



A FOREST OF UNIQUE CHRISTMAS TREES

Tumbleweed Smith



Tumbleweed Smith

It all started with an interview trip to central and south Texas. As usual we never know what to expect but we knew it would be fun and interesting. Sure enough.

In Comanche we visited Clint Tunnell's building on the square that was decorated for the holidays. He had a lighted Christmas tree, right? But you couldn't see the lighted tree. It was wrapped in a crocheted quilt with a bonnet on top of it. In the dark you see tiny dots of light through the loose threads in the quilt. That was unique for sure, and beautiful. But Clint wanted us to see more unique stuff. He took us the Methodist Church in the nearby community of Blanket, which has a population of fewer than 400 people. Clint has played piano at that church for decades. The sanctuary had a nice warm feeling to it. About 50 people show up for services on Sunday. The church has a fulltime minister who has been there for more than 20 years.

He took us to the huge Fellowship Hall next to the church that also serves as the community center where weddings, family reunions and similar events take place. We met Cheri Brown who, along with her sister, decorated the building for Christmas. There were a number of regular trees full of lights and ornaments but sprinkled throughout the room was a series of very unusual trees.

One was made of different sizes of punchbowls and smaller glass bowls all turned upside down to form a triangle of sparkling glassware. Another was lamp shades of different sizes in the shape of a Christmas tree. Each shade was decorated with designs of various materials. One tiny tree, about 8 or 9 inches high, had wristwatch faces (some running, some not) attached to a cone shaped form. It has beads and jewelry among the watches. One tree is made of red and green buttons. Another is made of dominoes in the shape of a triangle. Still another was made of Scrabble letters with a religious message. The display had a star at the top and 14 lines of letters.

The amount of creativity in Blanket is rather amazing. These were not just junked up trees. They were works of art with a high quality of workmanship. "If you just throw an idea out there our members will get busy to make it happen," says Cheri. "Not just the women, but men contribute, too. One made a tree out of two handsaws. One made a shelf unit in the shape of a tree and filled it with Christmas items. One of our members made a tree from a ladder with a nativity scene under it. One 90-year-old woman made paper decorations for her tree. One youngster made a tree from a windmill and loaded it with lights. One tree is made from 300 coffee pods. We have about 50 trees anywhere from about 4 inches to 5 feet tall. We asked our members to look around and find something that might look like a Christmas tree. About 15 members came in just to brainstorm and I showed them pictures of Christmas trees of different types of material and everybody got excited. Some of these displays are real eye catchers. We've been doing this for 7 years."

Miscellaneous

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WORD SEARCH (Martin Luther King)

Find and circle all of the words related to Martin Luther King Jr. that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a Martin Luther King Jr. quote.

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FIRST RESPONDERS



A first responder is a person with specialized training who is among the first to arrive and provide assistance or incident resolution at the scene of an emergency. First responders typically include law enforcement officers (commonly known as police officers), emergency medical services members (such as EMTs or paramedics), fire service members (such as firefighters, search and rescue members, technical/heavy rescue members, etc) and Public Works employees such as Heavy Equipment Operators as well as Public Works Tree Department personnel. In some jurisdictions, emergency department personnel, such as doctors and nurses, are also required to respond to disasters and critical situations, designating them first responders; in other jurisdictions, military and security forces may also be authorized to act as first responders.

In a medical context, certified first responder is an individual who has received certification to provide pre-hospital care in a certain jurisdiction. A community first responder is a person dispatched to attend medical emergencies until an ambulance arrives. A wilderness first responder is trained to provide pre-hospital care in remote settings who has skills relevant to ad hoc patient care and transport by non-motorized means. Public Works departments are also recognized as First Responders as they are generally called to clean up natural disasters, plow snow and maintain roads as well as provide rescue support in extreme weather scenarios.

The use of the term "first responder" in the current sense first emerged in the United States in the 1970s. Perhaps the earliest uses in print occurred in two articles in The Boston Globe in August 1973, about proposed ambulance regulations in Massachusetts.

"...any police or fireman who staff a 'dual-purpose' vehicle would have to be trained to offer 'first-responder' care — that is, to stabilize a patient until more sophisticated help arrived." "The chances are even better that your emergency call will be answered by a police or fire vehicle doing double duty instead of an adequately equipped ambulance and a paramedic trained in 'first responder' care."

