

Penny Record

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Week of Wednesday, July 5, 2023

Sheriff Mooney running for second term

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

Orange County Sheriff Lane Mooney is announcing on Wednesday he will be running in 2024 for his second term in office. Two other candidates have already announced they are challenging the incumbent in the March Republican primary race.

Mooney said he is campaigning on his record of accomplishments during his first term, including using a large savings of drug forfeiture money from a past administration to buy all patrol deputies new vehicles.

Mooney said the vehicles were a priority because he wants to keep the patrol deputies safe and secure. He recalls that in the past, when he was a patrol deputy, his assigned car had holes in the floorboard. Water and mud would splash inside when he drove through puddles after a rain.

Now, he said, patrol deputies not only have new vehicles, the vehicles are equipped with computer systems plus new rifles and shotguns. "They guys are ready to perform work and get home safely," he said.

Getting deputies home



Sheriff Lane Mooney

safely to their families is a priority for Mooney, he said.

He's also interested in the safety of the community and he has improved the SWAT team. After the elementary school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, last year, Mooney studied the actions, or lack of, by law enforcement officers.

He said he followed the online critique that former Green Beret Michael Glover did of the shooting. Glover has a training school for SWAT and Mooney hired him, once again using seized drug forfeiture money, to come train the sheriff's office SWAT. They practiced in the former Baptist Orange Hospital building.

The sheriff said since then, his deputies have vis-

SHERIFF Page 3A

Summer heat slamming Orange County

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

Orange County sweltered under a heat dome during June and the National Weather Service in Lake Charles is reporting the first six months of 2023 is the third hottest first half of the year for Southeast Texas since recording started in 1901.

The hottest first six months was in 2017, the year Hurricane-Tropical Storm Harvey flooded more than 60 percent of the county with record-breaking rainfall.

And more above-normal temperatures are forecast through most of July.

The average day temperature for the Orange, Beaumont, Port Arthur area was 69.8 degrees during the first six months of the year. The average in 2017 was 70.5 degrees.

During the June heat wave, heat indices at the

Orange County Airport registered near 110 or more for several days. Night temperatures stayed in the 80s with the night heat indices staying in the 90s. Last week, the night heat index dropped to 83 degrees early on the morning of June 30.

Normal highs for June in Southeast Texas range from 90 to 93 degrees, with lows of 74-77. In June, the temperatures at the Orange County Airport's National Weather Service monitor stayed in the upper 90s for several days.

Rain is in the forecast for this week, which could cool the temperatures some. It will also help prevent a "flash drought." The Lake Charles weather service explains that a flash drought is a rapid onset of drought that is associated with hot, dry, and windy conditions.

Thursday's U.S. Drought Monitor showed Southeast

Summer Heat Page 3A

"For" votes win Bridge City in crossfire of annexation

MARK DUNN
For The Record

Caught in the crossfire of annexation, a community-conscious group of citizens in 1970 initiated a movement to incorporate the town of Bridge City. July 7 marks the 53rd anniversary of their success.

By the late 1960s, the town of Bridge City's young infrastructure had taken root. In a healthy economic environment the thriving community boasted a Class 3A State Football Championship, a Chamber of Commerce, a Little League, a hometown newspaper and about 6,000 inhabitants.

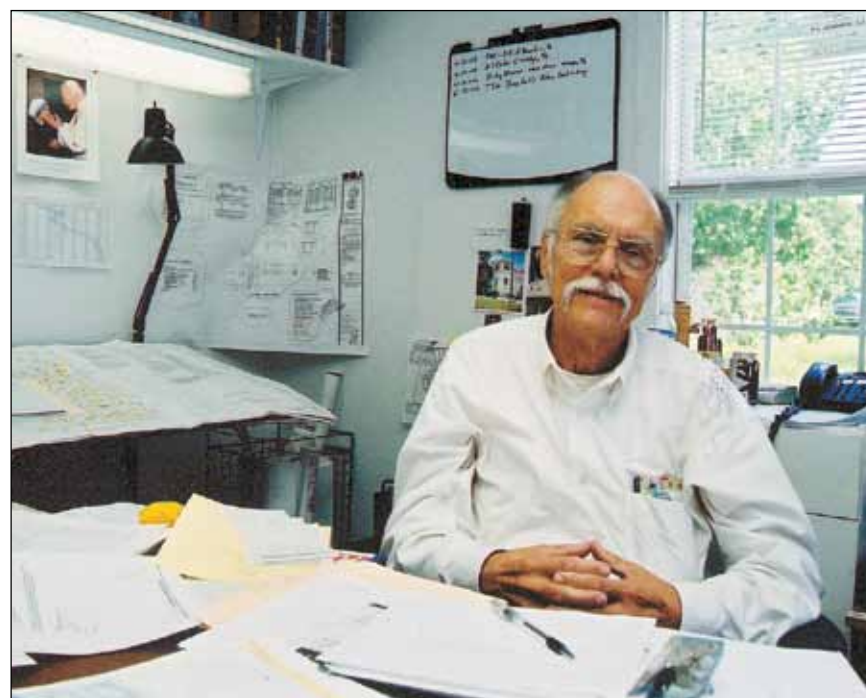
Port Arthur and Orange became embroiled in legal squabbles that centered primarily over tax revenue generated by the Gulf States Utilities power plant located near the town. The two municipalities made conflicting land claims. In 1959 Port Arthur claimed territory on the eastern shore of the Neches River in Orange County strategically taking in the Gulf States plant. The following year Orange planned annexation beyond the mouth of the Sabine River including the inlet of Cow Bayou and land as far as north Sabine Lake to benefit from future industrial development.

The small town of Bridge City and its adjoining marsh lands were caught in the middle. Through Texas extraterritorial law, Port Arthur and Orange both made demands on Gulf States Utilities Company for uncollected tax revenue through the Annexation Act of 1963.

Annexation of the town seemed inevitable until a group of citizens from the Bridge City community decided to take a stand. They called themselves the "Citizens For Bridge City Incorporation 1970" and they weren't without opposition. Two earlier attempts for incorporation



On Sept. 22, 1970, Bridge City held its first city election. Preston M. "Red" Wood narrowly edged out Jay Eshbach by three votes to become Bridge City's first mayor. Seen with the new mayor are Jo Bernard, Gay Bell, Mayor Wood and Chris Heath



"We had a good group of civic-minded people and businesses that wanted to incorporate Bridge City," said C.W. "Bubba" Hubbard before his death in 2005. Hubbard had been a central figure in the citizen committee's 1970 initiative.

RECORD FILE PHOTO: Mark Dunn

had failed. The 1970 citizens committee, however, foresaw the power struggle unfolding and mobilized to take action to prevent further annexation by one or both of the larger municipalities, and in the process propose incorporation to the Bridge City citizenry.

"We had a good group of civic-minded people and businesses that wanted to incorporate Bridge City," said C.W. "Bubba" Hub-

bard before his death in 2005. Hubbard had been a central figure in the citizen committee's 1970 initiative.

Hubbard and his wife Wilda had arrived in Bridge City in 1952. He established Hubbard Electric Company and was a member of the earlier failed attempts at incorporation.

In 1970, however, Hubbard said that annexation of Bridge City by Port Ar-

thur or Orange had become a real concern. He and Albert Gore, a BCISD administrator, would co-chair the 1970 citizens group that included community leaders from a spectrum of business and civic organizations. The official members included John Brooks, Gus Garza, Curtis Lee, Donald Cole, L.J. Garriga, Charles Gorman, G.A. Laughlin, L.J.

"FOR" Page 5A

OCP perfoms Broadway fundraiser

STAFF REPORT
For The Record

Orange Community Players is having another musical dinner theater performance this weekend at the Orange Train Depot. The fundraiser will help the longtime amateur theater company renovate the old Twin Cinema building on Bowling Lane to become the new playhouse.

This year's entertainment features show tunes and dances under the title "Broadway Fun for Funds."

Tickets are \$40 for individuals and \$70 for couples. The doors open at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, July 7, and then again on Saturday, July 8. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be served then. Desserts will be served during the show's intermission.

Tickets may be purchased online through the Orange Community Players website or Facebook page. In addition, tickets may be reserved by calling 409-883-3615.

The show will start at 7:37 p.m., the traditional

start for OCP night entertainments. The time was established more than 60 years ago when the downtown playhouse was new and a train through town with its accompanying noises created the need for an odd start time.

The old playhouse on West Division Avenue was donated by the late Edgar Brown Jr. and served for decades. However, Hurricane Ike in 2008, and then Hurricane Harvey in 2017, flooded the playhouse, making insurance too ex-

pensive for the non-profit group.

After Harvey, the Twin Cinema movie theater closed, even though the building did not flood. OCP bought the building and has been renovating it to become another stage for productions.

The OCP board voted to name the new theater in honor of the late Jeff Hattman, who long taught drama at Little Cypress-Mauriceville High School and was a leader for OCP productions.

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My 5-Cents By State Sen. Robert Nichols

A weekly column by Sen. Robert Nichols, Senate District 3

This week, the nation celebrated Independence Day. The Fourth of July commemorates the ratification of the Declaration of Independence in 1776, establishing the United States of America. Our Founding Fathers made history in declaring our independence from Britain 247 years ago and establishing this great nation. Happy Fourth of July week!



Sen. Nichols

ment of all the state's state hospitals, which is ongoing. The state has committed \$3.2 billion since 2017 for the replacement, renovation, or expansion of state hospitals in Austin, Kerrville, Rusk, San Antonio, Houston, and Dallas. The new Rusk State Hospital includes 100-bed non-maximum-security unit and an expanded 100-bed maximum-security unit. It also has single-person rooms, natural light, outdoor spaces, and a variety of therapeutic, recreational, and social experiences for patients to prepare for life outside the hospital. Mental health care is essential for many Texans, and it is imperative that the state continues to support and expand access to services statewide.

2. Governor calls first, second special sessions on property tax relief

As the last day of the

88th regular session came to a close, Governor Abbott called the First Called Special Session of the 88th Legislature. Property tax relief and border security were the only two items on the special session call, therefore the only things the Legislature could address. However, the House and the Senate could not come to an agreement on either issue. On the last day of the first special session, the Governor called the Legislature back into a second special session. The Second Called Special Session of the 88th Legislature will have a singular focus – property tax relief. Currently there is disagreement over whether to put the entirety of the almost \$18 billion toward lowering school district property tax rates or to allocate part of that relief to increasing the homestead exemption to \$100,000. Increasing the homestead exemption would create an ongoing benefit for homeowners, while compressing school district taxes would have to include continuing increasing funding from the state

for school districts to maintain the benefit.

3. TEA meets federal special education requirements, ending federal oversight

This month, the US Department of Education sent a letter announcing that the Texas Education Agency has fulfilled all the needed requirements to comply with federal special education law. The Department's Special Education Program's office will remove special conditions it had placed on TEA. The federal oversight began in 2018 when the Education Department informed the state it was out of compliance with special education standards, specifically when evaluating students for special education services. Over the past several years, TEA and the Education Department have worked to ensure students needing special education services were identified and given access to those services.

4. Texas to receive \$3.3 billion in federal broadband funding

This week, the federal government announced over \$40 billion for broadband expansion will be distributed nationwide. Texas will receive \$3.3 billion of that funding, more than any other state and more than \$1 billion more than the next largest share of funding. The funds are aimed at providing high-speed internet access to the nearly 2.8 million households without access in Texas. According to the Texas Broadband Development Office, 85 percent of Texans who lack high-speed internet live in rural communities. Broadband access is a necessity in an increasingly digital landscape. Health care, education, and business are all routinely conducted online or supplemented online. Without access to high-speed internet, rural Texans are left behind in an in-

creasing digital divide. Continued investment in the expansion of internet availability statewide is necessary to ensure rural areas receive access to broadband.

5. Texas ranks number one for Best Business Climate

In yet another survey, Texas is named number one – this time for Best Business Climate. Business Facilities magazine's 19th annual ranking report focused on over 60 factors that site selection teams use during corporate relocations or expansion projects.

