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The Post Dispatch

A BUILDER IN GARZA COUNTY SINCE 1926

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2014

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75 CENTS

Local office enforces tax IDs for farm tags

By Wayne Hodgin
The Post Dispatch

Garza County's tax collector has said her office will be enforcing the state requirement for residents to provide an Agricultural and Timber Exemption Registration Number when applying for an exemption for farm vehicles.

House Bill 268, passed during the 82nd Legislative Session, requires a person claiming a sales-tax exemption of certain items used in the production of agricultural and timber products to provide a registration number issued by the state comptroller.

"Texas law now requires farmers and ranchers to show their state comptroller-issued Texas Agricultural or Timber Exemption Registration number before obtaining farm license plates and/or temporary excess weight permits," said Nancy Wallace, tax assessor-collector for Garza County.

"Evidently, Austin caught wind that many farmers and ranchers were claiming these exemptions on vehicles that don't meet the requirements set by the state comptroller's office," Wallace said.

"Not all purchases that farmers and ranchers make are exempt from sales tax, some agricultural items are exempt, while others are taxable unless purchased for exclusive use on a commercial farm or ranch in the production of food or other agricultural products for sale."

Local producers wishing to apply for the ag/timber number may do so online at the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts website, window.state.tx.us.

According to the website, it should only take about 10 minutes to complete and, if the applicant qualifies, an ag/timber number will be issued at the end of the process.

Wallace said she wanted to remind Garza County residents of this law prior to them coming to her office, and that this law affects title changes and renewals of farm plates.

Stock Show Winner



Submitted photo
Post High School sophomore FFA student Bryan Smith, center, is shown with other representatives and contestants of the 2014 calf scramble event at the San Antonio Stock Show this past week. Smith was a winner of the event and not only won a prize to help purchase a show animal but he also secured a spot in next year's San Antonio event, which qualifies him for future scholarships and prizes from the organization.

Successful scramble secures Smith a spot at San Antonio

By Wayne Hodgin
The Post Dispatch

SAN ANTONIO — A Post High School student and FFA member was one of 13 winners in the annual calf scramble at the San Antonio Stock Show this past week.

Sophomore Bryan Smith won an \$850 prize for successfully coaxing, catching and haltering a calf across the winner's line. The win guarantees Smith a spot in the 2015 San Antonio Stock Show and the money used to put toward purchasing a show animal.

Smith enjoys showing pigs, and likely a gilt will be his choice of show animal next year. His future plans include buying and raising competitive show pigs.

Smith is the son of Post ISD Athletic Director Steve Smith and wife, Regina.

Since 1984, the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo organization has committed more than \$134 million to youth education across the state and, last year, awarded more than \$11.1 million in scholarships to graduating seniors.

Local charity endows scholarship at Hardin-Simmons

By Wayne Hodgin
The Post Dispatch

ABILENE — An organization based in Post that is known for philanthropies benefiting history and education has recently endowed a scholarship for college students with top preference for those from Garza and surrounding counties.

The newly created award was made possible by a substantial gift last August to Hardin-Simmons University by the Maxine Durrett Earl Charitable Foundation with stipulations that is be directly for student scholarships.

The funds will be divided into two scholarships — one for a junior or senior student majoring in history, and one to be awarded to a junior or senior student

majoring in political science, said Janlyn Thaxton, a HSU spokeswoman.

The scholarship was made available for the first time this spring semester.

Showing pride for her hometown of Post and her love of history, Maxine Durrett Earl founded her philanthropic organization to help further historical preservation and education, among other such causes. She was a schoolteacher and business owner in Post, as well as a member of the Post City Council from 1977-1985.

Earl was also known as a champion of historic preservation throughout the community and promoter of cultural events and projects that met a number of community needs. She was a founding member of the Caprock

Cultural Association.

She and her husband, Lewis Earl, also provided support for the founding of the Earl Survey Research Laboratory in the Department of Political Science at Texas Tech University. Although she received her undergraduate degree from the University of Texas, her master's degree was awarded from Texas Tech.

Requirements for the Maxine Durrett Earl Scholarship at Hardin-Simmons University include:

- Recipients must maintain a 3.0 GPA and be fulltime students in order to qualify for the scholarship.
- First preference will be given to students from Garza County, Texas.
- Second preference includes



MAXINE DURRETT EARL

students from the surrounding counties of Gaines, Dawson, Borden, Scurry, Kent, Lynn, Terry, Yoakum, Cochran, Hockley, Lubbock, Crosby, Dickens, Motley, Floyd, Hale, Lamb, and Bailey.

Post Notes

Events are listed free of charge as a service by this newspaper for nonprofit groups, civic organizations, churches, schools and select community events. Listings should be submitted at least two weeks in advance and will run as often as possible through the date of the event. News staff does not guarantee placement of events. Emailed submissions are preferred to thepostcitydispatch@gmail.com.

Ragtown show

"Gethsemane" opens tonight at Ragtown Gospel Theater and runs through April 12. Performances are at 7:30 p.m. Fridays and at 3 p.m. Saturdays. Tickets and information at ragtown.com.

Chamber banquet

The Post Area Chamber of Commerce annual awards banquet and dinner will be at 6:30 p.m. Saturday at the Post Community Center. Business and Citizen of the Year honorees will be named. Call 495-3416 or email chamberofcommerce@postcity-texas.com for information.

Early voting

Early voting ahead of the March 4 primary is ongoing through Feb. 28. Call the Garza County Elections Office for information at 806-495-4430. A valid photo ID for registered voters is required to cast a ballot.

Tabana Yuane

The annual sunrise wind ceremony predicting the upcoming crop season will be March 22 at City Park.

Close City Car Show

The second annual Close City Community Antique Tractors, Car and Toys Show will be April 5. No admission fee. Games, parades, food, vendors. Bring the whole family. Call Jim Ellis at 806-495-2753 for information.

Corrections

If you spot an error of fact, contact Editor Wayne Hodgin at 806-495-2816 or thepostcitydispatch@gmail.com.

News on the go



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89th Year, No. 25
USPS 439-620



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The Post Dispatch, 123 E. Main St., Post, Texas, 79356, is open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday; from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesday and is closed on Thursdays. Phone 806-495-2816 Fax 806-495-2059 Email thepostcitydispatch@gmail.com

PUBLISHER
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The Post Dispatch (USPS 439-620) is published every Friday, including holidays, by Blackburn Media Group Inc., P.O. Box 1260, Childress, Texas, 79201-1260. Entered at U.S. Post Office, Post, Texas, for transmission through the mail as a Second-Class matter, according to an Act of Congress, March 3, 1879. Periodical Rate Postage Paid at Post, Texas, 79356. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Post Dispatch, 123 E. Main St., Post, Texas, 79356.

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It is the mission of this newspaper to promote the rights of individualism in the American Declaration of Independence. The right of life, liberty and ownership of property are the cornerstone of freedom. Government's sole purpose is to enhance our liberty and freedom. Therefore, we hold every elected and appointed agent of government accountable to that standard.

DEADLINES
Advertising: 5 p.m. Mondays
Editorial: Noon Tuesdays

SUBSCRIPTIONS
\$30 a year in the county
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Thanks For Reading The Post Dispatch!

Words cannot express how thankful we are for the outpouring of kindness and support we have received during this difficult time. We would like to send a special thank you to the first responders, the women who so selflessly risked their own well being to help save our sweet Mileigh, Jason Powell and Melissa Flanigan. We are truly blessed to be a part of such a wonderful, caring community. We thank you all for helping us through this tragedy.

