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At The Corral Gate



Enola Gay

Seems I've known him ever since I discovered Western Swing music, but on the phone recently with RJ Vandygriff, he recalled when he first met me. So nice of him to remember, but he is that kind of guy! It was at an Academy of Western Artists Awards convention just after "the turn of the century", back when my daughters acted as the AWA "Vannas" for a span of 3 or 4 years. It must have seemed to the organizers that I possessed an inexhaustible supply of lovely daughters with evening gowns! They became regulars during their high school years. So in the Spring of 2004, a trio of my daughters were proudly assisting onstage by escorting recipients to the podium, and RJ was among these. For his role in western entertainment, he received the Will Rogers Award which is a beautiful white marble statue of Will Rogers with his ever-present coil of braided lariat. I got mine the next year as a radio DJ playing western music on the air, and I treasure it still today because it holds so many memories of the people who create music out of their own life experiences.



Will Rogers Academy of Western Artists Award

RJ's Western Recordings



See, I already knew that Robert Joe had spent time in Sulphur Springs way before I got here in the 1980's. It had been the hometown of his first wife. Not sure how they met, but he was a Roxton boy who grew up riding horses and playing guitar. He studied at three Texas colleges and for a time competed on the rodeo circuit in saddle bronc and bareback events and as a clown and bullfighter. His music took off when he became a country recording artist with "Big Blue Diamond" and "Say, Lady" as chart toppers during the early 1970's. His album "Dedicated" became #3 on the European country chart and led to eight successful tours of England and the European continent. He and his band "The Shades of Country" toured the U.S., Canada and Europe, playing to sold-out audiences. During these years, he appeared on stage with Garth Brooks, The Judds, George Jones, Alabama and Merle Haggard. Vandygriff then moved to Nashville to pursue a career in songwriting, also working as a booking agent representing acts like John Anderson, Lee Greenwood, Hank Snow, The Wilburn Brothers, Archie Campbell and producing shows with many of the biggest names in country music, bluegrass and rock 'n roll. In television, he was seen as "Ranger Mike" in episodes of "Walker, Texas Ranger" and you might see him on RFD TV's "Somewhere West of Wall Street" episodes by Red Steagall.



RJ as Joe Texas in "The Cowboy Ain't Dead Yet"

RJ's Dad Was A Cowboy



Today, Robert Joe is homebased out of his Lipscomb, Texas ranch where he enjoys the cowboy lifestyle and books appearances around the country. Besides playing concerts and fundraising events, RJ books tours of his one-man stage show "The Cowboy Ain't Dead Yet". This is a historical look at the cowboy lifestyle from the cattle drive days to movies to real life. The two-hour stage show includes plenty of physical action, music, comedy and fascinating fact, along with lights and sound effects that make it an unforgettable experience. RJ's background as a history major with actual cowboy experience helped him accurately define the overly-glamorized image of the American cowboy and bring it to the hearts of appreciative audiences all over the United States. Whenever you get the chance, catch this show!

Meantime, get your tickets for the Pilot Club Spring Fundraiser on April 7, featuring the music and personality of country music's RJ Vandygriff. Pick up some of his CD's and take the music home with you. In this return to Sulphur Springs, don't be surprised to see some of his former local band members there too, like Bill "Billy Fred" Owens and Earl Gaddy. And every ticket admission helps the Pilot Club in their 2018 projects that benefit the local community.



RJ "Somewhere West of Wall Street"

Robert Joe Vandygriff Today



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FAMOUS JOURNALIST

Rachel Maddow

Television Host, Political Commentator & Author



Rachel Anne Maddow, MAD-oh; (born April 1, 1973) is an American television host, liberal political commentator, and author.

Maddow hosts a nightly television show, The Rachel Maddow Show, on MSNBC, and serves as the cable network's special event co-anchor alongside Brian Williams. Her syndicated talk radio program of the same name aired on Air America Radio. Maddow became the first openly gay anchor to host a major prime-time news program in the United States. She holds a doctorate in politics from the University of Oxford.

Asked about her political views by the Valley Advocate, Maddow replied, "I'm undoubtedly a liberal, which means that I'm in almost total agreement with the Eisenhower-era Republican party platform."

