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Scholarship honors late radio personality Stewart "Stewman" Byars

MARTIN, Tenn. – Stewart "Stewman" Byars is remembered for his many talents and sense of humor as a popular Northwest Tennessee radio personality. Fans knew him best for his

work at the Thunderbolt Radio family of stations in Martin and Union City and as co-host of Club Country on West Tennessee PBS WLJT-TV. But Byars, who lived in Union City, is also remembered as

a mentor and friend. Ben Cunningham is among a group of individuals who knew or worked with Byars before he died from cancer in 2008 and still treasure his memory today. Cunningham and others keep his memory alive through financially supporting the Stewart Byars Excellence in Radio Production Award, which is presented to a University of Tennessee at Martin student during the scholarships, awards and recognition ceremony held each spring by the university's Department of Mass Media and Strategic Communication.

This year's ceremony was held April 9 in the Boling University Center's Russell Duncan Ballroom. Cunningham, and his wife, Jamie, both of Troy and both of whom attended UT Martin, were present at the event this year to present a \$2,000 scholarship. He credits Byars for fostering his interest in

See **STEWMAN** back page

WestStar hosting Elvelyn C. Robertson Jr. Conference of Excellence

MARTIN, Tenn. – The University of Tennessee at Martin WestStar Leadership Program's Evelyn C. Robertson Jr. Conference of Excellence will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., Tuesday, May 19 at the West Tennessee AgResearch and Education Center in Jackson. The Evelyn C. Robertson Jr. Conference of Excellence honors Robertson's legacy as a 1997 WestStar graduate and a dedicated committee member for the conference. Robertson was a former executive director of the Southwest Tennessee Development District in Jackson and

served on the board of directors of the National Association of Development Organizations. He also served as the commissioner of what is now the Tennessee Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Robertson passed away on Aug. 19, 2024.

This conference serves as a platform to connect emerging and established leaders to networking opportunities and to collaborate on solutions to better West Tennessee communities.

Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in engaging sessions and

See **WESTSTAR** back page



REMEMBERING STEWART BYARS – Stewart Byars (left) and Ben Cunningham are pictured during a mid-2000s Thunderbolt Radio remote broadcast. Cunningham and others keep Byars' memory alive through financially supporting the Stewart Byars Excellence in Radio Production Award, which is presented to a UT Martin student during the scholarships, awards and recognition ceremony held each spring by the university's Department of Mass Media and Strategic Communication.



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How rising food demand is affecting farming

The population is growing and so is its demand for food to fuel those extra bodies. Harvard Business Review reports the global population has quadrupled over the last century. It's predicted that, by 2050, the population will exceed nine billion people.

The world is not able to feed all of its inhabitants, according to Penn State. There are more than one billion people who are estimated to lack sufficient food, and two billion who do not receive adequate nutrition.

Researchers from the Institute on the Environment at the University of Minnesota concluded that, to feed the world by 2030, yields on maize, rice, wheat, and soybeans will have to rise by 60 to 110 percent. At the start of 2025, projections show them only increasing by 45 to 60 percent. There are a few reasons why food supply may not meet up with demand.

• **Climate change:** Climate change is predicted to cause issues to crop yields, especially in portions of the world where

the population is growing the fastest. For example, a recent NASA study published in the journal Nature predicts that high greenhouse gas emissions may cause corn output to decline as early as 2030, but wheat output would increase. Farmers may need to roll with the punches and shift operations to cope with the environmental changes.

• **Decreased commercial farming interest:** Fewer people are working in farming. Land prices for expansion, new

government mandates and regulations, and the impact of immigration and trade policies have made farming less attractive than it once was. Fewer commercial operations result in a diminished food commodity output.

• **Consumer waste:** Food loss and waste (FLW) is a widespread issue, posing a challenge to food security. The World Bank estimates 30 percent of all food across the globe is wasted, amounting to 1.3 billion tons of food per year. The average global household wastes 74 kg of food

each year, according to the United Nations Environment Programme's 2021 Food Waste Index. Food waste is an issue that needs a solution as the world looks for ways to feed an expanding population in the decades to come.

