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CLOVIS TIMES

Volume 1 Issue 1

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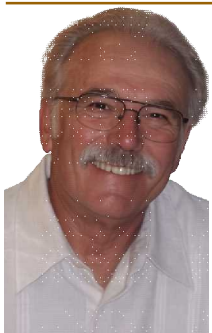
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Better Roads. Safe Streets? Pro's & Cons



\$7.3 Billion Transportation Measure?

Clovis, California — A drawing strong reactions from local leaders and residents, with debate intensifying over whether the Measure C and intended to support road improvements across Fresno County is a long-term tax commitment that may not deliver expected results. At the center of the discussion is a new proposed \$7.3 billion transportation infrastructure investment or measure promoted...**SEE P3**



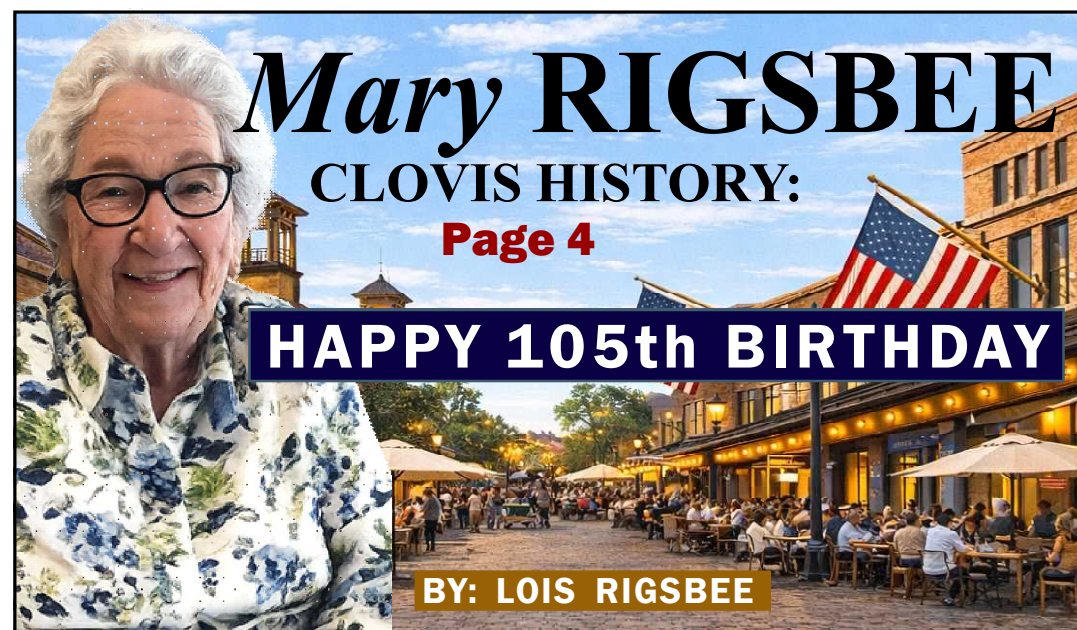
TOM SOMMERS The Fresno County Civic Leadership Award

By Kathryn Cox

Tom Sommers: A Life of Faith, Leadership, and Lasting Influence in Fresno

Few individuals leave a legacy that spans professional athletics, business leadership, and Christian mentorship the way Tom Sommers has in Fresno County. Though many people describe him as remarkably successful, Sommers himself quietly redirects attention elsewhere. To him, success is not measured by titles or recognition but by relationships built, lives encouraged, and faith shared over decades of service to others.

Born in Fresno on September 9, 1942, Tom grew up in a household shaped by both deep faith and personal...**PAGE 12**



105 years ago, on March 8, 1921, Mary Louise (Sagniere) Riggsbee was born at the old Clovis Sanitarium, the original Clovis hospital, to Joe and Tillie Sagniere of Clovis. The second of four children (older brother Joe, younger brother Fred and baby sister Rosalie), Mary was raised on the family fig ranch east of Clovis.

After graduating from Clovis High School Mary attended business school preparing for her long career as a bookkeeper. She retired from her job at Clovis Auto Parts at the age of 81! **PAGE 7**



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County Views

Lorenzo Rios: Serving Veterans and Strengthening Community



As Chief Executive Officer of the Clovis Veterans Memorial District (CVMD), Rios leads an organization focused on honoring military service while creating programs and opportunities that benefit both veterans and the broader community.

Since becoming CEO in 2015, Rios has worked alongside a team of professionals committed to advancing the district's mission of service, remembrance, and community engagement. Under his leadership, CVMD has continued developing programs and partnerships intended to provide meaningful support to veterans and create spaces where military service and sacrifice can be recognized and appreciated.

Rios describes the work as deeply personal and mission-driven.

"I lead a dynamic team of professionals that provide services and programs to

honor and support veterans and the community," he says.

During his tenure, he has overseen initiatives designed to strengthen organizational creativity, productivity, morale, safety, and inclusiveness while building relationships with local, state, and federal stakeholders. These partnerships have helped expand the district's reach and reinforce its role as a gathering place where veterans and civilians alike can connect.

The Clovis Veterans Memorial District serves as more than a facility. It functions as a community hub where ceremonies, educational programs, leadership events, and veteran-centered activities bring people together around shared values of service and civic responsibility.

Rios' leadership extends beyond his executive responsibilities. He also

serves as a Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army, a role that allows him to advise and support Army leaders on issues related to national security, defense matters, and military affairs. The appointment reflects his ongoing commitment to strengthening relationships between military institutions and the communities they serve.

His background includes experience in international relations, government relations, strategic planning, and leadership development. He is also pursuing doctoral studies in leadership through Gonzaga University, reflecting a continued focus on learning and professional growth.

One area that Rios frequently emphasizes is preparing future leaders.

He has often spoken about the importance of mentoring and investing in the next generation, believing that leadership is not simply about management but about creating opportunities for others to grow and serve.

That broader commitment to public service also recently earned statewide recognition.

The California Special Districts Association announced Rios as its elected Board President, a role that places him in leadership among organizations providing local services across California.

Following the association's first board meeting of 2026, Rios noted:

"Special districts are the most local and specialized form of governance in our country, delivering essential services that families and businesses rely on every day."

For Rios, the focus remains centered on service to veterans, service to communities, and service to future generations.

Those who work alongside him often describe his approach as collaborative and mission-oriented, with a strong belief that honoring veterans means not only remembering the past but continuing to build opportunities that strengthen communities today.

At the center of that work remains a simple goal: supporting those who served while helping create lasting impact for the communities they call home.

For more than a decade, Lorenzo Rios has dedicated much of his professional life to serving veterans, supporting military families and helping build stronger community connections throughout the Central Valley.

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SENIOR DISCOUNTS

Continued from page 1 - Better Roads. Safe Streets? Pro's & Cons

Better Roads. Safe Streets.

\$7.3 Billion Transportation Measure?

under the banner “Better Roads, Safer... Streets.” Supporters describe the proposal as a comprehensive plan to improve infrastructure throughout the county. Critics argue it functions more like a long-term 30 year public transportation tax.

