Disabled Veterans Memorial Unveiled in Hopkins County

The Hopkins County Veterans Memorial Committee held a dedication ceremony on Saturday, November 9 on the Sulphur Springs downtown square, to unveil the life-sized bronze sculpture of a disabled soldier and his service dog, Johnny & Bella, entitled FREEDOM IS NEVER FREE. The sculpture by artist John Parsons of Kanas City was commissioned by the Hopkins County Freedom Ball Committee and sponsored by Mickey and Barbara McKenzie and family. The names of Hopkins County Patriots Killed in Action (KIA) that were recently engraved on the



Memorial Walls were read aloud, commemorated and dedicated by Veterans of Hopkins County. Along with a flyover, remarks were given by Congressman John Ratcliffe, County Judge Robert Newsom, Hopkins County Veterans Service Officer Danny Davis and Mickey and Barbara McKenzie. The sculpture features a man with a prosthetic leg along with his service dog. Models were Mike and Pam Elliott's son, Cody, and their dog,

Bella. Pam serves as the chair of the Hopkins County Veterans Memorial.

Photos by Pam Elliott







THE MIKE RUSHIN ANNUAL 'CHILI' AT MT. STERLING

A gal can't stay at the Corral Gate all the time! So I wandered out to the Mt. Sterling community of Hopkins County a couple of weekends ago, and ran into LOTS of good folks and some REALLY GOOD CHILI! My good friend Mike Rushin is behind this little jewel of a yearly campfire event out in the country, held primitive

style under the trees. It usually happens in early November, or maybe on the first Saturday in November, about when the time of the first crisp evenings begins. That's also when many of us have had a bait of Hopkins County Stew already, and chili is sounding pretty darn good. See, the word chili can be both a food item as well as an event you're invited to. Thus, a "chili" event is something like a "stew", only more





Mike and his siblings were raised at Mt. Sterling community, and have fond memories of the big community events held at the chapel on the Mt. Sterling Cemetery grounds and at the nearby North Liberty Baptist Church. Besides going to church and to funerals, the grounds were often used for community get-togethers, which usually involved food as well as fellowship and fun. During summer months in times of plenty, there were 'watermelon cuttings' and ice cream suppers. To feed a big crowd, they'd occasionally cook squirrel stew or chicken stew, adding vegetables fresh from their gardens or canned and "put up" for the winter. Back then,

beef wasn't as accessible as it is now, so not a lot of families ate beef very often. But the exception to the rule was Chili, and it became a festive occasion whenever a "chili" was on. Women brought biscuits and combread, and maybe salads in season, plus desserts of all kinds. To raise money for the cemetery and church upkeep, they'd hold a pie or cake auction. The Rushin kids; Mike, Wynona, Donnis and Johnny, grew up around wholesome and friendly traditions such as this, while going to school and helping run the family's dairy farm. Those are treasured memories. Sadly, at some point, though, the traditions of the community began to fade as more families moved closer to town.

A few years ago, Mike moved the annual "chili" to his place just down the road from the cemetery on CR 3506, where he could cultivate it and keep it alive. He did all the cooking himself, beginning in the Autumn of 2004, just after his parents Merle and Lourice Rushin had passed away, both within a week of each other. You might remember, Merle was a WWII veteran and in 2002 the couple was honored as the Hopkins County Dairy Festival Parade Marshalls. Missing them, as well as his late brother Donnis Rushin, has kept the spark alive for Mike to now pass the tradition along to the "next generation". Jay Rushin and his friend Donald Hopper Jr. have been under Mike's tutelage for a few years. And by now Mike has shifted quite naturally to the role of "advisor" and the two young men are now full-fledged cooks Donald on chili, and Jay on beef stew. Of course, Mike patrols the fires and the wood supply, tastes their cooking for just the right balance of spices, and keeps a watchful eye on the process. He's quick to give a thumbs up but doesn't shy away from pointing out a change needed on taste or consistency! He's also the first to offer his hand and say "welcome" when his friends start to gather each year for the "chili". And you'll never catch him far from the stewpot with the big metal R on top, which puts an humble brand on this proud family tradition. If you want to attend a event that's real, genuine and very down to earth, join me next November for the "Chili" at Mike Rushin's!







