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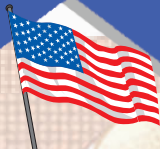
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THE IDLE AMERICAN

'Mind's Eye' Vision 20/20...

Commentary by Dr. Don Newbury

You may recall "been so, be my guest. Mine there/done that" experiences differently. If you close out the old

year as you choose. It is, after all, your life, and only a few hours remain before peals of 2017 bells are heard.

During an aborted springtime trip to San Diego--one of the world's most beautiful cities--I beheld the grandeur with just one eye. It was a strange way to awaken that fateful morning. Loss of half my vision overnight was not anticipated.

Dashed were plans to explore a city where all seasons yield to spring. Taking priority were plans to change

plane reservations for a return home to the Metroplex ASAP....

Back home, Dr. Parchue--an ophthalmologist whose name sounds like a sneeze--diagnosed a damaged and detached retina. Within hours, he had performed surgery, and my pilgrimage back to restored vision--albeit slower than preferred--was underway.

Caring friends asked if I'd been a wreck or sustained a blow to the head.

"Can't anything be the result of high mileage?" I countered....

It's a plus that the "mind's eye" is 20-20. Heading the recall list is akin to "California dreaming." To some readers, my memories of a shortened trip may seem to be in an unlikely order.

We had spent our last "full vision" day at the San Diego Zoo, SeaWorld and beach walking near the San Diego Hilton Resort and Spa, where the grounds were awash in greenery, flowers and leisurely walkways.

What we most remember, however, were not "up close" visits to destinations featured in travel brochures. Instead, we recall the joy of children being children. Some busied themselves in simple joys of pursuing a mother duck with her ducklings. Others were enthralled by a collection of dogs, cats,

birds and pigs. The "collection"--at least a large majority--has one thing in common. Before they were trained for "stardom," they were shelter-adopted animals....

The children seemed oblivious to promotions, particularly at SeaWorld, where Shamu's whale act is ending its long run this year. Of course, the youngsters joined adults in applauding Shamu.

Their prolonged clapping, however, was for the rescue animals.

And why not? These "lesser stars"--devoid of pedigrees and portfolios--performed as if their lives depended on flawless performances. Maybe it is more likely they anticipated pet treats awaiting them at acts' end....

Back to the ducks. As the sun was in descent's final rays, I chose to "sit a spell" on a hotel bench. I marveled at my wife's careful inspection of numerous flowering plants. She even spelled their names so convincingly that I would have challenged anyone suggesting corrections.

Soon to command my attention, however, were a couple of tykes, likely brother and sister. The older was perhaps six years of age; the other, around four. They fell behind a mother duck and her 10 trailing ducklings.

They mostly kept a safe distance a few

paces behind. When the mother duck accelerated, her brood scampered to keep pace, and so did the children. I resisted the temptation to pick up a duckling for the children to feel their soft yellow down. I did, however, reseat myself several times as they paraded up and down walkways. As dusk drew in, the parents herded the children toward the restaurant. The youngsters looked back, however, for final glimpses of the little ducklings as they followed their mother, waddling away into the night....

I was grateful for my doctor's dismissal some three months later. Surgery had been successful, and vision in my damaged eye was at least 95% renewed.

It's a grand feeling, at year's end, to enjoy reasonable vision and generally good health.

There's much for which to be thankful, including the "mind's eye," which seems never to age. I intend to depend on all three eyes in 2017, however, and wish for you and yours good health and much happiness....

Don Newbury is a speaker in the Dallas/Fort Worth Metroplex. Inquiries/comments to: newbury@speakerdoc.com. Phone: 817-447-3872. Web site: www.speakerdoc.com.

Answers to Word Search grid with words like SWAN, GEM, CRACK, etc.

DOWNTOWN SULPHUR SPRINGS IS CHANGING

Tumbleweed Smith



Tumbleweed Smith

If you go to Sulphur Springs and haven't been there in a while, you'll notice downtown is a totally new place, with interesting restaurants, bars, shops and apartments. You might think you're in Key West or maybe even France.

"We made the sidewalks wider and the street narrower," says city manager Marc Maxwell. Sometimes people complain about how narrow Main Street is because it's the narrowest of all the streets downtown. But a lot of times when they're complaining they're sitting at a café table outside on Main Street enjoying a meal or a drink."

The transformation of downtown Sulphur Springs started eight years ago when the city was trying to figure out a way to get people downtown, especially at night. Since the city has 200 events, city leaders decided to call Sulphur Springs Celebration City.

