

County Record

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New route this week for heavy hauls

Trucks to go through Bridge City and Orangefield

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

This week the new Golden Triangle Polymers plant under construction will be hauling in giant pieces of equipment on a route down West Roundbunch Road, FM 408 into Orangefield, and then FM 105 to South Highway 87.

The dates and times are

Wednesday, December 11, at 1 p.m. Thursday, December 12 at 8 a.m., and Friday, December 13, at 8 a.m.

According to the Texas Department of Transportation, the equipment will leave by truck in Port Arthur at Highway 87 and Houston Street. The heavy trucks will travel to Bridge City on Highway

87 and cross on the Veterans Memorial Bridge. From there, the hauling trucks will turn north on West Roundbunch Road (FM 1442) and go to FM 408. The trucks will take FM 408 into Orangefield

and then turn east on FM 105. The trucks then will travel to Highway 87 and turn into gates at the new plant site.

The route will take the heavy haul trucks away from Bridge City's com-

mercial area along Texas Avenue and Highway 87 between Bridge City and Orange by the Orange County Airport.

However, the route will also go along the narrow and curvy FM 408. Any

other vehicles may not be able to travel on the road.

The \$8.5 billion petrochemical plant is being built on 2000 acres off Highway 87 South be-

New Routes Page 3A

Troy Johnson to retire as judge of County Court at Law

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

After 20 years on the bench of County Court at Law Number Two, Judge Troy Johnson announces that he is retiring.

Says Judge Johnson, "I am stepping aside with the satisfaction of having kept my campaign promises. We eliminated the large backlog of criminal cases that we inherited. The combined efforts of our court team, the attorneys, and the bonding companies have enabled us to clear more than 20,000 criminal cases."

Throughout his tenure in the courtroom, Judge

Johnson has handled misdemeanor criminal cases, juvenile cases, civil cases, as well as divorce and custody cases. Judge Johnson says the highlight of the court were adoptions and he was honored that the adoptive parents allowed him to share such wonderful moments with him.

Judge Johnson says the most prominent setback in his time on the bench has been the hurricanes. "I think I have survived more hurricanes than any Judge in the history of Orange County." But despite the hardships of six devastating hurricanes, his

Troy Johnson Page 3A



After 20 years on the bench of County Court at Law Number Two, Judge Troy Johnson announces that he is retiring.



Orange County District Attorney John Kimbrough shows off a photograph he took of a Sabine River otter. He hopes to spend more time on nature photography as he retires this month after serving 32 years, or eight terms, in the elected office. He came to Orange right out of law school in 1985.

RECORD PHOTO: Margaret Toal

Kimbrough: Longest-serving elected official retires

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

Forty years ago, a young University of Houston Law School graduate and new member of the Texas Bar moved to Orange for his first job as a lawyer. He felt he was lucky to get a job as an assistant district attorney at a time when the county had some of the highest pay in the state for that position in a small town.

His plan was to learn to prosecute misdemeanors and then felonies and do the work for maybe three years. Then, he was moving back to San Antonio to defend those accused of crimes.

But love, marriage, and a family got in the way.

That young lawyer, John Kimbrough, is now 65 years old and he's packing up to retire after holding the top prosecutor's job for 32 years, or eight terms. It's an Orange County history record for longest-serving elected official.

On the ballot, the job is listed as Orange County Attorney. The position includes overseeing the prosecution of top misdemeanors plus all felonies. The office's legal

staff also works with the juvenile system and some of the assistants work county civil lawsuits and advise commissioners court on legal matters.

Kimbrough stands a bit taller than six feet and has a straight-forward Texas drawl, though he spent part of his youth in England. He has the bearing of a former athlete and spent years as a high school football referee across Southeast Texas. When his knees gave out he became the color commentator with Gary Stelly on the old KOGT radio broadcasts of the high school games.

He's a Texas lawman as much as a Texas Ranger carrying a gun and badge. And Kimbrough's philosophy has always been to follow the state law that requires a prosecutor to seek justice.

"We're not here to convict people, we're trying to do the right thing," he said.

He said he's dropped a murder case when someone came forward with new information. He also requires all the prosecutors in his office to follow the law in giving defense attorneys all the evidence, statements, and lists of witnesses

in criminal cases. One of the changes he's seen is that now, his office keeps information files in computers. Defense attorneys get a password to the DA's files instead of getting a paper folder full of copied papers.

Kimbrough calculated that during his years as district attorney, he's overseen 82 grand juries. Some of those grand juries had four-month terms and others six-month terms. He's overseen the prosecution of almost 20,000 felony cases, "and probably three times as many misdemeanors."

He quipped that "based on those figures, I prosecuted basically ever man, woman, and child in Orange County with a crime."

Kimbrough is not from Orange County, but he married someone who is. He started his job as an assistant district attorney at the beginning of 1985. That summer, Kelly Green from Orange got an internship at the courthouse as she studied criminal justice in college. She worked under Deborah Montagne in the court adminis-

Kimbrough Page 3A

OCP offers 'Cookies and Carols' for holiday treat

PENNY LELEUX
For The Record

Orange County isn't really known for traditional caroling, but Orange Community Players, Inc. is striving to bring it back to spread holiday cheer and raise a few funds at the same time. They are offering "Cookies and Carols" Dec. 20-21 between the hours of 5-8 p.m. This is a "pay what you can" event.

New board member Crystal Kelley came up with the idea last week when she, Ashley Guillory

and Mic Coats attended the board meeting seeking to fill some vacant seats on the OCP board.

Members were kicking around the idea of doing a Christmas concert, but knew it was a little late in the season to organize it.

Kelley has had a singing telegram business with Guillory for several years, so the idea of Cookies and Carols was just a variation of that.

"They contract us to sing at their business or home, or for someone they love," said Kelley, "to spread a little Christmas

cheer."

OCP members will be joined by students from Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School.

Kelley is the president of the newly created thespian booster club for the Bear Stage Players. She contacted Ms. Teague, LC-M's choir teacher and Ms. Creech, the theater teacher, to obtain the students.

"Kids alone make it super fun," said Kelley.

All the carolers will be dressed in ugly Christmas sweaters. Kelley said it adds a silly, fun element and it is the easiest way to

get them coordinated on short notice. They will offer Christmas classics such as "Silent Night," "Jingle Bells" and "12 Days of Christmas."

Singers will carol at your place of business, home, or wherever in Orange County you send them, for a donation of as little as \$5 or more. You must reserve a spot by either filling out the google form at www.bit.ly/ocpcarols or call Coats at 979-450-3254. You can pay with cash, or by cash app.

"We're really excited to rep OCP and show them

what OCP does," said Coats. "We're really excited to be on the board and bring OCP back to the community."

Coats said she moved to the Orange community in 2020, so OCP has been in its rebuilding phase the entire time she's lived here. The theater was shut down by flooding in their previous location on Division Avenue in 2017 by T.S. Harvey. OCP has almost finished the phase one remodel of the old Brown Twin Cinema to get back up and running. They are expecting to

have a Grand Opening event in January.

The new counter for the concession stand has been paid for with a generous donation from Dr. Nina Leifeste, a long-time supporter of the theater. It will be installed soon. The painting of the hand-capped space should be completed by Dec. 27. The only thing that still needs funding to get the theater open are the handrails for the exterior steps. Rico Vasquez says the estimate for the handrails is around

OCP Page 2A

Townsend donations boost local nonprofits



Rodney Townsend presents a \$5,000 check to Melissa Isaacs of the Bridge City Orangefield Ministerial Alliance.



Rodney Townsend is joined by board members for the Meals on Wheels program during the presentation of his \$5,000 donation.

Staff Report- In the spirit of Christmas giving Rodney Townsend of Bridge City, an attorney and incoming Judge for Orange County Court at Law No. 2, made two financial contributions to support local organizations serving the public. The donations, totaling \$10,000, went to the Bridge City-Orangefield Ministerial Alliance and the Orange County Meals

on Wheels program. Both organization received checks for \$5,000 each.

According to Melissa Isaacs, director of the Ministerial Alliance, there are 409 children signed up for Christmas gifts that will benefit from Townsend's donation.

Townsend, who also serves as a board member for The Orange County Meals

on Wheels Program, also received a \$5,000 donation from him.

Kristen Ross, executive director of the program said, "We are very grateful to Rodney for his generous and impactful donation. This is just one of the many ways our incredible board members have gone above and beyond to ensure our meals on Wheels program continues to

thrive."

The Orange Meals on Wheels ensures seniors get both nutritious meals and human connection.

"We have a lot of wonderful organizations in Orange County that strive to help the less fortunate in our community," Townsend said. "Thses are two that I try to support."

Orange helping to get new buyer for closed paper mill

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

The Orange City Council Tuesday officially created a reinvestment zone for 556 acres of land that was a paper mill from 1967 until it closed last as International Paper last year.

The designation will allow an investing company to get State of Texas economic incentives to buy the property and develop it.

Scott Overton, chief appraiser at the Orange County Appraisal District said the deed to the property has not been filed to show the old plant has sold,

but he has heard the sale is in the works.

The plant was built by the Owens-Illinois company and later became Temple-Inland before being sold to International Paper.

Reports are that United States Gypsum interested buyer. Bloomberg Business shows Otsego Paper Incorporated is a subsidiary of USG. The paper company in Otsego, Michigan, makes "heavy gauge paper used in gypsum wallboard and Sheetrock wallboard."

The International Paper mill produced heavy paper used in cardboard containers. US Gypsum makes



types of wallboard.

Overton with the appraisal district said an industrial plant that is not in operation still pays property taxes, but the valuation goes down if it is not in production. That loss in valua-

tion means entities like the Little Cypress-Mauriceville school district and the city of Orange are losing tax income as long as the plant is closed. Nearly 500 local jobs were lost because that plant closed.

