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The Devil's River News

Serving Sutton County Since 1890

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SONORA, TEXAS

Thursday, January 9, 2014

Last weeks article entitled, "Texas Groundwater-Your Future Conference Set for April 17" was printed in error. There is no conference scheduled for that date. We apologize for any inconvenience

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A Long Journey Home:

*From China To San Antonio
The Newest Pool Meets His Family*



Levi, Christi, Elizabel, and Olivia Pool pose with their newest family member Elliot.

By Ben D. Taylor

A lot of unoriginal writers will often use the phrase, "life reflects art". This is a line that I have tried so very hard to stay away from, but I guess if you write enough words there is no way to get out of using it. I started thinking about it after I read a blog that a good friend of mine posted. Even though she didn't write those dreaded words (she's a much better writer than I am) I kept wondering about what that line could possibly mean. In this online journal she documented the very personal and touching story about how she and her husband came to adopt a boy from China, and for some reason that silly phrase kept popping up in my head. It wasn't until a few days later that I was able to put my finger on it. Before I read her story I figured that the line "life reflects art" was

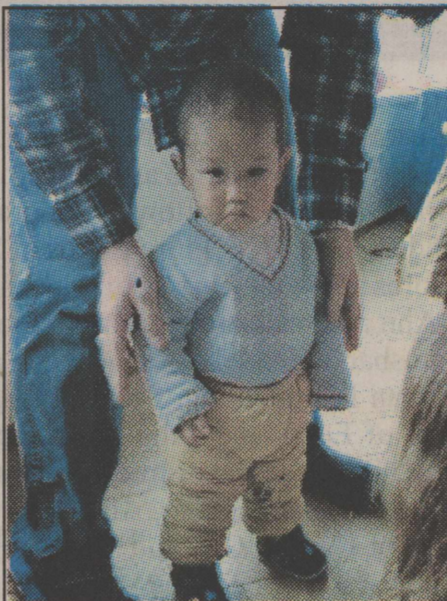
a cliché way to simply say "art is important", but after I had a bit of time to think about it I started to see that it can mean something else entirely.

Most of us go about our day to day lives taking one step at a time with little regard to the pattern of footsteps we leave behind us, but there are a very few people that are able to walk through life in a way that their footprints leave a masterpiece on the canvas of life. These people are artists not because they simply create beauty, but because they know that the beauty they create will always give something back to them. A reflection of their lives shine not only on them but on all those people that are close enough to feel the light, and the world benefits when others become inspired to do the same. My good friends Levi and Christi

Pool are one of those few people not because they adopted a child half a world away. They are one of those people because they knew that their lives would be more complete with that child. More to the point, their lives would receive the full reflection from the love that their new son Elliot shows them. Life reflects art, but the strength of that reflection depends on the lives we all choose to live.

Levi is the son of Sonora residents Ben and Lenora Pool and is also a graduate of Sonora High School. He and his wife Christi live in San Antonio with their three children Elizabel, Olivia and Asher, and until a few years ago they had never even considered the idea of adopting a child from a foreign country.

Continued on Page 6



Elliot getting to know his big Sisters.

Sonora Bank Expands Services by Acquiring RPM Mortgage Boerne Operation



Sonora, Texas -January 1, 2014 - Sonora Bank, which began operation in Sonora, Texas in 1900 as the First National Bank of Sonora and currently has branches in Sonora, San Angelo, and Boerne, Texas, has acquired the mortgage lending operation owned by Lance and Sandra Lemoine of Boerne, Texas. On January 1, 2014, Sonora Bank will create a new division of the bank that will be known as **Sonora Mortgage** and will be based in Boerne. The new division will incorporate the bank's residential mortgage lending operation currently conducted in San Angelo. With the addition of Lance & Sandra, Sonora Bank will be expanding and servicing additional markets. A Bentley University graduate with a degree in Finance,

Lance Lemoine, joins Sonora Bank as an Executive Vice President and President of Sonora Mortgage. Prior to starting his own regional lending operation in Boerne, Texas in 2008, he held extensive lending rolls with several national banks and mortgage lending companies. His career spans 27 years. Sandra Lemoine is also a Bentley University graduate with a degree in Marketing Management. She held various marketing rolls in the electronics industry prior to her involvement with their mortgage operation. Sandra joins Sonora Bank as a Senior Vice President and Director of Marketing for Sonora Mortgage. Also joining Sonora Bank will be Chuck Espinoza, Vice President of Sonora Mortgage Operations, and Tricia Laffer,

Sonora Mortgage Loan Coordinator. In announcing the acquisition, Bob Malone, President and CEO of Sonora Bank said, "Together, this team has over 50 years of experience in mortgage lending and will bring a wealth of mortgage experience with them as we start our new venture together. We continue to look for ways to better serve our customers and grow. The addition of this new division keeps us moving forward toward that goal." For questions or more information, call Sonora Bank at 325-387-3861, or come by any of their branch locations. www.sonorabank.com

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Sutton County Livestock Show

It's Show Time in Sutton County!

