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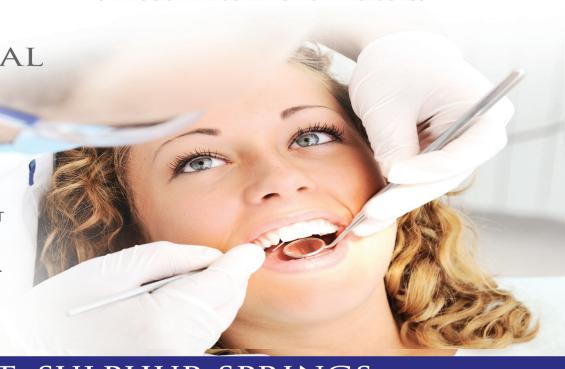
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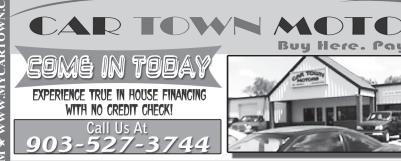
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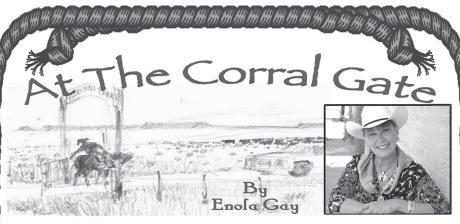
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"I want to live fast, love hard, die young! and leave a beautiful memory". Remember that golden country oldie? Good dance able, listenable LIVE country music, at least in our locale, is not as easy to find as it used to be. Not that many years ago, there were several "country bands" who would come to your place and put on entertainment for a dance or event. Now, there's only a few bands still carrying on the tradition. These play a combination of two-step, three-step, waltz and various other slow and fast tempos that dancers identify with. I know one band which will play for New Year's Dance in Hopkins County....Gale Hague and Lone Star Express on Dec 31 at the Arbala Community Center. Go and have a great, wholesome time.

So what is "co

So what is "country music" anyway? It's a matter of opinion. It's hard to define country music, partly because it began life as a hybrid. It had life breathed into it from bluegrass, mountain music, western, rock n roll, folk, zydeco and other influences. And then, it grew up to produce numerous sub-genres that you hear on the radio today....red dirt, classic, alternative, "new country", etc....so there is, and never truly was, any such thing as "pure country". The country sound that to each of us is "country" as we knew it, is what we crave to hear again. We are connected to the memories those songs made for us. That's the real reason why country music is "gold".

### "CHRISTMAS AND COUNTRY" Concert At Reilly Springs!







I'm, going to acquaint you with a country singer who is new to NE Texas, but not new to musical success. He is Tony Ramey, award-winning Nashville songwriter with tours, 3 CD's, movie sound tracks and a duet with Willie to his credit. He lives just north of Greenville, and tonyrameymusic.com is based largely from his home studio. His wife is also a singer, and performs on the Wylie Opry and other Metroplex venues, and his teen-age daughter Savannah is in the beginning phases of a launch of her singing career. They are indeed a country music family, and Tony is the REAL DEAL and a nice guy to boot. Influence for his story-songs take you from rodeos, prisons, long lonesome roads and hot dirty jobs, tragic AND happy love relationships, his Dad's teachings and Mom's love, and his family today. So, get ready to enjoy country music close to home, when Tony appears at the Reilly Springs Jamboree on Saturday December 20. He's bringing along Commerce-based award-winning musician Brad Davis who has toured with Marty Stuart and other Nashville names. Tony talked about the show in a recent phone interview with Tony by journalist Cindy Roller. "This is awesome. It will be an honor to be a part of history. It's a huge treat. You can feel a cool vibe in these historical venues (like Reilly Springs.) I'm enjoying Texas...the music part of the country. I've been writing stories since I was eight years old. Most of my songs are story-driven." Tony's most recent projects include the movie sound track to "The Last Ride" which depicts the last days of Hank Williams Sr.'s life, his song "The Bible, The Bottle and The Gun" which Willie Nelson duets on, and which will be included in his newest (fourth!) CD project "Sole Survivor" due out in early 2015. Please attend the Reilly Springs Christmas and Country Jamboree on Saturday December 20 and you'll be raving about Tony Ramey too. Also see and hear "The Haystacks" Teen Choir, Shea Birdwell and folk minstrel Victor Casad, all for a \$10 ticket price. Plus, the Reilly Springs Kitchen serves the best homemade desserts in three counties!

