

A Year in Review

Youth Learn The Spirit of Giving



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THE DEVIL'S RIVER NEWS



In the past year we have seen our fair share of goings on in Sonora. From prison breaks, petitions, and pointed elections we each had a front stage spot for all of it. In this edi-

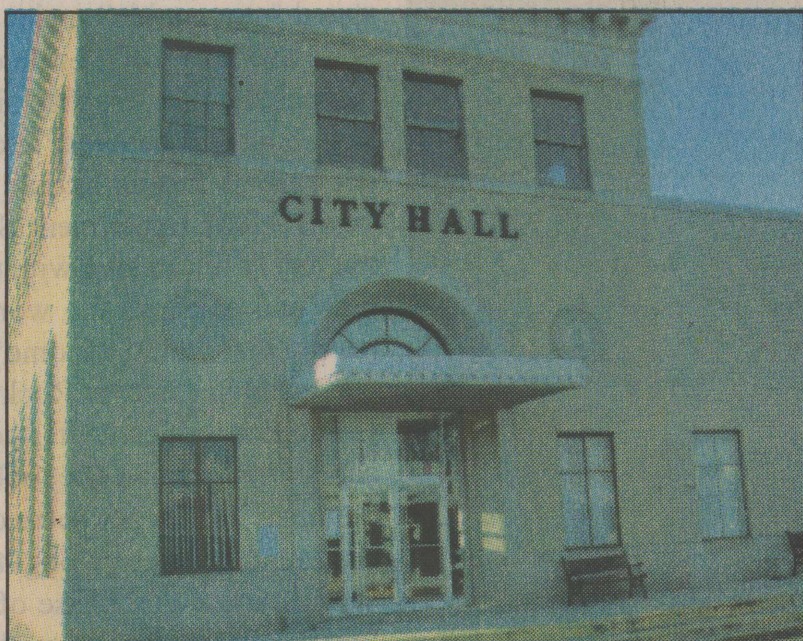
tion of the Devil's River News we have re-published some of these stories.

As 2013 knocks on our door we are already faced with fiscal cliffs and drought, but if

my limited experience has taught me anything about Sonora it's that we always find a way to make it through hard times. It's those times that truly define who we are as a community.

A Tale of No City: Dissolve the City Government?

Published on March 22, 2012



By Ben D. Taylor

There is an idea currently circulating around Sonora that could potentially impact us all for years to come. This idea centers on disincorporating the City of Sonora (or doing away with the city government) and having the Sutton County government manage our tax dollars to provide services to the residents. Doing away with the city government has been brought up several times in Sonora's history, but it has (to date) never been acted upon. Some members of the community have started the process to address disincorporation by circulating a petition. If enough signatures are collected, then an item would be placed on the ballot in the upcoming election in May where citizens could vote "yes retain the city" or

"no abolish the city and consolidate under the county". It is unknown why previous discussions about doing away with the city were brought up, but some of the major driving forces for the current discussion are centered on management of city funds and county tax rates.

It might be easy to assume the city is facing serious financial woes, especially on the heels of a former City Manager pleading guilty to Felony Theft charges. In order to understand fully the scope and scale of the past actions of city management staff and policy makers, current City Manager Charlie Graves has requested a forensic audit of the city (the results of which will be available in the near future). Even given the actions of previous

management, it appears that the City of Sonora is not in dire financial shape.

According to the most recent audit of the city (conducted by Coleman Horton and Company, LLP) has around \$9 million overall in net assets (money left over after debt is paid). Specifically in the proprietary fund (the fund where we pay fees for water, sewer, sanitation and airport) currently has \$13 million in revenue and \$7 million in expenses-which means that it has a total of \$6 million dollars after debt is serviced. The General Fund receives its money from property taxes and pays for most of the services the residents of Sonora receive (like police department, code enforcement, senior center, Trax Van, fire department, animal control, parks and street maintenance). Last year's audit showed that the general fund had a total of \$1.7 million dollars in revenue, and \$1.9 million in expenditures-which means that the General Fund's balance was around -\$200,000. The city council then approved a measure to balance that debt by withdrawing \$200,000 from a "rainy day fund". It is not uncommon for the general fund to have infusions from other funds (the city council has approved such measures

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"Transformation of EMS A Huge Success"

County Commissioners Hear Report on Hospital Run EMS



By Ben D. Taylor

Sutton County Hospital District CEO Keith Butler recently presented the financial report for the first fiscal year since the Hospital took over operations of the EMS to the Sutton County Commissioners. He opened up his presentation by stating, "All I've got to report today is good news. The Transformation of the EMS has been a huge success".

A year ago the Sutton County Commissioners voted to turn control of the county run all volunteer EMS over to the Sutton County Hospital District. The main reasons cited for the action at the time were

in order to save cost and improve service. According to Butler; both of those reasons have been validated.

