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Jeanne's Fancy Pecans in Lamesa makes pralines, patties and other items. "We make small pecan pies, called minis," says Gene DeFee, who owns the place with her sister Nan Ellis. "Around Christmas time we sell chocolate covered toffee, pecan brittle, peanut brittle and Texas Treasures, which is a chocolate covered praline."

Gene will make you a special Christmas gift basket of goodies, and ship it to wherever you want it to go. "Our baskets go all over the country," says Gene. "I'm sure there's a few state that are missing, but our stuff goes pretty far and wide."

A seven-inch basket in the shape of Texas has 5 chewy pralines and sells for \$17.75. A basket with five Texas Treasures sells for \$22.75. If you want to go smaller, a six-ounce bag of flavored pecans sells for \$8. A six-ounce bag of chocolate toffee sells for \$8.

I asked Gene if she ships out every day. She was quick to respond. "We only work three days a week, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. We ship out at least two of those days. We usually ship out on Wednesday so we can leave early on Thursday."

And it gets even better. "My sister Nan and I trade out. She works on Tuesday and I work on Wednesday then we trade out on Thursday. Whoever doesn't work on Thursday has to deliver to Midland, Odessa or Lubbock."

I'd call that a sweet kind of a deal: work less than half the time and have a wonderful business making and selling candy. Nan agrees. "Well, we're all old and none of us want to work full time."

The pecans come from Comanche. "We get about forty thirty-pound boxes of pecans every two weeks."

The company, located across the street from Lamesa's Chamber of Commerce, started in 1998. It has no internet presence. "People just look at the label, get our number and call us. We take orders over the phone."

Susanna Valenzuela has worked there sixteen years and turns out 1,800 pralines a day. She likes working there.

"It's not a stressful job," she says, while laughing. "We enjoy each others company and love working just three days a week, really two and a half."

Susanna and a helper start making pralines at seven AM. Gene and/or Nan come in about nine. "We all leave at four. Christmas time we work five to seven days a week."

Before buying the company, Gene had other jobs. "Dental hygienist, insurance agent, secretary and county treasurer. This is the most fun job I've ever had."

She loves to see people enjoy her products, but she doesn't partake. "I don't eat candy because I don't like nuts and stuff."

www.tumbleweedsmith.com

THE IDLE AMERICAN

Comments on This and That...

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

Two successful football figures who seem "unperturbable" are TV sports analyst Tony Dungy and Kansas State University Coach Bill Snyder. At ages 61 and 77, respectively, they remain vibrant, respected and poised. (Someone said when common sense, values and fairness were handed out, these two men may have gone through the line twice.)

No argument here. They are great by any measure. At K-State--where Snyder has been head coach twice-- games are played in "Bill Snyder Family Stadium." (You can be sure he had a hand in the decision to add "family" to the name.)

Dungy, former pro player and longtime National Football League coach, is spokesman for a program to help fathers. It's called All Pro Dads' Day...

In short, in the es-

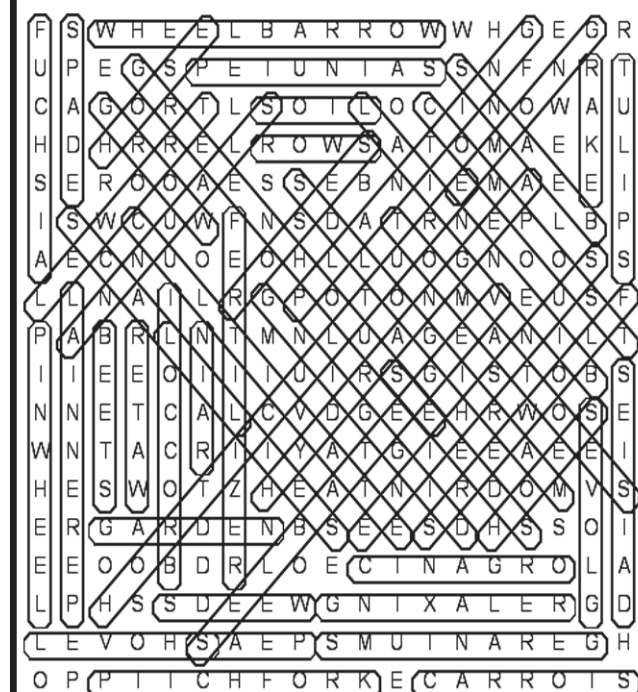
sence of the old E. F. Hut-ton commercial, "when Dungy and Snyder talk, we listen." If we fail to do so, we probably should join Little Jack Horner in the corner, without a Christmas pie.