It's time for our 4-H and FFA youth to exhibit the livestock they've been working for the last few months. They've had to gentle animals, halter-break them, weigh, exercise, doctor, and everything else necessary to prepare animals for the show ring.

Our Sutton County show activities begin this Thursday, January 9th with weigh-in at the 4-H Barn from 3 p.m.- 6 p.m. Shows will be at the Civic Center and start at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, beginning with market lambs and followed by the meat goats. Next in the order will be Angora goats. The swine show will conclude the day's activities. For any interested, we will offer a "Pee Wee Class" for any first or second-grader who wants to try their hand at showing. They will be able to borrow a goat and will have an older youth to assist them. Call the Extension Office at 387-3101

for more details or to sign your youth up for the Pee Wee show. So, make plans to attend the Sutton County Livestock Show this Tuesday.

The buyer appreciation supper is at 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 11th. The premium "auction" begins at 6:45. We ask any interested sponsors to support the auction if they can. Participating in stock shows can help youngsters develop self-confidence through competition. They are given the opportunity to learn patience, commitment, and work ethic, but can also learn to overcome obstacles and to deal with disappointment. Livestock exhibition is also an excellent opportunity for family involvement in competitive events which reinforce time and resource management skills.

For questions, call us at the Sutton County Extension Office at 387-3101.

Lady Broncos Use Team-First-Pass-Happy Attitude to Defeat Alpine

Tyler Hampton scored a career high with most of the damage in the 26 point scoring spree the Lady Broncos used to dominate the 3rd quarter. Overall, Tyler filled up the stat sheet with 22 points, 7 rebounds, 4 assists, 2 blocks and 5 steals. Kylie Love was her usual dominant self scoring 23 and pulling down 9 rebounds. Unselfish passing was the key to the attack with Gracie Dozier (7 assists), Janelle Vasquez (5 assists) and Katie Hartman (4 assists) all leading the way with the team-first-pass-happy attitude. JoJo Gutierrez sparked Sonora with 11 points off the bench and Cip Tobias (1 block), Sky Jennings (2 points), Naomi Dozier (2 rebounds) and Zella Powers (6 points and 6 rebounds) all played nice basketball in the 73-39 victory. Sonora Lady Broncos record is 18-4 / 1-0 (in district).

Thievery and Precise Passing Propel Lady Broncos Past Reagan Co.

Tyler Hampton (11 steals), Kylie Love (9), JoJo Gutierrez (8) and Gracie Dozier (5) literally stole the game from Reagan County with their thievery then Gracie Dozier (5 assists), Katie Hartman (5), Kylie Love (4) and Tyler Hampton (4) made the Lady Owls pay with their 'sweet' and unselfish passes. The Lady Broncos recorded a season high in team steals with 43 and a season high in team assists with 27 on the way to a 85-29 victory. Gracie had 24 points, JoJo Gutierrez scored 21 and Kylie Love had 17 plus 10 rebounds in the event. Zella Powers was everywhere recording 11 rebounds and 3 steals. Janelle Vasquez (6 points and 2 assists), Sky Jennings (2 points and 3 steals) and Naomi Dozier (2 blocks and 2 steals) enjoyed extended minutes in the game. Coach Mathews JV team improved to 12-3 with a 50-14 win. Brianna Jarratt and Tori Guerrero scored 10 each and Veronica Gayton played well with 7 points. Julia Pope and Jill Buitron led the defensive effort. Next up - Tornillo in Sonora this Friday 1/10/14.