The question many voters are now asking is simple: **Is this a good measure for Fresno County’s future transportation needs?**

What the Measure Would Do

Supporters say the proposal would generate approximately **\$7.4 billion over 30 years** through a continuation of the existing half-cent transportation sales tax.

According to project advocates, the funding would be allocated roughly as follows:

- **65%** for repairing and maintaining neighborhood roads
 - **25%** for public transit improvements
 - **5%** for regional transportation projects
 - **4%** for transportation innovation and accessibility
 - **1%** for administration and oversight
- Concerns Raised by Opponents**
Some elected officials and community voices have expressed concern that the measure could direct significant funding toward transit programs rather than roadway improvements. Critics warn the plan could cost taxpayers billions over three decades while not addressing the road maintenance priorities many residents expect.

Others have questioned whether policies sometimes referred to as “road diets” which shift space from vehicle lanes to bike lanes or other transportation uses could increase congestion in certain areas rather than reduce it. Additional concerns include the possibility that countywide taxpayers could subsidize bus systems primarily serving urban routes with limited use by residents outside those areas.

Opponents also argue that representation during the planning process may not have reflected the interests of all communities equally. Some leaders from smaller cities in Fresno County have publicly stated they believe regional road connectivity projects did not receive sufficient attention in the proposal.

Supporters Emphasize Regional Planning

Supporters of the measure, however, say the proposal is designed to address long-term transportation needs across Fresno County, including safety improvements, congestion relief, and expanded mobility options. They argue that modern transportation planning must consider a range of travel modes not only automobiles to prepare for population growth and changing infrastructure demands.

Backers also note that long-term funding mechanisms allow major infrastructure improvements to be planned and completed more efficiently than relying on short-term or uncertain funding sources.

Clovis Residents Recall Earlier Vote

The discussion has particular relevance in Clovis, where voters previously rejected a Measure C renewal proposal by a noticeable margin. Some residents say that outcome reflected concerns the earlier plan did not adequately prioritize road repair and expansion.

As debate continues, the current proposal is being closely examined by city officials and community leaders to determine whether it better addresses local priorities or raises similar concerns.

A Decision with Long-Term Impact

With transportation funding affecting everything from commute times to economic development and neighborhood safety, the issue has become one of the most closely watched regional policy discussions facing Clovis residents today.

If placed before voters, the measure would likely shape Fresno County transportation planning and taxpayer commitments for decades to come.

- Does the proposal fairly distribute benefits across cities such as Clovis, Fresno, and rural communities?
- Will the measure improve daily commuting conditions countywide?

With signature verification now underway, the final decision could soon be placed in the hands of voters.

Whether the “Better Roads, Safe Streets” proposal represents the right path forward remains a question the public will ultimately answer at the ballot box.



**Vong Mouanoutoua
Clovis Mayor**

FROM FRONT PAGE: Better Roads, Safe Streets proposes a measure to allow local jurisdictions to keep local dollars in our cities and directs resources where they are needed most without raising taxes. Right now, we see it and feel it. Neighborhood roads need help. It becomes more costly and unsafe if we wait. This measure prioritizes neighborhood streets, your local streets of fixing potholes, newer intersections, better lighting, and improving traffic signals. It invests in making neighborhoods safer for drivers, cyclists and pedestrians. It enhances public transportation for those who rely on it over 10.3 million riders in Fresno and 200,000 in Clovis last year. The goal is to make it quicker, safer and easier for all of us to get from point A to point B. Better Roads Safe Streets maintains the most local control, has the most flexibility, and increases funds for the County and every City in Fresno County.

Better Roads, Safe Streets provides maximum flexibility to bring road systems within incorporated cities and rural unincorporated areas of the County to good pavement condition. It includes performance

metrics, locked into law, to hold cities and the county accountable. There are annual report requirements, independent financial audits, and oversight by a citizen committee.

Of note, there will be no matching fund requirement for active transportation projects such as safe routes to school, bike/trail/walking paths, safety projects, protected facilities and street lighting.

Better Roads, Safe Streets resulted from a robust, countywide community engagement process. It held over 34 Town Halls, reaching 72 of the 91 zip codes in Fresno County, and interacted with over 4,500 residents. Moreover, it caps administration at 1% of the total measure proceeds and consolidates administration into one oversight agency of Fresno Council of Governments. All Cities have oversight over spending across all categories.

Better Roads, Safe Streets provides local funding to fix what matters most:

- 65% for Existing Neighborhood Streets
- 25% for Public Transportation
- 5% for Regional Connectivity
- 4% for Access & Innovation
- 1% for Administration & Oversight

On April 14th, supporters delivered over 32,000 signatures for validation to qualify it for November. The Clovis City Council approved this measure on a 4-1 vote.

We need this measure passed by Fresno County voters and would appreciate your vote.

Please read the measure. Don't just listen to the rhetoric and noise. Truth deserves our effort. Read the full plan for yourself and see who else is supporting the measure at: www.betterroadssafestreets.com.

Vote for Better Roads, Safe Streets.



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*The Clovis Times Newspaper
“Senior Lifestyle Options”
unites seniors with resources
& activities for Clovis*

The Clovis Senior Activity Center on Third Street has quickly established itself as one of the city’s most active gathering places for residents age 50 and older, offering opportunities for recreation, learning, and meaningful social connection in a modern, welcoming environment. Since opening in November 2023, the state-of-the-art facility has drawn strong community participation, with more than 650 visitors typically attending programs each day.

Designed to support healthy and engaged living, the center includes dedicated spaces for fitness, art instruction, dance, yoga, ceramics, reading groups, and billiards. A ballroom, exercise rooms, and creative studios give members opportunities to explore new interests while staying physically active.

For many participants, the social benefits are just as important as the activities themselves. National health experts note that loneliness affects roughly one in three adults in the United States, and long-term isolation can increase risks associated with depression, anxiety, and memory decline. Local leaders say programs like those offered at the Clovis center help counter those concerns by encouraging interaction and routine engagement.

Art instructor Deborah Pepin said creative classes provide both mental stimulation and something to look forward to each week.

“Even brief conversations can make a difference,” she explained. “People connect here, and that matters.”

Residents Darlene Morris and her husband were among the first to arrive on opening day, eager to try the new billiards room. Morris described the facility as impressive and said she looks forward to becoming involved in additional programs.

“It’s absolutely beautiful,” she said. “Now that the new center is here, I want to participate in even more activities.”

Membership is free for Clovis residents and available for a modest annual fee for those living outside the city. Individual classes range from no cost to small program fees depending on the activity.

In addition to recreation and education, the center also plays an important role in supporting nutrition and volunteer service. Free lunches are available for older adults, and many participants contribute their time helping with events and programs throughout the year.

Volunteer Denise Benelli said the center helped her build friendships after moving to Clovis several years ago. Through volunteering, she has continued expanding her connections within the community.