Last year, Texas attracted more than 1,000 projects, more than double the second-highest state, according to the magazine. Texas was rewarded for the amount of capital investment in the state, job creation, diversity of industries, infrastructure, and its business-friendly regulatory and tax climate.

Here are five things happening around your state:

1. Grand opening of improved Rusk State Hospital

This month, I was thrilled to attend the grand opening of the new \$200 million patient complex and administration building at Rusk State Hospital. I have worked on this project with other members of the Legislature and the Lt. Governor since 2015. The Rusk State Hospital improvement project opened the door for the improve-

GOVERNMENT FOR SALE?

Sen. Carl Parker For The Record



Former State Senator Carl Parker

Our Supreme Court has recently issued some very controversial rulings. All the rulings create dissatisfaction among political blogs but there is one ruling I truly believe threatens democracy as our form of government. The name of that case is "Citizens United."

Even though there have been reasonable limits on amounts of money spent on elections the past few years, this case seems to have hung a "For Sale" sign on the election process as we know it. The court ruled in

amounts of money to be spent in support of politics, it also allows any amount of money to be spent without revealing its source.

The Citizens United ruling makes America different from every other developed nation. Every other developed country has some reasonable limit on how much money can be spent in support of an election.

Most also have provisions of transparency so that voters can determine the source of political contributions. I doubt seriously that our forefathers authoring our constitution would have dreamed that

elections in America would be so influenced by the dollar instead of true public speech or writing of its citizens. It is estimated by some so-called experts that over a billion dollars will be spent on the next presidential election in the United States. In my opinion, this in itself is a threat to the underlying basis of a free democratic society controlled by the people.

Unless we in the near future offer a constitutional amendment to reverse the decision of Citizens United, America could be a nation where its leadership is simply for sale.

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of Orange County, Texas

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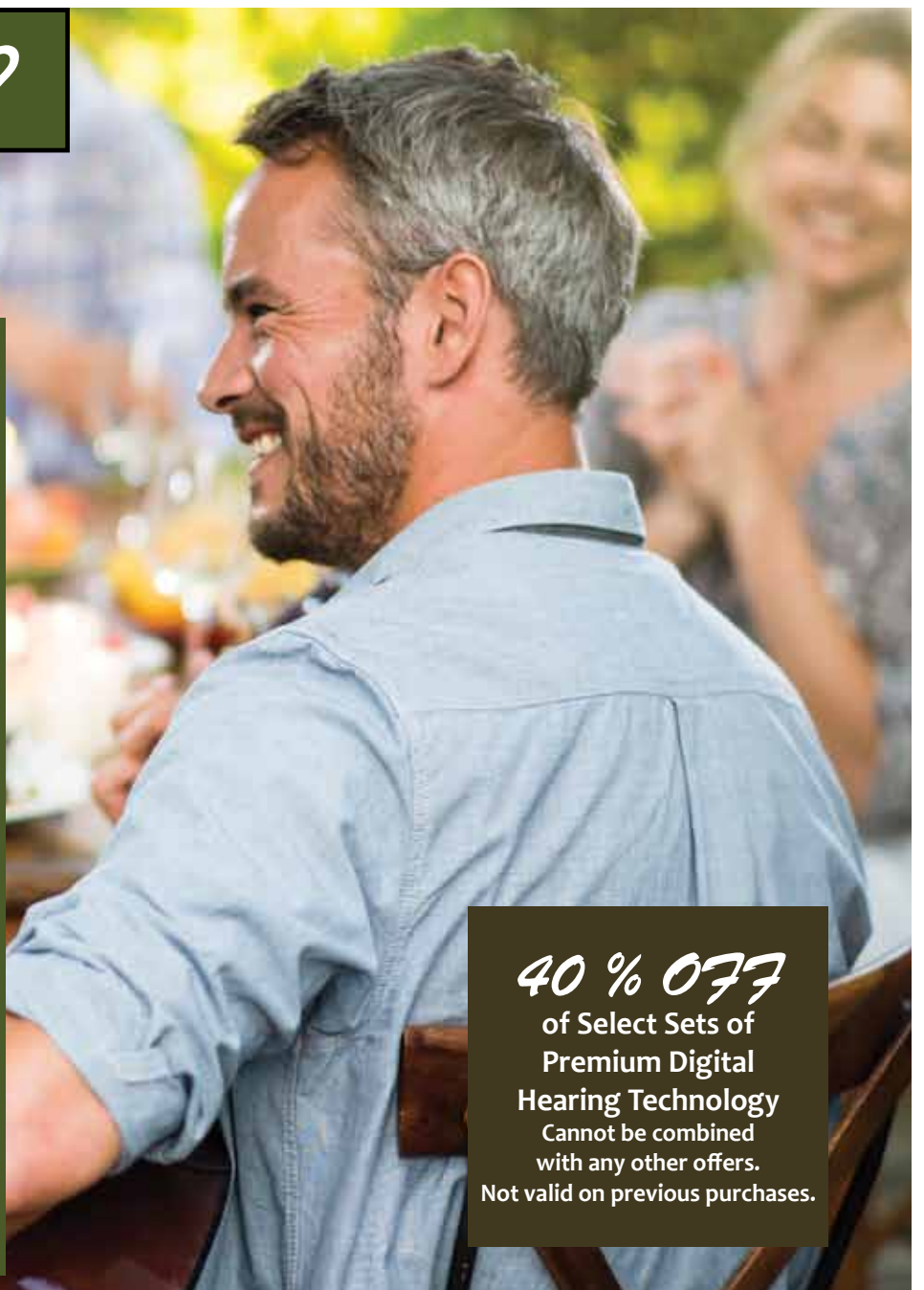
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Orange County Sheriff Lane Mooney was pleased with this year's edition of Cops N Kids which the Sheriff's Office has sponsored for 27 years. RECORD PHOTO: Dan Perrine

Sheriff Mooney From Page 1

ited schools to learn the layouts of rooms so they can be prepared for a possible school shooting.

But visiting the schools isn't only for scouting a possible emergency. Mooney said his deputies often visit schools to meet teachers and students. Mauriceville Elementary School has "Coffee with the Cops." Teachers bring snacks for the deputies, who visit in the morning and drink coffee with the teachers. Then the officers are out in the hallways to greet the students as they go by.

Not only are the patrol vehicles new, he has also added more patrols through the county. And if someone has a complaint about speeders on a rural road, he formed a traffic division to patrol during the speeding hours. If needed, the traffic officers will give tickets.

The Orange County Jail has passed state jail inspections, but Mooney is most proud of implementing a mental health program. "Every jail in Texas is a mental health facility" because of the number of people arrested who are having mental problems.

He has worked with the Spindletop Center, the regional state center for mental health. They have developed a program for Orange County inmates to get help.

Also, he pointed out that soon after he took office, a hurricane was coming and the department had to evacuate to Henderson. The storm damaged the jail and he found a place for 100 inmates in a jail 400 miles away. Luckily, the cost was only \$55 a day for housing, feeding, and guarding each prisoner. Now the cost would be at least \$90 a day, he said.

The county judge and commissioners court worked with him to make sure the

jail, which was insured, was one of the first county buildings fixed, he said.

In addition, Mooney worked with the deputies union and they signed their first contract in several years after failures in negotiations.

Mooney wants everyone to know he has an "open door" to his office and will answer phone calls from citizens. He even returns those phone calls, if at all possible, when a message is left.

Mooney and his wife, Michelle, grew up in Vidor and still live there. He said he went to a Houston tech school, but then learned he could become a law enforcement officer by attending the Lamar University Police Academy. He went and graduated in 1987. Ever since then, he has worked in law enforcement at different agencies and has been assigned to a variety of duties.

The couple have two grown sons. The sheriff and his sons are trained in Jui Jitsu. One is in Houston competing in fighting, the other helps run the family's Jui Jitsu school in Vidor. Mooney said he has quit competitive Jui Jitsu fighting.

The 2024 primary races will be held on Tuesday, March 5. So far, two challengers have announced they are also running for the Republican nomination for the November 2024 general election.

Ronald Dischler is a lieutenant with the Beaumont Police Department and a longtime resident of Orange County. Another veteran law officer, Mike Sanchez of Vidor, is also running.

The first day of filing for the primary races will be Saturday, November 11, 2023, with the filing deadline Monday, December 11, at 6 p.m.

Woman in wheelchair gets ramp



A young woman in a wheelchair now has a professional-style ramp to help her get into her house thanks to a united effort of local volunteers. Workers from the Orange Lions Club, Nehemiah's Vision in Vidor, and Orange County Disaster Rebuild worked in the hot sun and sweltering temperatures Saturday and Sunday to build the ramp. The small, wood frame house previously had a sheet of plywood up some steps. The new ramp is built like a deck with railings and designed in sections to give a safe slope for wheelchair use.

Summer heat From Page 1

Texas and Southwest Louisiana in an abnormally dry condition. Without rain, a flash drought could develop.

Orange County does not have a burn ban at this time, but caution is urged for people shooting fireworks during the holiday week, especially if the location has not had rain recently.

At this time, the National Hurricane Center has no tropical activity near the U.S., but is monitoring four tropical waves in the Atlantic Basin. The Atlantic Basin is the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean, and Gulf of Mexico. Two of the tropical waves are in the Caribbean. As temperatures stay high, the waters stay warm,

which can lead to tropical cyclone formation.

As the heat continues, the National Weather Service advises to never leave children or pets in cars, check on the elderly, especially those without air conditioning, and stay hydrated. People outside need to take short breaks to try to cool off and drink plenty of liquids to prevent heat stroke.

Also, if thunderstorms develop during the week, people need to stay inside out of the way of lightning. Boats need to be cautious about forecasts and have an escape plan if lightning comes with a thunderstorm.

DAR meets 3rd Tuesday in Bridge City

The Daughters of the American Revolution William Diamond Chapter of Orange County meets the third Tuesday of the month at St. Paul Methodist Church in Bridge City. DAR promotes local community service, education, historical preservation, and patriotism. To become a member a woman must prove blood line descent from an ancestor who aided in achieving American Independence. For more information contact Jackie Huckabay, Registrar, at 409-719-6478 or Bertie Herman, Regent, at 409-960-4560.