Everybody's got a story to tell, and another good friend of ours from the country, Marie Chester, has just celebrated her 95th birthday, and is still going strong strong. Hopefully next week we will catch up with her and get "her story here at the Corral Gate!

Miscellaneous

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Bright Star Cinemas

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November 21st Opening Date For Sulphur Springs Location

New owners of Sulphur Springs theatre busy hiring and training staff as preparations continue for late-November opening of Bright Star Cinemas.

SULPHUR SPRINGS, Texas, (Nov. 7, 2019) – Bright Star Cinemas announced today that their newly remodeled Sulphur Springs movie theatre is scheduled to open to the public under new ownership and management on Thursday, Nov. 21. The updated Bright Star Cinemas theatre located at 621 Shannon Drive East in Sulphur Springs will feature luxury electric recliner seating in all auditoriums, bigger screens, better sound, an updated lobby and expanded menu options. Patrons will also be able to reserve their preferred seats in advance when purchasing tickets in-person at the theatre or online at brightstarcinemas.com.

Bright Star Cinemas is currently hiring for part-time positions. Interested candidates can apply in person Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Bright Star Cinemas located at 621 Shannon Drive East, Sulphur Springs, TX 75482.

"We're incredibly excited to unveil the Bright Star Cinemas experience in Sulphur Springs," said Kathy Lee, COO of Bright Star Cinemas. "It's our mission to provide, the best, most comfortable movie-going experience to our guests. From our luxury recliner seating in all movie auditoriums to the updated lobby and menu offerings, we have created something very special that I think the area's residents will truly enjoy."

Bright Star Cinemas purchased the 20,000 square-foot freestanding movie theatre in Sulphur Springs in early September and has invested approximately \$4.5 million in the theatre project. Bright Star Cinemas also hired Dallas-based ShowBiz Cinemas to assist with management at the home office level. The fully upgraded theatre, which has been closed for renovations since September, will open under new management as Bright Star Cinemas on Thursday, Nov. 21. Bright Star Cinemas will celebrate their grand opening and VIP Red-Carpet Event on Wednesday, Nov. 20 at 6:30 p.m. Event attendees will be treated to free movies, popcorn and soda.

For the latest updates on Bright Star Cinemas Sulphur Springs and for invitation details for their VIP Red-Carpet Event on Wednesday, Nov. 20, stay connected at brightstarcinemas.com or through Bright Star Cinemas Facebook page.



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Asa Roger Sowell October 30, 1943 - November 10, 2019

Asa Roger Sowell, 76, of Cumby passed away at Medical City in McKinney on Sunday, November 10, 2019. A funeral service will be held Thursday, Nov 14, 2019 from 11:00 am - 12:00 am at the League Street Church of Christ in Sulphur Springs. Visitation will be from 10:00 am to 11:00 am at the League Street Church of Christ. Interment with military honors will follow at 12:30 pm at the Ridgeway Cemetery at 5989 FM 2653 at Ridgeway, Texas. He is survived by his wife Kay, two daughters, Meredith and Miranda, and four wonderful grand children.



Lois Owens

Funeral services for Lois Owens, age 90, of Sulphur Springs will be conducted at 10:00 a.m., Friday, November 15, 2019 at West Oaks Funeral Home Chapel with Rev. Rusty Posey officiating. Interment will follow at Sulphur Springs City Cemetery with Jimmy Slatter, John Slater, Dale McMahan, Bill Owens, Mike Owens, and Dale Owens serving as pallbearers. Honorary pallbearer will be Dean Owens. Visitation will be from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., Thursday, November 14, 2019 at West Oaks Funeral Home. Lois passed away on Saturday, November 9, 2019 at Christus Mother Frances Hospital in Sulphur Springs.

