

On our way to Christmas

Once again we are on the slippery slope to Christmas. It may seem as if there is a tremendous effort by some to keep us from plunging into the season with appropriate rejoicing, but I plan to try anyhow. After all, the reason for the season has not shifted even a fraction of an inch, all other considerations and problems notwithstanding. It's lasted for a long time, and if nothing has been able to alter it by now, I think we're pretty safe to plan on another celebration.



EGGS IN MY POCKET

Mary Fenoglio

It may be quite different in some respects; it's hard to find something that still is the way it used to be. That doesn't mean Christmas can't be different, but good in its own way.

I'm not a fan of huge, crowded celebrations, even more so since civility has all but vanished from the scene, but quiet pleasure in small groups of known people is quite satisfying. Others are welcome to the traffic clogged, people choked, pushing, shoving, noisy melee that passes with lots of folks as fun. Like some philosopher said, "It takes all kinds".

I hope Christmas Eve is a starry starry night, no clouds, just the pure dark vault of heaven studded with millions of points of light. A moon wouldn't ruin it, she is a wonder all her own. But a dark star studded sky would be fitting.

As a small child I sat on the porch with my brother on more than one Christmas Eve, huddled under a blanket against the cold December night in North Texas, and pondered

the stars and Santa's potential arrival, not necessarily in that order. We talked about things we never spoke of in the broad daylight, and would have denied with the sun in our eyes, but I remember. And much later Papa and I watched for Santa with our first child, and then with two wriggly, squirming little people trying to spot that fabled sleigh and the reindeer, nibbling extras from the cookies we had made for the jolly old elf himself. We were in the

Panhandle then, where the stars had no barriers and spread across the top half of the world like a spangled cap pulled down tight. There were no lights to blur the splendor, only clear air and open space, and sometimes even I thought perhaps I saw a faint red glow from a certain reindeer's nose far off on the horizon.

Nobody with evil intentions and a desire to spoil everything magical and fun can reach those memories. And now there's James, who calls Santa "HoHoHo" and is certain that when contrails crisscross the evening sky they aren't airplanes at all, but HoHoHo planning his route.

And then there's the matter of The Tree. I understand that Christmas trees, natural and artificial alike, will be in short supply this year as will, apparently, almost everything else. If you've been reading me for any length of time, you know my feelings about artificial trees. Don't like them, despite my pangs at the destruction of a beautiful fir tree cut down to stand in my living room for a month

or so, hung with lights and gewgaws for no reason except my pleasure. The fact that they are grown purposefully for that fate doesn't make me feel much better when we drag it out to hang stuff for the wild birds on it until it's finally disposed of in the burning pile. It takes years for a tree to get that big, and I'm a big live tree fan. I abhor the destruction of what some people regard as "trash" trees. A tree is a tree, with shade. Yet I've always had a live Christmas tree, and it's always been a highlight of the year; the search for the perfect tree, getting it home, the ritual of Papa having to cut some lower branches off to get it in the stand, which I never think he really needs to, his initial remark upon seeing it for the first time - "It's a nice tree, but it's too tall. It won't fit." I'm convinced he would say that if the tree was four feet tall in the stand. It's tradition.

But this year I've thought hard about an artificial tree. There are some that I can't tell from natural. The pros are that they don't shed needles for the cat and dogs to eat and throw up, they don't have to be watered regularly to stay green, there's no mess when you take them down, and no searching among crowds to find it in the first place. Even I surely couldn't misplace a seven or eight foot Christmas tree from one year to the next. I don't think. The good ones are pricey, but we'd probably never have to buy another one.

Still, it seems like giving in to old age and going for convenience to go artificial. Like giving up something, somehow, that I said I would never do. Quitting. More change in a world so changed I hardly recognize it. I have time to think about it a little more.

To be continued.

Thelma Munson

Thelma Munson, age 100, passed away November 21, 2021, in Round Rock, Texas.



standing Volunteer award of the year from the Visitor Center.

Thelma was born on January 26, 1921, to Ernest R. and Mancy (Stark) Anderson in Round Rock, Texas. She attended Palm Valley Lutheran Church in Round Rock, where she was baptized on February 22, 1921. She was also confirmed there and presented her Bible in 1935. Thelma graduated from Round Rock High School in 1938.