In order to improve output, farmers have to make some changes. These can include investment in tools and technologies that enable farmers to apply nutrients more precisely and at lower cost, advises the Environmental Defense Fund. Seeds that need less water and fewer

nutrients, as well as new fertilizers that are less likely to be lost to air and water, are some additional ideas. Farmers also may want to employ green practices, such as hydroponics and drip irrigation, if they haven't already, to improve efficiency and cut costs. The public also may need to petition their lawmakers to make it easier for farm workers arriving on working visas to man the fields.

Food demand continues to rise, and it has become challenging for agricultural operations to keep up.



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DT0096 '21 Case SV280B
skid steer



FC5570 '18 CAT 963K
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Throw a Memorial Day party to remember

Memorial Day weekend is the unofficial kickoff to summer. It's a time for cold beverages and poolside enjoyment, all the while reflecting on the meaning behind the holiday. People across the country will host Memorial Day gatherings over this long weekend. Throwing an event that hits all the right notes and is enjoyed by all comes down to proper planning.

Lean into Americana

When establishing the theme and decor for the party, opting for a strong Americana theme should be a no-brainer. Enhance tablescapes by choosing classic looks. Opt for a navy or red tablecloth with white ceramic plates and then a red or blue napkin. Fill small silver buckets or mason jars with white hydrangeas and red carnations for a timeless feel. Patriotic aluminum stars and country classics can be purchased at nearby hardware centers.

Respect the flag

Any American flags used for decor at the party should be handled with respect. Flags should never touch the ground, be worn as clothing or used as tablecloths.

Elevate the menu

Give a classic grilling menu an upgrade with a few touches that can make the experience more special. Consider a "build-your-own" bar with various gourmet toppings that can add extra flavor to burgers and hot dogs. Swap potato salad and cole slaw sides for lighter, gourmet options that won't spoil in the heat. Watermelon paired with feta or palm hearts paired with cherry tomatoes is light and refreshing. Create a signature drink that offers a nod to the red, white and blue. A batch of lemonade with blueberries and strawberries appeals to all ages. Adults can opt to spike theirs with a favorite spirit.

Classic lawn games

Guests can be treated



to some entertainment that goes beyond the pool or sitting barside. Popular lawn games, such as cornhole, Spikeball, bocce, and more encourage guests to get up, move and mingle. Think about having classic activities that can harken back

to simpler times. Turn music on and off for a game of "freeze dance." Or let kids play a friendly game of dodgeball or Red Rover so they stay off of their devices.

Secure the soundtrack

It's important to keep a steady playlist of songs going to maintain the vibe. Tailor the list to feature softer songs when guests are arriving or eating. More upbeat songs can be featured later in the day after people have become comfortable mingling.

Use a combination of songs that blend classic summer pop and rock with some patriotic hits.

Write down your task list

Writing down tasks and when to do them can keep a party host on track. Invitations should be sent at least three weeks out. With such a popular entertaining day, sending the invitations earlier might be smart. Shop for non-perishable items a week before. Save food shopping for two or three days before Memorial Day and prep make-ahead items the day before. The grill should be lit and preheated about 30 minutes before guests arrive if the plan is to cook immediately; otherwise, let guests stream in and enjoy chips and dips until the bulk of the cooking will begin.

Memorial Day festivities are nearly here, and preparing for this unofficial summer kickoff can lead to a more organized, fun and enjoyable party.

5 facts about Memorial Day

Memorial Day is celebrated at the end of May each year to honor those who lost their lives while serving in the Armed Forces. Memorial Day, the origins of which can be traced to the aftermath of the American Civil War, holds deep historical significance, and the following are five interesting facts about the holiday.

1. The holiday began as Decoration Day. Before the official establishment of Memorial Day, communities began holding spring tributes to fallen soldiers, decorating soldiers' graves with flowers to pay respects. In 1868, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization for northern Civil War veterans, officially proclaimed May 30 as Decoration Day. War.gov says that graves at Arlington National Cemetery continued to

be adorned in the same fashion they were back in the 1860s.

2. Memorial Day became an official holiday in 1968. President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Memorial Day into law on June 28, 1968, officially marking Memorial Day as a national holiday. However, two years prior, he signed a proclamation officially declaring Waterloo, New York, as the birthplace of Memorial Day. The town was the first to honor fallen soldiers, and has been featuring a formal, community-wide event since May 5, 1866.