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From the Creaux's Nest

WHAT DOES THE FOURTH OF JULY MEAN TO US

Yesterday We Celebrated Our Independence

The year was 1776 when a brave band of men put together the 'Declaration of Independence.' The first few lines always affects me, "We hold these truths to be **self-evident**, that all men are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among those are **life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.**" As a child these were just words, but after living all these decades, I've learned to appreciate them. The presentation of these unalienable rights is the purpose of government said our founding fathers. This philosophy is reflected in our constitution, "We the people of the United States, **in order to form a more perfect union**, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and our posterity do ordain and establish the constitution of the United State of America." Once again, freedom and liberty. Remember the stirring beginning of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg address? "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, **conceived in liberty** and dedicated to the position that **all men are created equal.**" Again **liberty and freedom.** Times have changed since I was a boy there seems to be **so much hate and venom spewed daily** on the internet, talk radio and far-right television. I believe they misunderstand what our founding fathers **really meant.**

TURNING BACK THE HANDS OF TIME 10 Years Ago-2013

A big celebration, "Born on the Bayou," was held the Fourth of July evening at Bridge City. The Bridge City historical group presented fireworks, music, food and fun.****Our deepest sympathies go out to the family of Chief **Jerry Wimberly**, who passed away June 27. Services were held at Claybar Funeral Home, Sunday, June 30. **Jerry** had fought the cancer battle but the odds were just too great to overcome. He stayed in good spirits until the end was in sight. **Jerry** liked being around **friends** and took every opportunity to do so. He was solid and any secret was always safe with him. As fire chief I remember the toy fire truck collection in his office. I was reminded of that when I saw the massive fire truck parked at the funeral home for Chief **Jerry's** service. He and **Ruby** really enjoyed a long life together.******Doug** and **Shelley Manning** and their three children, **Mason, Robert** and **Maya**, just returned from **Honduras**. They had been there since June 21. Attending also were **Dr. Nina Leifeste** and **Doug's** dad, **Jerry**. This was their second trip. While there **Shelley** worked **with the children** and held Bible school. **Doug** worked with others to build a house for a family using funds from Hope Coffee that began in 2009. **Doug's** dad also helped build houses.****The "Riders in the Sky" musical group will appear at the Lutch Theater for one show on July 14 at 3 p.m.****I'm looking forward to **Randy Travis'** new single due out in the fall. The single is a tribute to **George Jones**, "Tonight I'm Playing Possum" written by **Keith Gattis**. I hear this might be another hit. Maybe **Randy has his act together.** He's a great singer that went off the deep end. Also **Erik Thorson** and a couple of friends have written a song, "George Jones Jones" in **George's honor.******Murder/suicide on **McFadden Beach**, where **Eric Barragan**, 32, of Bridge City, shot and killed his ex-girlfriend, **Lauren Brack**, 31 and **Regino Antonio Maybit**, 31, and then killed himself is another case that lately has been happening way too often. In recent months several murder/suicides have occurred, also way too many youngsters are being killed in auto accidents.****Firefighters all over the country are mourning the **deaths of 19 firemen** who tried to gain control of a stubborn, swelling wildfire Sunday near Prescott, Arizona. Only one of the 20 member, highly trained, **Hot-shot team** survived. They were killed when a windblown **wildfire overcame them.** Most of those brave young men were in their 20's. The erratic winds, thunderstorms, with no rain, and shifting winds turned on them. The nation feels the pain of loss, but only a fireman understands what those young men must have gone through. It was heart breaking to see 19 white **vans, carrying those 19 bodies**, pass under arched ladders of fire trucks, on the way to the medical examiner's office. A big American flag was in the background. **President Obama** hailed the fallen as

heroes. Flags at fire stations around the country are at half-staff. The **fires continue to burn in Arizona** with no relief in sight.

44 Years Ago-1979

Saturday, July 7, the Harmon family of Orange opens the doors on their new building at 2611 MacArthur Drive. The Harmon family has been involved in transportation for more than 100 years and has been the **Chevrolet dealer for 10 years.** The building has 44,000 sq. feet, 24 service bays and a two-story, 9,000 sq. ft. **parts storage area.** Planning and engineering was done by Bill Hughes of Norstock Steel. The building was two years in development. The Harmons are **Jackie, Corky, Don** and **Tommy** and their dad **Ovie.********H.D., Sue** and **Penny** return from their trip to **Gatlinburg, Tenn.********Mr. and Mrs. Willard Frank** celebrate their 42nd anniversary on July 7. They married in 1937 at 7 p.m. and spent their honeymoon in room 1007.******Jo Amodeo** has worked for **Orange County Abstract** for several years. She is returning to **Port Arthur Abstract** where she previously worked for six years. On Aug. 1, she will be married to **Ace** 14 years.******Frenchy Credeur**, head mechanic at **P.S. Tire**, will race his Wild Man racing Ford at **Chenault Air Force Base.** He looks to capture the NHRA-sanctioned **Louisiana state championship** bracket series event.******James "Bubba" Busceme** returns to pro boxing and will fight **Camillo Ibarra** of Mexico on July 24 in a 10-round fight at the **Beaumont Civic Center.******Winning the fishing tournament for **OCBC** were **Jimmy McKee**, 21-1 pounds for first; **Darwin Fowler, Kenny Hudson, Willis Stout, Leslie Holt, Kenny Linscomb** and **Carl Thibodeaux** all weighed in with more than 10 pounds. **Hudson** snagged the largest fish, 4.10 pounds.******John Martin** wins the second fishing tournament ever in **DERA** history. Other winners were **Troy Woodall, Willie Hayes, Jim Prewitt, Mac Guillory** and **Larry Schrode.********Donna Summer** has the No. 1 & 2 spots on the Billboard charts with "Bad Girls" and "Hot Stuff." "Bad Girls" is also the top album.******Waylon Jennings'** "Amanda" is No. 1 Country.****A brand new 1979 Cadillac Coup Deville at **Smith-Lee** will set you back \$9997 loaded. A '79 Olds Cutlass **Supreme**, new, loaded, \$4997.****The **Texas Avenue Grocery specials:** ground beef, 5 lbs. for \$6; baby beef **veal chops, \$1.79 lb;** Pabst Blue Ribbon beer, 6-pack, \$2.99; Mrs. Tucker's shortening, 42 oz., \$1.19.

A FEW HAPPENINGS

On July 7, the City of Bridge City celebrates its 53rd birthday. Almost everyone who had anything to do with the city's birth is now gone.****We learned recently that **Hunter Uzzle** had given up coaching to enter the world of business. After watching 80 years of youngsters pursuing their dream in sports I never saw a youngster who was more dedicated and committed to being the best he could be. **Hunter** loved baseball and was a great example to all youngsters with his dedication and work ethic. It's still hard to believe **Hunter** would leave it all behind. He had a great run.****The sweltering temperatures have sent people off to cooling waters. Sometimes you don't even have to travel far. **Linda Hanauer** and **Nancy Allison** met up in **Linda's backyard pool** and sipped wine.****In **Bridge City**, the kids were finally able to play in the water again after the city finished repairs at the popular **splash pad.******Local folks took off for the lake at **Redneck Yacht Club at Toledo Bend.** Those enjoying a holiday weekend with friends were **Terri and Brad Childs, Janois** and **Mark Grizzaffi, Rhonda Ritter-Fenton** and **Mistie Layne.** The women decked out in **red, white, and blue swimsuits.** **Janois** is retired from the **Orange County Sheriff's office**, but can still rock a patriotic bikini.******Larry** and **Renee Fisher** met up with daughter **Halee** in Atlanta and traveled to **Ashville, North Carolina** to see the sites which included a **1920s Donald Ross golf course.** He also designed **Sunset Grove Country Club in Orange** back in the 1920s. They also visited the historic **Biltmore Estate.********Angel Mills** and **hubby** took off for **Fort Worth** to see **Tanya Tucker at Billy Bob's.********Lori Westover Gall** returned to **Orange** from her East Coast home and visited familiar sites, including the **Orange Boating Club********Pat** and **Patty Cook** continue their **50th wedding anniversary road trip** with a long stop to visit relatives in **Nebraska.** Their son drove up with a big mess of crawfish to treat the Midwesterners.******Brandi Griggs** took her two youngest on a cruise that included a stop in **Costa Maya.** **Suzie** and **Frank Wallace** were riding the **Bolivar Ferry** when **Brandi** and kids left Galveston harbor for the cruise and gave the cruisers a wave.******Edie Burch** and **Jennifer Byrd** visited the **Woodlands** and their adventures included riding in a push shopping buggy. **Edie** was hopping around this past week, especially when she went to **Beaumont** and did **bungee cord exercises.******People watching the **U.S. Women's Open** at **Pebble Beach** this weekend need to keep an eye out for the **Santa Claus** looking guy at the **13th hole.** Orange native **Woodrow Bishop** is the **13th hole marshal captain** for officiates at the tournament. Their uniforms are red shirts and he has a big white beard.******Evan Manshack** treated his grandparents, **Cathy** and **Mike Manshack**, to a home cooked breakfast. He got his cooking talents from **Cathy.********Judge Jim** and **Callie Bearden** took off for a trip to **Gulf Shores** for a vacation.******Orange Mayor Larry Spears** reports he's tired of the hot weather and is ready to put out fall decorations and declare pumpkin spice for the **Fruit City flavor.** Don't think his plan to change the seasons early is scientific, but it gives hope. Only three more

months to **Orangetober Fest.******Birthdays this past week are bittersweet. **Pete Runnels** would have turned 80, but left this work before he could celebrate. The former county judge and **Pinehurst mayor** will long be remembered here.****The Record's former editor, **Dave Rogers**, had another birthday as did former reporter **David Ball.********Carolyn Curran** had a landmark birthday, but isn't showing her age.******Becky Henry** had a birthday lunch at **Bluebird Fish Camp**, while **Katie Futch Swope** was honored with a big **65th birthday party.******Others with birthdays included **Cheryl Bradford, Jon T. Harmon, Leigha Barron, Chuck Knipp, Chance Henson, Kent Miller, Morgan Young, Wanda Johnson,** and **Christopher Griffin Jr.********Paul Dickerson** also celebrated a birthday and an expansion. The owner of downtown's **Orange Stationer** is growing his territory through the region.******Friends Sue** and **Tommy Simar** made contact over the weekend. **Sue** is hanging in there and **Tommy**, like the rest of us, is just standing his ground, trying not to fall.******Ellis Breaux**, no kin unless she's Uncle **Sostan's** granddaughter, was named **Miss Texas Saturday** in **Richardson.** Some reports say she is not **Cajun** at all.****Our friend **Phillip Welch** loaded up the family and headed out to a dude ranch in **Bandera.** He says he's leaving the riding to the younger folks and will ride in the chuck wagon.****Political races are just around the corner. Candidates are starting to approach the starting gates. Some old hands like **County Tax Assessor Karen Fisher** won't be seeking re-election. What a loss. **Karen** is a people friendly person who is doing a great job. Another good one, **County Attorney John Kimbrough**, after all these years, will be hanging up his spurs. **Judge Troy Johnson** is also ready to go to the house. From all reports **Troy** has been and is a good judge. I understand **Sheriff Mooney** is announcing this week that he is running for re-election. Stay tuned to the Record Newspapers for all the latest political news.

BREAUX BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

A few folks we know celebrating birthdays in the coming week. **July 5: Dr. Rod Fiset** celebrates also with **Shane Hanks, Susie Bickham, Charlotte Pruter, Billy Boehme** and **Debbie Moreau.********July 6:** Former president **George W. Bush** turns 77. **Lori Winstead, Makayla Pevetor, Tom Arnold** and **Arnold Myers** celebrate.******July 7:** Happy Birthday to **Donna Peterson, Alyson Nickum-Smith, Necey Mumbach,** and **Jason Barclay.********July 8:** **Lynda Barulich, Margie Bean, Amber Seiler, Anita Hennigan** and **Elizabeth Dupuis** celebrate.******July 9:** **Teri Chaffin, Kayla Gallegos, Laverne Joseph, Liz Barclay, Glenda Whitley, Patrick Halliburton** and **Steve Stanley** have birthdays today.******July 10:** Happy Birthday to **Theresa Fukuda, Edyn Patterson, Kathy Fraccastoro** and **Donna Riley.********July 11:** **Kathy Lynd, Michael Brinson, Miranda Welker, Charlotte Stout, Cleon Hogan** and **Lana Griffith** are all a year older today.****(Note: To publish birthdays or anniversaries free of charge contact **The Record** at 409-886-7183 or **therecordlive.com.**)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Quote of the week comes from **Texas Monthly's Texanist.** He says **Texans** have been telling untruths for the sport of it for a long time, going back to **Mody Boatright** and his friend **J. Frank Dobie.** "Quote: "Bull-shitting, after all, is our birthright and that's no lie!"

CAJUN STORY OF THE WEEK

One day, "Tee Man" Breaux was riding da Grayhound bus from Abbeville to Lafayette wen da bus stopped in Maurice. **Mary Ann Marceaux** and her baby climb on da bus. Da bus driver, "Grumpy" **Primeaux**, look at dat baby and he say, "Keyaw," **Dats da ugliest baby I ever saw me."** **Mary Ann** her, goes to da back of da bus and sits in da seat across from "Tee-Man" and she start crying.

"Tee-Man" unaware of wat had transpired, axe **Mary Ann**, "Wats da matter hanh?"

She says, "Dat mean old bus driver insult me so bad. I don't know wat to do me."