God bless you all,
The family of Taylor Baker
Klent Baker, husband
Mileigh Baker, daughter
Monica Lewis, mother
Frank Martinez, grandfather
Kelly & Donna Baker
Travis Lewis, brother
Brittany & Alan Leon, sister
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Praying for rain.

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Deaths

Mary Roberts

Mary Marlin Roberts, 81, of Lubbock died Wednesday February 12, 2014 at University Medical Center with her husband of almost 57 years by her side. Services were 10:30 a.m. Saturday February 15, 2014 at the 82nd and Avenue V Church of Christ with Dennis Dees and Rick Clark, Elders of the church officiating. A graveside service was held 3:00 p.m. Saturday at the Terrace Cemetery, in Post. Arrangements were under the personal care of Dee and Janet Justice, Justice-Mason Funeral Home.

Mary was born April 7, 1932 to Roy Roosevelt and Roxie Viola Bell (Scott) Lee at Tahoka. Her family moved to Post shortly after she was born and later returned to Tahoka. She graduated Tahoka High School and went to work for General Telephone as an operator. Mary and Glenn W. Roberts were married February 14, 1957 in Tahoka. They made their home in Lubbock where Mary worked for Southwestern Bell Telephone. After working 37 and a half years she retired. She and Glenn



MARY ROBERTS

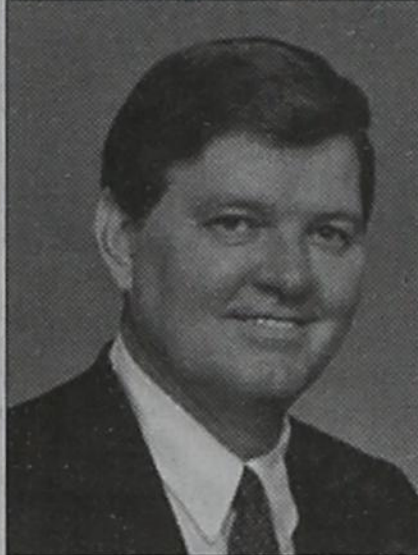
enjoyed traveling in their RV and Mary especially enjoyed reading her bible daily. Her Chihuahua's were special to her over the years. Mary is preceded in death by her parents. She was a member of the Church of Christ for over 55 years. Survivors include her husband: Glenn W. Roberts and her sister: Bobbie Joy Jenkins of Lubbock. Mary has a host of relatives and friends that also survive her. Pallbearers were: Johnny Kemp, Jimmy Kemp, Billy Weaver, Gordon Harvick, Don Clark and Ken McCarty.

Donald Ross Hays

AUSTIN — Donald Ross Hays, 71, of Austin passed away on Wednesday, February 12, 2014 from a brief illness due to complications of Parkinson's disease. Donnie, the youngest of twelve children, was born to James and Mattie Hays in Post, Texas on December 10, 1942.

As a young boy in Post, Donnie found work helping with milk delivery, shining shoes at the barber shop, and setting pins at the bowling alley. He played basketball and graduated from Post High School in 1961. He played basketball at West Texas State in Canyon and also attended Texas Tech in Lubbock.

He worked for Burlington Industries in Post and North Carolina. He scheduled production at Burlington facilities and was an industrial engineer at the Burlington Mill in Post until its closure. He worked for the Texas Employment Commission in



DONALD HAYS

Lubbock and the Texas Workforce Commission in Austin. He retired from state government in 2003.

Donnie enjoyed playing golf with friends and watching the Texas Rangers and Texas Tech sports. He enjoyed spending time with his family and the many large family reunions in Post.

He is survived by his wife, Shirley Harmon Hays of Austin; their twins, Matthew Hays and Juliana Danz; and grandson, Hunter Danz of Austin; brothers, Herb Hays of Austin and Pete Hays of Post; sister, Reba Propst of Post; sisters-in-law Fredda Hays of Austin and Kay Hays of Post; and by his beloved extended family.

The family will receive family and friends from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Sunday, February 16, 2014 at Cook-Walden/Forest Oaks Funeral Home.

Funeral services will be held at 10:00 a.m., Monday, February 17, 2014 in the Chapel of Cook-Walden/Forest Oaks Funeral Home.

Now cracks a noble heart. Goodnight, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest. Condolences may be made online by visiting www.cookwalden-forestoaks.com. Arrangements under the care of Cook-Walden/Forest Oaks Funeral Home, 6300 W. William Cannon Drive, Austin, Texas 78749, (512) 892-1172.

Letters to the Editor

ATV park: Much to be considered

There seems to be a lot of misinformation concerning the possibility of an ATV trail at White River Lake. I am a Crosby County taxpayer, and I was at the open meeting in Post last Thursday night. At that meeting, Steve Thompson, who is with Texas Parks and Wildlife, when pressed, said there "was a possibility" the money for the trail would have to be paid back by the cities if it closes before 20 years. I have reviewed the grant, and it clearly states that if the trail closes within 20 years the money must be paid back.

The mayor of Childress stated the park outside his town grosses about \$30,000 a year. It doesn't seem to me that — with that small of an amount of revenue — the project is worth the risk involved.

I am also concerned of the liability that would be incurred should someone be injured or killed on that trail. I know they will have everyone sign a waiver, but we all know those contracts don't always stand up in court.

There is to be a meeting in Ralls during March. I would like to encourage all residents to come to that meeting so that you can ask questions and get the facts.

CHARLENE TATE
Crosby County

Letter was not opinion of entire group

In last week's letter to the editor, from David Tate purported himself to be speaking on behalf of the White River Homeowners Association. As a homeowner and elected spokesman of the homeowners group, I knew nothing about the letter, and I do not agree with the Mr. Tate's opinion. As a group, the issue has never been voted on. I believe the majority of the property owners of White River Lake are in favor of the proposed ATV park — anything that will generate income and help curtail an increase in water rates.

A.O. SMITH
White River Lake

(Smith is owner and operator of the White River Marina)

School Menus

Week of Feb. 24-28

Southland ISD

Breakfast
Monday: Pancake on a stick, fruit, juice, milk
Tuesday: Breakfast pizza, fruit, juice, milk
Wednesday: Cherry or apple strudel, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk
Thursday: Muffins, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk
Friday: Biscuits, sausage, gravy, fruit, juice, milk
Lunch
Monday: Chicken spaghetti, garden salad, carrots with ranch, breadstick, apple slices, milk
Tuesday: Corn dogs, baked beans, baked chips, veggie cup with ranch, yogurt, fruit, milk
Wednesday: Chicken fajitas, charro beans, tortilla chips, salsa, orange smiles, milk
Thursday: Crispy beef chalupas, garden salad, refried beans, applesauce, salsa, milk
Friday: Hamburgers, baked fries, fruit, pudding, milk

Post ISD Breakfast

Monday: Pancake, bacon, fruit, juice, milk
Tuesday: Sunrise sandwich, fruit, juice, milk
Wednesday: Biscuits, scrambled eggs, fruit, juice, milk
Thursday: Brown sugar oatmeal, cinnamon toast, fruit, juice, milk
Friday: Breakfast burrito, fruit, juice, milk
Lunch
Monday: Corn dogs, baked beans, tomato an cucumber salad, apple-pineapple delight, milk
Tuesday: Beefy queso with tortilla chips, refried beans, garden salad, orange wedges, milk
Wednesday: Beef and bean burrito, oven fries, fresh veggie cup, fruity gelatin, milk
Thursday: Chicken nuggets with gravy, garden salad, baby carrots, fresh grapes, breadstick, milk
Friday: Pizza, crunchy broccoli, salad, seasoned corn, fresh fruit bowl, milk

NOTES

From Page 1

Military exhibit

The Garza County Historical Museum, 119 N. Ave. N, Post, has a new exhibit of more than 100 cast-dyed military warplane models on display as part of the 72nd anniversary of the 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor. The planes were donated by U.S. Marine Corps veteran Patrick Reilly and will be part of the museum's permanent collection. This county museum is housed in an old sanitarium built in 1912 by C.W. Post. Exhibits feature artifacts significant to the county and of general interest to visitors. For information, call 806-495-2207.