3. Blooming flowers have a place in Memorial Day history. Historians believe that the original choice of May 30 for Decoration Day was not due to any specific battle. Rather, it was a day when no particular conflict had taken place and was the time of year when flowers would

be in full bloom. So on May 30 there would be plenty of flowers across the country to decorate soldiers' graves.

4. All fallen veterans were eventually honored on Memorial Day. Many early Memorial Day iterations honored those who died during the American Civil War. After World War I, however, the Memorial Day holiday was expanded to honor all American military personnel who died during any war.

5. The Uniform Monday Holiday Act changed when Memorial Day is commemorated. Memorial Day once was commemorated on May 30 regardless of the day of the week. In 1968, Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, moving Memorial Day to the last Monday in May to create a three-day weekend for federal employees. This change went into effect in 1971.

How to prepare outdoor spaces for Memorial Day

Memorial Day weekend is a popular time to entertain. For many, the weekend marks the first outdoor entertaining opportunity of the year, which is certainly something to look forward to.

As outdoor entertaining season begins, homeowners can take these steps to prepare their outdoor living spaces for the first big backyard get-together of the year.

- Break out the power washer. Pressure washing is an important component of spring home cleanup. The warmer temperatures of spring allow water from power washing to dry more quickly, which can decrease the chances that mold and mildew will grow on surfaces like siding. A freshly power washed home also makes for a welcoming entertaining space. A power washer also can be used on outdoor entertaining spaces to remove dirt and debris that built up over the winter. Just make sure to

read manufacturer instructions before using a power washer to clean paving stones, decks and outdoor furniture.

- Inspect outdoor furniture. Now is a good time to inspect outdoor furniture if the task was not performed in late fall or early winter before items were moved into the garage or placed in storage. Check to make sure furnishings are still safe to use, addressing any issues before guests come over for a Memorial Day weekend gathering. Wash cushions for outdoor furniture and replace any that might be showing their age.

- Clean the grill. A thorough cleaning of the grill also is in order prior to summer entertaining season. Many homeowners do little or no grilling during winter, so now is the time to give grilling surfaces and the interior of the grill a deep cleaning. Check for leaks if using a gas grill, and scrub the interior of any grease that accumulated last

season. Many grilling experts advise lighting a grill and letting it burn for roughly 20 minutes prior to putting any foods on the grates for the first time. Such a strategy allows residual fluids like soap, vinegar and de-greasing products used when cleaning the grill to burn off before food is placed on the grates.

- Inspect the landscaping, too. It's not just seating areas like patios and decks that need some investigation prior to outdoor entertaining season. Take a walk around the landscape and make sure there's no potentially dangerous spots where people could be injured when playing backyard games. Fill in any holes with soil and fresh grass seed, and inspect trees to see if any branches need to be pruned.

Summer entertaining season begins each Memorial Day weekend. Homeowners can take various steps to ensure their outdoor entertaining spaces are comfortable and safe.

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The symbols of graduation

After many years of time spent toiling classrooms and study halls, many students welcome graduation. Graduating high school or college is a major milestone. It is associated with many symbols that have endured for some time. As graduates prepare to receive their diplomas or degrees, they might be curious to know what's behind some notable symbols of graduation ceremonies.

• **Gown:** The gown is a customary garment worn on graduation day. The Georgia Institute of Technology says gowns historically were heavy robes worn by medieval scholars for warmth in the largely unheated universities. Today, graduates don gowns not for warmth (as most graduation ceremonies take place in the spring and summer), but to symbolize the level of degree being conferred.

• **Cap:** A cap, also known as a mortarboard, often goes hand-in-hand with a graduation gown. Historians surmise the flat, square shape represents either a mason's mortarboard to symbolize hard work. Others say it may be the shape of a book to signify academic achievement.