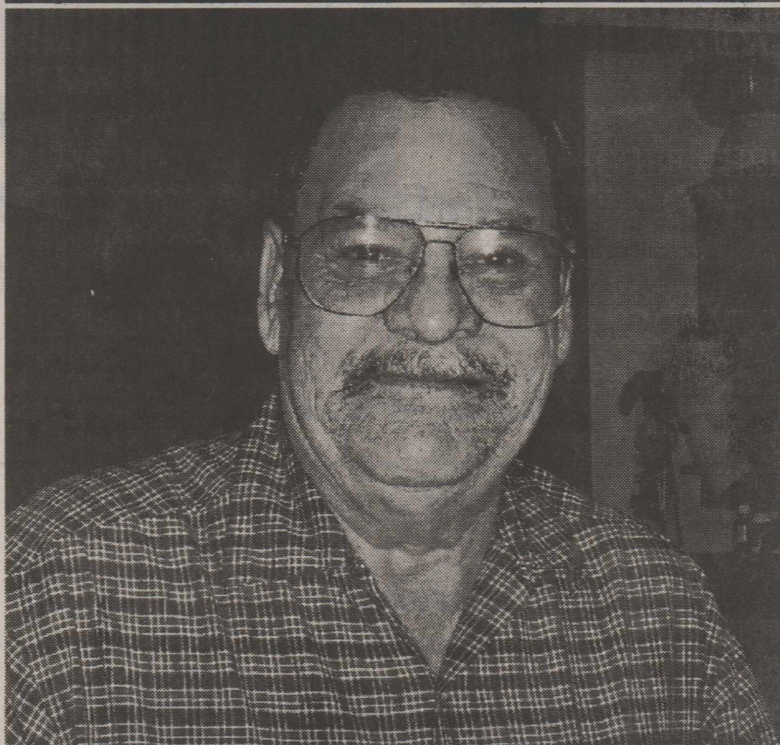
The Community Bible study will be studying

“Sacred Secrets” by Beth Moore

This will be a 5 week study beginning January 8, 2014 at First United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall

ALL ARE WELCOME

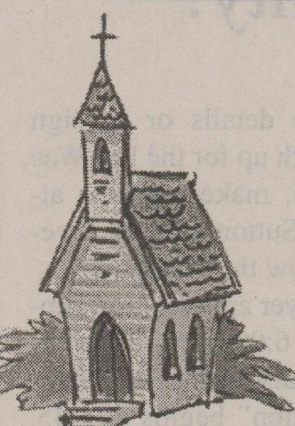
Obituaries



Sonora- Francisco Jesus Flores, 81, formerly of Sonora, died Monday, Dec. 30, 2103 in Mexia, Tx. Funeral services were Thursday, Jan. 2 at 11:00a.m. in St. Ann's Catholic Church. Burial will follow in Sonora Cemetery. Survivors include his wife Odelmira Flores of San Angelo, son Javier Flores and wife Christy of San Angelo, daughters Delia VonAhn and husband Kurt of Mexia, and Elvira Gallegos and husband Manuel of San Angelo, and brothers Salomon and Juan Flores, both of Rocksprings, and sisters Gloria Torres of Eden, and Julia Rodriguez of San Angelo, and grandchildren Jessica Stroud of San Angelo, Kristie McClelland of San Angelo, Anna Flores of Midland, Jason Flores of Garden City, and Taybor Flores of San Angelo. Pallbearers will be Joey McClelland, Jason Flores, Taybor Flores, Lorenzo Carrillo, Omar Rodriguez, Jr., and Hagen Porras.



Barbara Tirrell Earwood of Sonora, Texas went to be with her Lord and Savior and to reunite with her loving husband on January 5, 2014 at the age of 93. Barbara was born on July 18, 1920 to Vernice and Irving Tirrell in Quincy, Massachusetts along with two sisters and three brothers. She graduated high school from The Woodward School for Girls in Quincy MA, attended Angelo State University, studied with the Washington School of Art, North Light Art School, and under Robert E. Wood. Barbara continued her passion of art throughout her life studying under many nationally known artists and watercolorists. Although watercolor, with its tremendous challenge, was her favorite medium, she also did pen and ink, oils and scratchboard. Life on a working ranch where cattle, sheep and Angora goats are raised offered unlimited ideas for work. The beauty of the Edwards Plateau, where wildlife abounds, is reflected in her drawings and paintings. Barbara was married 71 years to her beloved husband, Armer, and together they raised three children, Elsie Earwood Belk of Winters, Melinda Earwood Crain, and Edward Armer Earwood of Sonora. The family is a long time member of the St. John's Episcopal Church, where Barbara served on the altar guild and the women of the church. Barbara served as a past president and past director of the Big Country Arts Association of Abilene, and was a director of the Texas Fine Arts Association, member of the West Texas Art Guild, the San Antonio Art League, San Angelo Art Club, signature member of the Texas Watercolor Society and the San Antonio Watercolor Group, and a signature member of the Southwest Watercolor Society where she regularly exhibited and won awards. Permanent exhibits include the Sonora Bank, Sonora Public Library, and Girl Scout of America pamphlet. Barbara was a Girl Scout leader and enjoyed teaching her passion of art to the youth and adults alike. Barbara is preceded in death by her husband Armer Earwood, siblings; Gertrude Tirrell Bates, Winston Irving Tirrell, Phyllis Tirrell Winnett, David King Tirrell, and John Cote Tirrell; daughter-in-law, Carolyn Earwood, granddaughter-in-law Staci Belk, and her great granddaughter, Eryn Belk. She is survived by her three children, Elsie and Allen Belk, Melinda Crain, Pam and Edward Earwood. Their nine grandchildren, Health Belk of Eola, Michelle and Harley Belk of Winters, Barbara and Keith Newland of Bryan, Katy and Quincy Crain of Sonora, Jesse and Wade Dellis of Goldthwaite, Blair and John Bryan of Walker, Louisiana, Becca and Riley Crain of Christoval, Emily and Carl Whitworth of Doole, and Meredith Earwood of Sonora. She is also loved by eighteen great-grandchildren. Barbara is best remembered as a loving and patient mother and grandmother who loved her family and her Lord dearly. The family wants to thank all who have offered prayers and helped in her care, especially Delma Martinez, Becky Levario, Edna Lopez and all the staff at the Schleicher County Medical Center Nursing Home and Hospice of San Angelo. Special friends: Silvino, Bicky, Santos, Agustina, Keno, and Roy. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to St. John's Episcopal Church of Sonora, Hospice of San Angelo or the charity of your choice. A memorial service will be held at the St. John's Episcopal Church at 10am on Thursday, January 9th 2014 with internment of ashes at the Sonora Cemetery. Reception to follow at the Parish Hall.



