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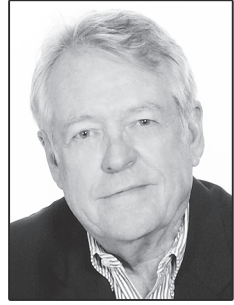
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A EUROPEAN CATHEDRAL ON THE TEXAS PLAINS

Tumbleweed Smith

I was privileged to be the guest speaker for the Memorial Day Ceremony at Erichsdahl. The only thing there is a church and a cemetery but the sense of community is extremely strong. People came from the nearby communities of Stamford, Avoca, Lueders, Pleasant Valley and other places further away. The program included patriotic songs



and poetry, prayers, a flyover of 4 aircraft and a bagpiper dressed in Scottish attire that played Amazing Grace. The event was held in the cemetery that had nearly 100 American flags on the graves of veterans. Then the crowd went to the church for refreshments.

The Bethel Lutheran Church is 100 feet tall and has a steeple that can be seen for miles in any direction. When a member dies, the bell rings the age of the deceased. Church historian Phil Swenson says the church has about 150 members and attendance is about 45 to 50 for Sunday services.

"It really does look like something you'd find in Europe. Growing up we called it a castle."

The church dates back to 1905 when the first services were held around a chuck wagon on land donated by SM Swenson, a rancher responsible for a lot of Swedish people settling in Texas. Erichsdahl is named for his son, Erik Dale. In the church's early days the sermons were in the Swedish language and Swedish customs prevailed. The first church building went up in 1907 and was known as The Little White Church On The Hill. The cost of building it was \$2,520. Services were both in Swedish and English.

"The present church was built like a church in Germany," says Phil. "The architect wanted it to appear as rising from the red hill where it is located. It was to have a value of \$42,000 plus \$25,000 for native stone and donated work. It was completed in 1943 when workers were scarce because so many were fighting in World War Two. The seating capacity is between 450 and 600 people. Families in the community donated dozens of stained glass windows. The original bell, over 100 years old, is still used every Sunday."

The pastor who guided the church through several decades was Hugh B. Haterius. He became the 4th pastor in 1919 and served 49 Years. He died in 1970. Reverend Haterius supervised the building of the church and the parsonage, both built with stone dug up from the church pasture. Horses and mules pulled sleds or fresnos to scrape up the boulders that were then broken up by sledgehammers and crowbars, then hauled away in wagons to the building site. Three professional stonemasons and carpenters did the building with the assistance of church members who volunteered their time and money. It took 4 years to build.

In 1962 the church started a public smorgasbord, which draws huge crowds. It takes place every other year. Proceeds go to the upkeep of the church.

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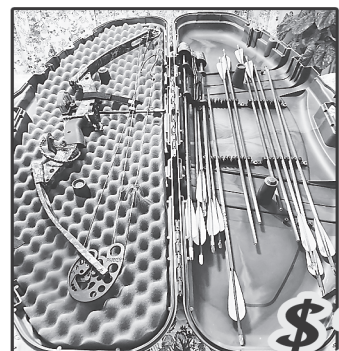
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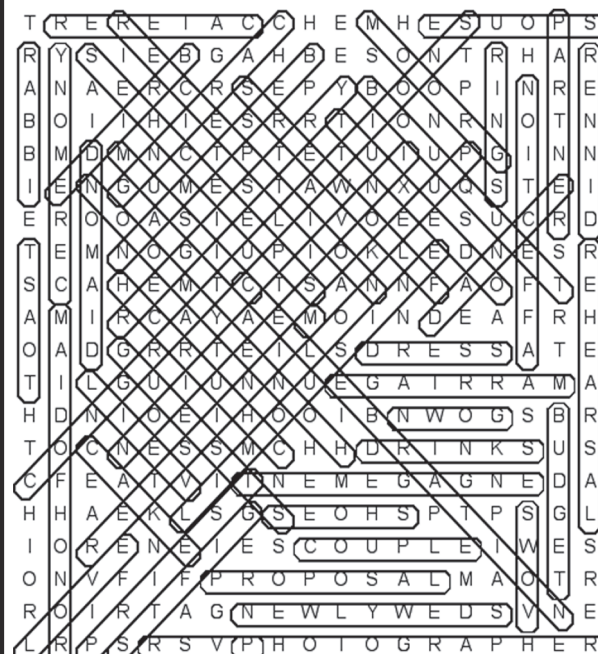
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Janis Kay Stokley

