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 WATER
 YEARLY

Answers on pg. 6



Every once in awhile I leave the corral gate for something totally non-ranch related. Here's photos from a couple of LARGE community events I attended this week.



Two performances of the NE Texas Choral Society's "Feast of Favorites" Christmas Concert was held in the 1200-seat SSS auditorium which was almost full both nights! This concert marked 20 years of Choral Society Christmas musical extravaganzas performed by the 100-voice community choir. One of the most inspiring voices is that of soloist Jaci Reed. She performed a powerful version of "Do You Hear What I Hear". A seventeen-year-old Senior at Sulphur Springs High School and reigning Hopkins County Dairy Festival Queen, Jaci plans to further her interest in theater drama in college next year. She also holds membership in the Haystack Youth Choir, and following Sunday's choral concert, Jaci quickly changed costume and dashed off to the Haystack concert set for that same night at Central Baptist Church.



Christmas time means children, children mean toys, and toys mean Santa! In Hopkins County, you often see jolly St. Nick in a BLUE Santa costume. I observed him collecting toys at the local Lowe's parking lot. He was being assisted by the Hopkins County Sheriff's Department, Sulphur Springs Police Department, and by the City of Sulphur Springs. I was told that the two-day Community-Wide Drive yielded dozens of bicycles, bins and bins of dolls and toy trucks, and quantities of other favorite toys for the needy children of Hopkins County. Cheers to you Blue Santa, and to the generosity of the people who live here!



Til next week, let's get in practice saying "Merry Christmas" to one and all we meet! I'll watch for you at the corral gate.

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National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day December 7



ATTACK ON PEARL HARBOR

Part of the Asia and the Pacific Theater of World War II
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The attack on Pearl Harbor was a surprise tactical strike by the Imperial Japanese Navy against the United States naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii Territory, on the morning of December 7, 1941. The attack, also known as the Battle of Pearl Harbor, led to the United States' entry into World War II. The Japanese military leadership referred to the attack as the Hawaii Operation and Operation AI, and as Operation Z during its planning.

Japan intended the attack as a preventive action to keep the U.S. Pacific Fleet from interfering with military actions they planned in Southeast Asia against overseas territories of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the United States. Over the next seven hours there were coordinated Japanese attacks on the U.S.-held Philippines, Guam and Wake Island and on the British Empire in Malaya, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

The attack commenced at 7:48 a.m. Hawaiian Time. The base was attacked by 353 Imperial Japanese aircraft (including fighters, level and dive bombers, and torpedo bombers) in two waves, launched from six aircraft carriers. All eight U.S. Navy battleships were damaged, with four sunk. All but the USS Arizona were later raised, and six were returned to service and went on to fight in the war. The Japanese also sank or damaged three cruisers, three destroyers, an anti-aircraft training ship, and one minelayer. One hundred eighty-eight U.S. aircraft were destroyed; 2,403 Americans were killed and 1,178 others were wounded. Important base installations such as the power station, dry dock, shipyard, maintenance, and fuel and torpedo storage facilities, as well as the submarine piers and headquarters building (also home of the intelligence section), were not attacked. Japanese losses were light: 29 aircraft and five midget submarines lost, and 64 servicemen killed. One Japanese sailor, Kazuo Sakamaki, was captured.

The surprise attack came as a profound shock to the American people and led directly to the American entry into World War II in both the Pacific and European theaters. The following day, December 8, the United States declared war on Japan, and several days later, on December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on the U.S. The U.S. responded with a declaration of war against Germany and Italy. Domestic support for non-interventionism, which had been fading since the Fall of France in 1940, disappeared.

There were numerous historical precedents for unannounced military action by Japan, but the lack of any formal warning, particularly while negotiations were still apparently ongoing, led President Franklin D. Roosevelt to proclaim December 7, 1941, "a date which will live in infamy". Because the attack happened without a declaration of war and without explicit warning, the attack on Pearl Harbor was later judged in the Tokyo Trials to be a war crime.

