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# Wreaths Across America. . . . . organized by ★ Jimmy and ★ Dena Loyd

For the second year, the Wreaths Across America memorial event was held locally. Conducted in Sulphur Springs City Cemetery on Saturday, December 14, 2019, the ceremony served three cemeteries this year: City, Mel Haven and Black Oak. This nationwide event is one to "Remember, Honor and Teach" about deceased Veterans who are no longer able to remind us of their service and personal sacrifices, and those of their com-

rades. Through this event, each community across America can remember these veterans, honor them with a brief ritual, and teach the coming generation. Ceremony emcee was Retired Army SSG James Clayton Bounds. During his concluding remarks, he quoted President Ronald Reagan who said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for,

protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States where men were free." It was gratifying to see families with children accept Bounds' invitation to go out into the ceremony and place the beautiful live fir wreaths with a bright red bow, on each marked headstone of a Veteran throughout the cemetery. It

is hoped it is a lesson remembered by the youth and children in attendance. Other youth who took part were local Civil Air Patrol cadets as well as Boy and Girl Scouts. Another youth, Jade Rowland led the Pledge of Allegiance. Dannette Lovelady sang the National Anthem, Dr. Jeff Graven offered prayer and TAPS was played by Garry Hall of the Marine Corps League. The ceremony was held outdoors in front of the beautiful Myra Wilson

Chapel. Dozens of local citizens turned out for the ceremony and to lay the over 600 fragrant wreaths upon the graves of veterans. Two Gold Star Mothers were in attendance. Patti Sells, whose son Tanner Higgins was killed in action, was the speaker for the ceremony. Dena Loyd, whose son Chad Loyd is buried at City Cemetery, organized the Wreaths Across America event for the community along with her husband Jimmy Loyd. Both

families lost their sons during combat assignments. It is with great appreciation that I commend the Loyds James and Annada Jones, Loretta Scott, Bounds, Veteran representatives and all the other volunteers for their dedication in making the 2019 Wreaths Across America event a moving and memorable one for Sulphur Springs and Hopkins County.

**William T. Johnson**



**John L. Mackechney**



## Soldier's Headstones



Patti Sells spoke of Tanner Higgins and two other sons in service.



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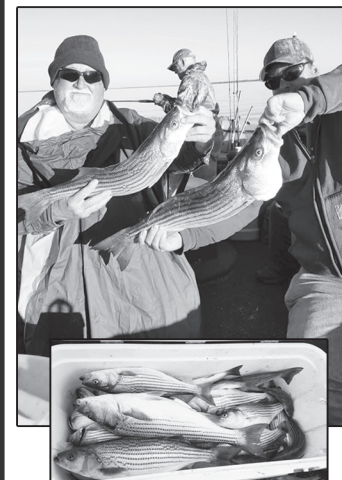
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Answers on pg 10

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Today is Justin Ervin and his twin sister, Alisa's, birthday. Several years ago Justin had his mother, Linda Johnson, write his Christmas Memories for a DayHab project. She loved this story and hopes everyone will enjoy it, too!

## A Justin Christmas *by Justin Ervin*

A Christmas that I remember best when I close my eyes will always be one outlined in blue lights. These blue lights outline my Papa and Granny's house and garage. Papa loved Christmas and he loved giving a beautiful Christmas to his children and grandchildren.

We always went to Papa and Granny's house on Christmas Eve for a big dinner of ham and turkey and dressing and all the fixings. We always had lots of desserts and candies.

The living room was a fairy land of decorations, tree with glowing lights and a bright star on top. The room was filled with presents and toys. Papa couldn't wait for all of the grandkids to begin opening the presents. It was a very happy time for me and my family.

