

THE KNOX COUNTY News-Courier

HOME OF PARKER FINLEY, SHANNON REEVES AND TREY TIDWELL

THURSDAY, MARCH 27, 2014

KCNEWSCOURIER.COM

75 CENTS

Moeller makes Honor move to PC as schools chief

By Geoff Baumgartner
The Knox County News-Courier

KNOX CITY — Knox City High School Principal Rick Moeller told school board members this week he will be leaving after this year to take the superintendent position at Paint Creek ISD.

The announcement came during the board's regular meeting Monday.

While Moeller's announcement surprised some, others knew the principal threw his hat in the ring for this position a long time ago and has undergone several interviews to become a finalist for and eventually earn the superintendent's spot.

In other business, the board listened to a presentation to consider entering into a contract that would take advantage of certain incentives available to the district through the Texas Economic Development Act.

Thomas Alvis of Moak & Casey was offering the benefit of tax programs available for the district through the Texas Economic Development Act, specifically Chapter 313, which gives tax incentives to companies and school districts over a designated period of time when development deals are made and business is brought to that district.

This type of development is taking place in Knox County in two places: along the Knox/Baylor County line with the ground breaking of the Green Pastures Wind Farm this summer through Pioneer Green Energy out of Austin and more recently with the announcement of the development of a new wind co-generation and solar energy plant toward the center of Knox County, just west of Munday.

The board was anxious to enter into such mutually financially beneficial tax abatement agreements and voted to meet in the near future to put together and sign a contract with Millennium Energy through Moak & Casey to receive such benefits over the course of the next ten years.

In order to finalize the agreements the district may have to adopt a tax reinvestment zone and job-waiver resolution, which is standard for such tax agreements with counties and districts. Furthermore, the district will need to have a policy ready to go and produce a \$75,000 application fee, which would be reimbursed by the state once the agreement with the district is entered into.

Munday teachers will see \$2K base pay hike

The Knox County News-Courier

MUNDAY — School board officials continue to up the salary ante as a number of raises have been approved for most all district employees for the 2014-2015 academic year.

During a regular meeting Monday, the Board of Trustees for Munday CISD voted unanimously to increase the base certified staff salary by \$2,000 a year.

In addition, the rate for at-will employees was raised by \$1 an hour.

For staff members with at least a master's degree, they'll see a \$2,500 raise per annum on next year's salaries, and an additional five-day, \$1,000 supplemental coaching stipend was approved for the athletics staff.

This week's salary raises follow those approved last month for most all district administrators.

Wayne Hodgins

Grandson of local resident attends National Prayer Breakfast

The Knox County News-Courier

Zee Rock was one of 100 U.S. college students invited to attend the 62nd annual National Prayer Breakfast event in Washington, D.C., during Feb. 5-7.

The junior public administration major at Harding University in Searcy, Ark., is the grandson of Munday resident Exa Lee Smith and Jose de Jesus Martinez of Dallas. His parents are Ned and Olivia Rock of Dallas.

The breakfast, held in the International Ballroom at the Washington Hilton, is typically attended by some 3,500 guests, including international invitees from more than 100 countries.

Hosted by members of the U.S.

Congress and organized by the Fellowship Foundation, a conservative Christian organization, the three-day forum for the political, social and business elite kicks off the first Thursday in February with a breakfast at which every U.S. president since Dwight D. Eisenhower has participated.

The breakfast typically has two special guest speakers: the President of the United States and a guest whose identity is kept confidential until that morning. This year's speakers included President Obama and Rajiv Shah, administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development, an arm of the federal government primarily responsible for admin-

istering civilian foreign aid with a budget of about \$22 billion.

While there, Zee visited with many of the speakers individually and attended a variety of panels, speeches and seminars that served collectively to unite all attendees by acknowledging the importance of prayer and faith at all levels of governments, especially as it relates to international aid.

Zee previously attended both the Arkansas and National Student Leadership Forums. He is treasurer of the Executive Committee of the Student Leadership Association and spiritual life director for Gamma Sigma Phi.

Wayne Hodgins



Photo courtesy of Lynn Finley

Parker Finley, Shannon Reeves and Trey Tidwell are expected to be honored Saturday during a ceremony during which they will be presented with the Eagle Scout Award, the highest attainable rank in Boy Scouting. The teens have been members of Troop 76 in Munday since 2008.



Boy Scouts of America

An Eagle Scout presentation kit, including Mother's oval pin, Dad's oval pin, Mentor oval pin, Eagle badge and Eagle award medal.

Boys to receive Scouting's highest honor

By Wayne Hodgins

The Knox County News-Courier

MUNDAY — Three members of the local Boy Scouts of America Troop 76 will be honored in a special ceremony Saturday when they will be awarded the highest rank attainable in Scouting.

Parker Finley, Shannon Reeves and Trey Tidwell each will be presented with a medal and badge recognizing their achievement of the Eagle Scout rank at 5 p.m. at the Munday Church of Christ. The public is invited to attend.

To earn the Eagle rank, Scouts must earn 21 merit badges, serve as a leader in his troop, and complete a major community service project. The boys have been part of Troop 76 since 2008.

Parker Finley, 17, is the son of Kevin and Lynn Finley of Munday. His project was replacing the roof over the changing areas at the city pool facility.

Shannon Reeves, 18, is the son of Lyndle and Jeanette Reeves of Munday. His project was installing an eagle sculpture and landscaping in memory of Charles Baker.

Trey Tidwell, 18, is the son of Doug and Li-

anne Tidwell of Munday. His project was restoring and repairing county flagpoles and conducting a flag retirement ceremony.

These three projects totaled 593 volunteer service hours.

In 2012, the 100th anniversary of the Eagle Scout Award and the latest date for which data was currently available, nearly 58,000 Scouts earned the rank of Eagle — more than in any previous year. Since its inception in 1912, more than 2 million Boy Scouts had earned the Eagle Scout rank.

Notable Eagles Scouts during the last 100 years include President Gerald Ford, astronaut Neil Armstrong, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Texas Gov. Rick Perry and Academy Award-winning film director Steven Spielberg.

It is estimated that more than 100 million hours of volunteer service has been completed for Eagle service projects during the last century, with about 3 million hours added each year. In 2011, about 9.5 million hours of volunteer work was completed by Boy Scouts working toward an Eagle Scout Award.

Knox Notes

Events are listed free of charge as a service by this newspaper for non-profit 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 kcnewscourier@gmail.com.

KC Chamber banquet

The Knox City Chamber of Commerce annual banquet will be at 6 p.m. April 5 at the Knox City Community Center. Guest speaker will be Glenn Dromgoole, author and former editor of the Abilene Reporter-News. Tickets cost \$18 each and are available at the Knox City Chamber office or from any board member. For information, contact Gail Nunn 940-658-3442.