Taxpayer clinic

Students at the Texas Tech School of Law conduct free clinic for low-income taxpayers throughout the year to assist them with federal tax issues related to individual tax matters. Eligibility is determined by the federal poverty guidelines. For information or schedule an appointment, call Nancy Mojica at 806-834-7972 or 800-420-8037.

GED classes

Instructional sessions for the GED test are 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays in Room 18 at Post High School. Call the school at 495-2770 for information. The Post Public

Library website now offers life-learning resources for GED test preparation, job search and workplace skills. Visit wtls.tsl.state.tx.us/pplib to register. For information, contact librarian Peggy Ashley at 990-2149.

Veterans benefits

Wartime veterans or surviving spouses may be entitled to monthly income from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. For information, contact Marsha Mahurin at West Texas Senior Resources at 806-781-3901 or email marsha.mahurin@yahoo.com.

City Council

The Post City Council meets at 6 p.m. the second Tuesday of the month in Council Chambers at City Hall, 105 E. Main St. For information, call 495-2811.

County Commission

The Garza County Commission meets at 9 a.m. the second and fourth Mondays of the month in Commission Chambers at the Garza County Courthouse, 300 W. Main St. For information, call 495-4430.

School board

The Post ISD Board of Trustees meets at 6:30 p.m. the second Tuesdays of the month in the conference room at the Administrative Offices, 501 S. Ave. K. For information, call 495-3343.

Clay Miller

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Colorado City teen killed in wreck

The Post Dispatch

ABILENE — A two-vehicle accident in Fisher County on Sunday afternoon killed an 18-year-old Colorado City resident on FM 57 just west of the Sylvester community.

Trooper Frederick Biddle, spokesman for the Texas Department of Public Safety's regional headquarters in Abilene, said Joshua Tyler Hulme was killed when he overcorrected the 2001 Ford Ranger he was driving in the westbound lane of the Farm-to-Market Road after partially running off the roadway.

Biddle said Hulme swerved into the eastbound lane and was hit by an oncom-

ing tractor-trailer, driven by Andrew Eugene Garganeous, 35, of El Reno, Okla.

Hulme's body was pronounced at the scene at 3:30 p.m., about an hour after the accident, by Judge Marshal Bennett. His body was taken to Weathersbee Funeral Home in Rotan.

Biddle said Hulme was wearing his safety belt. Garganeous was not injured.

The road's posted speed limit is 70 mph, and the road conditions were dry under partly cloudy skies.

The accident was being investigated by Trooper Michael Nottingham.

Wayne Hodgkin

The Paperboy

The home of the irresponsible

The age of personal responsibility is officially over!

What are you waiting on?

There's no need to work. No need to get an education. No reason to hope or dream.

Just sit back, relax and let good old Uncle Sam take care of you. Get free money for doing nothing.

You don't like that idea? Get over it!

Haven't you heard, we're not responsible for anything anymore. Pretty soon, we'll be able to get even more money from the food industry because we're too overweight as a country.

Oh yes. In this world where personal responsibility no longer matters, lawyers around the country are beginning to salivate at the notion that they can do to "big food" what was done to Big Tobacco.

"I believe that this is the most promising strategy to lighten the economic burden of obesity on states and taxpayers and to negotiate broader public health policy objectives," said Paul McDonald, a partner at Valorem Law Group in Chicago.

Lawyers have approached state attorney generals in 16 states with the idea to make the food industry pay for obesity-related health care costs.

They are hoping to take a page out of the Big Tobacco settlement of the 1990s which netted 46 states \$246 billion.

But, as we know, food is not tobacco. And to compare the two is preposterous.

I'll be the first to admit that I need to drop a few pounds. Do I blame Kellogg's Pop Tarts? No! I blame myself!

I'm the one with the mouth and the big eyes. Or maybe that's the eyes and the big mouth ... Either way, whether I'm fat or skinny is up to me.

The way this potential lawsuit is going down, it sounds to me like the lawyers are scheming so they can get rich.

The Valorem Law Group has actually

sent proposals to AGs from California to Mississippi explaining how suing "big food" can help their states close budget shortfalls or help eliminate their debt entirely.

For example, McDonald informed Pennsylvania Attorney General Kathleen Kane that the state faced a \$3.7 billion budget shortfall in 2012. The state's total Medicaid burden that year was \$10 billion. He feels that if the state sues the food industry for billions and wins a settlement, the poor decisions which have landed the state in financial problems can be absorbed.

Forget fixing the financial problems caused by leftist idiots in Michigan and California, let's just sue and get money that way.

And by the way, who would foot the bill if the food industry had to cough up half a trillion dollars? You and I.

How would having to pay much higher prices at the grocery store and restaurants fit into your budget?

The way to defeat our obesity problem is not through laws. Like many issues we have, it starts at home. It starts with parents being responsible enough to teach their children healthy eating habits and making them get outside and play.

But I forgot. This is America. We do what we like and then we blame others when things don't work out for us. That's what we learn from our elected officials so it must be the right thing to do.

So go ahead and eat the bad stuff. What difference does it make? Someone else will get the bill for your irresponsibility.

Who cares how bad we bankrupt this country. That's for another generation to worry about.

Chris Blackburn serves as CEO at Blackburn Media Group, proud owner of The Floyd County Hesperian-Beacon, Hall County Herald, The Hollis News, The Knox County News-Courier, The Post Dispatch, The Childress Index, Wellington Leader and The Stonewall Courier. He can be reached by email at chris@blackburnmediagroup.com and you can follow him on Twitter @WCSBlackburn.



CHRIS BLACKBURN

Lions Club News

Lubbock Lions plan 62nd pancake festival

The Post Dispatch

LUBBOCK — The Lubbock Lions Club's 62nd annual Pancake Festival fundraiser will be from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Saturday at the Lubbock Memorial Civic Center. As always, the food is freshly prepared and cooked throughout the day.

The event will be the first time members have made bacon available for purchase.

The event features a festive atmosphere with fabulous entertainment, melt in your mouth pan-

cakes and activities for the entire family. A benefit drawing will feature a 50-inch television and a football autographed by Red Raider head football coach Kliff Kingsbury.

Tickets cost \$5 in advance when purchased in person from any Lubbock Lions Club member and at all Bolton locations. At the door, tickets will cost \$6 per person. There is no charge for children younger than 2 years of age.

Tickets also may be purchased online at lubbocklions.org until 3 p.m. today and will be available at

venue's will-call window.

Guided by the motto "We Serve," Lubbock Lions Club members donate all of the profits raised from the Pancake Festival fundraiser to charities.

"We intend to raise more money than ever before (this year)," said Pancake Festival Co-Chairman Mike Massengale. "With increased participation from our community we will set a new record for helping people in need."

The Lubbock organization is the largest Lions Club in North America.

