked meal? Was it cooked in a slower cooker? Slow cookers are a great way to prepare food and can be used throughout the year.

Using a slower cooker saves on electricity and could avoid unwanted heat from the oven in the kitchen. Another advantage to using a slower cooker is that it can save time, allowing you more time to enjoy your family. Let's look at how to properly use a slow cooker.

Be sure to keep all perishable foods refrigerated until right before you need them to be placed in the cooker. If you have previously cut up foods, keep those foods stored separately in the refrigerator. Keeping foods cold prior to using them assures that bacteria will not be growing on the foods, thus not having a "head start" if they are left out at room temperature.

It's important to remember slower cookers come in a variety of sizes, so the amount of food you place in them will vary depending on the size of the cooker. Follow the manufacturer's guidelines on the sizes and amounts of food that should be placed in your specific cooker. Keeping the lid closed at all times helps to keep the steam/moisture in and ensures the food is cooking properly.

The majority of cookers now have numerous settings. Different foods will take different amounts of time to cook. If you're leaving for the day, it is recommended that foods be

cooked on the low setting; however, if you're at home and wish to cook it quickly, the high setting might be more appropriate for the meal you have selected.

When possible, turn the cooker on high for an hour or so and then turn it down to a lower setting. If you do not have time for this step, set the cooker on low, go to work, and come home to a deliciously cooked meal.

Should the power go out while cooking in a slow cooker, it is important to remember a few things. If you are home, immediately pull the food out and continue cooking it by another method. If you are not home and the power goes out, throw away the food, even if it looks done.

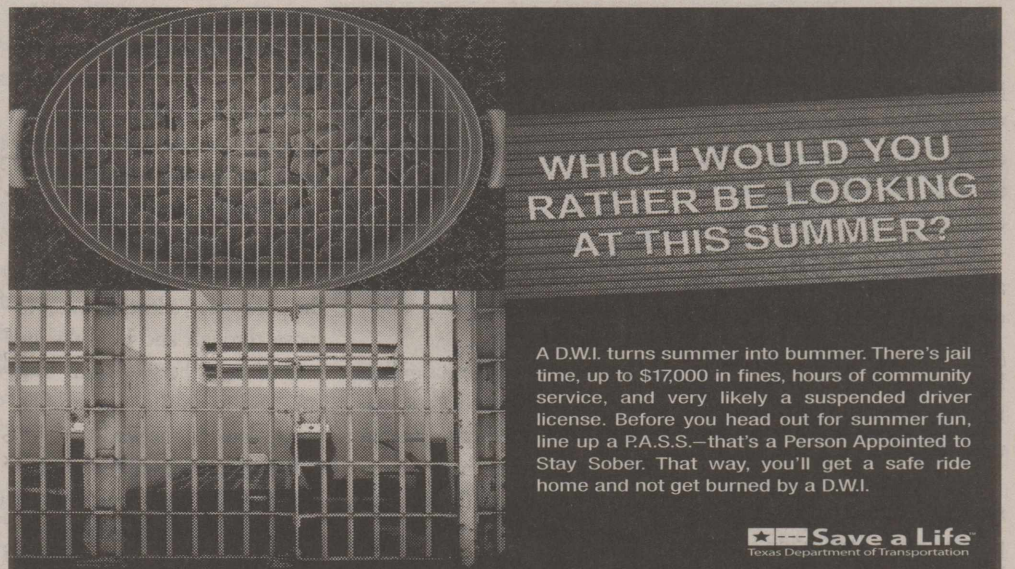
Food safety should always be a top priority in your kitchen. Remember to always cook foods to proper internal temperatures, follow good personal hygiene, and clean and sanitize all food contact surfaces.

On July 30, I will offer a class from noon to 1 p.m. at the Garza County Extension Office, called "Fast Food with Slow Cookers." Cost is \$12 per person and includes lunch and a recipe booklet. Topics include new guidelines for testing slow cookers, cooking to the correct temperatures and choosing the right recipe for your slow cooker.