There were some earlier uses of "first response", though not "first responder", in this sense. They included an article in the Grand Junction Daily Sentinel in March 1972, and another about the formation of a "First Response Group" composed of volunteers in The Burlington Free Press in April 1973.

A few months after its use in the Globe, the term "first-responders" appeared in a Boston Herald article about a master plan for emergency care from the Health Planning Council of Greater Boston. One of the recommendations in the plan, reported the Herald, was that "All ambulance personnel and first-responders (who are general police and firemen) should be adequately trained in emergency care such as cardiopulmonary resuscitation."

"First-responder" was also used in a July 1974 classified advertisement for a deputy chief of EMT training—"to assist in developing and implementing statewide training programs for EMT's and first-responders"—from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

The term began appearing in newspaper articles from other parts of the United States in the second half of 1974, and was in widespread use by 1975. At some point, the dash between "first" and "responder" disappeared. Some jurisdictions have special laws defining and establishing the rights and duties of first responders.

United States

The term first responder is defined in U.S. Homeland Security Presidential Directive, HSPD-8 and reads:

The term "first responder" refers to those individuals who in the early stages of an incident are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment, including emergency response providers as defined in section 2 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. § 101), as well as emergency management, public health, clinical care, public works, and other skilled support personnel (such as equipment operators) that provide immediate support services during prevention, response, and recovery operations.

Obits



WEST OAKS FUNERAL HOME

500 Hillcrest Dr., Sulphur Springs, Tx. 75482

<http://www.westoaksfuneralhome.com>



Juanita Attaway October 19, 1930 — January 26, 2025

Funeral service for Juanita Attaway, age 94, of Winnsboro, Texas will be held at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, January 31, 2025 at First Baptist Church in Yantis, Texas. Interment will follow at Yantis Cemetery. Visitation will be held one hour prior from 1:00-2:00 p.m. at First Baptist Church in Yantis.

Ms. Attaway passed away at Whispering Pines Nursing and Rehabilitation in Winnsboro, Texas on Sunday, January 26, 2025.



Alfonso Alvarez February 22, 1999 — January 23, 2025

Alfonso was born on February 22, 1999 in Green Bay, Wisconsin to Alfonso Alvarez Sr. and Luz Fiscal. He married Alyssa Leuzinger on January 18, 2020 in Stillwater, Oklahoma. Alfonso was a barber in Sulphur Springs. He was a member of the First Church. He liked fishing and always wished he could go more. He was in the process of rebuilding a 1986 Chevy c10 that he counted down the days to drive. He was the best dad and worked way too much to always make sure they never went without. He loved his boys. He was a husband any woman wished to have.

He is survived by his wife, Alyssa; sons, Jedidiah Alfonso and Malachi Michael; mother, Luz Fiscal; father, Alfonso Alvarez Sr.; mother-in-law, Caterina Santocono; father-in-law, Michael Leuzinger; mother-in-law, Angie Leuzinger; brother-in-law, Jesse Leuzinger; sisters, Lupita Flores and husband, Isidro, Jackelyn Ontiveros and spouse, Amadeo, Yadria Alvarez, Elena Alvarez and Sara Alvarez; brother, Jesus Alvarez; niece, Nayeli Flores, and nephews, Ismael Flores, Isai Flores, Mateo Ontiveros, and Tevin Devoise. Jr.



Cuba Jean Vaughn February 29, 1948 — January 22, 2025

A funeral service for Cuba Jean Vaughn, age 76, was held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 25, 2025 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Interment followed at Rockdale Cemetery. Visitation was held one hour prior from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home.

Cuba Jean (Grubbs) Vaughn, a cherished mother and grandmother, passed away peacefully, on January 22, 2025, at the age of 76. Born on a rare leap year day, February 29, 1948, in Dallas, Texas, she will be forever 19. Cuba graced this world with her presence, a beacon of faith and love. Her unwavering dedication to her Christian faith guided her life, leaving an indelible mark on her family, friends, and church community.

Cuba found her greatest joy in serving her church and singing the praises of the Lord. Her voice, a harmonious blend of hope and devotion, resonated throughout her church, and home, uplifting souls and inspiring hearts. She did not simply sing; she worshipped and connected with divine grace through her passion for music.

Cuba was preceded in death by her father, Samuel Grubbs; mother, Opal (Kinson) Grubbs; brothers, Richard and Jackie S. Grubbs; sister, Venita (Grubbs) Riggs, son, Samuel McCarter; grandson, Harley McCarter; daughter-in-law, Karen Campbell; and husband, Wayne Vaughn.