Papa didn't think it was Christmas unless you had fire works on Christmas Eve. He always bought a large box of rockets, sparklers, and strings of firecrackers that we could enjoy after dinner. One Christmas when I was very small, my older cousin Jeff could not stay away from that box of fireworks that Papa had put on the dining room table. When everyone had left the room Jeff used a lighted candle to look down into the big box. Well the next thing he knew the candle flame had lighted one of the rockets and the explosions began. Jeff hid under the table, Papa came running and all the family were running around in circles and hiding under the furniture. The fire department was called. Papa got the fire extinguisher and finally the last rocket flew out of the box. No one was hurt, except Jeff who got a spanking.

Lots of Granny's beautiful dining room had to be fixed and painted. There was a burnt spot on the dining room table that could not be fixed. Every time we ate at that table we remembered the Christmas Eve when fireworks were done inside instead of out in the field. It was funny then!

I love Christmas now just as much, the lights, the parties, the beautiful music at church, the Christmas parade and Christmas plays. Spending Christmas with my friends at Our Place and in Miss Linda's Sunday School Class is a favorite time. Christmas is a family time and we are all family.

*Editors note-Justin is a dear friend of mine and loved by all in Sulphur Springs. Merry Christmas to Justin and his family! Reprint from Christmas 2013*

Thank you Lord for Christmas.  
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# Obits



## WEST OAKS FUNERAL HOME

500 Hillcrest Dr., Sulphur Springs, Tx. 75482

<http://www.westoaksfuneralhome.com>



### ***Delecia Camille Simmons***

Delecia Camille Simmons was born July 1, 1985 in Sulphur Springs, TX to the proud parents the late Vickey Hollins and Daphne Ross of Sulphur Springs, TX. She was entered into eternal rest on December 12, 2019. Delecia accepted Jesus Christ in her life at a young age.

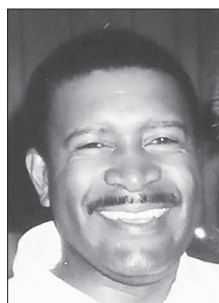
She attended Sulphur Springs High School and later joined the United States Navy in 2003. She married William Simmons on April 17, 2010 and to their union three children would make this family: Mackenzie Hollins and Nathaniel Simmons of White House, TN and Niya Jefferson of Monee, IL.

She also leaves to cherish her memories her Grandmothers Anna Johnson, Luella Hollins and Sue Ross of Sulphur Springs, TX; her grandfather Bo Hollins of Sulphur Springs, TX; her aunt Carla Houff of Texarkana, TX; one sister Kendra Ross of Dallas, TX and a host of aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; Vickey Hollins and Daphne Ross; grandfather, Cleatus Johnson.

Funeral services will be held at 11:30 a.m., Saturday, December 21, 2019 at Mitchel Chapel Church of God in Christ. Interment will follow at Restlawn Memorial Park. There will be no formal visitation.

Arrangements are under the direction of West Oaks Funeral Home. [www.westoaksfuneralhome.com](http://www.westoaksfuneralhome.com)



### ***Walter Ray Thomas***

Memorial service for Walter Ray Thomas, age 71, of Sulphur Springs, will be held at 11:00 a.m., Friday, December 20, 2019 at Morning Chapel Missionary Baptist Church with Rev. Jerry Vaughn officiating. There will be no formal visitation. Walter passed away on Sunday, December 15, 2019 at his residence.

He was born on December 3, 1948 in Sulphur Springs the son of Walter B. Thomas and Imagine Spigner Thomas. He worked as a rancher for many years. He is survived by lifelong partner and friend, Vernell Washington, daughter, Darla Washington, nephew, Charles Tate (Chasity), niece, Charlotte Tate, son, Justin Miller (Nicole), daughter, Erica McDaniel (Earnest), 3 great nieces, 4 great nephews, and 3 grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his parents, one brother, Danny Ray, and one sister, Shirley Thomas Tate.

Arrangements are under the direction of West Oaks Funeral Home. [www.westoaksfuneralhome.com](http://www.westoaksfuneralhome.com)



### ***Paul E. Leslie***

Paul E. Leslie, 85, went to be with the Lord and his wife, Lou, on December 4th, 2019 while resting at home in Emory, Texas.