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Bridge City parade float winners...

The Bridge City ISD Service Center won the Mayor's Trophy in the Chamber of Commerce's annual lighted Christmas parade last Saturday. The Mayor's Trophy goes for the best showing of the theme, which was Christmas on the Bayou.

A decorated school bus pulled replicas of bayou creatures. Other awards went to Girl Scouts Troop 3639 for Best Overall and First Place Float. Second Place Float went to Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and Third Place Float to the BC ISD Service Center. Boy Scouts Troop 290 got Best Ambulatory. Decorated vehicle awards went to Car Wars with First Place, Father of the Year Eric Andrus in Second Place, and Sabine Federal Credit Union for Third Place.

Kimbrough retires

From Page 1

trator's office that works with judges and lawyers to schedule hearings and trials.

After meeting that summer and going out, they married three years later.

Kimrough resigned as an assistant district attorney and went into a private law practice with the late Ed Barton. Barton had worked for the old Gulf States Utilities as an electrician and became a union leader. That led him to go to law school when he was 40.

Kimrough said he admired Barton because he had been a working man. Barton could weld, fix a car or truck. When Barton represented a worker in an lawsuit, he could name the

tools and the machines. The corporate lawyers from big cities couldn't name the tools.

Back in the early 1990s, when Barton and Kimrough worked together, each would hear other people asking if Kimrough would run for district attorney.

Kimrough said he kept refusing, knowing that he was not from Orange County and the office had an incumbent who would seek re-election. "Ed loved politics. He had gotten interested in them during his union work," Kimrough said.

Barton told his young partner with the kind of feedback they were getting, he thought Kim-

brough could win. Kimrough said he figured that if he lost, he still had a job with Barton, so he filed to run against the incumbent.

Kimrough said Barton enjoyed working on the campaign and probably lost a sizable amount of income to help his partner win the election.

And Kimrough won in 1992, taking the oath of office on January 1, 1993.

Kelly Green Kimrough became a school teacher for the Little Cypress-Mauriceville school district and their two sons graduated from LCM High. Son Dr. Ryan Kimrough is a neurologist in Austin and son Grant Kimrough is a teacher-coach in New Braunfels.

Kimrough was born in San Antonio and traveled the world with his parents as his father was a colonel in the U.S. Air Force. He went to school in a different places like Hawaii and then back to San Antonio. He went to a new school every year for several years. "You're always the new kid, but you learn to deal with it," he said.

One time, his father was "on loan" to the Royal Air Force in England and Kimrough attended a British school, not one on the base, for two to three years. He remembers the problem of writing with and old-fashioned foun-

tain pen dipped in an ink well built into each desk. Blotting paper was also on each desk. Kimrough was always getting smudges, on his paper and hands.

His favorite hobby now is nature photography with a telephoto lens. He shows off a the tail of a whale going back into the sea he snapped during a trip to Alaska, or a cardinal drinking water as his beak reflects, or a Sabine River otter looking back after catching a fish to eat. Talbert Meadows, a local birding expert and former Shangri La volunteer is a mentor.

But he'll be saying goodbye to the Sabine River otters. He and Kelly are moving to a new house they are building on acreage outside of Blanco in the Texas Hill Country. Their house in Oak Creek Village flooded in Hurricane Harvey, plus they've ridden out other damaging local storms. "We're tired of hurricanes," he said.

Also, the new house is closer to their sons and to John's four sisters so they will be able to spend more time with family.

County employees and lawyers will have a retirement party for Kimrough Friday, December 13, from 1 to 3 p.m. in the 128th District Court on the second floor of the historic courthouse building.

Troy Johnson to retire

From Page 1

team kept the Court going. Judge Johnson is also proud of the way that his Court, as well as other Orange County courts, endured the pandemic and kept the wheels of justice moving, while other counties completely shut down.

Before being elected in 2005, Judge Johnson served as a prosecutor for 16.5 years. After working as an Assistant District Attorney for Smith County in Tyler, Texas, Judge Johnson came back to his hometown in 1993 to work for District Attorney John Kimrough and has not left the courthouse since. He says what he will miss the most is the people who work inside the court-

house, especially his court family.

As Judge Johnson looks ahead to retired life he expects to spend more time on the golf course, travel with his wife, Veronica, specifically to the Dallas and Orlando areas to visit his children and granddaughter, and become an official Paul McCartney "groupie," because seeing him eight times is just not enough. He is also in the process of completing two bucket list items: the first is visiting all of the Major League Ballparks (only five to go), and to visit every courthouse in Texas (201 to go, but now he's got the time).

New truck routes for heavy hauls

From Page 1

tween Orange and Bridge City. Modules of the plant are constructed overseas and shipped to Southeast Texas. The modules are then taken by heavy haul trucks to the plant site.

The company even built a barge unloading site along Cow Bayou on Highway 87 in Bridge City. The

modules are shipped and then sent by barge to that site. However, some of the modules are shipped to Port Arthur and then carried by truck to the construction area.

Golden Triangle Polymers, or GTP, is a joint project by Chevron Phillips and Qatar

Salvation Army holiday drive in progress

During this holiday season, The Salvation Army staff and volunteers are diligently working to raise much needed funds to support those most in need this Christmas, and beyond. This year, The Salvation Army seeks to raise \$100,000 to meet the growing demand for essential services in the Orange community and is falling behind its goal.

The holiday season can be especially difficult for many, and donations are crucial to ensuring that no

one is left behind during this time of year.

"The holiday season brings unique challenges for many in our community, but it also brings out the generosity of those who can help," said Captain Dante Salgado with The Salvation Army of Orange. "Every donation, no matter the size, is a step toward lifting someone out of hardship and it is important to remember that every dollar given stays local, helping your neighbors in need."



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From the Creaux's Nest

PHELAN BIG LOSS FOR ORANGE COUNTY

The **Texas House Speaker** is one of the most powerful legislative positions in the state. For a district like ours, it is a big loss to lose **Dade Phelan**. It really doesn't matter if a state leader is Republican or Democrat, he always is in a position to bring good things to his district. **Phelan**, 49, has been one of the most powerful elected officials in Texas. **Phelan** started to lose his grip on the **House** last year when **Attorney General Ken Paxton**, months after being impeached on corruption charges in the lower chamber, survived his trial in the **Senate**. The acquittal was a major rebuke of **Phelan**, who supported the impeachment effort. **Paxton** and his far-right allies vowed payback against the speaker and any Republican who voted for impeachment. **West Texas** oil and gas billionaires and out-of-state school choice advocates spent millions of dollars to back his challenger **David Covey**. **Phelan** eked out only a 366 win in the runoff. The close race hurt **Phelan's** support state wide and caused Orange County to take a big hit. We probably will never have a state leader in our district again.

TURNING BACK THE HANDS OF TIME 10 Years Ago-2014

The **Mustangs of West Orange-Stark** have played almost flawlessly over the last couple of games. **Coach Thompson** and his coaches came up with just the right game plan and the youngsters executed it. The **Mustangs meet Sinton** in the semi-finals Friday at Rosenberg. If the **Mustangs** play like they have in the last two games it's a good bet they will be playing for the state championship. Special thanks to **Mari Elen Jacobs** who has done a great job covering the **Mustangs**, both in writing and photos, throughout the season.**** A big **New Year's Eve** shindig will be held at the **V.F.W. in Orange**, featuring **G.G. Shinn, Jivin Gene and friends**. It's going to be one heck of a big party.**** We were sorry to hear about the death of **Jim Austin**, who was a former **Orange Olds/Cadillac dealer** for many years. He was a prince of a guy.****Dec. 11, finds the "First Lady" of **Starks Lucy Hanks** celebrating another one. ****On Dec. 14, CPA **Keri Michutka, Kandy Sartin, Danny Blacksher, Diane Bertrand and Hannah Carpenter** all celebrate. This would also have been our late friend **Doug Harrington's** birthday. Also **Betty and Corky Harmon's 58th wedding anniversary**. ******Carlos Vasek, TCU's biggest fan**, is not happy that TCU was dropped out of the final four. To put salt in the wound, they dropped TCU to sixth place behind Baylor. (Editor's note: I miss seeing **Carlos**, a great guy and banker. Hope he's doing ok.)

20 Years Ago-2004

LSC-O to graduate 109 on Dec. 17. **Troy Johnson**, assistant district attorney, a native of Orange and graduate of West Orange- Stark, will be the guest speaker at commencement ceremonies. (Editor's note: Today **Johnson is County Court at Law Judge** and will retire this month.)******The Bridge City Rotary Club**, formed in 1974, is preparing to celebrate its 30th anniversary. The club chartered with 25 members. **Gerald Pesson** was first president, **Roy Dunn** first recipient of the **Paul Harris award**. Charter members were **Dr. David Olson, Bill Nickum, Roy Dunn, Dr. Joe Majors, Jerry Pesson, Doug Harrington, H.D. Pate, Butch Lusignan, Jimmy Hanson, Dr. Carlyle Dotson, Joe Fields, Louis Linder, Barry Weisman, Neil Bond, Hershel Mulligan, Bill Weisman, Tim Leiby, Don Castille, Paul Eason, Rev. Ed Robinson, Bubba Hubbard, Bobby Smitherman, Don Cole, Wilson Roberts and Gene Guillette**. (Editor's note: I count 20 of those young members that have died since the club was chartered 50 years ago. The **Bridge City Rotary Club** is still very active and meets each Thursday at noon.)****BCISD is in search of a new superintendent. **Sam Lucia**, outgoing superintendent's last day is Friday, Dec. 17. Asst. **Joe Chenella** has been named as the interim superintendent. **Chenella** says he does not want to move up to the position full time but is willing to serve as interim until someone is hired. **Chenella** said **Bill Ortego** has been hired by the school board as search consultant to find a new superintendent. Feb. 21, 2005 is the date set to fill the position.******Kirk and Shirley Roccaforte** were in a motorcycle accident which sent **Shirley** to the hospital. She underwent surgery on her hand and suffered a broken leg. **Kirk** was banged up and bruised but we understand he is alright. (Editor's note: That was 20 years ago.)****GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN: **Jack Douglas "Jackie" Harmon**, 75, passed away Dec. 9, at Memorial Herman Hospital in Houston. He was born in Orange March 13, 1929, to a pioneer Orange family. **Ovie and Rosalie Harmon** were his parents. At age 16, **Jackie** started in the used car business and later owned **Harmon Chrysler dealership**. He and his brothers, **Corky and Don**, purchased the **Chevrolet dealership** in 1969. He served as president for 20 years. He was preceded in death by son **Rocky Lynn Harmon**. Survivors are his wife of 57 years **Jerry**

