

# THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE

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# UPCOMINGS!

## Bronteoberfest slated for October 19

The 10th annual Bronteoberfest will be held on Saturday, October 19, at the park in Bronte.

The event will have a variety of activities including shopping, live music, the much loved wiener dog races, and much more.

Live music concerts will begin

at 6 pm with Coke County's own Kickapoo Creek Band, as well as local favorite McGinn of Dolly Shine fame. The headliner for this year's event is Cory Morrow.

Registration is now open for cook off teams, vendors, and food trucks. This can be done online at [www.restoringbrontefoundation.org](http://www.restoringbrontefoundation.org).

More information about Bronteoberfest will be available in the upcoming weeks.

he had not found the purpose of his quest, the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola. Those cities of gold and the province of Quivira would prove to be mythical, much to the chagrin of the gold-hungry Spaniards. Yet, the ambitious conquistador had wandered on to something stunning in its own right:

I reached some plains so vast that I did not find their limit anywhere I went, although I traveled over them for more than 300 leagues...with no more land marks than if we had been swallowed up by the sea...there was not a stone, nor bit of rising ground, nor a tree, nor a shrub, nor anything to go by.

It is a powerful visual of what is today called the Llano Estacado, a southern extension of the Great Plains that lies above the Caprock Escarpment in West Texas and Eastern New Mexico. As you travel the West Texas plains today, there are a few more landmarks. There are occasional trees and shrubs. Even the most novice traveler can find a few reference points with the signs of human civilization—highways, power lines, fields of growing crops, the occasional town, maybe even the blessing of an Allsup's convenience store on the horizon.

Even so, we understand Coronado's vision. Some places in the world are hard to picture in their "prior" form. Having read much about the history and development of Central Park (to say nothing of my immeasurable viewings of "Home Alone 2") it is still difficult to visualize the park as a quiet farming village much removed from the "City" on Manhattan Island. It is equally challenging to imagine a "Green Sahara" in which northern Africa was a savanna grassland.

But on the plains of West Texas, we understand Coronado's vision of that sea of grass from almost 500 years ago. A few of us might be wistful to

have seen it as Coronado did, before the plows, mesquite trees, and highways made their marks on large pieces of it. Even so, we can still feel the power of his visual. In "A Personal Country," Abilene native A.C. Greene reflected on his own complicated love for West Texas. I think about a passage where he visits the site of old Camp Cooper, a pre-Civil War army post situated on the banks of the Brazos River just north of Fort Griffin in southern Throckmorton County. Just a short distance from the site, Greene found a place where he could look around in full 360-degree view and not see any sign of human existence. There was nary a building, a road, or a power line in sight. He marveled at the unique opportunity in that locale. It was a rare 20th century evocation of Coronado's vision, on a spot that is only about 30 miles from my house as the crow flies. Sadly, this was written several decades ago and Greene has since passed, but if he were to visit today, he would surely see a few signs of "progress," headlined by wind turbines looming over the horizon in several directions.

June 20-22, 2024 was National Grasslands Week in America. It is a designation by the U.S. Forest Service to

recognize our nation's twenty official national grasslands and the work by USFS and other agencies to preserve, restore, and strengthen almost 4 million acres of grasslands in the aftermath of the Dust Bowl. I wonder how much worse off our country might be if not for the appointment of Hugh Hammond Bennett as the first director of the Soil Erosion Service in 1933. Bennett revolutionized the concept of soil conservation in America, overcoming deep-seated foolhardiness embedded in government policy and American agricultural practices and he deserves to be lauded as an American hero. Perhaps we should again consider some of Bennett's warnings on soil health and soil erosion, but that's a rant for another essay.

National Grasslands Week was a good opportunity for me to wax poetic about the grasslands of West Texas, as I am wont to do. I'll make no apologies for that. As we move in to a bitter presidential election season in America (gag), and as I dig in to another term as Mayor of Stamford, I want to focus on that which is most meaningful to me. It keeps me grounded and focused on the good work of local government and local culture.