Diplomatic background

War between Japan and the United States had been a possibility that each nation had been aware of (and developed contingency plans for) since the 1920s, though tensions did not begin to grow seriously until Japan's 1931 invasion of Manchuria. Over the next decade, Japan continued to expand into China, leading to all-out war between those countries in 1937. Japan spent considerable effort trying to isolate China and achieve sufficient resource independence to attain victory on the mainland; the "Southern Operation" was designed to assist these efforts.

From December 1937, events such as the Japanese attack on USS Panay, the Allison incident, and the Nanking Massacre (the International Military Tribunal of the Far East concluded that more than 200,000 Chinese non-combatants were killed in indiscriminate massacres, though other estimates have ranged from 40,000 to more than 300,000) swung public opinion in the West sharply against Japan. Fearing Japanese expansion, the United States, the United Kingdom, and France provided loan assistance for war supply contracts to China.

In 1940, Japan invaded French Indochina in an effort to control supplies reaching China. The United States halted shipments of airplanes, parts, machine tools, and aviation gasoline to Japan, which was perceived by Japan as an unfriendly act. The U.S. did not stop oil exports to Japan at that time in part because prevailing sentiment in Washington was that such an action would be an extreme step that Japan would likely consider a provocation, given Japanese dependence on U.S. oil.

The U.S. ceased oil exports to Japan in July 1941, following Japanese expansion into French Indochina after the Fall of France, in part because of new American restrictions on domestic oil consumption. This in turn caused the Japanese to proceed with plans to take the Dutch East Indies, an oil-rich territory. On August 17, Roosevelt warned Japan that the U.S. was prepared to take steps against Japan if it attacked "neighboring countries". The Japanese were faced with the option of either withdrawing from China and losing face or seizing and securing new sources of raw materials in the resource-rich, European-controlled colonies of Southeast Asia.

Japan's final proposal, on November 20, offered to withdraw their forces from southern Indochina and not to launch any attacks in Southeast Asia provided that the U.S., the UK, and the Netherlands ceased aiding China and lifted their sanctions against Japan. The American counter-proposal of November 26 (November 27 in Japan) (the Hull note) required Japan to evacuate all of China without conditions and conclude non-aggression pacts with Pacific powers. However the day before the Hull Note was delivered, on November 26 in Japan, the main Japanese attack fleet left port for Pearl Harbor.

Objectives

The Japanese attack had several major aims. First, it intended to destroy important American fleet units, thereby preventing the Pacific Fleet from interfering with Japanese conquest of the Dutch East Indies and Malaya and to enable Japan to conquer Southeast Asia without interference. Second, it was hoped to buy time for Japan to consolidate its position and increase its naval strength before shipbuilding authorized by the 1940 Vinson-Walsh Act erased any chance of victory. Third, to deliver a blow to America's ability to mobilize its forces in the Pacific, battleships were chosen as the main targets, since they were the prestige ships of any navy at the time. Finally, it was hoped that the attack would undermine American morale such that the U.S. government would drop its demands contrary to Japanese interests, and would seek a compromise peace with Japan.

On November 26, 1941, a Japanese task force (the Striking Force) of six aircraft carriers—Akagi, Kaga, Sōryū, Hiryū, Shōkaku, and Zuikaku—departed Hittokapu Bay on Kasatka (now Iterup) Island in the Kurile Islands, en route to a position northwest of Hawaii, intending to launch its 408 aircraft to attack Pearl Harbor: 360 for the two attack waves and 48 on defensive combat air patrol (CAP), including nine fighters from the first wave.