Nell, siblings **Carlton, Don and Tom**, sisters **Janie Holton and Cynthia Fisher**, children **Sherry, Tim and Michael Clay Harmon**.******Mark Dunn** writes feature story on Orangefield Oil pioneer **Paul Cormier** and the boom-town era celebrated in **Cormier's** museum collection. The museum is scheduled to open in January. An oilfield jail house, turn of the century saloon and oilfield boarding house are just a start of what will be on display. **Cormier**, 85, has collected historic items of the 20th century oilfield establishments that will fill twin 60X180 buildings. (Editor's note: The museum has been donated to the **Orangefield School District** since Mr. **Paul's** passing Oct. 30, 2009.)

45 Years Ago-1979

Keeping the Cajun heritage alive and sharing it with newcomers to the area, **W.T. "Boss Cajun" Oliver** embarks on second **Gros Boucherri**. The **Boucherri** was a gathering of **Cajun families in Louisiana** to butcher and share their hogs. It's a traditional winter event because, before the days of refrigeration, pork would spoil quickly. **Cajuns never wasted anything** edible. From pork they got cracklins and shortening. Besides cooking, the shortening was used to preserve pork meat in a jar by pouring it over the meat. As long as the air didn't hit it, the meat would congeal and not spoil. Among the guests were new incoming **Orange Chamber president Harmon Beauchamp and wife Mary, Lawrence and Ethel Foux, Bob Boudreaux, G.C. Fells, Ann Oliver** was chief hostess. Other helpers and eaters were **Ann Lieby, Bill and Martha Hughes, Roy and Phyllis Dunn and Carolyn and Frank Riddick**. Out-of-towners were **Jack Pevin and Bill Minert** of Dallas, **Bob Anderson**, of Ohio and **Van Grady** from Mississippi. Two hundred and fifty guests attended **Oliver's hog killing and feast** which was a big success. (Editor's note: Only **Roy** remains of those named but I bet **Mayor David Rutledge and "Bear" Ann's** daughter remembers.)**** Dedication of a historical marker and plaque for **Claiborne West Park** was held last Saturday at the soon-to-be-open park on Cow Bayou off of IH-10. ****A few of the students on the Bridge City principle's honor roll in the 12th grade: **Billy Bryant, Louis Garriga, Darrell Gurney, Barbara Hryhorchuk, Shelly Pate and Paul Zoch**; 10th grade, **Georgia Fleming, Brenda Berry and Fred Zoch**; 9th grade, **Frank Angelle, Cheryl Pesson and Tammie Waddell**. ******Tony Dorsett, of the Dallas Cowboys**, became only the second NFL running back to rush for over 1,000 yards in each of his first three seasons. The other was **John Brockington, of Green Bay**. **Dorsett** has lost only one fumble in over 200 carries.****This week, **Carl Thibodeaux** and his crew will be moving the **West Orange Pharmacy** to a nice, new building next to the office of **Dr. Jones**.

AROUND ORANGE COUNTY

Someone called the paper looking for **Coach Thompson's** book, "WOS Football - A Way of Life." Coach's wife **Francis** told us they are available for sale at **Trendz in Orange and The Cottage in Mauriceville**. It would make a great Christmas gift for the avid athlete supporter in your life. The rain stopped just in time Saturday for the **Bridge City Christmas Parade**. "It was perfect," said **Mandy Lyda of the Bridge City Chamber of Commerce**. "I think the gloomy atmosphere was just right for the theme." This year's **Christmas on the Bayou** theme brought out about 40 entries, including airboats and boats of all sizes. She said the Bridge City football team's float almost took out the phone lines with their huge **Lochness Monster** themed float. She doesn't know how many toys were collected, but they had several boxes at the chamber that was collected from the reverse **Santa** held earlier. The **Ministerial Alliance** handled the collections the night of the parade.******The Orange Community Players** are scheduling **Caroling and Cookies** next week 5-8 p.m. Dec. 20-21. You can surprise somebody by scheduling the carolers to arrive with Christmas cheer. This "Pay what you can" service is to make the public aware that **OCF is BACK** and open for business. They hope to have a grand opening event scheduled sometime in January. The link to schedule your caroling session is www.bit.ly/ocpcarols. Only available to Orange County locations.******The Salvation Army's Red Kettle collection** is falling behind in this year's goal of \$100,000. Drop a donation in the bucket if you are able or volunteer to ring the bell if you aren't. **All the money stays in Orange County**. Help them bring Christmas cheer to those that wouldn't have any without it. They also clothe and feed people in need throughout the year.

A FEW HAPPENINGS

Rain, wind, and cold hampered a few holiday events last weekend, but a bit of bad weather didn't hurt the festive holiday spirit. Orange canceled the **Gum Drop Shop in Stark Park** because of the forecast rain on Saturday. But the **Stark House and Stark Museum of Art** continued their family events and the **Kiwanis Christmas parade** moved through downtown. **Santa and Buddy the Elf** met with kids as planned after the parade, but instead of being outdoors in the park, they moved inside to the museum.***Over in **Bridge City, the Friday night tree lighting** and reverse **Santa** drew a good crowd, even with the cold and promise of drizzling rain.****Orange City Councilor **Brad Childs and wife Terri** hosted a big crowd Saturday night at their annual Christmas party at their estate and party barn. The crowd included **Jody Chesson, Della Gallien, Gary and Allisha Bonneaux, Lucy and DJ Parker, Amy Prouse, Jennifer McConnell, Shari Rule, Mistie Layne, Chris Hicks, Dale Ezell Foreman, Rita Monson, and Michelle LaRose**.******Amy Prouse and Jody Chesson** were busy again at the **Heritage House Museum for Santa Paws** and the lighted open house. Both are on the museum's board of directors. Other directors greeting people at the event included **Allison Clary** of the famous shipbuilding family, **Leslie Williams, Kimberley Manning, and James Scales**. **Charlotte Alford** is the **Heritage House director** overseeing everything.******Emily McKee Mellon**, president of the **Orange Service League**, greeted guests at the charity group's **68th Annual Toy Coffee** to gather new toys and cash donations for the local **Salvation Army**. **Emily** also serves on the local Army's citizen

board. **Captains Dante and Tiffany Salgado**, head of the **Orange County Salvation Army**, got the **Texas Army Band** to play at the festive gathering. The band played on the porch of the historic home of **Robin and Bruce Hunt** as guests arrived. The house, built in 1906, was once the home of the **Mazzola family** and lots of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren came to look at the new look for the old home. **Betty Harmon** made an outing to the coffee. Chairs for the event were **Cheryl Sharpton-Stalnaker, Tricia Stroud, and Rita Savage Ballard**. The Service League also presented **Rita Ballard's** new charity **Be Blessed** with \$10,500 to help the effort to help others.******Kelli Patin** has been touring Australia and New Zealand.******The Stark High '67 Chicks** gathered for a Christmas party. The grads included **Patsy Kemp, Tanya Goldbeck, Becky Davis, Pauline Hargrove, Janice Allen, Deidra Coody, Barbara Bridges, and Sue Ellen Hammonds**.****We were saddened to learn Tuesday at the death of the great poet **Nikki Giovanni**. She visited Orange more than 30 years ago for a local Black history banquet.******Rene Hanks Jr.**, known as the 'Mayor of Starks,' got a big surprise birthday party for his 90th birthday party. Nearly 150 people gathered at St. Maurice Catholic Church in Mauriceville as his daughter **Patti Hanks and her family** pulled off the big event without giving him a hint. They brought in some great area Cajun musicians including **Roland Boudreaux, Jivin' Gene Bourgeois, Mike Powell, Aubrey Powell, and Dwight Hanks**. The birthday boy himself picked up an accordion to play classics like **Jolee, Back Door, and Toot Toot** as his grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren danced. Others with recent birthdays include **Chloe Clark**, Orange City Secretary **Patricia Anderson, Beverly Blalock, Steve Maddo, Vivian Flore, Morghan Simone Mitchell, Holly Dickson, Mica Craft, Colton Claybar, Cliff Kennedy, Father Joe Daleo, Melanie Huckabay Claybar, Dewetta Brack, Ronnie Mason, Judy McNamara, Phyllis Casey, Tammra Frederick, and Evita Kemmer**.****Former New York Yankee **Andre Robertson and his bride, Lanier**, celebrated their **40th wedding anniversary**.****Dixie and Gay Richardson** have made it **61 years**.****Jason and Amber Toal** marked their sixth anniversary.