With a wide range of programs, strong daily participation, and a welcoming atmosphere, the Clovis Senior Activity Center is becoming more than just a recreation site—it is a place where residents stay active, form friendships, and experience a lasting sense of belonging in the community.

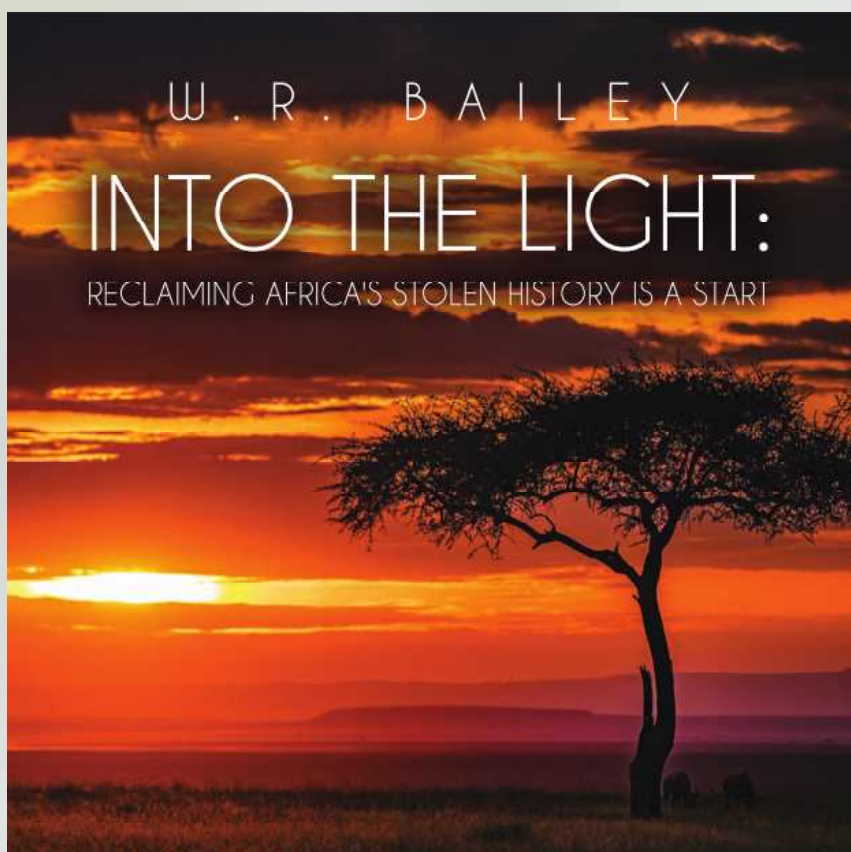


Booktalk!



W.R. Bailey has had a decades-long interest in African and African-American history. Into the Light distills the current movement to celebrate the African Century and the achievements of African and African Americans.

BY W.R. BAILEY



The author is a graduate of UC Berkeley and the University Of San Francisco School Of Law.

He is a member of the American Historical Association (AHA) and Computational history makes use of the lessons from our digital age and does take the nineteenth century view that history is not simple or inevitable, but the product of complex mixing of communities and cultures. Bailey grew up in a San Francisco Bay Area aerospace family in a culture focused on lively political discussion, jazz music, outdoor sports, and digital technology. His background, which includes law and engineering, dovetails with this emerging new framework.

The author’s website, “The Computational Age,” focuses on the rise of a network-centric view of history and culture’s culture. Bailey’s published articles have covered current affairs, history, and natural resources. The author enjoys reading, spending time in the mountains, outdoor sports, friends, his cat, and any good chat.

“ For many good reasons this is being called the African Century. For the same good reasons, it’s time to celebrate the history of Africa’s urban and scholarly past ” www.Info@ClovisTimes.com

Agriculture Is Investing in the Future of Our Valley's Students



By Nathan Magsig

For generations, farming has sustained our families and powered local jobs. But today, agriculture is also investing directly in education, workforce development, and opportunity for young people across our region.

From farm fields to classrooms, ag is helping open doors.

Across the Valley, agricultural companies partner with local school districts to support FFA programs, fund career technical education pathways, and provide hands-on training in everything from ag mechanics to food science and water technology. These programs give students real-world skills that translate directly into high-paying careers, whether they choose to attend college or enter the workforce after graduation.

We see powerful examples of this commitment right here at home. The Wonderful Company has invested millions of dollars into education initiatives in the Central Valley, including scholarship programs that help

In the Central Valley, agriculture is more than an industry, it is the backbone of our economy, our communities, and increasingly, the future of our students.

local students become the first in their families to attend college. Through its Wonderful College Prep Academy and scholarship efforts, students from farming communities are receiving life-changing opportunities to pursue higher education and return home with the skills to strengthen our region.

This is not charity, it is partnership. Agriculture understands that its long-term success depends on an educated, skilled local workforce.

Major dairy operators collaborate with community colleges to train future veterinarians, mechanics, and plant managers. Tree nut processors fund STEM programs that expose students to cutting-edge agricultural technology, including precision irrigation and drone mapping. Family farms sponsor 4-H and FFA chapters that teach leadership, responsibility, and entrepreneurship.

And the benefits extend far beyond those directly employed in agriculture.

When agriculture thrives, local tax revenues support our schools. When farms invest in infrastructure, entire communities benefit. When ag

businesses fund scholarships and internships, they help break cycles of poverty and expand opportunity.


In a region often overlooked by Sacramento policymakers, agriculture consistently steps up.

As someone who has served on the Fresno County Board of Supervisors and worked closely with school districts, I have seen firsthand how critical these partnerships are. Our Valley's students deserve pathways to success that reflect the strengths of our region. Agriculture provides those pathways, whether through four-year degrees, technical certifications, or skilled trades.



At a time when California faces serious economic challenges and rising costs that strain families, we should be championing industries that invest locally and lift up the next generation.

If we want strong schools, strong families, and strong communities, we must ensure that agriculture remains strong as well. That means fighting for sensible water policy, reducing unnecessary regulatory burdens, and protecting the industry that feeds the nation.

Our kids are the future of the Central Valley, and agriculture is helping them grow.



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BusinessMatters

Welcome to the Heart of Old Town Clovis!



BY: HEATHER FRANTZICH

WHY OLD TOWN CLOVIS

Old Town Clovis continues to be one of the most vibrant and welcoming destinations in the Central Valley, bringing together local businesses, community organizations, families, and visitors who appreciate the unique character and charm that makes our historic district so special. Each week, the Business Organization of Old Town Clovis (B.O.O.T.) is proud to spotlight the people, businesses, and events that continue to strengthen our community and support local commerce.

OLD TOWN SHOPPING

From specialty boutiques and coffee shops to family-owned restaurants and professional services, the members of B.O.O.T. work together to create an atmosphere that celebrates local entrepreneurship and community spirit. Whether you are visiting for the weekly Farmers Market, live entertainment, seasonal events, or simply enjoying a walk through Old Town, there is always something exciting happening.