Early life

Rachel Anne Maddow was born in Castro Valley, California. Her father, Robert B. Maddow, is a former United States Air Force captain who resigned his commission the year before her birth and then worked as a lawyer for the East Bay Municipal Utility District. Her mother, Elaine (née Gosse), was a school program administrator. She has one older brother, David. Her paternal grandfather was from a family of Eastern European Jews (the original family surname being "Medwedof") who self-identified as Polish and Russian at the time of their arrival in the United States; however, by today's borders, they would be considered Lithuanian and Ukrainian. Her paternal grandmother was of Dutch (Protestant) descent; her Canadian mother, originally from Newfoundland and Labrador, has English and Irish ancestry.

Maddow has stated that her family is "very, very Catholic" and she grew up in a community that her mother has described as "very conservative". Maddow was a competitive athlete and participated in high school volleyball, basketball, and swimming.

Referencing John Hughes films, she has described herself as being "a cross between the jock and the antisocial girl" in high school. Graduate of Castro Valley High School, she attended Stanford University. While a freshman, she was outed by the college newspaper when an interview with her was published before she could tell her parents.

She earned a degree in public policy at Stanford in 1994. At graduation, she was awarded the John Gardner Fellowship. She was the recipient of a Rhodes Scholarship and began her postgraduate study in 1995 at Lincoln College, Oxford. She had also been awarded a Marshall Scholarship the same year but turned it down in favour of the Rhodes. This made her the first openly gay or lesbian American to win an international Rhodes Scholarship. In 2001, she earned a Doctor of Philosophy in politics at the University of Oxford. Her thesis is titled HIV/AIDS and Health Care Reform in British and American Prisons, and her supervisor was Lucia Zedner.

In June 2005, Maddow became a regular panelist on the MSNBC show Tucker. During and after the November 2006 election, she was a guest on CNN's Paula Zahn Now; she was also a correspondent for The Advocate Newsmagazine, an LGBT-oriented short-form newsmagazine for Logo deriving from news items published by The Advocate. In January 2008, Maddow became an MSNBC political analyst and was a regular panelist on MSNBC's Race for the White House with David Gregory and MSNBC's election coverage as well as a frequent contributor on Countdown with Keith Olbermann.

In 2008, Maddow was the substitute host for Countdown with Keith Olbermann, her first time hosting a program on MSNBC. Maddow described herself on air as "nervous". Keith Olbermann complimented her work, and she was brought back to host Countdown the next month. The show she hosted was the highest-rated news program among people aged 25 to 54. For her success, Olbermann ranked Maddow third in his show's segment "World's Best Persons". In July 2008, Maddow filled in again for several broadcasts. Maddow also filled in for David Gregory as host of Race for the White House.

Olbermann began to push for Maddow to get her own show at MSNBC, and he was eventually able to persuade Phil Griffin to give her Dan Abrams's time slot.

The Rachel Maddow Show

In August 2008, MSNBC announced The Rachel Maddow Show would replace Verdict with Dan Abrams in the network's 9 p.m. slot the following month. Following its debut, the show topped Countdown as the highest-rated show on MSNBC on several occasions. After being on air for more than a month, Maddow's program doubled the audience that hour. This show made Maddow the first openly gay or lesbian host of a primetime news program in the United States.

The initial reviews for the show were positive. Los Angeles Times journalist Matea Gold wrote that Maddow "finds the right formula on MSNBC," and The Guardian wrote that Maddow had become the "star of America's cable news". Associated Press columnist David Bauder opined that she was "Keith Olbermann's political soul mate", and he described the Olbermann-Maddow shows as a "liberal two-hour block".

Of her collegial relationship with Roger Ailes of Fox News, whom she sought out for technical advice, Maddow said she doesn't want to talk about it because "I don't want anybody else to use it. It was a nice thing that he did for me, and it's been valuable for me – it helped me get an advantage over my competitors."

Personal life

Maddow splits her time between Manhattan, New York and West Cummington, Massachusetts with her partner, artist Susan Mikula. They met in 1999, when Maddow was working on her doctoral dissertation.