Lois was born on July 11, 1929 in Hagansport, TX, the daughter of John Fennell and Della Chapman Fennell. She married Ray Jr. Owens on February 21, 1948 in Sulphur Springs and he preceded her in death on March 25, 2017. Lois was a homemaker and was a member of the First Assembly of God.

She is survived by her sons, Ron Owens and wife Laura of Sulphur Springs, Larry Owens and wife Beth of Temple, TX, daughter Linda Galligher and husband Carl of Sulphur Springs, grandchildren, Jason Owens and wife Kelly, Duane Galligher and wife Jill, Kevin Owens and wife Beth Ann, Laura Mungia and husband Thomas, Sierra Owens and Savannah Owens, great-grandchildren, Jenacee, Jaiden, Kaylee, Claieer, Scarlette, Ian and Abigail, step-great grandchildren, Andrew and Lukas, sisters-in-law, Sue Owens, Bernice Fitzgerald, and Agnes Ables and husband Arnold.

In addition to her husband she was preceded in death by her parents, bothers, Lee Fennell and his wife Pearl, Johnny Fennell and his wife Margaret and sister, Jean Slater and her husband James.

Arrangements are under the direction of West Oaks Funeral Home. www.westoaksfuneralhome.com



Joshua Adam Vaughn

Josh Vaughn passed away Friday, November 8, 2019 at his home. He was born August 25, 1983 to John and Linda Vaughn in Sulphur Springs, Texas. His brother, Jason, was quite certain that his name should be Adam Frog; but they settled on Joshua Adam. He entered this world facing obstacles-club foot and Legg Perthes disease. The doctors said he wouldn't walk; obviously they underestimated Josh Vaughn's stubborn streak! The next few years would bring 25 casts and frequent doctor visits. The charming little tike would charm the nurses, getting special foods and treats from his favorites. Josh had a knack of annoying you until he got exactly what he wanted, and he wouldn't leave you alone until that happened.

He loved animals; especially horses, and riding was second nature to him from an early age. He always had a rope in his hands, and you would find the chair legs tied together quite often. Naturally athletic, Josh loved baseball and played little league ball all

the way up through high school in North Hopkins. He was the life of any gathering and always the jokester. He made friends easily and people felt at home with him. During his high school years, John and Linda's house was usually full of rowdy boys- his school buddies, some of the various Vaughn cousins, or anyone else he might have decided to invite over for that matter. After high school, Josh met Nicole Reeves and they set out to have a life together and have a house full of kids! Rhett, Casen, Carson, and Blakely were his world and he loved being a dad. It gave him an opportunity to be a big kid again and he loved doing all of their events-baseball, rodeo, hunting, camping, or just hanging out with them. He loved to cowboy, and everyone knew they could call for help catching a cow and he would show up ready to help. Josh went to work for Hydro and over the years, the guys he worked with became friends and knew they could count on him to come in, work hard, and make them laugh while he was there. Left to cherish his memory; wife, Nicole and children, Rhett, Casen, Carson, and Blakely; parents, John and Linda Vaughn; brother and sister in law, Jason and Patty Vaughn and their children, Natalie and Jackson Vaughn; his grandmother, Grace Vaughn and a grandfather, Luther Jack Petrea. He is also survived by mother in law, Andrea Reeves; uncle, Harold Petrea; brother in law, Zack and Brittanie Reeves; sister in law, Amy and Gary Tubb; aunt, Linda Ellen Vaughn; uncles, Chip, Jim, Charlie, and Tim; along with numerous aunts, cousins, and a lifetime of friends that will miss him dearly.