A funeral service for Janis Kay Stokley, age 76, of Pickton, Texas was held at 2:00 P.M. on Thursday, June 29, 2023 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home with Bro. Mike Haun officiating. Interment followed at Pickton Cemetery with Johnny Walker, Terry Lee Vails, Joey Satterfield, Johnathan Stokley, Kendall Glenn, Bruno Estrada, and Jerome Edwards serving as pallbearers. Honorary pallbearers were Eric Reeder, Gerald Caldwell, Jared Satterfield, Cody Jacobson, and Jonas Satterfield. Visitation was held from 6:00 to 8:00 P.M. on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. Mrs. Stokley passed away on June 20, 2023 at her residence.



Robert J. "Bob" Cowling, Jr.

Memorial service for Robert J. "Bob" Cowling, Jr., age 70, of Sulphur Springs, was held at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, June 25, 2023, at West Oaks Funeral Home Chapel with Bro. Jimmy Rogers officiating. Visitation was at 1:30 p.m., prior to service time.

Bob passed away on June 21, 2023. He was born on February 9, 1953, in Flora, IL, the son of Robert James Cowling and Patsy Pearl Minter Cowling. He married Robbie Mitchell on May 13, 1977, in Hopkins County. He worked as a cable splicer for GTE and Verizon for many years. Bob never met a stranger. He loved spending time with his family and friends.

Bob is survived by wife, Robbie, son, Chris Cowling and wife Rachael of New Braunfels, TX, brother, Roger Cowling and wife Paulan of Sulphur Springs, TX, sister, Linda McKennedy and Jerry Coughlin of Chandler, TX, sister-in-law, Carol Mitchell Stillwagner of Paris, TX, grandsons, Hayes and Dean Cowling, nieces, Jessica Horton and children, Molly McKennedy and family, Shelby Stillwagner Harris and family, Hadley Mitchell, Lauren Mitchell and family,

nephews, Patrick McKennedy, J.T. Cowling and family, Blake Stillwagner and family, Bobby Mitchell and family, as well as a host of extended family members and dear friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, son, Jonathon Cowling, brother, Barkley Cowling, and nephew, Josh Cowling.

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



Sunshine "Sun-ni" Rhiannon Rodriguez-Horne

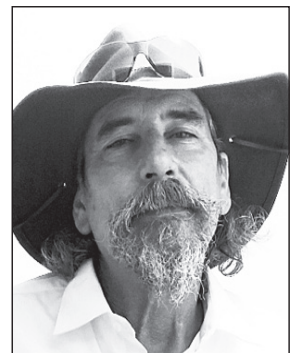
A graveside service for Sunshine "Sunni" Rhiannon Rodriguez-Horne was held at 2:00 P.M. on Thursday, June 29, 2023 at Brashear Cemetery. A visitation was held from 6:00 P.M. to 8:00 P.M. on Wednesday, June 28, 2023 at Murray Orwosky Funeral Home. Sunni passed away on Sunday, June 25, 2023 at Christus Mother Frances Hospital in Sulphur Springs.

Sunni was born on Wednesday, June 21, 2023 in Sulphur Springs to Neviea Rodriguez and Travis Horne. Those left to cherish the memory of baby Sunni are her parents, Neviea and Travis; brothers, Jaxon Giovanni Rodriguez, Aden Arthur Shoemake; grandparents, Tayna Renee Rodriguez, Ignacio Rodriguez; aunts and uncles, Nina and Dylan Cooper, Maria and Devin Melton; cousin, Lucas Melton; special best friend and cousin Maleah Melton.