Maddow has dealt with cyclical depression since puberty. In a 2012 interview, she stated, "It doesn't take away from my joy or my work or my energy, but coping with depression is something that is part of the everyday way that I live and have lived for as long as I can remember." She has explained why she decided to speak about it in interviews: "It was a hard call...Because it was nobody's business. But it had been helpful to me to learn about the people who were surviving, were leading good lives, even though they were dealing with depression. So I felt it was a bit of a responsibility to pay that back."

Maddow said "There are three things I do to stay sane: I exercise, I sleep – I'm a good sleeper – and I fish."

Writing career

Maddow wrote Drift: The Unmooring of American Military Power (2012) about the role of the military in postwar American politics. Upon its release, Drift topped The New York Times Best Sellers list for hardcover nonfiction.

In December 2013, The Washington Post announced that Maddow would write a monthly opinion column for the paper, contributing one article per month over a period of six months.

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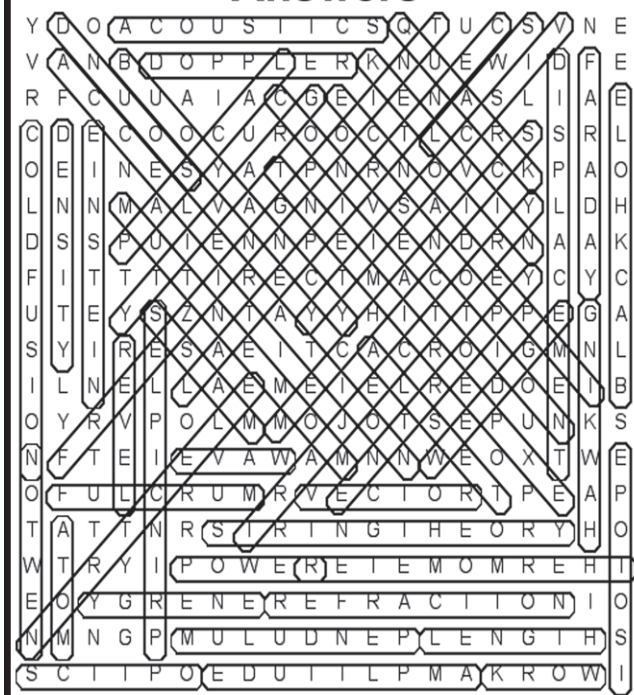
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Answers



HAIKU, ANYONE?

Tumbleweed Smith



Tumbleweed Smith

My super smart grandson Jackson Lewis majored in creative writing at Millikin University in Decatur, Illinois, where he graduated summa cum laude. Even though he grew up in Dallas, he took to Illinois pretty well. It's where he met his wife Erika and blossomed into maturity. He was president of his fraternity and spoke for his class during graduation ceremonies. I counted a dozen bursts of applause during his short speech that also provided lots of laughs. He is one talented guy.

When he moved to Chicago he worked a few jobs but found his niche when a magazine conglomerate that produces trade publications hired him. Jackson's articles that have received the most attention are about Wal-Mart, Tesla and Amazon. He continues to be the fair-haired boy. Of all the writers in the company, Jackson was selected to go to Seattle and do a piece on the Amazon convenience store that has no checkout counter. He says it's very strange to see the ceiling full of devices that measure your every move.

While in college Jackson studied Japanese poetry, especially haiku and tanka. Haiku has 3 lines while tanka has 5. They both count syllables, not words. The first line of haiku has 5 syllables, the second, 7 and the third, 5. Tanka is the same but has two more lines of 7 syllables each. Jackson writes haiku at events.

"It could be a corporate event, an office party, a wedding reception, someone's birthday a charity event, any number of things," says Jackson. "A writing friend and I show up dressed in suits and carrying manual portable typewriters from the 50's. People come up to us and tell a story. We write a haiku poem about it, type it on a card and hand it to them. It takes us about one to three minutes to compose a poem."

The host for the event pays the poets. The individuals who get the poems don't pay a thing. At a recent wedding reception, Jackson and another poet wrote about 80 poems for guests.

