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*Happy* **FATHER'S DAY**  
Page 8

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**VOL. 23 ISSUE 1152, June 15, 2022**

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## FROM A COW TO A CROSS

Tumbleweed Smith



When Tommy Womack was a boy, his family moved from El Paso to Amarillo. His daddy had just been discharged from the Horse Cavalry at Fort Bliss and had taken a job with the Santa Fe Railroad in Amarillo. Tommy started working in journalism. "I rode a bicycle and delivered the Amarillo Globe Newspaper to some neighborhoods. I Tumbleweed Smith would ride my bicycle down the middle of the street and throw papers to houses right and left. That's just the way paper boys did it back then." He says after having that job a while he acquired a throwing skill and had a strong rhythm of getting the paper from the bag, folding it and throwing it, almost always landing it on the front porches of houses. "Every once in a while I'd throw a wild pitch and the paper would land on the roof or in a flowerbed and I'd have to retrieve it and put it by the front door. That really upsets the rhythm."

When the family moved to Happy, a teacher convinced Tommy he should get involved with 4-H and Future Farmers of America, although he had no agricultural experience at all since he had always lived in a big city. "I started doing some agriculture stuff and ended up winning a heifer and I knew I had to bring it back the next year to show her. Now you know how I got into the livestock business."

Tommy lives a dozen miles from Tulia. He has herds of cattle. "Now I'm down to about 500 mother cows. But of course we're calving." He farms several thousand acres of land, some of it in cotton. "Looks like the price is gonna be real good this year."

He is up early and works late. "I'm busy all the time doing something and really enjoy everything I do. He and his wife spend winters on South Padre. "That's kind of a slow time of year for us and we go there in late January and leave just before it starts getting hot."

Once he and his son were going deer hunting and got to an area near Groom where a giant cross is located. "It turned out to be so foggy and I was looking for the cross because I had been there several times and knew it should start showing up through the fog. But I couldn't see it even though I knew it was lighted. But when we got up really close there was this circle of white fog and right in the middle of this circle was that cross. It was such a dramatic sight and that image stayed with me for about two years. I could not get it out of my mind. It was like my brain had taken a picture of that cross and permanently placed it there. So I got to thinking maybe I should build a cross."

He spent a year building a metal cross 45 feet high on his land near Happy. "Everything fell into place so quickly and easily from making a platform for it, the delivery of equipment, raising it up and supplying electricity. There were so many people willing to help and be involved." The cross went up ten years ago on Good Friday. It's visible on IS 27 near Happy. "It belongs to the public. My kids know it's never to be sold."

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Old TV Shows 2

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The remaining letters spell a secret message.

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E	I	A	N	Y	T	S	E	R	C	N	O	C	L	A	F	T	E
Z	S	L	B	N	Y	N	I	G	H	T	C	O	U	R	T	N	C
I	T	L	O	A	P	B	S	T	R	A	H	W	E	N	O	O	V
L	E	A	N	S	R	E	N	O	S	I	R	P	Y	Z	A	I	F
A	R	D	A	T	T	N	I	T	H	R	Y	O	T	C	R	A	F
U	E	F	N	Y	F	S	A	N	J	N	E	H	H	G	M	S	L
Q	D	L	Z	A	U	O	P	B	N	H	G	E	I	E	O	F	I
E	M	O	A	D	L	N	G	A	Y	I	O	N	H	U	R	O	N
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K	N	R	E	R	H	R	I	E	A	O	E	K	V	D	E	S	
C	S	I	L	Y	O	E	W	Y	N	T	R	N	I	E	I	F	T
I	T	A	L	R	U	T	O	Y	S	L	S	F	E	H	R	F	O
R	E	T	A	R	S	N	R	I	I	A	I	B	S	S	T	E	N
E	R	T	V	E	E	U	G	M	T	I	T	I	E	N	H	R	E
V	S	E	G	B	G	H	I	E	A	C	F	N	I	W	G	S	S
A	W	R	I	Y	R	T	A	W	H	E	H	A	W	I	O	F	
M	A	A	B	A	S	M	A	C	G	Y	V	E	R	F	N	N	L
C	T	B	U	M	O	H	W	R	O	T	C	O	D	S	K	S	A