"We're sitting on Celebration Plaza right now. We don't refer to it as the square anymore. From spring through fall every Friday and Saturday night there's something to do downtown. Friday night we show movies and Saturday night is the market itself. Vendors sell produce, prepared food and all kinds of crafts."

Celebration Plaza has computerized lights and sound.

"All the trees have lights underneath them and we can even synchronize them to music. During Christmas we put on a beautiful light show with music that can be heard all over downtown. We're trying to create the magic that makes people want to come downtown."

Downtown property values have gone through the roof since the renovations started. Previous vacant or burned buildings are now thriving businesses.

"We're working our way around the plaza, making changes in the streets leading to it. Each time we begin a new phase, there is a wave of investment downtown. People are buying buildings, restoring them, and moving businesses into them. It's to the point now that it really has its own momentum. We don't have to get out there and push. We used to recruit for restaurants like mad, trying to entice them to come downtown. We don't do that anymore. They come to us."

One of the owners of a downtown business drives a Tesla automobile.

"We're now getting a Tesla charging station. We'll be the only such facility between Dallas and Hot Springs, Arkansas. People that buy these hundred thousand dollar Teslas have to come here to charge and they have an hour on their hands. What are they going to do? They'll shop, right?"

Downtown Sulphur Springs has a theater that has half a dozen live shows a year.

"We're trying to get them to do more. When there's a play going on it doubles the activity downtown."

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FAMOUS TEXANS

Debbie Reynolds



Mary Frances "Debbie" Reynolds (April 1, 1932 – December 28, 2016) was an American actress, singer, businesswoman, film historian, and humanitarian. She was nominated for the Golden Globe Award for Most Promising Newcomer for her portrayal of Helen Kane in the 1950 film *Three Little Words*, and her breakout role was her first leading role, as Kathy Selden in *Singin' in the Rain* (1952). Other successes include *The Affairs of Dobie Gillis* (1953), *Susan Slept Here* (1954), *Bundle of Joy* (1956 Golden Globe nomination), *The Catered Affair* (1956 National Board of Review Best Supporting Actress Winner), and *Tammy and the Bachelor* (1957), in which her performance of the song "Tammy" reached number one on the Billboard music charts. In 1959, she released her first pop music album, entitled *Debbie*.

She starred in *How the West Was Won* (1963), and *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* (1964), a biographical film about the famously boisterous Molly Brown. Her performance as Brown earned her a nomination for the Academy Award for Best Actress. Her other films include *The Singing Nun* (1966), *Divorce American Style* (1967), *What's the Matter with Helen?* (1971), *Charlotte's Web* (1973), *Mother* (1996) (Golden Globe nomination), and *In & Out* (1997). Reynolds was also a cabaret performer. In 1979 she founded the Debbie Reynolds Dance Studio in North Hollywood, which still operates today.

In 1969 she starred on television in *The Debbie Reynolds Show*, for which she received a Golden Globe nomination. In 1973 Reynolds starred in a Broadway revival of the musical *Irene* and was nominated for the Tony Award for Best Lead Actress in a Musical. She was also nominated for a Daytime Emmy Award for her performance in *A Gift of Love* (1999) and an Emmy Award for playing Grace's mother Bobbi on *Will & Grace*. At the turn of the millennium, Reynolds reached a new younger generation with her role as Aggie Cromwell in Disney's *Halloweentown* series. In 1988 she released her autobiography titled, *Debbie: My Life*. In 2013, she released a second autobiography, *Unsinkable: A Memoir*.

Reynolds also had several business ventures, including ownership of a dance studio and a Las Vegas hotel and casino, and she was an avid collector of film memorabilia, beginning with items purchased at the landmark 1970 MGM auction. She served as president of The Thaliens, an organization dedicated to mental health causes. Reynolds continued to perform successfully on stage, television, and film into her eighties. In January 2015, Reynolds received the Screen Actors Guild Life Achievement Award. In 2016 she received the Academy Awards Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award. In the same year, a documentary about her life was released titled *Bright Lights: Starring Carrie Fisher and Debbie Reynolds*; the film is scheduled to air on HBO on January 7, 2017.

On December 28, 2016, Reynolds was hospitalized at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center following a medical emergency, which her son Todd Fisher later described as a "severe stroke". She died that afternoon one day after the death of her daughter Carrie Fisher.