BREAUX BIRTHDAYS

A few folks celebrating birthdays in the next few days. Dec. 11: **Jo Lynn Mott, Kent Sarver, Kristine Cortez, Jim Sands, Cody Caples, Leslie Lyons, Cody Caples, Tara Fountain, Nathan Vogt, Rob Clark**.****Dec. 12: **Lucy Hanks, Shelby Hebert, George Schon, Zackery Anderson, Arielle Foster, Joel Fruge, Scott Derouen, Bonnie Albright, Daniel Bates**.****Dec. 13: **Melissa Poydence, Melinda Swares, Kristy Kidwell, Jenny Duncan**.****Dec. 14: **Keri Michutka, Ronald Escamilla, Tim Fix, Danny Blacksher, Danny Prosperie, Dorothy Jenkins, Hannah Carpenter**.****Dec. 15: **Donnie Stanton, Maac Hughes, Amanda Webb Jeff Harrington, Kenneth Pittman Melanie Richter, Alex Harner, Belinda Broom, Brent Burris, Craig Reynolds, Dale Armand**.****Dec. 16: **Elizabeth Uzzle, Kitty Martin, Michelle Gephart, Carol Allen, Natalie Nimitz**.****Dec. 17: **Former Orange Mayor Brown Claybar, Beatrice Cortez, Jeremie Delano, Nathan Applebach, Martha Taylor**.

CAJUN STORY OF THE WEEK

Asa Comeaux's boy **Arnold** was marrying **Oris Boudreaux's** daughter **Evalyn**. On da day of da wedding **Asa** took his boy **Arnold** aside and tole him, "Wen you get back from you honeymoon, you got to lay down some rules. Let you wife know dat da man is da boss him, and he can do wat he wants to, and for her not to forget dat, you understand wat you **Papa** is telling you?"

Arnold, him, he answer, "Yes sir, I'll do dat, me."

Wen him and his wife got home from dere honeymoon at **Holly Beach**, **Arnold** say to his wife, "Look here, I got to lay down some rules rat now, me. I'll be home wen I want, at wat time I want, and I don't expect any hassle from you. Da man is da boss, him. Wen I get home I expect a good meal to be on da table, unless I tell you I won't be home for supper. I'll go hunting, fishing, boozing and card playing wen I want wit my good buddies and you better not give me a hard time bout it. Dose

are my rules. You have any comments, hanh?"

His new bride **Evalyn** look him rat in da eyes and say, "No, **dat's fine wit me Arnold**, just understand dat dere will be sex here at seven o'clock every night, whether you here or not."

C'EST TOUT

SWIFT PASSES BILLIONAIRE STATUS IN MUSIC INDUSTRY

Taylor Swift's "The Eras Tour" earned \$2,077,618,725 in ticket sales. **"The Tortured Poets Department"** singer-songwriter first took the stage 21 months ago in Glendale, Arizona, on March 17, 2023. **Swift** took her final bow in Vancouver on Dec. 8. The over \$2 billion total is double the amount of any other gross ticket sales of a concert tour. A total of 10,168,008 fans attended. **"The Eras Tour:" Taylor Swift** reportedly gave over \$197 million in bonuses to her touring staff. During her final show, **Swift** told the crowd: "We have toured the entire world. It has been the most exciting, powerful, electrifying, intense, most challenging thing I've ever done in my entire life." **Swift received 26.6 billion global streams** throughout 2024, according to **Spotify**.****Well, I've come to the end of another column. I give thanks to the Big Man for allowing me to still be able to do this and communicate with you after all these many years. I thank you for the time you spend with me each week. The sad part is so many of the good folks I wrote about through the years are now gone. But I'm proud of all the local history I was blessed to record, and still able to rerun some over 50 years later.****Read us cover to cover and please, whenever possible, shop our family of advertisers who make it all possible. We're locally owned and operated and strive to make our community better. Take care and God bless.

Deaths & Memorials

Patrick Nicholas Lawrence Sr. October 31, 1946 – November 18, 2024

It is with profound sadness that we honor the life of Patrick Nicholas Lawrence Sr., a devoted father, decorated Army veteran, retired medical doctor, and a man of unwavering faith whose compassion, wisdom, and kindness left an indelible mark on countless lives.

Patrick was born on October 31, 1946, to Dewey Dee "Buck" Lawrence Jr. and Mabel Wingate Lawrence as the third of 15 children in an extraordinary family. He was baptized and made his Confirmation at St. Mary Catholic Church. He attended St. Mary Catholic School, where his academic excellence culminated in his graduation as Valedictorian of the Class of 1964.

Patrick's college education was interrupted when he enlisted into the military. After being accepted into Officer Candidate School, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and deployed to Vietnam from December 1968 to September 1969. During his service, Patrick faced unimaginable challenges, including a life-altering gunshot wound to the chest and arm that resulted in the loss of function in his right hand. Demonstrating remarkable resilience, he adapted by relearning essential skills with his left hand.

Patrick's leadership and determination earned him two promotions during his deployment, and he retired from the Army at the rank of Captain. In recognition of his courage, he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for valor, the Purple Heart for his extraordinary sacrifice, along with the Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, and National Defense Service Medal, honoring his unwavering dedication to his country.

After his military service, Patrick pursued his dream of healing others. He earned his doctorate from the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio in 1977, graduating with honors. Over a 50-year career as a medical doctor, Patrick's expertise and compassionate care brought comfort and hope to countless patients.

Patrick's accomplishments extended far beyond his professional life. He was a licensed pilot and a man of profound faith. His book *Dying to Live* written in 1989 encourages readers to face their mortality, embrace divine love, and live authentically in a deeper relationship with God. He never missed an opportunity to share his love of God and God's love with others. His words of encouragement, heartfelt prayers, and enduring hope inspired all who knew him.

Those closest to Patrick often described him as "the smartest person" they've ever known, a testament to his sharp intellect.



Patrick Nicholas Lawrence Sr.

Despite the many hardships he endured, he was equally remembered for his humor, earning the title of "the funniest person at any gathering" with his quick wit and infectious laughter.

Patrick is survived by his beloved children:

- Dr. Michael C. Lawrence, Ph.D., and wife, Carrie, of Frisco, Texas
- Dianna Lawrence Gregg and husband, Tyler, of San Diego, California
- Nicolas Lawrence of San Diego, California

- Jesse Lawrence, Adam Lawrence, and Eva Lawrence of Tumacacori, Arizona.

He is also survived by Grace Barbara Lawrence, the mother of Michael, Dianna, and Nicolas, as well as six cherished grandchildren: Madison, Ashton, Jake, Kyan Lawrence; and Zayden and Skyler Gregg.

Patrick leaves behind 11 of his 14 siblings:

- Dr. Michael L. Lawrence, Ph.D., and wife, Susan, of Aledo, Texas
- Maureen Lawrence Shupp and husband, Mike, of Orange, Texas
- Roger Lawrence and wife, Sherree, of Westcliffe, Colorado
- Eileen Lawrence Romano of Orange, Texas
- Christal Lawrence Finck and husband, Phil, of Truro, Iowa
- Darlene Lawrence Brister and husband, Will Jaques, of West Des Moines, Iowa
- Marian Lawrence Kinchen and husband, Stanley, of Ponchatoula, Louisiana
- Theresa Lawrence of Porter, Texas
- Kevin Lawrence and wife, Claudia, of Pflugerville, Texas
- Maribeth Lawrence Ray and husband, Mitts, of Round Rock, Texas
- C.B. Lawrence and wife, Leanna, of Magnolia, Texas

Patrick was preceded in death by his parents and three brothers: Dr. Darrell Lawrence, Timothy Lawrence, and Stephen Lawrence.

Patrick's legacy of faith, courage, and love will live on in the hearts of all who knew him. He was a true servant of God, a healer, and a steadfast source of light in our lives. He will be profoundly missed.

There will be a Memorial Mass for Patrick on Saturday, December 14, 2024, at St. Mary Catholic Church in Orange, Texas. Officiating will be Father Anthony Palose. The family will speak from 9:40 am until the Mass begins at 10:00 am.

Patrick will be laid to rest with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia alongside his fellow soldiers. May he rest in eternal peace.

Nelda Joyce (Phelps) Ainsworth, 83, Bridge City

Funeral services for Nelda Joyce (Phelps) Ainsworth, 83, of Bridge City will be held Saturday, December 14, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. Services will be held at Liberty Baptist Church in Bridge City with Brother Terry Wright and Brother Trey Ainsworth officiating. Interment service will follow at 2:00 p.m. in the Griggs Cemetery of Newton County.

Nelda was born November 18, 1941 in Stringtown, Texas to Jack Phelps and Mellie (Griggs) Phelps, and died Sunday, December 8, 2024 in Lufkin at Hospice in the Pines Inpatient. She married her high school sweetheart, Henry Ainsworth, on June 16, 1962.

After graduating from Newton High School in 1960, Nelda attended Tyler Junior College where she danced as an Apache Belle, before attending Lamar University in Beaumont to obtain her teaching degree. She resided in Bridge City for most of her life where she served as a beloved teacher at Hatton Elementary for 35 years in the same creatively decorated and themed 3rd grade classroom. It was not at all unusual to walk into her classroom and find a covered wagon and antique school desks, a rocket ship, or even a huge dinosaur. Nelda understood the importance of multi-sensory learning and making learning fun.

If you knew Nelda, you know her favorite season was Christmas, a time to deck the halls and spend as much time as possible with family and friends. She welcomed people into her home where you could see her vast collection of antiques, Santas, and thoughtfully adorned Christmas trees in every room. When she and Henry hosted people in their home, the fellowship almost always found its way to their antique ice cream bar and Coke machine.

She also loved to travel with Henry, and



Nelda Joyce (Phelps) Ainsworth

together, they visited all 50 states, often bringing their children or their parents. In addition to their United States travels, they also traveled to many European countries with her sister and brother-in-law, Jaxine and Kenneth Bishop.