Space is limited to the first 20 people. To register, call the Garza County Extension office in Post at 495-4400.

For information on cooking with slow cookers or food safety, contact your local county Extension agent for family and consumer science.

Nancy McDonald is the family and consumer sciences agent for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Garza County.



NOTICE OF SALE

STATE OF TEXAS

COUNTY OF KNOX

By virtue of orders of sale issued out of the 50TH Judicial District Courts of Knox County, Texas, by the Clerk of the Court on the 18th day of MARCH, 2013, and the 31st of MAY, 2013, and in the following numbered and styled suits and to me directed and delivered, I, as Sheriff of Knox County, did on the 27 day of June, 2013, levy upon and will, on the first Tuesday in AUGUST, 2013, the same being the 6TH day of such month at the South door of the Knox County Courthouse, in the City of Benjamin, Texas, between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., beginning at 10:00 a.m. proceed to sell for cash to the highest bidder all the right, title and interest of the defendants in the following suits in and to the following described real estate levied upon as the property of the defendants in each respective suit, to wit:

Suit No.: 9317

Style: KNOX COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT VS. ADAM ANDRADE ETAL

Judgment: \$13,034.28 (plus interest and costs)

Property: Geo: R000004776

Lot 5 and 6, Block 47, J.T. Lee Addition to the City of Munday, Knox County, Texas, as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

Suit No.: 9217

Style: KNOX COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT VS. JIMMY EARL DOCKINS

Judgment: \$1,521.40 (plus interest and costs)

Property: Geo: R000004401

A 132X200 tract of land, more or less, out of Block 2, Reeves & Musser Addition, City of Munday, Knox County, Texas being that property more particularly described in Volume 285, Page 350 of the Official Public Records, Knox County, Texas;

Suit No.: 8987

Style: KNOX COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT VS. NELDA DOCKINS

Judgment: \$1,053.69 (plus interest and costs)

Property: Geo: R000006316

Lot 12, Block 50, Lee Addition to the City of Munday, Knox County, Texas as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

Suit No.: 9307

Style: KNOX COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT VS. SOLANO FERNANDEZ

Judgment: \$6,984.01 (plus interest and costs)

Property:

Tract 1: Geo: R000002917

Lot 10, Block 35, Original Townsite of the Town of Goree, Knox County, Texas as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

Tract 2: Geo: R000006328

Lots 11 and 12, Block 35, Original Townsite of the Town of Goree, Knox County, Texas as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

Tract 3: Geo: R000004931

0.630 Acres, more or less, out of the Southeast part of the H & TC RR Co. Survey #82, Block 45, Out of Abstract 1812, Knox County, Texas being that property more particularly described in Volume 256, Page 643 of the Deed Records, Knox County, Texas

Suit No.: 9402

Style: KNOX COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT VS. RICHIE PEREZ

Judgment: \$3,397.68 (plus interest and costs)

Property: Geo: R000002114

The West 48 1/2 feet of the North 87 feet of Block 31, R. P. Munday Addition to the City of Munday, Knox County, Texas, as more particularly described in Volume 309 at Page 1181 of the Deed Records of Knox County, Texas;

Suit No.: 9340

Style: KNOX COUNTY APPRAISAL DISTRICT VS. JESSIE TUCKER

Judgment: \$2,070.61 (plus interest and costs)

Property: Geo: R000008425

Lot 6, Block 116, Reeves & Musser Addition, City of Munday, Knox County, Texas as the same appears on a map or Plat thereof filed in the Office of the County Clerk of Knox County, Texas;

All the property sold will be subject to the owner's right of redemption. The redemption period is two years for homestead, minerals and agricultural use property and six months for all other property. Purchasers shall receive a Sheriff's Deed that is without warranty. Bidders should satisfy themselves concerning title and location of the property and improvements on the property prior to sale.

Signed: 6/27/2013

Dean W. Homstad
Dean W. Homstad, Sheriff
Knox County, Texas

DRILLING

From Page 1

can take years to remediate but also can come at a tremendous cost.