(Continued on page 6)

## Death Notices

### Gilbert

Jackie Dell Gilbert, 85, of San Angelo passed away on Tuesday, June 25, 2024.

Viewing was from 12 pm until 8 pm on Wednesday, June 26, 2024, at Robert Massie Funeral Home. Graveside services were at 10 am, Thursday, June 27, 2024, at Bronte Cemetery, under the direction of Robert Massie Funeral Home.

She is survived by two daughters, Brenda Gilbert and husband Randy Young of Grape Creek and Reba Dianna Gilbert of San Angelo; a brother, Johnny Grimes and wife Linda of Grape Creek; five grandchildren, Katie Ledford, Casey Young, Aubrey Young, Gerogiann Smith, and Dylan Gilbert; and numerous nieces and nephews.



### Sea of Grass

By James M. Decker

It was October 20, 1541, when Francisco Vázquez de Coronado wrote a missive to King Charles I of Spain about a shocking discovery deep in the interior of North America. No,



## Russell Davis

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## Area Churches

### Invite You to Worship

#### Bronte

#### Bronte Church of Christ

PO Box 346  
118 S. Jefferson • Bronte  
Sun. 10 am & 6 pm, Wed. 7 pm

#### Central Baptist Church

324 S. Franklin • Bronte  
(325) 473-4811

Dale Patterson, Pastor

Sun. 10 am Sunday School  
11 am & 5 pm Worship

#### First Baptist Church

424 S. Washington • Bronte  
(325) 473-2331

firstbronte@gmail.com

Pastor George Cooper  
Sunday 9:45 am Sunday School,

10:30 am Worship

Wednesday 6 pm - 8 pm

Children and Youth

#### Bronte Methodist Church

Corner of Washington & Holmes  
Bronte • (325) 650-4836

Pastor Keith Fletcher

Sun. 10:00 am Sunday School

11:00 am Worship

#### St. James Catholic Church

215 N. Washington, Bronte

(325) 365-2687

Rev. Timothy Hayter, Pastor

Sunday Bilingual Mass 8 am

#### Robert Lee

#### Emmanuel Pentecostal

PO Box 794 • 1004 Hillcrest

Pastor Brantly Robertson

(972) 841-2009

Sundays 10 am, Wednesdays 7 pm

#### First Methodist Church

PO Box 144 • 9th & Chadbourne

Pastor Gary Karschner

Robert Lee • (325) 453-2417

Sun. 11 am Worship,

#### Southside Church of Christ

PO Box 698 • 8th & Houston  
Robert Lee (325) 453-2176

Sun. 10 am, Sunday School

11 am Worship

Wed. 6 pm, Worship

#### Northside Church of Christ

PO Box 508

9th & Chadbourne • Robert Lee

(325) 453-2685, (325) 763-2118

or (325) 473-1053

Services: Sun. 10 am

#### Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church

601 W. 10th, Robert Lee

(325) 365-2687

Rev. Timothy Hayter, Pastor

Saturday Vigil Mass 6 pm

#### Robert Lee Baptist Church

PO Box 493 • 22 W. 11th

(325) 453-2724

Chris Walls, Pastor

Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School

11 am Worship

Wed. 6:30 pm, Prayer Meeting

#### Victory Assembly of God

(325) 453-2208, PO Box 638

202 E. 6th Street, Robert Lee

Rev. Rocky Youngblood, Pastor

Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School

10:45 am & 6 pm, Worship

Wed. 6 pm, Bible Study

#### Coke County

#### Pecan Baptist

PO Box 542 • 12 miles West of

Robert Lee on Sterling City Hwy

(325) 453-2065, Bill Hood, Pastor

[www.pecanbaptistchurchrl.com](http://www.pecanbaptistchurchrl.com)

Sun. 10 am, Sunday School

11 am & 7 pm, Worship