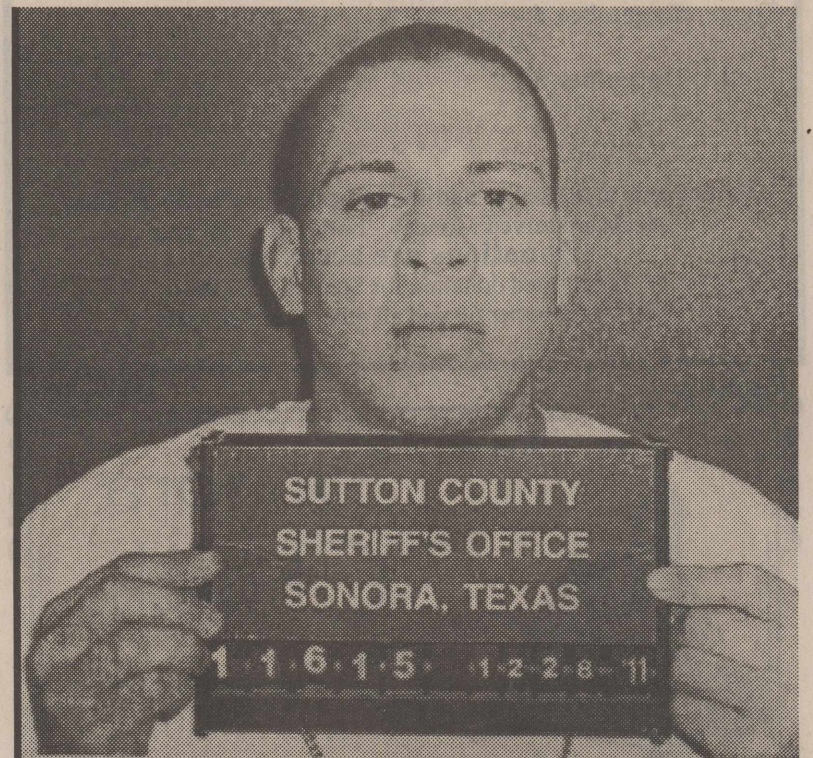
"July is the end of the first fiscal year and the first year contribution from the County ended up being 25% less than what was budgeted." Butler then went on to explain that in the second year of the transformation agreement the county will start to save even more money, "During the second year you will realize a 65% decrease in your contribution." Butler then presented the County Commissioners with a \$96,000 check by commenting, "You [the county]

gave us [the hospital district] \$327,000 for this first year. We didn't spend all of it so I am giving you the difference".

Butler also stated that the current EMS is able to provide more and faster services citing faster response time, full time staff, in house billing and a new program where the EMS will provide home service to patients.

"You might have noticed the new pickup and carport at the EMS building. All of it was paid for by a grant at no cost to the taxpayer. That pickup will be essential for our new home service program".

Published on January 5, 2012



Trevino Escapes from County Jail: The Search Continues

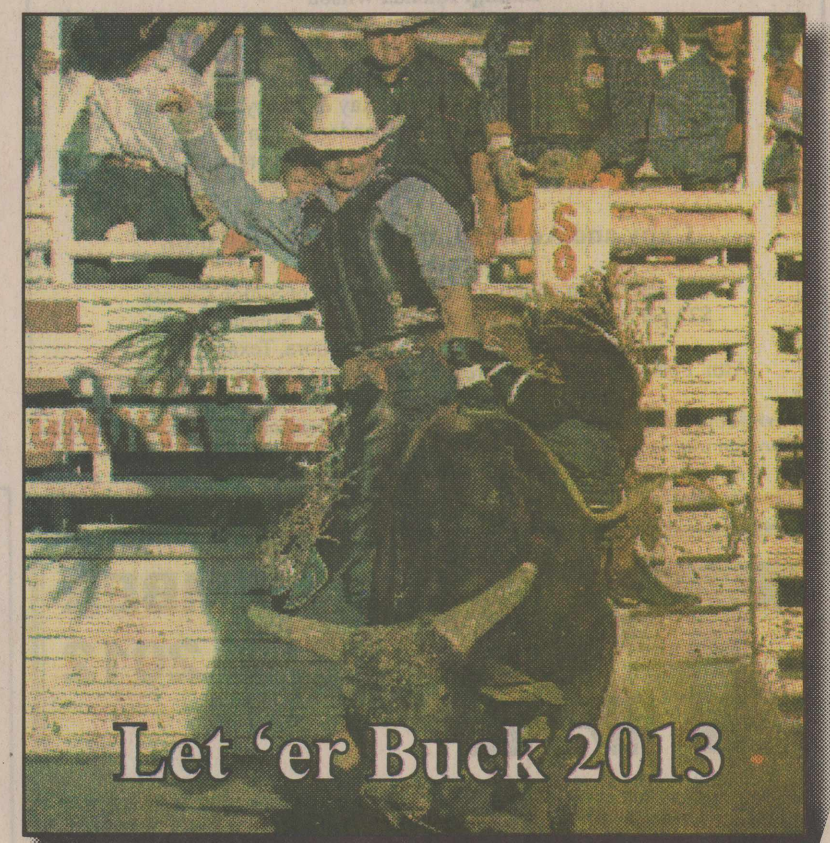
By Ben D. Taylor

A 20 year old man by the name of Jose Luis Trevino escaped from the Sutton County Jail at approximately 9:30 in the morning on Monday, January 2nd. Trevino is 5 foot 11 inches and 210 pounds, and was last seen wearing a white jail uniform. At the time of press he was still at large, but Sutton County Sheriff Joe Fincher commented that, "we believe he has left the county all together. He has known ties to people in Del Rio and Ft. Stockton, so we are concentrating our search in those areas he is most likely to look for refuge".

When asked specifically about the escape, Fincher stated that, "he went out through a door that was inadvertently left unlocked. I contacted the Texas Jail Commission immediately and reported the escape, and am in the process of submitting a report to them

as well. Rest assured that we are making corrections to ensure this does not happen again." Fincher was also quick to dispel any rumors on the specific on the escape, "Trevino did not assault anyone in the course of his escape, and he was not a trustee."

The search for Trevino began immediately after his escape, "I contacted all of the area agencies right away to inform them of the situation. I also spoke personally with Kimble County Sheriff Cantu who offered the support of his office." The search also included horse and dog teams from the Colorado City and Ft. Stockton Prisons, a DPS helicopter, Sutton County Sheriff's department, Sonora Police Department, Texas Ranger support, The Border Patrol and support from the U.S. Marshall's Service.