Rifle raffle

The Orient 905 Mason Lodge AF&AM is conducting a raffle for a Smith & Wesson M&P 15 Sport "black rifle." Tickets are \$5 each, 12 for \$50 or 25 for \$100. All proceeds benefit local scholarships and charities. Contact Steve Pepper 940-256-0028, or Greg Oliver at 361-877-6165 for information. The drawing date is to be determined. The winner does not have to be present to win but must be legal age to possess a firearm in the state of Texas.

Rodeo shirts

Knox Prairie Ranch Rodeo T-shirts are on sale for \$15 each. Call 940-203-2411 to place your order.

KCAC raffle

Knox County Aging Center members are selling \$1 tickets for a \$250 gift card to Walmart as a fundraising project. The drawing will be held during the center's Mother's Day luncheon on May 11. Call the Center at 940-657-3618 for information.

Support Group

AA and Al-Anon meetings are 7 p.m. Tuesdays, the Doug Meirzer Activity Center, 203 SW Fourth St., Knox City, TX. Call if you have questions, JoAnn @ 940-658-3926.

Child Safety Seat

Knox County Hospital District is proud to announce we are now a Child Safety Seat Distribution Site. We can provide child car seats to low income families at no cost. Classes are being held on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. and the 3rd Thursday at 10:00 a.m. Please contact Linda Hearn at the Knox City Clinic at 940.657.3906 for more information and to register for a class. Classes are held in Spanish and English.

Noah Project

The Noah Project-North Advisory Committee will meet at noon, Friday in the Jury Room at the Haskell County Courthouse. The organization's Spring Fling will be April 26 at the Haskell Memorial Civic Center for which donations for the silent auction are still being accepted. Call 940-864-2551 for information.

Corrections

Munday Elementary third-grader Leigha Purselley was inadvertently omitted from the fourth six weeks A-B honor roll list published in last week's edition.

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

News on the go



Use your smartphone to scan the quick response, or QR, code to visit us online.

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Courtesy photo

Zee Rock, center, a junior at Harding University and grandson of Munday resident Exa Lee Smith, is shown with friends Tyler Keeling, left, and Tyler Fincher, right, at the 62nd annual National Prayer Breakfast event at the Washington Hilton in Washington, D.C. The annual event, attended by political, social and business elite, has a focus of prayer and faith in national and international government.

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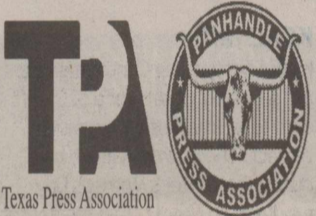
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The Knox County News-Courier

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 the 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. Fridays
Editorial: Noon Mondays

SUBSCRIPTIONS
\$30 a year in the county
\$35 a year outside the county



Deaths

Edd Martin Bowman

Edd "Martin" Bowman, 77, passed away Monday, March 24, 2014 in Lubbock, Texas. Edd was born June 14, 1936 to Floyd and Frances Bowman in Brushy, Texas. Edd married his wife, Barbara on November 11, 1957 in Silver, Texas. They were married 56 years. He was a member of the First United Methodist Church of Munday.

Edd loved his family, he was interested in everything they were doing and involved in. He kept up with everything. He had a remarkable memory.

Edd is survived by his wife, Barbara, of Goree, one son; Michael and wife,



EDD BOWMAN

Kim Bowman of Munday, one daughter; Michele and husband, Mark Haskin of Midland, one brother; Don and wife, Shirley Bowman of Munday, six grandsons; Payden and wife Tandi Bowman of Haskell, Taylor

Bowman and Ben Bowman of Munday, Dean and wife, Jerrie Haskin of Cedar City, Utah, Alan and wife Ashley Haskin of Midland, and Justin Haskin of Midland, two great-grandchildren; Kaydence Haskin of Midland and Kylie Haskin of Cedar City, Utah. Also, one niece and one nephew.

Visitation was held from 5:30-6:30, Wednesday, March 26, 2014 at the funeral home. Services will be at 2PM, Thursday, March 27, 2014 at the First United Methodist Church in Munday. Burial will follow in Brushy Cemetery under the direction of McCauley-Smith Funeral Home.

Manuela A. Sanchez

Manuela A. Sanchez, 94, went to be with her heavenly Father on March 23, 2014. Funeral service will be 10:00 a.m., Thursday, March 27th, 2014 at Temple Emanuel Assembly of God, 460 Fir Ave., Munday, Texas, with Reverend Samuel C. Lopez and Reverend Eusebio Bueno officiating. Burial will follow at Johnson Memorial Cemetery in Munday. The family received friends from 6:00 until 8:00 p.m., March 26th at the church in Munday.

Ms. Sanchez was born in Sierra Blanca, Texas to Rodrigo M. Sanchez and Angela Acosta. She was the second of thirteen children, living most of her life in Munday, Texas. As a migrant worker, Manuela traveled as far as Minnesota and Indiana. In 1984 she moved to Wichita Falls to live with her sister Lupe



MANUELA SANCHEZ

Enriquez, where she was an active member of Primera Asamble de Dios and in 1994 was named "Virtuous Woman of the Year" for that section. In 2011, Manuela moved to Abilene with her sister Julia Lopez and became an active member of Gethsemani Assembly of God. She enjoyed quilting, gardening, sewing, baking and sharing the word of God with friends and children. Manuela loved and looked

forward each year in going to the Women's Camp. She was loved by many and will surely be missed.

Left to cherish her memories are two sisters, Julia Lopez of Abilene and Raquel Lopez of Ulysses, Kansas; Numerous nieces and nephews and many great nieces and nephews.

Ms. Sanchez was preceded in death by her parents; five brothers, Gregorio Sanchez, Ramon Sanchez, Jose Sanchez, Thomas Sanchez and Matias Sanchez; five sisters, Soledad Sanchez, Maria Enriquez, Cruz Salazar, Lucia Vargas and Lupe Enriquez.

Honored to be pallbearers are Felipe Lopez, Ricky Salazar, Simon Chavez, Daniel Orosco, Alex Orosco and Jesus Barrios.

Online condolences and guest book may be signed at www.abilenefuneral-home.com

William Fitzgerald

A celebration of life for William Fitzgerald will be held at 2PM, Sat-

urday, March 29, 2014 at the First United Methodist Church of Munday

under the direction of McCauley-Smith Funeral Home.