• **Tassel:** The turning of the tassel is a relatively modern tradition. The tassel, which is attached to the mortarboard, initially was an ornament but has since evolved into a traditional element. The Honor Society says the practice of moving the tassel from one side of the cap to the other symbolizes completion of this important academic milestone. Typically, graduates move the tassel from the right to the left. The right side represents the student being a candidate, while the left means he or she is now a graduate. While some sources date the tradition to the early 1900s, the current tradition has been traced to the 1960s and 1970s.

• **Cords and stoles:**

Graduates may adorn their graduation garb with other elements. Cords are twisted ropes that often represent high grade point averages or participation in honor societies. Stoles are satin scarves that often denote participation in specific organizations or a student's cultural heritage, according to the University of Colorado Boulder.

• **Diploma:** A diploma is a legal document. Historically, diplomas were written on thin sheepskin and rolled into tubes. Students may receive a prop diploma on graduation day or empty diploma folio. Later on the actual document will be mailed or made available for pickup.

• **Rings:** Some

graduates have opted to purchase class rings. Students will often wear the ring with the school name facing them while still a student. Upon graduation, the ring will be turned so the name faces outward, presenting the completed coursework to the world.

• **Commencement speech:** The word "commencement" means "beginning," which is fitting for a graduation ceremony. Instead of marking the end of something, commencement is for students who are about to start a new chapter.

Graduation rituals and symbols have endured through the ages, and are likely something students and their families will encounter as they prepare for the ceremony to come.

congratulations, graduates!

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Grad party planning countdown

Reaching senior year of high school or college is an academic milestone worthy of celebration. When the time comes to start planning an epic graduation party, getting the timeline correct can make all the difference.

Once you learn the graduation date
Graduation season

occurs in a very limited span of time between the months of May and June. This creates high demand in a limited window. Right after the school releases the commencement date is a good time to reserve a graduation party venue if you are planning to have the party away from home. Aim to host

the party a day or two after the graduation ceremony.

Four to five months before

Now is the time to begin thinking about what you can afford to spend on the event. Think about the timing of the party as well. Because there are so many graduations taking place, some people opt to have an open time range for their own parties, so graduates can hop around to each of their friends' parties.

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COUNTDOWN,
from page 6

Three months before

Although many people now rely on digital invitations, those who want to send paper invitations can order them now to ensure they'll get shipped to your home in enough time to mail out to guests. Also, it is a good idea at this time to narrow down the guest list so you will know how many invitations you will need. Think about your theme and coordinate with the invitation design or color scheme.

Two months before

Mail out the invitations to friends

and family. If you will be designing any do-it-yourself centerpieces or other decorative items for the party, such as marquee letters or lights, secure these items now. If the graduation party will be at home, reserve party tents, catering, tables, chairs, and more at this time.

Six weeks before

Get in touch with the restaurant or caterer to finalize menu plans, including dessert. If you will be having a DJ, go over any details about the party as well, including a playlist the guest of honor will love.

One month before

If the graduate prefers, set up a graduation registry for gifts. Use this time to create a slideshow of images of the graduate throughout the years. Finalize favors if you will be offering them and grab the materials necessary to make them.

Two weeks before

Touch base with the venue to give the final head count and pay off your remaining balance. If you will be cooking, shop for and prepare any food that can be frozen and then reheated.

One week before

Grab any last-

minute decor and figure out attire for the party. Confirm with all vendors that everything is still on target for the graduation party date. Book hair or nail appointments so the grad is photo-ready.

Day of the graduation party

Set up as needed a few hours before the party. Chafing dishes will require up to two hours to heat food thoroughly, so plan accordingly. Some venues allow you to arrive an hour or two before the party time for decorating. Get dressed with plenty of time to spare, as there is always

a guest or two who arrives fashionably early. Then be ready to celebrate!

Graduation parties

require ample planning to celebrate the accomplishments of hard-working students.

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Day trips to make Mother's day special

Mother's Day 2026 will be celebrated across the United States, Canada, Australia, and many other countries on Sunday, May 10. Mother's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday in May, and has been since 1914, when President Woodrow Wilson signed a proclamation establishing the day as a national holiday.

There are plenty of ways to celebrate mothers, grandmothers, and stepmothers, including with gifts and celebrations. However, gift givers also may want to trade wrapped presents for a shared experience. Consider day trips or overnight excursions as options for treating Mom to something special. Here are some day trips that can make lasting memories.

