

Ely Air Lines –

Being Brave & Daring

by Mike Ely and Linda Street-Ely

Linda: I felt brave and daring when, at 13, I borrowed one of my parents’ cars to drive my little sister around on her paper route, because she didn’t feel like walking it. I was careful, and they never found out until I ‘fessed up years later. But a car was all I borrowed. That’s a few levels down from Brownsville, Texas, native Kris Kristofferson “borrowing” an Army helicopter.

Mike: Kristofferson was an Army brat who became an Army Ranger and helicopter pilot. However, he



left the service to pursue his dream of being a musician, even turning down an opportunity to teach literature at West Point. His father was a pilot in the US Army Air Corps and later became a Major General in the US Air Force when the two branches of the military were separated. His grandfather had also been a General.

While pursuing his musical dream, he took several odd jobs that might give him access to Nashville’s movers and shakers. Like sweeping the floors at Columbia Records. But he had a young family, and medical bills for one of his children were a heavy financial burden, so he took a job as a commercial helicopter pilot. During the week, he flew back and forth from Lafayette, Louisiana, to oil rigs in the Gulf. One week on, one week off gave him time to hawk his songs in Nashville. And there were plenty of idle hours on those oil rigs, which Kristofferson took advantage of, writing songs like Help Me Make It Through the Night and Bobby McGee.

But he was also flying helicopters for the Tennessee National Guard.

And that is how he got hold of the Bell UH-1 Huey he used to introduce himself to Johnny Cash. Kristofferson later called it “kind of an invasion of privacy that I wouldn’t recommend,” and claimed Cash probably wasn’t home at the time. But accounts differ as to what really transpired that day.

While working as a janitor, he had met June Carter Cash and gave her a couple of tapes of his songs. She passed them on to Johnny, who added them to a pile of tapes from other folks that he never got around to listening to. But Kristofferson wouldn’t give up. He took the helicopter on one of his weekend reserve duty days and landed smack-dab in the middle of the Cashes’ back yard.

The way the story goes, June came out and yelled “Sweet Jesus, they come to us up the road and now they are coming to us out of the sky!” Despite being ordered to leave, Kristofferson wouldn’t budge until Cash listened to one of his songs. Upon hearing Sunday Morning Coming Down, Cash reportedly melted and agreed to record the song. It became song of the year, and the two men later performed it together on Cash’s 1978 Christmas show.

Fans have their favorites. Personally, I love Sky King, which Kristofferson sang to the tune of Jimmy Dean’s Big Bad John.

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Texas America250 exhibit

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ica250/ to stay informed about upcoming America250 programming.

Texas America250 will be on view for free through February 28, 2026, at the Liberty Municipal Library 1710 Sam Houston, Liberty, Texas, open Monday through Thursday 9 to 5 p.m., Friday 1 to 5 p.m., and Saturday 10 to 4p.m. For more information, visit <https://liberty.ploud.net/-america250-traveling-exhibit> or call 936-336-8901.

FREE ADMISSION FOR VETERANS

AUSTIN - Veterans receive reduced admission to Texas Historical Commission state historic sites year-round, and active-duty military members receive free admission year-round. The THC preserves and operates 42 state historic sites across Texas. To find out where they are located, visit <https://thc.texas.gov/historic-sites>.

Meet and Greet



GERALD KOLARIK COMMISSIONER PCT. 4 Candidate

Saturday | February 14 | 11 am - 2 pm

**Kenefick Civic Center
228 FM 2797 • Dayton**

*Meet the Candidate
and Enjoy Gumbo*

Pol. Adv. paid for by Gerald Kolarik campaign. Carol Kolarik, treasurer.

DAYTON SENIORS DISCOUNT UTILITY RATES

DAYTON - The City of Dayton is offering senior residents, age 65 and over, a 20 percent discount on their water and sewer bills. To receive the discount, seniors must provide their driver’s license and either proof of homestead exemption or a current lease agreement in their name. The documents can be brought to the city office at 117 Cook Street. Seniors are limited to using this discount on one account. Landlord accounts and trash services do not qualify for this discount. For questions, contact the City of Dayton at 936-258-2642.

LIBERTY GAZETTE
936-336-6416

Dayton Mayor Mudd speaks to Lambda Alpha Sigma

DAYTON - The Jones Public Library was the location for Lambda Alpha Sigma’s January 13 meeting. At 6 p.m., President Shirley Sisk welcomed guest Mayor Martin Mudd. She then led the 10 members present in the reading of the Club Collect and in the pledges to the American and Texas flags.

During the short business meeting, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved as read, and the treasurer’s report was filed as given.

Program Chairman

Sherry Sikes introduced Mayor Martin Mudd as the speaker for the evening in lieu of Derek Woods, who was unable to attend.

Mayor Mudd spoke on the state of the city of Dayton. He noted that during his bid for mayor, his intent was to listen to the citizens of Dayton and act on their concerns. Once in office, he helped with the development of a plan that would act as a foundation for the city’s growth. Matching grants, along with free grants,

helped to fund planned projects. A first phase, of improving the city’s streets, has been completed. During his presentation, Mayor Mudd shared a lot of information and answered many questions.

In appreciation, he was presented with the book “Mission Driven” by author Mike Hayes, which will be placed in the Jones Public Library in his honor.

Hostesses Shirley Sisk and Sherry Sikes provided refreshments.



RURAL ROOTS CONSERVATIVE VALUES

Raised on an East Texas dairy farm, Trent Ashby knows the value of hard work. Now, he is running for State Senate to be a strong conservative voice for us in Austin.

TRENT’S PRIORITIES

- ★ SUPPORT ICE AND PRESIDENT TRUMP TO STOP ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION
- ★ CUT PROPERTY TAXES
- ★ DEFEND CHRISTIAN VALUES
- ★ PROTECT EAST & SOUTHEAST TEXAS WATER

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ENDORSED BY 16 REPUBLICAN SHERIFFS IN SD 3
ENDORSED BY TEXAS FARM BUREAU AGFUND
POL. ADV. PAID FOR BY THE TRENT ASHBY CAMPAIGN



Barbara Toler (left) and her friend Cordella Kirkham from “The Prairie” (Tarkington Prairie for the uninformed) enjoyed a good visit at the GOP’s Candidate Meet & Greet last week. Cordella is no stranger to these campaign events, since her husband was Lloyd “Tookie” Kirkham, Liberty County judge for 12 years.