She is survived by her son, Trey and wife Leslie Ainsworth of Lufkin; daughter, Charin Price of Bridge City; grandchildren, Jadon and wife Kayla Price of Vidor, Laurel

Ainsworth of Lufkin, and Mason Price of Bridge City; great-grandchildren, Bryson Powell, Casen Powell, Ryan Price, and Graysin Price of Vidor; sister, Jaxine Bishop of Red Oak; sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law, Judy and John Mouton of Liberty Hill, Linda and Hershel Lansford of Montgomery, Sue and Jeffrey Jones of Navasota; along with numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, other relatives, and friends.

Nelda was preceded in death by her parents, Jack and Mellie (Griggs) Phelps and her parents-in-law, Henry Harrison and Jewell Rae (Johnson) Ainsworth; husband, Henry Harrison Ainsworth II. Also, preceded in death by her sister and brothers-in-law, Ree and Johnny Peavy, and Kenneth Bishop; brother-in-law, Harry Ainsworth; sister-in-law, Bootsie Boyett; niece, Gina Patterson; and nephew, Jerad Jones.

The family will welcome friends and loved ones on Wednesday evening from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at Carroway Funeral Home in Lufkin and also from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Friday evening at Liberty Baptist Church.

Memories and condolences may be added at www.carrowayfuneralhome.com, and live webcasting of the services may be viewed on the Liberty Baptist Church YouTube page.

Durham/Ellis pecans this Holdiday Season

Wesley United Methodist Church will be selling this years crop of Durham/Ellis pecans and walnuts, delivery early November. Pecan halves or pieces \$13.00 per pound, walnuts \$8.50 per pound. Call Jan 409/734-8036 to place an order or for additional information.

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Performers - Starting at 11:30 A.M.

Orangefield Junior High Gym



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Longhorns face Clemson in First Round

GRACE TAFOLLA
Texas Longhorns News

AUSTIN, Texas – No. 3 and fifth-seed Texas Football will be hosting No. 16 and 12th-seeded Clemson in the 2024 College Football Playoff first round at 3 p.m. CT on Saturday, Dec. 21, inside Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium. The game will broadcast on TNT/Max with Dave Pasch (play-by-play), Dusty Dvoracek (analyst) and Taylor McGregor (reporter) on the call.

Texas will be making its second College Football Playoff appearance in as many years after earning the three seed in the 2023 College Football Playoff, making a semifinal appearance against the No. 2 Washington Huskies at the Allstate Sugar Bowl. The Longhorns have 11-consecutive top-10 CFP rankings, dating back to Oct. 31, 2023. Texas debuted at No. 5 in the first CFP rankings on Nov. 5 this season – which dou-

bled as the program's highest-ever spot in the first week of CFP rankings. Texas has been in the top-25 in each of the last 15 rankings and has 27 overall appearances in the rankings with its highest being No. 2. UT checked in at No. 4 in both the Associated Press and Coaches Polls that were updated on Dec. 8.

Dec. 21 will mark the first-ever matchup between Texas and Clemson. The first round winner will advance to the CFP Quarterfinal at the 57th Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl and face the Big 12 Champion and No. 4 seed Arizona State at Noon C.T. on Jan. 1, 2025, in Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta. The game will air on an ABC/ESPN platform.

Head coach Steve Sarkisian has now led his programs to eight postseason appearances in his 11 seasons as a head coach. He led Washington to four-straight bowl games following the 2010-13 sea-



Head coach Steve Sarkisian has now led his programs to eight postseason appearances in his 11 seasons as a head coach. He led Washington to four-straight bowl games following the 2010-13 seasons and guided USC to the Holiday Bowl in 2014. His Washington team played in the 2013 Fight Hunger Bowl, a game he did not coach in after taking over the Trojans' program.

sons and guided USC to the Holiday Bowl in 2014. His Washington team played in the 2013 Fight Hunger Bowl, a game he did not coach in after taking over the Trojans' program. Sarkisian was the head coach for the Hus-

kies' Alamo Bowl appearance against Baylor in 2011.

College Football Playoff First Round Game Ticket Information:

Texas Football season

rial Stadium. Season ticket holders should log in to their account to purchase. The deadline for Texas Football season ticket holders to request tickets is Monday, Dec. 9 at 4 p.m. Central. No general public tickets will be available for purchase. Fans interested in purchasing tickets should visit SeatGeek, the official fan-to-fan ticket marketplace of Texas Athletics.

Longhorn Foundation donors at the Tradition level or higher (\$1,500+) may also request tickets for other CFP game that the Longhorns may qualify for this postseason. The deadline to request tickets for the College Football Playoff Quarterfinal at the Chick-fil-A Peach Bowl is Monday, Dec. 9 at 4 p.m. Central. The deadline to request tickets for the College Football Semifinal at the Goodyear Cotton Bowl and College Football National Championship Game is Monday, Dec. 16 at 4 p.m. Central.

Longhorns fans looking forward to first-round College Football Playoff



There is good news for Longhorn fans following the announcement of the final 12 teams making it to the College Football Playoff on Sunday. The Longhorns will host a first-round game at Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium in the coming weeks.

Jenna King
Texas Longhorns News

AUSTIN, Texas - The University of Texas Longhorns came off of a loss against the Georgia Bulldogs on Saturday. However, in two weeks, the Horns are playing South Carolina's Clemson Tigers.

Clemson beat SMU by three points in the ACC Championship Game, and Texas lost by three points in overtime to Georgia in the SEC Championship game. The good news is that their seasons are not over yet.

"I think it's still incredibly exciting, especially with the new playoff format where we would have not been included, let's say, last year, but now we have a chance, and I think the path to victory," said UT student Ishan Isingh.

In the first-round College Football Playoff game, Texas and Clemson will square off in Austin, giving the Horns the home-field advantage over the Tigers.

"We don't get the first round bye," said UT student Brady Parker. "But we get a home game. So it's a little more fun, may go to that and then preceding we play Arizona State. So I like our road to the playoffs, and that's...I'm very excited for the future."

Texas has only lost one match-up at home so far, but Clemson has not lost an away game all season.

"I hope we can kind of turn it around and just the excitement that we had for them at the last game we didn't show on the field," said UT student Nasha Lampe. "I think they need to bring it this game."

The winner will face off against Arizona State in the Peach Bowl. However, UT fans are already looking further into the future and discussing another chance to see Georgia on the gridiron.

"So, looking forward to what we do in the playoffs, and I think if we meet Georgia again in the national championship, I don't think it is going to go the same way as the last two times," said UT student Roman Villa.

Maybe the third time is a charm for the Longhorns, but the playoffs are just starting, so anything could happen.

The Horns will host the Tigers at DKR Stadium in Austin. The kickoff is set for 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 21.

UT Texas fans react to SEC Championship loss, playoff spot

Many watched the highly anticipated SEC Championship game between the Texas Longhorns and Georgia Bulldogs on Saturday night.

"Tough loss, lots of screaming and lots of things hurting," said UT student Webb Mooring.

The game came down to the wire with the Longhorns losing in overtime 22-19 to the Georgia Bulldogs in Atlanta.

"When obviously Georgia scored the touchdown in overtime, it was silent," said UT student Antz Bahad.

With the loss, Texas will not have a first-round bye

in the playoffs and dropped to the number 5 spot.

"Definitely disappointed. We definitely could have put up a better fight. But you know what we've got in the college football playoffs, and I have hope for that," said Bhojani.

There is good news for

Longhorn fans following the announcement of the final 12 teams making it to the College Football Playoff on Sunday. The Longhorns will host a first-round game at Darrell K Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium in the coming weeks.



The Horns will host the Tigers at DKR Stadium in Austin. The kickoff is set for 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 21.

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OUTDOORS

Texas duck hunters crank season up again

OUTDOORS
Capt. Chuck Uzzle
For The Record



Chuck Uzzle

After a nearly 2 week layoff the Texas duck season is set to resume once again on December 14th and it happens to fall just perfect after the coldest weather of the year. The weather man appears to have not cooperated as forecasts call for warmer temps for several days leading up to Saturday's opener.

Reports from farther up the flyway suggest the biggest influx of birds has yet to happen as they migrate from the north. Many outfitters I have spoken with say the same thing and that is they believe the biggest migration is about two weeks behind schedule. If that is truly the case then the coastal hunters should be in for a great second half of the year.

Due to many factors such as lack of available water in many areas to the north and the coldest weather of the year on the horizon it would make perfect sense to see a major increase of ducks and geese to this part of the state. The only problem with that theory is that ducks and geese don't read so for the time being all local hunters can do is chase the birds that are here.

As far as chasing birds are concerned I have really noticed an increase in them number of hunters, especially younger hunters. This is a great thing to see as they will no doubt be the future of the sport for many years to come but that also comes with a set of problems. The increased numbers of hunters has upped the level of competition for prime areas to hunt which in turn has pushed many hunters to the wrong side of the law.

Local public hunting areas that are only open on specific days are routinely hunted on non-hunting days by those either ignorant of the law or just brazen enough to do it and not care. I spoke to a game warden at the launch on Sunday and it was amazing to hear how many calls they get and citations they write on hunters who continue to hunt off limit areas.

Another big problem that is much more common to younger or beginning hunters is bird identification. Now to say that veteran hunters never mistakenly identify a bird would be completely false because it does happen but not nearly as often as the beginner. Along with mis-identification there is also the problem with not knowing the exact limit on different species of birds. You wouldn't believe how many hunters show up at a check station believing they are perfectly legal only to find out they have some how broken the law.

In a case like that it's plain to see the hunter had no knowledge of breaking the law and had no intent or else they would not have brought the illegal birds to the check station. The hunters who knowingly break the law and try to get away with it are a completely different story and usually are dealt with in a much harsher fashion. Young or beginning hunters can really help themselves out by reading and studying birds both in books and in the field. The ability to identify ducks in flight or at hand is something all waterfowl hunters should strive to perfect.

