

Mailing Address: P.O. Drawer 1200, Seminole, TX 79360 • Email: news@seminolesentinel.com • Web Site: www.seminolesentinel.com • Phone: (432) 758-3667 • Fax: (432) 758-2136



Paper 'n Ink... change...

By Lynn Brisendine

It was a news brief, really brief, about the gaming company Atari filing for bankruptcy protection. The company is facing debts which have become too much for their business model in today's reality.

For some readers of this item, that company may not be so easily recalled. Perhaps it would be simpler to say it is the manufacturer of Pong, which was the first game I saw played on a television screen.

It was mesmerizing. The idea that you could use a system to interact with your tv. And while it seemed so technical at the time, in today's wired and wireless world, the memory recalls such an uncomplicated game. The game consisted of a dot on a basically blank screen which was batted from one side to the other, being blocked and rebounded by a small vertical bar manipulated with a handheld control.

Some kids could play the game for hours. I never really dealt with it that much. My, then, future brothers-in-law enjoyed it. I have to admit that after a couple of minutes it got to be monotonous and, for me, lost its appeal.

Atari stepped out and advanced their inventory of electronic games. They had home versions and also had some high-tech machines that were found in video parlors all over the country. One of their main stays a decade after Pong was Asteroids. It was a more complex venue which had a lot of kids of that age becoming experts at blowing up those blips coming in from all angles at different speeds.

Competition came on with a vengeance and other games like Pacman and so many others began to overtake the original and suddenly lackluster bouncing dots striking movable paddle bars.

It was over 40 years ago when Pong was all the rage. So many changes. So many gadgets and entertainment options have come, captured the nation and faded away, seemingly, just as suddenly as they appeared.

Eight track tapes were amazing. The sound they produced using stereo speakers, usually one on each side of an appliance or hidden in the dashboard and doors of automobiles.

The first taped auto system I saw was in my senior year in High School. At a class reunion years later, I talked to the guy who was lucky enough to have such a luxury in 1965. I reminded him I sat in his car one evening and enjoyed his eight track, its sound was great, compared to the one or two speaker AM radios most of us had at the time.

He laughed and said it wasn't an eight track but it had four tracks.

Going forward to 1974, I bought a brand new Ford with a cassette tape player. I had them take it

out and replace it with the tried and true eight track player. They looked at me like I had lost my mind. I was thinking of the limited collection of eight tracks I owned.

It didn't take long until I realized I had made a big mistake. The smaller tapes were everywhere and eight tracks began to disappear from music stores.

Those smaller tapes, of course, soon gave way to the CD. These plastic discs could hold a lot of information and the sound they delivered, coupled with new speakers including a sub woofer, seemed like magic.

Computer chips have made all of the above obsolete and the devices they use are, in some instances, the size of a postage stamp.

In today's world you can receive music via an internet connection over several electronic devices. These over-the-internet sound delivery systems offer any and every kind of music nearly anyone would wish.

Change has been ongoing in so many areas of our lives. Internet services see users spending hours a day updating information and sharing it with a wireless world.

Televisions are also an evolving technology which offers so much more. These appliances also offer connectivity with a wireless internet signal and the options amaze. The history of television for the most part has mirrored a baby boomer's life.

Grade school for those of us born just after WWII saw a burgeoning of black and white sets. First they had a round tube only inches around. Then a new format was introduced with a diagonal screen 21" across.

By Junior High, most families had color sets. I can close my eyes and see in my mind the first time I saw a color television set. I was visiting my aunt and uncle. We were watching Dinah Shore's variety show. Ms. Shore was riding a roller coaster and each car had a large bunch of different colored balloons. The coaster hit the top and sailed down the slope. While the image of the balloons also made the trip, the individual colors remained at the top, and then slowly dropped down to resolve with the image several seconds later.

Today we take for granted High Definition pictures that offer amazing clarity and every color imaginable perfectly coordinated.

And in a world where size matters, the screens have transitioned from that 21" to 80", 90" and in some venues over 100" inches diagonally.

Some of these changes happened over the last half century, but a lot of them have taken place in the last few years.

Change is inevitable and I am sure technologies are ahead which will make much of what we enjoy today as obsolete as we consider Pong.

State Capital Highlights

Compiled by Ed Sterling, Texas Press Association



Dewhurst names Senate panel chairs...

AUSTIN — Key to getting the 83rd session of the Texas Legislature in gear, Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst, president of the Texas Senate, on Jan. 17 made public his choices for committee chairs and members of each committee. Senate bills can now be assigned to committees and public hearings set.

Sen. Tommy Williams, R-The Woodlands, returns as chair of the body's powerful Finance Committee, whose primary task is to craft the state budget for 2014-2015.

Also named as committee chairs were senators: Kevin Eltife, R-Tyler, Administration; Craig Estes, R-Wichita Falls, Agriculture, Rural Affairs and Homeland Security; John Carona, R-Dallas, Business and Commerce; John Whitmire (dean of the Senate), Criminal Justice; Bob Deuell, R-Greenville, Economic Development; Dan Patrick, R-Houston, Education; Judith Zaffirini, D-Laredo, Government Organization; and Jane Nelson, R-Lewisville, Health and Human Services.