Sonora Church Directory

<p>Primera Iglesia Bautista 504 Santa Clara 387-2035</p> <p>The Church of the Good Shepherd Presbyterian 319 E. Mulberry 387-2616</p> <p>Lighthouse Community Church 1705 N. Crockett 387-9100</p> <p>St. Ann's Catholic Church 311 W. Plum 387-2278</p> <p>Jehovah's Witness 310 St. Ann's St 387-5658/387-5518</p> <p>Faith Apostolic Church 120 N. Concho Ave. 206-0277</p>	<p>Church of Christ 304 N. Water 387-3190</p> <p>First Baptist Church 11 E. Oak 387-2951</p> <p>St. John's Episcopal Church 404 E. Poplar 387-2955</p> <p>First United Methodist Church 201 N. Water 387-2466</p> <p>Casa Del Altarero Asamblea De Dios 306 W. 4th St 325-226-1789</p>
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Wellness Ministry

We often rely on willpower when attempting to keep New Year resolutions. Whether it be to lose weight, spend less, exercise more, or any of the many goals that we set for ourselves. Motivation comes easily with the start of a New Year, but eventually we tend to fall back into old patterns. To make any true life change, you need more than mere human willpower, you need Godpower. As humans we are weak, but we have a source of unlimited power that is ours to tap into at any time. God is there, just waiting, wanting us to ask Him for help. Every night, I have my kids repeat this affirmation after we've said our prayers: I am kind. I am smart. I am brave. I can do ANYTHING with God's help. I want them to know that they can depend on God for anything in their lives. And you can, too.

Don't depend on your own power or strength, but on my Spirit. Zechariah 4:6

Chelsea Blackbird is a Certified Nutritional Therapist. For more information go to www.dailynutritionist.com

Police blotter

11/29/2013: Pacer, Falon Holley arrested for POSSESSION OF MARIJUANA AND PUBLIC INTOXICATION

12/02/2013: Arispe, Jaime arrested for SCHLEICHER COUNTY WARRANT POSSESSION OF A CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE

12/03/2013: Ramon, Cesario arrested for PROBATION VIOLATION

12/09/2013: Chavez, Michael arrested for PUBLIC INTOXICATION

12/22/2013: Covarrubiaz, Alfonso arrested for ASSAULT and RESISTING ARREST

12/23/2013: Martinez, Jorge Luis arrested for EL PASO COUNTY WARRANT FOR CRIMINAL MISCHIEF

1/5/2014: Esquivel, Humberto Erasmo arrested for SUTTON COUNTY WARRANT FOR AGGRAVATED ASSAULT CAUSES SERIOUS BODILY INJURY

1/5/2014: Esquivel, Jesus Jr. arrested for SUTTON COUNTY WARRANT FOR AGGRAVATED ASSAULT CAUSES SERIOUS BODILY INJURY

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Gov. Perry Touts Progress in Texas Transportation

Gov. Rick Perry today touted the important strides Texas has made in bolstering transportation infrastructure in the state since 2001. The governor spoke at the Ninth Annual Texas Transportation Forum, where the Texas Transportation Commission announced the creation of the Governor Rick Perry Leadership in Transportation Award. Beginning next year, the award will be presented annually to recognize leaders who have shown a commitment to advancing transportation infrastructure in Texas.