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Shelby Cockrell & Clyde Frierson
Kelsey Brooks & Paul Sims

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Brianna & Reyes Benavides

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Menus: Week of March 31- April 4

Knox City-O'Brien

Breakfast
Monday: Biscuits with sausage and gravy or cereal bowl, toast, applesauce, juice, milk
Tuesday: Cinnamon toast with sausage or cereal bowl with sausage, pears, juice, milk
Wednesday: Mini corn dogs or cereal bowl, toast, mixed fruit, juice, milk
Thursday: Pancakes with syrup or cereal bowl with sausage, applesauce, juice, milk
Friday: Cinnamon roll with sausage or cereal bowl, toast pineapple, juice, milk

Lunch

Monday: Lasagna or antipasto salad with salami or bologna and cheese, green beans, corn, fruit, slushy, milk
Tuesday: Chicken fried steak or fajita chicken salad or turkey and cheese, gravy, mashed potatoes, green beans, mixed fruit, slushy, milk
Wednesday: Crispy beef taco or garden pasta salad or ham and cheese, Mexican style beans, lettuce, orange, slushy, milk
Thursday: Cheeseburger or zesty tuna salad or tuna salad, carrots, lettuce, pineapple, slushy, milk
Friday: Pizza or chef salad or energy meal with po-boy sandwich, tator tots, pork n' beans, grapes, slushy, milk

Munday

Breakfast
Monday: Waffles with Syrup, honey graham, mixed fruit, slushy, juice, milk
Tuesday: Cereal bowl, honey graham, peaches, slushy, juice, milk
Wednesday: Pancake wrap, applesauce, slushy, juice, milk
Thursday: Cereal bowl, honey graham, pears, slushy, juice, milk
Friday: Breakfast pizza, honey graham, pineapple, slushy, juice, milk

Lunch

Monday: Rib sandwich or bologna and cheese, corn, green beans, mixed fruit, slushy, milk
Tuesday: Frito chili pie or turkey and cheese, carrots, lettuce, honeydew, slushy, milk
Wednesday: Chicken quesadilla or ham and cheese, Mexican corn, refried beans, applesauce, slushy, milk
Thursday: Steak fingers or tuna salad, gravy, mashed potatoes, green beans, cantaloupe, slushy, milk
Friday: Pepperoni pizza or po-boy, tator tots, baked beans, pineapple, slushy, milk

Knox County Aging Center

Monday: Spaghetti with meat sauce, vegetable broccoli, garlic toast, Jell-o
Tuesday: Pork chops, black-eyed peas, spinach, cornbread, baked apples
Wednesday: Polish sausage, cabbage, pinto beans, cornbread, peaches
Thursday: Lasagna, Brussels sprouts, corn, pears
Friday: Hot dog on a bun, baked potato with sour cream, seasoned broccoli, oatmeal cookie

Come eat with us and support your aging center program. Please call in your orders by 10:00 a.m. to 657-3618. Orders can't be taken after 11:00 a.m. please pick up by 11:00 a.m.

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Guest Speaker: Glenn Dromgoole
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Pastor Shane Kendrix

Service Times:

Sunday
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m.
Worship: 11:00 a.m., 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday
Awanas, Pre-K to 6th grade:
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Youth: 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Benjamin News

By Gladene Green

To start out this week, I must admit I made a mistake last week in my report of Donnie and Barbara Ryder's arm problems. It is not their left arm and shoulder (her and his), but it is the right ones—Now, understand, this came after I had visited them 2 or 3 times and saw what they were dealing with, and I still got it wrong! The truth is she did break her arm, and he had shoulder surgery, and they are both left handed, but it's the right ones that are causing the trouble. Can't believe I made such a mistake, but I did, and I have no one to blame but myself. And a report on them (and this is right) is that they are both "hanging in there." Donnie gets his stitches out this week, and that will help a lot. He will probably have some post-op therapy, but that has not been decided upon as yet. Barbara had a CT scan on her arm Friday, and as of last night (Sunday) she had not gotten the report from it. She's probably going to have to see an orthopedic specialist before her problem is solved. They still are pretty well out of commission and will be for a while longer.

Here 'n' there

News is pretty rare this week. Main topic of discussion has been the ever-changing weather. We have been having warm—80 degrees plus weather one day and freezing cold the next—Calm one day and a real "duster" the next. That's been the pattern for a while now. Today (Monday), it's calm and cool, but before the day is over it is supposed to be pretty nice.

Judy and Randolph Barnett had their grandkids a couple of days last week. Their son, Jim Bob Conner (and Jenny Beth's children), Charlie, Madelyn, and Jaylee of Lubbock had a nice visit here before returning home on Saturday. They "picnicked" out north of Benjamin, took a little hike, and just enjoyed the out of doors while they were here.

My grandson, Dillon Keys, returned here Thursday, two days short of a two-week stay in Children's Medical Center in Dallas. He's doing well and returned to work today. He will have to be very careful and take care of himself, but so far, so good. And for that we are very thankful.

Dawn Vanderpol called on Friday to tell me that several from Benjamin-- school "chums" of Brittney Coop were in Lubbock a couple of weeks ago to help her observe (and celebrate) her birthday. Friends going out there for the get together were Mitchell Welch, Blake and Devon Jones, and Jessica and Leah Vanderpol. These are all in college, so it was a good chance to meet for them all. During their spring break from McMurry Jessica and Leah and their brother, Benjamin (also on spring break) went to Austin for a visit with relatives and friends. Jessie attended the South by Southwest music festival while they were there, but was not there the night that crazed driver rammed his car into the crowd. She said there were all kinds of music and that Jessie thoroughly enjoyed it.

I saw Cody Propps Friday night. He had been home a couple of days visiting home folks and friends. Cody is attending Tarleton State University in Stephenville and is doing well. It was good to see him.

I've been hearing about the 4-H kids who have gotten involved in the sport of archery. Not knowing much about this activity, I can't comment much, but I think it's great that they are learning the art of using a bow and arrow. Several were in Graham on Saturday for some competition, and that is good experience.

With election time coming soon, there will be no change in our city government except for the mayor's position. Sylinda Meinzer opted not to seek another term, and Ronnie White was the only candidate, so since he's unopposed, he is already in—just waiting for the current term to end before he takes the oath of office. And there's also no competition in the council race, so the two sitting councilmen whose terms are expiring (being unopposed) are elected as well. Those two council members are Charles Jones and Fred Carver.

The same situation exists with the school board. No one has filed for the expiring positions on the board, so there will not be a need for an election for trustees. So I guess everyone is satisfied with the way things are going, both city and school wise.

Gladene Green is the longtime Benjamin correspondent for the Knox County News-Courier.

The Paperboy

The illness that keeps on giving

Ever given much thought to the common cold? I bet you do when you have one.



CHRIS BLACKBURN

cold virus.

According to the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, an adult will get between two and five colds per year with the majority coming between September and May.

Children — with perhaps more exposure to germs (or lack of habits to prevent transmission of germs) — can get as many as seven to 10 colds a year.

Scientists continue to discover new viruses that cause colds.

Colds are most contagious about two days before symptoms start and during the early stages of illness.

The average cold lasts from two to 14 days.

Coughs, sometimes a symptom of a cold, can persist up to six weeks.

You can make yourself more resistant to cold viruses by exercising, reducing stress, getting good sleep and washing your hands frequently.

During the course of a cold, there are some things you can do to hasten the illness:

Days 1 to 2

There are no symptoms as the virus incubates in the body.

Days 3 to 4

The first signs of the cold often include a tickle or soreness in the throat and, many times, a runny nose, sneezing and chills.

Getting as much rest as possible, relieving the symptoms with over-the-counter medicine and drinking plenty of fluids are good ways to get back on track.