"Tee-Man" says, "Well, I'll tell you wat to do, you go up dere and give dat old man a piece of you mind. In fact, while you go up dere, I'll be happy to watch you puppy me."

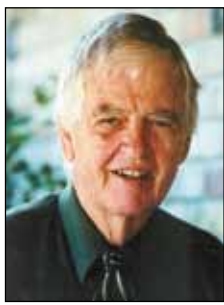
C'EST TOUT

Famous Texas TV anchors. In the past 70 years Texas has produced four famous TV network journalist. **Walter Cronkite** attended high school in Houston and attended the University of Texas. His papers and documents are on display there. **Dan Rather's** name is on the **Mass Communication** building at **Sam Houston State.** **Bob Schieffer** is the namesake of **TCU School of Journalism** in **Fort Worth.** **Scott Pelly**, CBS present anchor, was born in **San Antonio.** At age three, his family moved to **Lubbock** where he attended high school and **Texas Tech.** These four Texans also have the **CBS** connection in common, where they all showed the world their Texas talent.****I've gotta go. Please read us cover to cover, shop our family of advertisers when you can. Thanks for your time, mine is up. Take care and God bless.



“For” votes win Bridge City From Page 1

Bison, and Tom Arnold. Marjorie Fields served as the group's secretary. There were 14 in all. Twenty-seven year old attorney H.D. Pate was also on the committee. He and Feagin Windam, an Orange attorney, provided legal direction as Port Arthur and Orange ratcheted up claims on extraterritorial jurisdiction. To finance the initiative, the citizens committee collected \$1,520 from among its membership and local businesses.



The late H.D. Pate was one of the founders of the City of Bridge City and became the city's first employee as City Attorney. He is seen here years later at his law practice in Bridge City.

Going into action, the groundwork began being laid for the acclaimed “C.W. Hubbard and Others” lawsuit filed by Pate and Windham. The intention of the lawsuit was to stall annexation and inevitably force another election for incorporation.

Legal disputes, however, were flaring on all sides. Because of the claims Port Arthur made on the Gulf States Utilities power station, Gulf States refused to pay any further taxes to the City of Orange. Orange moved to block Port Arthur's claims in Orange County and the Bridge City citizens group launched the “C.W. Hubbard and Others” lawsuit against both municipalities.

“The lawsuit sought clarification of the law on extraterritorial jurisdiction,” Pate, Bridge City's City Attorney for 34 years, said before his 2019 death. “We wanted to know where we stood in a move to incorporate Bridge City.”

Essentially, the “C.W. Hubbard and Others” lawsuit challenged the cities of Orange and Port Arthur for their claims on the area and invoked the right for the citizens to hold an election for incorporation. The lawsuit caused a landlock that halted further legal action by the larger municipalities. They released Bridge City from their territorial claims but not without first settling with each other over the Gulf States squabble. The citizen's committee dropped

its lawsuit. It was a victory but a battle only half-won.

Convincing the citizens to return to the polls once again to vote for incorporation was the next obstacle. The citizens committee formed an Election and Promotional Committee headed by Gorman and Garza. Marjorie Fields chaired the Publicity Committee. Pate researched types of city governments. Hebert, Cole and Brooks searched for potential sources of revenue. Cost of operating a city government was looked into by Lee and Garza. The committee, under Hubbard and Gore, met weekly to monitor the group's progress.

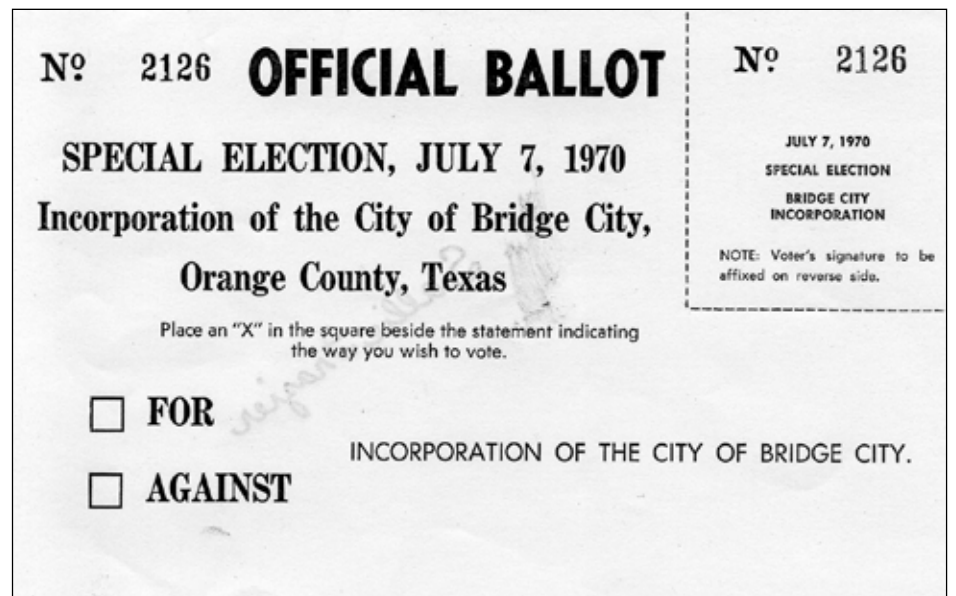
“The procedure back then was that you needed at least 50 people to petition the Orange County Judge to hold an Election for Incorporation,” recalled Pate. The citizens committee began a signature drive to get the issue on a ballot. Nine full pages of signatures accompanied the group's Application For Election to Incorporate. One hundred and sixty signatures graced its pages. The fourth item of the undersigned stated, “the desire to have the City of Bridge City incorporate . . .”

On July 5, 1970 permission for the election was granted.

Opposition to the proposal mounted. “There was a lot of people who thought Orange or Port Arthur would never touch the area we now know as Bridge City. They openly opposed incorporation,” Pate said.

Nevertheless, the Citizens For Bridge City Incorporation produced “An Open Letter to the People of Bridge City” and it was published on the front page of the Penny Record. A promotional campaign titled “Did You Know” was circulated and bumper stickers were printed. The Jayceettes joined the effort with a “Get Out The Vote” telephone campaign. Countless volunteers talked up the issue to family and friends.

In an editorial endorsing incorporation



“For” or “Against” were the choices left for the citizens of the town as shown on the Official Ballot for the July 7, 1970 Special Election.

the Penny Record declared “Vote For A Bridge City” in bold red letters in the July 1, 1970 edition. “Incorporation Election, Tuesday, Bridge City Junior High School” it reminded readers in bold print.

Finally, “For” or “Against” were the only choices left for the citizens of the town. The citizens committee named Nolton Brown as election judge as the decision went to the voters on July 7. On this day 1,123 votes were cast and the “Fors” took it with 677 of them. County Clerk Sallie Frazier deemed the election results official. The Penny Record spread the good news.

The Order Declaring Results of Incorporation made it a matter of history. The Order stated, “Be it remembered that on the 13th day of July, 1970 there came to be considered the returns of an election held on the 7th day of July . . . and it is hereby declared to be incorporated as a city, and that name of the city is and shall be the City of Bridge City.” An infantile “General Law” municipality was born.

The day after claiming victory, Wednesday, July 8, the Citizens For Bridge City Incorporation 1970 held its final meeting. “There being no further business, and the function of the committee having been fulfilled, upon a motion made by Hebert and seconded by Gorman,” the minutes read,

“the members voted unanimously to disband.”

On Sept. 22, 1970, Bridge City held its first city election. Preston M. “Red” Wood narrowly edged out Jay Eshbach by three votes to become Bridge City's first Mayor. The first city council was comprised of Jack D. Pepper, Don Clayton, Charles English, E.T. Ernest and David Hock.

On Oct. 5, Bridge City's first city council took the oath of office in a ceremony held at the Bridge City Volunteer Fire Department in a cinder block building at the corner of Bland and Roberts. The first city council voted to open each meeting with a prayer. They also voted to thank the fire department for the use of the building. H.D. Pate was hired to be the city's first full-time employee as City Attorney, a position he held until 2004.

Three years into its inception the city of Bridge City was asked to make another important decision. In 1973 voters elected to accept a “Home Rule” city charter that provided for a City Manager.

For his involvement as a leader in the Citizens For Incorporation 1970, C.W. “Bubba” Hubbard became the Bridge City Chamber of Commerce first “Citizen of the Year” in 1971. H.D. Pate was chamber president.

New Law Makes Changes to AMBER Alert System

Staff Report
For The Record

AUSTIN – Newly signed legislation is making changes to the existing AMBER Alert system to allow local area activation under certain conditions. Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed HB 3556 into law on June 13, 2023, and the law immediately took effect.

This law has been referred to informally as the “Athena Alert” bill, in honor of seven-year-old Athena Strand, who was kidnapped and murdered in Wise County in 2022. It allows law enforcement to request activation of the AMBER Alert system even if the criteria have not been verified. However, it is important for Texans to understand that the legislation did not create a new alert, and all alert messaging will continue to be referenced as an AMBER Alert.

Under the new law, a request for an AMBER Alert may be made by a local law enforcement agency that knows a child is missing but has not verified the AMBER Alert criteria, and if the chief law enforcement officer of the local law enforcement agency believes that activation of the alert

system is warranted. Under these circumstances, a local area AMBER Alert would be activated in the following areas:

• within a 100-mile radius of the location from which the child is believed to have gone missing or the location in which the child was last seen; and

• in all counties adjacent to the county from which the child is believed to have gone missing, or the county in which the child was last seen.

Law enforcement agencies seeking to activate a local area AMBER Alert will use the AMBER Alert Request Form, which was updated shortly after the new law took effect.

When an alert has been activated, DPS asks all Texans to pay attention to alert messages and to be observant of their surroundings. If an alert is posted either on a highway sign or information is shared in other formats such as broadcasts or social media, take time to read and digest the information. Once the description of the child, suspect or vehicle is shared, be aware of possible matches. Texans should immediately call 9-1-1 if they have information to share with law enforcement.

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LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Testamentary for the Estate of **JIMMY WAYNE BLOCK**, Deceased, were issued on the **JUNE 27, 2023**, in Cause No. **P19593**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **JIMMY WAYNE BLOCK, JR., AND JEREMY S. BLOCK**. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: **JIMMY WAYNE BLOCK, JR.**
4750 Meeks Drive, Apt 177
Orange, TX 77632

c/o: **JEREMY S. BLOCK**
1365 Chelsea's Circle
Orange, TX 77632

Dated the 29th day of June, 2023.

Tommy Gunn
Tommy Gunn

Attorney for: **JIMMY WAYNE BLOCK, JR., AND JEREMY S. BLOCK**
State Bar No.: 08623700
202 S. Border Street
Orange, TX 77630
Phone: (409)882-9990
Fax: (409)882-0613
Email:tommy@gunnlaw.org

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Testamentary for the Estate of **BARBARA L A G R A P P E**, Deceased, were issued on the **JUNE 27, 2023**, in Cause No. **P19668**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **DEBRA GAUTHIER**. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: **DEBRA GAUTHIER**
8500 Thomas Road
Orange, TX 77630

Dated the 29th day of June, 2023.

Tommy Gunn
Tommy Gunn

Attorney for: **DEBRA GAUTHIER**
State Bar No.: 08623700
202 S. Border Street
Orange, TX 77630
Phone: (409)882-9990
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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of **DAVID E. BUSH**, Deceased, were issued on the **JUNE 28, 2023**, in Cause No. **P19620**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **RUTH D. BUSH**.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: **Ruth D. Bush**
1730 Old Hwy 90
Vidor, TX 77662

Dated the 28th day of June, 2023.