Wine country: For moms who love wine, a visit to a nearby vineyard is an elegant way to celebrate. However, there's also the option to travel to historically popular and well-regarded wine regions, such as Napa Valley, Sonoma County or Willamette Valley in the western United States. An even more epic adventure can be a trip to key regions in Europe like Bordeaux, France, Tuscany, Italy, or Rioja, Spain.

Historic sites: Moms who are history buffs can travel to areas of the country that are known for their historical significance. Boston, with its hop-on-hop-off trolley tours, provides an up-close look at sites that shaped the American Revolution.

Williamsburg, Virginia, and nearby Jamestown also offer a historical touch. Colonial Williamsburg is a living-history museum where actors in period costume depict daily Colonial life. At Jamestown, walk in the steps of Captain John Smith and Pocahontas and explore a unique locale in American history.

Peace in nature: Some mothers find that nature is their happy place. A garden tour

or a visit to the nearest botanical garden is a great choice. Many beautiful flowers peak in early May, including late tulips, lilacs and azaleas. Roses also may start budding around this time. Butchart Gardens in Canada is a 55-acre National Historic Site known for its Sunken Garden, and can be a lovely spot to tour. Letting mom experience different day trips can be a special way to set this Mother's Day apart.

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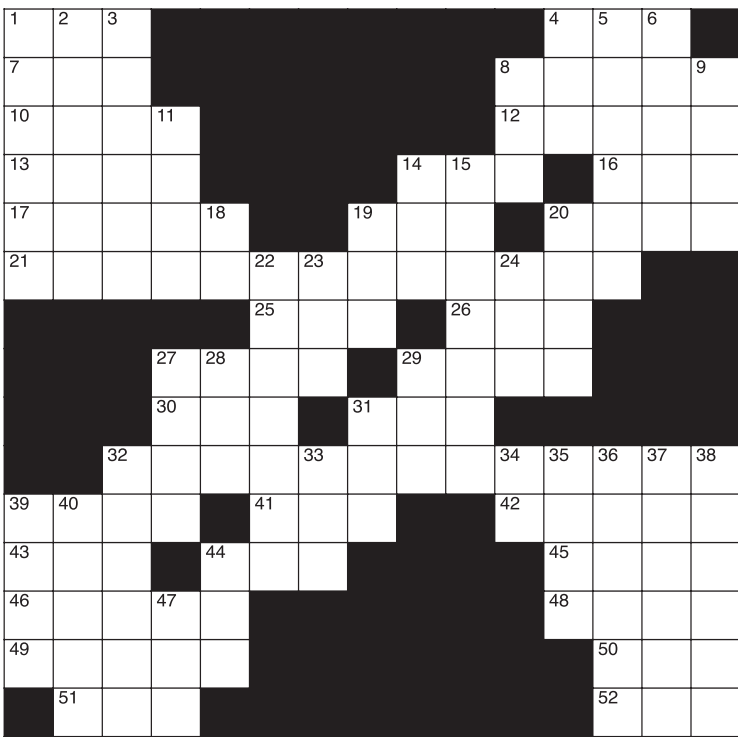
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Crossword Puzzle



CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Purchase
- 4. British news organization
- 7. Midway between northeast and east
- 8. Language specialist group
- 10. Fancy automobile
- 12. Small loop or series of loops
- 13. Exploiter
- 14. Don't know when yet
- 16. Group of languages
- 17. One who's finished
- 19. After B
- 20. Angled
- 21. A place to adopt pets
- 25. Swiss river
- 26. Young boy
- 27. Unexciting
- 29. American comedian Vidale
- 30. Peyton's little brother
- 31. Corporate higher-up
- 32. "All in the Family" star
- 39. Strike something forcefully
- 41. Up in the air (abbr.)
- 42. Clay earth pigments
- 43. Means to record brain activity
- 44. Small constellation
- 45. Embraces
- 46. Brief description
- 48. Exclude
- 49. White (French)
- 50. Insect
- 51. A major division of geological time
- 52. Soviet Socialist Republic