Let 'er Buck 2013

Senior Center Activities

Thurs. November 29 - Happy Birthday Richard Palmer

Fri. November 30 - Run errands

Mon. December 3 -
Tues. December 4 -
Wed. December 5 -

Senior Center Menu

Thurs. November 29 - Smothered steak, Mashed potato, Mix greens, Roll, Peach shortcake, milk

Fri. November 30 - Chicken Fajitas, Spanish rice, Pinto beans, Flour tortilla, Fruit cocktail, milk

Mon. December 3 -

Tues. December 4 -

Wed. December 5 -

Participants in the senior nutrition program must be 60 or older. - Meals are served Monday - Friday at 12:00 p.m.

Donations are accepted
(suggested donation for Seniors is \$2.00; \$5.00 for under 60 and all other meals-to-go).



Sonora Church Directory

Primera Iglesia Bautista
504 Santa Clara
387-2035

Church of Christ
304 N. Water
387-3190

The Church of the Good Shepherd Presbyterian
319 E. Mulberry
387-2616

First Baptist Church
11 E. Oak
387-2951

Lighthouse Community Church
1705 N. Crockett
387-9100

St. John's Episcopal Church
404 E. Poplar
387-2955

St. Ann's Catholic Church
229 W. Plum
387-2278

First United Methodist Church
201 N. Water
387-2466

Jehovah's Witness
310 St. Ann's St
387-5658/387-5518

Templo Jerusalem Asamblea De Dios
306 W. 4th St
387-5713

Faith Apostolic Church
120 N. Concho Ave.
206-0277

Hope Lutheran Church
417 E. 2nd St.
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The Devil's River News

Established 1890
228 E. Main Street, Sonora, Texas 76950
Phone: (325)387-2507 • Fax (325)387-5691
Published every Thursday
USPS (155-920)

Publishing Owners: Ben D. Taylor, Sam C. Taylor
Editor: Ben D. Taylor
Billing: Rhonda Wilson

Advertising/Classifieds: Allison Freeman
Internet Technician: Mike Taylor
Reporting/Photography/Typesetting: Staff
Guest Columnists: Kelly Thorp, Ray & Nancy Glasscock
Delyse Jaeger, Pascual Hernandez, Susan Hall
Email: General Information: editor@sonoratx.net
Advertising: sales@sonoratx.net

Copy and Ad Deadline: Monday 4:00 p.m.

Subscriptions
\$25 per year in county • \$32 per year out of Sutton County
\$22 per year Senior Citizens (in and out of Sutton County)
Second class postage paid at Sonora, Texas
Attn. Postmaster: Send address change to the Devil's River News,
228 East Main Street, Sonora, TX 76950

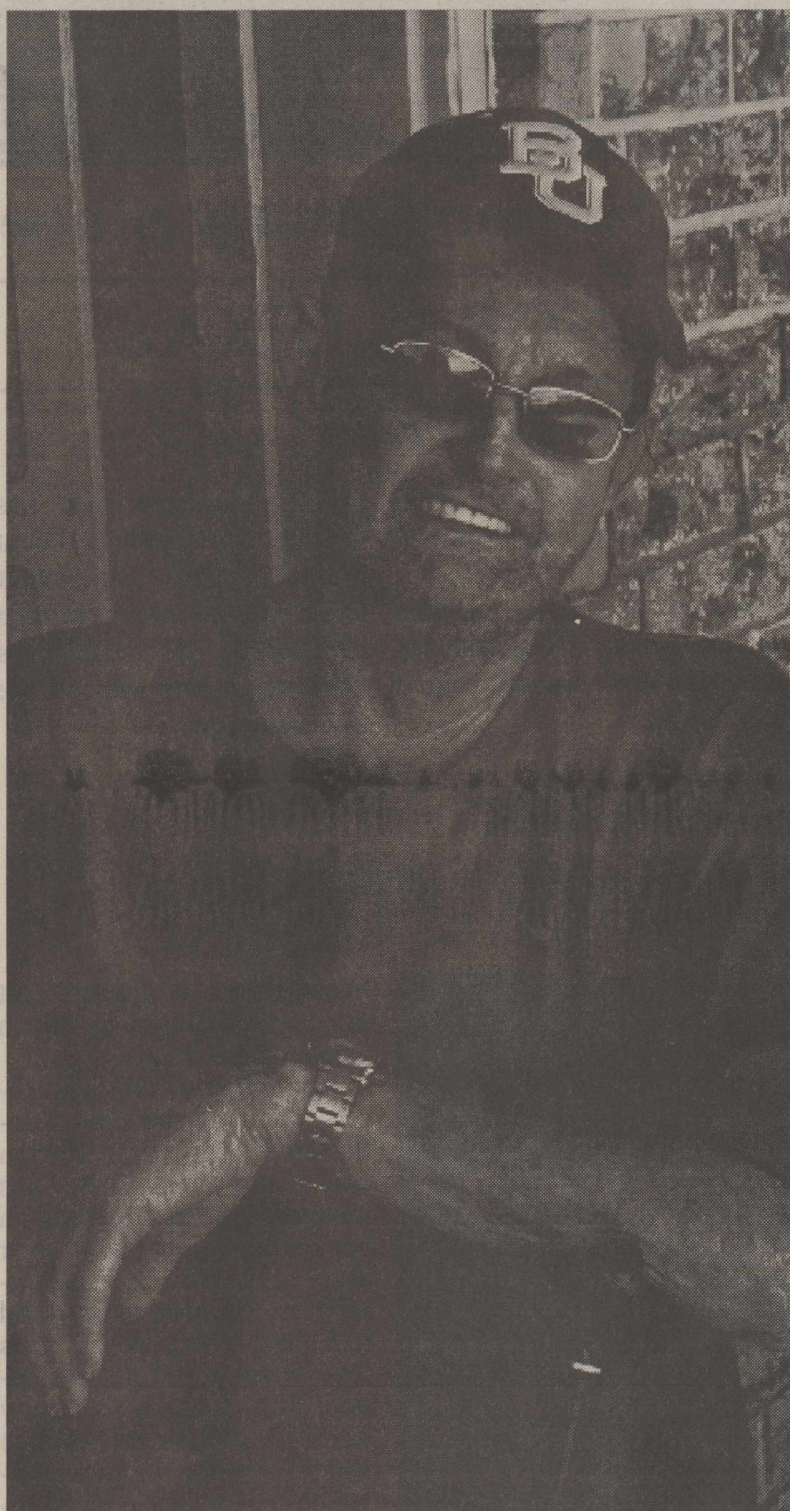
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Obituaries