Under Gov. Perry's leadership, the Texas highway system has grown by more than 6,600 new miles from 2001 - 2012, more than any other state over that time, and invested more than \$59 billion in transportation projects. This includes crucial projects across the state, from I-35 in Central Texas to I-10 in Houston, I-69 in the Rio Grande Valley and the Dallas-Fort Worth Connector. Texas has also implemented effective methods to fund new roads and highways, giving more

control to local authorities who can best address their region's needs and expanding public-private partnerships, all without raising taxes.

"Transportation fuels the economy that's making it possible for families to build lives, but transportation is also essential to help families enjoy the lives they've built," Gov. Perry said. "That's a simple fact of life that we need to keep in mind moving forward. That's why we've taken so many steps over the past decade to improve our roads, while remaining true to the essential Texas value of fiscal responsibility."

To further advance transportation projects in the state, Gov. Perry called on lawmakers in the 83rd Legislative Session to pass House Bill 1, which pending voter approval this fall, will allow the state to direct surplus severance tax revenue to critical infrastructure projects. Without raising taxes, this investment will secure funding for crucial transportation improvements across the state for years to come.

Texas' strong job creation and quality of life have attracted families and businesses to the state, with recent census data showing Texas grew more than any other state in 2013. This rapid population growth poses unique challenges for maintaining a safe and efficient road and highway system, increasing capacity and making it easier for Texans to travel, commute and move goods throughout the state.

Investments in roads and infrastructure directly impact Texas' economic competitiveness and companies' ability to do business in the state. Texas has remained the top exporter in the U.S. for 11 years in a row, and Texas' transportation system continues to receive national attention, ranking the number one state for infrastructure and transportation for three years in a row by CNBC. Safety on Texas roads has also increased with initiatives like the Safety Bond Program, which Gov. Perry supported in 2003, and Click it or Ticket helping raise awareness and save lives across the state.

Mango Effective In Preventing, Stopping Certain Colon, Breast Cancer

COLLEGE STATION - Mango. If you know little about this fruit, understand this: It's been found to prevent or stop certain colon and breast cancer cells in the lab.

That's according to a new study by Texas AgriLife Research food scientists, who examined the five varieties most common in the U.S.: Kent, Francine, Ataulfo, Tommy Atkins and Haden. Though the mango is an ancient fruit heavily consumed in many parts of the world, little has been known about its health aspects. The National Mango Board commissioned a variety of studies with several U.S. researchers to help determine its nutritional value.

"If you look at what people currently perceive as a superfood, people think of high antioxidant capacity, and mango is not quite there," said Dr. Susanne Talcott, who with her husband, Dr. Steve Talcott, conducted the study on cancer cells. "In comparison with antioxidants in blueberry, acai and pomegranate, it's not even close."

But the team checked mango against cancer cells anyway, and found it prevented or stopped cancer growth in certain breast and colon cell lines, Susanne Talcott noted.

"It has about four to five times

less antioxidant capacity than an average wine grape, and it still holds up fairly well in anticancer activity. If you look at it from the physiological and nutritional standpoint, taking everything together, it would be a high-ranking super food," she said. "It would be good to include mangoes as part of the regular diet."

The Talcotts tested mango polyphenol extracts in vitro on colon, breast, lung, leukemia and prostate cancers. Polyphenols are natural substances in plants and are associated with a variety of compounds known to promote good health.

Mango showed some impact on lung, leukemia and prostate cancers but was most effective on the most common breast and colon cancers.

"What we found is that not all cell lines are sensitive to the same extent to an anticancer agent," she said. "But the breast and colon cancer lines underwent apoptosis, or programmed cell death. Additionally, we found that when we tested normal colon cells side by side with the colon cancer cells, that the mango polyphenols did not harm the normal cells."

The duo did further tests on the colon cancer lines because a mango contains both small molecules that are readily ab-

sorbed and larger molecules that would not be absorbed and thus remain present in a colon.

"We found the normal cells weren't killed, so mango is not expected to be damaging in the body," she said. "That is a general observation for any natural agent, that they target cancer cells and leave the healthy cells alone, in reasonable concentrations at least." The study found that the cell cycle, which is the division cells go through, was interrupted. This is crucial information, Suzanne Talcott said, because it indicates a possible mechanism for how the cancer cells are prevented or stopped.

"For cells that may be on the verge of mutating or being damaged, mango polyphenols prevent this kind of damage," she said.

