



The Pearce family during Media Day 2025, prior to the Buckaroos season. The family is mourning the loss of Bill Pearce, left, posing with his son Casey, right, and grandson Gunnar, front and center.

Photo/Alex Kielar

## Buckaroo faithful mourns loss of coach Bill Pearce

Alex Kielar

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Breckenridge ISD and the wider Buckaroo community are mourning the loss of longtime coach, educator and athletic trainer Bill Pearce, who passed away Friday, Dec. 26 at the age of 80.

His absence leaves a noticeable quiet across the district he served for nearly half a century.

Pearce, born William Casey Pearce on Aug. 18, 1945, in San Saba County, built a career in Texas public education that spanned more than four decades. A

standout student, he graduated as valedictorian of Richland Springs High School before earning top academic honors at Baylor University.

His early coaching and teaching years took him to Fort Stockton and later to Austin, where he worked as a teacher, coach and athletic trainer.

Pearce moved to Breckenridge in the late 1970s, joining the Buckaroo coaching staff and beginning what would become a lifelong commitment to the district.

Over the years, Pearce served as an assistant

coach, head football coach, classroom teacher and eventually the district's longtime athletic trainer and consultant.

His familiar stride up and down the sidelines became part of the rhythm of Friday nights in Breckenridge, a presence so constant that many said it felt like he would always be there.

Those who knew him describe a coach who balanced toughness with fairness, someone who expected effort and accountability but always

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Coach Bill Pearce, left, at the Buckaroos football scrimmage in Fort Worth before the 2025 season. Pearce passed away Friday, Dec. 26 at the age of 80 and is being remembered and honored by the community.

Photo/Alex Kielar



The best of show rabbit reserve champion is awarded during last year's Stephens County Junior Livestock Show. The 68th annual show and sale will take place next week at the Stephens County Ag Center, from Thursday, Jan. 8 through Sunday, Jan. 11.

Photo/Alex Kielar

## Junior livestock show next week

Alex Kielar

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The barns at the Stephens County Ag Center will come alive next week as local 4-H and FFA members prepare to exhibit months of hard work during the 68th annual Stephens County Junior Livestock Show and Sale.

For more on the show schedule, see page 10.

The show will be held Thursday, Jan. 8 through Sunday, Jan. 11 at the Ste-

phens County Ag Barn at 145 County Road 245. Animal validations and entry dates have been held from June through December.

The contest is open to all active 4-H club members who are nine years old or are in the third grade on the day of validations. Additionally, the contest is open to active Breckenridge FFA members who are full-time students and have not grad-

See SCJLS, Page 7



Graduates of the first annual city of Breckenridge's Citizens Academy were honored for completing at least eight of the nine classes back in October. The city is bringing back the academy for the second year starting in January.

Photo/Alex Kielar

## Second annual Citizens Academy begins soon

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The city of Breckenridge is once again inviting residents to step inside the workings of local government through its second annual Citizens Academy – a nine-month journey into the departments, partnerships and people who keep the city running.

Starting Monday, Jan. 12,

the academy will meet every second Monday evening through September 14, offering participants a behind-the-scenes look at municipal operations.

From finance and public works to police, fire and animal control, each session will spotlight a different city department or community partner. Attendees will

See Academy, Page 2

### Weekly Local Forecast

**Saturday, Jan. 3**  
High 65 | Low 41  
Precipitation 5%

**Sunday, Jan. 4**  
High 77 | Low 53  
Precipitation 4%

**Monday, Jan. 5**  
High 81 | Low 51  
Precipitation 2%

**Tuesday, Jan. 6**  
High 79 | Low 48  
Precipitation 1%

**Wednesday, Jan. 7**  
High 67 | Low 48  
Precipitation 24%

**Thursday, Jan. 8**  
High 68 | Low 44  
Precipitation 24%

**Friday, Jan. 9**  
High 68 | Low 43  
Precipitation 14%

**Hubbard Creek**  
At capacity: 1,183.00  
Current: 1,169.05

Cap. Highlights 3, 7  
Classifieds 8-9  
Entertainment 9

Obituaries 2-3  
Opinion 4-5  
Sports 6

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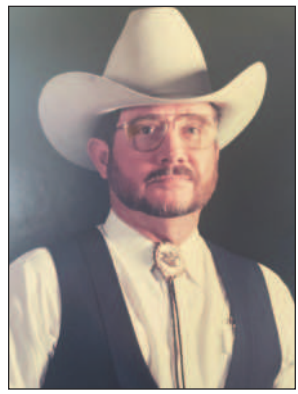
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# Obituaries



## Johnny Lee Rowe

Aug. 13, 1942 – Dec. 18, 2025

Johnny Lee Rowe, age 83, of Breckenridge, passed away Dec. 18, 2025 in Breckenridge.

Johnny was born in San Angelo to Joseph William Rowe and Frances Ivey Rowe on Aug. 13, 1942. He attended school in various places in the Western United States, including high school in Van Horn, Texas. He married Penelope Presley on May 28, 1991 in Clark County, Nevada.

Johnny worked in the gravity magnetic and seismic fields for much of his life, serving as President of Breckenridge Exploration Co., Inc from the 1980s until his retirement in 2011. Johnny always said he could not have been successful without his valued employees and co-workers.

He was a veteran, having served in the United States Army. Johnny was a long-time member of the Masonic Lodge, of which he was very proud.

Johnny was preceded in death by his parents, and a daughter, Jacqueline Annette Rowe.

He is survived by his wife, Penelope and a son, Johnny M. Rowe. In addition, siblings Jody(Dean) Harris, Joe Bill Rowe, and Ronee (A.H.)Bickel. Grandchildren, Heather ( Ryan) Suiter, Jayme Rowe, Jessica (Kirk) Ayers, Joseph W. Rowe. Great-Grandchildren include Kole McGlothlin, Andrué and Halen La Fleur, Trinity Welch and Stetson Rowe. Additionally, Johnny is survived by one great-great grandchild, Westin McGlothlin.

Special acknowledgment to our nephew, Scott Presley and his daughters Emily and Sydney for their assistance and support in recent months. Also, our dear friend Patsy McMullen, wife of Johnny's beloved friend, Roger.

Johnny's most cherished hobbies included competitive shooting, serving as a licensed scuba instructor, along with hunting and fishing. He had a lifetime love of all things outdoor.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Breckenridge Masonic Lodge #492 or Shriners Hospitals.

No services are planned at this time. Cremation services are entrusted to West Central Texas Cremation, of Abilene.



## King Hoermann

April 10, 1941 – Dec. 18, 2025

King Colville Hoermann, 84, passed away Dec. 18, 2025.

King was born April 10, 1941, in Seguin, to Alvin and Reatha Hoermann. A proud Matador from the Seguin High School Class of 1959, King went on to graduate from the University of Texas where he was president of the Delta Upsilon fraternity. He was a lifelong Longhorn, cheering especially loudly against Oklahoma and Texas A&M.

King loved traveling, hunting and fishing, entertaining guests on the grill, and sharing good music and great stories - if you knew him, you never left hungry! In Breckenridge, Texas, he worked for Texaco, Environmental Consultants (with good friend Mike Thornton), and helped launch the environmental program at Texas State Technical College. He was deeply committed to his community, serving as a vestry member for St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, president of the Rotary Club, on the Boards of the Library and Fine Arts Center and the Economic Development Corporation, and was proud to be recognized as the Chamber of Commerce's Citizen of the Year. And who could forget his participation as Nurse Ratched or one of the Blues Brothers at fundraisers and community events!