Jack Alton Lawson was born October 8, 1958, in Odessa, Texas, to Don and Mary Lawson. He passed away at Midland Memorial Hospital on December 21, 2012.

Jack lived in Odessa until junior high when his family moved to Sonora, Texas. He graduated from Sonora High School in 1977. During these years, he met his high school sweetheart with whom he raised three children. Jack's three children and two grandchildren were his pride and joy. He never missed an opportunity to share stories and pictures of his "babies". He followed in his father's footsteps, working in the oilfield for many years before retiring in Odessa. Jack thoroughly enjoyed fishing with his dad and brother, watching sports on television, and spending time with his family. He shared a passion of working on trucks with his only son, Hunter. Jack was a very hard worker who always put others before himself.

Jack was preceded in death by his mother, Mary Culvahouse Lawson. He is survived by his dad, Don Lawson, of Odessa; his brother, Dan Lawson, and wife Susan, of Fulshear, Texas; his daughters, Heather Cearley and husband Cole, of Sonora, Texas, and Hillary Lawson, of Sonora, Texas; son Hunter Lawson, also of Sonora, Texas; grandchildren Lynden and Lane Cearley, of Sonora, Texas; his niece, Danali Lawson, of Waco, TX. His "chosen" brother and sister, Prissy Pollot, of Montgomery, Alabama; and Billy Bob Galbreth, and wife Kathy, of San Angelo, Texas. He also had a cherished relationship with his cousin, Karen Munsell. His aunt, Jeanette Bennett, and husband Danny, of San Angelo, Texas, always had a special place in his heart. Jack is also survived by many other aunts, uncles, and cousins.

Pallbearers were Jim Gulley, Houston Powers, Ronald "Scooter" Surber, Scott Brasher, Arnold "Buffy" Norman, and Joe Fincher. Honorary pallbearer is Jimmy Powers.

Jack's services were held at Sunset Memorial Gardens and Funeral Home in Odessa, Texas on December 27th at 2 P.M.

Pattie Edwards Merrill passed away on Sunday, December 30, 2012. She was born in Washington DC on March 21st, 1924 to John Rawlings Edwards and Camilla McMullan Edwards. She lost her precious mother to tuberculosis when she was only 5 months old. She then led a happy and carefree life in Hertford, NC being raised by her grandparents Pattie Valentine Edwards and W.F. Clifton Edwards (Mama and Papa) She graduated from Perquimans County High School in 1941 then entered East Carolina Teachers College.

While in college, on a school break, she went to a dance via a bus that went through town picking up the local girls. By the time the bus got to her house, it was full of all the girls plus the military men from bases in the area. Pat had to take a seat that was already occupied by two people. She spotted one by a cute navy boy and the rest was history! She married that man, Lieutenant Leo B. Merrill on January 6th, 1944. After a very short honeymoon, he went back in service and she finished college. After she graduated, they headed to California where he would be released from active military status and begin looking for a job. As they were driving through the panhandle of Texas in the late summer in extreme heat, she stated "you couldn't make me come back to this state if you gave it to me". Little did she know that they would be back there in less than six months and she would later say about her beloved Texas, "I wasn't born here but I got here as fast as I could!" Leo found his job at the Texas A&M Experiment Station in Sonora and Pat immediately fell in love with the country life: the beautiful hills and oaks, all the wonderful little animals and the people that would become life long friends. Pat began her teaching career at Rocksprings High School teaching Home Economics. After her first child Clift came along and started school, she took a 7th grade science class in Sonora. When her second child, Pattie, started school she found her true calling: teaching Kindergartens.

She started that phase of her career by going to L.W. Elementary in Sonora with a class of 20 children that spoke little or no English. She spoke no Spanish but with her mentor and savior Jewel Sykes by her side, they all learned from each other and by the end of the year the children were fluent in English. For five years, she taught kindergarten classes of all Spanish-only-speaking children and as a result, there are around a hundred 46-51 year-old former students of Mrs. Merrill's living in Texas and the U.S. who now speak English with an east North Carolinian accent.

When that school closed, she moved to Sonora Central Elementary where she finished her career with 33 years of teaching to her credit. Also, in 1977 she received her masters degree in elementary education from Texas A & M university. She was extremely proud to be both an ECTC pirate and a Fightin' Texas Aggie!