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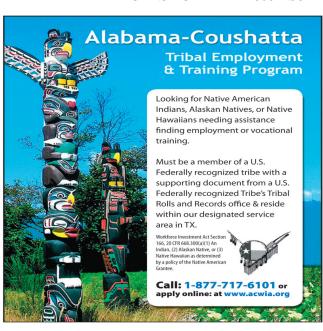
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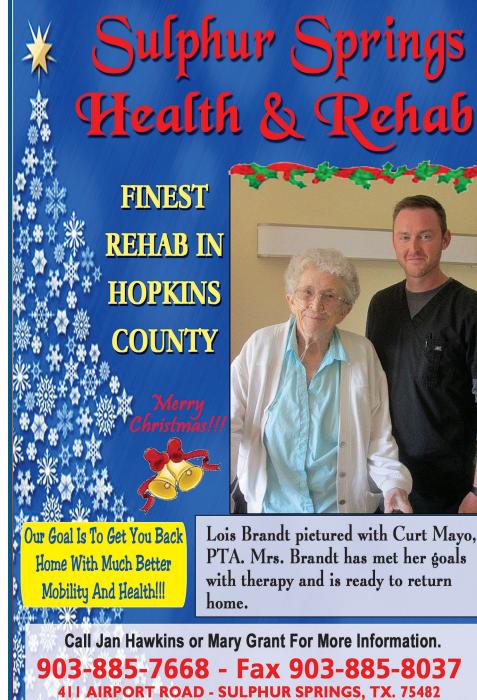
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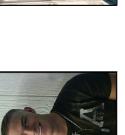


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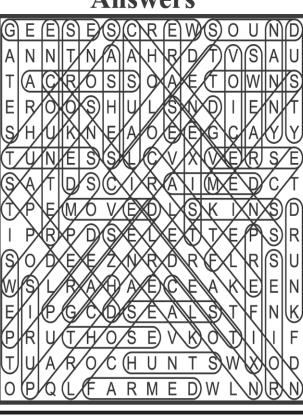
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I don't know how old Tom Neely is, but he gets around like a spring chicken. He lives on a ranch in the mountains ten miles west of Sierra Blanca. He's had about four careers involving everything from owning a grocery store to being a court bailiff. He's involved in every historical group West of the Pecos. He writes a weekly newspaper column and is a lay minister in his church. He's an amazing storyteller and plays **Tumbleweed Smith** Santa Claus to kids in Hudspeth County. We'll take the seasonal topic here.

"I have a real beard that I start growing in July," says Tom. "And believe it or not, the kids know that. In fact, one time out at Dell City I was walking toward the school and a bunch of little ones came out to see me. One little boy looked at me, turned around and said, 'it's the real Santa. He has a real beard.""

Tom started playing Santa ten years ago at the request of the newly elected sheriff, who was once a student in a school where Tom's wife was a teacher. "He decided to start gathering up money from wherever he could all year so he could go buy presents for all the kids from Headstart through the fifth grade. He approached me to be Santa Claus and hand out the presents."

Tom has worn out one Santa suit and has just acquired a new one. He'll use it for the first time this year. "That first ear I borrowed one from somebody. Then I bought one and used it until last year. This new one is really nice."

His arrivals at schools are spectacular. "The sheriff's office coordinates with the DPS. When the weather permits and if the helicopter is not involved in a chase somewhere they come pick us up in the DPS helicopter. We fly to Fort Hancock and land behind the school. Little kids are out there jumping up and down, screaming and hollering and we're blowing dust all over them as we land. Then we go in the building and pass out the presents. Then we get back in the helicopter and go to Sierra Blanca and land on the football field. Sometimes we pass out the presents in the stadium and sometimes if the weather is bad we go inside. Then we fly up to Dell City, which is seventy miles north and do the same thing up there. Usually we get all of that done in one day. Everything is coordinated with the schools."

Tom's wife Winnie plays Mrs. Claus and is on hand to help pass out the gifts, which are age and gender appropriate. And he has other helpers. "Ladies who work in the sheriff's office dress up in Elf costumes and help out, doing anything they can. I've got the best gig in the world. Everybody else does all the work and I get to have all the fun. All I do is talk to the kids, give the a present and wish them a Merry Christmas."

Tom plans to play Santa a long time. "It's a lot of fun. We get a big kick out

Tumbleweed Smith is a folklorist, humorist and oral historian who lives in Big Spring with his wife Susan. Contact him at ts@tumbleweedsmith.com

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### Maria DeLourdes Moreno

Funeral services for Maria De Lourdes Moreno, age 43, of Sulphur Springs were conducted at 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 16, 2014 at West Oaks Funeral Home with Father Juan Carlos Sardinas officiating.

There was no formal visitation.

Mrs. Moreno passed away Saturday, December 13, 2014.

Mrs. Moreno was born in Mexico City, Mexico on June 6, 1971 the daughter of Jesus Alcantara and Maria Martha Cer vantes. She married Honorio Moreno and he survives. Mrs. Moreno was a homemaker and a member of St. James Catholic Church.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her children, Carolina Moreno, Israel Moreno, Daniel Moreno and Diego Moreno all of Sulphur Springs, her mother, Maria Martha Alcantara of Dallas, brothers and sisters, Margarita Perez, David Alcantara, Antonio Alcantara, Beatriz Buduen, and Jesus Alcantara all of Dallas.

She was preceded in death by her father. Arrangements were under the direction of West Oaks Funeral Home.