Days 3 to 5

The head and sinuses become stuffy, and there is much sinus and chest congestion. You should continue to drink fluids and rest as much as possible. Steam inhalation and elevating your head to rest will help relieve sinus pressure.

Days 6 to 14

Most symptoms subside but a cough can persist for weeks. It's fine to return to normal activity and continue to treat your cough.

Maybe the most important thing to realize about colds is that there is not much you can do outside of what's been mentioned. Not even your

wonderful doctor can do much for you, so you might save the time and money by riding it out at home.

If someone in your family has a cold, odds are that the whole household has been exposed. You might as well prepare to go through the cycle.

At the beginning of the winter, I was ill about six out of eight weeks at one point. It was awful. I believe I had around four colds, but it's hard to tell. The cough was the worst part. I guess it comes with the territory when you're around as many youngsters as I am.

Chris Blackburn is as CEO of 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.

SPRING TRAINING

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Members of the Knox County 4-H archery team participated in the state indoor tournament in Graham recently.

4-H News

Youth participate in state indoor archery

Knox County 4-Hers traveled to Graham for the state indoor archery match March 21-22. Archers from counties all across Texas gathered to compete and have fun together at the Young County Arena. Knox County 4-H club had 11 members participating: Josiah Copley, Ryan Earthman, Corrie Earthman, Sierra Boyd, Hailie Macias, Joseph Macias, Shawn Earthman, Morgan Earthman, Nate Earthman, Abraham Nevarez, and Grant Jackson.

For their first archery match, all did very well.

Grace Estrada competed in the Bosque County archery match on March 15. She had a great time and won second place in her age group.

If you have any questions about 4-H, contact the Knox County Extension Office at 940-459-2651.

Corrie Earthman

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR FLUID INJECTION WELL PERMIT

Hunt Oil Company, 1900 North Akard Street, Dallas, Texas 75201-2300 has applied to the Railroad Commission of Texas for a permit to inject fluid into a formation which is productive of oil or gas. The applicant proposes to inject fluid into the Tannehill formation in the S. B. Burnett Estate "N" Lease Well No. N-27. The proposed injection well is located 17 miles southeast of Guthrie, Texas in the Big -N- (Tannehill) Field, King County, Texas. Fluid will be injected into strata in the subsurface depth interval from 2735' to 2810'.

LEGAL AUTHORITY: Chapter 27 of the Texas Water Code, as amended, Title 3 of the Natural Resources Code, as amended, and the Statewide Rules of the Oil and Gas Division of the Railroad Commission of Texas.

Requests for a public hearing from persons who can show they are adversely affected, or requests for further information concerning any aspect of the application should be submitted in writing, within fifteen days of publication, to the **Environmental Services Section, Oil and Gas Division, Railroad Commission of Texas, P.O. Box 12967, Capitol Station, Austin, Texas, 78711-2967. (Telephone 512/463-6792)**

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is the policy of **Munday Nursing Center** to admit and to treat all residents without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, handicap or age in compliance with the 45 CFR Parts 80, 84 and 91 respectively. The same requirements for admission for admission are applied to all patients' whose needs are reasonable for the facility to meet, and residents are assigned within this care center without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, handicap or age. Each resident must be admitted to the facility on the recommendation of a licensed physician. It is the policy of the facility not to retain a resident who required services beyond those for which the facility is licensed or has the functional ability to provide. This determination is made by the facility admissions committee. There is no distinction in the eligibility for, or in the manner of providing any resident service provided by the care center or by others in or outside of the care center. The services of this care center are available without distinction to all residents and visitors regardless of race, color, sex, national origin, handicap or age. All persons and organizations having occasion either to refer residents for admission or to recommend to the care center are advised to do so without regard to the resident's race, color, sex, national origin, handicap or age.

24th Annual Baylor County Agriculture Appreciation Day

Cliff Styles Ag Pavilion - Seymour, Texas

Tuesday, April 8, 2014 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

- Keynote speaker will be **Shaughn Ryan**, project manager of the **Green Pastures Wind Farm**.
- Noon meal will be provided free of charge.
- Musical entertainment will be provided during the meal by Earthman Family Fiddlers from Knox City, Texas.
- **A drawing for a Henry Golden Boy 22L Rifle (donated by the Baylor County Farm Bureau) will take place following the noon program.**
- 3 - \$100 Gas Cards will be given away during the noon meal. Must be present to win.
- Approximately 75 Booths and Exhibits
- Door Prizes Given All Day • Free Admission

The Seymour Hospital Health Fair will once again be held, and blood draws will begin at 7 a.m. with the opportunity to donate blood throughout the day.

The 501 Lupy redefines the English language

Learning a language is like learning to swim. It's easier for children. Adults don't like getting water in their noses, and they don't like to flail around in foreign linguistic waters. They might make a mistake. They could drown!



HANABA MUNN WELCH

Hey, that's why it's called "submersion." Moi, I don't mind taking the plunge. Bring on the uncharted grammatical currents. My lack of maturity is a plus.

My friend Lupy, on the other hand, has mastered adulthood. Teaching school forced her to grow

up. Somehow she still butchers English, left and right — except she'd say "right

and left." Maybe it all started with the Anglo doctor who butchered the spelling of "Lupe" on her birth certificate. If it weren't for him, we wouldn't have Lupyisms.

Si, English is Lupy's second language. If Lupy held back in English until she was sure she wouldn't make a mistake, she'd stay mum. The world would be the less for it, and various English nouns wouldn't know what it's like to be assigned a gender — yea, even to have it switched. English nouns miss a lot.

Si, Lupy just hit town. Normally she lives in Washington state, except "normally" isn't a good word to use in the same sentence with "Lupy." Trust me. Lupy is more fun than normal. (Read that sentence twice for the double entendre.)

"Didn't your grandmother have nutty pine in her house?" Lupy asked me.

"Knotty pine," I corrected her, acting like the schoolteacher I never was and adding another Lupyism to my list.

Lupy flew into Oklahoma City two days ago. We lunched there at a restaurant called "1492" — a name that reflects the incursion of Spanish into North America. In Lupy's case, her ancestors followed Columbus by a few hundred years, landing in Texas from Spain, staking their claim ahead of my Texas ancestors.

When we were children on the same farm — me rattling around in the big house and she and her brother and sisters crammed into the little house — I didn't realize Lupy was ahead of me on any count. I was a year older and spoke perfect Texas English. Never mind she was bilingual and I wasn't. I was the smarty white kid — the boss.

At some point, things changed. When we

toured Europe some years ago, who made the arrangements when we arrived anywhere? Lupy. It happened even in Germany, and I'm the one who speaks German.

Ah, but you want more Lupyisms. At 1492 she told the waiter she and I grew up "a jump and a skip" from Oklahoma.

When I corrected her on some point, she said I didn't have to "rub her face in it."

As we drove on I-40, she said "You're not merging!"

She was talking by phone to her husband Ruben. "Merge" is her command word to get him to move into her lane of thinking.

I'd like to say "merge" to my husband, but some Lupyisms don't work unless spoken by Lupy. She's got that one licensed.