Hopefully the second split will open up this weekend and the numbers of birds in the area will equal the anticipation from the local hunters. Looking at all the factors like weather, tides, and moon phases it sure seems like the odds for success have increased but only time will tell if it actually happens. Good luck and be safe.

'The Lakes' Fishing

• Toledo Bend Fishing Report

FAIR. Water normal stain; 68 degrees; 4.43 feet below pool. Fishing patterns are holding steady with very little change. Expect the bass to be good shallow with chatterbaits, small spinnerbaits and swimbaits. Target fish in 1-5 feet of water in flooded stumps or shallow grass. The creek bite will take a few days to turn on after the water clears. Best baits are going to be lipless crankbaits, square bills crankbaits and Texas rigs in 6-10 feet. The deep bite will improve this week after the strong winds pass. Cast spoons, dropshots and tail spinners. No reports on crappie. Report by Stephen Johnston, Johnston Fishing.

• Sam Rayburn Fishing Reports

FAIR. Water slightly stained; 62 degrees; 2.70 feet below pool. Bass are improving in shallow water where fish are chasing the bait into pockets. Target whatever brush and grass you can find and flip into it with your favorite lure. Crappie are slowly moving up the river. Catfish are good in 15-26 feet of water on cut bait and minnows. Report by Captain Lynn Atkinson, Reel Um N Guide Service.

Gulf Coast Fishing Reports- This Week

Compiled by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

• Sabine Lake

GOOD. 68 degrees. Focus fishing efforts in areas protected from the wind. The Neches River points, drops, bayous and buoys continue to produce catches of redfish, speckled trout, drum and sheepshead with live shrimp under a popping cork or fishing off the bottom with live shrimp on a Carolina rig. Many limits of drum and redfish can be had especially with the moving tide.

Look for midlake bird action then slow roll silver or gold spoons on the bottom for bigger sized trout, or make long drifts with ½- ¾ ounce jigs in 2-6 feet of water. North Levy on Pleasure Island is good for speckled trout and redfish with live shrimp under a popping cork. Some birds are working the North Levy wall. Bull redfish are staying near the jetties.

Report by Captain Randy Foreman, Captain Randy's Guide Service Sabine Lake.

• Bolivar

GOOD. 72 degrees. Water temperature is dropping finally in the lower 70s, and should continue to drop with the forecasted weather changes. Water levels swapping back-and-forth this week with the north winds pushing the tide out. Anglers are still catching plenty of redfish everywhere. The big croakers are still being caught along with a few more sand trout, black drum, redfish, speckled trout, and crabs caught along the jetty with a few small stingrays and sharks. The surf is producing lots of redfish, black drum, the occasional speckled trout and crabs along the whole peninsula with more activity towards Gilchrist, High Island mainly. Report by Captain Shane Rilal, North Jetty Bait Camp.

• Trinity Bay

SLOW. 68 degrees. Decent numbers of redfish in the marsh using live shrimp and soft plastics. East shoreline spotty for trout, but waders are still finding some solid fish depending upon tide and wind. Upper ship channel bays fair for speckled trout, but good numbers of black drum, along with the occasional sheepshead and redfish being caught on live shrimp. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing. Normal tides are bringing in a lot of trout primarily on the north ends in warmer water with movement and also some decent sized ones are showing up under birds next to the shoreline. Redfish are being caught regularly but the slot redfish can be difficult to find for some. Bull redfish are all over but seem the spot reefs are on flats with rocks being caught on weedless paddle tails and live shrimp under a short popping cork. Flounder are showing up at a rapid pace being caught on paddle tails on rock flats, but remember they are catch and release only until December 14. The best paddle tail we have been successful with is the WACKy Shad XL in the peppered pumpkin color. Always wear your kill switch and pay attention to weather. Looks like a good front with west wind will show up mid week. Should make for a great dump and make a lot of fishing fantastic moving forward. Report



Chance Hobbs took advantage of a late afternoon summer bite.

by Captain Zackary Scott, Zack Attack Fishing.

• East Galveston Bay

GOOD. 60 degrees. Deep water bayous, drains, and back lakes hold fair numbers of speckled trout and redfish. Best bite on soft plastics and live shrimp. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing. Slot sized speckled trout, black drum, and redfish are being caught on live shrimp, croakers, and finger mullet. We are still getting a few reports of good fishing by Frenchtown Road, Siever's Cut, and near the boat ramp by rollover. Report by Captain Shane Rilal, North Jetty Bait Camp. Surface water temperature 54 degrees. The water clarity is average now for East Galveston Bay. This past week we had fronts

push through once again that dropped the water temperatures, as well as water levels in the bay system. On our morning trips we have fished falling tides, and the trout bite has continued to get better, catching good numbers and some oversize fish as well. The ticket the past few days has been fishing right on the bottom over deep shell with 1/4 ounce jig heads with Salt & Pepper WACKy shad XL tails by Wac Attack, securing the most bites. The redfish bite has been on fire around grass lines and in the shallow water areas back in the marsh. We are still using Imitation shrimp lures and tails under popping corks, with a 1 foot leader to secure the most bites. As in previous weeks, if you don't see active bait in the area you are targeting, move on rather quickly.

This time of year brings some of the best fishing conditions for bigger fish, with fewer fishers on the water, so get out and make it happen with your family and friends. Report by Captain Jeff Brandon, Get the Net Guide Service, LLC.

• Galveston Bay

SLOW. 58 degrees. Wind has been a problem during the morning hours, with anglers finding decent trout and a few reds with black drum in protected areas like Moses Lake and Clear Lake, Shorelines producing decent action on trout when wind subsides. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing.

• West Galveston Bay

GOOD. 66 degrees. Anglers fishing areas west of the causeway bridge, along the rocks with live shrimp, picking up fair numbers of redfish. Scattered catches of trout over deep shell in west Galveston bay, fishing soft plastics in dirty streaks of water. Shell reefs adjacent to deep water, anglers are finding speckled trout, reds, and black drum on live shrimp under popping corks. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing.

• Freeport

GOOD. 62 degrees. Fishing has been good in between fronts. Redfish and trout have been good working under the birds with plastic or popping cork with gulp. In Bastrop Bay, Christmas Bay, Chocolate Bay, Salt Lake and Oyster Lake.

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Yes, the number of food recalls has been rising

Bill Chappell and Allison Aubrey
NPR News

It's been a year of high-profile food recalls. A deadly listeria outbreak led to a massive recall of Boar's Head deli meat. Contaminated onions on McDonald's Quarter Pounders and organic carrots were linked to E. coli outbreaks. And in late November, federal authorities launched an investigation into cucumbers contaminated with salmonella.

"I think that this most recent spate of outbreaks and recalls has made the average American consumer more anxious about food safety," says Darin Detwiler, a longtime food safety advocate and professor at Northeastern University.

Even before the Boar's Head recall, a Gallup poll in July found Americans' confidence in the government to ensure a safe U.S. food supply had sunk to a record low.

"While 57% express at least a fair amount of confidence in the government to keep food safe," the organization said, "28% of Americans do not have much confidence and 14% have 'none at all.'"

Here's a guide to the situation, and tips on keeping your food safe.

Are there more recalls than before?

Food recalls fell sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic. But the numbers have been rising again: The Food and Drug Administration, which reports food and cosmetics recalls together, says 1,908 such products were recalled in the fiscal year that ended in September. That's the highest since 2019, when 2,046 food and cosmetic products were recalled.

Not every recall signals an outbreak — some are due to undeclared allergens like nuts or eggs, or a machine part, like a piece of plastic, getting into food at a processing facility. An "outbreak" means two or more people have been sickened by the same illness.

"Typically, on average, fresh produce accounts for roughly half of all the number of outbreaks that we have in the U.S.," says Amanda Deering, associate professor of food science at Purdue University.

And now more than ever, it seems consumers want to know where their food comes from.

"Ten years ago it was a different thing," Deering says. "People weren't so wanting to have that information. Right now, they go looking for it."

Do recalls mean our food safety system is working?

The U.S. has two main food safety regulators: the Department of Agriculture, which is responsible for meat, poultry and eggs; and the FDA, which essentially handles everything else. Each agency follows its own inspection regimen and protocols. Other agencies, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Environmental Protection Agency, are also involved in food safety.

Asked why there seem to be more recalls this year, Deering says U.S. food surveillance has got-



In 2024, Americans saw an increase in recalls of food and cosmetic products, with three main pathogens — salmonella, listeria and E. coli — posing the greatest overall risk of severe illness.



A deadly listeria outbreak led to a massive recall of Boar's Head deli meat. Contaminated onions on McDonald's Quarter Pounders and organic carrots were linked to E. coli outbreaks.

ten more granular — and communication about problems is more effective.

As recently as 10 years ago, Deering says, declaring a food-related outbreak with only six cases "would have been almost unheard of."

But in recent years, scientists at the CDC and labs across the country have gotten better at detecting and tracing the source of foodborne illness outbreaks. Using the Pulse Net data-sharing system, and a newer technology known as whole genome sequencing, scientists can sequence the DNA from bacteria to help investigators see the scope of an outbreak and find its source.

"Whole genome sequencing has really changed the game," explains Martin Bucknavage, a food scientist at Penn State University. Investigators are able to get a detailed genetic fingerprint of the bacteria causing an outbreak.

Investigators use whole genome sequencing to match organisms (such as salmonella and E.coli) isolated from sick people to find related cases. They also ask those affected what they've eaten, with the aim of identifying a common food. Then, they try to trace the bacteria in the sick people back to the suspected food.

In the recent E. coli outbreak linked to McDonald's onions, Bucknavage says investigators did not find the exact E. coli strain in the onions. But based on the strength of investigative findings, the onions were identified as the probable source.

How can consumers make sure their food is safe?