The attack took place before any formal declaration of war was made by Japan, but this was not Admiral Yamamoto's intention. He originally stipulated that the attack should not commence until thirty minutes after Japan had informed the United States that peace negotiations were at an end. However, the attack began before the notice could be delivered. Tokyo transmitted the 5000-word notification (commonly called the "14-Part Message") in two blocks to the Japanese Embassy in Washington. Transcribing the message took too long for the Japanese ambassador to deliver it on schedule; in the event, it was not presented until more than an hour after the attack began. (In fact, U.S. code breakers had already deciphered and translated most of the message hours before he was scheduled to deliver it.) The final part is sometimes described as a declaration of war. While it was viewed by a number of senior U.S. government and military officials as a very strong indicator negotiations were likely to be terminated and that war might break out at any moment, it neither declared war nor severed diplomatic relations. A declaration of war was printed on the front page of Japan's newspapers in the evening edition of December 8, but not delivered to the U.S. government until the day after the attack.

For decades, conventional wisdom held that Japan attacked without first formally breaking diplomatic relations only because of accidents and bumbling that delayed the delivery of a document hinting at war to Washington. In 1999, however, Takeo Iguchi, a professor of law and international relations at International Christian University in Tokyo, discovered documents that pointed to a vigorous debate inside the government over how, and indeed whether, to notify Washington of Japan's intention to break off negotiations and start a war, including a December 7 entry in the war diary saying, "Our deceptive diplomacy is steadily proceeding toward success."

Courtesy of Wikipedia.



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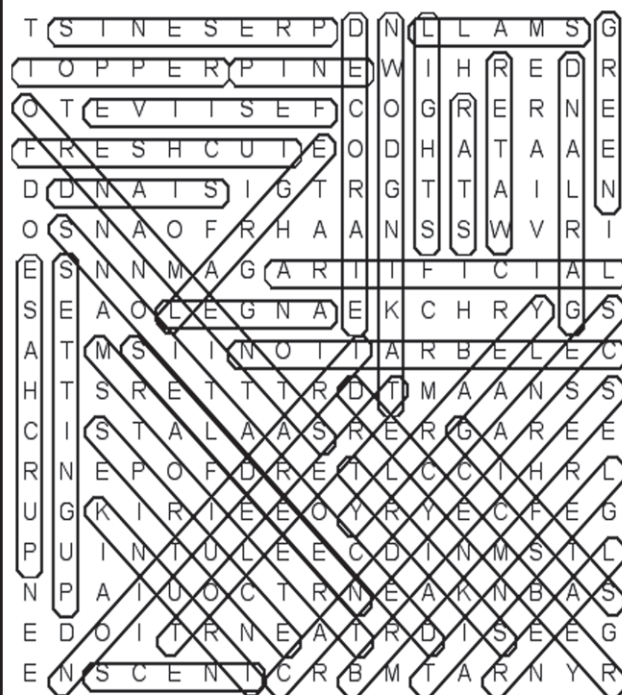
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Answers



THE NORTH POLE OF TEXAS

Tumbleweed Smith



Tumbleweed Smith

Alan Screws grew up on his family’s dairy farm 4 miles north of Pickton in northeast Texas. He has turned part of the farm into what he calls THE NORTH POLE OF TEXAS which features lighted Christmas scenes and a fifteen minute train ride that goes across a couple of bridges and right through the middle of a toy shop.

“It’ll stop in the toy shop,” says Alan, “which is a twenty-four by forty foot building. “I got the idea from the mine train at Six Flags, which goes through an old saloon. The toyshop has animated elves in it. Every night Santa is there and talks to everybody on the train and gives them a bag of jellybeans. The words Happy Birthday Jesus are printed on each bag.”

The place has become a major tourist attraction. Thirty volunteers help.

“Back in 1997, we built a small train and I thought it would just be to carry children around in our yard at Christmas time. I found out pretty quick that adults like to ride, too. So we built a bigger train for the adults. We soon ran out of room in our front yard to run the trains so we got permission from the county commissioners to build a bridge over the county road to get to the other side of our property. Soon we built another bridge. The crowds kept growing and we started having two or three hundred a night, then four hundred and six hundred, then a thousand. We’ve had up to two thousand people ride in one night. Some folks have waited up to two or three hours for a ride. This is our twentieth year. Last year we hit our one hundred thousandth ride. It’s all free. We’ve got four trains now so we can give about four hundred rides an hour. While people are waiting in line we have big TV monitors that show me reading the Christmas story. We’ve had as many as 800 waiting in line. Commissioners have let us build a by-pass on the county road so traffic can be diverted and people can stand in line on the county road. We have a Christmas cabin where the people can come in and visit with Mrs. Claus and take pictures with her. We have Kim’s hot chocolate factory, Kim’s my wife, where we give away the best hot chocolate you’ll ever want to drink. We always have a live nativity scene. We have a huge Texas-sized sleigh that you can put your whole family in and take pictures.”