"Drilling fluids are land-applied in many parts of Texas where drilling is occurring," Feagley said. "Improper application has severely damaged soils that have failed to recover even after many decades."

In many cases, Feagley noted, recycling those fluids through proper land application could have prevented those adverse effects.

"There are numerous potential issues associated with land application of these materials," Feagley said. "If done properly on soils that can accept these types of materials, no detrimental effects should occur. However, if not applied properly, then numerous detrimental effects can occur that can take many years to remediate."

Applied properly, Feagley said, land application can provide beneficial environmental affects.

Unfortunately in Texas, however, the oil industry is self-regulated, so it becomes incumbent upon the landowner to ensure the environmental integrity of his or her own land.

Sodium is key in Texas

Fluids and muds used during oil and gas exploration are typically recycled during the drilling process until they can no longer be used, Feagley said. But then the remaining byproduct needs to be disposed of, and operators turn to landowners who will allow the "sludge" to be spread across their acreage.

No two muds are the same,

Feagley noted, as each operator has a "recipe" for each hole. Most muds will contain a combination of bentonite clay, barium sulfate, lime, soda ash, lignite and materials that prevent the loss of circulation — including ground peanut shells, mica, cellophane, walnut shells, cottonseed hulls — and add to the sealing ability of the material.

There are two types of oilfield byproduct: water-based and oil-based. Most of the time, Feagley said, it is the water-based material that is applied to the land, but it will contain dissolved solids and sodium.

"You need to determine if the soil will be changed due to salts and clays in a detrimental way," he said. "Sodium is the major problem we have with using this water. When we get a certain amount of sodium in the soil, it has a tendency to disperse the clay and organic particles then seal the pore space in the soil."

"Instead of having the ability to get water into and through the soil, that first increment of precipitation seals all the pore space and the water doesn't have any place to go, so we get runoff and eventually erosion."

Another concern is the chloride, which some plants can be sensitive to, he said. Also, the bentonite does not contain many nutrients but does add clay to the soil, "which is good in a sandy soil, but not so much in a clay soil, where you don't need any more clay," he said.

The typical contents of the oil-based materials are more acidic in nature, containing petroleum hydrocarbons and not as many dissolved solids, which limits soil capability, Feagley said.

"To counteract that acidity, adding limestone to the soil will

raise the pH levels and allow that soil to be more productive," he said.

If excess sodium and poor drainage are a problem, he said, gypsum can be to treat the soil.

"Once you get the gypsum or calcium sulfate mixed in, it replaces the sodium and re-opens the pore space, allowing water to move through and the salts are pushed out," Feagley said. "But you have to do the gypsum first before you add the water."

If applied properly in certain areas, drilling mud could benefit the soil by reducing compaction, which allows for better tilling, and the addition of clay in sandy soils increases nutrient and water retention.

If applied improperly, however, the addition of unnecessary and sometimes harmful salts to the soil could intensify its clay content, making it impermeable and leading to runoff and erosion.

"It can take years to regenerate an area if the material is applied improperly," Feagley said. "Remediation takes time and can be very expensive for the landowner; it's not a quick fix to get salts in the soils out."

Costly mistakes

Landowners across the state are discovering, some much too late, the adverse effects drilling can have on their own land — and on their wallet.

Oil and gas production produces massive amounts of solid waste. For each foot drilled, according to the American Petroleum Institute, 1.2 barrels of solid waste are produced.

Sharon Wilson, director of the Texas Oil and Gas Accountability Project, an arm of the industry watchdog group Earthworks, said drilling companies will of-

fer anywhere from \$10,000 to \$30,000 per acre to land-apply these materials in Texas.

"The industry argues that what they're taking out of the ground, they're putting back into the ground through land-farming," Wilson said. "But materials from inside the earth's crust don't belong on top of the earth's crust."

"Much of this material contains low concentrations of radioactive material, and during the drilling process becomes chemical-laden, containing drilling fluid, mud, drill cuttings, slurry, heavy metals and other impurities."

