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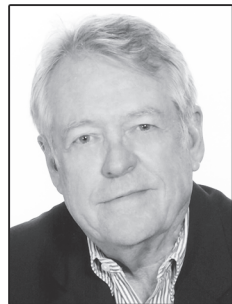
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MIKE BLUM: THE VALLEY SUPERMAN

Tumbleweed Smith

Mike Blum seems to be everywhere doing everything in the Rio Grand Valley. He lives in McAllen and knows all about the valley. He says the area covered by 11 states is smaller than the area covered by the Rio Grand Valley. "Geographically, the valley is 90 miles from east to west and 40 miles north to south. It's home to 1.2 million people in Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy and Starr Counties."



Tumbleweed Smith

Mike was McAllen's city planner, was museum president, played Santa Claus for 20 years (even though he's Jewish), is in real estate and is an active civic worker among other things. "I am a twelve-string guitar player and I've been doing music with our Sunday School kids for 30 years, teaching them Jewish songs. I love doing that."

He also plays guitar at services in his synagogue. He is Humanitarian of the Year for Easter Seals. "When I was seven years old I had polio. I only had it four days. The first day I was almost unable to move. The second day I was paralyzed. The third day things started easing up and the fourth day it was gone. I never had another problem from the polio. But in high school I realized how important it is to take care of kids who have polio and I volunteered at the American Red Cross to learn how to be a baby sitter for kids in a wheel chair or have braces on their legs."

What he really likes to do is create works of art in wood. I'll put some wood on the machine and something will come of it. I've got to have an idea going in, but sometimes the wood tells you what to do and you just let the wood talk." He goes to meetings of the Wood Turners Association where he learns new techniques and buys exotic woods. A bowl he made in a high school shop class sits on his desk. "Fifty years after I made that bowl, my daughter was having a baby in Spring, Texas. Her husband took me to what I call a big boy toy store. It was a woodcraft store. I saw a mini-lathe designed to turn pens, as in ballpoint pens. I bought it, took it home and within a matter of days I turned my first piece since I was sixteen. I was hooked. For the next ten years I made a lot of little pieces, little bowls, little nothings. Periodically I'd experiment."

He spent two years studying with a professional wood turner. He did some favors for that person and to show his appreciation he gave Mike a two thousand dollar lathe. "I can now turn 48 inches long and 18 inches in diameter."

Some of his pieces sell for thousands of dollars. He uses wood and epoxy to create a gallery of award-winning fine art. He makes lamps, vessels of all sorts and even wooden eggs that have become collectors' items.

"I have developed a skill set that allows me to look at a piece of wood and imagine what it would look like if I did this or that. I can take a piece of ugly wood, put it in a pot of epoxy, turn it and the epoxy fills in all the imperfections and you wind up with a spectacularly different piece of wood." The international Museum of Art and Science in Houston has recognized his work.

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WORD SEARCH (Astronomy)

Find and circle all of the Astronomy related words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a secret message.

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Hidden sentence: THE FIRST PERSON TO SET FOOT ON THE MOON WAS NEIL ARMSTRONG

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Wellness and Weight Maintenance: It Could Be Your Thyroid or Hormones

By Gabriela Camacho, BSN, RN-BC

Integrative Functional Health Practitioner
Omega Hydration & Wellness Services

In today's fast-paced world, weight maintenance is often oversimplified to "eat less, move more." But what if you're doing everything "right" and still can't lose weight or worse, you're gaining? The truth is, weight is a reflection of more than just calories. It's also about your body's hormonal balance, thyroid health, and overall wellness.

The thyroid gland, a small butterfly-shaped organ in your neck, plays a massive role in regulating metabolism. If your thyroid is underactive (hypothyroidism), your metabolism slows down, making weight loss extremely difficult even with diet and exercise. You may feel tired, cold, depressed, or foggy, and these symptoms are often brushed off as stress or aging. Getting a complete thyroid panel not just TSH can uncover hidden imbalances and guide targeted treatments.