The Talcotts hope to do a small clinical trial with individuals who have increased inflammation in their intestines with a higher risk for cancer.

"From there, if there is any proven efficacy, then we would do a larger trial to see if there is any clinical relevance," she said.

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Dr. Dale Rollins receives Superior Service Award



The award was presented Jan. 8 during AgriLife Extension's Centennial Conference in College Station.

Throughout his 26-year AgriLife Extension career, Rollins has delivered quality research-based outreach education to the people of Texas, Cathey wrote in his nomination of Rollins.

Rollins has successfully involved AgriLife Extension agents in youth leadership activities associated with Texas Brigades

COLLEGE STATION – Long-time West Texas wildlife expert Dr. Dale Rollins has received a Superior Service Award in the specialist category.

Rollins recently retired as a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service wildlife specialist at San Angelo, however he has continued to serve as the quail project leader for the Reversing the Quail Decline Initiative, said Dr. Jim Cathey, associate department head and program leader in the department of wildlife and fisheries at Texas A&M University, who nominated Rollins for the honor.

youth camps, result demonstration work such as the Texas Quail Index, and adult training opportunities including Quail Masters and Appreciation Days for quail, deer and predators, Cathey wrote. He has also successfully melded Texas A&M AgriLife Research with AgriLife Extension activities to translate findings and sound conservation practices to students, producers and natural resource professionals.

"Although Dale is often credited with initiating the popular Texas Brigades youth camps, he will quickly tell you it is

because he 'hunts with good dogs,' a 'Daleism' conveying high praise for hardworking people collectively working for a common goal," noted Cathey. "This collaborative effort of AgriLife Extension personnel, state and federal natural resources professionals, landowners and member of the Texas Wildlife Association are now seeing the fruits of their labor pay off, as the young people they taught are now entering the conservation workforce. Likewise, several of Dale's 16 graduate students are now well-recognized academic researchers and accomplished wildlife biologists."

Cathey noted that Rollins has gained monetary program support of \$10.9 million. These contracts and grants can be noted as \$916,000 for AgriLife Extension, \$810,000 for the Bobwhite Brigade, and \$8.7 million for the Rolling Plains Quail Research Foundation, which Rollins helped to create.

Rollins' contributions to natural resources extend to several professional organizations he has served in various leadership capacities including: Wildlife Society Bulletin associate editor; president of the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society; and board of directors member of the Texas Wildlife Association.

His many honors include: Outstanding Contribution to Range Management for the Texas Section, Society for Range Management; Hero of Conservation, Field and Stream Magazine; Outstanding Achievement Award-Conservation Education, The Wildlife Society, and a previous AgriLife Extension Superior Service Award given in the team category.

"Dale has devoted his career to providing educational resources that have changed the lives of a wide audience ranging from landowners to youth," Cathey wrote. "His efforts elevated the plight of quail to a national state of awareness and his work will help to assure that this important game bird will thrive across our state," Cathey concluded.

The Superior Service Awards recognize AgriLife Extension faculty and staff members who provide outstanding performance in Extension education or other outstanding service to the organization and to Texans.

Two Men Charged In Shooting Of Texas Game Warden

AUSTIN – Two men have been arrested and charged in connection with the shooting of a Texas Parks and Wildlife Department game warden earlier this week.

Booked into the Delta County jail in Cooper were Eli Stephens, 18, and Dalton Haddix, 21, both of Illinois. Stephens has been charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, a second-degree felony. Haddix was charged with failure to report a felony, a Class A misdemeanor.

The two men, who came to Texas for the holidays, were taken into custody by game wardens Tuesday afternoon following an investigation by TPWD game wardens, Texas Rangers and the Delta County Sheriff's Office.

The charges stem from the Sunday shooting of Game Warden Chris Fried, 31, of Cooper. Fried had been off duty and bow hunting on the Cooper Wildlife Management Area when the incident occurred around 6 p.m.

The warden remains in stable condition in the intensive care unit of Parkland Hospital in Dallas, where he underwent surgery early Monday for a gunshot wound from a high-powered rifle bullet that entered his upper right shoulder and lodged in his chest.

According to investigators, Fried had been sitting in a blind on the 14,160-acre wildlife management area, hoping to take a deer, when he saw a light and heard what he believed to be an electronic game call. Thinking someone might be illegally hunting on the state property, the warden went into law enforcement mode and left his stand to investigate.

Moments later, as he walked toward the light, Fried was struck by a bullet. The warden yelled, "You shot me!" but no one responded or came to his aid. Fried then used his cell phone to call for help.

Investigators have determined that the shot came from private property adjacent to the WMA. Information from a Delta County resident familiar with the area led wardens to the two defendants.