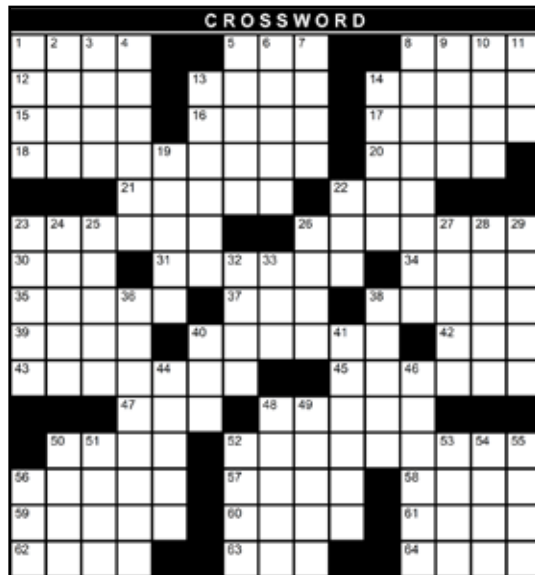
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of **LENORE SUE FEAGIN**, Deceased, were issued on the **JUNE 29, 2023**, in Cause No. **P19645**, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: **TANYA MARIE LOGGINS**.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: **Tanya Marie Loggins**
2445 North Tram
Vidor, TX 77662

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MOVIE ANIMALS

ACROSS

- Deli side
- "Breakfast at Tiff any's" animal
- Songs for one
- What formica and biochemical have in common
- Prefix for partly
- Dark
- Crew equipment, pl.
- Steinbeck's "East of ____"
- Golf shirt
- "Marmaduke" animal
- "Away & Back" animal
- Game "field"
- Slightly insane
- Casual top
- Vending machine
- Rocks, to a bartender
- Bowling prop
- Lush
- Trots and canisters
- Broadcasting medium
- Inflammatory swelling
- Highland tongue
- Sock pattern
- Bring into play
- Go back over
- Theater passage

DOWN

- Air quality concern
- Fibber
- Farm measure
- Sushi condiment
- Natural moth repellent
- To change, as in the U.S. Constitution
- Fork prong
- "Harry Potter" animal (2 words)
- Earthenware pot
- "Born Free" animal
- I in T.G.I.F.
- Administer diazepam
- When Cinderella wins
- Part of a cheer
- Lump of anything
- Milo and Otis, e.g.
- "Dunston Checks In" animal
- CISC alternative
- Private theater box
- Resembling wings
- MacFarlane or Rogen
- Go-_____
- "Bullseye, Hamm and Lotso Bear, e.g.
- Lyric poem
- Immediately, doctor's jargon
- Civil wrongs
- "Some Nights" band
- "Life of Pi" animal
- Close call
- Bank job
- Gossamer
- Cry like #5
- Liquorice flavored herb
- Hues
- Backgammon predecessor
- "Babe" animal
- "Anchorman" and "The Wizard of Oz" animals
- Kundera's "Unbearable Lightness of ____"
- "That feels good!" exclamation
- Set in motion
- Like a go-getter bird
- Lies in ambush
- Wept
- It makes waste?
- Singular of #17
- Across
- Home versus ____ game
- Guesstimate
- phrase (2 words)
- To perfection (3 words)
- Taj Mahal city
- As opposed to gross
- "Willard" animal

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Thompson writes history of Mustang football

Dan Perrine
For The Record

For more than four decades the West Orange-Stark Mustangs have thrilled their fans with winning football teams. Now one of their longtime coaches is writing a history of the winningest high school football program in the state of Texas.

Cornel Thompson was the linebacker coach in the first few seasons of West Orange-Stark (WOS), was promoted to defensive coordinator where he served for almost three decades, and concluded his coaching career as the head coach of the Mustangs. In his retirement Thompson is working to compile a book recalling the great Mustangs of the past, remembering the memorable games, and highlighting the winning tradition at West Orange-Stark.

The idea to write a book about Mustang football first got in Thompson's head about twenty years ago when he concluded coaching in Huntsville, Texas and was considering his retirement from coaching. "I had already started writing that book until Coach Hooks called me and wanted me to come back along with Mark Foreman to West Orange-Stark. The book went on hold for a few years, about twenty years," Thompson recalled.



Dan Perrine

After Thompson officially retired following the 2021 football season he found and dug out his old notes. He has about fifteen or sixteen legal pads full of notes he's taken some of them front and back sheets with game by game the Mustangs have played over the years from 1977 to his last year as their coach.

Many people have asked Coach Thompson why he was writing his book, inquiring whether it was to just make money. Cornel replied, "No! It was not to make money. I just felt like since we became the winningest program in the history of Texas high school football that I wanted to get out that message about West Orange-Stark and have something recorded about it."

The story of the West Orange-Stark Mustangs football program began in 1977 with the consolidation of two schools and two teams the West Orange Chiefs and the Orange Stark Tigers. There was naturally a bit of a rivalry amongst the players and coaches when the new school was created.

The new high school was actually based on the two previous schools'

campuses. The ninth and tenth grades went to classes at the previous Stark High School in Orange and at the West Orange campus were the eleventh and twelfth grade students bringing the total to 1,950 students at West Orange-Stark that first year of the school.

The trustees with the consolidated school board hired Steve McCarty to be the first head football coach. "In my opinion, he was probably the only guy in the state of Texas that could have pulled two staffs together under those circumstances which was two school districts at that time really at each other's throats over the years, there wasn't any love lost between the two



Cornel Thompson is surrounded by souvenirs from over forty years of winning football at West Orange-Stark.
RECORD PHOTO: Dan Perrine

THOMPSON Page 3B

Fire damages Dan R. Hooks Stadium



A fire on Thursday injured no one but damaged the press box at Dan R. Hooks Stadium and is under investigation by the West Orange Fire Department and the West Orange Cove School District.
RECORD PHOTO: Dan Perrine.

DAN PERRINE
For The Record

A fire outside the new press box under construction at Dan R. Hooks Stadium adjacent to West Orange-Stark High School was extinguished Thursday, June 29, with no injuries reported. The cause of the fire is under investigation.

A citizen driving past the stadium noticed the fire about four o'clock Thursday afternoon and called in the emergency. The West Orange Volunteer Fire Department responded to the stadium shortly after the fire was reported.

According to Tyler Roberts Captain 1 of the West Orange fire department they responded with about ten fire fighters to the blaze at the stadium. Roberts added that West Orange asked for mutual assistance from the Bridge City Fire Department which responded with additional fire personnel on the scene.

West Orange Fire Chief David Roberts and Assistant Chief Simmie Gibson are working with the fire marshal in their investiga-

tion of the cause and the exact origin of the fire. The front of the press box was badly blackened by the fire.

Spokesperson Dawn Martin for the West Orange-Cove Consolidated Independent School District issued a press release on Thursday concerning the fire and the quick work by the fire fighters to extinguish it. "We would like to express our gratitude to the first responders who promptly arrived at the scene and successfully contained the fire, minimizing potential damage. Thankfully, we can confirm that no injuries were reported as a result of the fire. The safety and well-being of our workers and staff are of utmost importance, and we are relieved that no one was injured," Martin said.

The construction of the press box at Dan R. Hooks Stadium will continue as planned the press release stated. The district is committed to completing the project and the incident of the fire will not deter them from that objective the statement concluded.

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<div style="text-align: right; background-color: yellow; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">ON THE LOT!</div> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.1em;">2023 FORD F-150 XLT</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Iconic Silver Metallic, Black Interior, 4X4, Automatic Trans., V6, Stock No. 8694</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.9em;">MSRP: \$54,425</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue; font-size: 0.9em;">-\$1,750 DEALER SAVINGS</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em; color: red;">\$52,675</p>	<div style="text-align: right; background-color: yellow; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">ON THE LOT!</div> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.1em;">2023 FORD F-150 XLT</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Iconic Silver Metallic, Medium Dark Slate interior, 4X4, Automatic, V6, Stock No. 8658</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.9em;">MSRP: \$63,855</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue; font-size: 0.9em;">-\$4,943 DEALER SAVINGS</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em; color: red;">\$58,912</p>	<div style="text-align: right; background-color: yellow; border-radius: 50%; padding: 2px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.8em;">ON THE LOT!</div> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.1em;">2023 FORD F-150 XLT</p> <p style="font-size: 0.7em;">Area 51 Blue, Black Interior, 4X2, Automatic Trans., V6, 18 CITY / 25 HWY, Stock No. 8738</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 0.9em;">MSRP: \$55,950</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: blue; font-size: 0.9em;">-\$3,547 DEALER SAVINGS</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em; color: red;">\$52,403</p>

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Gulf Coast Fishing Reports

This week's Texas Gulf Coast Fishing Reports was compiled by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

The Lakes

• Toledo Bend Fishing Report

SLOW. Water stained; 80-84 degrees; 0.82 feet below pool. Happy Fourth of July! The water level is 171.12 with both generators running 10 hours a day. Water temperature at the Dam is 82 degrees. North of the three-mile Pendleton bridge, temperatures have been running 8-84 degrees. Air temperature will be up around 100 degrees this week. Again, this week, with the feel like temperatures reaching 114 degrees the fishing has been very tough for the Bluegill, Bass and Crappie bite. Best times for your topwater Bass frog bite over vegetation is very early and at dark. Another Bass pattern has been, a floating trick worm in white with a EWG hook no weight. Cadence is twitch, twitch, and let it die. During the heat of the day Bass are being caught in 20-25 feet over brush piles and ledges. Texas and Carolina rigs have been producing in the outer swings of the creek bends. Best colors in a 10" worm is watermelon red, June bug red and Tilapia gold. The bass are a little selective right now over brush piles and you might catch one or two and the school will shutdown. Just move on, find another spot, and catch one or two again. Keep moving, do not stay in one spot for too long. White bass are showing up in big schools in the main lake over humps and river channels, sometimes schooling on the surface south of the Pendleton bridge. For white bass use a Black/Blue back 1/2-ounce rattletrap, a jig-n- spoon in 1/2 and 3/4 ounce, and a medium diving crankbait. Drink lots of water and stay hydrated in this extreme heat. Captains watch, watch your party closely, if you observe someone experiencing these symptoms, feeling lightheaded, nauseated, having muscle cramps, motor skills are slow, they are in trouble, get off the water, and get them cooled down immediately. They may be experiencing heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Just a reminder, the summer brings quick developing showers, high winds, hail, and lightning. Watch your weather radar and if you hear lighting, get off the water. Remember, it is always better to play it safe by telling a loved one or friend the area you will be fishing, how many people are in your party and the expected return time. Good luck and keep casting forward! Report from Master Captain Steve "Scooby" Stubbe, Mudfish Adventures LLC, Orvis Endorsed Fly Fishing Guide, and Mudfish Custom Rod Shop.

• Sam Rayburn Fishing Report

GOOD. Water stained; 85-87 degrees; 0.64 feet below pool. Happy Fourth of July! The water is off color in some places, so fish the clearer water for a more active. Bass are good with topwaters in the pencil grass and hydrilla. Bigger bass are on points and humps biting crankbaits and Carolina rigs. Crappie are stacking up on brush with bluegill mixed in biting on minnows or jigs. Catfish are good on brush and around creeks. White bass are schooling on points biting jigs and crankbaits. Report by Captain Lynn Atkinson, Reel Um N Guide Service.

Bass are fair with an early morning topwater bite, transitioning to deeper structure with crankbaits and Texas or Carolina rigged worms.

• Texas City

FAIR. 87 degrees. Happy Fourth of July! Anglers fishing from the dike at night finding fair action on speckled trout using

live shrimp. Daytime catches are slow. Galveston jetties producing catches of bull reds, sharks, kepper black drum, sheepshead, and a few speckled trout. all on live natural baits. the beachfront remains off-colored. Those battling the rough seas, are finding snapper 60 miles offshore of Galveston. Report by Captain David Dillman.