Her retirement years were spent traveling, with her favorite places to visit being Tasmania, part of a trip to Australia, and Nags Head NC, where she went every summer of her life until the last two years. She loved playing bridge with those lifelong friends, and her favorite part of retirement was to spend time with her kids and grand kids. She would drop everything if a game of go-fish was requested and would always fill an order of pot roast, twice baked potatoes, lime sherbet and of course oatmeal!

Both her kids and all five grand daughters got to see her and spend precious moments with her the day before she left her earthly body and they will always cherish those moments.

Pat was preceded in death by her mother Camilla Edwards, her grandmother Pattie Edwards, grandfather Clifton Edwards, special aunt and second mother Mildred "Mic" Whitley, father Jack Edwards, step-mother Mary Shepard "Emmy" Edwards and husband of 60 years Leo Merrill.

Pat is survived by her children, son Clifton Edwards Merrill, his wife Pat and much loved grand dogs Shadow



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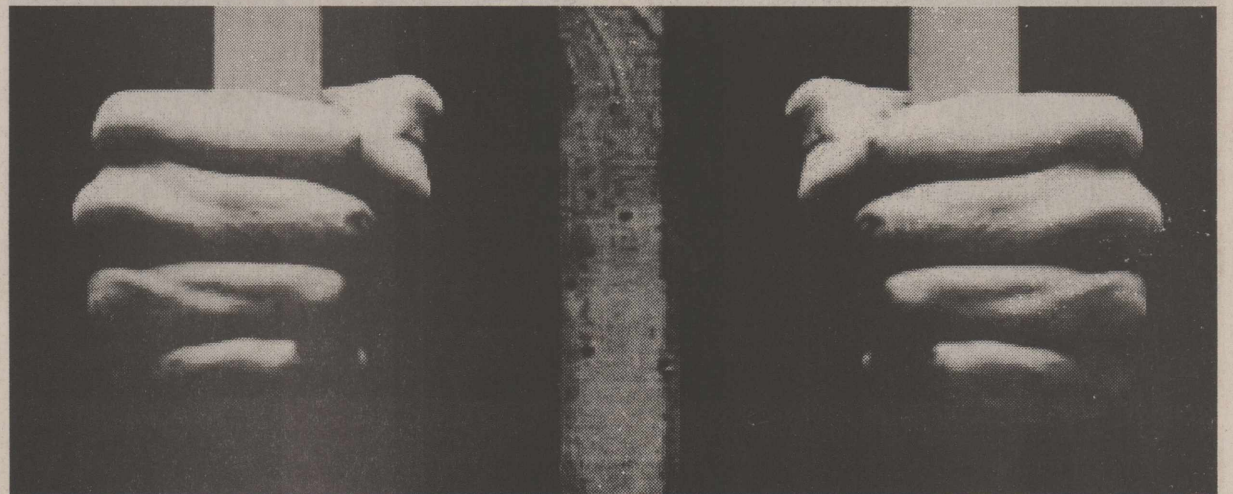
Sonora Lady Bronco CHAMPIONS at the 82nd Annual Mary Tatum Basketball Tournament

In the past two seasons the Lady Broncos have made it to the finals of six straight tournaments. Sonora has won the Harper Tourney twice and now are the (Reagan Co.) Mary Tatum Champions. The Lady Broncos are peaking at the right time. District starts January 4th in Alpine. The Lady Broncos went 4-0 in the tourney and now have a season record of 20-2. The first game pitted the Broncos against Coahoma with the Sonora team winning 67-37. Four Lady Broncos were in double digits scoring – Kylie Love (12), Gracie Dozier (12), Avery Nolen (13) and Jaye Sanchez (17). Jaye and Gracie paced the offense with 5 assists each and Kylie (7 rebounds), Abby Creek (5) Zella Powers (5) and Avery (7) controlled the boards. The Lady Broncos shot 48% from the field and 72% from the FT line. In the second game of the day, Sonora was matched with the very confident Mc-

Comey team winning 63-39. Gracie Dozier shot 7 for 9 on the way to 17 points. Avery Nolen turned in a other solid performance with 13 points, 4 assists and 4 steals. Jaye Sanchez recorded 10 assists and Kylie Love controlled the paint with 11 boards. Tyler Hampton, Zella Powers and Katie Hartman were spark plugs off the bench. The Lady Broncos shot 50% for the game. Day two Sonora found Stanton and Sonora had a dominating defensive performance with a 55-28 victory. Sonora forced 36 turnovers and limited Stanton to 23% shooting. On offense, the entire team was in the scoring column: Kylie (10 points & 11 boards), Zella Powers (5 points & 6 boards), Katie Hartman (1 point & 2 steals), Gracie Dozier (10 points & 7 assists), Avery Nolen (12 points & 3 steals), Jaye Sanchez (9 points & 3 steals), Tyler Hampton (2 points & 3 rebounds), JoJo Guitierrez (1

point & 2 steals), Naomi Dozier (2 points & 2 rebounds) and Abby Creek (4 points and 8 boards). In the finals against longtime rivals – BALLINGER - the Lady Broncos won 59-48. The Sonora team outscored the Ballinger team 24-13 in the all important 4th quarter to run away with the win. The pressure defense and 'run and fun' offense were keys to the victory. Kylie Love had 19 points and 5 blocks to earn MVP honors. Gracie Dozier (14 points and 7 assists), Avery Nolen (9 points, 5 assists and 5 steals) and Jaye Sanchez AKA Logan Smith (8 points, 5 assists and 10 REBOUNDS) were also named to the all-tournament team. Abby Creek (4 points, 8 rebounds and 3 steals) had another inspired performance and logged extra minutes with the very productive subs in the 3rd quarter to set up the fourth quarter run. It was another team victory for the Lady Broncos.