He is survived by his wife, Karen Hoermann, with whom he spent 60 wonderful years of love and laughter; his children, Lindy Sprong (husband Mike Sprong) and Will Hoermann (wife Kate Hoermann); and his grandchildren, Ben Sprong, Maggie Hoermann, Jordan Sprong, and Amelie Hoermann.

King will be remembered with love by all who knew his warmth, humor, and generous spirit. The family will have a private celebration of life at one of his favorite hill country spots when the wildflowers are in bloom.

## Pearce

Continued from Page 1

paired it with genuine care.

Former students often recall the same things: the early mornings, the quiet encouragement, and the way he made every athlete—from varsity starters to student trainers—feel valued. Colleagues say his influence reached far beyond sports, shaping work ethic, character and confidence in the young people he worked with.

District leaders echoed that sentiment in a message to the Buckaroo family after his passing, noting that Pearce embodied the values BISD strives to uphold—dedication, humility and service to others. They said the lessons he modeled daily will continue to guide the students and staff who work alongside him.

In the days following his passing, the community found its own way to honor him. Residents began raising their green Buckaroo flags in his memory, a

gesture meant to show his family just how far his influence reached.

Clear Fork Bank also announced it would light the "B" atop the building in his honor, a symbol that has long marked moments of pride and unity in Breckenridge. For many, seeing those flags and that glowing "B" served as a reminder of how deeply Pearce was woven into the identity of Buckaroo Nation.

Pearce's legacy also continues through his family. He is survived by his wife, Teeny; his

son and daughter-in-law, Casey and Monica; and his grandson, Gunnar, all of Breckenridge. His extended family includes siblings, nieces and nephews across Texas. His son Casey followed him into coaching and returned to Breckenridge in 2020 as athletic director and head football coach, carrying forward the same passion and presence his father was known for.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, Dec. 30 at 10 a.m. at St. Andrew's Anglican Church.



Samantha Stephens, Bill Pearce, Kennedi Toombs and Rick Townson, all Breckenridge folks, participated in the FCA All Star Football game June 9, 2018 at Shotwell Stadium.

Archive photo

## Academy

Continued from Page 1

hear directly from department heads, tour facilities and explore how city services intersect with organizations like the Breckenridge Chamber of

Commerce, BISD, Stephens County and Sacred Cross EMS.

The program is designed for those who want to better understand how decisions are made, how services

are delivered and how different agencies collaborate to meet community needs. Whether you're a longtime Breckenridge resident, a local business owner, a high school senior at BISD or a student enrolled at Texas State Technical College, the Citizens Academy offers a chance to connect, learn and lead.

Participants will gain firsthand insight into topics like elections, parks, water systems and emergency response, while building relationships with city staff, board members and fellow residents. The experience is interactive, informative and geared toward empowering future civic leaders.

Graduates of the academy are scheduled to be recognized at the Tuesday, Oct. 6 city commission meeting.

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# Obituaries



## Brenda Merle Dahse Smock

Sept. 3, 1950 – Dec. 25, 2025

Brenda Merle Smock, age 75, of Mineral Wells, passed away peacefully 12:25 a.m. Thursday, Dec. 25, 2025, at Harris Methodist Hospital in Fort Worth, surrounded by her loving family. Brenda was diagnosed with Burkitt Lymphoma in late June of 2025 and faced her illness with remarkable strength and determination until the end.

A Celebration of Life honoring Brenda will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026, at Rest Yourself River Ranch, 133 Seybold Road, Mineral Wells. The service will be followed by a catered BBQ dinner and time of fellowship.

Brenda was born Sept. 3, 1950, in Mathis, and raised in the Orange Grove area, the daughter of Henry John Dahse and Merline Koenig Dahse. She attended Orange Grove Schools from first through twelfth grade, graduating high school in 1969. Growing up, Brenda worked in the fields with her family, helped with their laying hen operation, and was actively involved in 4-H, band, and school activities—early signs of the strong work ethic and servant's heart she carried throughout her life.

She attended Bee County Junior College from 1969 to 1971, then transferred to Texas State University in San Marcos, where she earned her degree in education in 1973, with endorsements in elementary and kindergarten education. Brenda began her career as an educator in Breckenridge, Texas, where she helped establish the kindergarten program and taught for two years.

In July of 1973, Brenda married Richard Smock of San Antonio. Together they made their home in Breckenridge, where they raised their family. Brenda ended her teaching career in 1979 to stay home and devote herself to raising her children. Never one to sit still, she soon began sewing for the public and baking pies for the Village Inn Restaurant on Hubbard Creek Lake.

In 1980, Brenda and Richard opened Smock's Garden Center on Walker Street in Breckenridge. After a devastating flood in 1984, the business was rebuilt at a new location on the west side of town, where it flourished. Brenda owned and operated Smock's Garden Center from 1980 to 1995, running a thriving nursery and employing many Breckenridge High School students over the years. In 1992, she expanded her entrepreneurial spirit by opening a floral and gift shop, which soon led to the start of her catering business—first serving civic clubs and eventually the public with popular noon buffets.

While living in Breckenridge, Brenda was deeply involved in the Stephens County 4-H program, the Garden Club, and numerous civic organizations. She was a devoted supporter of young people, faithfully driving them to stock shows, sporting events, and other activities—never missing a game, match, or show.

In the fall of 1992, Brenda's life took a challenging turn when her son, Steven Henry Smock, was diagnosed with pituitary cancer. For two years, she set aside her businesses to care for him at Scott & White Hospital in Temple. During that time, Brenda also cooked meals for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House, offering comfort and nourishment to others even while walking her own difficult path. Her daughter, Stephanie Smock Renfro, helped manage the family businesses during her junior and senior years of high school.

In 1995, following Steven's remission, the passing of her mother, Merline Dahse, and her divorce, Brenda continued running her catering business in Breckenridge until 2002, when she relocated her business to the Mineral Wells area, where she would live until her passing.

From 2003 to 2009, Brenda partnered with a friend to manage bookkeeping for The Chilton Company, a construction business in the Austin area. With the help of her son-in-law, Justin Renfro, the company grew significantly, building more than 75 homes per year as an independent contractor for Toll Brothers and Mercedes Homes throughout the Austin and San Antonio markets.

In 2009, Brenda faced another life-altering challenge when her son Steven suffered a traumatic brain injury from a fall at the Houston Livestock Show, resulting in his use of a wheelchair. Brenda became his devoted caregiver, a role she embraced with unwavering love and resilience.

In 2011, Brenda reignited her passion for cooking and service by restarting her catering business, which continued to flourish until the very end of her life. Serving others was truly her calling. Her catering took her across North, South, and West Texas, with a special focus on Parker, Palo Pinto, Erath, and Stephens Counties. Through her work, she formed many cherished friendships and touched countless lives.

Brenda had a deep love for the outdoors and a true passion for traveling, much like her father. She loved seeing the country, fishing, hunting, and visiting new cities whenever she had the opportunity. Whether it was a road trip across Texas or exploring somewhere new, Brenda found joy in the journey itself. Those adventures fed her adventurous spirit and gave her countless stories she loved to share with family and friends.

Brenda's greatest joy was her family—especially her role as "Grandma" to her grandsons, Kase and Kade Renfro, born in 1999 and 2001. They were her world. She never missed a stock show, football game, school function, or church event, often loading Steven and his wheelchair into the vehicle in the early morning hours to be wherever her boys needed her. Her passions included caring for Steven, serving others, cattle and cattle shows, gardening, her businesses, and watching high school and college football.

Brenda was preceded in death by her parents, Henry and Merline Dahse, and her brother-in-law, Danny Williams.