The 501

A (fledgling) snowbird in Venice — Florida

Fort Lauderdale is the Venice of the Americas. I'm not sure what that means for the real Venice, Fla., but now that I've spent a few days in Fort Lauderdale, I get it. Canals are everywhere. But instead of gondolas,

yachts are the rule.

Big, shiny yachts. I'm here thanks to an invitation from my cousin Liz. Nice cousin.

Liz also has adopted a homeless woman who sleeps on the beach. I've yet to meet her. Softhearted Liz gave her some money. And those are the extremes of society in Fort Lauderdale — the ultra rich and the yachtless home-

less, both attracted to the great weather here.

So am I. Liz's son Brewster lives here. If he weren't her son already, I'd adopt him.

It wouldn't be a no-strings adoption. I'd make it clear he'd have to house me in the dead of winter if Texas ever has another one like 2013-2014.

Brrrrrr. Never have I thought much of snowbirds — people too lazy to stay home and shovel snow. Wimps. They use places like Florida and the Rio Grande Valley the way we regular Texans use Colorado in August. Users.

Now I am one.

I'm not proud to have abandoned my husband to feed 43 cows and thaw out the frozen well without me. I make that confession as the ocean breezes turn the palm fronds into hula dancers and my

hair into something it's not in Texas. I would say what, but there's not a word for it. If there's a drawback here, the effect on hair is it, at least for anyone who tries to stay coiffed. I don't.

Travelogue-wise, I've little to say. Aside from visits with Liz and Brewster, my experiences have been bus rides, sort of like my first adventures in Paris, when I spent two days on the Metro. Nothing beats public transit for seeing both the seamy and ritzier side of things and for rubbing shoulders with the natives, especially during rush hour. One bus lurch here sent me into the lap of a sickly fellow who was riding the bus in his wheelchair. And he asked me if I was OK! So far, even on the crowded buses, no one has picked my pocket.

That's more than I can say for Lisbon.

Yesterday, after some cursory online research, I took the bus to a used apparel store in a better (understatement) part of town, hoping to supplement my spare travel wardrobe. Prices started at \$150. I felt the discerning eyes of the clerks on my basic Wal-Mart canvas shoes — the very same shoes confiscated and inspected by airport security. At least at the airport, they passed.

Clerks' opinions aside (not that anyone said anything), my cheap basic shoes have served me well here. Maybe I'll get them bronzed for spite.

Better yet, I should save them for trips to other places called Venice — Bruges, Amsterdam, Manchester, St. Petersburg. Or even Venice.

Perk up little shoes. You know you want to go.

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



HANABA MUNN WELCH

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Cryptogram

A cryptogram is a puzzle where a sentence is encoded by substituting the actual letters of the sentence with different letters. The challenge of the puzzle is to 'decode' the sentence to reveal the original English sentence. We have provided a few of the decoded letters to help get you started.

Hint: Quote by Jay Leno

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

O D I H X S L K Q K S D B S Z S K Q I B F E I Z D
H O O H
Y V I B S P F Q D I H R S H T V

Take the First Step to a Heart-Healthy Life.

Start! Walking. Start! Something.

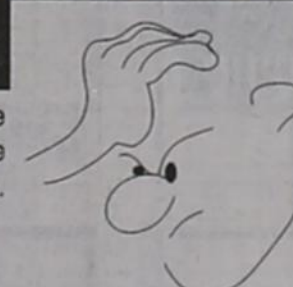
Heart disease is the number one killer of men and women in America. But did you know that just 30 minutes a day of physical activity can improve your health and decrease your risk of heart disease? An easy way to work physical activity into your regular routine is to start walking. For every single hour of regular, vigorous exercise, you can add two hours to your life expectancy.

It's easy to Start! whether you're by yourself or with friends, family and co-workers. You'll all feel a difference and live longer, heart-healthier lives.

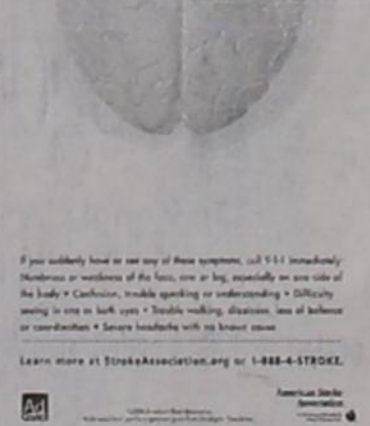
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If you suddenly find it hard to do things, call 911 immediately. Stroke is a medical emergency. Time is brain. The longer you wait, the more brain cells are lost. Stroke is a leading cause of disability and death. Learn more at StrokeAssociation.org or 1-888-4-STROKE.

© Feature Exchange

Capital Highlights

Candidates show differences as primaries approach

AUSTIN — Counting down to Primary Election Day on March 4, Republican Greg Abbott and Democrat Wendy Davis remain the presumptive frontrunners for governor in their respective party races.

For lieutenant governor, state Sen. Leticia Van de Putte of San Antonio stands alone as the Democrat vying for that powerful office, while Republican primary voters will have a field of four candidates to choose from in that race: incumbent Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst; Jerry Patterson, land commissioner; Todd Staples, agriculture commissioner; or Dan Patrick, chair of the state Senate Committee on Education. While agreeing on most issues, one popular way those four Republican candidates seek to differentiate themselves is by publicizing lists of endorsements by various political action committees and other special interest groups.

Last week Abbott, the current state attorney general, said corruption and gangs are a threat to security along the border with Mexico. His likening the border region to a third world country, however, drew a blistering response from South Texas residents.

Davis, a state senator from Fort Worth, focused on public school funding. She pointed to a pending state district court case dealing with fairness in the education finance system and called on Abbott to stop defending the state law that sparked the case.

Davis suggested that the state Legislature be called into special session to revise the law.

Abbott has said that as attorney general, it's his job to defend state laws against court challenges.

Davis also spoke in favor of gay marriage and "open carry" by local option. An open carry law would allow Texans who have the appropriate state permit to wear a firearm in plain view in public.

Abbott previously has made his opposition to gay marriage known and he labeled Davis's open carry statement as political opportunism.

Early voting began Feb. 18 and will end on Feb. 28.

Business filings increase

Texas Secretary of State Nandita Berry on Feb. 10 reported that in calendar year 2013, some 150,979 certificates of formation creating new limited liability companies, corporations, and limited partnerships were filed with her office.

The number of filings, she said, represents a 5.6 percent increase from

2012, when the office received 142,872 filings.

"We've cut red tape and made it possible in many cases to start a new business in Texas virtually overnight. Texas is wide open for business. Welcome to the land of opportunity," said Berry, who appointed by Gov. Perry and sworn in on Jan. 7.

Sales tax revenue is up

State sales tax revenue in January was \$2.3 billion, up 8.3 percent compared to the previous January, state Comptroller Susan Combs said Feb. 12.

Combs said increases across all major sectors of the economy indicate "continued expansion in both consumer and business spending, and brings the growth in fiscal year-to-date collections to 4.6 percent compared with the previous year. Sales tax revenue has increased for 46 consecutive months."

Cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts would be sent their February local sales tax allocations totaling \$802.1 million, up 8.2 percent compared to February 2013.

UT chancellor steps down
After a five-year tenure, Chancellor Francisco G. Cigarroa announced Feb. 10 that he would step down as head of The University of Texas System but will serve until a successor is named.

Cigarroa will become the head of pediatric transplant surgery at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio while also serving as a special liaison to the board of regents to advise on the development of the new University of Texas Rio Grande Valley and medical school.

Cigarroa served as president of the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio from 2000 to 2008 before being named the first Hispanic chancellor of the UT System in late 2008.