EARLY LIFE:

Mary Frances Reynolds was born on April 1, 1932, in El Paso, Texas, to Maxene "Minnie" (née Harman) and Raymond Francis "Ray" Reynolds, a carpenter for the Southern Pacific Railroad. She was of Scottish-Irish and English ancestry and was raised in a strict Nazarene church. She had a brother two years her senior. Reynolds was a Girl Scout, once saying that she wanted to die as the world's oldest living Girl Scout. Her father was a ditchdigger and her mother took in laundry for income, while they lived in a shack on Magnolia Street, in El Paso. "We may have been poor," she said, "but we always had something to eat, even if Dad had to go out on the desert and shoot jackrabbits."

One of the advantages of having been poor is that you learn to appreciate good fortune and the value of a dollar, and poverty holds no fear for you because you know you've gone through it and you can do it again...But we were always a happy family and a religious one. And I'm trying to inculcate in my children the same sense of values, the same tone that my mother gave to me.

Her family moved to Burbank, California, in 1939. While a sixteen-year old high school student, she won the Miss Burbank beauty contest in 1948. Soon after, she had a contract with Warner Bros. and acquired the nickname "Debbie" via Jack L. Warner. One of her closest high school friends said that she rarely dated during her teenage years in Burbank.

"They never found her attractive in school. She was cute, but sort of tomboyish, and her family never had any money to speak of. She never dressed well or drove a car. And, I think, during all the years in school, she was invited to only one dance."

Reynolds agreed, saying that "when I started, I didn't even know how to dress. I wore dungarees and a shirt. I had no money, no taste and no training." Her friend adds I say this in all sincerity. Debbie can serve as an inspiration to all young American womanhood. She came up the hard way, and she has a realistic sense of values based on faith, love, work and money. Life has been kind to her because she has been kind to life. She's a young woman with a conscience, which is something rare in Hollywood actresses. She also has a refreshing sense of honesty.

CAREER: FILM and TELEVISION:

Reynolds was first discovered by talent scouts from Warner Brothers and MGM who were at the 1948 Miss Burbank contest. Both wanted her to sign up with their studio and had to flip a coin to see which one got her. Warner won the coin toss, and she was with the studio for two years. When Warner Brothers stopped producing musicals, she moved to MGM.

With MGM, Reynolds regularly appeared in movie musicals during the 1950s and had several hit records during the period. Her song "Aba Daba Honeymoon" (featured in the film *Two Weeks with Love* (1950) as a duet with Carleton Carpenter) was a top-three hit in 1951.

Her performance in the film greatly impressed the studio, which then gave her a co-starring role in what would become her highest-profile film, *Singin' in the Rain* (1952), a satire on movie making in Hollywood during the transition from silent to sound pictures. It co-starred Gene Kelly, whom she called a "great dancer and cinematic genius," adding, "He made me a star. I was 18 and he taught me how to dance and how to work hard and be dedicated." In 1956 she appeared in *Bundle of Joy* with her then-husband, Eddie Fisher.

In 2000, Reynolds took up a recurring voice role on the children's television program *Rugrats*, playing the grandmother of two of the characters. In 2001 she co-starred with Elizabeth Taylor and Shirley MacLaine in *These Old Broads*, a television movie written for her by her daughter, Carrie Fisher. She had a cameo role as herself in the 2004 film *Connie and Carla*. In 2013 she appeared in *Behind the Candelabra*, as the mother of Liberace.

MUSIC CAREER and CABARET:

Her recording of the song "Tammy" (1957; from *Tammy and the Bachelor*), earned her a gold record, and was the best-selling single by a female vocalist in 1957. It was number one for five weeks on the Billboard pop charts. In the movie (the first of the Tammy film series), she co-starred with Leslie Nielsen.

For ten years, she headlined for about three months a year in Las Vegas's Riviera Hotel. She enjoyed live shows even though that type of performing "was extremely strenuous," she said. Reynolds' last album was a Christmas record with Donald O'Connor entitled *Chrissy the Christmas Mouse*.

MARRIAGES and LATER LIFE:

Reynolds was married three times. Her first marriage was to singer Eddie Fisher in 1955. They became the parents of Carrie (1956–2016) and Todd Fisher (1958). The couple divorced in 1959 when Fisher had an affair with Elizabeth Taylor shortly after the death of Taylor's husband Mike Todd; Taylor and Reynolds were good friends at the time. The Eddie Fisher – Elizabeth Taylor affair caused a serious public scandal, which led to the cancellation of Eddie Fisher's television show.

Reynolds' second marriage, to millionaire businessman Harry Karl, lasted from 1960 to 1973. For a period during the 1960s, she stopped working at the studio on Friday afternoons to attend Girl Scout meetings, since she was the leader of the Girl Scout Troop of which her 13-year-old daughter Carrie and her stepdaughter Tina Karl, also 13, were members. Reynolds later found herself in financial difficulty because of Karl's gambling and bad investments. Reynolds' third marriage was to real estate developer Richard Hamlett from 1984 to 1996.