She is survived by her daughter, Stephanie Renfro and husband Justin; her son, Steven Smock; her grandsons, Kase and Kade Renfro; her sister, Sara Williams; nieces and nephews Kim Williams Poe and husband Chris of Austin; Jason Williams and wife Stephanie of San Antonio; Katie Williams Vincent and husband Chase of LaVernia; Jesse Beckett and wife Maureen of Austin; Charles Smock and wife Brittney of New Braunfels; Lauren Smock Flippin and husband Brian of Kyle; along with numerous great-nieces, great-nephews, and many cousins from the Dahse and Koenig families.

The family wishes to thank all who have reached out through calls, texts, and social media. Your love, prayers, and words of comfort have meant more than you know.

In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully requests that memorial donations be made to the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Temple, in honor of Brenda's compassion and the care she shared with families during their time there.

## Online database displays state local bond, tax projects

Thomas Wallner  
editor@grahamleader.com

The Texas Comptroller's office launched a resource which will provide access to current and historical information on local government bonds, voter-approved tax rate elections and other

er projects.

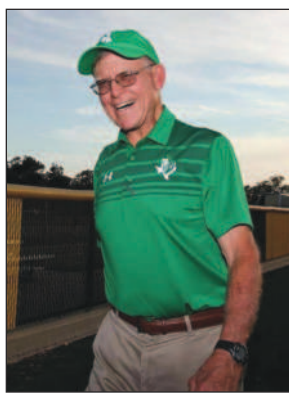
The Local Government Bond, Tax, and Project Transparency Database was a part of the House Bill 103 in the 89th Texas Legislature which sought to increase transparency and accountability in local fiscal decisions.

The bill requires the

comptroller to maintain the database with historical data on bonds and bond-related information that each Texas taxing unit issues.

Taxing units are required to submit historical data by Jan. 1,

See Database, Page 7



## Bill Pearce

Aug. 18, 1945 – Dec. 26, 2025

Bill Pearce, beloved father, coach, mentor, and lifelong educator, passed away Dec. 26, 2025, leaving behind a legacy defined by service, integrity, and an unwavering belief in young people.

For more than four decades, Bill devoted his life to Texas athletics and education. He served as an active football coach for 33 years, followed by 25 additional years of continued service as an athletic consultant and athletic trainer at Breckenridge High School.

Coaching was never just a profession for Bill—it was a calling. He believed deeply in the power of discipline, hard work, and character, and he modeled those values daily for his players, fellow coaches, and students.

Known for his calm presence, steady leadership, and unbiased wisdom, Bill became a trusted mentor to generations of young coaches entering the profession and to head coaches navigating the challenges of leadership. His work ethic, compassion, and high expectations helped revive and sustain athletic programs, most notably at Breckenridge ISD, where his influence kept the Buckaroo Spirit strong and competitive.

Bill's impact reached far beyond wins and losses. He understood that coaching was about shaping lives, not just athletes. Countless former players and colleagues carry his lessons with them—lessons about accountability, perseverance, humility, and doing things the right way. His contributions to education and the coaching profession touched communities across Texas and reflected the very best ideals of high school athletics.

Above all, Bill was a devoted husband, father, proud grandfather, and family man. He took immense pride in his grandson, Gunnar, and the lives they built, leading by example and encouraging him—and everyone around him—to "go out and attack the day and make it better." He loved his time outdoors with Gunnar and his many favorite bird dogs who accompanied them on walks and hunts at the deer lease, Sally's, or the Thompson properties. These two spent countless hours casting, shooting, talking football, baseball, and track, and most importantly thinking up the next adventure. He never grew tired of answering G's questions and delving into deep conversations about who knows what. These two had the best times of their lives together.

His influence was felt not only on the field and in the classroom, but at home, where his guidance, love, and quiet strength were constants to his family.

Bill was a member of the Masonic Lodge of Texas, where he served as Deputy Grand Master from 1985-86, and of the Scottish Rite Bodies from 1984 to the present. He also served St. Andrew's Anglican Church in multiple capacities on the church vestry throughout the years. He was a lifetime member of the THSCA, NATA, and SWATA, serving on the THSCA Board of Directors from 1993-1995, and was named the 2003 THSCA Athletic Trainer of the Year.

Bill was born William Casey Pearce on Aug. 19, 1945, in San Saba. He grew up in Richland Springs, with his siblings and parents, H.E. Casey and Irene Hopkins Pearce. He graduated valedictorian of his class in 1963 and went on to attend and graduate Summa Cum Laude from Baylor University in 1967. While attending Baylor, he served as a student assistant in the athletic training department. Upon graduation, he chose the education and coaching profession, taking his first coaching position at Ft. Stockton in 1967. While coaching and teaching in Ft. Stockton, he met and married his wife of 56 years, Teeny Pearce. They were married on Aug. 15, 1969, in San Angelo. He finished his time in Ft. Stockton as Athletic Director and Head Football Coach. After leaving Ft. Stockton in 1974, Bill, Teeny, and Casey moved to Austin, taking a position at Austin High School, where he served as a teacher, coach, and AISD lead Athletic Trainer. In 1977, Bill moved his family to Breckenridge, where he became an assistant coach and athletic trainer. Over the next 48 years, Bill served BISD in multiple capacities. Athletic Director and Head Football Coach 1981-1984, assistant coach from 1977-1980 & 1985-2001, high school assistant principal 1988-1991, and 2001-present as the BISD contract athletic trainer and athletic consultant. He was a lifelong educator and took much pride in BISD's direction and goals.

He was preceded in death by his parents, father, H.E. Casey Pearce, and mother, Irene Hopkins Pearce of Richland Springs; and sister, Marilyn Pearce of Richland Springs.

Bill is survived by his wife, Lilla "Teeny" Pearce, his son Casey and wife Monica, and his grandson Gunnar, all of Breckenridge. Sister, Patty Ratliff and husband Mickey of Lubbock; nieces, Bonnie Shahan and Joli Gray; nephew, Mathew Ratliff; brother, Frank Pearce and wife Cydney of Richland Springs; niece Paige Moats; and brother, Raymond "Cubby" Pearce and wife Teresa of Richland Springs; nephew, Jacody Sealy.

To those who knew him, Bill Pearce will be remembered as a man of principle, service, and heart—a coach and teacher who cared deeply, a mentor who gave freely, and a father whose legacy lives on through the many lives he shaped. His impact will be felt for generations, and the Spirit of the Buckaroo will live through his legacy of expectations of service, pride, and toughness.

A Requiem Mass was held Tuesday, Dec. 3, at 10 a.m. at St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Breckenridge, followed by burial in the Richland Springs Cemetery. The visitation was held at 6 p.m. Monday, Dec. 2, at Morehart Mortuary in Breckenridge. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to St. Andrew's Anglican Church and Buckaroo All-Sports Booster Club, honoring Bill's lifelong commitment to his church, education, and athletics.

## Five big moves from the Legislature in 2025

The Texas Legislature made a host of major decisions in 2025, as The Dallas Morning News reported. Here are the highlights:

- Homeowners received a break on their property taxes after approving a proposed constitutional amendment in November. The homestead exemption was increased to \$140,000 from \$100,000. People 65 and older were given an additional \$60,000 exemption on top of that.

- A major public school funding bill was passed, pumping \$8.5 billion into raises for teachers and support staff and additional op-



Gary Borders

### Capital Highlights

erational funding. Lawmakers also approved a statewide school voucher plan with \$1 billion in initial funding. Eligible families can use public funds for private schools.