Seat belt campaign begins

Texas Department of Transportation announced Feb. 14 the launch of its annual "Teen Click It or Ticket" campaign to address the leading cause of death among teens ages 15 to 20: motor vehicle crashes.

The campaign features videos and a wrecked truck exhibit "to highlight the consequences of not wearing a seat belt, such as costly tickets, lost driving privileges, injuries or even death," TxDOT said.

Educational toolkits available to campus classrooms include posters, banners, parking lot signage, morning announcements, a school newspaper article, a parent brochure and more.

Legends

The third life of Sea Cloud

(Editor's note: The following column is the third in a series by Linda Puckett on the history of the sailing yacht once owned by Post heiress Marjorie Merriweather Post.)

Part three of "Sea Cloud" continues with Marjorie divorcing E.F.

Hutton in August of 1935 and by December she married once again to an old friend, Joseph E. Davies, who was an internationally known attorney.

Davies was very active in the Democratic Party having worked with President Wilson as one of his economic advisers at the end of World War I.

Politics would certainly shape the lives of the newlyweds for the next few years, and the Sea Cloud would play an important role.

One caption in the Sea Cloud book reads, "A New Life Under A New Name: Deck Planks Turn Into A Diplomatic Stage."

That was pretty much a perfect description of Marjorie's "new" life, a new husband with a new title of U.S. Ambassador Joseph (Joe) Davies, and her newly re-named yacht, the Sea Cloud.

She had been greatly admired as the super-rich heiress and the wife of Ed Hutton. She now would be given honors of a political dignitary at diplomatic levels.

Joe's new ambassadorial status increased the social occasions on board the Sea Cloud as it was. On Jan. 16, 1936, they set sail for Dominican capital of Santo Domingo, called Ciudad Trujillo by the small country's new dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. It was on this visit that President Trujillo presented Joe with the highest award the Dominican government had to offer — the medal of the Order of Juan Pablo Duarte. Trujillo would become a major player in the seven lives of the Sea Cloud, which we will touch on a bit later.

Marjorie would have preferred to have been stationed in London, but President Roosevelt assigned Joe to Moscow to observe Stalin's purge and to determine the Soviet Union's military and economic strengths. The Sea Cloud was ordered to Russia as a bug-proof floating palace, arriving in Leningrad on July 6, 1937, and was the first luxury yacht to sail into Communist waters since czarist days.

Marjorie kept scrapbooks, documenting their travels aboard

Sea Cloud to many of the major sea ports in the world and of entertaining dignitaries in each country. On one occasion, Norwegian Queen Maud paid a visit, and, as she stepped aboard the Sea Cloud, she was greeted by 74 crewmen dressed in white and snapping to attention. She casually remarked, "You live like a queen."

On July 11, 1937, the entry read, "Sailed to Sarö and visited (King) Gustov in his castle."

A few days later, Sea Cloud sailed to Copenhagen and picked up the world famous American opera tenor Lawrence Tibbett and his wife. The yacht then returned to Sweden where Marjorie held a luncheon for the Swedish King. Fish was served to the guests and after the monarch had eaten hardily, Marjorie asks him how it had tasted. His Majesty found the fish to be delicious. Marjorie then informed him the fish had been caught two years ago. She quickly used the monarch's amazement as an excuse to show him the deep freezers below deck and to explain the new wonder called "frozen food." Purchasing the Birdseye Co, was a real win for use on the Sea Cloud.

In March of 1938 the Sea Cloud was repainted and given her white "spring dress" that distinguished her as a private yacht verses the darkly painted commercial ships.

The Davies' last big trip in the area and their farewell to the Soviet Union started in June. The Sea Cloud sailed from Odessa to Istanbul.

"What a thrilling sight it was," Marjorie wrote, "as we just slid through the gates into Istanbul before they closed at 8:30 for the night. On and on the Sea Cloud slowly and quietly made her way and finally anchored in front of the beautiful palace, which was brightly lit. I have never seen anything as gorgeous. It didn't seem real!"

This experience quickly soothed the shock she had received earlier as her ship arrived in Odessa, making her note "The Red Flag was flying from our yard."

Istanbul was to be Sea Cloud's last highlight before the Second World War. Joe was transferred to the Brussels embassy. Marjorie exclaimed, "Thank God, they've got a King!"

Next week the Sea Cloud is sacrificed for the nation, and we revisit Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molinas, the brutal dictator who proclaimed himself to be President of the Dominican Republic.

Linda Puckett is the curator of the Garza Museum and director of the Garza County Historical Commission.



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Pleasant Home Baptist Church- E. 14th & N Ave F
Southland Baptist Church- Southland
Temple Bautista- 315 W. Main
Trinity Baptist Church- 915 N. Ave O, 990-3038

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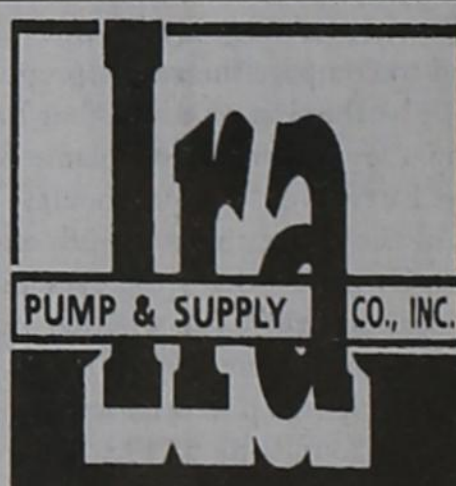
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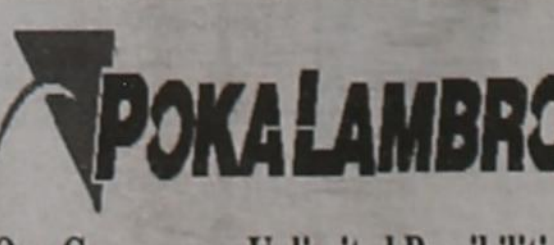


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FSA briefs Agency OKs TRC as a lender

Officials with the USDA Farm Service Agency this week announced the Texas Rural Communities organization has been approved as a nontraditional guaranteed loan lender for the FSA in the state of Texas.

A recently revised policy allows FSA to issue farm loan guarantees to nontraditional lenders. Nontraditional lenders can originate, hold and service guaranteed loans.

The goal of Texas Rural Communities is to improve and maintain the quality of rural communities. This goal is accomplished by assisting rural communities, individuals, groups and support organizations with viable rural development enterprises.

FSA has worked with traditional lenders in the past, but is now expanding to work with both traditional and nontraditional lenders. A nontraditional lender is one that does not typically hold deposit accounts and is not subject to oversight and supervision. The most common nontraditional lenders are those who are funded under the U.S.

Department of Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund.

FSA-guaranteed loans allow lenders to provide agricultural credit to farmers who do not meet the lender's normal underwriting criteria. Farmers and ranchers apply for a guaranteed loan through a lender, and the lender arranges for the guarantee. FSA can guarantee up to 95 percent of the loss of principal and interest on a loan. Guaranteed loans can be used for both farm ownership and operating purposes.

"The Agency has expanded its authority to extend guarantees to nontraditional lenders like Texas Rural Communities in order to provide credit to producers who operate in underserved locations," said Judith Canales, executive director of the Texas FSA.

For questions regarding the FSA Guaranteed Loan program, please contact your lender or your local FSA Office.

The Post Dispatch

Nancy's Notions Are you at risk for heart disease?

During the month of February, Americans see the human heart as the symbol of love. Since February is also American Heart Month, it is time to show yourself some love.