On March 11, 1942, she married Wilbur Munson from Georgetown, at Palm Valley Lutheran Church. After his military service from 1942-1946, they moved to Georgetown, and she became a member of St. John's United Methodist Church. Blessed with two children, Richard and Vernelle, she became involved with their church activities teaching Sunday School and Bible School classes and serving as Methodist Youth Fellowship sponsor. She served as an officer in several positions in the United Methodist Women for many years and was also a member of the Adult Bible Class. Thelma was an original member of the Quilters group and enjoyed making quilts for the Harvest Fest every year. She also served on the Evangelism, Visitation, and Heritage committees. Thelma and Wilbur received the "In His Steps" outstanding Christian Mission Award in 1999.

Thelma was active in her community over the years in the PTA, Cub Scouts, and Girl Scouts. In later years, she was a volunteer at The Caring Place for seven years and the Georgetown Visitor Center for 20 years. In 1999, Thelma and Wilbur received The Out-

standing Volunteer award of the year from the Visitor Center. Two of her special skills were sewing and baking. Thelma enjoyed sewing dresses for herself and Vernelle and especially enjoyed baking cookies and Swedish brown bread. Special interests of hers were all of the friends in their domino groups for many years, and relatives' birthday celebrations. She was especially proud of her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren and all their accomplishments.

Thelma was preceded in death by her husband, Wilbur Munson of 67 years, her parents, Ernest and Mancy Stark Anderson, sister, Laura Stark Homeyer, and grandson, Patrick Elliott. She is survived by son, Richard Munson and wife, Peggy of Round Rock; daughter, Vernelle Elliott of Austin; grandchildren, Lisa Cobb and husband, Jason of Austin, Holly Hill and husband, Shane of Needville, and Collin Munson and wife, Katy of Pflugerville; great-grandchildren, Nora and Byron Cobb, Tyce, Haven, and Jaylin Hill, and Devin and Zoey Munson; and sister, Gladys Johnson and many loving family members and friends.

Services were held Saturday, November 27 at St. John's United Methodist Church in Georgetown, Texas.

Memorials may be made in Thelma's name to St. John's United Methodist Church.



Radishes – An easy winter vegetable

November is an interesting month for vegetable gardeners as we transition into cooler weather. I have two cherry tomato plants in my garden that are still producing tomatoes, and I'm keeping a close eye on the forecast so I can be sure to harvest the green tomatoes before a freeze. My herb garden is green with basil, sage, and thyme, and the bees are enjoying the last bit of pollen and nectar from the flowers on the basil.



TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE

Kate Whitney

While the tomatoes and basil are enjoying the last few days before a freeze, my broccoli plants are going strong and doing well in the cooler weather. I recently planted arugula and cilantro, and I am looking forward to fresh salads with the peppery flavor of arugula and the

zesty cilantro.

One vegetable plant that does well in Central Texas throughout the fall, winter and into spring is radish. Radishes are a good litmus test for anyone who thinks they have a black thumb. Radishes are easy to grow, and they grow quickly. If you can't grow a radish, well, keep coming to our gardening classes.

Radishes can be planted by seed anytime from September through March. You can plant two or three seeds per inch and thin the radishes to one inch apart. Or you can space your seeds to one inch apart and thin only if the radishes are close together. Cover lightly with soil and sprinkle with water. Keep the soil moist, and the radish plants should be up with-

in four to six days. Water radishes at least once a week if it does not rain.

You might start with just a dozen radish plants at first, then plant more after two or three weeks. This is called succession planting, and it allows you to harvest in small batches, rather than one big harvest. Harvest when the radishes are young and tender. They get spicy and tough if you leave them in the ground too long.

I have to confess that radishes are not one of my favorite vegetables, but the seed catalogues do make them look tempting. Traditional varieties like Cherry Belle, Crunchy Red, Icicle and Early Scarlet Globe are a good place to start. This year, I might try Black Spanish and Purple Plum varieties to see if I can learn to love this easy winter vegetable.

For more lawn and garden information, contact Kate Whitney, Williamson County AgriLife Extension Horticulturist, at 512-943-3300.

Special December art exhibits at the library

December will be a special month for art exhibits and receptions in the Georgetown Public Library.

First, sculptors Stuart Simpson and Mary Paige Huey will install their joint exhibit, "Carved in Stone x2." Stuart Simpson was a high school student when he began taking Mary Paige Huey's stone carving classes at Laguna Gloria Museum in Austin. Now, more than 30 years later, Stuart's career is dedicated to architectural and sculptural limestone carving. He and Mary Paige Huey have reconnected through their mutual love of sculpture and mutual admiration of one another to present this two-person exhibit, which will run December 3 through January 5 in the library Lobby.

