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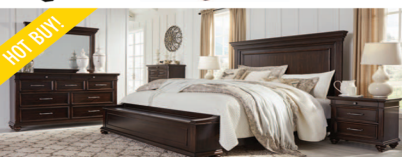
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At The Corral Gate



Enola Gay

Summer is a time of special pleasures. During this unique season, those who still live close enough to the land and livestock are lucky folks! Add to that the privilege of being a grandparent to small children who still find honest delight in nature's wonders along with you, and Honey Child, you've got a recipe for some major lasting memories!



One of my best friends ever in my life, Mr. Loyd Chapin, grows a great garden at Brashear, Texas. And he is always willing to share his squash, okra, peas, cucumbers and tomatoes with me. When the watermelons and cantaloupes start to get ripe, it's a time to take a seat at the table under his shade tree, enjoy nature's bounty and appreciate the blessings of good friendship and being alive in a free country. But for me, an even better delight is when the watermelons get ripe at the same time I'm expecting a visit from out of town grandchildren. You can be sure I take them for an experience they may never get any pother time in their lives!

Mr. Chapin grows big round green melons and he grows the long oval-shaped melons and he also sometimes grows the green stripe melons. Now, if you have been buying your melons from a grocery store or produce market, you probably are getting mostly 'seedless' melons. They're handy to eat, but some of flavor and fragrance of the natural grown melons is sacrificed. The old-time seeded melons are best. And don't forget the seed-spitting contests that go along with a watermelon feast!



Some people tell a ripe melon by thumping it for sound. That's OK but there is a surer way that some gardeners use. Mr. Chapin says that the way you tell if a melon in the field is ripe, is to look closely at the melon vine near where it is attached to the melon. There will be a little curly-cue end near the attached vine. If that curly cue is dry, it's ready. Now, if you wait until the 'umbilical' vine that is actually attached to the melon dries up, you will have probably lost the best flavor and sweetness, and your melon may actually be over-ripe and mushy!

My mother used to make watermelon rind preserves, and there's really nothing like that flavor in anything you can buy in a store. The long slow simmering of the cut-up white part of the rind with sugar produces a preserve that is honey-colored and honey-thick but with a deep, delicious flavor. We always enjoyed this on toast, or even on a slice of bread spread with peanut butter. It's a way of preserving the richness of summer's bounty. Another favorite home-cooked product is green tomato preserves. Now you have probably had green tomato relish at a fish restaurant, but this is a sweet preserve made of sliced green tomatoes and sugar, slow-cooked and simmered sort of like my mom did with the watermelon rind. But this unmistakably delicious treat comes in the fall, maybe late fall. For gardeners whose tomato plants are still bearing when a freeze is predicted, the idea is to strip the plants of all the red and green tomatoes. Cut them up in slices or narrow hunks and use a 'right smart' amount of sugar and set em to simmering low. The finished product is rather dark and deeply flavored, sweet but also savory, a pulpy spread perfect for biscuits, that has the power to impress itself on your memory via your taste buds. To some folks like me,



I know you have your own garden-time memories, and I'd love to have you share them. You can email me at enolagay.mathews@gmail.com. Until next week, stay cool and I will watch for you at the corral gate.

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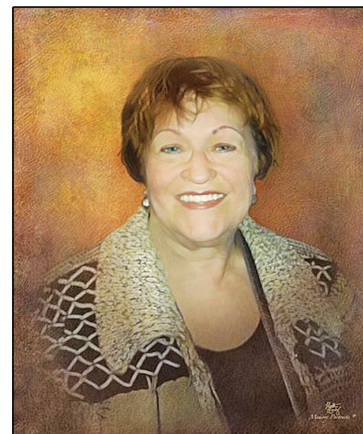
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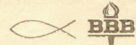
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Nancy Elizabeth Thomas Harmon

Nancy Elizabeth Thomas Harmon passed peacefully from this earth to her Heavenly home on the morning of August 4, 2019. She was 77 years old. Nancy chose to be cremated and did not want a funeral. Instead, she wanted everyone to have a party and celebrate her life. Following her wishes, there will be a Celebration of Life for Nancy on Saturday, August 10th, from 4pm – 7pm, in the Town Hall Room at the Clarion Pointe Hotel in Sulphur Springs. Please wear purple or leopard, since those were her favorite colors.