- The Texas Lottery Commission was abolished, with oversight moved to the Department of Licensing and

Regulation. Online ticket sales were banned, as were courier services.

- After devastating floods in the Hill Country, especially along the Guadalupe River, killed at least 135 people, lawmakers approved funding to strengthen flood warning systems, expand river and rainfall gauges, and speed updates to flood-risk mapping.

### Warm, dry holiday weather elevates wildfire risk

Texas A&M Forest Service is warning that unseasonably dry and warm weather conditions are raising the

See Highlights, Page 7

## The greatest among us...

Often, I believe, writers spend too much time on the “what was” and “what will be” instead of the “what is.”

I admit to such whimpering occasionally, and this time, make no promises to do better, but I'll try.

Keep in mind, though, that my promises—if golf shots—typically veer off to both the left and right, perhaps no closer to the hole than when teed up.

Like golf, life isn't a straight-down-the-middle fairway...

•••

So, I'm but “semi-promising” on most topics as this column enters its 24th year.

It remains a joyful project with final wording and punctuation of each improved by the sharp eyes of a handful of “pre-readers,” all valued.

In 2026, I hope some observations will be helpful, and I'm pretty sure I won't pass along any “can't miss” recipes. I shared one long ago, and it was a di-



Don Newbury

Idle American

saster.

Better ones are found on the label of grocery items.

(A couple of ingredients were omitted, two others mistakenly measured and the recommended baking temperature way off.)

In this year's final piece, however, I want to mention two bloggers who are seriously devoted to writing, and whose topics each time make me want more, knowing that “more” awaits in their next writing cycle...

•••

Both are unshamedly Christians, regularly providing challenges to make the rest of us who claim to be followers of

Christ better ones.

One is Clint Hurdle, a former major league baseball player for a decade and in managerial and coaching roles for an additional quarter-century or so.

All told, he has been associated with five major league baseball teams.

A great communicator, he writes daily blogs, as well as passing along favorites of others he has perused along the way.

He began with a dozen email recipients more than a decade ago, and today he has more than 7,000 followers. It is simple to sign up for his free blog at [clinthurdle.com](http://clinthurdle.com)...

•••

Melissa (Mrs. Chad) Edgington isn't a baseball authority, but in the prose world, is in a league of her own. I much admire her “juggling” of activities/schedules/family matters in Olney, a small northwest Texas town where her husband is a minister.

Married for 26 years,

the Edgingtons' lives have included his leading a rock band in Nashville, then “lawyering” for the Wagstaff Law Firm in Abilene before he became an East Texas music minister, and finally, Senior Pastor of Olney First Baptist Church.

(Though still practicing law, it's much on the back burner.)

A stay-at-home mom and mother of four children, Melissa is a former English teacher “hooked” on writing. Several years ago, she decided to write “something” every day. That “something” has become an inspirational blog called “Your Mom Has a Blog,” and she writes when she has time. Several thousand recipients look forward to her free emails. To sign up, simply click YES at her website, [yourmomhasablog.com](http://yourmomhasablog.com)...

•••

She writes what she feels, sometimes with seasonal topics, but al-

See Newbury, Page 5

## A tremendous year for Texas agriculture

As we close out this year and look toward the next, it's appropriate to reflect on the incredible progress we've made for Texas at the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).

Texans are known for hard work, grit, and a love for the land that feeds and clothes the world. This year, that spirit was on full display. We focused on real results for real Texans. This year was not without its road bumps. To put it bluntly, this year gave Texas agriculture challenge after challenge. This has been one of the toughest stretches in recent memory for Texas agriculture producers. Farmers and ranchers across the state faced rising input costs, global market disruptions, and lingering inflation brought on by the Biden administration.

Texas Gulf seafood continues to combat devastating trade imbalances. We've had a farm bill that needs updating, leaving our producers with out-of-date support and crop coverage. That's just a start. It's a long list.

Despite these headwinds, Texas agriculture rose to the challenge with new innovations and record crops. Through it all, the Texas Department of Agriculture worked tirelessly alongside our producers, advocating for their interests and ensuring they had the tools and support needed to keep feeding, clothing, and fueling the world.

There are several key victories to celebrate. One of our most significant roles was in standing up and protecting Texas livestock and crops from serious biosecurity threats. From invasive pests to dangerous animal and plant diseases, the Texas Department of Agriculture worked tirelessly to find solutions. We faced the Cotton Jassid, Rice Delphacid, Citrus Greening, Equine Herpesvirus, Pasture Mealybug, Red Flour Beetle, and New World screwworm, to name a few. It's another long list that we've faced head-on that would have had devastating consequences for our ranchers and for our national food supply if left unchecked.

Thankfully, Texas



Sid Miller

Texas Ag Commissioner

farmers and ranchers know that when the stakes are high, they can count on us to have their backs. That is why we strengthened our vital biosecurity enforcement, worked hand in hand with the Trump administration and our state partners, and responded quickly to deliver the public key information. We remained vigilant, and I am proud to say that Texas has led the nation in biosecurity response.

When foreign nations failed to honor their obligations and left our producers without precious water, or when disasters struck and damaged vital infrastructure, our agency stood firmly behind Texas agriculture.

To combat ongoing failed water deliveries, I issued an unprecedented executive order giving Texas farmers and ranchers the green light to tap into the Rio Grande River for much-needed irrigation.

Water that at the time would have otherwise gone to waste washed into the Gulf of America. We also responded swiftly by expediting 1944 Water Treaty grant applications and mobilizing aggressive fundraising efforts through our STAR Fund.

Time and again, we were there to help Texas producers recover, rebuild, and get back on their feet. Our nutrition program is one of our greatest responsibilities, and among our proudest achievements. Texas is leading the nation in ensuring children and senior communities receive healthy meals through our Farm Fresh Network and school nutrition partnerships. We work with schools to ensure that kids, when they are at school, are given nutritious, healthy fuel to help them learn and grow. We also fought hunger, expanding support for food banks. And we've continued to fight fraud and misuse of state and fed-

See Miller, Page 5

## New Year's Resolutions: Super Success Strategies

Almost 90% of Americans will make at least one New Year's resolution.

Less than 20% will succeed in accomplishing even one.

The beginning of the year is a great time for life improving resolutions.

Common resolutions include losing weight, giving up smoking, maintaining a budget, saving money, finding a better job, getting healthier, becoming more or-

ganized, and spending more time with family.

Whatever your resolutions, here are some specific strategies to help you succeed.

First and foremost is to take the first step, which is to start. Without action, there will be no success. Action creates results. Intention alone will not work.

Have written goals stating what you want to accomplish. If you want to lose weight, how much and by when?

If you want to live within a budget, what is the amount? If you want to continue your education, what school will you go to and which classes will you take?

Take small but consistent steps. Habits are formed by frequent repetition over time. Change occurs by the same process. A resolution is not all or nothing. Partial change is okay.

Any progress in the desired direction, regardless of how small,



Bryan Golden

is a success. Accomplishing a resolution is a process, not a one-time effort.

Positive goals are more effective than negative ones. Rather than saying you will eat less, resolve to have a healthier diet.

Instead of spending less time at work you can endeavor to spend more time at home.

Bad habits can't just be eliminated; they have to be replaced by good ones.

Identify potential obstacles so they don't surprise you. If you experience a setback, don't give up. Don't blame yourself if you stumble.

Failure only occurs when you stop trying. Difficulties are an opportunity to learn. If you slide backwards, get back on track, get back in gear, and resume your progress.

Don't keep your plans a secret.

Develop a support system utilizing friends and family. Visualize how great you will feel as you succeed. Take credit for all accomplishments. It doesn't matter if your progress is slower than you would like.