• Sabine Lake

GOOD. 87 degrees. Jetties are good for speckled trout, redfish, sheepshead and drum on the rock piles with live shrimp under a popping cork. Trout and redfish are biting in the ICW and Sabine Channel reefs and humps, rock piles. Redfish are good on lake points and bayous. Look for the bird action on outgoing tides in the morning. Neches River holding speckled trout in 14-25 feet of water using 3/4 ounce jighead glo chartreuse tail, jigging silver or gold spoons. Redfish are on the flats in Besie Heights early in the morning live shrimp under a popping cork, or live mullet on a Carolina rig. North Levy is on fire for trout with topwaters early, switching to live shrimp under a popping cork and crankbaits, 3/4 ounce jigheads with glo chartreuse plastics. Report by Captain Randy Foreman, Captain Randy's Guide Service Sabine Lake.

• Bolivar

GOOD. 80 degrees. Happy Fourth of July! The surf is holding lots of black drum, pompano, sharks and redfish biting live or fresh dead shrimp. The North Jetty Gulf side holding limits of sheepshead and trout against Rocks look near the end on popping cork with shrimp. The wreck has good numbers of trout on free-line shrimp or croaker close to rocks. Channel side holding some nice trout close and big redfish on the bottom. Shark on the end of jetty towards gulf side. Report provided by Captain Raymond Wheatley, Tail Spotter Guide Service LLC.

• Trinity Bay

SLOW. 87 degrees. Happy Fourth of July! Small protected bays in the northwest region producing black drum, redfish on live shrimp under popping corks. Open bay fishing is on hold due to southwest winds. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing.

• East Galveston Bay

FAIR. 88 degrees. Open bay water is off-colored due to southwest winds. Best catches of trout and reds, coming from protected shorelines and deep bayous on live shrimp and soft plastics. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter. Surface water temps 85 degrees, water clarity good



Trout and redfish are biting in the ICW and Sabine Channel reefs and humps and rock piles. RECORD PHOTO: Capt. Chuck Uzzle

in most places within East Galveston Bay. Surface water temps 86 degrees, water clarity varies depending upon what part of the bay you are in. Winds have been out of the Southwest most of the week, in the 12-25 mph range, making it difficult to fish the open water reefs on most days, and has muddied up the water in a number of areas. When the conditions allow, we have been catching solid trout and bull reds over reefs, making for some great fun. When the wind is up, we have been limited to fishing drains, grass lines, and protected shell beds. This week we have been throwing blue moon artificials, as well as shrimp imitation lures under popping corks, with both working well when we locate baitfish and shrimp in the area. Birds are still working in the bay, but this week they only produced small trout when we found them. Live shrimp has produced Reds and trout, on our live bait trips, but catching slot reds has been more difficult than previous weeks for us in East Bay. Please remember to drink plenty of water and bring plenty of sunscreen, as we have ventured into the time of year when it gets extremely hot on the water and it is critical you stay hydrated and do not get overheated or sunburned. Report by Captain Jeff Brandon, Get the Net Guide Services, LLC. Yates Bayou and Siever's Cut are still holding redfish against grass line on popping cork and shrimp. Hanna's Reef and Deep Reef are holding fair numbers of speckled trout early on shrimp under a popping cork or twitching

artificial paddle tails. Look for birds, baitfish and slicks- watermelon smell in the air look down and you may find a slick. Deep Reef, Pepper Grove Cove to Moody's Pass holding fish. Report provided by Captain Raymond Wheatley, Tail Spotter Guide Service LLC.

• Galveston Bay

FAIR. 88 degrees. Happy Fourth of July! Speckled trout catches scattered for those anglers throwing live croakers and shrimp. Good numbers of black drum and a few redfish being caught along bay structure with live shrimp under popping corks. Southwest winds causing open bay to be off-colored. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing. The piers on the island are on fire for redfish, sharks, and jack crevalle. Before the storm the surf was on fire from Pleasure Pier to Surfside is hot for redfish, speckle trout, pompano, jacks all on live shrimp under a popping cork, croaker on an OCTO Circle with small chatter-

weight. The South Jetty holding big redfish, some nice shark on the end. gulf side on fire speckled trout, sheepshead, pompano and redfish close to rocks on popping cork with live bait, free-lined shrimp, or Carolina rigged float with shrimp, or chatter weight and croaker. Channel side holding trout close to rocks popping cork with live shrimp. 61st Pier has some bulls with a few jack crevalle mixed in being caught on spoons as well as bait. The causeway and Pelican Island Bridge are holding redfish. Report provided by Captain Raymond Wheatley, Tail Spotter Guide Service LLC.

• West Galveston Bay

GOOD. 88 degrees. Happy Fourth of July! Protected shorelines with structure producing scattered catches of speckled trout on live shrimp and croakers. Open bay is off-colored due to southwest winds. San Luis Pass fishing is slow, with few trout being reported. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing. South Shore holding a lot of speckled trout and redfish around the coves and grass lines from south deer Island to San Luis Pass. Both sides of Bird Island holding fish Bird Island flats holding good numbers of speckled trout, and some redfish for Wade Fisherman. North shorelines between Carancahua and green cut holding fish under birds. Mecoms Reef will have fish on it early up by rocks with artificial or live bait free-line or under cork. Report provided by Captain Raymond Wheatley, Tail Spotter Guide Service LLC.

• Houston

FAIR. Water stained; 85 degrees; 0.07 feet above pool. Happy Fourth of July! Catfish are good on cut bait and on baited holes. Crappie are fair on submerged structures with jigs and minnows.

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Thompson book record Mustang football history From Page 1B

of them," Thompson emphasized.

Cornel found himself in somewhat of a unique situation with the consolidation of the two schools. Thompson elaborated, "I had been coaching at Stark High and was a graduate of West Orange High School, so I saw it from both sides of the street."

Coach McCarty in the words of Thompson was saddled with the dubious job of combining two coaching staffs into one cohesive unit by keeping some coaches and letting others go. McCarty did bring in a new offensive coordinator with him and a defensive coordinator by the name of Dan Ray Hooks.

McCarty made Thompson the Mustangs' line-backer coach which Cornel promised he would do for a year before looking for a head baseball coaching job which was his first love. "Probably the best thing that ever happened to me in my career was when Steve McCarty took me out of baseball to where I could really concentrate on becoming a football coach because football was my tickle just like for so many other young coaches to other sports as well. Football is king in the state of Texas," Thompson professed.

The student athletes from West Orange did not know the coaches from Stark High School and vice versa for the players from Orange with the coaches from West Orange. Thompson suggested, "It was a time for the players and coaches to get to know each other. We probably had, other than the 2014 to 2016 years, the best group of athletes that we have ever had assembled here in Orange, Texas because we were pretty good but we didn't know each other."

The Mustangs won five of their first seven games that initial season. The school board came into the dressing room after the fifth win to pat the players and coaches on the back because the success of the football team helped pull the two communities tighter together following the merger.

The visit by the trustees may have got into the heads of the young players and they did not play well the remainder of the 1977 season. The Mustangs lost their last two games to Vidor and Thomas Jefferson, two teams West Orange-Stark was better than according to Thompson, to finish 5-4 on the year.

The Mustangs went 7-3 in their second season. The highlight of the season was their first win over the Port Neches-Groves Indians who had won the state championship in 1975 and finished runners-up in 1977.

The win by WOS over PNG was repeated in 1979 in what proved to be the district championship game. The Mustangs went to the playoffs for the first time, but lost in the Astrodome to Baytown Lee in the first round.

"The success of the program really started right off the bat in the first four years that Coach McCarty was here," Thompson reflected.

Prior to the 1981 football season Steve McCarty stepped down and West Orange-Stark saw a transition with the elevation of Dan Hooks from his position as defensive coordina-



Cornel Thompson wearing his WOS winningest team in Texas high school football shirt at his desk where he is working on a book about the history of Mustang football.

RECORD PHOTO: Dan Perrine



Possibly the best West Orange-Stark football team of all time the 2016 Mustangs went undefeated and outscored their opponents 811 to 62 during the season.

RECORD PHOTO: Dan Perrine

tor to being the head football coach. Thompson threw all his support behind Hooks to be the head coach.

Coach Hooks called Thompson into his office. Thompson said, "He told me he wanted me to be his defensive coordinator, which is what I wanted, and to be his first assistant."

The transition went very smoothly under Coach Hooks with winning seasons the first two years. Thompson was running the off-season program and was asked by Hooks how could they improve the conditioning of the Mustangs to which Cornel replied he wanted to get away from the weight machines being used and instead buy more weights with the bars to hold them to upgrade the team's weight lifting program. The weight room at West Orange-Stark High School is named in Thompson's honor to this day.

A rare losing season occurred in 1983 during which Thompson started eight sophomores on defense. Those Mustangs needed to grow up and by 1984 West Orange-Stark competed again for a district championship.

A win over district favorite West Brook had the Mustangs sitting pretty in first place. A later district loss to the eventual co-state champion Beaumont French Buffaloes kept West Orange-Stark out of the playoffs but would set the stage for bigger things the next year.

The Mustangs went undefeated during the 1985 regular season for the first time in school history. West Orange-Stark advanced to the third round of the post season before losing a close game at the Astrodome to the ultimately undefeated state champion Houston Yates Lions which blew out Odessa Permian in the championship game.

The final season for West Orange-Stark to play in Class 5A the highest classification at that time in 1985 was significant. "The transition was moving in the right direction our last year in 5A, and it was really beginning to start being fun," Thompson pointed out.

Enrollment numbers in the West Orange-Cove School District had gone down and in 1986 West Orange-Stark was dropped down to Class 4A for the upcoming football season. The combination of their outstanding 1985 season and the reclassification had the Mustangs picked by preseason football prognosticators as the number one team in Class 4A in the state.

Going into the 1986 football season WOS had several returning starters back on offense and defense plus the junior varsity had been

undefeated the year before. Thompson responded, "We were going to attack that 4A division just like we did the 5A division. We tried to schedule our non-district games and ended playing all the 5A teams in our district the year before because nobody else would play us none of the 4A schools would play us."

This was a blessing for the Mustangs because it prepared them for the competitive district they were in and for the playoffs. There was one stumble in district for West Orange-Stark when it lost at home to the Jasper Bulldogs because the Mustangs lost two fumbles inside the Bulldogs' five-yard line.

West Orange-Stark and Jasper would meet again in the quarterfinals of the state playoffs at Sam Houston State in Huntsville. The Mustangs avenged the earlier loss with a win that put them in the semifinals.

The New Braunfels Uni-

corns were the next Mustang opponent led by their running back Brad Grant who was the leading rusher in Class 4A and had not fumbled all season. The Unicorns used an unbalanced set against WOS which Thompson admitted the Mustangs were unprepared for in the first half.

"We went in at half time made our adjustments to the unbalanced set which we still ran that defense against unbalanced sets until I retired. We came out the second half scored on our first drive, caused Grant to fumble which we recovered leading to a score, and went on to beat them 28-12 to go to the state championship game," Thompson indicated.

The state championship at the Astrodome pitted West Orange-Stark against the McKinney Lions with running back Randy Simmons. At 6-4, 220 pounds, with track star speed Simmons was the kind of run-

ner Thompson and his Mustang defense knew they were going to have to gang tackle every time he got the ball.

Simmons passed Grant to become the leading rusher in the state, but the Mustangs held him under a hundred yards and limited his longest carry to 21 yards. Thompson exuded, "The pursuit of the Mustangs won the football game as we were draped all over him."

"Winning that first state championship was a really big deal, and it's the first time a state championship had been won in Orange County in twenty years since the Bridge City Cardinals had won in '66," Thompson said.

To repeat as champions is always a special feat for any team. The 1987 Mustangs not only repeated as state champions they also went undefeated.

After being humbled by Port Neches-Groves in a

preseason scrimmage the Mustangs turned things around. A narrow win in the first game against Aldine Nimitz was followed by a home game at Mustang Stadium against the Aldine MacArthur Generals.

This was the third meeting in three years between West Orange-Stark and Aldine MacArthur with the two schools splitting the two previous games. The Generals were ranked number one in the state and number three in the nation according to some polls.

The stadium was packed with fans and a lot of media from all over Texas. Thompson threw a bit of a curve at Aldine MacArthur by the Mustangs playing a 40 Defense instead of their normal 50 Defense which the coaches of the Generals were not prepared to face.