OLD TOWN ANTIQUES

This summer season has brought renewed energy to the district as visitors continue to support local merchants and attend community events that highlight the best of Clovis. The Old Town Farmers Market continues to attract residents from throughout the Valley with fresh produce, artisan foods, handcrafted goods, and live

music from talented local performers. The market has become more than just a shopping experience it has become a gathering place where neighbors reconnect and families create lasting memories.

OLD TOWN DINING

B.O.O.T. members are also preparing for several upcoming events designed to encourage shopping local and supporting community businesses. Participating merchants are planning special promotions, sidewalk sales, family activities, and evening entertainment opportunities that will help showcase the unique personality of Old Town Clovis.

In addition to supporting businesses, B.O.O.T. remains committed to preserving the historic identity and welcoming atmosphere that has made Old Town Clovis one of the region's favorite

OLD TOWN FARMERS MARKET

destinations. The organization continues to work closely with local leaders, merchants, and community volunteers to improve the district and promote events that benefit residents and visitors alike.

We encourage everyone to explore the shops, restaurants, services, and community events that make Old Town Clovis such a treasured part of our city. Supporting local businesses helps strengthen our economy, creates local jobs, and preserves the unique

character that makes Clovis special.

OLD TOWN SERVICES

If your business or organization would like to become involved with B.O.O.T. or participate in upcoming events and promotions, we invite you to connect with us and become part of the growing momentum in Old Town Clovis.

OLD TOWN OTHERS

Together, we continue building a stronger, more connected, and thriving community.

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The Old Town Market vibe is as fresh as the produce, featuring incredible food selections, artisan vendors, and live music from talented local artists and food creators.

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ClovisHistory



From page 1

HAPPY 105th BIRTHDAY

BY: LOIS RIGSBEE

In 1946 Mary married Emmett Rigsbee. They lived in Clovis and eventually moved the house to their ranch east of Clovis. There they raised their 3 children: Chuck, Dan, and Pam. Mary loved family gatherings and large BBQs at the ranch.

As lifelong residents of Clovis, Mary and her family have been involved in the Clovis Rodeo since its inception in 1914. Her grandfather helped cook the meal for the first Clovis Rodeo (then called Clovis Days). Her husband Emmett was a longtime member on the Clovis Rodeo board and served as Grand Marshal in 1992. Both her sons have a long-term involvement with the association; both have served as President. Mary is no longer able to go to the rodeo but never misses it on TV.

She remained on the ranch for a number of years after Emmett passed in 1995. Eventually the ranch was sold, and she moved, as she says, to town to a small condo. She never complained about trading the bucolic view of cattle grazing in the pasture for a small backyard with a patio

table. She had totally adjusted to her new place.

In 2019, she moved again, this time to Magnolia Crossing, an assisted living facility near old town Clovis. Her room is decorated with her mother's dresser, a comfy recliner, her favorite pictures, and rodeo posters, and of course a mini fridge for her Gatorade and cookies.

At 105 she is oldest resident and the oldest in residence of the facility.

Her life is simpler now, but she still gets lots of visitors, family, and friends, including her weekly communion delivered by Our Lady of Perpetual Catholic Church, of which she has been a member for over 100 years. As everyone knows Mary loves goodies, so everyone brings her a sweet. If you ask, she may share with you or direct you to the candy dish by the door.

She is still warm, talkative, and friendly, willing to give hugs to all that comes by. And at this stage of her life, she takes a couple of naps daily. She is doted on by her kids, their spouses, Lois, Susan and George, her nieces and nephews and her great grandchildren Mason and Cameron.

Mary attributes her long life to hard work, a good sense of humor, and a little Crown Royal.

Congratulate her on a life well lived as she looks forward to her 106th birthday next year.



THE RIGSBEE FAMILY

L - R - DAN, PAM, EMMETT, MARY AND CHUCK



L - R - CHUCK, MARY, DAN, PAM



L - R - SISTER ROSALIE ESTILL AND MARY

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Hi, my name is **Armando Negrete**, and together with **David Menendian**, both longtime local sports photographers and sports writers, we are proud to partner with The Clovis Times to bring you outstanding local sports coverage. From high school athletics to community sports, our goal is to keep you informed, connected, and engaged with the teams and athletes that make Clovis proud.

HEATHER FRANZICH

B.O.O.T

OLD TOWN CLOVIS FARMERS MARKET

Keep up with all of the great things happening in Old Town Clovis.

Read my Clovis Times article on page 10 and visit us at our website below.

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A WAY OF LIFE

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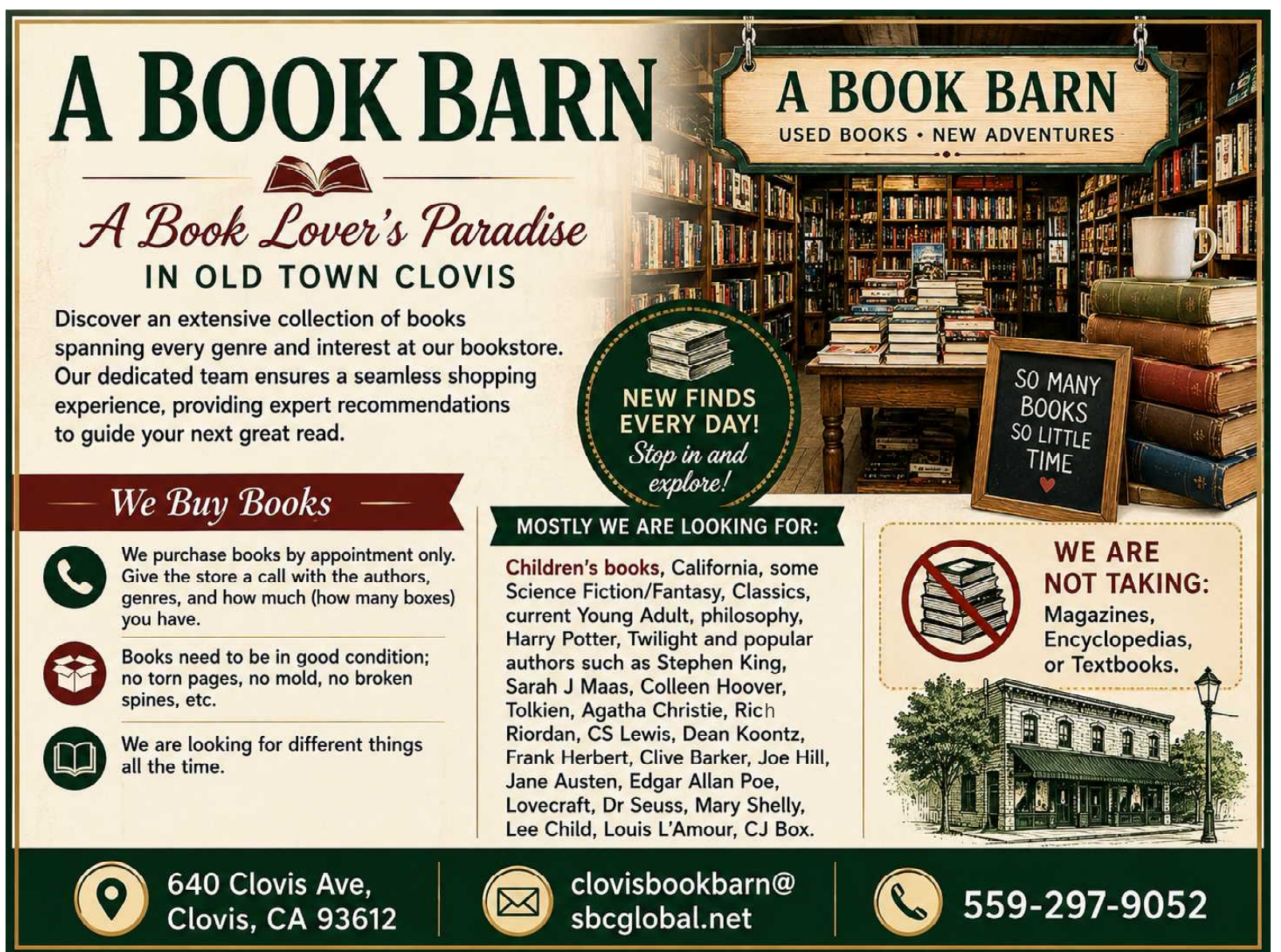
VIEW COMPLETE CALENDAR