Paul was born in Tulsa, Oklahoma on November 27, 1934. He graduated from Will Rogers High School in 1952 and attended Oklahoma A&M College where he received a Bachelor's degree in Personal Management. Paul served his country as he worked in public service for the U.S. Government while he and Lou lived in Oklahoma, Virginia and Texas. He retired on Lake Fork in Emory, Texas.

He is survived by his son Doug Leslie and daughter in law Charlotte Leslie of Garland, TX, brother Robert Leslie and sister in law Tomi Leslie of Oceanside, CA, brother in law Autry Hill and sister in law Geraldine Hill of Stillwater, OK, grandchildren Chris Leslie and his wife Sarah Leslie of Lometa, TX, Katie Leslie of Ogden, UT and Adam Leslie of Garland TX. Paul is also survived by three great granddaughters, Angie Leslie, Lucy Leslie, and Frankie Leslie. He was preceded in death by his wife of 65 years Louise (Lou) Leslie where they lived for the past 28 years in Emory, TX, and his parents Wayne and Dorothy Leslie.

In lieu of flowers please contribute in Paul's memory to the Parkinson's Foundation or your favorite charity.

Memorial Service will be held at Memorial Park Cemetery, January 17, 2020 at 2:00pm in the Chapel at 5111 South Memorial Drive, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74145. Interment immediately following the service.

### ***Dorothy Dean Bozeman***

Funeral services for Dorothy Dean Bozeman, age 91, will be held on Saturday, December 21, 2019 at 2:00 PM at Tapp Funeral Home Chapel. Dorothy Dean Bozeman passed away on Sunday, December 15, 2019.

Dorothy Dean Bozeman was born on April 07, 1928, in Big Sandy, TX, the daughter of George Williams and Zola Douglas Williams. Ms. Bozeman worked at many jobs before retiring.

Survivors include a host of nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her parents: George and Zola Williams and husband: Lee Odus Bozeman.

# A Welcome Pause...

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

It is a simple request, embodied in a one-syllable, five-letter word. Yet, it is potentially "punch-packing," whether perpetrated by an individual, or considered by an entire nation, or even the world. Whoever penned it likely had no clue that its message should be implemented beyond the

walls of Chick-fil-A by a world spinning insanely fast, with little thought to abrupt stops that could occur at any moment. Maybe, just maybe, the word on a sign posted before one reaches the counter for ordering could have far-reaching results. Posted atop a stanchion for patrons next in line

to order is the modest request: "PAUSE."  
\*\*\*\*\*  
At Thanksgiving--and certainly at other times as well--this is a welcome prospect. We can use such time to breathe, to be considerate and to reflect on our lives, as well as the zany goings-on around us.

It isn't threatening like many signs are. We are not told we can't cross the line, if per chance our hunger is dulling our judgment if not our senses. There is no mention of punishment or penalties should we ignore the request.

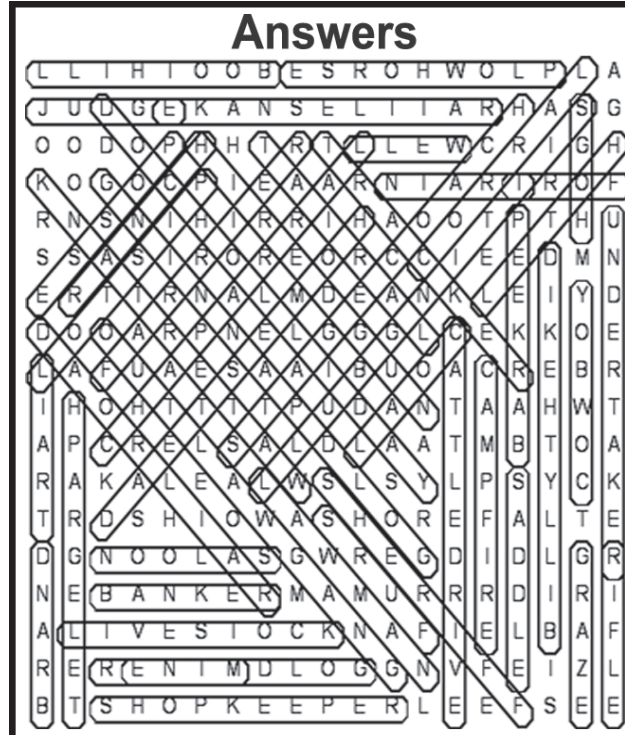
I think of it as reinforcement of the biblical admonition of Psalm 46:10: "Be still and know that I am God." As the season for ultimate "rushing" looms, the request is a healthy tonic. It is good for us to simply pause, reflecting on our belief that the same God who has intervened in human affairs throughout the centuries is still in charge.