MacArthur took an early lead with a field goal. Rick Dearing of the Mustangs had two big sacks from his linebacker position that killed later drives and kept the score 3-0 in favor of the Generals.

Late in the game Kevin Smith for WOS was inserted as a tight end which the Mustang coaches had noticed were being covered by the Generals with defensive ends. Thompson stated, "We ran Kevin down the field to the end zone laid the ball up and he out-athleted the defender, caught the ball for a touchdown, and we won the game 6-3."

"Even though we won the state championship the


THOMPSON Page 4B



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Thompson: Mustang football history From Page 1B

year before that had to be one of the biggest victories in Mustang history that turned the program around for the next almost forty years," Thompson proclaimed.

Another thrilling win for the Mustangs came in district during the game at Jasper. Both teams were ranked at the top of the state polls with a number of great players on each squad.

The game remained scoreless as the Mustangs had a snap on a field goal attempt go through the hands of Kevin Smith and the Bulldogs missed on a field goal kick. Smith caught a long pass which setup a dramatic field goal by kicker Russell Turkel with less than a minute on the clock that gave WOS a 3-0 victory.

West Orange-Stark advanced in the playoffs to the semifinals and faced Kerrville Tivy at the Astrodome. The Mustangs primarily ran the ball as did the Antlers from their Straight T-Formation.

The score was tied 7-7 in the second half when the Antlers had a fourth-and-one at the Mustangs' two. Film had tipped off Coach Thompson and the Mustangs which way Tivy was going to run from the formation they lined up in pre-snap.

Safety Quinton Tezeno read it perfectly and smashed the runner for a loss giving the ball to West Orange-Stark on downs. The Mustangs then drove the length of the field for the go ahead touchdown and won the game 21-7 to advance to their second championship game in a row.

Rockwall was the opponent for the Mustangs. The Yellow Jackets' quarterback and wide receiver coach Todd Dodge was from Orange and later played quarterback at Port Arthur Thomas Jefferson and at the University of Texas before becoming a very successful high school head coach at Southlake Carroll and Austin Westlake.

The Mustang defense held the explosive Rockwall offense to just seven points. West Orange-Stark won the game 17-7 at College Station for its second straight state title.

Many of the Mustangs returned from that championship team for the 1988 football season. The talk of a record tying three-peat as state champs was common around the Orange and West Orange communities.

Thompson confessed, "We had that swagger about us after winning two state championships. We had about six shutouts that year, won the district championship, and got in the playoffs."

The first tough playoff game that year was in the quarterfinals against Tomball. "They were up on top of us, and we ended coming from behind to beat Tomball 24-22. That was a magnificent victory I thought because they were a very good football team," Thompson said.

For the second consecutive year West Orange-Stark faced Kerrville Tivy in the semifinals. The Mustangs controlled the football with their running game and de-

feated the Antlers 28-14 to advance to a third straight state championship game this time against the Paris Wildcats.

The Mustangs did not have a great week of work prior to the championship contest. Thompson and the other WOS coaches attributed it at the time to the media because everything they read was already giving the championship to the Mustangs and the players began to believe it.

The Wildcats ran a downhill sweep off tackle, and they ran that sweep using four different blocking schemes. Thompson told, "No matter what we did worked, nothing worked to stop that sweep, they were wearing us out."

Paris won 31-13 over West Orange-Stark using a blocked punt and four turnovers. "Our whole attitude was not as it had been all year going into that football game. We weren't ready to play the football game, and it cost us a third state championship," Thompson reminded.

A consistency in the over forty years of West Orange-Stark football has been a hard hitting defense. The defensive alignment during those years was the 50 Defense of which Thompson was and is a strong proponent.

The 50 Defense

The 50 Defense goes back to the 52 Defense used by the Arkansas Razorbacks. It was the first defense Thompson used when he was an assistant coach at Kirbyville High School.

Thompson described his 50 Defense, "I was multiple with the 50 after I got the defensive coordinator's job. We used the zero technique where we had a noseguard that was head up with the opposing center. I always wanted to cover the center because he had an extra job to do before he could block my noseguard, and if we had an athlete at noseguard he would be hard to block."

Even retired from coaching Thompson is still called to come speak on the 50 Defense. He has given more than twenty clinics on it the most recent at a local school in late June and has two more talks scheduled in the near future.

Coaches ask him why the 50 Defense. "I say when we go in at halftime, if it's broke I know how to fix it. I can adjust it and fix it right now. We've defended everything from the Triple I, the Straight T, the Wishbone, the Spread, and the Wing T. You name it, we've defended it. We see what the other team is doing on offense and our defense doesn't change from game one to game fifteen or sixteen. It doesn't change with the exception of making a few minor adjustments to what we are defending against our opponent," Thompson replied.

The 50 Defense was taught to the young Mustangs even before they come up to the varsity. Thompson continued, "I think the

best thing that we've done at West Orange-Stark over the years is that we've been able to get our personnel in a position that they can play and make a contribution to the Mustangs so that we can be successful."

A dozen years would pass before West Orange-Stark made another run at a state championship. Y2K was okay for the Mustangs' football fortunes.

Thompson was optimistic before the season opened. "We had athletes in the secondary, we had a good forcing unit, and some good players on defense so I knew we were going to have a fun year," Thompson predicted.

The Mustangs opened with a good win over Ozen in a close contest. The third game was against the talented Bay City Blackcats at the Astrodome, and WOS won on a late field goal after recovering a fumble caused by a sack from defensive end Paul Thomas.

That was just a sample of what Thomas would contribute that year for the Mustangs as he set a school record with fifteen and a half sacks. He would be rewarded at the end of the season by being named all-state at defensive end a position he moved to at the request of Coach Thompson at the start of the season.

West Orange-Stark won an impressive game in the playoffs against a very good Friendswood team with Thomas making another huge sack to help ice the victory. The Mustangs got their first win ever 10-6 over an old nemesis the LaMarque Cougars to advance to the semifinals.

Corpus Christi Calallen ran the Slot-T offense which Thompson and the Mustangs have faced about forty times over the years losing only once. This was not the one time, but it was close.

Calallen had the lead late even with injuries to its best runner and quarterback. WOS shifted from its normal offense to the Spread like a two-minute offense, and late in the fourth quarter the Mustangs scored on a hitch pass to win 27-21 for the opportunity to play the next week in the championship.

Spread Offense

The Spread Offense was new and only a few teams were running it in 2000. One of those was the Ennis Lions who had moved a linebacker to quarterback and used some outstanding skill players to be the Mustangs' opponent in the championship game at Texas Stadium.

Thompson was not happy with the site for the game. Ennis had played five weeks in a row at Texas Stadium. It would be like a home game for them and the Mustangs would have to travel over three hundred miles to get there.

Coach Dan Hooks wanted to give the Mustangs the opportunity to play at the

home of the Dallas Cowboys. Hooks stepped on the coin after it was flipped saying the Mustangs would come to Texas Stadium.

The Mustangs were not allowed to practice in Texas Stadium so they did not even step on the field or get their first look inside until the day of the game. They did get to dress in the Cowboys' locker room as the designated home team.

The first half was spent with the Mustangs' heads still in the clouds. Thompson observed, "The Mustangs were in awe. We were standing around looking. The Lions were beating our eyes out the first half."

The second half was more competitive, but the damage had been done. "I felt like if we had made Ennis travel, we could have slept in our own beds, and played them in the Dome the score would have been closer. We might not have won, but we didn't give ourselves a chance, and I've always been miffed over that," Thompson complained.

The decision to play the 2000 championship game at Texas Stadium was a rare disagreement between Head Coach Dan Hooks and Defensive Coordinator Cornel Thompson with the Mustangs. The friendship dates back to the first days of West Orange-Stark High School in 1977.

Hooks and Thompson were assigned the same room at the school. Thompson fondly remembered, "We sat there all morning and talked football. After we sat there and talked and visited I believe that I won Dan over that he was satisfied I could coach the inside backers and knew what I was talking about."


The duo first met when Hooks was a coach at Lamar University and went to do recruiting at Kirbyville High School where Thompson was an assistant coach. Later Hooks did recruiting visits to Stark High in Orange looking for a defensive end for Lamar which Thompson was then coaching at the high school.

Beginning in 1977 Hooks was the defensive coordinator and Thompson was the linebacker coach. In 1981 Hooks was appointed head football coach and wanted Thompson to be his linebacker coach, defensive coordinator, and first assistant. Thompson looked back, "Up until after 2010 when I became the head coach Dan was my boss man. We had a friendship, we were close, we could agree to disagree."

A tragic incident marred the final season of the partnership between Dan Hooks and Cornel Thompson. The Mustangs' quarterback Reggie Garrett had just thrown a touchdown pass during a game before coming to the sidelines and was standing behind Coach Thompson.

"I heard someone call me and say, Reggie! I turned around and looked. He had gritted his teeth, his eyes rolled back, and boom he fell right beside me. By that time our trainers and everybody that was there peeled away. When I checked and didn't get his pulse I knew he was dead," Thompson sadly remembered.


THOMPSON MUSTANG Page 5B




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Thompson: Mustang football history From Page 4B

“That is something we will always remember because there was not a greater young man than Reggie Garrett. It was one of the major tragedies that occurred in our program.”

To honor the legacy of Reggie Garrett, West Orange-Stark adopted the motto give 112% for its students and athletes. Garrett wore the number 12 on his Mustang jersey.

Thompson named head coach

After the 2010 football season Dan Hooks retired after thirty years as the head coach of the Mustangs. Thompson said many people expected him to be the primary candidate for filling the vacancy. “The thought never crossed my mind. I never thought I would be the head coach because I thought Coach Hooks and I would end up going out together,” Thompson admitted.

Thompson actually left West Orange-Stark for three years from 2001 to 2004 and was going to retire at that point. He came back as the first assistant and defensive coordinator for six years more years before the retirement of Hooks.

Two other WOS coaches also applied for the job during the two weeks it was open for applications. Thompson explained, “I wasn’t real sure that I was going to get the job. I had already got calls from three other coaches that if I didn’t get the job they wanted me. I interviewed with the selection committee which asked ten or twelve questions, and I was the sixth applicant. They told me that day that I was their new head coach.”

The start of the Cornel Thompson era as head coach of the Mustangs in 2011 did not start well with three losses in their first four games. After that the coach got his players pulling together, and West Orange-Stark started winning making it to the fourth round of the playoffs before being eliminated.

This was the beginning of a special streak for the Mustangs. During the first nine years with Thompson as the head football coach West Orange-Stark made it to at least the fourth round of the state playoffs every post season which is an incredible feat of consistency which was stopped in 2020 when several Mustangs contracted COVID prior to their second round game and could not play.

Included in that span of nine seasons were four straight appearances in the state championship game. The Mustangs won two of those four games they played in the finals.

The first of four championship games was in 2014 against the high scoring Gilmer Buckeyes. West Orange-Stark held a 25-7 lead just before half time when Gilmer tried a long field goal which came up short and was caught by the Mustangs’ Deionte Thompson who ran it back for an apparent touchdown, but a flag was thrown wiping out the points for WOS.

Reviewing the film of the play more than twenty times Thompson still has not seen the block in the back for which the flag was thrown. Later he told the head of officials in Houston, “Your boys cost us the state championship.”

Thompson confessed his own decision to play for an onside kick to start the second half back fired when the Buckeyes kicked deep and the Mustang return man fumbled the ball giving West Orange-Stark terrible field position inside the five. Another fumble followed resulting in a quick score for Gilmer and momentum swung the Buckeyes’ way.

Later a reverse screen was wide open for what would have been a sure Mustang touchdown, but the normally sure handed receiver dropped the ball. Gilmer completed the comeback holding WOS scoreless in the second half while scoring four times.

Mustang quarterback Jack Dallas was a sophomore in 2014. His next two years Dallas would lead West Orange-Stark to back-to-back state championships and was named the offensive Most Valuable Player in both games.