Hormones such as cortisol, estrogen, progesterone, insulin, and testosterone also deeply influence your ability to maintain a healthy weight. Chronic stress elevates cortisol, which signals your body to store fat especially in the belly. Estrogen dominance or low testosterone can alter fat distribution, muscle tone, and appetite. Many women in perimenopause or menopause notice stubborn weight gain that diet alone won't fix, while men may experience fatigue and loss of muscle mass due to low testosterone.

Functional wellness focuses on identifying and treating the root causes of these imbalances. Through advanced labs, lifestyle evaluation, and integrative therapies, we can address hormone disruptions, nutrient deficiencies, gut health, and more. Wellness isn't about looking skinny it is about feeling strong, energetic, and balanced.

At Omega Hydration & Wellness, we believe that weight maintenance is a medical and metabolic issue not a moral failure. We help clients understand their body's signals and support them through customized nutrition, hormone optimization, IV therapy, and peptide treatments. The goal is sustainable wellness, not short-term dieting.

If you're frustrated with your weight despite your efforts, don't blame your willpower get your hormones checked. True health comes from the inside out.



Gabriela Camacho



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Carolyn Ann Tapp Shields

Carolyn Ann Tapp Shields, 80, of Greenville, passed away on July 12, 2025, in McKinney, Texas. Funeral services were held at 2:00 P.M., Thursday, July 17, 2025, at Coker-Mathews Funeral Home Chapel with Rev. Joel Bench officiating. Visitation was at 1:00 P.M. until service time. Interment was in Memoryland Memorial Park.

Carolyn was born July 14, 1944, in Greenville, Texas to Raymond Tapp and Cordelia Hembree Tapp. She married George Shields on February 12, 1971, in Greenville, Texas. She worked as a Health Services Paraprofessional at Greenville ISD and was a long-time member of First Baptist Church of Greenville.

She is survived by her husband, George Shields; son, Rod Cook and spouse, Terry Jones; daughters, Holly Walker and husband, Key Walker, Andrea Lucas and husband, Patrick Lucas and Becky Shields; grandchildren, Ashley and Chad Waters, Mason Lucas, Emily and Clayton Stewart, Logan and Julia Lucas, Sydney Walker, Jaxey Walker and Jude Walker; and seven great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents; son, Robert Dane Shields; and twin grandchildren, Carson and Ryley Walker.

Pallbearers were Jude Walker, Hunter Waters, Kaden Waters, Chad Waters, Clayton Stewart, Logan Lucas, and Mason Lucas.

Honorary pallbearers were Jim Folks, Ronnie Lamb and Don Garrett.

Memorials may be made to SEEK Camp, checks payable to: Megan Racca, 5905 Flint Ridge Drive, Flower Mound, Texas 75028



Raina Harlow Hernandez

Memorial service for Raina Harlow Hernandez, was held at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, July 25, 2025 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home in Sulphur Springs, Texas.

With broken hearts, we announce the passing of our beloved daughter, sister, granddaughter, niece, and light of our lives — Raina Harlow Hernandez, who left us far too soon on July 21, 2025, at just 2 years old in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Born on March 20, 2023, Raina brought immense joy and laughter to everyone she met. Her bright eyes, sweet giggles, and curious spirit touched the lives of all who knew her. Though her time on Earth was brief, Raina's impact was immeasurable — she filled her family's hearts with a love deeper than words could ever express.