Caught



By Ben D. Taylor

Jose Luis Trevino was re-apprehended by U.S. Marshalls in Del Rio on Wednesday, January 4th around 3:00 p.m. Sutton County Sheriff Joe Fincher was on the scene during the re-capture and later commented that, "Joe Frank Martinez (Val Verde County Sheriff and the Rangers did an excellent job of putting the operation together. They covered all the bases and made sure nobody got hurt."

Trevino was free for about 48 hours before the Texas Rangers received a tip on his location. Texas Ranger Kenneth Wadsworth commented, "The vehicle Trevino was known to

be in was discovered by railroad workers next to the rails. At that point it was just a matter of time before we caught him."

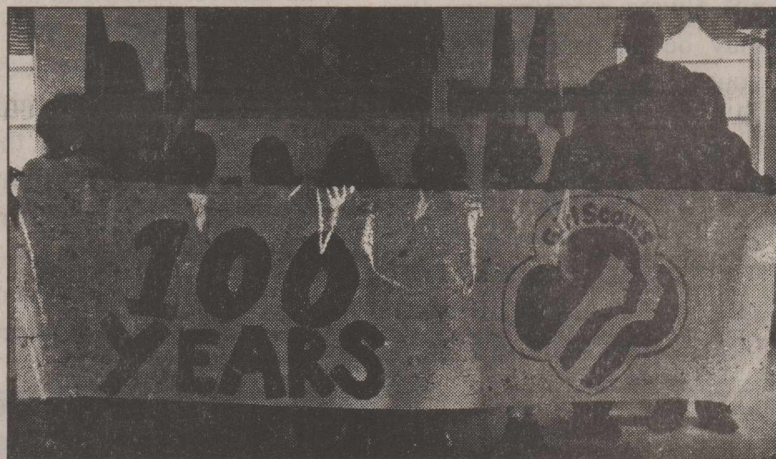
Trevino was apprehended in a trailer house, and with known gang ties his re-capture was approached with care. "We knew he was associated with a pretty rough gang, so safety was very important to us," commented Fincher, "again I cannot stress how good of a job everyone did in catching him".

Ranger Wadsworth commented that, "In the 20 plus years I have been involved with the Texas Rangers (part

of that time spent with a fugitive apprehension team in Odessa) I have never been on an operation that went as smooth as this one did. This operation may have ended in Del Rio but it began almost immediately after Trevino's escape. I was contacted within minutes of his escape, and at that point we immediately began a coordinated operation involving local, state, and federal agencies. Joe Fincher led the operation, and he did an outstanding job handling this entire multi-agency apprehension."

Published March 22, 2012

Girl Scouts Celebrate 100th Anniversary



2012 is the 100th anniversary of the Girl Scouts of America, and Sonora's own Central Texas Girl Scouts Troop #5263 enjoyed a few festivities as well. Sonora's Girls kicked off their Spring Break by sharing a few games and cupcakes on March 12, 2012, which is the exact Girl Scout anniversary, but the real treat came on the following Monday, when the girls were presented with a 100th Anniversary Banner created by Sonora High

School Art Classes! There to present the banner was Mrs. Karen Roach, Sonora High School's Art Teacher, as well as Colonel Pete Bradley, who was representing the Sonora Lions Club. Sonora Girl Scouts would like to thank Mrs. Roach and her students for all their hard work, the Sonora Lions Club for the wonderful support they continuously provide, and the community of Sonora for cheering them on! Go Girl Scouts!

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F.Y.I

The Old Ice House Ranch Museum needs an old oak ice box to display in the Museum! Can you help?

Art Classes the 1st or 2nd Monday of each month from 8:00AM to 5:00PM. \$36.00 per class, lunch included. FMI call Ken Rowland 432-238-3121, Lori Stricklan 325-226-2526 or Anita Spiller 325-387-5266.

Rent the Depot or Amphitheatre for your special party or event. Call 325-387-5084 Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. -5:00 p.m.

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Youth Learn The Spirit of Giving



Each Christmas, I write about community service because it is great to see folks come together to do something worthwhile for others. There are numerous examples, such as the "red kettle" drives, clothing drives, care packages for our service men and women, or benefit events for those in need. Another good example is the local Food Basket Ministry. Though it requires many

adults, it focuses on involving youth.

Lewis Allen, pastor at the local Presbyterian church, coordinates with other pastors and local youth leaders to collect food items. Church youth groups and youth organizations such as 4-H, Cub Scouts, as well as Jr. High and High School, can also initiate food collection drives. Lewis then meets at the Methodist

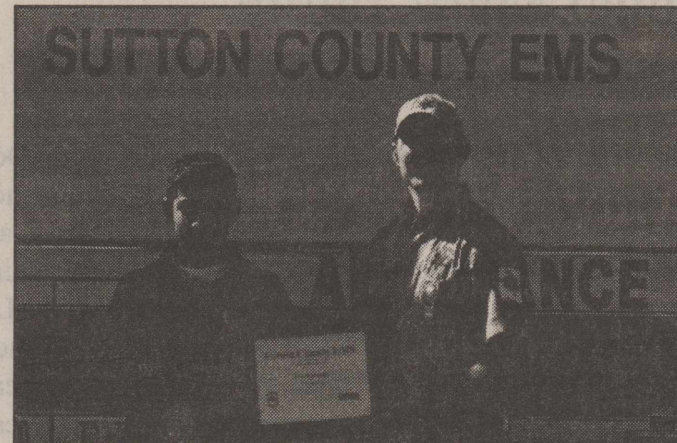
Church with members of the various youth groups to oversee the assembly of food boxes. These boxes are then distributed by other volunteers. It is encouraging to see these young men and women involved in this way. They will reach adulthood with a sense of community service.