Don't try to change too many things at once or you risk becoming overwhelmed and discouraged.

You can have a long list of resolutions so long as you realize all of the items don't have to be addressed simultaneously.

See Golden, Page 5

The Breckenridge American offers local readers an opportunity to share their opinions on community topics and issues of public importance. Mail or deliver letters to the office at 114 E. Elm Street in Breckenridge, or e-mail letters to [editor@breckenridgeamerican.com](mailto:editor@breckenridgeamerican.com). The deadline is 5 p.m. Friday for the midweek edition. Letters that do not meet the deadline will not be printed in the paper. Letters must be submitted by the author/signee, and not by a third-party on behalf of the author/signee. Letters must contain the author's first name, last name, complete address, and telephone number. Only the writer's name and title of the letter, as appropriate, will be published with the letter. Names cannot be withheld. Letters from any candidate who is actively running for any political office will not be published. Writers may submit letters of up to 500 words. Letters are not guaranteed to be published in the next edition, but every effort to do so will be made. Unverified letters and letters containing personal attacks the newspaper deems to be of a libelous nature will not be published. In any event, the newspaper reserves the sole discretion to decide whether or not a reader submission will be published. All letters and columns featured on the Opinion Page are the views of the authors and do not reflect the views of the Breckenridge American.

## Breckenridge American

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# Newbury

Continued from Page 4

ways on target, underscoring whoever first said that “life is what happens to us while we’re making other plans.”

Bottom line, she’s a “serious” Erma Bombeck. If you were in a household where many of the conversations include remembrances of a rock band in Nashville, a courtroom in wherever, pastor (and wife) in a small town church and rearing children—seemingly from here to eternity—you, too, might have plenty of column fodder.

(Their children—Adelaide, 20, Sawyer, 17

and Emerald, 13—now have a little sister, Ivy Joy, who has been a part of the Edgington family since she was 11 weeks old, and officially “theirs” since 2024. She’s now age four.)

Initially, Melissa “blogged” for her children, saying, “When my face is only a memory.... when I want them to be able to ‘read’ me.... for my words to come to them in lessons, as gentle whispers from God, as instruction and encouragement.”

She’s a favorite in the Olney Enterprise, and, thanks to blogging, her wonderful words of encouragement and inspiration have no limits...

# Golden

Continued from Page 4

Each accomplishment can be followed by another. Change can begin at any time, not just on January 1. Believe in yourself and your ability to change.

Change can feel difficult, uncomfortable, or painful, but you can do it.

Become determined to succeed. Don’t procrastinate. Although doing nothing is often an appealing alternative, it leads to frustration.

Each day is a new opportunity to work on your resolutions. If you were successful yesterday, fantastic, keep going. If yesterday was a disappointment, today is a new chance to make progress. Replace the word “try” with “will.” Do whatever it takes to get the results you want.

...  
Bryan is the author of “Dare to Live Without Limits.” Contact Bryan at [Bryan@columnist.com](mailto:Bryan@columnist.com) or at [DareToLiveWithoutLimits.com](http://DareToLiveWithoutLimits.com).

# Miller

Continued from Page 4

eral nutrition dollars. Making sure Texans are fed is sacred work, and we take that duty seriously.

This was also a banner year for our GO TEXAN program. More producers and agribusinesses than ever are displaying the GO TEXAN mark, and we’ve seen a nearly 20% increase in membership this year. More stores and restaurants are sourcing Texas-grown products. And more families are choosing our products at checkout. Even as State Fair lost nearly half a million visitors this year, our GO TEXAN Pavilion, sponsored by Southwest Dairy Farmers, didn’t miss a beat.

Our local and global outreach campaigns helped Texas farmers and ranchers connect directly with consumers in new and meaningful ways. Whether

it’s across the street at H-E-B or on the shelves in South Korea, our mission is to get Texas products into every expanding market. From Texas wine to Texas honey, from our cattle producers to our specialty crop growers, GO TEXAN continues to shine as the gold standard for supporting local agriculture and the best of Texas products.

The Texas State Office of Rural Health at the Texas Department of Agriculture also delivered meaningful results for rural communities across the state this year.

Our office has expanded access to care by providing technical assistance, grants, and operational support to rural hospitals, clinics, and healthcare providers, helping them recruit and retain medical professionals, modernize facilities, and

remain financially viable.

TDA earned national recognition for improving the quality of care in rural critical access hospitals through our Flex Program, reflecting a strong commitment to accountability and patient outcomes. Through these efforts, TDA has strengthened and better equipped rural healthcare to serve Texans where access to care matters most.

Across every corner of this state this year, Texas agriculture proved once again why it remains the back-

bone of our nation. This has been a year of action, innovation, and results. But we are not slowing down. Next year will bring new challenges and new opportunities, and TDA will be ready.

Texas farmers and ranchers feed the world. They deserve a Department of Agriculture that fights for them, and that is precisely what we delivered this year. The future of Texas agriculture is the boldest and grandest in the world, and we have more to accomplish together.



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# Breckenridge Devotional Page

1. For possible New Year's resolutions, Proverbs 16:3 says, "Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be \_\_\_\_\_." Resolved, Established, Directed, Bountiful
  2. Likewise, Psalm 37:5 instructs us to "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to \_\_\_\_\_." Nurture, Pass, Action, Light
  3. From which book's 29:11 does the Lord declare plans to prosper you, thoughts of peace to give you hope and a future? Leviticus, Ezra, Nehemiah, Jeremiah
  4. 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 2:20 are among the verses to focus on what in a new year? Blessings, Moving forward, Grace, Church attendance
  5. In which month of the religious calendar did the new year begin in the Bible? 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th
  6. From James 1:5, what may one lack, and if they ask God, it shall be given? Love, Wisdom, Truth, Goals
- ANSWERS: 1) Established, 2) Pass, 3) Jeremiah, 4) Moving forward, 5) 7th, 6) Wisdom

**FEATURES FROM THE BIBLE**  
**TRUTH IN SCRIPTURE**  
Zelophehad's Daughters' Inheritance  
Numbers 27

Zelophehad, of the tribe of Manasseh, died and his five daughters came before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and the whole assembly. They reported that their father had died and left no sons and asked why his name should disappear from his clan just because he had no son. They requested that they be given property among their fathers relatives.

Moses presented the situation to the Lord and expressed his belief that the girls were right in their thinking.

The Lord instructed Moses to write it down as a legal requirement that, "If a man dies and leaves no son, turn his inheritance over to his daughter. If he has no daughter, give his inheritance to his brothers. If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to his father's brothers. If his father had no brothers, give his inheritance to the nearest relative in his clan, that he may possess it. This is to be a legal requirement for the Israelites as the LORD commanded Moses."




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Douglas White posts up in the paint against a Bells defender Monday, Dec. 29 in the Bucks' first game of the Eula Tournament that they lost, 52-34 coming out of the Christmas break.

Photo/Alex Kielar

## Bucks drop first game of Eula Tournament

Alex Kielar  
news@breckenridgeamerican.com

The Breckenridge Buckaroos struggled to get going offensively in their return to action following the Christmas break as they lost to the Bells Panthers in their first game of the Eula Tournament, 52-34, Monday, Dec. 29.

The Bucks fell behind 11-1 out of the gate and spent most of the first half trying to chip away, trailing 11-3, 13-5, 17-5 and eventually 22-9 before tightening it to 23-15 before halftime.

Most of their early production came from Joacim Fernandez, who opened with a free throw and added two baskets, with Jaime Cruz, Douglas White at the free throw line and Hudson Woodward contributing as well before the break.

