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SONORA: THE CITY WITH A CAVE

Tumbleweed Smith

I've done a lot of interviews in Sonora, the county seat of Sutton County. I've done some historical reports on the city's first electricity, first water and first icehouse. Other topics include interviews with goat and sheep ranchers, cowboys, historians, rattlesnake hunters, artists, musicians athletes. and some colorful

Tumbleweed Smith characters. Still others are the court house designed by Oscar Ruffini, the Fling Ding, Wagon Theater, outlaw Will Carver and the Wild Game Dinner. I even recorded Philip Cooper's donkeys. I really got deep into Sonora's culture.

The city has wide streets and graceful shade trees and downtown buildings that give you the feeling of the old west.

Residents make you feel welcome and you get to experience real western hospitality. Sonora has abundant and productive ranch land that early settlers called Cattleman's Paradise. The rugged terrain is crisscrossed by the Llano and Devil's rivers.

There is delicate and unsurpassed beauty underground at Sonora Caverns. This National Natural Landmark is a few miles west of Sonora. It's a world-class cave because of its stunning array of calcite crystal formations. The Caverns of Sonora is internationally recognized as one of the most beautiful show caves

I always thought the word Sonora sounded like a song. The city is named for a servant from Sonora, Mexico. He worked for Charlie Adams, a merchant and rancher who settled on four sections of land and offered free lots to prospective citizens. The county was named for Confederate Colonel John S. Sutton, an Indian fighter.

This is the home of mohair and where the Texas Goat and Sheep Raisers Association was formed. The clear sky, enchanting vistas and pleasing atmosphere were welcome sights to the Tonkawa, Apache and Comanche, early residents of this land. They were not the first. Fossils around Sonora go back tens of thousands of years to a prehistoric culture.

This is brush country, with mesquite, live oak, cedar and pecan trees. There was a problem getting a railroad in Sonora, so a man bought nearly one hundred miles of right of way, fenced it with holding pens, water wells and windmills so ranchers could drive their cattle to the railroad in San Angelo.

Wildlife in Sutton County is a big enterprise. Hunters go after deer, turkey, fox, quail and dove. The pioneer heritage prevails today and you can see it in the resident's determination, commitment and passion. Sonora is a beautiful city with attractive neighborhoods. And with three people per square mile, there's plenty of breathing room. I've always felt special going to Sonora.

I'm making a speech in Sonora later this month. I'm looking forward to a return visit to this fascinating city.

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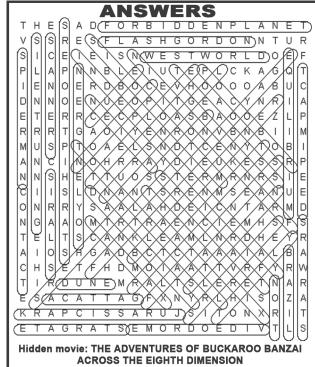
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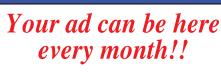
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Loyd Harris "L.H." Chapin

July 12, 1935 — August 10, 2024

A funeral service for Loyd Harris "L.H." Chapin, age 89, of Cumby, Texas will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 14, 2024 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. Interment will follow at Pleasant Grove Cemetery in Cumby, Texas. Visitation will be held one hour prior from 1:00-2:00 p.m. at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home.

Mr. Chapin passed away at Christus Mother Frances Hospital in Sulphur Springs on Saturday, August 10, 2024.



Robert Herman Weir Jr.

Robert Herman Weir Jr., born on October 6, 1948, in Cooper, Texas, passed away peacefully in Tira, Texas, on Thursday, August 8. He was 75 years old.

Robert was the beloved husband of Yvonne Hall Weir, with whom he shared 50 wonderful years of marriage. Together, they built a loving family that includes their children: Destri Weir (Eben Esterhuyse) of Sunnyvale, TX; Dacy Campbell (Michael) of Caddo Mills, TX; Dustin-Kirk Robert Weir (Natalie) of Tira, TX; Dakota Shane Weir of Sulphur Springs, TX; and Dalton Wesley Weir of Tira, TX.

Robert was a proud grandfather to Mena, Emlyn, and Nicolaas Robert Esterhuyse of Sunnyvale, TX; Elise and Eli Campbell of Caddo Mills, TX; Everly and Sienna Weir of Tira, TX; and Levi Shane Weir of Sulphur Springs, TX. Robert was preceded in death by his parents, Robert Herman Weir Sr. and Helen Julia Olsen Flippen. He is survived by his

siblings Janie (Van) Prahl of Sulphur Springs, TX; Joyce (William) Dodd of Sulphur Springs, TX; and Mary Helen Moss of Hughes Springs. After graduating from North Hopkins, Robert attended ETSU and went on to serve his country with honor in the United States Air Force. He spent four years as a Medic, including a role as NCOIC of Pediatrics at Sheppard AFB Hospital. Following his military service, Robert built a successful career as a UPS driver, retiring after many years of dedicated work.

Beyond his professional life, Robert dedicated himself to his community and his passions. He and Yvonne were foster parents for 20 years, during which they fostered over 30 children, leaving a lasting impact on the lives they touched and who in turn touched theirs. Robert also took great pride in helping keep the TiraFood Pantry stocked.

Robert was a Boy Scout Leader, a devoted numismatist, and an enthusiastic participant in the "My Heroes" Bowling Club with his son Wesley. Visitation will begin Thursday, August 15, at 2 PM at Tira Methodist Church, with the funeral service to follow at 3 PM. Burial will be directly afterward at Tira Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to My Heroes Bowling or Bright Star Baseball if desired.

Robert Herman Weir Jr. will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and all who knew him. His legacy of love, service, and dedication to family, community, and those in need will be remembered always

Arrangements are under the direction of Tapp Funeral Home The online register can be www.tappfuneralhome.com

Jean Gibbons May 12, 1926 — August 8, 2024

A graveside for Jean Gibbons of Sulphur Springs, Texas was held at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, August 12, 2024 at Sulphur Springs City Cemetery with Rev. Larry Jordan officiating. Ms. Gibbons passed away at her home on Thursday, August 8, 2024 after a brief illness.

Jean Felton Gibbons, age 98, was born in Dallas, Texas on May 12, 1926 to Guy Herman Felton, Sr. and Rhoda L. Best. Jean was a graduate of Sulphur Springs High School and was a member of the Drum & Bugle Corps. Jean married Pete Gibbons on November 18, 1943 and spent most of their adult lives on the Dairy Farm.

She is survived by her only son, John R. Gibbons and wife Sandra of Sulphur Springs; three grandchildren, Gina Jones, Philip Gibbons and David Gibbons; and four great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband, J.R. (Pete) Gibbons in 1987; two brothers, Guy H. Felton Jr. and wife Helen, William E. (Bill) Felton and wife Christine.

I could not have asked for two better parents, we didn't have a lot of money, but we had a lot of Love.

May The Good Lord Bless & Keep You. Arrangements were under the direction of Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home.

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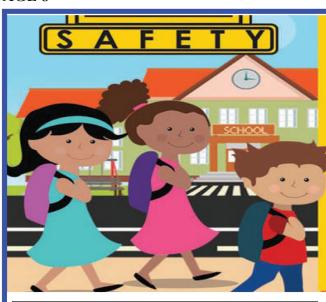




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