Raina loved swimming, watching TV with her brothers and sister, watching House of Dragons with Papa, dancing with her big sister, watching her brothers play video games, coloring/scribbling, playing hide and seek, cheering big brother on at his baseball games, cuddling, playing with the water bottles, singing along with her Mommy, and talking to her Daddy on the phone. She looked forward to watching Bluey and Chip & Potato TV shows. She loved going to Aunt FeFe's house and seeing her Uncle Greg and his chickens. Raina is lovingly remembered by her devoted parents, Cashius Hernandez and Brittany Bridges, and her cherished siblings, Nyko, Kadius, and Blayze Hernandez. She was the treasured granddaughter of Charles "Papa" & Staci Bridges, Sonja Bridges and KeriAnne "Nana" Mills and great-granddaughter of Beverly "GAMMA" Bridges & Elizabeth Jennings. Raina was surrounded by a large, loving family and is also survived by many aunts, uncles, and cousins: Felicia "FeFe" & Gregorio Tapia, Kera & Collon Williams, Marcus & Ciara Gardner, Wesley & C.J. Bridges, Richard & Teisha Bridges, Sadie Pack, Nicole Hernandez, Violet Bridges, Andy & Brandy McCullough, Daryan Rich, Hunter Mills, Easton & Liam Williams, Elijah & Adeline Bridges, Khamila & Willow Bridges, Aiden McCullough, Jaedon & Amiah Gardner, and Jaylyn Turner, II — all of whom adored her deeply.

She was preceded in death by her Pa, Jackie Mills. Though her time with us was far too short, Raina's beautiful soul and the love she gave will remain in our hearts forever. Her memory will live on in every laugh, every butterfly, and every pink sunset and every RAE of sunshine. "Some people only walk this earth for a short time. Their departure reminds us that angels are watching over us."



Maribel Kalp

Memorial service for Maribel Kalp, age 92, of Cooper, Texas will be held at 11:00 A.M. on Saturday, August 2, 2025 at New Hope Church in Cooper, Texas. A memorial service in Pennsylvania will be held at a later date. Mrs. Kalp passed away at Wesley House Assisted Living in Sulphur Springs, Texas on Wednesday, July 23, 2025 at Wesley House Assisted Living with her son by her side.

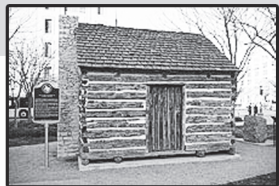
Maribel Jane Kalp (Lear) was born on February 14, 1933 in Blairsville, Pennsylvania to Elder and Mabel (Libengood) Lear. Maribel had her own business as a dog groomer for many years. She enjoyed visiting with all her clients, as well as loving on all the animals that she met. Maribel was a devoted Christian that touched many lives. She also fostered many children. Maribel "Marty" was a beacon of light for so many people in her community.

Maribel is survived by her sons, Michael and wife Suzanne of Naples, Florida, Mark and wife, Deb of Latrobe, Pennsylvania, Eric and wife, Sue of Boswell Pennsylvania, and John and wife, Kathy of Cooper, Texas; grandchildren, Richard, Stacy, AJ, Jacquelyn, Ashley, Renee, Emily, and Chelsea; step grandchildren, Kevin and Stephanie; eight great grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Maribel was preceded in death by her husband, Merle; parents Elder and Mable Lear; brother, Bill Lear and sons, Brian Kisic and Aaron Kisic.

John Neely Bryan

Founder Of City of Dallas, Texas



Replica of John Neely Bryan's cabin, Founders Plaza, Dallas, Texas.

City of Dallas Today!!



John Neely Bryan (December 24, 1810 – September 8, 1877) was a Presbyterian farmer, lawyer, and tradesman in the United States and founder of the city of Dallas, Texas.

EARLY LIFE -- Bryan was born to James and Elizabeth (Neely) Bryan in Fayetteville, Tennessee.

There, he attended the Fayetteville Military Academy and after studying law was admitted to the Tennessee Bar. Around the year 1833 he left Tennessee and moved to Arkansas, where he was an Indian trader. According to some sources, he and a business partner laid out Van Buren, Arkansas.

EXPLORING DALLAS -- Bryan visited the Dallas area in 1839, and in 1841, he established a permanent settlement, which eventually became the burgeoning city of Dallas.