Both teams opened the third quarter scoreless until Bells finally broke through a three at the 6:14 mark, swinging momentum back their way after Breckenridge's late-half push. The Panthers stretched the lead to 30-15 by the



Cooper Wimberley dribbles up court during the first half of the Bucks' loss to Bells in their opening game of the Eula Tournament coming out of Christmas break Monday, Dec. 29.

Photo/Alex Kielar

5:34 mark and added another corner three at 4:41.

The Bucks didn't score in the period until Fernandez hit one of two at the line with

3:06 left.

Woodward followed with a corner three at 2:25 for the team's first field goal of the second half, and Conor Salazar jumped a passing lane moments later, turning a steal into an assist to Joseph Juneau to make it 34-21.

Bells answered with another corner three at one minute remaining in the quarter. Woodward closed the quarter with a late layup to bring it 39-23 going into the final quarter.

The Bucks opened the fourth quarter with energy as Fernandez cleaned up a Salazar miss for a putback and an and-one at seven minutes remaining. Woodward added two free throws after a strong offensive-rebound sequence and Cruz knocked down a midrange jumper at the five minute mark. But Bells continued to answer, hitting corner

threes at 3:39 and 2:39 to keep the margin out of reach.

White scored on a layup with 1:30 remaining, and with 25 seconds left, Bry Armstrong fed Gavin Harrison inside for the final basket of the game for the Bucks.

The Bucks went on to face the Muenster Hornets in the loser bracket Tuesday, Dec. 30.

"We had open gym yesterday (Sunday, Dec. 28) and shot and got up there this morning at 9. We didn't shoot well in practice, we didn't shoot well in the game," head coach Brent Lucas said. "Story of the day so far I guess. We got to be able to score, and that's why we work on shooting so much. There's no microcosm to that - shooting the ball. It's hard to win when you score 38 points."



Ryan Waller holds the ball against a Bells defender Monday, Dec. 29 in the first half of the Bucks' first game in the Eula Tournament coming out of the Christmas break.

Photo/Alex Kielar



Breckenridge children will get their shot at a national-level basketball competition this weekend when the local Elks Lodge hosts its annual Hoop Shoot free-throw contest.

Archive photo

## Breckenridge Elks Lodge annual hoop shoot tomorrow

Alex Kielar  
news@breckenridgeamerican.com

Breckenridge children will get their shot at a national-level basketball competition this weekend when the local Elks Lodge hosts its annual Hoop Shoot free-throw contest.

This year's contest is taking place Sunday, Jan. 4 with registration beginning at 2:30 p.m. at the Breckenridge High School gym, 602 W. Second St.

Breckenridge Elks Lodge No. 1480 is coordinating the event, which is open to boys and girls ages 8 to 13 and free to participate in.

Competitors will be grouped by age - 8-9, 10-11 and 12-13 - based on their age as of April 1, 2026. Winners in each division will advance to the district round, the local lodge covering gas expenses for families making the trip.

Those who move on past district will compete at the state contest in Carrollton on Feb. 21, followed by the regional round in Dallas on March 14. The national finals are

scheduled for April 18 in Chicago. All levels beyond district include overnight travel, with participants and their parents attending as guests of the Elks.

Six national champions - one boy and one girl from each age group - will be named. National winners receive a trophy and have their names added to a permanent plaque at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts. The top overall boy and girl earn the Getty Powell Award.

Breckenridge has a strong recent history in the competition. Last year, Millie Walling won the Texas state title and went on to place third at regionals, marking her second appearance at the state level.

The Elks organization describes the Hoop Shoot as an opportunity for kids to compete, building friendships and experience statewide and national travel with minimal cost to families.

For more information, contact Wayne Justus at 254-477-3941 or 254-477-3272.



The Elks Lodge will host its annual Hoop Shoot free-throw contest Sunday, Jan. 4 with registration beginning at 2:30 p.m. at the Breckenridge High School gym, 602 W. Second St.

Archive photo

# Highlights

Continued from Page 3

risk of wildfire as the New Year approaches.

“We have seen above-normal grass production across large areas of Texas, especially near Abilene, Wichita Falls, Lubbock, Childress and Amarillo,” said Luke Kanclerz of the forest service. “These grasses are now dormant and freeze-cured, which means they dry quickly and can support wildfire activity when wind speeds increase.”

About 90% of wildfires in the state are caused by human activity, with debris burning and equipment use accounting for the majority. Before traveling, drivers are urged to inspect their vehicles to make sure tires are properly inflated and trailer safety chains are secure to prevent creating sparks that can cause wildfires.

A total of 103 Texas counties are currently under a burn ban. A list of counties under a burn ban can be found at <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/>.

## Judge blocks app store age verification law

A federal judge temporarily blocked a new state law that would require app stores to verify the ages of users and restrict use by those under 18, the San Antonio Express-News reported. U.S. District Judge Robert Pitman granted an injunction against the law, which was set to take effect Jan. 1, saying it likely violates free speech rights under the First Amendment.

“The act is akin to a law that would re-

quire every bookstore to verify the age of every customer at the door and, for minors, require parental consent before the child or teen could enter and again when they try to purchase a book,” Pitman wrote.

Attorney General Ken Paxton said he would appeal the ruling.

The law would require app store users to be over 18 or to have parental consent before downloading or purchasing an app. Tech companies such as Apple and Google objected, calling it a violation of privacy and saying it would affect all apps, including those dedicated to news, sports or weather.

## Paxtons’ divorce files unsealed

After months of legal wrangling, the files in the divorce case of Angela and Ken Paxton have been released. The files show Angela Paxton contended the marriage has become “unsupportable” in part because of his infidelity, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Several media companies sued to force the release of the files, contending the public had a right to know since both parties are public elected officials. Angela Paxton is a Republican state senator from McKinney. Ken Paxton is leaving his attorney general post in a bid to unseat incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn in the March GOP primary.

The couple in mid-December agreed to make the files public just before a scheduled hearing on wheth-

er the records should remain sealed.

In her motion for divorce, Angela Paxton said the 38-year marriage had become insupportable and asked for a larger portion of their assets. Ken Paxton responded that his wife should “take nothing.”

## South Texas builders: ICE arrests upend industry

Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents have arrested more than 9,100 people in South Texas, The Texas Tribune reported, and builders say the arrests are slowing construction of new homes. The arrests account for nearly one-fifth of all ICE arrests in the entire state.

Mario Guerrero, executive director of the South Texas Builders Association, said ICE agents were operating without arrest warrants — which they can do legally — but are also detaining people who have proper authorization.

“It’s what’s happening across the Rio Grande Valley at construction sites,” he said.

Data from the Federal Reserve of Dallas indicates a 5% drop in construction jobs during the third quarter of 2025.

## New refuge for whooping cranes on Texas coast

Conservation groups have purchased more than 3,000 acres of prairie on an isolated stretch along the Gulf of Mexico to preserve as habitat for the endangered whooping crane, The Tribune reported. The

\$8 million purchase of two tracts in Calhoun County provides winter grounds for the world’s last wild flock of whooping cranes.

“Large, intact coastal landscapes are disappearing fast, and protecting this one is a major win,” said Julie Shackelford, Texas state director of The Conservation Fund, which purchased the 2,200-acre Costa Grande Ranch. Another coastal property consisting of 1,100 acres was bought by the International Crane Foundation.

Barely two dozen whooping cranes remained a century ago. Conservation efforts have increased the last wild flock to nearly 600. The flock migrates annually from Canada’s boreal forest to the Texas Gulf Coast.