Courtesy of Wikipedia

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Tune in for Afternoon Drive 4 - 6pm Weekdays



Readers of this article know I love music about as much as I love my horses and my grandkids. I am proud to announce that not one, but two of our local musical youth have important career events coming up during January 2017.

Jack Phillips is an 11-year-old sixth-grade student at a small country school in Hopkins County, and he is on his way to becoming a professional fiddler. Jack's parents Mark and Allison Phillips starting noticing his interest in stringed instruments at an early age. By the time he was 5 years old, he had a quarter-size fiddle and already knew the names of the best Western Swing fiddlers he'd listened to. When his parents took him to concerts he watched the bands with rapt attention. At one outdoor festival, he took a chair onto the dance floor right to the edge of the stage and sat watching the fiddler while dancers whirled around him. That's when he knew what he wanted to do in life, and his family has supported his interest by driving him to lessons, workshops and music camps in addition to concerts all over the State. At age 9, Jack put on his first Western Swing Roundup at the Reilly Springs Jamboree. Two years and miles and miles later, he was ready to record his first CD in the Bob Wills style. His parents helped him reach out for the best musicians and vocalists to appear on the project. In the studio, Jack provided all the fiddle work on the 12 songs, also mandolin and guitar on some selections, and most of the vocals. The project, entitled "Jack Phillips", was just completed in late December 2016. It's first release event will be for home folks, of course!



That's Saturday January 7 at 12 noon at the new (old) Sulphur Bluff store, now Bear Country Store. Come get your CD and meet Jack Phillips, his family, store owners Billy Emerson and Brad Cecil and manager Sally Causey. The celebration will also include a BBQ lunch!



Josh Davis is another youthful entertainer from Hopkins County who has a lot going for him! During January 2017, he will be part of the entertainment lineup on an Elvis Carnival Cruise departing from Galveston. Now age 21, Josh appears across the South as an ETA (Elvis Tribute Artist) with his own entertainment company. His fan club follows him to most public events and his calendar stays pretty full. He also stages shows as Buddy Holly and as Roy Orbison for private and corporate events, fundraisers and concerts. His collection of elaborate costumes has changed in size as he has grown, and it now takes several closets to store them. Josh's special love is for the gospel and spiritual songs of Elvis. Like Jack, Josh also displayed interest in public performance at an early age and has been assisted by his parents Gary and Debbie Davis in fulfilling his dreams.

When you have a chance, catch performances of these dedicated young men who are carrying on the traditions of America's most beloved music. You can take pride in knowing them because of the professionalism and good taste that is evident at their shows. As we take baby steps into this new year, I want to wish you happiness, wealth and glowing good health! Til next week, I'll watch for you at the corral gate!

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WORD SEARCH

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 C H E R L B T B N O U N U I
 P T G E R R K I U L C R C M
 E E I O A A M C T D K L O H
 L E P M S A P U A E G C A U
 I K O W L T R S Y L K I M F
 C A L F H E R O N I B E E O
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| BLACKBIRD | EAGLE | MARTIN | ROBIN |
| BUDGIE | EMU | MOCKINGBIRD | SEAGULL |
| CANARY | FALCON | MYNA | SPARROW |
| CARDINAL | FINCH | OSTRICH | SWAN |
| CHICKEN | FLAMINGO | OWL | TURKEY |
| CRANE | GOOSE | PARAKEET | VULTURE |
| CROW | HAWK | PARROT | WOODPECKER |
| DODO | HERON | PELICAN | WREN |
| DOVE | JAY | PIGEON | |
| DUCK | MAGPIE | RAVEN | |

Obits

Eulalio Yanez

Eulalio Yanez, age 71, of Sulphur Springs, passed away Wednesday, January 4, 2017 at CHRISTUS Mother Frances in Sulphur Springs. Arrangements are pending with West Oaks Funeral Home.

Charles Clayton

Charles Clayton, age 74 of Sulphur Springs passed away Tuesday, January 3, 2017 at his residence. Arrangements are pending with West Oaks Funeral Home.

Elton Ayers

Elton Ayers, age 97 of Winnsboro, passed away on Monday, January 2nd, 2017 in Winnsboro. He was born on February 1st, 1919 in Franklin County, to the late William Ayers and Maud Atyers. He was retired from the U.S Postal Service and was preceded in death by parents. He is survived by numerous nieces and nephews.