Fact: According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cardiovascular disease, (CVD) including heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure, is the No. 1 killer of women and men in the United States.

Fact: It is a leading cause of disability, preventing Americans from working and enjoying family activities.

Fact: CVD costs the United States more than \$300 billion each year, including the cost of health care services, medications and lost productivity.

CVD does not affect all groups of people in the same way. Although the number of preventable deaths has declined in people ages 65 to 74 years, it has remained unchanged in people younger than 65. Men are more than twice as likely as women to die from preventable CVD.

Having a close relative who has heart disease puts you at higher risk for CVD. Health disparities based on geography also exist. During 2007 to 2009, death rates due to heart disease were the highest in the South and lowest in the West.

Race and ethnicity also affect your risk. Nearly 44 percent of black men and 48 percent of black women have some form of CVD, and both are more likely than any other racial or ethnic group to have high blood pressure and to develop the condition earlier in life. About 2 in 5 black adults have high blood pressure, yet fewer than half of them have the condition under control.

Many CVD deaths could have been prevented through healthier habits, healthier living spaces, and better management of conditions like high blood

pressure and diabetes. Take it one step at a time. You can control a number of risk factors for CVD, including:

- Diet
- Physical activity
- Tobacco use
- Obesity
- High blood pressure
- High blood cholesterol
- Diabetes

As you begin your journey to better heart health that can last a lifetime, keep these things in mind:

- Try not to become overwhelmed. Every step brings you closer to a healthier heart, and every healthy choice makes a difference!
- Don't get discouraged. You may not be able to take all of the steps at one time. Get a good night's sleep — also important for a healthy heart — and do what you can tomorrow.
- Reward yourself. Find fun things to do to decrease your stress. Round up some colleagues for a lunchtime walk, join a singing group, or have a healthy dinner with your family or friends.
- Partner up. The journey is more fun — and often more successful — when you have company. Ask friends and family to join you. Step Up & Scale Down is a new 12-week program developed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension nutrition specialists and is based on the USDA 2010 Dietary Guidelines intended to help Americans choose a healthy eating plan within their calorie requirements to achieve and maintain a healthy weight. The dietary guidelines provide sound scientific information about how proper dietary habits can promote health and reduce risk for major chronic diseases.

Spring is the perfect season to get active. For more information on Step Up & Scale Down, call the Garza County Extension Office at 806-495-4400, or your local Extension service office.

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

Lesser prairie chicken Neugebauer urges agency to finalize report, extend deadline

The Post Dispatch

LUBBOCK — Congressman Randy Neugebauer (R-TX) has joined five western lawmakers on a letter to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services (FWS) Director Dan Ashe urging a quick approval of conservation efforts to preserve the lesser-prairie chicken, and a two-month delay of the scheduled listing decision.

"This is part of our effort to ensure the FWS doesn't move forward with a costly listing of the lesser-prairie chicken when innovative state and regional efforts would make the listing unnecessary," Neugebauer explained.

"Within months of FWS approval of the conservation plan, there are now 4.8 million acres of existing or pending enrollment across the lesser-prairie chicken's range, Neugebauer noted.

"That's roughly the size of Delaware and Connecticut combined," he said.

The letter urges FWS officials to finalize the conservation review and incentivize additional efforts for conservation.

In the letter, the lawmakers also pressed FWS to extend its final listing decision until June 11 to allow more acreage to be enrolled in the range-wide plan.

"With the clear and growing success of these conservation plans, we urge USFWS to allow sufficient time for this unprecedented, range-wide conservation effort to succeed by finalizing the last of the plan's agreements and extending the deadline.

Neugebauer said he is confident that given the opportunity to fully implement the range-wide plan, states will prove that listing the lesser-prairie chicken is not necessary.

Other signatories included Reps. Steve Pearce (R-NM), Mike Conaway (R-TX), Corey Gardner (R-CO), Mac Thornberry (R-TX), and Frank Lucas (R-OK).

Puzzle of the Week

CLUES ACROSS

1. Extinct European wild ox
5. Swat
9. Principal character in a novel
10. Ten ____: octopus arm
12. Be unsuccessful
13. Theatre guides
15. Upped the stakes
20. Hollowed out earth
21. The deep vascular inner layer of the skin
23. Bombax ceiba
24. Sew the eyelids of falcons
25. Mrs. Nixon
26. About The Netherlands
30. Working memory (abbr.)
31. Attorney tests
32. Removal from home or country
33. Continent
34. Combine or increase
35. Big-eyed scad genus
36. 12th month (abbr.)
37. Merc ____: contains mercury
39. Acts dejected
41. Jeans fabric
43. Pi-meson
44. Not fully awake
50. Legislative assembly
51. Young French woman (abbr.)
53. 45385
54. Ban ____: Chiquita fruits
55. A dissenting clique
56. Having wisdom that comes with age

CROSSWORD PUZZLE
POST DISPATCH

22. ____ Mater, one's school
23. Pilchards
25. Fathers (Span.)
27. ____ death do us part
28. Devices to hold things together
29. Brave and courageous
31. Data transmission speed measure
33. Benign tumors
38. Bedbug genus
40. Taro root paste
42. Extract from the earth
45. Blackberry stem
46. About ear
47. Orderly
48. Forearm bone
49. Smelting waste
52. Point midway between E and SE

PUZZLE SOLUTION

CLUES DOWN

1. Ultrahigh frequency
2. Backside
3. Murre genus
4. Petitions persistently
5. ____ter: impaired speech
6. Whip
7. Dull steady pain
8. Beseech
11. Sea eagles
14. Tensions
16. Golfer Snead
17. Sidesteps
18. Opulent
19. Induces vomiting