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

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KC stage play advances to district

The Knox County News-Courier

KNOX CITY — The cast and crew of “Flowers for Algernon,” the one-act play being performed this season by drama students at Knox City High School, will advance to the district competition Saturday at Guthrie High School after advancing from the zone competition last weekend.

Last weekend’s performance garnered a number of awards for the local cast. Chris Richardson (Charlie Gordon) was named Best Actor, and Jessica Wilburn (Mother) and Hailee Cox (Mrs. Mooney) were named to the All-Star Cast.

Keelie Deville (Alice) was named to the Honorable Mention Cast. Caitlyn Baxter had Best Lighting from the Knox City crew. The crew was named Best Overall Crew.

Crowell also will advance with Northside as the alternate.



The cast and crew of “Flowers for Algernon,” the one-act play being performed this season by drama students at Knox City High School.

Sheri Baty/The Knox County News-Courier

KC Hounds take third at Jayton relays

By Geoff Baumgartner
The Knox County News-Courier

JAYTON — The Knox City High School varsity Greyhound track team placed third at the Rolling Plains Relays last weekend while the girls finished sixth place overall.

First, Jacoby Thomas placed fourth in the 100-meter dash. Then, Sheldon Baty, Zach Carter, Israel Rodriguez, Thomas, and Elias Nevarez all placed second in the 400-meter relay while Carter managed first place in the 400-meter dash.

Knox City earned second place in the

1,600-meter relay with Baty, Chris Lewis, Nevarez, and Carter all participating in the event.

Krys Campos finished six place in the shot put event while earning fourth in the discus. Tyllyne Eaton ended up earning third place in the discus event.

Knox City boys coach Colin Howeth was very proud of his team and the way they performed in their events against the other larger schools.

“We took about 12 athletes and placed third out of the 20-plus teams there,” Howeth said. “With as few participants

as we have for us, to place that high as a team speaks volumes for the quality of the student athletes we have participating in track here at Knox City High School.”

The Houndettes also did well in their events.

Makaylie Steele finished fourth place in the shot put event with a distance of 33 feet, 5 inches while Jordyn Eaton finished fifth place in the discus event with a distance of 91 feet.

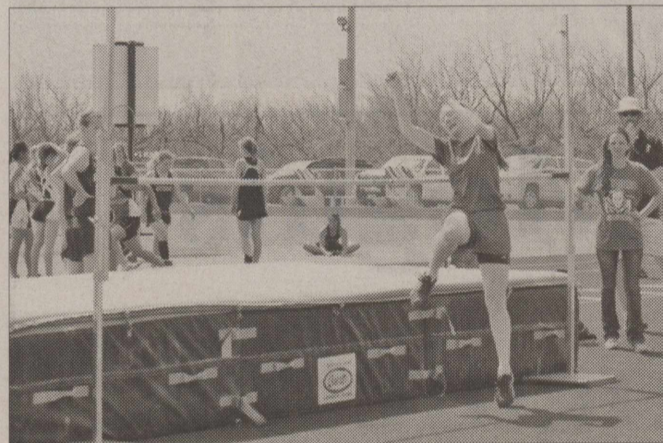
The girls also finished fifth in the 400-meter relay and first place in the 800-meter relay. Shailee Manning was also

able to finish sixth place in the 1,600-meter run.

Head girl’s coach Jason Josselet was also proud of the results his Houndettes achieved.

“They did really well in certain events and were competing against several other larger schools. Very proud overall,” Josselet said.

Knox City varsity Greyhound and Houndette teams will next be participating in the Knox City Relay’s on April 4, which Knox City High School will be hosting.

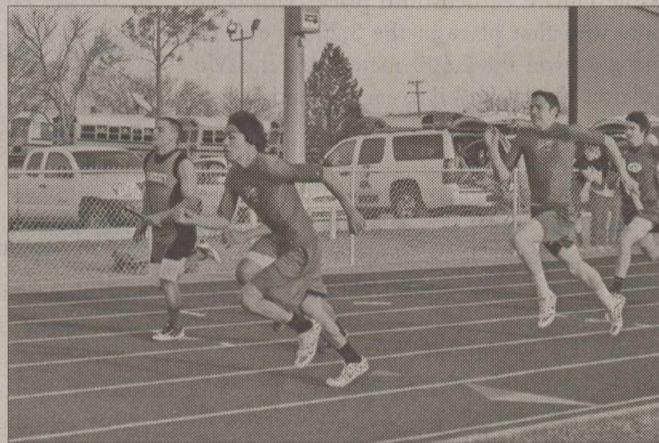


Photos by Sheri Baty/The Knox County News-Courier

Makayla Bailey launches into her high jump position as she speedily approaches the bar. The Knox City girls team managed to finish fourth place overall at the meet in Jayton.



Jordyn Eaton grunts as the discus flies from her hands. Demonstrating perfect form, Eaton managed to finish fifth place overall in the event.



Israel Rodriguez takes off from his starting position and gets ready to receive the hand off from Zach Carter during the 400-meter relay at the Jayton Rolling Plains track meet last week. The boys finished second place in the event.

Congrats, One Act Play!

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Marching into Fitness

Munday Elementary School celebrated Texas Public School Week March 3-7. On Wednesday, March 5 parents were invited to visit the school for "Marching into Fitness." Parents visited their children's classroom, received their child's report cards, visited the book fair, and were served healthy snacks in the school gym.

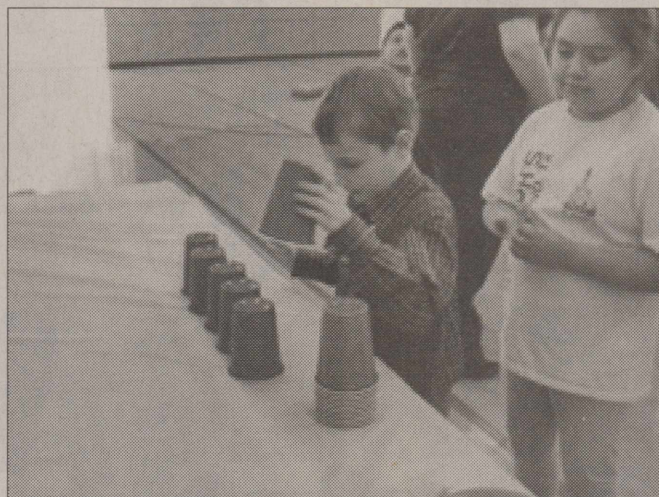
Students participated in activities testing their hand/eye coordination and their speed and agility. School nurse, Rebecca Clark, promoted drinking milk products by offering students an opportunity to obtain a "milk moustache." Healthy snacks of fruits and vegetables, crackers, cheese and nuts were offered in the gym along with

healthy alternatives to breakfast. Knox County Hospital donated bottled water. Twenty-seven door prizes were given away that promoted exercise and fitness. The American Cancer Society donated door prizes as well as First State Bank Munday and Knox County Hospital. Informational brochures were handed out and as well as

information about the upcoming Relay for Life.