Fried is stationed in Delta County. He graduated from the TPWD Game Warden Academy in June 2009.

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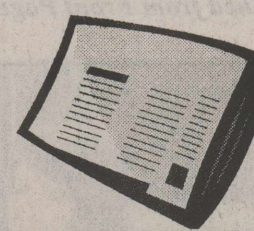
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Employment

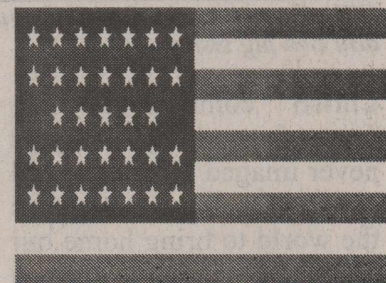
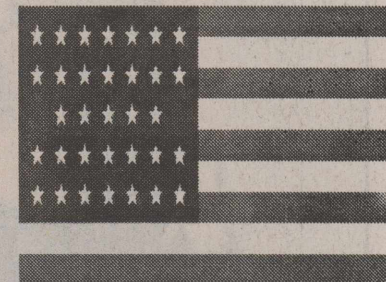
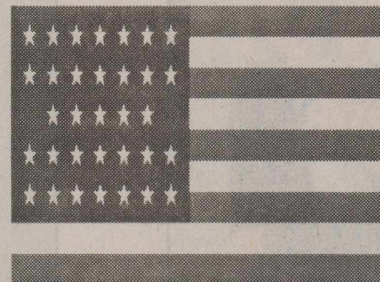
Mr. D's is now accepting applications for cashiers. Come by and pick up application

Employment

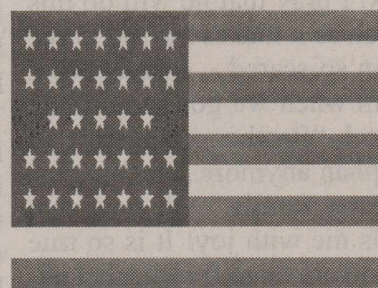
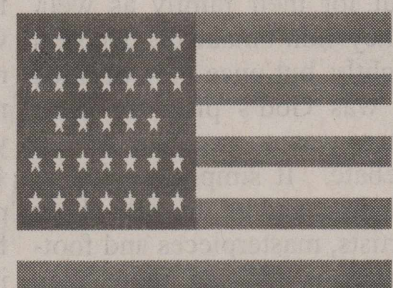
The Sonora Abstract Company has an opening for an office assistant. Basic computer skills required. If interested mail your resume to P.O. Box 1456, Sonora, TX or email to sonabco@verizon.net or fax to 325-387-2910
Sonora Abstract Company
P.O. Box 1456
227 E. Main Street
Sonora, Tx 76950

Misc

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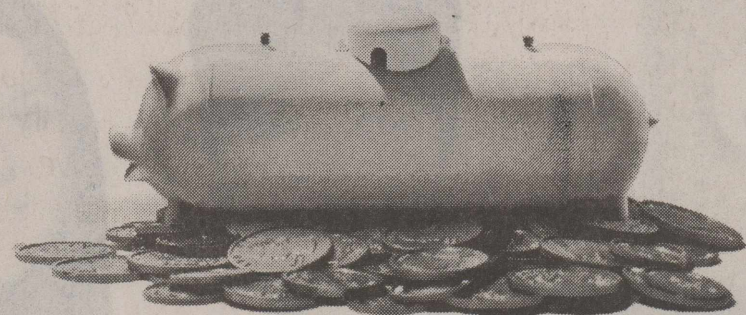
Helps fight leg cramps*
For those with milk allergies
Fights osteoporosis

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

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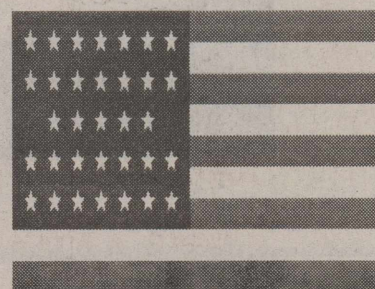
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Continued from Front Page: A Long Journey Home



Elliot hangs out in the playground with his mom and two big sisters.



Levi poses for a picture with his new boy while they process his adoption papers.

Christi commented that, "even 3 years ago I would never imaged that we would start 2014 with a trip across the world to bring home our 4th child". Their thirteen hour flight to China began as most flights do, with a 3 hour delay. "I was afraid that the girls [Elizabeth and Olivia] wouldn't do so great with the length of the flight when Olivia asked if we were almost there after 2 1/2 of being in our seats, before we even left Chicago. But thankfully they both did amazing". The flight wasn't the only delay that the Pool family would face in their quest to adopt Elliot, as they have spent over a year wading through an almost endless ocean of paperwork.