READ ALL ABOUT IT
www.clovisca.gov



CLOVIS BUSINESS LICENSES FREE FOR VETERANS

Earlier this year, the City Council approved an ordinance to exempt Honorably Discharged or Honorably Relieved Business Owners, as well as Active Duty or Reservist Military Personnel Business Owners, from payments associated with business registration or license fees if the veteran is the sole proprietor of the business. In other words, Clovis business licenses are free for active duty service members and veterans! For more information, visit ClovisCA.gov/services/finance/business_licenses.php or call (559) 324-2112



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JUNE 2026
VOL. 1 • NO. 20

CLOVIS COMMUNITY CALENDAR



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Your guide to local events, programs & activities in Clovis.

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JUNE
7
SATURDAY



CLOVIS FARMERS MARKET

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JUNE
7



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County SPORTS



“The Sanger Metric Classic”



By Armando Negrete,
Instagram
@etergen_sports

Clovis

Unified Track and Field Programs Showcase Speed and Depth at Sanger Meet

SANGER, Calif. • Powerhouse programs from across the Clovis Unified School District delivered another impressive showing on the track, as Buchanan, Clovis High, Clovis East, Clovis North, and Clovis West competed at a recent Sanger-hosted meet, reinforcing the district's reputation as one of the strongest track and field hubs in Central California.

From explosive sprint relays to well-rounded performances across



multiple events, The Sanger Metric Classic highlighted both elite individual talent and the depth that defines Clovis Unified athletics.

Buchanan High School once again set the tone in the sprint relays, turning in some of the fastest times of the meet. The Bears' boys 4x100-meter relay team clocked a blazing 42.03, a mark that placed them among the top-performing teams in the region this season. Their consistency in short relays continues to make

them a formidable contender heading deeper into the schedule.

At the center of Buchanan's success is senior standout Donovan Dunmore, whose speed and versatility have made him one of the Central Valley's most exciting athletes this season. Individually, Dunmore continues to shine. He has posted a personal-best 20.77 in the 200 meters and a 10.50 in the 100 meters. Times that rank among the fastest in the region. He has also

proven his range in the 400 meters, clocking a 49.19 and providing critical splits in relay competition.

The Wisconsin Football commit has shown leadership and consistency throughout the season which has not only elevated Buchanan's performance but has also set a standard for excellence across the district.

Clovis North answered with strength in the longer relays and field events, including an impressive 3:19.66 in

the 4x400-meter relay. The Broncos also posted competitive marks in the throws and distance events, demonstrating the kind of balance that could prove crucial in championship meets.

The girls competition proved just as competitive, with Clovis Unified schools continuing to demonstrate depth and balance across sprint, distance, and field events.

Teams like Buchanan and Clovis North led the way with strong relay performances and consistent

finishes in individual races, while Clovis High, Clovis West and Clovis East showcased emerging talent across multiple disciplines. From sprint relays to distance races, the level of competition mirrored that of the boys side, with tightly contested finishes and several top marks posted throughout the meet.

The continued development of underclassmen, combined with experienced upperclass leaders, has positioned the girls programs across the district for a strong push as the postseason approaches.

As the season progresses, Clovis Unified schools appear poised for another deep postseason run. With a combination of elite sprinters, strong relay teams, and developing talent across all disciplines, the district continues to set the bar in Central California track and field.

If early-season results are any indication, fans can expect fast times, fierce competition, and plenty of headline-worthy performances in the weeks ahead.

Inside the Game: Clovis North junior catcher Riley Grealy

Q: How would you describe the team's season so far?

A: "The season has been really good so far," Grealy said, noting the team had to adjust after losing key players. With a younger lineup stepping up, she added the group initially faced challenges but found its identity after a difficult stretch. "Something kind of just clicked and we started playing for each other," she said. "One word that describes our team is continuity...we're very balanced and we support each other."

Q: What are the team's goals for the season?

A: Grealy emphasized both longterm and day-to-day focus. "The main one obviously is to defend our back-to-back valley (central section) titles and to make a deep run into state (playoffs)," she said. At the same time, the team is approaching the season steadily: "Coach Dale Inside the Game: By Armando Negrete, Instagram @etergen_sports reminds us, It's a marathon not a sprint... we're taking it game by game." She added that winning a league title remains a key goal for this group.

Q: As a catcher, how do you approach leadership on the field?

A: "Lots and lots of energy," Grealy said. She highlighted the importance of communication and trust, especially with her pitcher. "Constantly talking... having like really pumped up energy, the team feeds off of it," she said. "We know that... we need to play with a lot of energy and intensity to keep everybody in the game."

Q: How important is team involvement beyond the starting lineup?

A: Grealy stressed that every player contributes to the team's success. "The dugout is the heartbeat of the team," she said. "Even the girls who



don't get much playing time, they contribute... being involved in the game is very important." She added that creating a fun, inclusive environment keeps everyone engaged.

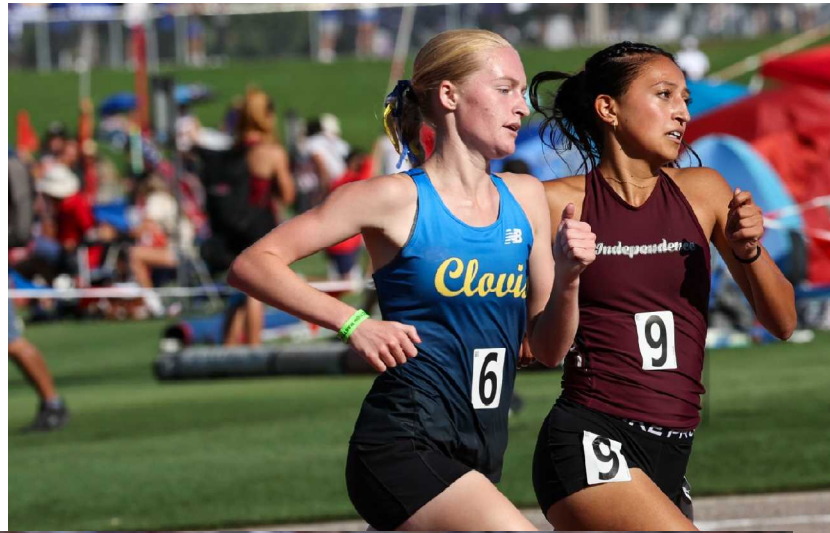
Q: How did you first get involved in softball?