The entire event was a huge success with participation from many parents and students.

Kristi Buffkin



Mogulettes place fourth at Rolling Plains Relays

By Geoff Baumgartner
The Knox County News-Courier

JAYTON - Munday's varsity Mogul and Mogulette track teams traveled to Jayton this past week to participate in the Rolling Plains Relay Meet. Amongst 25 other competing schools, the Munday girls earned fourth overall at the event while the boys earned 10th place overall. However, some individual Munday athletes did manage to not only win their respective events, but blow away the competition while at they were at it.

Girls Results:

Deeber earned fourth place in discus event while Dillard earned third place. Salinas not only won first place in the 3,200-meter run but also won the 1,600-meter run. The Mogulettes also managed to earn second place in the 1,600-meter relay.

Boys Results:

Temerick Reagins earned fifth place in triple jump event. Day'veon Dockins earned fourth place in long jump, while Reagins walked away with second place in the high jump event.

Munday Mogul boys earned fifth place in the 400-meter relay event while

Also, Heath Bivens earned second place in the 800-meter dash event.

Reagins again managed to place high when he took home fifth place in the 400-meter



Sheri Baty/The Knox County News-Courier
Rylie Decker launches the shot put at the Jayton Rolling Plains Relays last week.

dash race, while Dockins finished sixth in the 200-meter dash.

Munday Boys finished fifth overall in the 1,600-meter relay race.

The Munday track teams will be hosting the Munday Relays on April 3 and will be traveling to Albany to participate in the District 9A track meet the following week.

Mogulette Track



Mary Murphy Photography

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This photo shows a dust storm blowing in from the west near Canyon on March 18. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Expert: Conditions ripe for second Dust Bowl Era

By Robert Burns
Special to the News-Courier

Though it may seem like a return of Dust Bowl days to some farmers, ranchers and residents of the Texas High Plains region, we're not there yet — at least not quite, says the state's leading weather expert.

State Climatologist John Nielsen-Gammon of College Station said evidence of difficult working conditions for producers throughout the Panhandle, South Plains and Rolling Plains regions point to a second Dust Bowl Era if the area's weather pattern doesn't improve.

"Over the past few weeks, the dust seems to be mainly picked up from southeastern Colorado and eastern New Mexico, so we're not having a problem with widespread soil loss in Texas so far," Nielsen-Gammon said. "But it's something that could happen if conditions don't allow for spring green-up, which they haven't yet."

Jerry Coplen, the Knox County agricultural agent for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, noted cotton producers were trying to prepare planting beds in between dust storms.

Some areas throughout the Rolling Plains region received up to 2 inches of reported rainfall last Friday. Generally, though, drought conditions persist and are compounded by high, gusty winds and blowing dirt.

Rick Auckerman, AgriLife Extension agent for Deaf Smith County in the western Panhandle, said wind speeds of 30 to 50 mph bore down on the county for most of the week, and producers were running out of tools to stop soil from blowing away.

Auckerman noted that though it may feel like a return of the Dust Bowl days as fences are being covered up by sand and dirt in

Deaf Smith County, modern producers have a lot more tools to fight blows, including U.S. Department of Agriculture Conservation Reserve Program grassland.

"But on much of regular farmland, there isn't a lot of growth to hold the dirt in place," Auckerman said.

Also, typically by this time of year the region has begun to see a greening up of grasses, but December through February have been the 10th driest on record in the last 10 years, Nielsen-Gammon said.

March doesn't seem to be turning that trend around.

"The last time it was drier (the first quarter of the year) was in 1996, which was the start of this string of droughts that we've been having," he said.

The other issue that continues to hover critically on the horizon is a possible battle between towns and agriculture over extremely limited reservoir levels, Nielsen-Gammon said.

"Reservoir levels are lower this time of year than they have been previously during this drought," he said. "If we don't see summer months of more than average rainfall, we will likely see conflicts between agricultural and municipal/industrial uses."

On a good news note, the Southern and Southeastern parts of the state are doing much better, Nielsen-Gammon said. And parts of West Texas have gotten some decent rains during the past year.

"But most of the Panhandle has averaged less than 50 percent of normal for the last three years," Nielsen-Gammon said.

More information on the current Texas drought and wildfire alerts can be found on the AgriLife Extension Agricultural Drought Task Force website at agrilife.tamu.edu/

Pink Ladies

Nine members of Pink Ladies met March 19 at the Thrift Store. President Glenda Huff reported that a replacement for the combination heater/air conditioner in the back room would cost about \$665 to heat/cool 1000 square feet and the needed carpenter work would be approximately \$200. The motion for replacement was unanimous.

There was discussion about our lack of

parking spaces, the use of our dumpster, cars too near our back entrance and trash against our building. A NO PUBLIC RESTROOM sign will be placed at the front of the store and a DO NOT BLOCK ENTRY sign put on the back door.

As always, we appreciate our customers and public donations.

Billie Walker

PUBLIC NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS MANAGEMENT SERVICES
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The City of Benjamin is soliciting proposals from qualified individuals or firms for management, administrative and planning services in conjunction with the Texas Small Towns Environmental Program (STEP) from the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) for program years of 2013. Accordingly, the City is seeking to contract with a qualified management firm to administer the contract. Please submit your proposal of services and a statement of qualifications for these proposed services to the address below:

Mayor Sylinda Meinzer
City of Benjamin
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Proposals must be received by the City by 10:00 am on Monday, April 7, 2014 to be considered. The City reserves the right to negotiate with any and all individuals or firms that submit proposals, as per the Texas Professional Services Procurement Act and the Uniform Grant and Contract Management Standards.

The City of Benjamin is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

The advertisement is for March 27, 2014

LEGAL NOTICE

Updated Property Tax Information Now Available for Texas Taxpayers

Knox County— New and updated property tax information has just been compiled by Knox County Appraisal District and is available now to assist taxpayers. This property tax information is current and covers a wide range of topics, such as taxpayer remedies, exemptions and appraisals, and is of value to select groups, such as disabled veterans and persons who are age 65 or older.

"Whether you are a homeowner, business owner, disabled veteran or a taxpayer, it's important you know your rights concerning the property tax laws," said Mitzi Welch, Chief Appraiser of the Knox County Appraisal District. "You can contact us about any property tax issues with full confidence that we will provide you the most complete, accurate and up-to-date available information to assist you."