Texas Football magazine came out in 2015 with West Orange-Stark ranked as the number one team in Class 4A, Division II. The only returning offensive starter for the Mustangs was Jack Dallas which proved to be a pretty good guy to start your offense.

“Jack was a tremendous leader, he was like a coach on the field. He’d come to the sideline to tell you what the other team was doing on defense, where we needed to attack them. Jack had a grip on what we were doing offensively because he was thrust into the fire as a sophomore and took us all the way to the state championship. He could make a good play out of a bad play. As a junior he was ready to take charge,” Thompson evaluated. “Best quarterback West Orange-Stark has ever had.”

The 2015 season was fun for Coach Thompson with very few problems and no major problems during the course of the year. The Mustangs breezed through the district and then the playoffs making it to the championship game against the Celina Bobcats.

The first drive of the game the Celina quarterback drove the Bobcats downfield until he broke his throwing arm trying to brace himself while being tackled. Celina got a field goal and would not score again.

Dallas had a great game scoring a touchdown on an option play to take the lead for the Mustangs. “That was a great game 22-3 beating Celina,” Thompson emphasized.

40-Game Winning Streak

There have been some great years of West Orange-Stark football, but it will be hard to find a better one than 2016. The Mustangs went undefeated winning their fourth state championship, shutting out eight opponents, and setting a school record for points scored while outscoring their opponents 811 to 62 during the season.

The championship game began like it was going to be more of the same with West Orange-Stark driving to the Sweetwater one-yard line on the opening possession. An exchange on a handoff was fumbled and a Sweetwater defender scooped up the loose ball running it over 90 yards for a touchdown to stun the ‘Stangs.

Thompson commented, “Our players came to the sideline just matter-of-factly. I can remember like it was yesterday. They’re looking like no big deal. The Mustangs didn’t panic. There was nobody gripping at anybody or nobody saying anything. Sweetwater kicked off to us and we scored to take the lead 7-6 since Sweetwater missed their point after.”

The remainder of the game belonged to the Mustangs as the defense did not allow a point while grabbing a pick six and the offense helped pad the lead with a late touchdown. “That was naturally a big win, one of the great thrills of my coaching career to win it two times in a row,” Thompson confirmed.

For the fourth year in succession West Orange-Stark made it to the state championship game in 2017. The Mustangs played the Pleasant Grove Hawks for the state title.

Pleasant Grove operated out of the Slot-T Offense which is geared to run the ball ninety percent of the time. In the forty some odd times over the years that Coach Thompson played against the Slot-T to that point the Mustangs had never lost.

On the first play from scrimmage the Hawks threw a pass to their tight end who took it to the house. Pleasant Grove showed

West Orange-Stark they could throw the ball when they wanted to connecting on another long pass to a wide open receiver in the second half.

Thompson talked to the Pleasant Grove head coach later. “The Hawks’ coach said he knew they had to throw the ball against us that they would not be able to run it like they had been doing,” Thompson echoed.

The loss brought an end to an enviable WOS winning streak. The Mustangs had won 40 games in a row over three seasons before falling to Pleasant Grove.

Winningest team in Texas football

Maybe the most significant game in the history of West Orange-Stark football was played the next season. It was the five hundredth game in the school’s history and officially made the Mustangs eligible to claim the title as the winningest team all time in Texas high school football.

A special banner signifying the accomplishment was made prior to the game held on October 12, 2018 at Dan R. Hooks Stadium with the Silsbee Tigers. Thompson invited Dan Hooks to attend the game and advertised on Facebook to get ex-Mustangs to come to the game because it was going to be a big deal to officially recognize West Orange-Stark as the winningest football school in Texas. “I was telling somebody, we better win!” Thompson remembered.

Silsbee kicked off to start the game and a short boot was taken by the Mustangs’ Jay’zn Robinson who ran it back 69 yards for a touchdown. The Tigers tied the score in the second quarter before Mustang kicker Angel Ibarra kicked a 22-yard field goal in the last minute before the half to give West Orange-Stark a 10-7 lead going into the locker room.

In the second half Silsbee broke two long runs for touchdowns sandwiched around a

second field goal by Ibarra to grab an eight point lead. The Mustangs drove 77 yards in thirteen plays with Kavyn Cooper scoring on a seven-yard run and quarterback Tyrone Wilson converting the two-point conversion to tie the game 21-21 with just over four minutes left in regulation.

The Tigers were hoping to drive for a late field goal to retake the lead. On fourth and three from the WOS 44 the Mustang defense made the stop of the game dropping Silsbee’s Dralyn Taylor for no gain turning the ball over on downs with less than a minute to go in the fourth quarter.

On first down Wilson threw a pass to Brettlin Wiley good for 38 yards to the Silsbee 21. Two plays later Wilson ran for eight yards to the thirteen.

Angel Ibarra kicked a 30-yard field goal with six seconds left in the game to give West Orange-Stark a 24-21 victory. “The Mustangs reached their goal of being the winningest all-time program in the state of Texas. That’s a great milestone during our career,” Thompson applauded.

The big blue banner celebrating West Orange-Stark as the winningest high school football team in Texas hangs proudly now in the Cornel Thompson Weight and Conditioning Room at the high school. Through the 2021 football season the Mustangs had won better than 80 percent of their games which was three percent better than any other Texas high school with at least 500 games played.

Thompson plans to see a book publisher about editing the material after he types his some fifteen to sixteen note pads of information. He has chapters from 1977 through the 2021 season.

“I’m going to write one more chapter that I am fixing to start writing after the Fourth of July which is the 2022 season. It’s going to contain some stats, what’s going on with me since my retirement, list milestones over the years that will be well worth reading in the book. I’m looking forward to getting that done,” Thompson concluded.

When the book will be published is still up in the air. Thompson anticipates the finished product being available maybe within a year.

Support group for widows and widowers

The Bridge City Public Library will continue its Widows/Widowers group after the success of its opening meeting. The group’s purpose is to provide an opportunity for those who often lead lonely lives after the death of a spouse to have an outlet to share with others in the same situation. We do require participants to call the library the Monday before the Friday of the meeting so that we can know how many to plan for. Planned meetings will be from 10 am to noon on the following Fridays; July 7 and July 21. If you have any questions, call the library at 409-735-4242.

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ORANGE COUNTY GARDENING:

Transplanting Trees: When It's Hot It's Not

**JOHN GREEN
ORANGE COUNTY
MASTER GARDENERS**

Staking trees is an often-overlooked gardening task but necessary to maintain a tree's structural growth and root stability. The recommendation is to allow stakes to remain attached to the tree for two years of growth, and the preferred method to protect your investment of time, money, and energy (image courtesy: cheyennegardengossip.wordpress.com).

Wow, can you believe how rapidly this year is advancing? Half the year is already behind us, and we have now celebrated our 247th Independence Day! Hopefully each of you celebrated with neighbors, family, and friends, utilizing the traditions your families have created for such a momentous occasion. Today, our discussion will be centered on 'best practices' for planting trees in SETX and timing. Let's 'dig in' (pun intended) but want to lead into the discussion by saying it is not the correct time of year for us to be planting trees, as it's simply too hot! Naturally, I purchased too many plants (including numerous trees-don't roll your eyes, some of you did the exact same thing) this spring and ran out of time before I could get them each planted into the ground.

It is imperative that the initial step, before digging to plant a tree or other type excavation work is by dialing 811 (national call-be-



Dig a hole 2 to 3 times the size of the root ball or container but do not dig deeper than the top of the root ball. If planted too deeply the root system will be deprived of oxygen, weak-

fore-you-dig) phone number requesting that the approximate location of buried utilities be marked with paint or flags, so you don't unintentionally dig into an underground utility line. This will usually take a couple of days for utility companies to send out crews to mark the locations. Once the lines are marked, select a planting location away from overhead electrical lines based upon the tree's mature height but should be in full sun. Note if you plant the tree too close to electrical lines it will be 'shaped' for you, and I can guarantee you it's not going to be attractive!

The optimal tree planting time is autumn through winter, while the tree is dormant, as this provides the tree time to develop a robust root system, while not expending energy to grow leaves. Instead, the

tree can put all its energy into growing roots. Trees need space to grow, not only for their canopy spread, but also for their even more expansive root system beneath the soil. Roots don't migrate straight downward and have small, delicate roots radiating away from the taproot near the soil surface. These smaller roots capture nutrients and uptake water. Compaction of the soil around trees damages these small, delicate, sensitive roots, easily stressing the tree which will suffer and eventually die.

If the root ball is dry, soak it overnight before planting. The guidelines below will assist you in determining space requirements for tree roots:

- **Small size trees need at least 10 feet by 10 feet**
- **Medium size trees**

- need 20 feet by 20 feet**
- **Large size trees need at least 30 feet by 30 feet**

Now that the perfect planting site is selected, gather the following items which are necessary to plant a tree: knife or scissors, paperboard box, tarp or wheelbarrow, hammer, shovel, bracing stakes and rope, wrapping material (such as old water hose cut into 12-inch sections) to prevent damage from string trimmers and rope burn when staking, compost, composted manure, and mulch. Once the tools and other items are on hand, let the fun begin! Dig a hole 2 to 3 times the size of the root ball or container (I use the trees container as a guide when digging the hole) but do not dig deeper than the top of the root ball. If planted too deeply the root system will be deprived of oxygen, weakening the tree, and increasing the likelihood of disease forming.

Ensure the soil removed from digging is captured, and placed onto a paperboard box, tarp, or wheelbarrow. Since most of us in SETX have clay soil, my recommendation is loosening the soil another 6 to 8-inches deeper, which allows tree roots to grow more readily, unencumbered by compacted soil. Mix half the removed soil with equal parts of compost and composted manure, then add 1/3 of the amended soil mixture into the bottom of the hole, then gently remove the tree from the nursery pot by

cutting away the plastic pot using a knife or scissors, this is less destructive to the root system and a better choice than 'tugging' on the tree to free it from the pot! Often the roots are tightly wound and a compact the root ball has formed, if this is the case, gently untangle the roots to loosen them and visually inspect the top of the root ball to ensure there are no roots encircling the trunk, they will strangle the tree if not removed.

If the tree is 'bare root' or 'burlap' wrapped, inspect the roots and look for "J-shaped" roots, they will need to be straightened, if possible, when planting to allow the roots to grow downward. Begin filling the hole, alternating layers with the amended soil mixture, followed by a layer of soil removed from the hole.

The nutrient rich compost and composted manure provides the tree with the benefits of easily accessible nutrients from the soil amendments, while it adapts to the new growing environment. Gently tamp the soil into place, firmly but not severely, slightly compressing the soil when filling the hole. There should be a good bit of soil remaining after planting the tree, use all of it to build a 4 to 6-inch berm around the perimeter of the newly planted tree.

Fill the berm with mulch, shredded bark, or compost, as this becomes a moisture barrier adding in water retention while diminishing

weeds from growing. Many gardeners believe that staking is not necessary, I completely disagree! I encourage gardeners to always place stakes on either side of a newly planted tree to stabilize the tree for two years. This is going to protect your investment of time, money, and energy! Staking trees allow the roots to stabilize when growing, especially during the windy wintery months.

Once the tree is planted, fill the berm 2 or 3 times with water, and allow the water to penetrate the soil to the root ball. The initial two weeks after planting the tree will require light watering daily and should be provided about a quart of water. The 2nd and 3rd week increase water volume to two quarts of water every other day. The 4th week the water volume increases to 3 quarts every 3rd day and beginning the 5th week, water on an as needed basis. The goal is to diminish watering completely (except during drought conditions), forcing the root system to grow stronger by making the roots search for water deeply into the soil. Note that I do not recommend fertilizing a newly planted tree the first year, since over-fertilizing will damage the root ball which might kill the tree or severely injure it.

Thank you for your recent questions, I enjoy answering each and every one of them! If you have gardening questions, email me: jongreene57@gmail.com

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