Once the sludge is spread out over the land, if done improperly, the cost to reclaim the land comes at a much higher cost. Most times, because of weak contract negotiations, Wilson said, the price to rehabilitate that land falls on an unsuspecting landowner who will blindly sign a contract while waiting for the money to come rolling in.

"I can't stress enough the importance of landowners seeking out the expert advice of a qualified attorney well-versed in the oil and gas industry," said Wilson, a resident of Allen and herself a mineral owner. "However, these qualified attorneys are hard to come by, especially in places such as the Barnett and Eagle Ford shales, because the industry will go in there and put them all on retainer. This pre-empts them from representing landowners because, in effect, they're already working for the oil and gas companies. It becomes a conflict of interest."

Once a qualified attorney is found, Wilson urged landowners to consider an independent evaluation of not only the soil, water and air of their acreage, but also



of the drilling fluid to be used, before any work is allowed.

"Drilling companies have analyses, but their analyses are designed only to meet regulations, and some even could be skewed to fit the data," Wilson said.

Slope, buffer zones, soil texture, electrical conductivity, exchangeable sodium percentage, depth to bedrock, water table and frequency of application are all parts of the rules and regulations governing the application of both water-based and oil-based materials.

"Before considering any commitments, whether by handshake or contract, or on a single property or multiple properties, get a lawyer and make sure they know the contents of the material and their soil," Wilson said. "A good company will work with you from application to years down the road when you can see how the crop responds, and make sure they are held financially accountable for any detrimental effect application has on your land."

Kay Ledbetter, a writer for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at College Station, contributed to this report.

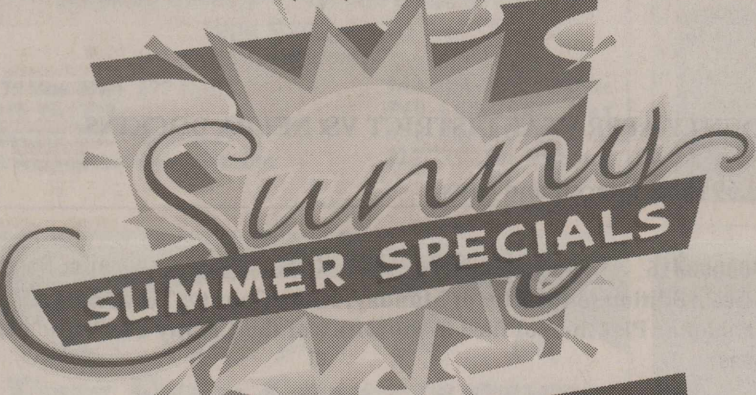
On the web:

• For further reading, read "Land Application of Drilling Fluids: Landowner Considerations," a publication prepared for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service by the Department of Soil and Crop Sciences at Texas A&M University. The report can be accessed online at <http://bit.ly/19kIUa>.

• For information on soil testing, contact the Texas AgriLife Extension Service Soil, Water and Forage Testing Laboratory at 979-845-4816, or the Garza County Extension office at 806-495-4400.

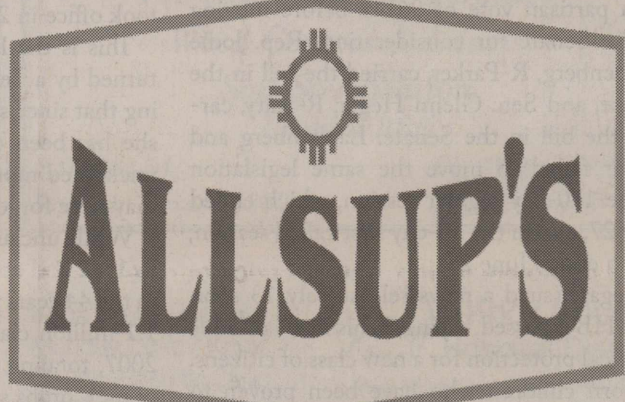
• For questions and assistance related to drilling fluid disposal or a land application program, contact the Railroad Commission of Texas district office in Midland at 432-694-5581 or online at rrc.state.tx.us.