When their airplane finally touched down in China last week they would begin the final leg of this journey as they will spend two weeks

in China finalizing the adoption paperwork and getting to know their new son. Christi commented about the bitter sweet nature of the orphanage that Elliot had called home for the majority of his young life, "It was both heartbreaking and heartwarming at the same time. It was heartbreaking to see the orphanage that my son has lived in for nearly two years. It is a big, bright, fun looking building with two large playgrounds in front. The walls are filled with beautiful artwork made by the children. It looks similar to a daycare in the US, just extra big".

From the instant that they were finally able to hold Elliot it became obvious that he was their son, "our hearts just melted the moment the nanny brought our son into the room and placed him in my arms. It was obvious that the nanny had sweet affections for him and for that I am glad. He

cried a lot as I held him but was quickly calmed when the nanny gave me a yogurt covered cracker to give him. I loved having him eat it out of my hands bit by bit. Elizabeth and Olivia are so sweet to him! They constantly want to give him toys, touch him and talk to him. They have talked about him and prayed for him for months and are now just giddy being around him".

This is not the end of their journey though as the Pools still have a long path towards helping Elliot adjust to his new life, but he does have a great team helping him towards that goal. "It is obvious that he is very nervous. He holds his body tensely and is hesitant to make eye contact. He watched curiously out the car window as he probably hasn't been outside the orphanage in nearly 1 1/2 years, since his last hospital stay. I know his whole world has changed and

as he gets comfortable and learns to trust us he will relax. I pray that he will do this soon as it makes me sad to see him so scared. Elizabeth told him when we got back to the hotel, "Brother, you aren't an orphan anymore. You are part of our family." Oh how that fills me with joy! It is so true and I am thankful Elizabeth understands. One day Elliott will too."

The Pool family will remain in China for another week or so it seems that the newest Pool is starting to get into the groove of his new family, "It is common for children adopted from China to be nervous around their dad and get attached to mom more quickly and this is what we are experiencing! Elliott won't let me out of his sight. In the hotel room he follows me if I get to far away. The only time he will let Levi hold him is to give him a bottle. So Levi

is giving him his bottles and feeding him. This will eventually build trust and I fully expect Elliott to figure out that Levi is the fun/exciting parent very soon. I am thankful that he wants me and he has started to call me Ma, it just melts my heart. He will point to Levi when you ask him where Daddy is and he has said Da a few times! He also points to the girls when you ask him where sisters are. I love that he is learning who his family is."

I have known Levi for over 30 years and I met his wife Christi about a week after Levi did, so I can probably guess that both of them are rolling their eyes a little bit about all of this talk about them being "life artists". If you were to ask them, the ultimate decision to bring Elliot into their family was not only something they needed to do-it was something they had to do. Not just for him, but for their family as well. They didn't make the decision lightly, but once they decided it was God's plan for them there was no need for further debate. It simply needed to be done and all this talk about artists, masterpieces and footprints is nothing more than the usual amount of "over the top" analogy they have come to expect from me.

The truth is that while artists care what other people think about their work they still would create even without an audience. Yes there are a few lucky people like Michelangelo, Edgar Allen Poe, and Beethoven who's art is appreciated by millions of people across the ages, but I have a feeling that each of them would have still painted on canvas, written on paper and

played on a piano even if nobody had ever heard of them. Towards the end of her story, Christi expresses sadness over the fact that a large number of children are still waiting for permanent families. The thing is that if life truly reflects art, then the love that Levi, Christi, Elizabeth, Olivia, and Asher show Elliot might just reflect back from him bright enough to show other families that a similar path lies before them. It is their story that showed me that life does reflect art, but it's the brightness of that reflection that can show the way for others. The reflection from Elliott's story should not simply be a lesson about adoption; it is a lesson about living an artful life. In order to do that you would need to do what all artists do, give something of yourself to the world. If you have the ability and God puts it on your heart then yes adopt a child, if you have extra money and feel lead to donate then give without the expectation of recognition. If you don't have money than give time, and if you don't have time then try simply being nice to other people. That is how the reflection of an artful life can inspire other people to create their own masterpiece. Just like any true artists, the Pool Family paints their picture no matter who is there to watch them. The only difference is that now they have one extra brush to paint with. Their new son, Elliot.

If you want to read more about Elliot's story (and progress) check out Christi's blog at <http://thenewestpool.blogspot.com/>

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