She is survived by three children: daughter, Penny Alkire (husband David); sons, Royce Campbell and Johnny McCarter (wife Karen); grandchildren: Misty Kouba, Tiha King, Aimee Dawn, Jason Alkire, Jeremy Alkire, Joshua Alkire, Kayla Campbell, Kaylee Milbauer, Cherish Sinclair, Johnnie Dean, Joanie Dean, Mark Fanfalone, Jessica Leavitt, Jamye McCarter, Samuel J. McCarter, Bryson McCarter, Hayden Winstead, and Joseph Winstead; 24 great-grandchildren; 5 great-great grandchildren; and sisters, Linda Hammond of Quinlan, Texas and Jeanette Ely (husband Jack) of Commerce, Texas. Pallbearers were David Scribner, Jackie Grubbs, Johnnie Dean, Chad Jones, Casey King, and Jeremy Alkire.



Carol Ann Heer March 7, 1957 — January 21, 2025

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Carol Ann Heer, who left this world on January 21, 2025 after a courageous 13-year battle with Alzheimer's disease. She was surrounded by her loving family, who cherished her deeply. Born on March 7, 1957, in Dallas, Texas, to Peary and Mary Zetterlund. She was preceded in death by her parents and her brother, Barry Zetterlund.

A proud graduate of Thomas Jefferson High School, she completed her general studies at the University of Texas at Austin and then received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing at the University of Houston. Carol pursued a career in nursing, a profession that perfectly reflected her heart for service and care for others. Carol married the love of her life, Jesse Heer, on March 16, 1985. Together, they shared a beautiful and devoted marriage of nearly 40 years, building a beautiful family that she loved unconditionally.

She is survived by her husband, Jesse; her brothers, Doug Zetterlund and his wife Debbie and Roger Zetterlund; her children; Jonathan and Whitley Heer of Cameron, North Carolina, Cody and Ashley Chevalier of Cooper, Texas, Brandon Heer and Skyler Strickland of Sulphur Springs, Texas, and Dustin and Ashleigh Heer of Sulphur Springs, Texas. She was the proud grandmother to nine grandchildren, Leah, Bryson, Sadie, Landry, Corbin, Kodee, Chandler, Ally, and Miles, who brought her endless joy and pride.

Beyond her profession, Carol was known for her warm, infectious personality that could light up any room. Her laughter and kind spirit left a lasting impression on everyone she met. Above all, she was devoted to her family, pouring her love and energy into creating a home filled with joy, care, and unwavering support.

A celebration of her life was held on Saturday, January 25, at 10:00 a.m. at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Visitation was held from 6:00-8:00 p.m. on Friday, January 24, 2025 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. Her family finds comfort knowing she is at peace, her love and impact enduring forever in their hearts.

Obits Continued



Jason Ryan Good March 16, 1979 — January 21, 2025

Memorial service for Jason Good, age, 45, of Sulphur Springs, Texas will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 8, 2025 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Mr. Good passed away at his home on Tuesday, January 21, 2025.

Jason Ryan Good was born on March 16, 1979 in Arlington, Texas to Dennis and Cindy (McCarthy) Good. Jason enjoyed listening to music from the 80's as well as Rock & Roll. He loved watching and sharing movies with others. His favorites include, The Crow, Young Guns, The Outsiders, and Red Dawn. Jason had the biggest heart, always checking on people to ask how they were feeling. Jason enjoyed many trips to Sonic for his beloved favorite, Cherry Dr. Pepper and onion rings. He was an avid dog lover and loved his entire family dearly, especially his nieces and nephews. Jason will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

Jason is survived by his father, Dennis Good of Sulphur Springs, Texas; mother, Cindy Richerzhagen (Wayne) of Gun Barrel City, Texas; sister, Andrea Cannon (Kevin) of Sulphur Springs, Texas; brothers, Jerry Good (Janice) of Gilmer, Texas and Joel Good (Tonja) of Midlothian, Texas; two generations of nieces and nephews; and stepmom, Karen Good.



Myrna Loy Hatcher November 4, 1934 - January 20, 2025 (age 90)

Myrna Loy Hatcher went to rest in the arms of her Lord on January 20, 2025. She was born in Franklin County on November 4, 1934, the daughter of Raymond Douglas Glover and Lilla Alta Simpson. Also, beloved stepdaughter of Roy Lee Simpson.