Alan, who used to race cars and pickups on dirt tracks, is mechanically minded and built the trains. One of the displays features racecars. One on a pond has jet skis.

“The train engine is a Kubota tractor that we built a cab around and put a nose on it like a train. We put a smoke machine on the front so it smokes like a train. And it has a bell on it. Each train has three passenger cars that carry 8 to 10 people each.”

The ride starts Thanksgiving weekend and operates until December twenty-third. It runs from six to nine PM. The address is 227 CR 3378, Pickton.

“It an experience. People need to come out and enjoy the true meaning of Christmas with us.”

Obits

Sharon Brown

Sharon Brown, age 55, of Yantis, passed away on Monday, December 4, 2017 at her residence. Arrangements are pending with West Oaks Funeral Home.



Dave Evans

Graveside service for Dave Evans, age 51, of Cumby, TX will be held at 3:00 P.M. on Thursday, December 7, 2017 at Sunny Point Cemetery, Cumby, TX with Rev. Mike Eason officiating. There will be no formal visitation. Mr. Evans passed away on Friday, December 1, 2017 in Lake Charles, LA.

Ronald Dave Evans was born on September 14, 1966 in Greenville, Texas to Alton and Joy (Bloodsworth) Evans. He married Dana Wallace on June 13, 2015 in Sulphur Springs, TX. Dave was an owner/operator of a farm and ranch and a member of the Cross Spur Cowboy Church.

He is survived by his wife, Dana of Cumby, TX; mother, Joy Evans of Cumby; stepson, Christopher Lay of Greenville; sister, Ginger Brooks and husband, Jeb of Sulphur Springs; sister-in-law, Lori Evans; step granddaughters, Kharington Lay and Aurora Lay; nephews, Ryan Evans, Reece Evans, Ben Brooks; niece, Summer Brooks.

Dave was preceded in death by his father and brother, Ricky Evans.

Memorials can be made to Sunny Point Cemetery, 1601 CR 1130, Cumby, TX 75433.

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



Mary Juanita Preston Griffin

Graveside service for (Mary) Juanita Preston Griffin, age 93, of Carrollton, TX, formerly of Sulphur Springs, will be held at 11:00 A.M. on Saturday, December 9, 2017 at Sherley Cemetery with Buddy Wiggins officiating. Visitation will be held from 9:30 to 10:45 A.M. on Saturday, December 9, 2017 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. Ms. Griffin passed away December 5, 2017.

(Mary) Juanita Griffin was born on April 13, 1924 to Robert and Maud Preston. She married Roby Griffin on January 5, 1946 in Greenville, Texas. He preceded her in death on March 7, 1995. She was a homemaker. A member of Church of Christ and The Big Sisters community group in Sherley, Texas.

Survivors include her son, Larry Griffin and wife, Gloria of Addison, Texas; sister, Martha Collins; grandchildren, Patty Bouma and husband, Dirk, Nicole Parks and husband, Joe, Terry Ault and wife, Susan; great grandchildren, Christopher Ault, Lauren Ault, Kendall Parks, Reimer Bouma and Koert Bouma.

She was preceded in death by her parents; two sisters, Murriel Renshaw and Jinnie Maude Bishop, and four brothers, Raymond Preston, Johnnie Lee Preston, Ray Preston and Robert "Robbie" Preston.

Memorials can be made to the charity of your choice.