"Goodnight our sweet girl, you are forever loved, beyond the sands of time. Always and Always"

"The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart: and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come." Isaiah 57:1 KJV

Arrangements were under the direction of Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home.



George Joseph Blaylock

Memorial services for George Joseph Blaylock age, 59, of Sulphur Springs, TX will be held at a later date at Calvary Hill Funeral Home and Cemetery Dallas, TX

Some Things About Texas You May Not Know!

Many people associate the Lone Star State with cowboys, guns, oil, and the world's best barbecue. While you're likely to find all of those things on a visit to Texas, you may run into some surprises along the way. Here are some facts about the state of Texas that may blow you away.

Dr Pepper was invented in Texas in 1885.

Created by Charles Alderton in Waco, Dr Pepper was first nationally marketed in 1904 and is now sold all over the world. The recipe is a secret and is kept in two halves in safety deposit boxes located in two different Dallas banks.

The first frozen margarita machine was invented in Dallas.

Restaurateur Mariano Martinez, who drew inspiration from the Slurpee machines at 7-11, adapted a soft-serve ice cream machine to make frozen margaritas and called it "The World's First Frozen Margarita Machine". It is now on display at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.

Bugs Bunny's catchphrase "What's Up, Doc?" originated in Dallas.

Looney Tunes animator Tex Avery, who attended North Dallas High School, introduced the phrase. He later said that he didn't think much of it because it was a common phrase used where he grew up.

The Six Flags Over Texas theme park is named for the six countries that have ruled over Texas.

These six countries are Spain, France, Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the United States, and the Confederate States of America. The six flags can be found on the reverse of the Seal of Texas.

Texas uses its own power grid, separate from the rest of the United States.

There are three power grids in the US: one for states east of the Rocky Mountains, one for states between the Pacific and the Rocky Mountains, and one for Texas. The Texas power grid was established during WWII to make sure all of the Texas factories producing critical war supplies were self-sustainable.

The Texas flag's designer is unknown.

An early image of the Lone Star flag was drawn by Dr. Charles B. Stewart, but no one knows who is responsible for actually designing it. Stewart's drawing was used when the flag was being enacted by legislation, but the origin of the design still remains a mystery.

The colors used on the Texas flag are the exact same as those used on the United States flag.

The red, white, and blue colors used on the flag are required to be an exact match to those on the national flag. Each color has its own meaning: red for bravery, white for purity, and blue for loyalty.

The deadliest natural disaster in United States history occurred in Texas.

The Great Galveston Hurricane of 1900 took between 6,000 and 12,000 lives with a storm surge of 8–15 ft (2.4–4.5m). The next deadliest hurricane in US history was Hurricane Katrina, which claimed 1,200 lives.

The largest known bat colony in North America is located in Texas.

Located in Bracken Cave, the largest known North American bat colony has over 20 million bats, which is more than the entire human population of Mexico City. The largest known urban bat colony is also located in Texas over Lady Bird Lake in Austin.

The fastest road in the United States is located in Austin.

In a rural stretch located between Austin and San Antonio, the speed limit of a 40mi (64m) stretch of a toll road is 85mph (137kmph). Texas also has the fastest average legal speed at 78.3 mph (126kmph).

The Texas State Capitol building is the largest state capitol in the nation.

In terms of gross square footage, the Texas Capitol is only smaller in size to the US Capitol building. Additionally, the Texas Capitol dome actually sits 7ft (2.13m) higher than the US Capitol's.

Texas is larger than any country in Europe.

If Texas were its own country, it would be the 40th largest in land area. With an area of 268,820sqmi (696,240sqkm), Texas is second only to Alaska's landmass.

King Ranch, located in Kingsville, is larger than the state of Rhode Island.

Sprawled across 825,000 acres, King Ranch is home to over 200 Quarter Horses and over 35,000 heads of cattle. The ranch reaches into six different counties and was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1961.

Texas has three of the top 10 most populous cities in the US

These cities are Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio. The total population of the Texas Triangle Mega-region as of the 2010 census was 17,745,584.

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