"Don't take any chances," says Linda Harris a food scientist at the University of California, Davis. If a product is recalled, "throw it away," she says.

Harris says there are day-to-day food handling habits that can help limit the risk of foodborne illness. With meat and cooked foods, heat can kill bacteria such as salmonella, E. coli and listeria.

Fresh, raw vegetables and fruit are a different issue, says Purdue University's Deering.

Rinsing under running water can help remove microorganisms from the surface of fresh produce. Foods with a hard, smooth surface, such as cucumbers, are easier to rinse off.

"You can apply some pressure with your hands as you're rinsing, which will increase the amount of microorganisms you can wash away," Harris says. There's no need to use soap or other wash solutions.

It's also helpful to dry with a clean towel to "remove the last bits of water and any microorganisms that are in those water droplets," she says.

Some people rinse produce with a vinegar or lemon solution. But Harris advises against soaking your produce in a bowl. If there is bacteria on one piece or part of the produce, soaking it may contaminate the water and everything else in the bowl.

Bacteria such as salmo-

nella don't typically multiply on the surface of a fruit or vegetable with a hard peel, such as a cucumber. But once they're sliced, bacteria have a chance to multiply.

"If you cut something that's fresh, the knife edge can push the contamination from the surface to the flesh," says food scientist Don Schaffner of Rutgers University. That's why it's important to keep produce cold to reduce the likelihood of contamination.

His No. 1 tip for consumers? "Once you cut it open, it must be refrigerated," he says.

Citing the cucumber recall, Schaffner says people may wonder about peeling off the wax coating. Research shows peeling can remove much of the contamination, but some can still be transferred to the cucumber flesh, so it's not a guarantee. "You can't eliminate [the risk], but you can reduce it," Schaffner says.

As for listeria, the CDC says that while infections are rare, people who are in at-risk groups such as the immunocompromised or are pregnant should avoid foods like unpasteurized soft cheeses such as queso fresco and brie, or pre-made deli salads.

In general, experts also recommend steps such as washing your hands and making sure foods that need to be refrigerated don't sit out too long.

What kind of pathogens trigger recalls?

The CDC says 31 pathogens — bacteria, viruses

and parasites — have been commonly linked to foodborne hospitalizations and deaths in the U.S. Young kids, older adults and people with compromised immune systems are at particular risk.

Three bacteria cause the most hospitalizations and deaths each year:

• Salmonella

Salmonella bacteria live in the intestines of people and animals. It's also "the biggest cause of hospitalization and death in our food system," Sarah Sorscher, director of regulatory affairs at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, told NPR's 1A program in September.

Every year, salmonella causes "about 1.35 million illnesses, 26,500 hospitalizations, and 420 deaths" in the U.S., according to a CDC estimate.

Common symptoms include diarrhea, fever and stomach cramps. They often start hours or days after ingestion but can also be delayed for weeks after the initial infection. While people usually feel better after four to seven days, some strains can cause severe illness and infect the nervous system.

"In rare cases, infection may spread from the intestines to the bloodstream, or to other parts of the body," the CDC says. "These patients should be treated promptly with antibiotics."

FOOD RECALLS Page 4B



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AI 'granny' beats scammers at their own game

Reported By
Alana Wise-NPR News

British mobile phone company O2 has unveiled a new creation, Daisy, a chit-chat and kitty-cat loving artificial intelligence "granny" who talks to scammers to keep them away from real people.

"Hello, scammers. I'm your worst nightmare," Daisy says by way of introduction to would-be ne'er-do-wells.

In the video introduction, featuring former Love Island contestant and scam victim Amy Hart, scammers are heard feeling much of the same frustra-

tions they put their victims through as Daisy breezily yammers on about her kitten, Fluffy, and her inability to follow the scammers' instructions.

"I think your profession is bothering people, right?" one defeated scammer tells Daisy after being given the runaround.

"It's nearly been an hour! For the love of [bleep]," another yells in frustration.

But for Daisy, time couldn't be less of a concern.

"While they're busy talking to me, they can't be scamming you. And let's face it, dear, I've got all the time in the world," she says.



A screenshot of the AI-generated "Daisy" — a new program launched by British phone company O2 to combat phone scams.

O2, the company behind the scam-baiting granny, said the AI technology can keep scammers on the phone for 40 minutes at a time. Daisy was trained with the help of YouTuber and software engineer Jim Browning, who has made an online career exposing scammers to his community of 4.4 million subscribers.

In order to bait scammers into time-wasting calls, the company utilized the practice of "number seeding," which put the AI granny's number on lists used by scammers to find their victims. The granny gimmick's goal is twofold: to

keep scammers away from real people and to raise awareness about the dangers of risky phone hoaxes.

"We're committed to playing our part in stopping the scammers, investing in everything from firewall technology to block out scam texts to AI-powered spam call detection to keep our customers safe," Murray Mackenzie, the company's director of fraud, said in a statement.

"But crucially, Daisy is also a reminder that no matter how persuasive someone on the other end of the phone may be, they aren't always who you think they are."

Food recalls rising

From Page 1B

• Listeria monocytogenes

"We do see listeria with produce at times, but listeria is naturally found in the soil, so that's not a huge stretch," Deering says. Listeria can be found in items like deli meat because it can grow under refrigeration temperatures, she says. "Listeria isn't great at it, but it can grow."

Just one or two listeria cells in a package of lunchmeat — with its often months-long shelf life — can grow to levels of illness under refrigeration, she notes.

The main symptoms are diarrhea and vomiting, which can be mild compared to other pathogens listed here. But some people can also develop an invasive illness beyond the intestine with a fever and flu-like symptoms — and, for a pregnant person, there can be heightened risk to the baby.

People infected with listeria might not be aware of it for weeks, a delay that

makes it harder to identify and clamp down on an outbreak.

• E. coli

Escherichia coli bacteria are germs that live in the intestines and feces. Not all of them are dangerous: The CDC says they "help us digest food, produce vitamins, and protect us from harmful germs."

But six types of E. coli cause diarrhea. And one type known as STEC — Shiga toxin-producing E. coli — can make people very sick. Unlike other types of E. coli, STEC is more likely to hit people in high-income countries; it particularly affects children younger than 5 and adults over 65. The CDC says STEC "can trigger a serious health condition called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). HUS can lead to kidney failure, permanent health problems, and even death."

Other pathogens routinely tracked by U.S. agencies include the cyclospora par-

asite and norovirus; and bacteria such as Campylobacter, Vibrio, Yersinia and Shigella.

How has food regulation changed?

Important shifts have often come in response to tragic outbreaks. A deadly E. coli outbreak linked to Jack in the Box hamburgers in 1993 changed the way meat was regulated, for instance. Soon afterward, the Food Safety and Inspection Service declared dangerous E. coli to be an adulterant in ground beef and set up a testing program for it, according to the USDA.

"If it's an adulterant, it means that if the product has that bacteria, it can't be sold to consumers," Sorscher said in September. "It has to be diverted."

Also, regulators have historically lacked authority. Until 2011, for instance, the FDA didn't have the power to issue mandatory recalls. That changed with the

Food Safety Modernization Act, which addressed concerns such as imported foods not meeting U.S. standards.

When outbreaks do occur, advanced technology helps experts determine

what went wrong. But Detwiler, Sorscher and others say the U.S. needs more systemic changes to prevent outbreaks in the first place.

"The fact that we're identifying more outbreaks doesn't mean the system is

"working," Detwiler says, noting the human toll of outbreaks. "True progress will come when we stop seeing outbreaks and recalls as routine events, and when we address the root causes of contamination."

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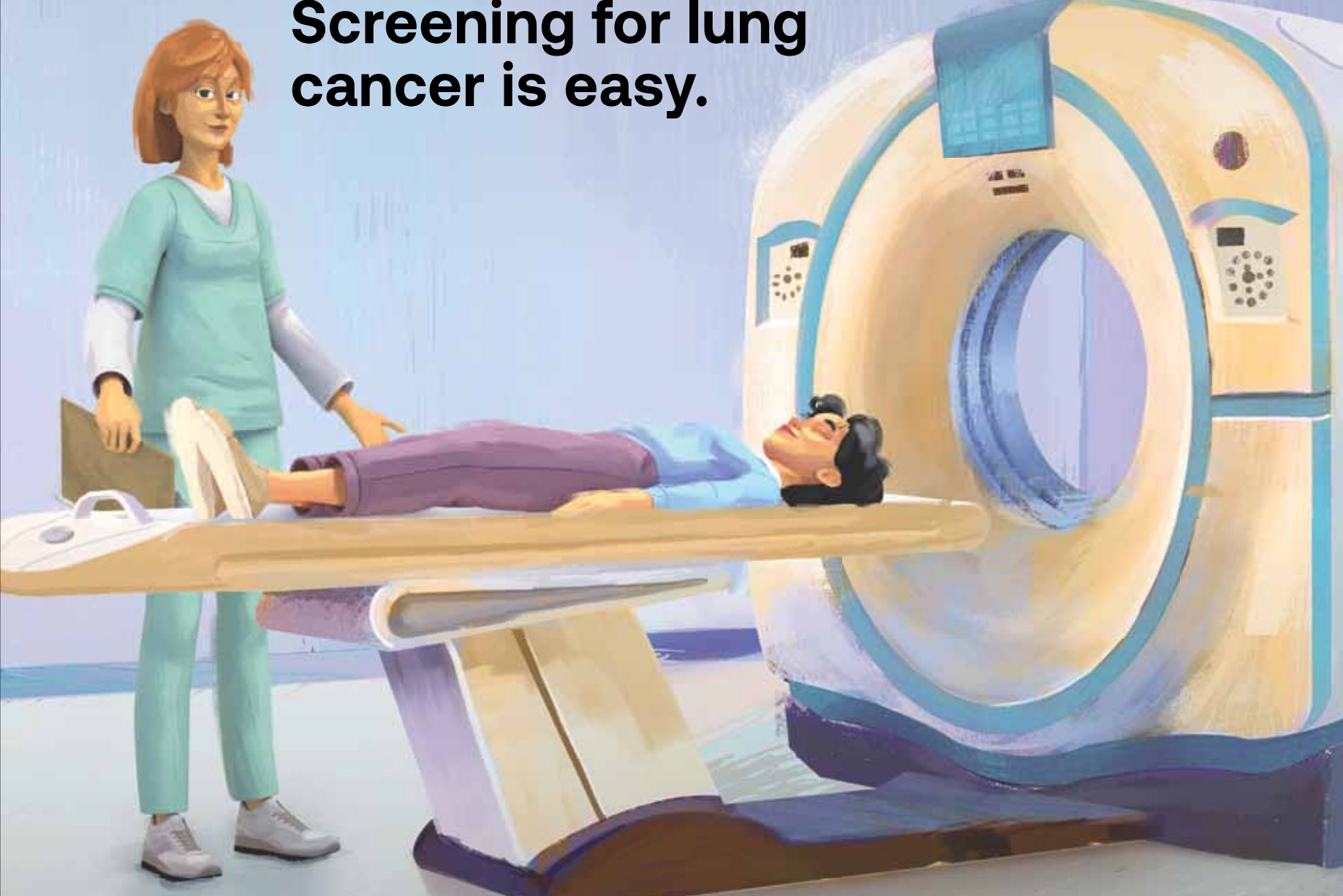
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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of **MARIE ELAINE JOHNSON**, Deceased, were issued on **December 4, 2024**, in **Docket No. P20153**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **Gary James Robertson**.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: **Paul M. Fukuda**
Attorney At Law
312 Border Street
Orange, TX 77630