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Type of whale
- 2. In tune
- 3. A citizen of Yemen
- 4. Actress Ling
- 5. One who supports
- 6. Circus performer
- 8. Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- 9. Quantitative fact
- 11. Utah city
- 14. Where a golfer begins
- 15. Attendant
- 18. The ancient Egyptian sun god
- 19. Book of Chronicles (abbr.)
- 20. Benedictine monk
- 22. Not turbulent
- 23. Car mechanics group
- 24. Buffer used in chemistry
- 27. Fall heavily
- 28. Pie ___ mode
- 29. The Brits love it
- 31. Children's TV channel (abbr.)
- 32. Jacksonville footballer
- 33. Helps little firms
- 34. ___ and behold
- 35. A way to resemble
- 36. Fingers
- 37. Excessive indulgences
- 38. You might be an "empty" one
- 39. "How the West Was Won" writer
- 40. European river
- 44. They begin the alphabet
- 47. The body's messenger

PUZZLE SOLUTION



Word Search

LOTS OF LAUGHS WORD SEARCH



Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

ANSWERS ON THE CLASSIFIED PAGE

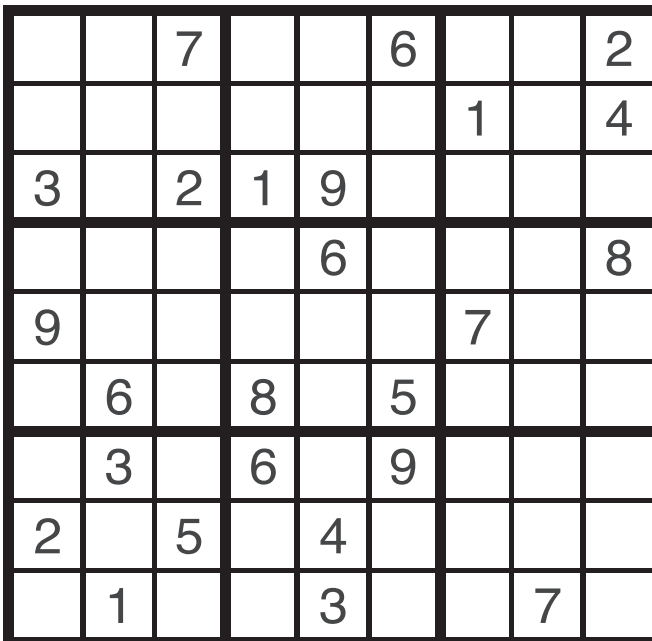
WORDS

- AMUSING
- BANTER
- CHUCKLE
- COMEDY
- FACETIOUS
- FUNNY
- GUFFAW
- HILARITY
- IRONY
- JESTING
- JOCULAR
- LEVITY
- MERRIMENT
- PARODY
- PUNCHLINE
- QUIP
- SATIRE
- SLAPSTICK
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- TEDIUM
- TICKLE
- UPROARIOUS
- WITTICISM
- ZANY

Sudoku Puzzle

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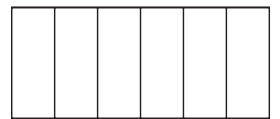
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle! Good Luck! **ANSWERS ON THE CLASSIFIED PAGE**



Word Scramble

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to humor.

ILSESM



Answer: Smiles

Guess Who?

GUESS WHO?

I am a football player born in New Orleans on April 27, 2004. I am the grandson of a longtime New Orleans Saints quarterback and two of my uncles each won a pair of Super Bowls. I was a highly coveted recruit coming out of high school, and I ultimately chose to play for the Texas Longhorns.

Answer: Arch Manning

COLORING FUN



VICTORIOUS *Living* ...in a troubled world

Why “built a tower” should bring you comfort —

Teresa LeNeave –
leneave2@comcast.net

Peter, Jesus' loud and energetic disciple, once said, “He (God) has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). That's a powerful statement because “everything” means “everything” ... not just some of what we need to live in this world. When you're going through a battle, it may not feel like He's given you everything but even though we can't see it, it's still true.

There's a parable in the Bible, told by Jesus, in Matthew 21:33 where He describes God's investment into humanity. In the parable, after planting a vineyard, the Landowner (God), builds a hedge, digs a winepress, then builds a tower. When the vineyard is carefully set up with provision and protection, He rents it out to tenants then goes away.