A: Family has been at the center of Grealy's softball journey. "Watching my sister play... made me love the game," she said, referring to her older sister Kaylee, now a Division I softball player at Louisiana Tech. Growing up, Grealy followed her sister's path and passion for the sport, which helped shape her own drive. She also credited her father's influence, both in skill development and leadership. "He taught me how to be a good leader on the field for my she said, noting how his experience helped her grow into the role of catcher—"kind of like a quarterback"—while reinforcing the family's shared love for the game.



A Sports Collage By David Menendian

By: David Menendian



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TOM SOMMERS The Fresno County Civic Leadership Award

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

...hardship. His parents, both Russian Germans born locally, influenced him in very different ways. His mother was a devoted Christian who faithfully took him to church twice each week beginning when he was just five years old. His father, however, struggled with severe alcoholism, creating a difficult home environment that shaped Tom's early years.

"I literally never saw my father sober," Sommers once reflected. "Sports became my refuge."

Baseball, in particular, captured his imagination. Inspired by his older brother, an accomplished athlete himself, Tom spent his childhood on football fields and baseball diamonds throughout Fresno. Little League sparked a dream that would follow him into adulthood to become a major league baseball player.

That dream nearly collapsed during his senior year of high school when tragedy struck. His mother, who had quietly endured years of hardship while holding the family together, passed away at just 54 years old before seeing Tom graduate. Her death left a deep emotional mark.

"Why did you take my precious mom?" he remembers asking God. "Why not my father?"

Shortly afterward, his father entered Stockton State Hospital due to alcoholism and dementia. Despite overwhelming loss, Tom pressed forward, completing high school and continuing his education at Fresno State University. There he played football for two years and baseball for four years under legendary coach Pete Beiden, whom Sommers later described as a second father.

After marrying his college sweetheart Barbara in 1964, an unexpected opportunity changed the course of his life.

During their honeymoon, Barbara encouraged Tom to attend a tryout camp hosted by the California Angels. At the time, there was no formal draft system. If a scout liked what he saw, a player could sign immediately.

Barbara spent much of their honeymoon waiting at a hotel while Tom attended four days of tryouts from morning until late afternoon. The gamble paid off. He signed with the Angels and spent four seasons working his way through the minor leagues, eventually reaching Triple-A in Seattle.

His leadership ability quickly became evident. At just 24 years old, Sommers was appointed manager of the Angels' Idaho Falls affiliate, possibly making him one of the youngest managers in professional minor league history. Around that same time, another young manager in the league named Tommy Lasorda would later go on to manage the Los Angeles



Dodgers with historic success.

By age 28, Sommers had become the California Angels' Minor League Director, overseeing player development across the organization for seven years. During that period, the Angels' farm system was twice ranked number one in professional baseball.

He also developed a close friendship with team owner Gene Autry.

"Gene loved baseball," Sommers recalled. "He came to nearly every game and cared deeply about the players. Even though the team didn't make money for decades, he stayed committed because he loved the sport."

Despite his success, professional baseball demanded constant travel across Mexico, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic. When the Angels reorganized leadership following a

difficult season in 1977, Sommers received an offer to become general manager of the Seattle Mariners. After prayerful discussion with Barbara, he declined the opportunity and chose instead to prioritize family life.

He returned to Fresno and entered the insurance profession with New York Life, beginning a 32-year career that proved just as influential as his years in baseball.

Yet something was still missing.

Although he had grown up around faith through his mother's example, Sommers admits he had never fully committed his life to Christ. That changed on May 1, 1985.

"That day everything changed," he said. "I recommitted my life to Jesus and I haven't had a drop of alcohol since."

From that point forward, mentoring men became one of his primary callings. Through Christian Business Men's Connection (CBMC), Sommers began leading early-morning Bible studies in his

office, often meeting eight to ten men daily before continuing conversations by phone into the evening hours.

Over time, those meetings transformed lives across the Central Valley.

One longtime friend recalled meeting Sommers more than three decades ago through CBMC.

"I recognized he had a peace about him that I needed," the friend said. "He invited me to Bible study, and my life changed."

Others tell similar stories. Men encouraged through addiction recovery, business struggles, family crises, and spiritual uncertainty.

After retiring from New York Life, Sommers accepted the position of director of CBMC Fresno, where he served for eleven years. During that time he and Barbara hosted numerous events, brought nationally known speakers to the region, and helped



TOM SOMMERS, I

SEATTLE ANGELS

strengthen a network of Christian business leaders committed to serving their community with integrity and faith.

Beyond CBMC, Sommers also played a significant role in organizing the Fresno

California's leading anti-human trafficking organizations. Its co-founder, Debra Rush, says Sommers saw potential in her long before she recognized it herself and helped open doors that transformed her life and career.



Clovis Prayer Breakfast, an annual gathering that has grown from a small meeting of five businessmen in the 1940s into an event drawing thousands of attendees each year. Speakers have included nationally recognized leaders such as Tony Dungy, Anne Graham-Lotz, David Jeremiah, Chuck Swindoll, Dallas Jenkins, and Sammy Rodriguez.

Even outside formal ministry leadership, Sommers continued mentoring athletes and supporting organizations like the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the Fresno Athletic Hall of Fame. Community leaders consistently describe him as a connector, someone uniquely gifted at bringing people together for meaningful purpose.

Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer described him as "one of the most recognizable Godly pillars in the business community," noting Sommers' extraordinary ability to unite leaders across professions and ministries.

Others credit him with helping shape major regional initiatives, including the founding of Breaking the Chains, now one of

Today, Tom and Barbara Sommers continue serving quietly but faithfully. Barbara remains active in their church, and Tom still meets regularly with local businessmen, encouraging, mentoring, and building relationships one conversation at a time.

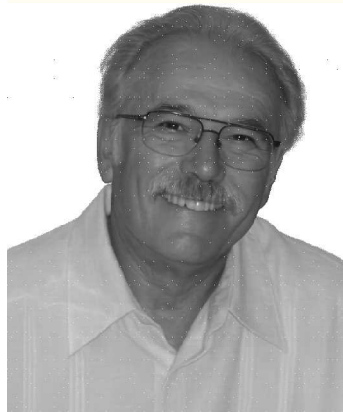
Though many consider him a role model, Sommers consistently points to those who influenced him along the way, including longtime mentors, colleagues, and especially his brother Fred and his sister Betty Hudson.