Nancy was born in McAllen, Texas, on March 16, 1942, to Joseph P. and Leona Jones Thomas. She was a 1960 graduate of McAllen High School and attended business school. Nancy and her family moved to Sulphur Springs, Tx, in 1972, where the family owned and operated Northeast Texas Oxygen. She also worked for Mike McNally DVM, Audley Moore Construction, Commercial Services and Save More Drug as a bookkeeper for many years.

Nancy loved gardening, plants, shopping, reading, eating out with her friends and the ladies at her apartment complex, and traveling. Nancy is survived by her children and grandchildren: Tracy and Ragan Dennis, Travis and Brady Harmon, Stacy and Karrie, Rhandi Jo and Haley Harmon; step-son Brad Bettis, all of Sulphur Springs. She is survived by her sister and brother-in-law, Jan and Clifford George, of Florence, Tx., and her brother and sister-in-law, Joe P. and Sarah Thomas of McAllen, Tx. She has 3 great grandchildren, 3 nephews and 2 nieces. She also leaves behind her extended family, Brent and Diane Glenn and Stephanie Bland. Plus numerous friends who loved her dearly. Nancy was preceded in death by her parents, infant sister Bonnie, great-grandson Sterling, and her beloved companion Ozzie.



Mervis Dell "Dave" Davidson

Mervis Dell "Dave" Davidson, age 84, passed away peacefully on August 2, 2019. He was born on September 17, 1934 in Sulphur Bluff, Texas to John W. and Colela Powell Davidson. After finishing high school in Jacksonville, Texas, he enlisted in the United States Air Force where he served for 17 years. On November 11, 1968, he married Georgia Alice Thornton and they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2018. Together they have two sons. Returning and settling in Sulphur Springs, Texas, Dave worked for the Northeast Texas Farmers Co-Op until his illness in 2018.

Known as "Big Dave" or "Dixie Dave" to many, he began his career with Dixie Baseball, Inc. in 1976 for the Hopkins County Boys Baseball Association (HCBBA) as a minor league coach. Dave coached both of his boys (Shane & Justin) from 1976 to 1984. Dave was the HCBBA Commissioner in 1982 and was elected in the fall of 1986 to serve as the Dixie District Director for District 2 in Texas where he served in that capacity until 1990 when he was elected Texas State Director for the Dixie Majors division. In 1994, he was elected to become a National Board Member. He held this position until his retirement in 2002. In 2016, he was honored by Hopkins County for his service to youth baseball with a proclamation naming October 11th as Dave Davidson Day in Hopkins County. And in 2017, he was inducted into the Dixie Baseball Hall of Fame. During his career, his prime purpose was to instill in the youth the ideal of good sportsmanship, honesty, loyalty, courage and reverence to the end that participants of the program may be finer, stronger and happier than any other youth in other organizations resulting in those youth becoming responsible adults. He is survived by his beloved wife, Georgia, one brother, Bruce and wife Julia of Katy, Texas, sons, Dr. Shane and wife Amy of Evansville, Indiana, Justin W. and wife Kristyl of Sulphur Springs and 6 grandchildren: Hayden and wife Sara of Denver, Colorado, Eric of Indianapolis, Indiana, Sadie Grace of Sulphur Springs, Taylor Katherine and Ian Shane of Oklahoma City and Leif Alexander of Sulphur Springs. There was a graveside service held for him at the Nelta Cemetery on Monday, August 5, 2019.

Eddie Hicks Haynes

Eddie Hicks Haynes, 81, of Cumby, passed away early Sunday morning, July 28, 2019 in Greenville, TX.

Eddie was born in Razor, Texas (Lamar County), on March 22, 1938, the son of Troy Haynes and Gladys Hicks Haynes. He was a retired Classified & Production Coordinator for the Dallas Times Herald. Eddie served in the United States Army as well as the Army National Guard of Texas, earning the rank of Major. He married Cindy Kopec on September 7, 1984 in Garland and they moved from Dallas to take up residence in Cumby in 1986.

He was a member of the First Christian Church of Commerce, Texas, the Masonic Lodge in Cumby, and the Hopkins County Republican Party. He enjoyed anything that had to do with history and wars, and also genealogical research as well. Eddie will also be remembered as being a "Master of Puttering".

