

Twin Mountain 4-H to host Jackpot

Twin Mountain 4-H will host their first annual jackpot on Saturday, October 22, at Harper Park in Water Valley.

Registration for goat/sheep and rabbits will be held from 7 am until 9 am with weigh in for goats/sheep from 9 am until 10 am. The rabbit show will kick off at 10 am with the sheep/goat show to begin at 10:30 am.

For more information, text (325) 234-9968.



Knowing a Place

By James M. Decker

“To know fully even one field or one land is a lifetime’s experience. In the world of poetic experience it is depth that counts, not width. A gap in a hedge, a smooth rock surfacing a narrow lane, a view of a woody meadow, the stream at the junction of four small fields - these are as much as man can fully experience.” -- Patrick Kavanagh

What does it take to truly “know” a place? Have you ever considered that? I don’t mean memorizing a set of facts about the place. With proper practice, anyone can do that, even if they’ve never once visited.

Knowing a place is much more involved. Knowing it requires awareness of its history: how it came about, what factors shaped its story and charted the course to the present day. Knowing a place requires knowledge of its geography in full: the rises and falls, how it was shaped by water and wind (or lack thereof), the natural history, the plants and animals that can and do populate it, and what forces have positive and negative impacts on it. If a place includes people, then knowing it requires knowledge of those people and their culture, their stories, their legacies, and their relationships with one another and the land.

The Irish poet Kavanagh beautifully lays out the joy and difficulty of truly knowing a place. He does not attempt to know an entire city, much less a region or state. His vision is of small, seemingly meaningless individual places. These are the places that we pass by every day and likely never give them more than a quick thought, much less a full mental exploration. And yet, as he sets forth, each such place is full of depth.

We live in a fast-moving world full of instantly accessible knowledge. “Multitasking” is encouraged, if not outright



Youth Fishing Day! The first annual Coke County Youth Fishing Day was held on Saturday, October 15, at Lake Knierim in Bronte. Local kids enjoyed a day of fishing the 500 catfish that the Texas Parks and Wildlife Inland Fisheries Division had stocked ahead of the event. Those attending were also able to visit with Coke County Game Warden Dan Waddell and other local law enforcement officials, business owners, and others who helped with the event.

demanding, in both our personal and professional lives. We juggle our own activities with those of our children and family. We might work more than one job, either to make ends meet or because our brain is wired accordingly. We start one project and we are ready to move on to another before the first is even remotely finished. Width of knowledge is favored over depth. Depth is for scholars or people with too much time on their hands.

Kavanagh’s words have shaken and moved me ever since I encountered them last year, naturally via Wendell Berry. As someone who prizes both depth and width of knowledge, I have concluded with great sadness that I do not have enough time to learn everything about everything. It would be nice, but alas.

When I read Kavanagh’s words, I think of the lot behind my house. It comprises no more than a third of an acre. It’s where we have our garden. We have planted several fruit trees and several mixtures of native grasses and wildflowers. It seems like an innocuous piece of ground. I drove by it at least a hundred times before we bought our house and I never gave it much thought. Today, I see it differently. I see the change in soil from the side nearest our house (deep and dark) to the other end (shallow, red, and rocky). I see the slope and how the water runs. I see the

differences in vegetation. I see how aggressively the mesquites and yucca attempt to dominate my preferred plant selection and where their forces have established the strongest foothold. I see how this lot fits within the lands that surround it. I see how it could be improved, how it is limited, and how we’ve only begun to tap its potential as a life-giving garden and a miniature shortgrass prairie.

Last week, I quoted Wendell Berry’s view that in using land, “you cannot know what you are doing unless you know well the place where you are doing it.” This is a continuation of Kavanagh’s ideal. Each place, no matter how small, is full of depth, complexity, and fascination. Our rural communities seem small, but they are comprised of hundreds of deep, complex, fascinating places, each of which would take a lifetime to fully know.

It is an intriguing thing, to know these places and imagine their potential individually and in concert with one another. Each of us in our communities should seek to truly know one place in the community. We might be amazed how much knowledge we find.

James Decker is the Mayor of Stamford, Texas and the creator of the West of 98 website and podcast. Contact James and subscribe to these essays at westof98.substack.com and subscribe to West of 98 wherever podcasts are found.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED BRONTE CEMETERY

These are your family plots.

Help to keep them clean.

Meetings frequently held.

Posted time and day on community bulletin board.

Please join us!

County Commissioners meeting minutes told

The Coke County Commissioners Court met in regular session on September 26, 2022, at 9 am at the courthouse in Robert Lee.

Those in attendance included County Judge Hal Spain, Commissioner Precinct 1 Donald Robertson, Commissioner Precinct 2 Paul Williams, Commissioner Precinct 3 Marshall Millican, Commissioner Precinct 4 Joe Sefcik, and Clerk Cindy Sawyer.

The meeting opened with the pledge to the flag and prayer was offered by Sheriff McCutchen.

Judge Spain announced the presence of a quorum. All were present with Paul Williams joining by teleconference.

Commissioner Millican made a motion to approve the minutes and was seconded by Commissioner Robertson. The motion carried.

Judge Spain presented the DR Report.

Judge Spain made a motion to reinstate the burn ban and was seconded by Commissioner Robertson. The motion carried.

Commissioner Millican made a motion to approve the ordinance agreement between the City of Bronte and the Coke County Sheriff’s Office. Commissioner Sefcik seconded the motion and the motion carried.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to change the October Commissioners Court regular meeting to October 3 due to October 10 being a holiday. Commissioner Sefcik seconded and the motion carried.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the 2023 Coke County Resolution Indigent Defense Grant Program and was seconded by Commissioner Sefcik seconded. The motion carried.

Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the Court Report salary and was seconded by Commissioner Millican. The motion carried.

Commissioner Williams presented and made a motion to approve the 2022 Coke County Central Appraisal District Budget amendment. Commissioner Robertson seconded the motion and the motion carried.

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Please **VOTE** in the upcoming General Election.

Regardless of whom you support, it is your continued interest and active participation in our electoral system that keeps our democracy strong.

Early voting will be Oct. 24 - Nov. 4.

General Election is Nov. 8

Although I do not have an opponent, I would very much appreciate your vote and support.

Hal Spain

Republican Incumbent for Coke County Judge

Pd. Pol. Adv. by Hal Spain, PO Box 975, Robert Lee, TX 76945