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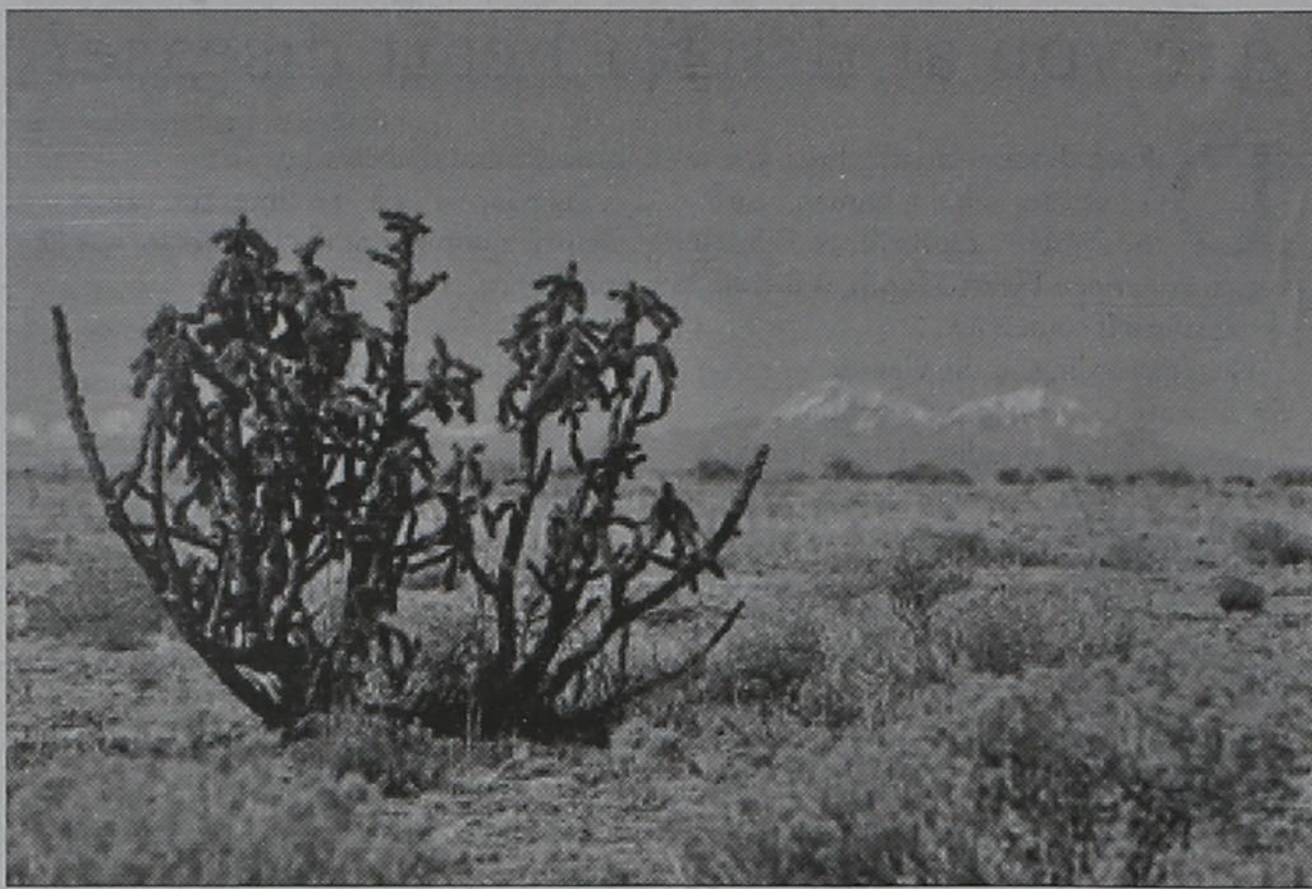
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Wilder's Nature Journal



This Cholla cactus grows in the Comanche National Grassland in southwestern Colorado. In the background, the snow-covered Spanish Peaks can be seen more than 50 miles away.

Nicknamed the chain-link cactus, these cacti grow in Colorado, Texas, New Mexico and Utah. They grow in deserts, on the plains and in cow pastures. When it dies, it turns into a hollow wooden cane with big holes in the wood. In a drought, the Cholla can survive very well. Actually, it thrives, because some cows will

eat these cacti when they run out of grass. Then the cows spread the seeds in their manure. You can always tell an overgrazed pasture by too many cactus plants that are now crowding out the grass.

S.J. Dahlstrom is a Garza County resident and author of the young adult fiction book series "The Adventures of Wilder Good," based on a 12-year-old boy who enjoys hunting, fishing, cowboying and just about everything there is to do outdoors.

Horticulture agent tapped for South Plains

By Steve Byrns
Special to the Dispatch

LUBBOCK—The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has named Vikram Bradley Baliga as the new AgriLife Extension agent for horticulture in Lubbock County.

The announcement of Baliga's hiring was made by Lubbock County Judge Tom Head and Michael Clawson, AgriLife Extension administrator in Lubbock.

"We are very pleased and excited Vikram has accepted this key position in the South Plains District," Clawson said. "This is a brand new position that we have wanted and looked forward to for quite some time."

"The main focus of the position is the development of urban water conservation strategies for Lubbock County," he said. "This will be accomplished with strong partnerships and collaboration efforts with AgriLife Extension, county and city officials, urban homeowners, commercial landscape businesses and other local organizations."

"Conservation of



VIKRAM BRADLEY

water resources is a hot topic across Texas, and across the South Plains is no exception. The development of educational programs on water conservation practices, landscape design, irrigation efficiency and use of drought tolerant and native landscape plants are essential to the future of Lubbock and the surrounding areas."

Baliga earned a master's degree in horticulture from Texas Tech University, where his major

concentration was fruit crop production. He also holds a bachelor's degree in horticulture from Texas A&M University, where his emphasis was on landscape design.

His most recent work experience includes operating a landscape design, installation and maintenance firm. In addition, he has been active in several youth and adult horticulture and outreach educational events in the Lubbock community, Clawson said.

The Idle American Freedom to exhale

So far as I know, none of my elementary schoolmates made it to the Metropolitan Opera — unless as a member of the audience, usher staff or clean-up crew.

On balance, our highest musical aspirations might have justified our inclusion in church choirs, but without expectation to be chosen for solos. When Christmas pageant time rolled around, we risked minimal embarrassment by shooting for silent roles — perhaps as shepherds.

Donning masquerades as camels might best have fit our ability — front or back end — as long as each end knew what the other was doing.

Lest you think our teacher was a buffoon, I hasten to emphasize that the late Betty Jo Rice was more than "up to speed" to handle music instruction for all eight grades. In fact, she was superior in numerous ways, not the least of which was showing us that music fits neatly into our lives long after school bells are silent.

She convinced us that we could — and should — face the day smiling. Surveying the room, she smiled broadly each day, asking if we were ready for our breathing exercise. We were determined to please her, with our breathing if not our singing.

We may have been among the best "breathers" on the planet, taking in big gulps of air, holding them a few seconds, then exhaling on command. I'm here to tell you, we had the breathing part down.

Little did we know at the time that now, some 70 years later, we've pretty much given up on singing outside the shower. However, we're clinging to an exercise regimen, hopeful for another "inhale" after each "exhale." Mrs. Rice might find it hard to believe that in these days, exhaling is the hardest part.

We all have lists of breathtaking challenges, from the communities where we live to the globe we share. Admittedly, Carter was big in pill production, but many folks today have as many problems as he had pills.

Take the current Winter Olympics as an example. When will all parties concerned — participants, fans, media personnel and Russian hosts — feel free to exhale? Add pilots and flight

attendants to the list; surely they have to wonder if someone has slipped a rigged tube of toothpaste onto the plane. (One guy mentioned he'd never previously heard of "Sochi," and when he did, offered a "Gesundheit.")

As a former higher education administrator, I wonder how many educators today need to take some deep breaths, hold them and then fully exhale.

At the University of Texas, for example, worms are out of the can. What a mish-mash of problems between the governor, regents, chancellor, presidents and coaches, perhaps not in that order.

Chancellor Francisco Cigarroa has had enough, opting to return to his medical career in organ transplants. After all, he's performed kidney and liver transplants "every three or four weeks" during his five years as chancellor. On my best "chancelloring" days at a much smaller institution, they wouldn't have thought me capable of transplanting mesquite trees. However, I could exhale with the best of them.

On local levels, stomachs churn on many topics. Consider "bullying," a problem atop many lists. Some bullies seem committed to ugly tactics for a lifetime. (It wasn't long ago the word "bully" was usually followed by "pulpit.")

We risk boggled minds with daily news accounts of man's ongoing inhumanity to man. Sometimes it's more than a body can reasonably bear. (Deliver me from Denmark, where zoo workers have ghoulish ways to dispose of giraffes.)

Only the lions win. I heard of a third-grader, call him "Wee Willie," who asked his dad for \$5 to take to school the next day. Sensing jagged edges of concern in his son's request, Mr. Winkle, reached for his wallet, always eager to help out. Pausing, he asked, "What's it for?"

"Big Bob the Baddest Bully blabbed that if I don't bring bucks — five of 'em — he's going to bludgeon me to a bloody blob," Willie answered.

The youngster found little comfort in his dad's response.

"No way, son, that's extortion."