A-TEAM  
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**TRACTORS & LOADERS:** JD 5090E MFWD, rollbar canopy, hyd. shuttle w/JD 520M ldr., showing only 1397 hrs.; Kubota M6040 DT, MFWD, roll bar canopy, hyd. shuttle w/Kubota LA1153 ldr., showing only 1619 hrs. **ATV's:** Kubota RTV 1120 diesel, 4-wd, utility vehicle, lots of options, showing only 269 hrs.; Trailmaster 150 XRS, 2-seater, buggy, Polaris Ranger 6x6. **Z-TURN MOWER:** Kubota ZD 326 diesel w/commercial 60 inch deck, showing only 129 hrs.

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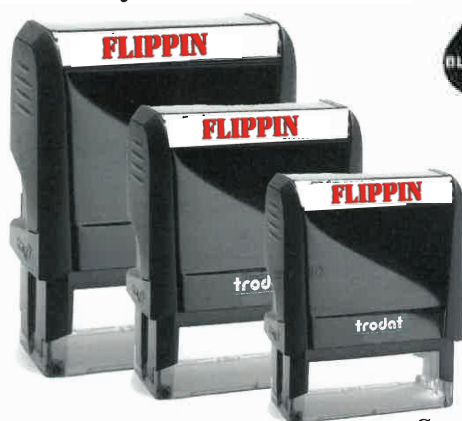
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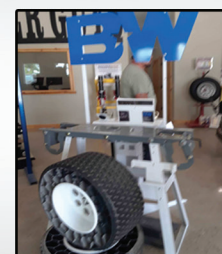


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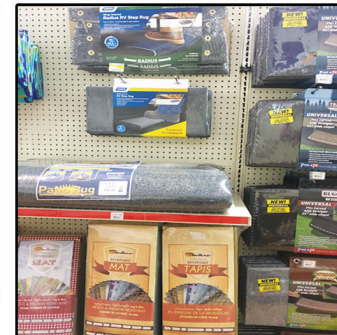
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# Obits



## WEST OAKS FUNERAL HOME

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### **John Gillis**

John Gillis, (known mostly as “Johnny” to family and friends), left this earth suddenly and peacefully, on Wednesday, June 8, 2022 in his home in Sulphur Springs, TX.

Johnny graduated from Sulphur Springs High School in 1979. He attended East Texas State University, and graduated with a Bachelor’s Degree, in Business Administration.

He married his high school sweetheart, Deborah Nowlin Gillis on August 24, 1985.

Johnny was born February 1, 1961 in Sulphur Springs to Bobby and Janelle Gill Gillis. Johnny is survived by his wife, Debbie, his son, Matthew Kyle, his daughter-in-law, Erykuh Brooke Verner, his grand-daughter Anaura Ruth, and his grand-son Anzel-Sage.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

The Gillis family moved to Hopkins County around the 1860’s from Tennessee and started ranching in Black Jack Grove, now Cumby, Tx. They were farmers and ranchers until 1928 when John’s grandfather, A.K. Gillis, landed work with the KCS railroad company to construct the railroad bed through the ranch’s land. During this time, all the work was done with mules and Fresno scrapers. This was the beginning of A.K. Gillis and Sons as a dirt contractor. John’s father, Bobby and Uncle Jack both worked for the family business

which was incorporated in 1971 and became one of the biggest dirt contractors in the southwest through the 60s, 70s, and 80’s. The company built lakes, worked for the railroad, worked in the strip mines, and built and continues to build roads for TxDOT. John became president and owner of A.K. Gillis & Sons in 2009. He was active within the company and was a vital member of the construction community until his passing.

Johnny and his family moved to San Antonio in 1991, to become President of GLI Distributing. He quickly found his passion for the beer industry. He had so many friends and mentors that helped him become iconic in the way he constructed and built his company. His managers and employees were very loyal and instrumental in transforming GLI into the great success it became until he sold it in 2019. He so enjoyed being involved in The Wholesale Beer Distributors of Texas, where he served twice as president, and held positions on various boards.

