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Death Notices

Emfinger

Stephanie Ann Emfinger, age 50, of Tennyson, Texas, passed away peacefully on Sunday, September 10, 2023, in San Angelo, Texas.

Stephanie leaves behind a legacy of love and unforgettable memories, cherished by her husband of thirty years, Steven

Emfinger; her son, Wayd Rusler, and his wife, Vanessa; her son, Stetsen Emfinger, and his girlfriend, Sam Bird; and her daughter, Stacia Emfinger. She will also be lovingly remembered by her grandchildren, Sawyer Pellegrino, Dawson Rusler, and Athena Rusler.

A memorial service and celebration of Stephanie's remarkable life was held at 2 pm on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, in the chapel of Shaffer Funeral Home, with Pastor Russ Frasier officiating.



Dignity and the Machine

By James M. Decker

What does the word "dignity" mean to you?

The dictionary definitions have slight variations, but they all center around a main premise: dignity is the characteristic of being worthy of respect and honor.

I've been thinking about this word a good bit lately. Not because I am a weirdo who sits around and ponders the philosophical meaning of words (okay, not SOLELY for that reason), but because of what it means within the larger context of society.

Last week, I concluded with a discussion of a famous line from a speech by Theodore Roosevelt on Labor Day 1903: "far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing..." What is that work, exactly?

In 1999, a great movie was released. It was called "Office Space." It had a limited release and a small budget. It was something of a flop at the time but it has since become a cult classic. I had never even heard of it until I got to college. It is an eminently quotable movie full of catchphrases, the perfect kind of movie to amuse college students. If you have never seen it, I highly recommend it, but I will warn you that it is not

particularly family-friendly.

To quickly summarize the premise, the movie is based around ordinary people who hate their jobs. They work in a non-descript office park in a non-descript suburb doing mundane and tedious tasks that provide limited fulfillment. They feel utterly useless and replaceable and their happiness in life is reflected accordingly. They also learn that they ARE replaceable when a pair of efficiency consultants arrive and start asking them about the necessity of their individual job assignments. I won't spoil what transpires from there, but director and writer Mike Judge hit on something very real and meaningful, in how much we Americans struggle with finding meaning in our work.

There are a lot of reasons for this struggle. I don't have time to detail them all in this space, but Wendell Berry has written tens of thousands of words on the topic for over 50 years (among others). When Theodore Roosevelt gave that famous speech in 1903, American society was grappling with some very significant consequences of the Industrial Revolution. Machines were being introduced into factories and manufacturing was becoming less of a human-oriented affair. Henry Ford was still a decade from unveiling the assembly line, which would revolutionize that process even further.

Those days feel quaint in 2023. Machines aren't just a

novel addition to the workplace, they are the central figures of the workplace. No matter your job, it is likely oriented around machines and automation in some form or fashion and the prospects of reducing that orientation seem slim.

What to make of the people? Machines have been replacing humans in the workplace for well over a century now. Is our society happier? Are we more fulfilled in our work? Have we pawned the mundane tasks onto the machines and given ourselves more happiness and fulfillment as a result?

Actually, it is quite the opposite. Devaluing work and informing humans that they are expendable commodities has created a crisis of dignity in our country. Our society treats individual people as useless and replaceable in The Economy. That informs and influences all of our behavior. And that is not a good thing.

Dignity is inherent to our value as humans. Somehow, some way, we must find ways to claw back our dignity from the clutches of the machines and The Economy. Our happiness and our ability to interact with each other successfully literally depends on it.

I have a few ideas.

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

UPCOMINGS!

Classic Car Show slated for October 21

A Fall Classic Car Show will be held at the Bronte Depot on Saturday, October 21, from 9 am until 1 pm. Prizes will be awarded to the Best of Show, Crowd Favorite, and Participant Favorite. Car Show participants are asked to parade to Bronte Health and Rehab Center at the conclusion of the show.

Kid Fish set for October 21

The 2nd annual Kid Fish event is slated for Saturday, October 21, from 7 am until 12 noon at Lake Knierim (Bronte Lake). Tackle, bait, and lunch will be provided. The free event is open to all kids 17 years of age or younger.

Bronteoberfest to be held October 21

The 9th annual Bronteoberfest will be held on Saturday, October 21, at the park in Bronte. The event will include a vendor fair, food truck court, Kid's Korner, BBQ cook off, Running of the Wieners, and Beer Stein Holding Contest. There will also be live music throughout the day, including the Fox Fire Trio at 6 pm, Kickapoo Creek Band at 8

pm, and ending the evening at 10 pm will be headliner William Beckmann.

RLVFD fundraiser to be held October 28

The Robert Lee Volunteer Fire Department will be hosting a fundraiser on Saturday, October 28, beginning at 12 noon. Plates including brisket/Mikulik sausage, red beans, and potato salad will be sold.

Edward Jones

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Life doesn't stop changing. Let's partner so you can enjoy all of it.



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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

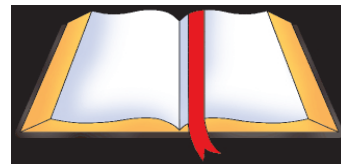
215 N. Washington, Bronte
(325) 365-2687
Rev. Timothy Hayter, Pastor
Sunday Bilingual Mass 8 am

4C Cowboy Church

Drawer R • Bronte • (325) 895-4080
Robert Lemmond, Pastor
Sunday, 10:30 am - Texas Theater
Wednesday Bible Study 6 pm -
4C Feedlot Youth Building
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
Sun. 10 am, Sunday School
11 am & 7 pm, Worship



Robert Lee

Bible Baptist Church

PO Box 938 • 9th & Austin
Sunday 10 am Sunday School,
11 am and 5 pm Worship,

Wed 5 pm Bible Study
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
Robert Lee • (325) 453-2417
Sun. 10 am Sunday School
11 am Worship,

Iglesia Bautista Betel

101 Houston • Robert Lee
Sun. 9:45 am • Sunday School
11 am Service • Bible Study Wed. 6 pm

Southside Church of Christ

PO Box 698 • 8th & Houston
Robert Lee (325) 453-2176
Sun. 10 am, Sunday School
11 am 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

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