“As the populations have grown, they have expanded more and more off of those protected lands,” said Carter Crouch of the International Crane Foundation. “If we want to have a continually growing and recovering population, we need to secure sufficient wintering habitat.”

•••  
*Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches, Lufkin and Cedar Park. Email: [gborders@texaspress.com](mailto:gborders@texaspress.com).*



Stephens County voters approved the \$39 million Breckenridge ISD bond for the construction of a new pre-kindergarten through 5th grade elementary school.

Contributed photo

# Database

Continued from Page 3

2026. Historical information includes data currently active or approved within the past 10 years, or tax years 2015 through 2025.

Taxing unit means a county, incorporated city or town, school district, special district or authority or any other political unit of the state.

While these local taxing entities are required to submit information, the comptroller states it does not independently verify information in the database or “represent or warrant” that information is accurate or complete.

“Database contents are subject to change without notice, as the comptroller strives to promptly incorporate new and updated in-

formation it receives throughout the year,” the website states.

Bond elections will be listed with ballot language, projected Interest and Sinking (I&S) Fund tax rate, votes in support and against, bond election results, list of proposed projects to be funded, dollar amount of any funded projects, description of increase in I&S tax rate and an estimate of the minimum dollar amount required to spend on debt service.

For school district Maintenance and Operation (M&O) bond elections they will have to list if the proposition was not approved or the proposed and approved tax rate as well as the ballot language for the M&O taxes levied.

# SCJLS

Continued from Page 1

uated from high school.

Each 4-H or FFA exhibitor must show their own entry during judging but may have another exhibitor assist only when exhibiting two or more animals in the same class. All exhibitors will be assigned a number to wear at all times exhibiting their animals.

In divisions where there are five or more entries, grand and reserve champion awards will be presented. For divisions with fewer than five entries, only grand champion awards will be presented. In divisions or classes with only three entries, ribbons only will be awarded.

The event begins Thursday, Jan. 8 with the Range and Pasture Identification Contest at 2 p.m. and the Public Speaking Contest at 3:30 p.m. Weigh-in will be held from 5-6 p.m. for rabbits, 5-6:30 p.m. for poultry, 5-7:30 p.m. for goats and sheep and 5:30-6:30 p.m. for swine. Ag mechanics and art projects will also be checked in from 5:30-6:30 p.m.

Judging will follow with breeding rabbits from 6:30-7:30 p.m., market rabbits from 7:30-8:30 p.m., county-born and-bred rabbits from 8:30-8:45 p.m. and rabbit showman-

ship from 8:45-9:15 p.m.

Friday will be filled with judging, beginning with poultry and poultry showmanship from 8-9 a.m. Judging of ag mechanics and the art show will begin at 9:30 a.m., alongside judging for breeding goats, market goats, bred and born goats and goat showmanship.

From 11:30 a.m. through 1 p.m. will be judging of breeding sheep, market sheep, bred and born sheep and the sheep showmanship award. Cattle weigh-in will be held from noon to 1 p.m.

Judging will resume from 1:30-5:30 p.m. for market gilts, market barrows, bred and born swine and swing showmanship. The Pee Wee show will follow the swine competition. At 6 p.m., the livestock judging contest will be held.

Then from 6:30-7:30 p.m., the judging of breeding cattle, market cattle, bred and born cattle and the cattle showmanship award will take place.

The last day of the show, Saturday, Jan. 10, will begin with herdsman interviews at 8 a.m. for seniors and then juniors. The Jacob Jackson Master Showman Contest will be held at 10 a.m., followed by the buckle awards presentation at 11:30 a.m. The Buyers’ Luncheon will begin at

noon, and the live sale will start at 1:30 p.m. to close out the three-day livestock show. Each exhibitor will be allowed to sell only one market or breeding entry in the general sale.

The sale order will be overall market champions, overall breeding champions, overall reserve market champions, overall reserve breeding champions, breed champions, showmanship champions, herdsman winners and bred and born champions.

Animals will be sold alternating between cattle, swine, sheep, goats, rabbits and poultry. After the champions have sold, the sale will continue in the order of divisions as listed by class placings.

A mandatory cleanup for all exhibitors will be held at 1 p.m. Sunday to receive sale checks in full. Unexcused absences from the cleanup will result in \$100 of the award check being contributed to the SCJLS Scholarship Fund.

To qualify for the scholarship, applicants must be in their graduating year of high school and must have shown in the livestock show either through 4-H or FFA for a minimum of three of four high school years, including their graduating year.

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800 PUBLIC/LEGAL NOTICES

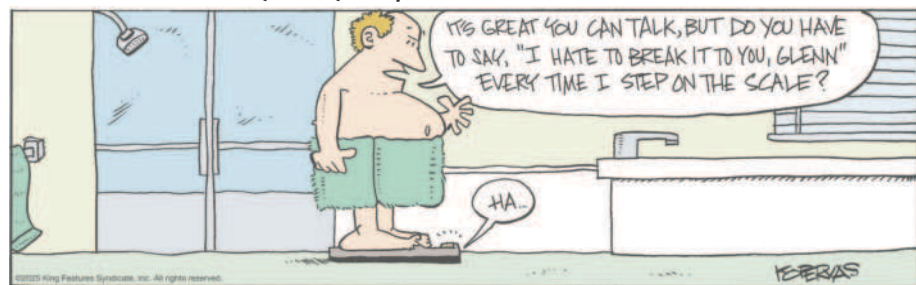


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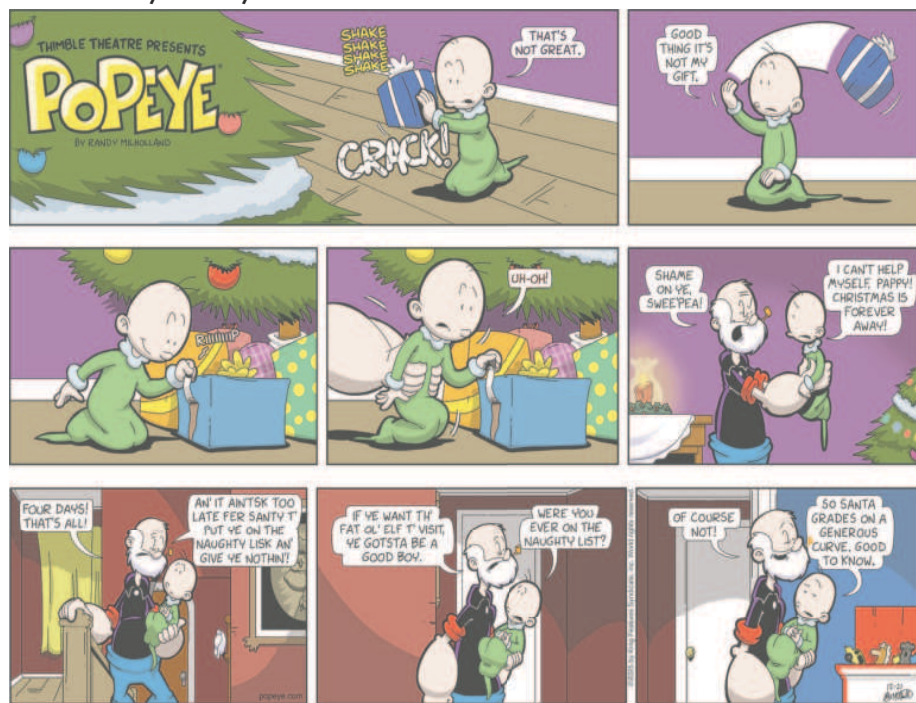
**OUT ON A LIMB** by Gary Kopervas



**THE SPATS** by Jeff Pickering



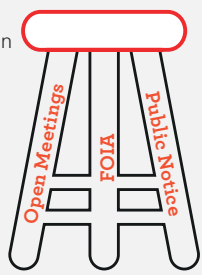
**POPEYE** by Randy Milholland



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**Why Public Notice Should Remain in Newspapers**

Along with open meeting and freedom of information laws, public notice is an essential element of the **three-legged stool of government transparency**.