"Nope," the third-grader countered, "Big Bob says it's health care."

No doubt Mr. Winkle gasped for air, hopeful of being able to exhale before too long.

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

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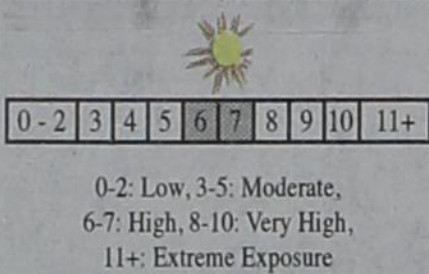
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Post Dispatch Weather Summary

Post's Seven Day Forecast

Friday Sunny 68 / 35	Saturday Mostly Sunny 60 / 35	Sunday Mostly Sunny 66 / 34	Monday Mostly Sunny 59 / 35	Tuesday Mostly Sunny 55 / 31	Wednesday Partly Cloudy 52 / 31	Thursday Partly Cloudy 54 / 35

Local UV Index



Weather Trivia

What effect does the Gulf Stream have on winter storms?

Answer: Powerful Nor'Easters can develop from it.

Weather History

Feb. 21, 1935 - Frequent dust storms occurred in eastern Colorado during the month, forcing schools to close and people to stay indoors. A fatality occurred on this date when two section cars collided on the railroad near Arriba, Colo., due to poor visibility.

Feb. 22, 1986 - A 12-day siege of heavy rain and snow, which produced widespread flooding and mudslides across northern and central California, finally came to an end. The storm caused more than 400 million dollars in property damage.

Detailed Local Forecast

Today we will see sunny skies with a high temperature of 68°, humidity of 14%. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph. The record high temperature for today is 86° set in 1986. Expect partly cloudy skies tonight with an overnight low of 35°. Southwest wind 10 to 15 mph. The record low for tonight is 19° set in 1964. Saturday, skies will be mostly sunny with a high temperature of 60°, humidity of 16%. Southeast wind 10 to 15 mph. Skies will be partly cloudy Saturday night with an overnight low of 35°. Southeast wind 10 mph.

Peak Fishing/Hunting Times This Week

Day	Peak Times		Day	Peak Times	
	AM	PM		AM	PM
Fri	4:37-6:37	5:07-7:07	Tue	8:23-10:23	8:53-10:53
Sat	5:30-7:30	6:00-8:00	Wed	9:22-11:22	9:52-11:52
Sun	6:26-8:26	6:56-8:56	Thu	10:20-12:20	10:50-12:50
Mon	7:24-9:24	7:54-9:54			

www.WhatsOurWeather.com

Sun/Moon Chart This Week

Day	Sunrise	Sunset	Moonrise	Moonset
Fri	7:21 a.m.	6:36 p.m.	12:11 a.m.	11:10 a.m.
Sat	7:20 a.m.	6:37 p.m.	1:11 a.m.	11:57 a.m.
Sun	7:19 a.m.	6:38 p.m.	2:11 a.m.	12:51 p.m.
Mon	7:18 a.m.	6:38 p.m.	3:10 a.m.	1:50 p.m.
Tue	7:17 a.m.	6:39 p.m.	4:06 a.m.	2:55 p.m.
Wed	7:15 a.m.	6:40 p.m.	4:58 a.m.	4:02 p.m.
Thu	7:14 a.m.	6:41 p.m.	5:46 a.m.	5:11 p.m.

Last Week's Almanac & Growing Degree Days

Date	High	Low	Normals	Precip	Farmer's Growing Degree Days			
					Date	Degree	Date	Degree
2/11	30	19	57/28	0.00"	2/11	0	2/15	12
2/12	60	17	57/28	0.00"	2/12	0	2/16	9
2/13	71	32	57/29	0.00"	2/13	2	2/17	4
2/14	63	37	58/29	0.00"	2/14	0		
2/15	87	36	58/29	0.00"				
2/16	83	35	58/29	0.00"				
2/17	66	43	58/29	0.00"				

Growing degree days are calculated by taking the average temperature for the day and subtracting the base temperature (50 degrees) from the average to assess how many growing days are attained.

Dixie Divas What Charlie Tinker once saw

(Editor's note: The following column from Ronda Rich is the third in a three-part series about her husband's grandfather, a White House telegrapher and confidant of President Abraham Lincoln.)

It is the summer of 1865 and, according to Charlie Tinker's diaries, it has been a summer of oppressive heat, its airless steaminess made more miserable by the heavy sorrow that he and his colleagues have shouldered since the death of the commander-in-chief, President Abraham Lincoln.

Lincoln, who made several visits daily to the telegraph office where Charlie and three others deciphered frequent dispatches from the Civil War battlefields, was like a family member, especially to Charlie whom Lincoln had befriended years before when both lived in Illinois. He was the first American president to be assassinated, the shock of which stunned a nation and devastated particularly those who knew him.



RONDA RICH In the month that followed, Charlie, trying to assuage his grief, took time to return to Chicago and visit old friends.

He later returned to Washington to watch a review of Sherman's army as they paraded through the city streets and to buy a beautiful bay horse with a white star on her forehead. The horse, to my chagrin, for which he paid a hundred dollars, participated in Sherman's brutal campaign through Georgia. There are still things about Charlie's diaries that make me cringe.

"She had taken the march from Atlanta to the sea," he wrote, "and though thin was full of mettle."

Through his entries, it is clear that Charlie loved that horse which he named Lizzie, after his wife.

It is his writing of a sweltering July day that brings forth an interesting piece of historical knowledge, perhaps unknown, until now. The morning of July 7, 1865, dawned hot and grew increasingly unbearable. It was a memorable aspect of a historic day. "Major Johnson attained a pass for himself and I to witness the execution of the assassins."

John Wilkes Booth was dead, but four others had been convicted in a military trial that ended 10 days earlier. Mary Surratt, who owned the boarding house where Booth and his co-conspirators met to plan the assassination of Lincoln and Secretary Seward (who lived despite a severe stabbing), would become the first woman in U.S. history to be executed.

"We went to the arsenal and were admitted to the penitentiary yard where we found the scaffolds already raised and a regiment of soldiers guarding the enclosure."

Mrs. Surratt and the others were brought from their cells, white hoods placed on their heads, and each prayed over by a minister of individual choice.

"At 12 p.m.," Charlie recorded, "all was ready and at a special signal from the officer in command, the props were removed and the drops fell launching all four into eternity with hardly a struggle. The closing scene was horrible, but it was an end of justice fully warranted. I was anxious to see this execution and am satisfied. I never want to witness another."

It was perhaps Charlie's obvious seriousness and complete devotion to Lincoln that brought to the 28-year-old an unexpected assignment. For reasons he doesn't detail and quite probably didn't know, Charlie was given the nooses that had strangled the co-conspirators and asked to dispose of them.

Imagine that? Perhaps no one in history has ever asked: What happened to the death-rendering nooses? Yet, now we know. Charlie Tinker, in his normal, matter-of-fact manner, took them home, chopped them into tiny pieces, and burned them for kindling in his fireplace.

In stoic Tinker manner — they are men of graceful determination — Charlie served his country then moved on. That afternoon, he rode out to the country to visit with Secretary Stanton, the man after whom he would name his son.

Charlie Tinker never forgot, though. He had a front row seat to history, ranging from a friendship with Lincoln to the Civil War to the hanging of those convicted.

Thanks to his diaries, we are able to see what he saw.

Ronda Rich is a Southern storyteller, humorist and best-selling author. Visit rondarich.com to purchase her books and sign up for her newsletter.

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