\*\*\*\*  
If we are lucky, we'll reach times when there'll

be unavoidable pauses, whether we choose to do so or not.

Serving in senior adult ministry at our church, I see folks who are pausing regularly.

One 90-something lady I visited recently in the hospital said, "I am so ready to go to my heavenly home." She paused before adding, "But that's not my call, is it?" I was moved by her response, and shifted into "pause mode" as I walked slowly toward my car.



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## STORIES FROM AN EAST TEXAS COWBOY

Tumbleweed Smith



Tumbleweed Smith

"Tell all them hands out there in the west These East Texas cowboys are still the best."

Carroll Langham of Grapeland is one of those rare and fortunate individuals who can have outrageous experiences and relate them with vigor. He writes cowboy poetry and stories and has put some of them in 2 books. Their titles are THE CUSTOM COWBOYS OF HOUSTON COUNTY and THE RETURN OF THE CUSTOM COWBOYS OF HOUSTON COUNTY.

His wife kept hearing his stories and encouraged him to start writing some of them. That's just what he has done the past 5 years. One of his stories is about a friend of his who killed a chicken snake just before the vet came to examine some cows.

"He thought how funny it would be to put that snake in one of them cows that the vet was checking. So he lubed the snake up good and put it in the cow's rectum. The vet ran his arm in the cow and there was something in there that wasn't supposed to be. He began pulling the snake out and it was folded up pretty good. When it came out and fell on the floor it started to unfold. It looked like it was alive. The vet was so scared he turned and ran, scrambling to get away from that snake."

You just can't make up stuff like that. Carroll writes poems about dogs.

"I've had a lot of dogs and some good 'uns I've had.

But a dog that won't handle can sure make you mad.

A dog that will find and a dog that will stay

Can sure make you have a much better day.

The only thing worse than a dog that won't hunt

Is a dog that works behind instead of in front."

Then there's the story about his buddy Johnny who had some deer hunters on his land.

"He got to be friendly with them. They had killed a deer and were out there skinning it. One old big heavy boy was bent over skinning on the deer and his britches were kind of open on the back. Well Johnny had some red M & Ms in his pocket that he had been eating. So he just dropped about 6 of them red M & Ms down the guy's pants. He was busy with the deer and didn't notice anything. So that night when he went to take a shower all them red M & Ms had melted in his underwear. He thought he was bleeding to death. He went to the emergency room. Johnny said when he got back the next day he was one mad cowboy. They told him at the hospital it was just red M & Ms."

In his writing, Carroll uses his own vocabulary.



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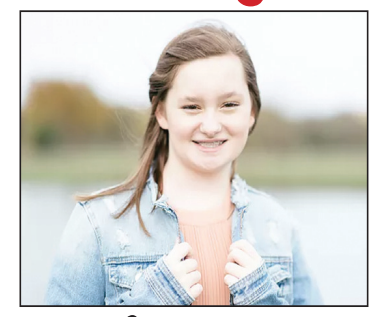
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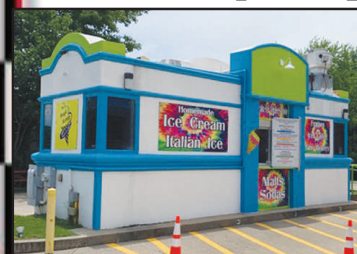
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