The Christmas season is a time when a lot of people want to do good things for others. It is during Christmas that we are most generous. Volunteering is a great way to help others in their time of need. Just remember, however, that many organizations need volunteers year-round. And it is not always your money that may be needed, it could be your knowledge, skill, or ability.

We are both grateful and proud to have all of you who are involved in such worthwhile efforts. We also wish you a "Merry Christmas" from the Sutton County Extension Office.

Fast Acting Middle School Student Made Honorary EMT

Published on June 7 2012



Sonora First Graders Given Free Prevent Tooth Decay Kits By Local Masons

Sonora, TX—All first graders at Sonora Elementary recently received free prevent tooth decay kits through the Fantastic Teeth Fan Club. James Parry, a member of Dee Ora Masonic Lodge in Sonora, organized the effort. Lodge members assembled and delivered 71 kits to the school.

The Fantastic Teeth Fan Club, sponsored by Masonic Home and School of Texas, works to prevent suffering from toothaches, reduce missed school days due to dental problems, and cut costs for dental treatment.

Prevent tooth decay kits contain: a toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, healthy teeth sticker, two-minute timer (optimal brushing time), Tips for Healthy Teeth educational info for parents in both Spanish and English, and a summary of MHS services.

According to Oral Health In America: A Report of the Surgeon General, tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease—five times more common than asthma and seven times more

common than hay fever. Poor children are affected by this epidemic more frequently than other children, with nearly 12 times more restricted-activity days due to dental issues than children from higher-income families. With more than 1.5 million Texas children living in poverty, there is a great need for preventive dental care.

Dental problems also directly affect success for children, with more than 51 million school hours lost each year to dental-related illness. Teachers have judged both classroom performance and classroom behavior to be significantly poorer among children in need of dental care. Pain and suffering due to untreated dental disease can also lead to problems in eating and speaking.

Masonic Home and School of Texas (MHS) is a non-profit organization with a history of helping children across Texas for more than 100 years. Contact MHS by calling toll-free 1.877.203.9111; sending an email to info@mhstx.org; or by visiting the website, www.mhstx.org.

You have seen it in movies a hundred times. It's the classic "does anyone know the Heimlich maneuver?" part. Usually it's someone that is trained in this maneuver that ends up saving that person's life. In some movies it's by sheer luck and what looks to be a painful lack of knowledge that someone is saved from choking. Have you ever wondered what you would do if faced with such an encounter? Would you be able to stand up and perform this on someone who is truly choking on something? Or would you sit by and wait for someone else to do it. This wasn't the case during lunch time at Sonora Middle School. Thanks to the heroic act of taking action when another person is in trouble, Jose Hernandez helped out a fellow student who started choking. If it had not been for his fast actions in the lunch room; the situation might have turned into a more dramatic scene. The rewards for being a hero isn't what you would think. Sometimes it's just a "thank you" and you are on your way again. Other times you receive a gift from whoever you saved. For Jose Hernandez it was a bag of lifesavers from the school and he was also given an "honorary EMT" award from our local EMT's. Upon hearing about this story and what transpired from it; it made me think. How many of us actually know how to do the Heimlich maneuver? Personally I have taken a "First Aid" class but I have never had to use it in a real life application. It makes you wonder who you would portray in the movies. Would you be the heroic person who precisely delivers this maneuver or would you be the somewhat heroic person that thrashes the victim around until the object pops out. I believe it is a good idea for us to all look into knowing some First Aid. The truth is you never know when you will be the one that has to step up and save a life. The only question left to ask is... would you?

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All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, or an intention, to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18. This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free 1-800-669-9777. The toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

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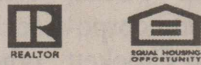
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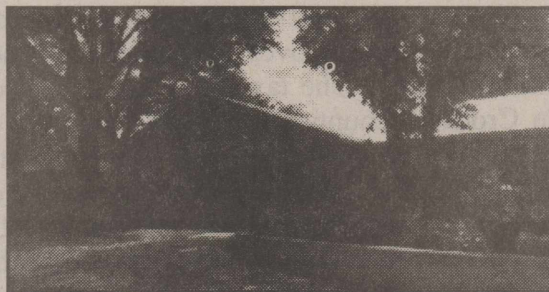
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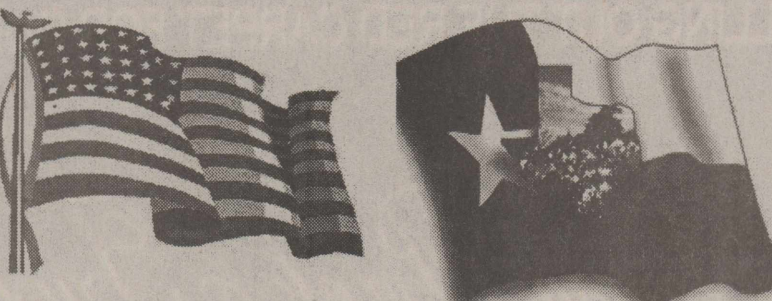
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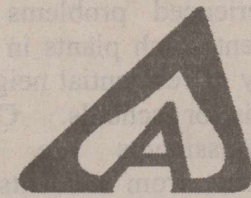
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A tale of no city: Continued from Front Page

It's important to note that even in the best financial years the General Fund is always managed on a thin margin, mainly due to the fact that it only receives money when property taxes are paid (usually all at once in the month of January). Imagine managing all of your personal bills and expenses if you only get paid once a year. You would be able to budget all of your fixed monthly expenses (house payment, utilities and cable) but there is no way you can plan for unexpected doctor bills, vehicle repair or even theft. This is why savings accounts are so important in our personal finances as well as businesses and government.