In the words of Fresno County District Attorney Lisa Smittcamp:

"Tom Sommers doesn't just speak the Word of God; he lives it. His legacy is not defined by statistics in baseball records, professional titles, or organizational leadership roles. Instead, it lives on in the countless men and women whose lives were strengthened by his faith, humility, and willingness to invest deeply in others."

For Fresno and the Central Valley, Tom Sommers remains what he has always been: a quiet servant leader whose greatest achievement is the people he has helped along the way.

Clovis City Council Approves “IN GOD WE TRUST”



BY BILL SCOTT

During the effort to install the motto, “In God We Trust”, in the Clovis City Council chambers, twice it was mentioned, we have a motto, “Clovis – a way of life”. In God We Trust is a motto. Clovis is a way of life, is a tagline. A motto is an internal principle that guides decisions and standards. A tagline is the steady promise people associate with the brand over time. A motto is a word, phrase, or sentence that expresses an organization's principles or beliefs (Cambridge).

A tagline is a short phrase an organization uses in advertising, so people recognize it or its products (Cambridge).

Outside the Council Chambers, the question came up, what is the “Clovis way of life”? No one had a definitive answer. I began to look for an answer. I heard rumors it was a reporter, that first coined the phrase. But, who, what paper, when, and why, I've found no answer. Also, what is the correct phrase, Clovis is a way of life, Clovis is a way of life, The Clovis way of life. I've been unable to find answers to those questions, since I started in early February. If you know those answers the Clovis Times would be happy to publish your story.

As I was looking for those answers, I started asking friends what they thought the Clovis way of life is. Then I put the question on a local social media. The following are the answers I received. I only printed first names to protect identities.

- Lorenzo - Humble life based on gratitude and patriotic values.
- Ryan - Family, Faith, God.
- Jason - Small town, helping each other out.
- Bob - We are a small town, that does things differently, and this is how we do it.
- Jared - Family.
- Kent - Small town, easy going.
- Stephanie - Rodeo, family and country.
- Matt - Cowboys.
- Todd - Safety, police, schools.
- Adam - Rodeo.
- Jim - Different, respectful, cowboy.
- Kay - Family structured good things, community, people care about each other.
- Rob - Quality of service.
- Carol - Cowboy and friendly folk.
- Melanie - My Clovis Hills church family! Wonderful!!!
- Chloe - A great little western town, with great people, with good values, and is growing too fast these days.
- Jeanine - Walking in old town.
- David - Yup, love it, The Edge, Papa's Place, House of JuJu!
- Jeanine - Community.
- James - A great way of living.
- Marci - In 1976 when we were still a small enough town to know most everybody walking around, and farmland was all around us. FOR ME, I liked the country life. I had a great childhood living in the country Too many houses now.
- Gail - Clovis is a nice place to live.
- Angel - To me, it means it's a little bit slower pace of life A little country. We say Please, thank you. People are polite, courteous, have more manners. It's cleaner nicer. It's a way of life.
- Patricia - I moved to Clovis in the 70s, because it had great schools, safe neighborhoods, and friendly, small town atmosphere.
- Eden - I lived in LA. I can tell you, I 100% prefer Clovis way of life.
- Dann - Pollasky Ave, Friday's Farmer's Market, Big Hat Days Clovis Rodeo, Antiques, and much more!
- David - Come out and hear The Good Old Boys Band in Old Town!
- Victoria - Family, Love and the smell of orange blossoms.
- Cyndi - Slow-paced, easy going, welcoming & friendly.

- Jeanine - Worth it.
- Will - Clovis is a way of life means the care put into the school system, the quality of housing, the neighborhoods, the stores and shopping, the central location, the people, our law enforcement, all of it. Clovis is a great city to live in!
- Jay - Community, kindness, inclusiveness, and the old skool way of living!
- Luisaa - I lived there for many years. It is a way of life.
- Judy - Rodeo
- Stephanie - Safe and quiet. Cleaner streets and less crime.
- Jade - Breakfast at Rodeo café or Sandy's, or cheeseburgers at the 500 Club. Oh, and San Joaquin College of law, and 4th street Antiques, of course. Old town is nice.
- There were also some neutral and negative responses.
- Doug - Hahaha
- Tamie - The good old boys club.
- Gordon - About 30 years ago, the perception was racial superiority.
- Steph - It's systematic racism, not-in-my-backyard, cowboy hats and a very cute Old Town.
- Suzette - Why? That's what comes to my mind.
- Christie - Absolutely nothing except their taxes!
- Michelle - I've never heard someone say that? Can you provide more context?
- Rebecca - It used to mean small town feel and friendly people. Not so much anymore.
- Lauren - Hysterical laughter.
- Ryan - Gone.
- Pamela - It used to be a nice small town now it's getting just as bad as Fresno! very sad.
- Matthew - That more people need to venture out of Clovis, Imao.
- Matthew - I didn't know how racist 559 was until you see posts like this and everything is democrats and minorities faults. No accountability. No facts ever. Just blind hatred. I'll pray for you losers.
- Joi - As a black woman married to a white man. I've seen and experienced the hostility that comes from driving while Black, shopping while Black, walking my dog while black in Clovis, and it's rather disheartening.
- Debra - I don't think Clovis is a Way of Life is relevant anymore. When it was small, yes. But it's a bigger city now. It's been growing so much they want to make huge increases to our water costs but don't really encourage saving water.
- Rebecca - Clovis how it was from 60's to 80's.
- Cyn - Systematic racism and entitlement.
- John - When I think of Clovis, I think of a bunch of orange man pdf supporters.
- Parker - A lot of stuck-up people with their nose up in the air.
- Helen - Racism.
- Mason - The phrase always makes me feel uncomfortable.
- Erin - When the street signs turn brown, it's time to turn around.
- Beau - It used to be 30 years ago!
- Cindy - It's starting to slip away!

The Clovis way of life does begin with the American ideal of rugged individualism. The first settlers took a chance on farming and ranching in this area. The local Indians didn't think much of this area. They tended to live in the foot hills, where there were better resources. The settlers worked together to make a small railroad freight stop into a small town. Created a rodeo, started schools and churches. Then in rough times they just made do with what they had. The rodeo became a big deal, the first on the PCRA circuit. Along with the parade, rodeo week end, the last weekend in April, attracted thousands from all over.

The Clovis police developed their no-nonsense reputation, dealing with the large number of biker gangs that descended on Jim's Place, looking for fights with the cowboys. I remember you could not find a place to park your car on Clovis Ave, between 7th St. and 3rd St., because it was filled with motorcycles. Big Hat days, farmers markets, and assorted street fairs, added to the Clovis image.

The City of Clovis took extra care to retaining old town looking much like it was. Even now there is something special about Old Town's mix of nostalgic buildings and newer modern structures that still blend in. A great collection of restaurants, antique shops, regular businesses and offices, make Old Town a destination rather than a place to go get something then leave. And from this came the Clovis way of life.