A company in New York, THE HAIKU GUYS AND GALS started haiku events a few years ago and they are spreading across the country. They're looking for poets.

When Jackson was trying out in front of a representative of HAIKU GUYS AND GALS he set up his typewriter on a stool in Chicago's Millennium Park.

"I had a sign on my typewriter case that said FREE HAIKU and complete strangers actually came up, found out what I was doing and said 'o, sure I'd love one.' People just kept coming and coming to the point where there was a line waiting for a poem. And this was not a planned event. This was just a try out."

He paid about a hundred dollars for his typewriter and says that's his only investment. His is a Remington Quiet Writer Eleven. He says they're easy to find, both typewriters and printing ribbons.

"It's really turned into kind of a part-time job."

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Obits



Tammy Kay Bennecke

A memorial celebration for Tammy Kay Bennecke, age 55, of Sulphur Springs, will be from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Thursday, March 29, 2018 at West Oaks Funeral Home. Tammy passed away on Sunday, March 25, 2018 at her mother's home.

Tammy was born on May 21, 1962 in Dallas, TX, the daughter of Plas "Ray" William, Jr. and Mary Kathryn Palmer Williams. Tammy was the owner of the La Pooch Resort.

Tammy is survived by her mother, Kathryn, son, Derek Cooper and wife Shelbi, brother, Todd Williams and grandchildren, Gentry and Gus Cooper.

She was preceded in death by her husband David Mark Bennecke and her father.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Sulphur Springs Animal Shelter, 1313 Hillcrest Dr. N., Sulphur Springs, TX 75482.

Arrangements are under the direction of West Oaks Funeral Home.



John Noe Sr.

John Noe, Sr., age 82, of Quitman, passed away on Monday, March 26th, 2018 in Quitman, TX. He was born on July 1st, 1935 in Wood County to Hugh Noe and Palma (King) Noe. On February 15, 1963 John married Wanda Cower. He was a retired Non-Commissioned Officer of the Texas National Guard's 49th Armored Division, and worked with Wood County, Texas Precinct 4 maintenance for many years until his recent retirement from that organization. John was a proud, active member of the First United Methodist Church of Winnsboro.

He was preceded in death by his parents. John is survived by, wife Wanda Noe of Quitman; son, John Noe, Jr. and his wife Shelly of Winnsboro; daughter, Jamie and her husband Jeff Brooks of Whitesboro; brother James Howard Noe of Quitman; sister, Polly Ann Pickle of Tyler; grandchildren, Kimberly, Matthew, Adam, Brett and Blake.

Visitation was held on Wednesday, March 28th, 2018 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Beaty Funeral Home-Winnsboro 816 W. Broadway Winnsboro, TX 75494. Funeral Services will be held on Thursday, March 29th, 2018 at First United Methodist Church of Winnsboro at 10:00 am, Rev. Debbie Lyons, Rev. Henry Suche, Rev. Mike Morrow officiating. Interment will follow at Clover Hill Cemetery



Tony Wayne Brown

Tony Wayne Brown, age 62, of Pickton, passed away on Monday, March 26th, 2018 in Tyler. He was born on December 9th, 1955 in Pittsburg to Elmer Ottis Brown and Bobbie Nell (Attaway) Brown. Tony was a Meter Tester/Field Security officer serving the Wood County Electric Cooperative. He enjoyed his Church home, Spur On Ministries in Mineola, as well as serving as a Wood County Reserve Deputy and member of the Wood County Sheriff's Posse. Tony will be remembered for serving the public as a Winnsboro Police officer many years ago, and his most recent position with the Co-op. Tony was a true modern-day cowboy!

He was preceded in death by his father, Elmer Ottis Brown. Surviving family includes, mother, Bobbie Nell (Attaway) Brown of Pickton; brother, Tommy and his wife Kathy Brown of Pickton; sister Sharlet and her husband Dudley Lovelady of Winnsboro;

long-time girlfriend, Tammy Roberts of Winnsboro; nieces and nephews, Jim Brown, Tim Brown, Randy Brown, Shannon Grim, Shelley Stevens and Hunter Lovelady, fourteen great nieces and nephews and two great-great nieces and nephews.