Their creative styles are as different as their ages, which will make for an interesting show. On Sunday, December 5 from 2 - 2:30 p.m., an artists' talk will be held in the library's second floor Hewlett Room, followed by a reception in the Lobby.

Then on December 15, another new exhibition will open, "The Art of Robert Douglass: My Life in Trees and Towers on the Plains."

BIBLIOFILES

Dana Hendrix

This two-part exhibition will last through January 16, with a reception for the artist December 19 from 4-6 p.m. "Towers on the Plains" depicts towering grain elevators, church steeples, and iconic barns, architectural exclamation marks on the wide plains of Nebraska, Texas and points in between.

"My Life in Trees" carries a relationship to the artist's career as an architect. As a young architectural designer, he took great pride in the drawings he did for clients to illustrate his design proposals, and his clients always found them persuasive. But a problem nagged - he hated the convention that required him to draw trees and bushes on top of the pristine renderings of his designs.

"My trees were, well, embarrassing," he says. "In fact, I hated my trees. It was frustrating. But my practice grew, and soon my responsibility to direct project teams and see to an increasing number of clients took precedence over spending my time doing renderings; I gave someone else that job. Professional

success followed but the frustration persisted...Why can't I draw a decent tree? It hounded me into my retirement and to my move to Georgetown."

Mr. Douglass joined clubs of local artists - Central Texas Pastel Society, Sun City Visual Arts, the Austin Pastel Society - all with the single hope that by immersing himself in these talent pools he might finally learn to draw or paint a tree he didn't despise.

"This has been a long and arduous quest," he says, "but what was once a burden - drawing a darned old tree - has become an affair of the heart. Trees, I've learned, are endlessly individual, often sensual, strongly expressive, reliably beautiful or brawny and seductively mysterious. The paintings in this show continue my exploration of these qualities."

Mr. Douglass works primarily in oil, pastel and acrylics. Drawing was important in his early career in architecture, but he began painting seriously around the year 2010. He has taken more than 40 workshops with distinguished artists in many parts of the country, mostly en plein air. Among the fine Texas artists are Bob Rohm,

Art in the library

December 2 - January 6: Stuart Simpson and Mary Paige Huey: Carved in Stone x2 (first floor Lobby)

December 5, 2-4 p.m.: Artist talk and reception for Stuart Simpson and Mary Paige Huey (second floor Hewlett Room 2-2:30 p.m.; first floor Lobby 2:30-4 p.m.)

Through December 12: Waterloo Watercolor Group: Better Together exhibit (second floor Bridge and Hall)

Rusty Jones, Denise Mahlke, Jane Jones, Ann Templeton (deceased), Dalhart and Michael Windberg, Jeri Salter and Mike Etie. In recent years he has enjoyed several working sessions with Albert Handell in his Santa Fe studio.

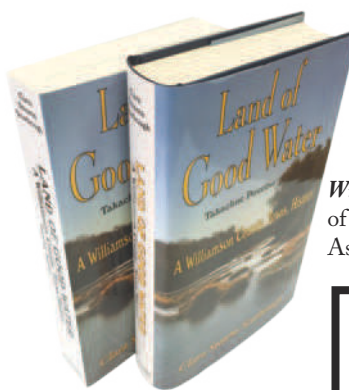
Mr. Douglass' work has received more than 40 awards in local and regional competitions and is held in several private collections.

Dana Hendrix is the Technical Services Librarian at the Georgetown Public Library.

Obituaries may be e-mailed to obit@wilcosun.com Monday at 5 p.m. for the Wednesday paper, Thursday at 5 p.m. for the Sunday paper.

Call 512-930-4824 for more details.

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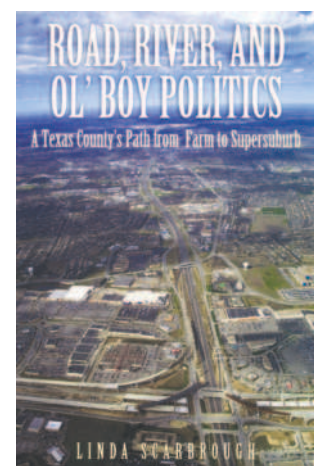
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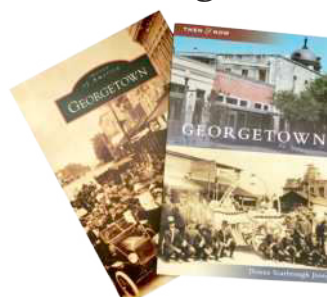
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