This includes information about the following programs:

- Property Tax Exemptions for Disabled Veterans** - The law provides partial exemptions for any property owned by veterans who are disabled, spouses and survivors of deceased disabled veterans. This includes homesteads donated to disabled veterans by charitable organizations at no cost to the disabled veterans. The amount of exemption is determined according to percentage of service-connected disability. The law also provides a 100 percent exemption for 100 percent disabled veterans and their surviving spouses, beginning in 2009, and for surviving spouses of U.S. armed service members killed in action.
- Property Tax Exemptions** - Non-profit organizations that meet statutory requirements may seek property tax exemptions and must apply to their county appraisal district by a specific date. Businesses that receive tax abatements granted by taxing units; ship inventory out of Texas that may be eligible for the "Freeport" exemption; store certain goods in transit in warehouses that are moved within 175 days; construct, install or acquire pollution control; own and operate energy storage systems; or store offshore drilling equipment while not in use may also be eligible for statutory exemptions.
- Rendering Taxable Property** - If a business owns tangible personal property that is used to produce income, the business must file a rendition with its local county appraisal district by a specified date. Personal property includes inventory and equipment used by a business. Owners do not have to render exempt property such as church property or an agriculture producer's equipment used for farming.
- Appraisal Notices** - If a taxpayer's property value increased in the last year, the Texas taxpayer will receive a notice of appraised value from the appropriate local county appraisal district. The city, county, school districts and other local taxing units will use the appraisal district's value to set property taxes for the coming year.
- Property Taxpayer Remedies** - This Comptroller publication explains in detail how to protest a property appraisal, what issues the county appraisal review board (ARB) can consider and what to expect during a protest hearing. The publication also discusses the option of taking a taxpayer's case to district court, the State Office of Administrative Hearings or binding arbitration if the taxpayer is dissatisfied with the outcome of the ARB hearing.
- Homestead Exemptions** - A homestead is generally defined as the home and land used as the owner's principal residence on Jan. 1 of the tax year. A homestead exemption reduces the appraised value of the home and, as a result, lowers property taxes. Applications are submitted to the appropriate local county appraisal district.
- Productivity Appraisal** - Property owners who use land for timber land production, agricultural purposes or wildlife management can be granted property tax relief on their land. They may apply to their local county appraisal district for an agricultural appraisal which may result in a lower appraisal of the land based on how much the taxpayer produces, versus what the land would sell for in the open market.
- Residence Homestead Tax Deferral** - Texas homeowners may postpone paying the currently delinquent property taxes due on the appreciating value of their homes by filing a tax deferral affidavit at their local county appraisal district. This tax relief allows homeowners to pay the property taxes on 105 percent of the preceding year's appraised value of their homestead, plus the taxes on any new improvements to the homestead. The remaining taxes are postponed, but not cancelled, with interest accruing at 8 percent per year.
- Property Tax Deferral for Persons Age 65 or Older or Disabled Homeowners** - Texans who are age 65 or older or disabled, as defined by law, may postpone paying current and delinquent property taxes on their homes by signing a tax deferral affidavit. Once the affidavit is on file, taxes are deferred, but not cancelled, as long as the owner continues to own and live in the home. Interest continues to accrue on unpaid taxes. You may obtain a deferral affidavit at the appraisal district.
- Notice of Availability of Electronic Communication** - In appraisal districts located in counties with more than 200,000 populations or that have authorized electronic communications, and that have implemented a system that allows such communications, chief appraisers and ARBs may communicate electronically through email or other media with property owners or their designated representatives. Written agreements are required for notices and other documents to be delivered electronically in place of mailing.
- Protesting Property Appraisal Values** - Property owners who disagree with the appraisal district's appraisal of their property for local taxes or for any other action that adversely affects them may protest their property value to the appraisal district's ARB.

For more information about these programs, contact Knox County Appraisal District at 940-459-3891. Information is also available on the Comptroller's Property Tax Assistance Division's website at www.window.state.tx.us/taxinfo/proptax/.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

The City of Munday will hold a public hearing to adopt the proposed 2014-2015 Fiscal Year budget on April 8, 2014. The hearing will be opened at 6:30 PM at the regularly scheduled City Council meeting. All interested parties are encouraged to attend and be heard. The combined 2014-2015 Fiscal Year budget is listed below. If a line item detailed budget is required or you have questions, please contact the City of Munday at the Munday City Hall and one will be supplied.

City of Munday
Fiscal 2014-2015 Proposed Budget

| | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|
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| Total Income-Operating | \$ | 521,110.00 |
| GENERAL FUND TOTAL INCOME | \$ | 1,141,820.00 |
| Total Expense-Enterprise | \$ | 616,000.00 |
| Total Expense-Operating | \$ | 495,775.00 |
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Farm News

State ag forum will focus on farm bill

By Blair Fannin
Special to the News-Courier

Discussion of the 2014 farm bill will take center stage at the Texas Ag Forum on April 10 in Austin.

The event, to be held at the Hilton Austin Airport, will bring together producers, commodity and farm organization leaders from across the state, said Joe Outlaw, co-director of the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at the Texas A&M University and a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service economist.

"The 2014 farm bill significantly changed the farm program safety net," he said. "The new law provides producers with a number of choices for both commodity programs and crop insurance. We will take the opportunity to discuss these changes and provide insight on how the new farm programs will work for Texas producers. In short, the conference will focus on what the impacts will be."

The forum will feature presentations from policy makers, university experts and farm-group representatives.

"Anyone who is interested in production agriculture or the food and fiber system will find this meeting valuable," Outlaw said. "We are asking some very knowledgeable people for their perspectives. We expect Chairman Frank Lucas of the House Committee on Agriculture to participate via telephone."

Other expected presenters and topics are:

- Judith Canales, state executive director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency in Texas, "Implementing the 2014 Farm Bill."
- Outlaw, "Commodity Title Overview

and Explaining the Crop Policy Decision Aid."

- Bart Fischer, chief economist for the House Agriculture Committee, "An Insider's Perspective on the 2014 Farm Bill."

• Patrick Westhoff, director of the Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute at the University of Missouri-Columbia, "Sector Level Analysis of the 2014 Farm Bill."

• Doug Steele, director of the AgriLife Extension, "Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the 2014 Farm Bill."

• Scott Brown, assistant research professor in the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Missouri-Columbia, "A Dairy Perspective on the 2014 Farm Bill."

• Gary Adams, vice president of economics and policy analysis at the National Cotton Council, "Cotton and the 2014 Farm Bill."

• Mechel Paggi, director of the Center for Agricultural Business in the Department of Agricultural Economics at California State University-Fresno, "Fruits and Vegetables and the 2014 Farm Bill."

Advanced registration is \$125 through the Texas Agricultural Cooperative Council, 1210 San Antonio St., Suite 101, Austin, TX 78701. To register, call 512-450-0555 and ask for Gloria Johnson. Same-day registration is \$150.

The Texas Ag Forum is an association of agricultural leaders and representatives from across the Texas food and fiber system. It was founded more than 20 years ago to provide a forum for open and public discussion of the problems and emerging issues in agriculture. It is a stakeholder-driven program in partnership with AgriLife Extension.

FSA recognizes National Ag Day

Special to the Courier

USDA Texas Farm Service Agency (FSA) Executive Director Judith A. Canales, encourages everyone to take a moment to appreciate the hard working farmers and ranchers in Texas on March 25, National Ag Day. This year's theme is "Agriculture: 365 Sunrises and 7 Billion Mouths to Feed."

USDA is proud to stand behind the producers who rise before dawn 365 days a year in order to put food on the table for 7 billion people.