Johnny spent his youth at the Sulphur Springs Country Club, and through his business success with GLI, he acquired the Country Club from the original stockholders, and made capital improvements, bringing it into the 21st century. His dreams and visions are still a work in progress.

His life endeavors enabled him to become philanthropic. The John and Deborah Gillis Foundation, and the Bright Star Scholarships have so far enabled 41 high school students from Hopkins County to help to achieve higher education.

Services were held at 10:30 a.m., Monday, June 13, 2022, at Hopkins County Civic Center with Logan Vaughan and Harry Schuhmacher officiating. Visitation was held from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Sunday, June 12, 2022. Arrangements were under the direction of West Oaks Funeral Home.

### **Kenneth Abron** January 27, 1956 - June 8, 2022 (age 66)

Kenneth Cal Abron, after a long, hard fight with an extended illness, has finally received his ultimate and glorious healing. On Wednesday, June 8, 2022, our heavenly Father called him from his labor to reward. By the bedside of Kenneth, was his loving wife, and sons.

Kenneth was born to Alvis O. L. Rogers, Sr. and the late Gloria Dean Abron, in Pittsburg, Tx on January 27, 1956. His family later moved to Sulphur Springs, TX which became his home. Kenneth was educated in the Sulphur Springs Independent School District and graduated from Sulphur Springs High School in the class of 1974.

Kenneth was employed at The Southland Corporation while enrolled in the work program at Sulphur Springs High School, after graduating from High School, he was hired as a full-time employee. In 1979, he went to work for Rockwell International and after a large company lay-off, Kenneth was once again back at Specialty Foods, formerly The Southland Corporation. Through this company and the many name changes, such as the two previous mentioned, Specialty Products, Dean Foods, Morning Star and now Saputo Kenneth worked for 33 years until his health would not allow him to do the strenuous labor.

He was a member of the Morning Chapel Missionary Baptist Church since an early age and has been a faithful and passionate worker for many years until his health failed him in April of 2020. Kenneth loved studying, participating in his men’s Sunday school class, Wednesday night Bible study as well as mid-week prayer on Wednesday mornings. His absolute perfect joy came, when he would go and visit the sick and shut in, at home, hospitals, and the nursing homes. Kenneth planned his daily schedule and worked it so that he could be blessed by visiting with others. He was a Deacon and loved the ministry that went along with being a deacon.

On March 18, 1978, he married the love of his life Vanessa Berry Abron whom he often to referred to as his Queen. They were married for 44 years, and to this union two sons were born, Travaris LaCal Abron and Triston Kentez Abron.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Gloria Dean Abron Glass, paternal grandparents, Arthur Rogers and Arvetta Johnson; and maternal grandparents, Homer Abron Jr, and Nellie Mae Abron, one brother, Orlando “Karl” Rogers, three uncles and two aunts.

Kenneth leaves to celebrate his life and cherish is memories, his wife, Vanessa, sons, Tarvaris (Kimberly) of Sulphur Springs, TX, and Triston (Misty), of Pittsburg, TX Seven grandchildren: KaDadrian, DeJarian, Aliyah, Ava, Alyssa, Kanin, and Sevyn Abron. One Great-grand-daughter: Paisley Mae Davis. His Father, Alvis Rogers of Houston, TX. Siblings: Constance Brooks (Robert Jr.), Hope Eldridge (Curtis), Alvis Rogers Jr., and Marcia Dickson of the Houston area. Shunail Glass Singleton (Robert), Felton (Juanita)-Los Angeles California, and Kevin (Effie)Glass – Mississippi. Aunts: Della Cleveland, and Marilyn “Elaine” Clayton (Tommy) of Sulphur Springs and Yvonne Abron of Gilmer, Tx, his mother-in-law Fannie “muh in law” Berry and a host of other relatives, cousins, and friends.

Kenneth’s bond with his aunts/uncles and cousins were so close, they grew up thinking they were all siblings. He lived in the same household with them and received the very same love and affection.





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