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



Noble Coker

Funeral service for Noble Coker, age 94, of Yantis, TX will be held at 1:00 P.M. on Thursday, December 7, 2017 at First Baptist Church, Yantis, Texas with Rev. Byron George, Pastor Craig Vance and Bro. Robert Kinsey officiating. Interment to follow at Yantis Cemetery with military honors with Corey Coker, Nathan Coker, Mark Coker, Tim Coker, Chasen Chamness and Scott Ogle serving as pallbearers and DeWayne Manns, Frank Coker, Tommy Coker, Terry Coker and Billy Mack Chamness serving as honorary pallbearers. Visitation was held from 6 to 8 P.M., on Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Chapel. Mr. Coker passed away on Monday, December 4, 2017 at CHRISTUS Trinity Mother Frances Hospital, Tyler.

Noble Odessa Coker was born on November 12, 1923 in Arbala, Texas, the son of John Alvin and Addie (Chamness) Coker.

He married Jo An Emery in Altus, OK on December 5, 1943. Noble served in the U.S. Army in WW II. He was a 32nd Degree Mason for 50 years and a member of the Yantis Masonic Lodge. Noble was also a former member of the Yantis Lions Club and a member of the First Baptist Church, Yantis. He retired from Briggs and Weaver as truck driver.

He is survived by his wife, Jo Ann of Yantis; son, David Coker; daughter, Carolyn Manns and husband, DeWayne; grandchildren, David Coker, Olivia Coker, Callie Ruth Rogers, Rena Ann Wells; great grandchildren, David Coker Jr., Ashley Coker, Addison Coker, Layla Coker, Peyt Blevins, Baylee Riddle, Morgan Grissom, Langston Ray, Emma Hood; great great grandchild, B.J. Riddle.

Noble was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Vernon Coker and sister, Nelda Marie Coker.

Memorials can be made to the Yantis Cemetery Association.

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



Archie "Arch" Fluitt

Graveside service for Archie "Arch" Fluitt, age 76, of Sulphur Springs, TX were held at 3:00 P.M. on Sunday, December 3, 2017 at Shooks Chapel Cemetery with Sonny Pennington officiating and Marlin Jones, Jerry Dodd, Sonny Pennington, Jimmy Candle and Tippy Aaron serving as pallbearers. There will be no formal visitation. Mr. Fluitt passed away on Thursday, November 30, 2017 at his residence, Sulphur Springs, Texas.

Archie Lee "Arch" Fluitt was born on October 19, 1941 in San Antonio, Texas to Edgar Lee and Lillie (Stockton) Fluitt. He married Carolyn Ann Gilbreath on October 10, 1964 in Sulphur Springs, Texas. Archie worked as a maintenance man, welder and assembler throughout his life.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn; son; Michael Lee Fluitt; grandsons, Larry Dale Fields, Brandon Keith Fields, Joshua Lee Fields, granddaughters, Monica Kristene Fluitt, Kaylin Ann Fluitt; great grandson, Christopher Lee Fields, great granddaughters, Addison Nicole Fields, Betty Jo Smith; mother, Lillie Stockton Shelton Fluitt Kolar; brother, Richard Fluitt; half-sisters, Eva Marie Fluitt Segar, Patsy Fluitt Hanson, Peggy Shelton Bailey.

Archie was preceded in death by his father, Edgar Lee Shelton.

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

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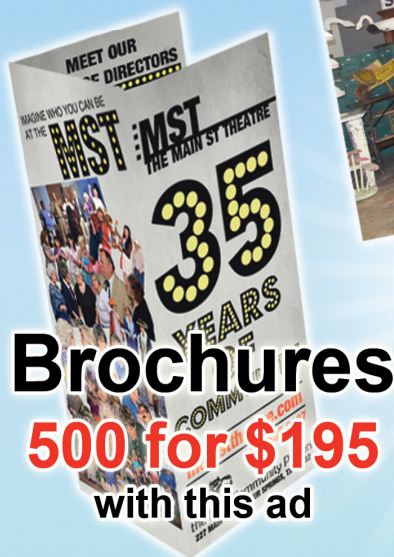
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