"We recognize the importance of agriculture and hope that the recent passage of a new Farm Bill is a sign that 2014 will be a 'banner year for the industry,'" said Canales. There is no better way to show our support for farmers and ranchers than to begin implementing a new Farm Bill — legislation that will provide farmers, ranchers and consumers alike supportive results."

While the American economy is rebounding and gaining strength, the agricultural economy has remained strong and at its best. Looking ahead, the U.S. has seen a trend towards aging farmers; however, according to the recent Census of Agriculture, the nation is beginning to reverse that trend. There is an increase in the number of farmers under the age of 35.

And although the agriculture industry

promises a bright future, many farmers and ranchers are still recovering from natural disasters that occurred this year, including the continuing drought. Fortunately, these producers were still able to grow the commodities that Americans rely on in order to remain a food-secure nation. Our farmers and ranchers have also continued their legacy of protecting natural resources and environmentally sensitive land through the use of conservation programs.

Please join FSA in celebrating America's farmers and ranchers — a selfless group of individuals who make up less than two percent of the world's population. They feed our country and make our nation secure. And, they supply quality foods to the rest of the world's seven billion people.

From the clothes we wear, the foods we eat, the fuel we burn and the agricultural byproducts we use daily, American agriculture adds to the quality of our lives.

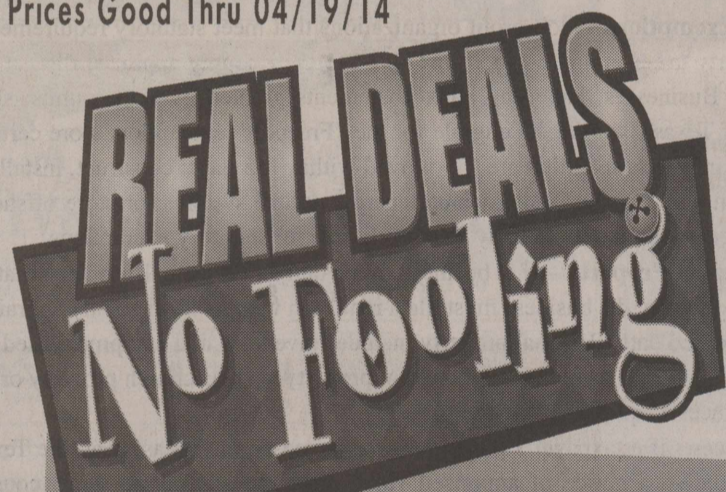
None of the contributions of U.S. farmers and ranchers should be taken for granted, because no one can live without agriculture.

Ag Day is a project of the Agriculture Council of America. For further Ag Day information and events visit www.agday.org. For information on programs administered by FSA, please contact your local FSA office or visit us online at www.fsa.usda.gov.

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administered, are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. DATED March 24, 2014. BOBBY D. BURNETT, State Bar No. 03434000, P. O. Drawer 390, Munday, Texas 76371, (940) 422-4525, (940) 422-5544 (fax). ATTORNEY FOR THE ESTATE.

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Wilder's Nature Journal



S.J. Dahlstrom

Some scientists believe bucks shed antlers annually to replace damaged beams and snapped tines. A second theory suggests they shed and grow new racks to keep pace with their increasing weight and girth as they mature. In the southern portion of the United States, bucks typically drop their racks in the early springtime months of March and April.

Shed hunting

By S.J. Dahlstrom

A shed is an antler that has dropped off of a buck deer or a bull elk. Lots of people go shed hunting every spring. Finding a large antler is a big deal. It shows you that a nice deer made it through hunting season and where he is living.

Antlers are the bones that grow out of the skull, and they are used for fighting other males and attracting females. When the antler grows, it is covered in velvet; a soft outer covering that brings blood to the bone to help it grow.

In the spring when the temperature warms up, the buck starts growing a new antler under

the old one. This new growth pushes up, and the old antler falls off of the deer's skull. This process goes on every year of a deer's life, and the antlers get bigger every year.

You can use sheds for all kinds of things: hat racks, knife handles, rattle calls, etc. Mainly I just like to find them. To me, it feels kind of magical when you find them alone in the woods.

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:

Dixie Divas

Mama and her money

It was a couple of years before Mama just up and died without warning — and when we least expected it — that I was visiting her one day. I recall it precisely.

I was sitting on the edge of the sofa, and she was in her well-worn recliner, sipping coffee. A look came over her face that was always specific to a well-thought-out announcement. She tilted her head to the side, raised an eyebrow and said, "If I knew I'd live long enough to get enough use out of it, I'd buy me a new bedroom suite."

That, of course, would have been an excellent idea. After all, her bedroom suite was an inexpensive Art Deco style from the early 1940s when she and Daddy married, and the mattress and box springs was a set I had given her from a guest room. When she had been recovering from a hospital visit, she had stayed with me and said repeatedly how much she loved that mattress. So, at first opportunity, I gave it to her.

"I think that is excellent idea," I exclaimed. "You need to buy exactly what you want. I'll take you shopping so you can pick it out." She took a sip of coffee and shook her head. "No. It's a waste of money. I'm not going to live that many more years then you kids would just have to do something with it. I'll just make do with what I've got."

These kinds of conversations aggravated me beyond measure. It was obvious she had thought a great deal about it, she wanted it and she had the money, but she refused to make the purchase. It took me a long time to realize — and by the time I did, Mama was gone — that a lifetime of watching every dollar doesn't ever go away. It hangs like an early morning mist over the heads of those who have made it a fervent practice.

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

Mama was one of those. She was a smart one. And a lucky one. A few years ago, I needed some help in the yard and was referred to a man who needed the work. The second day he showed up, I opened the door to find him leaning against the porch column, looking as if he might collapse any moment.

"Are you OK?" I asked, alarmed. He nodded weakly. "Yeah, I just ain't had nothin' to eat today. We're out of food, and I ain't ate since yesterday."

I opened the door wide. "Come in and let me feed you."

"Oh no! We get our food stamps today, and my wife's buying steaks for supper. She'll throw a fit if I eat before supper."

I protested but he stuck to his ground. A couple of hours later, I went out to check on his progress, and he asked if rain was coming.

"I don't know. I haven't seen the weather."

He stood up and scratched his head. "Do you have Direct TV? Because if you do, there's a button you can push on the remote and it'll give you the weather."

It took a second. Sometimes I'm a bit slow on the uptake. He continued to talk on with great knowledge about satellite television until I interrupted him.

"Do you have satellite TV?"

"Oh yeah, I got the whole package." Now, here's a man who hadn't had food in 24 hours, was waiting on his food stamps to buy steaks, but he had satellite television. What's wrong with that picture?

In our house, shelter and food were paid first. Debts were paid off, then any extras were purchased if they were purchased at all. Now, my parents had money worries from time to time when emergencies arose but, for the most part, money problems never kept them awake at night.

And that is one of the greatest — and freest — luxuries in life.

Ronda Rich is a Southern humorist, storyteller and best-selling author of "There's A Better Day A-Comin'."

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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 "chanceloring" 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.

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