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Old Glory News

The last few days have been miserable, just too hot. It has cooled off a lot today (Sunday) and we are told that we may get some rain. Just can't wait to see it..... A small cloud popped up on Thursday afternoon and came across this area and I got three tenths of rain. Boy did it ever smell and feel good. It was a fast hard rain, but I'll take every drop.



ANITA DOZIER

Please remember our monthly musical at the Old Glory Community Center on Saturday, July 27 with the concession stand to open at 5:30 and the program to begin at 6 P.M. Hope to see all of you there.

Todd and Krista Spitzer and Trussel and Katrina Thane of Stamford drove to Albany on Monday evening to enjoy a delicious meal out to help Krista celebrate her birthday.

Donna Westbrook drove to Lubbock to pick up that precious little grandson, Kameron Edwards, so he could spend a few days here so she and S J could spoil him. She later met Kamerson's parents in Post for his return home.

Kambree and Kelsey Pierce of Nona have been here to spend several days with their grandparents, Glen and Helen Pierce while their parents are vacationing in Hawaii. Kade and Kellie Lowack also spend some time there so they could enjoy visiting with Kambree and Kelsey.

It seems as though sadness just keeps returning to this community. Thomas Lewis Corzine passed away in Stamford on July 7. He was the son of the late Oscar and Lillie Corzine and grew up in this community. Funeral services were held on Wednesday at the Faith Lutheran Church in Sagerton with burial in the Old Glory Cemetery. Our sincere sympathy to all the family.

Mittie Dunham along with Isabell Mrazek, Mary Everette, and Martha McDowell assisted with serving refreshments during the ladies social hour at the Aspermont Care Home on Wednesday afternoon. The Croton

Creek Band consisting of Bo and Whiz Creighton, Steve Duncan and Pide Dunham entertained the residents and visitors.

Mittie Dunham and Whiz Creighton spent the day in Abilene on Friday for business and shopping.

A large crowd attended the Senior Citizens Dance at the Old Glory Community Center on Thursday evening. Everyone enjoyed the good country and western music by Mike and Kevin, and all the delicious snacks that the ladies brought.

It seems that July is a big birthday month, Happy Birthday was sung to Riley Ellison, Doris Sims, Bernee Sealy, Mary Simmons, Pat Goodall, Anita Dozier, Bobby Wade, Shirley McElyea and James Branch. (Hope I didn't miss anyone).

Winning the door prizes were Pat Gray from Stamford and Bobby Wade from Hamlin. See you next month on Thursday, Aug. 8.

Delbert and Joyce Leferve of Sagerton were honored with a big celebration at the Old Glory Lodge Hall on Saturday evening celebrating their 70th wedding anniversary. A delicious meal was served followed by a lovely program presented by family members and a slide show, then the dance. The great event was hosted by their children, Larry and Susan Leferve of Rule, Linda Leferve of Dallas Wylie, Kent and Kathy Leferve from Tuscola and Jill and Ken Brown from Sagerton. Also nine grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. All were present with exception of four grandchildren.

Delbert and Joyce were married on July 6, 1943 in the St Paul Lutheran Church in Sagerton while he was on furlough from the 11th Airborne Division stationed in North Carolina during WWII. About 100 guests registered coming from Fredericksburg, Tyler, Midland, Houston, Tulsa, OK, Lubbock, Abilene, Haskell, Stamford, Rule, Sagerton and Old Glory. Music was furnished by Dickie Greenwood from Abilene and Randy Hise of Haskell who played music and songs from the 1940s. Congratulations to the lovely couple and we wish them many more.

What a Blessing to be able to celebrate that many years together.

Phyllis Letz stated that her mother, Martha Spitzer, is still in the hospital and needs your prayers. Grandchildren Eric and Deanne Conner have went back home to Crowell after several weeks visiting with Granny and Pa.