The people understood the parable because vineyards were valuable and, in those days, they were vulnerable to thieves and wild animals.

The Landowner (God) knew there would be dangerous things coming to try to destroy the vineyard, but I

believe the focus here is not the danger, but that before leaving, He provided all they needed. “Nothing was missing. Everything needed for success was already given”.

Then, there comes a twist in the story. When harvest time comes, He sends servants to collect his share. The tenants

beat, stone, or kill them. He sends more servants, but with the same result. Finally, he sends his Son, thinking they'll respect him. Instead, they kill the Son to try to seize the inheritance.

The landowner is God and the parable assures us He is watching, but He's

also returning. The vineyard is God's people. The hedge, the winepress, and the tower is everything God provided for success: protection (hedge); purpose/productivity (winepress); added protection, a place to watch over and protect the vineyard from predators and

thieves (the tower). That's why “built a tower” should bring us comfort. He refused to leave us defenseless against evil.

In short: nothing was lacking. The setup was complete. God gave leaders responsibility over His people. Those leaders failed and abused that responsibility. They rejected God's messengers again and again and finally, they rejected (and killed) His Son. The Good News is that even after killing his Son, God made provision: His Son rose from the grave and currently is in heaven making intercession for us.

That's a good God. A good Landowner. And, no matter what anyone believes, God is the Landowner. He created it all. He created you and He cares about you. Trusting God's love and provision is the best arsenal we have against evil.

He's still waiting

By Gary Miller

That morning I had located what turned out to be four toms and some hens. They were still on the roost. And even though they had not been pressured, I made sure to do minimal and only light calling. A soft yelp on my slate call was enough for all the ears within 100 yards to hear me. So, I laid down the call, got my gun ready, and began scanning the top of the hill in front of me. I knew pretty much what any older tom would do. He would not come directly in line with my call. He would show up to one side or another.

These birds know not to trust their ears as much as their eyes. I also knew that any other tom that might be with him would follow. Sure enough, in just a few minutes, two hens and four gobblers showed up about 100 yards to my right – which is a terrible place if one is right-handed like myself. Two of the toms began to perform in full strut. The other two shortly followed suit. The hens were not impressed. I thought about how I might go about getting a shot without being seen. Nothing came to mind other than “be patient.” Soon the hens moved

within 35 yards of me, and two big toms were following. The problem, however, remained. They stayed to my right. How would I rearrange my seating, raise my gun and aim without them seeing me and flying away. I couldn't. So, I decided once again to just be patient. Before too long, all those toms began coming my way and moving perfectly in front of me. The biggest one came to about 40 yards. When he moved behind a tree, I raised my gun, got ready, and waited (patiently again) for him to clear the tree. When he did, I

aimed carefully and pulled the trigger. I ate smoked turkey breast for lunch the next day. He was a big bird. Eleven inches of beard. One and a half inch spurs. It was a fun hunt.

When you look at the subject of patience in the Bible, you will quickly notice that God thinks it is important. There are several reasons and many of them have to do with our everyday circumstances and situations. But I think when it comes to relationships, I see three things. First, God is patient with us. A synonym of patience that describes His

dealings with us is the word long-suffering. God is longsuffering with us. I sure am glad He is. Secondly, since He is patient with us, He wants us to be patient with other people. Or be long-suffering with others. Yes, this is the hard part. But here's the third piece. It's the job of the Holy Spirit to produce in us the patience we need to deal with others. And in this I think is where people see Jesus in us. It's when our patience with others is seen as coming from a place beyond us. So, the next time you're struggling with patience with others, ask God to remind

you how many times He has waited for you to get it right. For me, I think He's still waiting.

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Gary Miller has written Outdoor Truths articles for 23 years.