Visitation was held on Wednesday, January 4th, 2017 from 10:00 am to 11:00 am at Beaty Funeral Home-Winnsboro 816 W. Broadway Winnsboro, TX 75494. Graveside Services were held on Wednesday, January 4th, 2017 at Good Hope Cemetery at 11:00 am, with family conducting.

James Micheal Ward

Graveside Service for James (Jim) Michael (Mike) Ward 60 of Sulphur Springs, TX were Tuesday, January 3, 2017 at Ridgeway Cemetery. He died December 31, 2016.

He was born February 2, 1956 in Memphis, TN. To James W. and Ileta L. Ward. He is of the Christian faith. He went to be with our Lord and Savior on December 31, 2016. He was married to Norma Robinson on June 23, 1995.

He was preceded in death by his parents James W. and Ileta L. Ward, grandparents AJ and Leona Ward and Hazel Sifford. One niece Carrie Walker.

He is survived by his loving wife Norma Ward, three sons Jeremy Ward, Ricky Ward and Michael Ward. One daughter Michelle Hadley and one step-daughter Amber Adam. One brother Barry Ward of Greenville, TX, two sisters Debbie K. Walker of Ecrú, Miss. And Pam Nordin of Sulphur Springs, TX. Three grandchildren, a host of nieces, nephews and other relatives and friends.

Nancy Tiller Jackson



Graveside Services for Nancy Tiller Jackson, age 69, of Sulphur Springs, were conducted at 11:00 a.m. Monday, January 2, 2017 at Gafford Chapel Cemetery with Bro. C.J. Duffy officiating. There was no formal visitation. Nancy passed away on December 29, 2016 at her residence.

She was born May 19, 1947 in Greenville, TX, the daughter of Ruel Tiller and Juanita Spray Tiller. She married Jerry Jackson on October 10, 1978 in Sulphur Springs. He survives. Nancy was of the Methodist faith. She retired from A&M University in Commerce.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her daughters Tammy Green and Mike of Sulphur Springs, Amanda Meadows and husband Larry of Sulphur Springs, sisters, Judy Martin of Paris, TX, Susan Tiller of Sulphur Springs, grandchildren, Robyn and Calvin Vaughn of Greenville, TX, Kadie Green, Richard Green, and Chelsey Meadows, all of Sulphur

Springs, great-grandchildren, Kourtnea Joslin, Trenton Wright of Greenville and Madalyne Masters of Sulphur Springs, nieces, Vicki, Jana, Lindy, and nephews Billy and Jay.

Arrangements were under the direction of West Oaks Funeral Home.

Bob Harris



Funeral services for Bob Harris, age 81 of Quitman, were held Tuesday, January 3, 2017, at Winnsboro House of Praise with Bro. Gary Hampton officiating. Burial followed at Black Oak Cemetery with Kevin Foster, Jay Foster, Seth Foster, Sam Foster and J.D. Hallonquist and Erik Lynn serving as pallbearers. Visitation was held one hour prior to service.

Mr. Harris passed away Wednesday, December 28, 2016 at Christus Mother Frances Hospital in Winnsboro.

Donations may be made to St. Jude's Children's Hospital, 262 Danny Thomas Place, Memphis, Tennessee 38105

Arrangements were under the direction of Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home.

Marlon Wayne Douglas



Marlon Wayne Douglas, age 67, of Sulphur Springs, passed away Monday, December 26, 2016 at Watkins Logan Veterans Home in Tyler. Memorial Services will be held the first weekend in June.

Mr. Douglas was born February 28, 1949, in Sulphur Springs, to Johnny Joe and Vena Bianca (Doughty) Douglas. He married Mary Jo Flournoy in Pickton, Texas on August 20, 1969, she preceded him in death. Marlon served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, and was retired from Hannah Construction. He was of the Baptist faith.

Marlon is survived by daughters, Tina Douglas Tallant and husband John of Winona, Amy Douglas Harrington and husband Darrell of Winthrop, Arkansas and Angela Douglas and significant other Steven Busby of Sulphur Springs; sister, Joy Matlock of Sulphur Springs; grandchildren, Brendon and Katelyn Tallant, Jerry Young, Bradley and Naomi Harrington,

Andrew and Johnathan Harrington, Patrick and Joseph Owens, Judy Harrington, Ashley Garcia and Justin Freeman; great grandchildren, Karma and baby Harrington.

Mr. Douglas was preceded in death by his parents, three sisters and one brother.

The family has requested that memorials be made to: Texas State Veterans Home, 11466 Honor Lane, Tyler, Texas 75708, attention: Donna Huffman.

Arrangements are under the direction of Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home.

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