ESTABLISHMENT OF DALLAS -- Bryan was very important to early Dallas — he served as the postmaster, a store owner, a ferry operator (he operated a ferry where Commerce Street crosses the Trinity River today), and his home served as the courthouse. In 1844, he persuaded J. P. Dumas to survey and plot the site of Dallas and possibly help him with the work. Bryan was instrumental in the organizing of Dallas County in 1846 and in the election by voters of Dallas as its county seat in August 1850 (over the towns of Cedar Springs and Oak Cliff). When Dallas became the county seat, Bryan donated the land for the courthouse. In 1843, he married Margaret Beeman, a daughter of the Beeman family who settled in Dallas from Bird's Fort. The couple had five children.[1] Another Beeman, John, arrived in Dallas in April 1842 and planted the first corn.

GOLD RUSH -- In 1849, Bryan went to California during the gold rush but returned within a year. In January 1853 he was a delegate to the Texas state Democratic convention. In 1855, Bryan shot a man who had insulted his wife and fled to the Creek Nation. The man he shot made a full recovery, and Bryan certainly would've been informed, but still Bryan did not return to Dallas for about six years. During that time he travelled to Colorado and California, probably looking for gold. He returned to Dallas in time to take part in a brief military expedition against the Comanche Indians in 1860.

LATE LIFE -- Bryan joined Col. Nicholas H. Darnell's Eighteenth Texas Cavalry regiment in the winter of 1861 and served with the unit until late 1862 when he was discharged due to his old age and poor health. He returned to Dallas in 1862 and again became actively involved in community affairs. In 1863, he was a trustee for the Dallas Male and Female Academy. In 1866, during a Dallas flood, he was very prominent in aiding those affected. He also chaired a citizens' meeting that pushed the Houston and Texas Central Railway to complete the railway through the city, and presided at a rally that sought to get full political rights for all ex-Confederates. In 1871 and 1872 Bryan became one of the directors of the Dallas Bridge Company, which built the first iron bridge across the Trinity River. He also stood on the platform at the welcoming ceremonies for the Houston and Texas Central Railway when the first train pulled into town in mid-July 1872.

By 1874 Bryan's mind was clearly impaired; though, it is not known exactly how. "I am the son of John Neely Bryan, now before the court," Edward T. Bryan testified on Feb. 1, 1877. "My father is insane." He was admitted to the Texas State Lunatic Asylum in February 1877 and died there on 8 September 1877. He is believed to be buried in an unmarked grave in the southeast quadrant of the Austin State Hospital Cemetery. In 2006, Bryan's descendants placed a headstone in the cemetery that reads "PVT 18 Texas CAV CSA Dec 24 1810 Sep 8 1877 Founder of Dallas Texas."

In 1954, a white granite marker honoring the Dallas founder was erected by the James Butler Bonham chapter of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas in Pioneer Cemetery (Pioneer Plaza).

A large marker bearing the name "Bryan" and displaying two "Citizen of the Republic of Texas" medallions honoring John Neely Bryan and his wife stands in Riverside Cemetery at Wichita Falls, Texas. It overlooks the graves of Margaret Beeman Bryan (1825-1919), her son John Neely Bryan, Jr. (1846-1926), and other family members.

A Texas Historical Marker "Beeman Memorial Cemetery," located east of downtown Dallas just off of Dolphin Road, states that John Neely Bryan is buried in the Beeman family plot of his wife, Margaret, and other Beeman family members. This cemetery is somewhat hard to locate, but is located just behind a large Jewish Cemetery (Shearith Israel) on Dolphin Road just south of Military Parkway.

The Bryan Pergola, standing on the Grassy Knoll in Dealey Plaza, Dallas, Texas, is named after John Neely Bryan (1810-1877), the recognized founder of the City of Dallas.

Dallas Independent School District named an elementary school after him, John Neely Bryan Elementary.

CULTURAL REFERENCES -- The concrete pergola upon which Abraham Zapruder was standing during the John F. Kennedy assassination as he made the Zapruder film was originally placed in Dealey Plaza in honor of Bryan, and is named for him. -- The Grassy Knoll and Bryan pergola in Dealey Plaza. -- Historical Marker for Bryan.

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