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STEWMAN from Front Page

broadcasting during bus rides to Hillcrest Elementary School in Troy when Cunningham was in seventh grade. The driver would tune in the local station for the students to hear as they traveled. He recalled one morning when another character joined Byars on his show. "He (the second character was named Lewis) would argue with Stew," Cunningham recalled. "He was a ne'er-do-well always trying to get something over on Stew and always failing every day. It wasn't until years later that I found out that voice was also Stew. "Stew having a two-sided conversation alone in a room by himself, and I was just enthralled at how in the world he was able to do that." Fast forward 12 years when Cunningham received his first break in broadcasting at Thunderbolt Radio in Martin where Byars worked, and a 16-year radio career began. "He (Byars) became my mentor, my colleague, my coworker," Cunningham said. "He was everything." The on-air relationship extended beyond radio into an enduring friendship. Cunningham was known as "Big Ben," so when the two teamed for remote broadcasts, fans who came out to the events often thought that the larger Byars was "Big Ben," a mix-up that both found humorous. It was humor that helped to sustain the duo when Byars became seriously ill. "I went to visit Stew in the hospital when he was sick," Cunningham said. "At the time, I was thinking about returning and filling in for him until he got well. ... So, I went and talked to Stew, and I expected it to be a real somber event because I knew how sick he was, but when I walked in the room, the entertainer in him turned on, and it was laughter the entire time. "I walked out of that room feeling better about everything. He just refused to let people

feel sorry for him. He was always going to be the one to put a smile on somebody's face, and then he died a few days after that." Although Byars' radio voice was silenced, friends wanted his memory to continue. Misty Menees of Edward Jones, and Chris and Trudy Brinkley with UT Martin, established the memorial scholarship in his name. The first scholarship was presented to communications student Benita Evans, and the scholarships have continued annually and increased in amount since then. Evans works in the UT Martin Department of Engineering and is active in local media. This was a great beginning, but Byars' friends wanted to do more. "I called Richard Robinson (professor of mass media and strategic communication) in March and asked him what was the biggest scholarship that was given annually at Awards Day," said Menees, who once worked at Thunderbolt Radio. "He told me an amount and I said 'OK, hang on.' "A few days later we told him we wanted the Stewart Byars scholarship to be the biggest award of the day and that we would give \$2,000. He was ecstatic at what that would mean for his students." The quick turnaround for the scholarship increase meant that Izzy Burdette of Union City became the first to receive the \$2,000 award. Those supporting the scholarship are some of Byars' former co-workers at Thunderbolt Radio, including Jared Wilson, Jordan Tinkle, Crystal Oldham, Christie Jenkins, Ben Cunningham and others. Then came Captain's Challenge, the annual one-day UT Martin fundraiser held in April. "Captain's Challenge has been huge for us because we can get the match of whatever we can get donated up to \$300 per donor, and that helped us to increase our award," Menees said.

WESTSTAR from Front Page

forge partnerships through networking opportunities. Jahnae Johnson, WestStar Leadership Program manager, leads all planning efforts for the conference. The Conference of Excellence committee is composed of WestStar alumni. "This conference is the perfect opportunity to learn from a variety of diverse leaders across the region," Johnson said. "Whether you're a seasoned leader or just starting out, it is an opportunity to learn and grow in your own career path or journey." Emceeding this conference is Darlette Samuels, chief strategy and innovation officer at Jackson State Community College. This event also features keynote speaker K. Durell Cowan, founder and CEO of HEAL 901, a Memphis-based nonprofit organization focused on violence prevention,



WESTSTAR – Gem Bell (left) of Haywood County, a 2013 alumnus of the WestStar Leadership Program, speaks at the inaugural Evelyn C. Robertson Jr. Conference of Excellence on April 29, 2025, in the Duncan Ballroom of the Boling University Center on the campus of the University of Tennessee at Martin. He is seated with Kim Jones of McNairy County, a 2022 alumna of the WestStar Leadership Program.

community outreach and mental health. UT Martin Chancellor Yancy Freeman Sr. will also be a guest speaker at this event. To register, visit www.tinyurl.com/ycyvw8ph. The deadline to register and pay the \$40

registration fee is Friday, May 8. For more information about the Evelyn C. Robertson Jr. Conference of Excellence, email weststar@utm.edu or call 731-881-7787. For more information about the WestStar

Leadership Program and its programs and events, visit www.utm.edu/weststar. For more information about UT Martin, visit www.utm.edu or call 1-800-829-UTM1 (-8861).

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