In any discussion with the county, it becomes important to fully understand exactly what a county is and through that definition what it can and can't do (which have a direct impact on the services citizens receive and the tax rate we pay). According to a House Reach Organization Focus Report (a document prepared by the Texas House of Representatives) a county is, "a legal subdivision of the state, a county serves as an administrative arm of the state in helping to carry out the state's business. A county does not have as much autonomy [ability to self-govern] as a city". In a nutshell, a county is just a smaller form of the state government and does not have as much power as a city. For example, as dictated through the Texas Constitution, a county can-

not pass any zoning laws or ordinances. That report later stated a specific problem associated with the lack of zoning powers for counties.

"Comal County is experiencing problems with rock quarries operating near residential neighborhoods. Blasts from the quarries rattle windows, shake doors, and disturb residents. Many counties have experienced problems with cement batch plants in proximity of residential neighborhoods or schools. County commissioners are under pressure from residents worried about the effect of industries and other developments, such as the proliferation of manufactured home parks in unincorporated areas, on their property values." This means that if the city disincorporates then that empty lot next to your house could be turned into an enterprise that could decrease your property value.

The county also has little choice as to what services it can provide. By law Sutton County has to provide: sheriff's office, tax assessor, justice of the peace, county district courts and clerks, county judge, auditor, treasurer, probation services, and county roads. All other services can be provided if money is available (Trax van, senior center, golf course, parks, swimming pool, museums, etc). The key to make sure the county keeps providing all of these services is to increase revenue to the county, which in terms of government, could mean higher taxes.

Right now the Sutton Coun-

ty Property Tax rate is .4295 per \$100 of property value. This rate looks different from what your overall tax bill is (the total is about \$1.71 per \$100 for the county) only because the overall tax bill includes taxes we pay to the Hospital, Underground Water Conservation District and School. The county has no authority over what those tax rates are. With a tax rate of .4295/\$100 the county is able to bring in \$3.4 million annually and the city (with a tax rate of .53994/\$100) takes in over \$600,000. This means that the county and city have a base operational budget of just over \$4 million. Ozona, for example, is an unincorporated city located in Crockett County. The people living in Ozona do not pay any city taxes, and the county tax rate is lower than Sonora City and County rates combined. Crockett County (which operates without a city government) is able to bring in over \$10 million dollars. The tax rates in Crockett County are lower not because they are unincorporated, but because they have more valuable natural resources than Sutton County (taxes on wind farms and oil field activity which Sonora does not have). It's important to note that Sutton County and the City of Sonora are able to provide more services to its residents on less than half Crockett County's revenue.

While taxes remain the largest source of revenue for our local government bodies, the City of Sonora is also able to

take advantage of a city sales tax. This sales tax is used to supplement funding for several different organizations in Sonora that serve county as well as city residents (Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Board and Ice House Ranch Museum). Due to the counties limited power without collect a sales tax, it's likely the funding sources for these organizations would dissipate.

However; in certain instances, a county can levy a sales tax. If it is approved by voters a "county assistance district" can be created to fund many different services. It's pretty complicated and can only be set at a predetermined rate - in other words, you could probably fund only one or two things because of the limitation on total sales tax. This is in the Local Government Code, chapter 387. You always have to remember that Texas has a cap on sales tax, so you can only add a little to the state tax (also remember that the county is a part of the state government which restricts the level a county sales tax rate can be set). The most common use of these taxes is for fire department districts and the second most common use is for EMS.

A portion of the funds collected by a city sales tax is also earmarked for the maintenance and repair of the city streets. The Texas Legislature established the street maintenance sales tax in 2001. The purpose of the legislation is to allow cities to adopt a sales tax rate of up to 1/4th of one percent to be fully dedicated

to the maintenance and repair of existing streets. What this means is that if a city votes to adopt the city maintenance sales tax (as Sonora has), then the city gets to keep a portion of the sales tax (instead of sending it to the Comptroller's office) to use on its roads. Currently the Sutton County and the City of Sonora have an agreement where the city pays the county (with sales tax money) to repair the streets in Sonora. Without the city in existence, that money would not be available and the

county would then be responsible for paying for all city street repairs (at an estimated cost of \$80,000 annually).

Just as with any idea concerning the future course of our community, the question as to whether we should disincorporate is not simple. This question should not be approached lightly or without perspective. If you have any questions regarding this subject I encourage you to visit with our local government leaders and do your own research.

Published on November 15, 2012



Sonora Native Recieves Honor for Service

The photo placed above this article serves as a memorable reminder of the spirit and honor of our fallen military brothers and sisters who fought in the Vietnam War. The photo shows the laying of the wreath at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. Sunday November 11, 2012. The soldiers were selected to lay the wreath on behalf of the 5th Battalion of the 7th Regiment of the 1st Calvary Division. They are pictured from left to right Juan Carlos Gonzales, retired Brigadier General Howard Prince II and Bob Child. Juan Gonzales and Brigadier General Prince are from Texas.

A formal dinner event held on the evening of Saturday, November 10 gave special recognition to Juan Carlos wherein he was awarded a silver Vietnam Veteran Commemorative Coin by Major General Maurice Edmonds (retired) commander of the troops in 1970 when the 1st Calvary went into Cambodia.

We are very proud to say that Juan Carlos Gonzales, Airborne, is a Texan minister of Sonora and resident of Austin Texas.

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