Myrna was born and raised in Hopkins County. On October 30, 1948 she married Troy D. Hatcher at Sulphur Springs Church of God. The couple remained members and raised children and grandchildren in the church.

It was in her marriage, her church, her family, and with children where Myrna's light would truly shine. She enjoyed writing church plays and stories for her grandchildren, delighted in raising her children, and rejoiced in being a help mate. For a time in the 1960's, Myrna ran Hatcher's Grocery in Sulphur Springs. The family later purchased a dairy, and proudly ran it until they retired in 1993. Myrna was gracious and kind to all she met. She was full of joy and love; a gentle soul, and well known as a peacemaker. Myrna sought to bring joy to others and above all, please her Heavenly Father. She would frequently be seen praying over others and offering

a loving word to anyone in need. During each Christmas, Myrna would make sure everyone had a gift and a "Santa Sock", continuing tradition handed down from her father-in-law, Harvey E. Hatcher. She left her legacy in her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren and each life she touched.

She was preceded in death by her parents; a brother, Buddy Glover; her sisters, May Jean, Mildred, and Mary; her husband, Troy; daughter Shirley Ann; son, Troyce Wayne; and two great-grandchildren, Ethan and Charity.

She is survived by her son, Roy Lee Hatcher and wife, Patsy of Pine Forest; her granddaughters, Jodi Sorrels and husband Denton of Katy, and Casey Tucker and husband Bill of Commerce; and great-grandchildren, Nathan and wife, Madison, Troy, Lilli, Christopher, Payton and Elisha.

A funeral Services was held at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, January 24, 2025 at West Oaks Funeral Home with the Reverend Douglas Holt officiating. Serving pallbearers were Jason Frazier, Bill Tucker, Denton Sorrels, Jimmy Beck, Troy Menser, and, Johnny Whittaker. Visitation was one hour prior to the service at 1:00 p.m. Interment followed the service at North Hopkins Cemetery.

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



Birdie Smith January 14, 1939 — January 17, 2025

A funeral service for Birdie Smith, age 86, of Sulphur Springs, Texas was held at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, January 27, 2025 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. Interment followed at Sherley Cemetery. Visitation was held one hour prior from 10:00-11:00 a.m. at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Ms. Smith passed away at Rock Creek Health and Rehabilitation on Friday, January 17, 2025. Birdie Lucile McFarland Smith was born on January 14, 1939 in Lamar County, Texas to Albert Dee and Hautie May (Martin) McFarland. She married Vernon Smith in Hopkins County on May 10, 1974 and they were married until his passing. Birdie was a homemaker and caregiver to her son, Scotty Smith a paraplegic until his death in 2014. Birdie was a member of the Davis Street Baptist Church.

Often referred to as Aunt or Miss Birdie, she was special to those who knew her. Birdie's gift she so eagerly shared was to make you feel like family and welcome. When you met her, it was as if you had known her for many years. Her friendship and demeanor were second to none. Birdie never met a stranger and always had nice things to say about everyone. Those who knew her, will miss her dearly. A wise man once said — Love is not measured by how much you Love someone, Love is measured by how much you are Loved by others.

Birdie is survived by numerous nieces, nephews, and relatives; stepdaughter, Ann Tanton; special friends, Sheila Oxford and Mozelle Smith; and her family at Rock Creek Rehabilitation Facility where she resided for the last several years.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Albert Dee and Hautie May McFarland; infant son, Malcolm Paul Jones; son, Scotty Smith; husband, Vernon Smith; siblings, Vada Gooding (Jack), Guy McFarland (Virginia), Ann Jones (Arnold), Bill McFarland (Georgia), and Troy McFarland (Pat); and stepsons, Danny and Van Smith.



First responders are the backbone of emergency services: firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency medical technicians, paramedics and 911 dispatchers. These individuals are the first to arrive at the scene of emergencies, providing critical assistance and often risking their own lives to save others. Every day, across the United States, approximately 4.6 million first responders stand ready to answer the call of duty. They face a wide range of challenges, from severe weather events and chemical emergencies to fires, vehicle accidents and acts of terrorism. The work of first responders is not without its risks. Last year, according to the National Fire Protection Association, 89 firefighters in the United States died from traumatic injuries, heart attacks, strokes or aneurysms while on duty or within 24 hours of duty. Beyond the physical dangers, many first responders also grapple with the mental and emotional toll of their work, including high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder.

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