Since the first U.S. Congress, public officials have understood that newspapers are the best medium to notify the public about official matters because they contain the **essential elements of public notice:**

- Accessibility
- Independence
- Verifiability
- Archivability

**Newspapers** remain the primary vehicle for public notice in **all 50 states**.

**This is not about "newspapers vs the internet". It's newspapers and newspaper websites vs government websites** and newspaper websites have a much larger audience. Moving notice from newspapers to government websites would **reduce the presence of public notices on the internet**.

**Publishing notices on the internet is neither cheap nor free**

**Even Exchange** by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an L, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

1. Cabbage garden	___ A ___	Toss the baseball	___ I ___
2. Wood's homophone	___ U ___	Earth	___ R ___
3. ___ shop quartet	___ A ___	Carpet style	___ E ___
4. Runway walker	___ D ___	Traveler's inn	___ T ___
5. Buffett or Beatty	___ R ___	Prison official	___ D ___
6. Funniness	H ___	Gossip's specialty	R ___
7. More rapidly	___ R ___	Button up	___ N ___
8. Small river	___ T ___	Banshee sound	___ C ___
9. Welcome	___ E ___	Vast	___ A ___
10. Baton or rod	___ I ___	Jammed	___ U ___

**SCRAMBLERS**  
Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

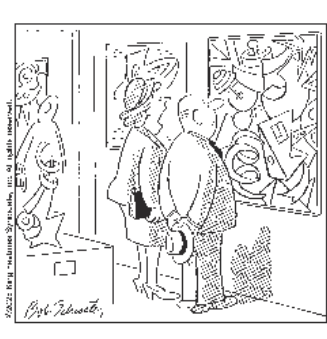
Chant  
**DABALL** [ ] [ ]

New  
**LOVEN** [ ] [ ] [ ]

Ruler  
**ERGENT** [ ] [ ]

Collect  
**GEARTH** [ ]

**TODAY'S WORD**  
[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]



"By the way, when are you going to clean out the \_\_\_\_\_?"

**Newspaper is inherently superior to the internet for public notice** because reading a newspaper is a serendipitous process.

We find things in newspapers we weren't expecting to see. On the internet, we search for specific information and ignore everything else.

**Citizens continue to learn about vital civic matters from newspaper notices.** Documented examples of people taking action and alerting their community after reading a newspaper notice are reported on a regular basis.

**Verifying publication is difficult-to-impossible on the web.** That's why the courts subject digital evidence to far greater scrutiny than evidence published in newspapers.

**Governments aren't very good at publishing information on the internet.** Unlike newspaper publishers, **public officials aren't compelled by the free market to operate effective websites.**

**Significant numbers of people in rural areas still lack high-speed internet access.** Those who are older than 65 or who have lower incomes or lack high-school diplomas are also cut off from the internet in far higher numbers than the average.

**Moreover, the real digital divide for public notice is growing** due to the massive migration to smartphones and other small-screen digital devices

Requiring independent, third-party newspapers to ensure that public notices run in accordance with the law helps **prevent government officials from hiding information** they would prefer the public not to see

Grade **F**

**Crossword**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12			13					14		
15		16						17		
20	21				22	23				
24				25				26	27	28
29			30					31		
32		33					34			
37	38	39				40				
41				42	43				44	45
46				47				48		
49				50				51		

**ACROSS**

1 Ship's sail  
4 Some TVs  
8 Corned beef recipe  
12 Terre Haute sch.  
13 Greek vowel  
14 Iso-  
15 Flop  
17 Pop's sister  
18 Coated with gold  
19 Is boastful  
20 Forest clearing  
22 Satiated  
24 Partially mine  
25 Screwdriver type  
29 - Lanka  
30 Warning  
31 Compass dir.  
32 Sailing challenge  
34 Wound cover  
35 Breaks down  
36 Piles  
37 Pink hue  
40 Seniors' org.  
41 Each  
42 Unexpected gain  
46 Story  
47 Shoppe descriptor  
48 24 horas  
49 Building wings

**DOWN**

50 Yale students  
51 Conclude  
20 "Holy cow!"  
21 Entice  
22 Secluded spots  
23 Cooking fat  
25 Move like a butterfly  
26 Adventure  
27 Now, in a memo  
28 Society newbies  
30 Missing GI  
33 Curtains

11 Chart toppers  
16 Pot covers  
19 Cigar remnant  
20 "Holy cow!"  
21 Entice  
22 Secluded spots  
23 Cooking fat  
25 Move like a butterfly  
26 Adventure  
27 Now, in a memo  
28 Society newbies  
30 Missing GI  
33 Curtains

34 Lowly worker  
36 Devil's domain  
37 Blanchett of "The Aviator"  
38 Milky gem  
39 Sandwich bread  
40 "The King -"  
42 Misery  
43 Under the weather  
44 Architect Maya  
45 Young fellow

Look for answers in the Classifieds.



# 68th Annual STEPHENS COUNTY JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW & SALE

.....  
●● JANUARY 8-11, 2026 ●●  
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## 2026 Stephens County Junior Livestock Show Schedule

### Thursday, January 8

2 p.m.	Range & Pasture ID Contest	5:30-6:30 p.m.	Check-in of Ag Mechanics & Art Projects
3:30 p.m.	Public Speaking Contest	6:30-7:30 p.m.	Judging of Breeding Rabbits
5-6 p.m.	Weigh-in of rabbits	7:30-8:30 p.m.	Judging of Market Rabbits
5:30-6:30 p.m.	Weigh-in of poultry	8:30-8:45 p.m.	Judging of County Born & Bred Rabbits
5:30-7:30 p.m.	Weigh-in of goats	8:45-9:15 p.m.	Judging of Rabbit Showmanship
	Weigh-in of sheep		
	Weigh-in of swine		

### Friday, January 9

8-9 a.m.	Judging of Poultry	11:30 a.m.-1 p.m.	Judging of Breeding Goats
	Judging of Poultry Showmanship		Judging of Market Goats
9:30 a.m.	Judging of Ag Mechanics & Art Show		Judging of Born & Bred Goats
9:30-11 a.m.	Judging of Breeding Sheep		Judging of Goat Showmanship
	Judging of Market Sheep	Noon-1 p.m.	Weigh-in of cattle
	Judging of Born & Bred Sheep	1:30-5:30 p.m.	Judging of Market Gilts
	Judging of Sheep Showmanship		Judging of Market Barrows
			Judging of Born & Bred Swine
			Judging of Swine Showmanship
			*Pee Wee Show immediately follows.
		6 p.m.	Livestock Judging Contest

### Saturday, January 10

8 a.m.	Herdsman Interviews	10 a.m.	Jacob Jackson Master Showman
8-9 a.m.	Judging of Breeding Cattle	11:30 a.m.	Buckle Awards Presentation
	Judging of Market Cattle	Noon	Buyers' Luncheon
	Judging of Born & Bred Cattle	1:30 p.m.	Live Sale Begins
	Judging of Cattle Showmanship		

**1 p.m. Sunday, January 11 • Mandatory Clean-Up**

*Good luck to all 2026 Stephens County  
Junior Livestock Show Participants!*



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