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You feel strongly about an issue, and you want to let people know what you think. You believe you can even influence people to take some action if you speak your mind. But, you want to reach an audience larger than just your friends or your group membership. Letters to the editor can be an effective way to get the word out.

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PoliticalMatters

Save the Country— Pass the SAVE ACT

If you don't ACT, who will?



FRED VANDERHOOF

Recently, Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Harmeet Dhillon, said that federal officials discovered tens of thousands of dead people and non-citizens on voting rolls. This problem is the result of too many states ignoring United States election law, specifically the National Voting Right Act (NVRA).

This law was passed in 1960 to ensure election integrity.

States that have refused to follow this long-established law include California, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and New York. Consequently, the U. S. Department of Justice has filed lawsuits against these and other states which refuse to comply. Dhillon also has said that even in states trying to comply with these laws, issues concerning voter eligibility were still being identified.

Dhillon continued, "Of the 60 million records we've run so far we found at least 350,000 dead people currently on the voter rolls...and we've referred approximately 25,000 people with no citizenship records to the Department of Homeland Security...to see the extent to which people voted. So the Left told us this never happens and it's a myth - it definitely happened."

With the November 2026 mid-term elections just six months away, it is imperative that elections across the country become secure and honest. Fortunately, the SAVE ACT, a bill, which if passed by the House and Senate and signed by President Trump, would be



a law that would fix many of these critical problems.

Following are the key components of the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act (SAVE ACT):

1. Require proof of citizenship to vote
2. Require photo ID to vote
3. Require states to remove non-citizens from their voting rolls

With hundreds of thousands of suspect ballots being cast in current and future elections, our very survival as a free country is at stake. A relatively small number of votes can easily swing a local, a state, or a national election. For instance, the "Hanging Chad" election in 2000 was barely won by George W. Bush who defeated Al Gore for the presidency by only 537 votes!

It's time for America to join the rest of the world by establishing common sense voting safeguards through the SAVE ACT.

- The overwhelming majority of countries (at least 176) require voter I.D.

- Almost all nations do not accept ballots days or weeks after an election

- Many nations do not allow mail-in voting at all

- No country allows illegal aliens to vote Americans of all backgrounds support this bill by wide margins:

- Over 90% of Republicans
- 70-80% of Independents
- 50-70% of Democrats

Rarely has any piece of legislation received such overwhelming support of the U.S. population. The House of Representatives has passed the SAVE ACT. Currently, the SAVE ACT has stalled in the U. S. Senate. With a majority of voters from all major parties supporting this vital bill, we urge you to contact the Senate Majority Leader, Senator John Thune. There are several paths that he can take to get this Bill passed. Please take a few minutes to contact him by

phone, email or by writing a letter (at one of the offices listed below) asking him to do all he can to protect our nation by leading the effort to pass the **ASAVE ACT**.

Contact information for Senate Majority Leader John Thune:

Email by going to www.thune.senate.gov/public Washington, D. C. Office

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(202)224-2321

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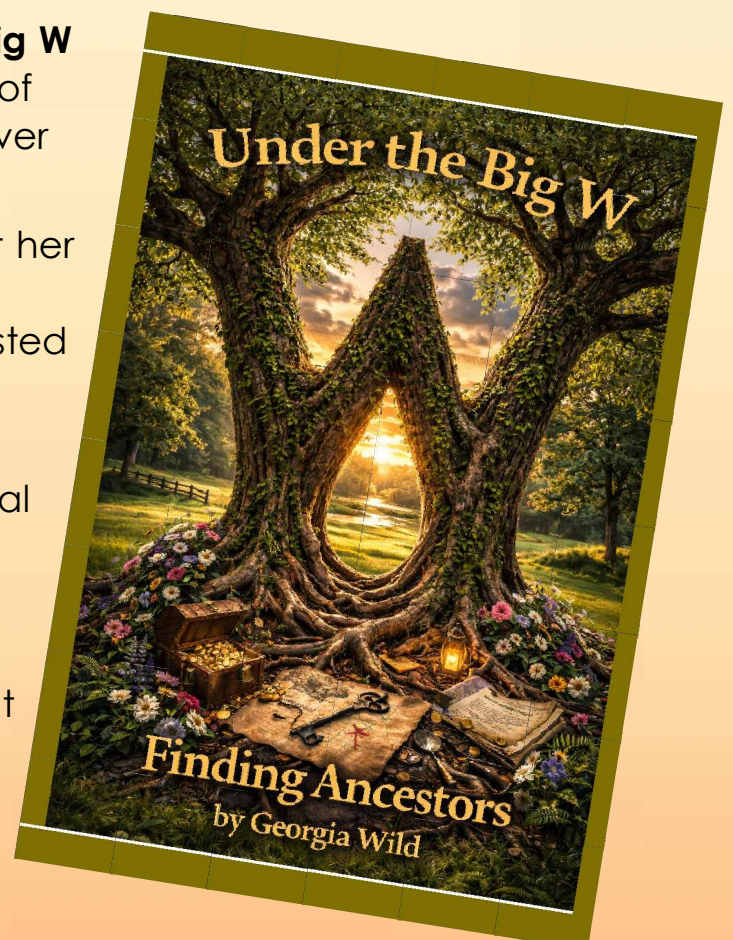
You can find "Under the Big W" on Amazon or www.UnderTheBigW.com

Georgia Wild is the author of Under the Big W – Finding Ancestors, a heartfelt account of her lifelong journey helping people discover their family roots.

Her search began when she learned that her own father had been adopted at a time when no computers or digital records existed to guide the process.

Driven by determination, curiosity, and compassion, Georgia developed practical research skills that helped reunite families and uncover lost histories.

Her book reflects decades of persistence and discovery and stands as a testament to the power of never giving up when searching for identity, connection, and the stories that shape who we are.



AMAZON AT: <https://a.co/d/06AXXWxm> or - www.UnderTheBigW.com



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Introducing: The Faith Based Leadership Network

“The Fresno County Faith Based Leadership Network” was created to provide a simple, practical way for ministry leaders, and faith-based influencers throughout Fresno County to stay connected, informed, and engaged without adding unnecessary pressure to already busy lives.

This network is built on a clear understanding: most faith leaders are already carrying full schedules, balancing ministry responsibilities, family life, and community involvement. The last thing needed is another structured program demanding time, attendance, and obligation. For that reason, the Fresno County Faith Based Leadership Network is intentionally designed as a **loosely held organization with no commitment of any kind**. There are no mandatory meetings, no dues, and no expectations beyond your willingness to participate when it fits your schedule.

At its core, this network exists to make connection easy and accessible. Through a weekly Zoom call, leaders have the opportunity to hear what is happening across the community, share insights, and stay aligned with key issues affecting the region. Participation is entirely optional; you can join live, listen later, or simply stay informed through other channels.

In addition to the Zoom call, the network utilizes email communication to distribute updates, announcements, and opportunities that matter to the faith community. This ensures that even those who cannot attend live gatherings can remain informed and engaged.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
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