DATED the 5th day of December, 2024.

Paul M. Fukuda
Paul M. Fukuda

Attorney for:
Gary James Robertson
State Bar No.: 00789915
312 Border Street
Orange, TX 77630
Phone: (409)883-4357
Email: pfukudalawoffice@yahoo.com

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Independent Administration for the Estate of **HARRY L. STEPHENS**, Deceased, were issued on **December 4, 2024**, in **Cause No. P20096**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **MARJORIE A. STEPHENS and CRISTY SMITH**.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

Marjorie A. Stephens
c/o:
Barron Law Office
P.O. Box 279
Orange, TX 77631-0279

Cristy Smith
c/o J Nichols Law
2935 Toccoa St,
Beaumont, TX 77703

Dated the 4th day of December, 2024.

George B. Barron
George B. Barron
Attorney for Executrix
State Bar No.: 01817500
P.O. Box 279
Orange, TX 77631-0279
Email: george@barronlawoffice.net

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Administration for the Estate of **RELMON DUHRAM COTTEN**, Deceased, were issued on **December 4, 2024**, in **Cause No. P2018**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **JOANN COTTEN REYNOLDS**.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o:
Barron Law Office
P.O. Box 279
Orange, TX 77631-0279

Dated the 4th day of December, 2024.

George B. Barron
George B. Barron
Attorney for Administrator
State Bar No.: 01817500
P.O. Box 279
Orange, TX 77631-0279
Email: george@barronlawoffice.net

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of **ROGER LOPEZ**, Deceased, were issued on **December 3, 2024**, in **Cause No. P20138**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **ROBERT JOHN LOPEZ**.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o:
Robert John Lopez
7574 N. Bilbo Road
Orange, TX 77632

Dated the 3rd day of December, 2024.

Tommy Gunn
Tommy Gunn

Attorney for:
Robert John Lopez
State Bar No.: 08623700
202 S. Border Street
Orange, TX 77630
Phone: (409)882-9990
Fax: (409)882-0613
Email: tommy@gunnlaw.org

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of **SYLVIA LOPEZ**, Deceased, were issued on **December 3, 2024**, in **Cause No. P20137**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **ROBERT JOHN LOPEZ**.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o:
Robert John Lopez
7574 N. Bilbo Road
Orange, TX 77632

Dated the 3rd day of December, 2024.

Tommy Gunn
Tommy Gunn

Attorney for:
Robert John Lopez
State Bar No.: 08623700
202 S. Border Street
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Phone: (409)882-9990
Fax: (409)882-0613
Email: tommy@gunnlaw.org

NOTICE OF HEARING BEFORE SPECIAL COMMISSIONERS FOR PUBLICATION

Pursuant to Rule 21.016(d)(3), Texas Property Code, the Special Commissioners hereby issue this Notice of Hearing in connection with their Order Setting Hearing entered this same day.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE

TO: THE UNKNOWN OWNERS OF THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IN THIS PROCEEDING; AND ANY UNKNOWN PERSONS WITH AN INTEREST OR CLAIM AGAINST THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IN THIS PROCEEDING, to be served by publication pursuant to § 21.016(d) (3) of the Texas Property Code and

You are hereby notified that on the 10th day of January, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the Meeting Room at the Holiday Inn Express - Orange, 2655 I-10 East, Orange, Texas 77630, the undersigned Special Commissioners appointed by the Judge of the County Court at Law No. 2 of Orange County, Texas, will convene a hearing to assess the damages occasioned by the condemnation by Midcoast Pipelines (East Texas) L.P., as Condemnor, for the acquisition of an easement over a portion of a certain tract of land, legally described as being a portion of land situated in the John Stephenson Survey, A-169, Orange County, Texas, being over and across the residue of a called 25-1/2 acre tract conveyed to W.J. Burton recorded on December 8, 1921 in Volume 34, Page 572 of the Official Public Records of Orange County, Texas, (current ownership unknown).

These are proceedings in eminent domain in a case styled: MIDCOAST PIPELINES (EAST TEXAS) L.P. v THE UNKNOWN OWNERS OF AND ANY UNKNOWN PERSONS WITH AN INTEREST IN OR CLAIM AGAINST THE SUBJECT PROPERTY IN THIS PROCEEDING, ET AL., Cause Number 25400, filed in the County Court at Law No. 2 of Orange County, Texas. The undersigned, having heretofore duly selected such time and place for hearing as required by law, will proceed to hear said parties and receive evidence on damages and to act thereon in the manner directed by law.

The preceding Notice to be served via publication has been APPROVED and ISSUED the 25th day of November, 2024.

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Tangible Acts of Christmas

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I've been ruminating on a text of Scripture that has me rethinking how I've typically sought to share the gospel with others at Christmastime.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die — but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:6-8)

This is the phrase that has stuck in my mind: "God shows his love for us." And the word in that phrase that has particularly gripped me is shows. God shows his love for us.

When it comes to love, it's a matter of show and tell (and often in that order). We know love when we both see it and hear it. Words are an essential dimension of how we show our love, but it's our actions that prove the truth of our words. Love, like wisdom, "is justified by her deeds" (Matthew 11:19). Love, like faith, "if it does not have works, is dead" (James 2:17).

And that's what has me rethinking my approach to Christmas evangelism. I wonder if I have sought to love others with too much talk and not enough deeds.



By This We Know Love:

You might recognize in my words the echo of another passage:

By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:16-18)

There it is again. We know God's love for us by the way Jesus generously showed love toward us. And the way Jesus showed his love for us provides a profound model for how we as Christians are to show our love for one another.

We know from Jesus's holistic example, however, that we're not merely to show love to other Christians. For we are to "do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). And Jesus tells us that even our loving deeds toward other Christians speak to unbelievers: "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" — love they can see (John 13:35).

Haunted by Christmas Past

Now, the reason I'm pondering all this in the context of Christmas is because it's an annual moment when our culture's collective attention is drawn in some way toward Jesus. In the increasingly post-Christian West,

people have the general notion that at the heart of Christmas is love. They have this notion because it's an echo of the ancient story that still reverberates through Western civilization:

When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

Even though many misunderstand or ignore or reject this echo, it often still leaves them with a sense that Christmas is about redeeming love.

We can hear strains of the echo in many of our culture's favorite Christmas-themed stories, from A Christmas Carol to How the Grinch Stole Christmas, where deeply selfish souls experience some kind of redemption after

an encounter with transcendent love — often, like Scrooge, merciful love. They are shown love. And as a result of this encounter, they are transformed into loving souls who discover a far greater joy than they've ever known in counting others more significant than themselves. These stories are haunted by the ghost of that ancient Christmas past, when "God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16).

Show the Love

Putting this all together, it's hitting me in a fresh way that Christmas is a particularly poignant time to show the love of Christ to those outside the household of faith.

So, what might that mean exactly? Well, at the time I'm writing this, which is just after Halloween, I'm not sure exactly. Because rather than planning a program, I'm planning to keep my eyes open and as the Lord's leads, to follow the needs. Christian love, as John Piper says, "is the overflow of joy in God that gladly meets the needs of others" (Desiring God, 119). Often, we can't foresee what people will need, but we

can plan to reserve some time and money so that if needs arise, there are practical channels through which our love can flow to meet them. And experience has taught me that, if I'm paying attention, rarely is there a lack of needs to meet.

Over the years, I have participated in, coordinated, and led countless Christmas events — worship services, musicals, parties, neighborhood and family gatherings — intentionally designed to present the message of the gospel to nonbelievers. And I don't regret having told them about the love of God in Christ. It is a way to show them God's love. But I do feel some regret that I haven't given more time and energy to showing more people the love of God in Christ through tangible, personal deeds. And so I'm seeking to change that — to demonstrate the truth of my words with actions of love by intentionally and prayerfully looking for ways to show the love "in deed and in truth" this year.

Jon Bloom (@Bloom_Jon) serves as teacher and cofounder of Desiring God.

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