Daughter, Rita Stephens of Abilene, and I drove to Austin on Saturday. That evening we joined a large group of friends and relatives for the beautiful wedding for Jacqueline Dozier to Mark Zimmerman. The lovely event was held outdoors on the Pecan Springs Ranch near Austin followed by a delicious dinner and dancing. Jacqueline is the daughter of Dr. Norm and Kim Dozier of Abilene and Shari Dozier of Austin. Parents of the groom are Mark and Kandace Zimmerman of Tyler. Grandparents of the bride are Pete and Sally Gee of the Woodlands and Anita Dozier of Old Glory and the late J F Dozier. Congratulations to the lovely couple.

I attended the baby shower honoring Blair Dozier at the First United Methodist Church in Trent on Sunday afternoon. Hostess for the beautiful event were Candace Pair, Peyton Guierrez, Shayla Groves, Laramie Gorbett, Robert Boyd and Wendi Frasier. The Mother-to-be received many lovely and useful items for the little cowgirl when she arrives.

Thought for the week: "It takes both rain and sunshine to make a rainbow."

Happy Birthday Wishes go to Dorothy Clark, Janis Lowack, Anita Dozier, Pat Gholson, Imogene Duncan, Rodney Foreman, Mary Sawyers, Claudett Carroll, Stacy Bruns, Mary Simmons, Kinsey Thomas, Lacey Letz, Cole Wolsch, Arvel McCoy III, Delia Craft, Linda Leferve, Ryland Letz, Robert Vahlenkamp, Stacey Jones, Shirley Manske, Sarah Rhoads, Peggy Eubanks, Brant Bowman, Betsy Neinst, Chad Hertel, Megan Boyd, Yvonne Kiker, J N Townzen, Karen Shelnut, Mike Mills, Stephanie Diers, Emma Reanne Gray, Joe Barrera, Bill Flowers, Johnny Pittcock, Sue Bradford, Earl Copen, Paula Patton, and Layne Hertel. We wish you many more.

Anniversary greetings go to Joe and Angela Bly, Dickie and Melissa Greenwood and Micah and Sharen Henry.

Anita Dozier is the Old Glory correspondent for the Stonewall Courier.



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

The state's beef industry won't build back up to pre-recession and pre-drought levels overnight. Experts with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service urge cattle producers to set goals and prudently manage assets and record books to better manage their herds.

Cattle producers watching future with 'guarded optimism'

By Blair Fannin
Special to the News-Courier

While there are signs of some ranchers beginning to rebuild herds, experts continue to monitor the state's cattle situation closely as drought conditions continue to affect parts of Texas beef production country.

"Some areas are still in pretty bad shape," said Phil Sadler, president of the Independent Cattlemen's Association. "Cow numbers are down due to liquidations. Having said that, on the expense side, with prudent management that will be the key to being successful."

In the meantime, Sadler said, any upward climb in overall cow numbers in Texas will not come overnight.

"It's going to be a slow process to rebuild herds," he said. "The numbers are not there."

"Guarded optimism" was what he said would best describe the outlook going forward.

Stan Bevers, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service economist in Vernon, said producers need to closely monitor expenses and track performance of each cow. Once a good record-keeping system is in place, valuable data can be generated to aid making decisions about the operation.

"You can't manage what you don't measure," he said. "The whole point of being in business is to make profit."

Bevers said while cattle prices remain strong, input costs continue to affect profit margins. He said ranchers without any goals identified for their business are setting themselves up for potential problems.

"You should make profits, then make choices," he said. Bevers said too many cattle producers make purchasing choices before making profit.

"When I first start working with ranches, I ask individuals if they are reaching their goals and effectively managing assets," he said. "You need to identify what your goals are and where you are going."

Bevers said that starts with keeping good records. However, he added, producers don't have to go out and purchase expensive software programs.

"It doesn't have to be a \$6,000 software program," he said. "It could be something as simple as a spreadsheet or even on paper."

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