I thought of these men the other day upon hearing about Carolina Panthers' star quarterback threatening to speak to

the commissioner about game officials' failure to protect quarterbacks. "I don't even feel safe anymore," Cam Newton said

Without regard for whether he is right or wrong, upon learning of his frustration, I wondered: What would Snyder or Dungy do?...

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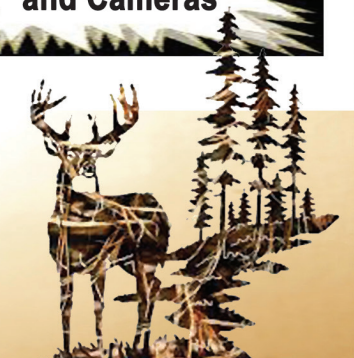
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At The Corral Gate



By
Enola Gay



You don't have to stray far from the corral gate or the front porch to find other country-lovin' folks like yourself, ones that enjoy the land, the animals and the people who steward both. Here's a few of these special people I have encountered lately.

Miss Gracie Beech is an FFA Officer in the Yantis, Texas school chapter. She was a delegate to the National FFA Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana during October. That same month, she attended the Leadership Development Event (LDE) for area FFA'ers on the campus of Texas A and M Commerce. There were 35 different chapters attending and each brought numerous members. I ran into Gracie there when I was serving as a Radio Contest judge at the invitation of Molly Maroney, an Ag Education major and co-coordinator of the broadcast portion of LDE. Gracie Beech will be running for a State FFA office soon, and represents Yantis well. Let's show appreciation for these Ag youth whenever and wherever we see the purple jackets!



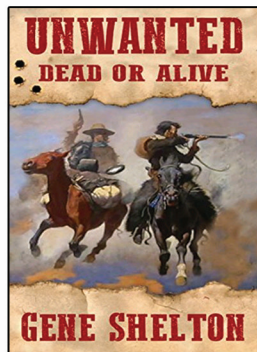
Gracie Beech and Enola Gay

I recently visited Cross Spur Cowboy Church in the Pleasant Grove community of Hopkins County. I was warmly welcomed then seated amid a crush of western and country folk who are members and guests. Their church is nearly splitting it's seams! There are lots of families with children. I hear they want to build a new facility out near their arena, but also want to do it debt-free, so I applaud their initiative for saving up. Currently the Cross Spur congregation meets in the tall, wooden 126-year-old Pleasant Grove church/community center built in 1890. The Pleasant Grove Cemetery is on the grounds. My visit on November 6 happened to be the 7th anniversary of the formation of Cross Spur, so I snapped a photo for you. You'd be welcome to visit anytime too, at 953 CR 4759 on Sundays at 10:30 and Wednesday nights at 7pm.



Pastor Mike Easdon and Music Director Jack Newsome

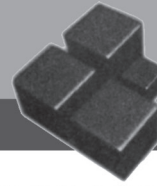
Our Western-writer friend Gene Shelton has roped in another top score! A lifelong journalist, Gene makes his home in Sulphur Springs with his wife and continues to create quality western fiction. However, for a second time, an older manuscript of his has captured best-seller status on Amazon. First it was his historic fiction Houston Madam, revived from the dust of paperbacks on the shelf to best-seller e-book status earlier this year. Now it's a 2-book series How the West Was Lost and Unwanted Dead or Alive that's got a 4-and-a-half star-rating this week. The adventures of Buck and Dobie are hilarious while staying true to the cowboy era, and according to Gene, quite factual. Gene should know! He bases more than a few of their escapades on antics of his own as a young man working on a Texas ranch. And, through new writings, Gene continues to ride the range via his word processor. Congratulations Gene... just goes to show, good old cowboy stories never die! Don't know about old cowboys. Oh...find his 2-book set on Amazon and saddle up with Gene!



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