### **Robert Valton Mason**

Robert Valton Mason, age 78, of Point, died Friday, Dec. 12, 2014, at Presbyterian Hospital of Kaufman.

Mr. Mason was born in Bayou on April 19, 1936, to N.J. and Ethel Jane Rice Mason. He married Bertie Inez Mitchell in Kirbhyville on Feb. 13, 1954. Mr. Mason was a hard working man, and a good provider for his family. He will be greatly missed.

Survivors: Wife: Inez Mason of Point 2 sons: Jerry Mason (Vicky) of Point and Jeff Mason (Elizabeth) of Katy Sister: Fay Mason; Grandchildren: Jerrice, Inez, Michael, Sara, and David; Great-grandchildren: 7

He was preceded in death by his parents, 4 brothers, Robert, Marcus, William, Marvin 5 sisters, Hazel, Ethel, Ferle, Mary Ola, and Ruby. Cremation arrangements are under the direction of Wilson-Orwosky Funeral Home.



### **Modis Robinson McMillan**

Funeral service for Modis Robinson McMillan, age 88, of Emory, were held at 11:00 am, Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2014, at Emory Baptist Church. Rev. Willie R. Byrd officiated. Burial followed in Hopewell Cemetery.

Visitation was from 6:00-8:00 pm Tuesday evening at Wilson-Orwosky Funeral Home.

Mrs. McMillan died early Friday morning, Dec. 12, 2014, in Mesquite, at Willow Bend Nursing and Rehabilitation She was born Dec. 13, 1925, in Emory, to Henry and Lucy Bridges Robinson. She married Alfred Cliftord McMillan, Sr., in Emory. Mrs. McMillan was a housewife, and operator of A.C. McMillan African -America Museum in Emory.

Left to cherish her memories: Sons: Alfred Clifton McMillan, Jr. of Emory and Harold Dale McMillan of Austin; Daughter: Gwendolyn McMillan Lawe (Theodore) of Dallas; Grandchildren: Yolanda Edwards, April McMillan, Stacye Hargrove, Sylvia Lawe Williams, and Hayes McMillan Great-grandchildren: Mechelle Edwards, Mitchell Edwards, II, Taylor McMillan, Timothy McMillan, Preston Lawe, Blair Williams, Sydney Hargrove, Aaron Hargrove, and William Hargrove

She was preceded in death by: parents; and all of her siblings: Elma Hobbs, Virgie Potter, Lonnie Robinson, Loda Kendrick, Gletha Davis,

Ozell Robinson, Lorenza Robinson, and Choycie Robinson; Great-grandchild: Mitchell Edwards, III

Funeral arrangements were under the direction of Wilson-Orwosky Funeral Home.

### **Mae Thomas Dial**

Mae Thomas Dial, 63, of Sulphur Springs passed away Monday, December 15, 2014 at her residence. Arrangements are pending with West Oaks Funeral Home



### **Larry Spradlin**

Funeral services for Larry Joe Spradlin, age 61, of Sulphur Springs were conducted at 10:00 a.m., Saturday, December 13, 2014 at Posey Baptist Church with Rev. Joe Perkins officiating and Jack Newsom assisting. Interment followed at Posey Cemetery with John Vaughn, Tim Spiva, Jim Anderson, Marty Spradlin, Jason Kennedy, Jerry Brandonburgh, Andy Wright, Robert VanWinkle, Ronny Glossup and Weldon Glossup serving as pallbearers. Honorary pallbearers were Lance Looney, Ron Stanley, Tommy Long, Tom Glossup, Clint Spiva, Cody Spiva and the Monday Night Guitar Jammers.

Visitation was from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., Friday, December 12, 2014 at Posey Baptist Church.

Larry was born on December 10, 1953 in Marysville, CA, the son of Howard "Buddy" Spradlin and Truman "Trudy"
Ballard Spradlin. He married Sherri Glossup on March 23, 1978 in Sulphur Springs. She survives. Larry was an Ag teach-

er at North Hopkins ISD, he was a dairyman, and managed Cattleman's Feed Store and was the Hopkins County Extension Agent. He was a member of NETLA and NETBIO and a member of Posey Baptist Church. Larry also served on the North Hopkins School Board.

In addition to his wife Larry is survived by two daughters, Stacy Spradlin Hrabal and husband Michael of Sulphur Springs and Haley Spradlin Ross and husband John of Bogata, mother, Trudy Spradlin of Talco, brother, Marty Spradlin of Talco, sister Sue Witt of Pittsburg, grandchildren, Jalyn and Hadlee Hrabal of Sulphur Springs and Jake and Judd Ross of Bogata.

He was preceded in death by his father.

Memorials may be made to Posey Baptist Church Building Fund, 4620 FM 71 West, Sulphur Springs, TX 75482.

### **Barbara Chambers**

Funeral arrangements for Barbara Chambers of Sulphur Springs are pending with Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. Barbara Chambers past away Tuesday, December 17, 2014, at Carriage House Manor in Sulphur Springs.

The online register can be signed at: www.murrayorwosky.com



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