Visitation was held on Wednesday, March 28th, 2018 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm at Beaty Funeral Home-Winnsboro 816 W. Broadway Winnsboro, TX 75494. Funeral Services will be held on Thursday, March 29th, 2018 in Beaty Funeral Home at 2:00 pm, Bro. Mike Fletcher officiating. Interment will follow at Pleasant Grove Memorial Park in Winnsboro.

Tommy White

Funeral service for Tommy White, age 84, of Sulphur Springs, TX will be held at 11:00 A.M. on Thursday, March 29, 2018 at Greenpond Baptist Church with Richard Teer officiating. Interment will follow at Greenpond Cemetery with Jerry Dodd, Layne Glenn, Lauren Reeves, Tommy Robinson, Matt Bowen, and Robert Reeves serving as pallbearers and Tim White, Turk Morgan and Darrel Dodd serving as honorary pallbearers. Visitation was held from 6 to 8 PM on Wednesday, March 28, 2018 at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home. Mr. White passed away on Saturday, March 24, 2018 in Ft. Worth, TX

Tommy White was born on September 27, 1933 in the Greenpond Community, to Oscar and Effie Mae White. Tommy served in the US Army and was deployed during the Korean War. Tommy was a retired Farmer, Rancher and member of First Baptist Church, Sulphur Springs.

He is survived by his daughter, Dr. Tommie Cherie White-Reeves of Ft. Worth; sons, Matthew Grant White of Plano, Texas and Larry Lance Chapman of Hallsville, TX; grandchildren, Tommy Wayne Robinson, Taylor Rae Reeves, Lauren Nicole Reeves, Robi Lance Chapman, Brandi Laine Chapman; great grandchildren, Kylie Reeves, Kaydence Reeves, Rhet Bowen, Jaxson Reeves, Colt Reeves, Charlotte Reeves; sisters Oska Nell Ross and Jackie Sue Dodd, both of Sulphur Springs.

Tommy was preceded in death by his parents; daughter, Ivana Belle White; brothers, Howard and Maurice White.

Memorials can be made to the Alzheimer's Association at Alz.Org or you can donate by mail at Alzheimer's Association, P.O. Box 96011, Washington, D.C. 20090-6011

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



Charles "Charlie" Nelson

Funeral service for Charles "Charlie" Nelson, age 78, of Sulphur Springs, TX, were held at 11:00 A.M. on Wednesday, March 28, 2018 at Piney Grove Baptist Church with Darrell Brown and Rev. Al Davis officiating. Interment followed at Piney Grove Cemetery with Kyle Presley, Cameron Geautreaux, David Nelson, Donald Bullard, Cody Burks and Dillon Burks serving as pallbearers and the Texas Roadrunners serving as honorary pallbearers. Visitations was held on Tuesday, March 27, 2018 from 5 to 7 P.M. at Murray-Orwosky Funeral Home and then one hour prior to the service starting at 10:00 A.M. at Piney Grove Baptist Church. Mr. Nelson passed away on Sunday, March 25, 2018 at Wesley House, Sulphur Springs, TX

He is survived by his wife, Vonda Nelson; daughter, Karen Presley of Corpus Christi; sons, Roger Burk and wife, LeAnn of Mt. Vernon, Gary Burks and wife, Sharri of Gladewater, TX; grandchildren, Brandie Gautreaux, Breanne Coe, Melissa Presley, Sarah Presley, Kyle Presley, Aliasha Adair, Amber Sheridan, April Sheerer, Destine Grobe, Dillon Burks, Cody Burks; 21 great grandchildren; brother, Mark Nelson and wife Peggy; sisters, Jaunice Wilehem, Vida Taylor and husband, Robert.

Easter

Easter, which celebrates Jesus Christ's resurrection from the dead, is Christianity's most important holiday. It has been called a moveable feast because it doesn't fall on a set date every year, as most holidays do. We celebrate Easter on the first Sunday following the full moon after the vernal equinox on March 21. Therefore, Easter is observed anywhere between March 22 and April 25 every year.

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