"Hicks" is survived by his wife Cindy, two daughters: Karen Haynes Peacock of Royce City, and Christy Haynes Johnson of Dallas; other survivors include grandsons: Rocky Johnson and Beau Snodgrass and two great grandchildren, and a brother Bill Haynes of Paris, Texas. He was preceded in death by his parents, a sister, Margaret Haynes Jackson, and a brother, Robert Haynes.

The family hosted a memorial service Saturday, August 3, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. at the First Christian Church in Commerce.

For those who would rather give a memorial donation instead of flowers, the family has requested that such donations be made to the First Christian Church of Commerce.



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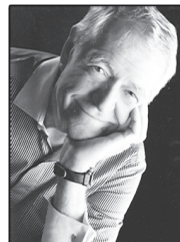
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BUMPS AT THE MOVIES

Tumbleweed Smith



Tumbleweed Smith

We went to see the movie ROCKETMAN the other day. Matinee. Didn't know what the crowd would be like, although we didn't buy tickets before getting to the theater. The movie had been out a couple of weeks. At the box office, there was a seating chart and we chose to sit in the middle about 3 rows down from the last row. We usually sit on the back row because otherwise the people sitting behind us keep bumping the backs of our seats.

We were in a huge multi screen movie complex in Midland. When we arrived in the darkened theater there were only 2 other people there. They were sitting close to the aisle a dozen rows down from us. Then 2 other people came in and sat at the end of our row near the aisle. All the empty seats in this huge theater and here was someone on our row.

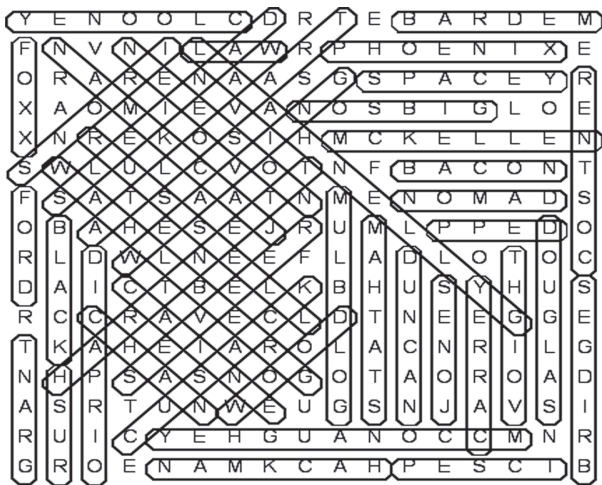
Then came the 5th and last person to make up the entire audience of 7. He sat directly behind us just about the time the movie was starting. He had apparently bought every item the concession stand had for sale and began unwrapping all of his purchases. The sound of crinkling paper carried straight to our ears. So did the sound of his grabbing handfuls of popcorn from a cardboard tub. He made chewing noises. Then he fell asleep and started snoring. I whistled real loud and woke him up. When he became fully awake he resumed his unwrapping, grabbing and chomping. In spite of all that, we enjoyed the movie. We had gone to Las Vegas to see Elton John and loved doing it.

We have experienced small numbers of people at movie theaters before. When our young son was in high school he worked at our local movie theater. Several times around sundown he would call us from the theater and invite us down, saying they wouldn't show the movie unless 10 people were in the audience and only 8 people were there. We saw lots of movies for free, but he always made us buy popcorn.

Getting back to people behind us kicking the backs of our seats: once we were in New York City and bought tickets to see CATS. A woman with her small child was sitting behind us. All during the musical the child kept kicking the back of the seat where my wife was sitting. It wasn't a gentle bump. It was like the child reared back and took direct aim at kicking the seat. My wife Susan jerked at each kick. At intermission Susan said something to the woman about her child kicking the seat. She didn't seem to care. Her attitude was "that's your problem." We had spent a lot of money getting to New York, paid outrageous prices for the tickets and we couldn't really enjoy what was happening on stage because of this child whose mother apparently would let him get away with murder. That is not the ideal way to see a musical on Broadway.

That's when we started sitting on the back rows of movie theaters. We haven't been big fans of Andrew Lloyd Webber's music since then.

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