Clara Mills

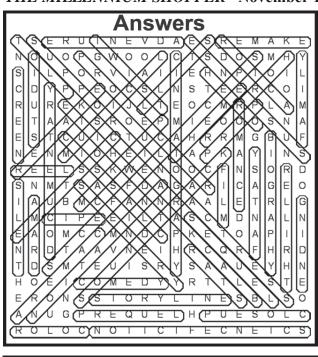
Memorial service for Clara Mills, age 74, of Sulphur Springs will be held at 10:30 A.M. at Mt. Paran Primitive Baptist Church in Paris, TX on Saturday, November 16, 2019 with Elder Jimmie Stipland, Elder Mike Montgomery and Elder Shane Nix officiating. Visitation will be held on Wednesday November 13, 2019 at Tapp Funeral Home from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M. Mrs. Mills passed away on Friday, November 8, 2019 at Christus Mother Frances Hospital, Sulphur Springs, TX.

Clara was born on March 29, 1945 in Cullman, AL to Lonnie Vurl and Nancy Cato. She married Gary Brice Mills She retired from Custom Shutters and was a lifelong member of Primititive Baptist Church.

She is survived by her husband, Gary Mills; daughter, Sandra Nowlin and husband Lloyd; grandchildren, Nathanael Nowlin, Savannah Nowlin, Joshua Nowlin and Michael Paul Nowlin; brother, Robert Kindell Cato; sister, Celia McFarland.

Clara was preceded in death by her parents; sister, Veola Burch; brothers, Wade Cato and Donald Cato.

In lieu of flowers, the family would like to request that memorial donations be made to Mt. Paran Primitive Baptist Church: 580 19th st SW Paris, TX 75460.



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A MAN OF MANY TALENTS

Tumbleweed Smith



I have a small horned toad made of spoons and forks. It is a clever piece of whimsical art produced by Roger Stanley who lives on a ranch near Cleburne. "We call it Bent Wheel because we found an old bent wheel and put it on a gate," says Roger. When I met him for the interview, the first thing he did was pull out his guitar and start playing Red River Valley. He went through a couple of tunes and ended up with Ghost Riders in the Sky. His daddy gave him a guitar when he was 13.

I learned to play the guitar by looking in a mirror. I'd put a record on the record player and try to duplicate it. My daddy was musical and loved the old cowboy ballads. When I was 5 years old we'd go chase cows and I'd be standing up in the front seat listening to daddy sing."

Roger is extremely talented when it comes to making things with his hands. "I used to make my own toys from old skate wheels, pieces of junk, just anything. I made myself a rod and reel when I saw one for the first time. I was 7 or 8 then. I have this little porch on the house and it has a wood-burning stove in it. That's my world. I sit there with a jeweler's torch and make things." His items are popular at Cleburne's weekly Wednesday flea market. "I always bring a bunch of my art items. We also liquidate estates and we have a lot of that stuff with us."

In the 3rd grade Roger read through a complete set of encyclopedias. He makes custom hunting knives and is learning to make arrowheads. He built 2 cars from scratch, starting with the frames. One of them was featured in a hotrod magazine. Roger writes and recites cowboy poetry and performs it at poetry gatherings all over the state. Once when he was at an event in the tiny town of Woodbury near Hillsboro the person on stage asked the audience of anyone had a joke or story they would like to tell. Roger walked on stage and recited a poem about a wolf that he had written. "It went over pretty good and they invited me back several times. One time a publisher was in the audience and suggested I do a book, so I did. I went to a Red Steagall event at the stockyards in Fort Worth, recited some poetry and the book sold out. I've also done a few CDs of my poetry. It got to where I was doing commission poetry for everything from fraternity parties to family reunions. I do poetry every month in Cleburne's Performing Arts Center."

His daddy dabbled in art, making sculptures of flying ducks and other wildlife. Roger called his mother a Cherokee Squaw and she was an artist with a needle and thread. "She had me making little leather pouches, doing the beadwork and everything. I keep one with me all the time. It contains things that are special to me, little things my wife has given me over the 50 years we've been married."

Roger has made his living in construction, both designing homes and working as building foreman. He taught woodshop in high school and later painted the interiors of 14 schools in central Texas. I treasure my little silverware horned toad.

Miscellaneous

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