And, Kel Seliger, R-Amarillo, Higher Education; Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa, D-McAllen, Intergovernmental Relations; Royce West, D-Dallas, Jurisprudence; Troy Fraser, R-Marble Falls, Natural Resources; Glen Hegar, R-Katy, Nominations; Rodney Ellis, D-Houston, Open Government; Robert Duncan, R-Lubbock, State Affairs; Robert Nichols, R-Jacksonville, Transportation; and Letitia Van de Putte (Senate president pro tempore), D-San Antonio, Veterans Affairs and Military Installations.

Speaker Joe Straus has not yet named House committee chairs and members. In the 2011 session, Straus named them on Feb. 9. In 2009 — his

first term as speaker — Straus announced his committee appointments on Feb. 12.

As of the end of the second week of the session (Jan. 18), 748 bills and resolutions had been filed by House members, while Senate members had filed 201 over the same period. To give some idea of what lies ahead in that regard, in the last 140-day regular session, 7,003 House and 3,312 Senate bills and resolutions were filed.

The bill-filing deadline is March 8, the 60th day of the current session. The deadline applies to bills and joint resolutions (proposed constitutional amendments) other than local bills, emergency appropriations and bills that have been declared "emergency" by the governor.

Many gun bills are filed
More than a dozen state lawmakers have filed legislation pertaining to firearms, as reported by many journals.

The bills deal with who, what, when, where and how a handgun can be carried, licensing procedures, permit fees, renewals and more.

One of the bills, SB 182 by Sen. Brian Birdwell, R-Waco, sets forth conditions under which a concealed handgun license holder may "carry" on land and buildings owned or leased by an institution of higher education.

In other news, a rally at the state Capitol on Jan. 19 against President Obama's recent gun control proposals drew several hundred people.

Year ends with job gains
December was the fourth straight month that the unemployment rate in Texas has declined, the Texas Workforce Commission reported on Jan. 18.

Texas' unemployment rate fell to 6.1 percent in December, down from 6.2 percent in No-

vember and from 7.4 percent a year ago, the agency's Chairman Andres Alcantar said. Also, private sector employers in Texas added 257,400 jobs since December 2011 for an annual growth rate of 2.9 percent.

"In December, we saw annual growth in 10 major industries, for an overall annual growth of 2.5 percent in Texas," Alcantar said. "With those positive strides and 11,800 private sector jobs added in the past month, 2012 was a strong year for Texas and my hope is that the Texas economy will build on that success in 2013."

Tom Pauken, the agency's commissioner representing employers, said, "Texas is leading the way in helping to make the United States energy independent. Our robust energy sector not only is creating good paying jobs for many Texans in that industry but also is spurring job growth in many other industries."

Travis letter to head home

William Barret Travis's "Victory or Death" letter written on Feb. 24, 1836 will be returned to the Alamo on Feb. 22 for a grand celebration at Alamo Plaza.

This will be the first time the letter -- which resides at the the Texas State Library and Archives in Austin -- has been at the Alamo since it left with a courier on horseback under the cover of darkness during the famous 13-day siege in 1836, Texas Land Commissioner Jerry Patterson said Jan. 16. Visitors will be asked to be silent and respectful when viewing the document "from a safe distance" and no flash photography will be allowed.

Alamo visitors will be able to view the letter Feb. 23 through March 7.

Wright Words ...

By Dustin Wright
Sentinel Managing Editor

Within the next few weeks, we as Americans will be addressed by President Barack Obama in his annual "State of the Union" address, where he will update us on our country this past year and address current issues our country is facing and outlines his plans on how to face those issues.

On a more regional level, Texas Governor Rick Perry will also address Texans within the coming weeks on a similar level, focusing on similar issues pertaining to the Lone Star State.

Locally, in Gaines County and Seminole, we don't receive an annual "State of the County" or "State of the City" address from local leaders.

However, one look around by locals and those who pass through can notice times are good on both the city and county levels.

This past Friday evening, during a break in activity at a basketball game I was covering, I was visiting with some fellow out-of-town media members, who made the comment "it appears things are going well here in Seminole."

Indeed, I honestly believe they are. With oil field activity busting within the county, and the surrounding area, the Seminole -- and Gaines County community as a whole -- is reaping the benefits.

Our local businesses in Seminole have seen steady streams of traffic, with both locals and out-of-town commuters visiting our local retail stores, restaurants, convenience stores and even our downtown specialty shops.

Those trends can be seen through our monthly sales tax allocations report, which is monitored on a monthly basis by the Texas Comptroller's Office.

The increase in activity has brought new businesses to our community, primarily the construction of two hotel developments within the Seminole City Limits, which are anticipated to both be opened for operation later this calendar year.

In addition, numerous smaller businesses have sprung up over the past year -- and honestly in the years prior -- many of which serve as specialty businesses catering to the

agriculture and petroleum industries of Gaines County.

A prime example of such can be found in the Seagraves community, with the development of storage silos for frac sand along the railway line on the city's southern edge. A business development which was not present numerous months ago.

Despite the drought conditions seen by our region's farmers over the past few years, Gaines County agriculture industry still remains strong.

But, we do need help from the Good Lord Above in the form of precipitation, as our area farmers begin preparing for the upcoming 2013 growing season.

Several local governmental entities are also taking advantage of our bustling local economy, with expansion -- or planned -- expansion projects.

A prime example of such is the ongoing Seminole ISD \$110 million bond project, which is in its final construction stages, and has brought with it projects and facilities which will serve the students of Seminole ISD for 50, 60, 70-plus years down the road.

Seagraves ISD is also undertaking an \$11 million bond project, for the construction of a new elementary school campus, which also addressed that school district's needs of an improved school campus set-

ting for the education of its younger children.

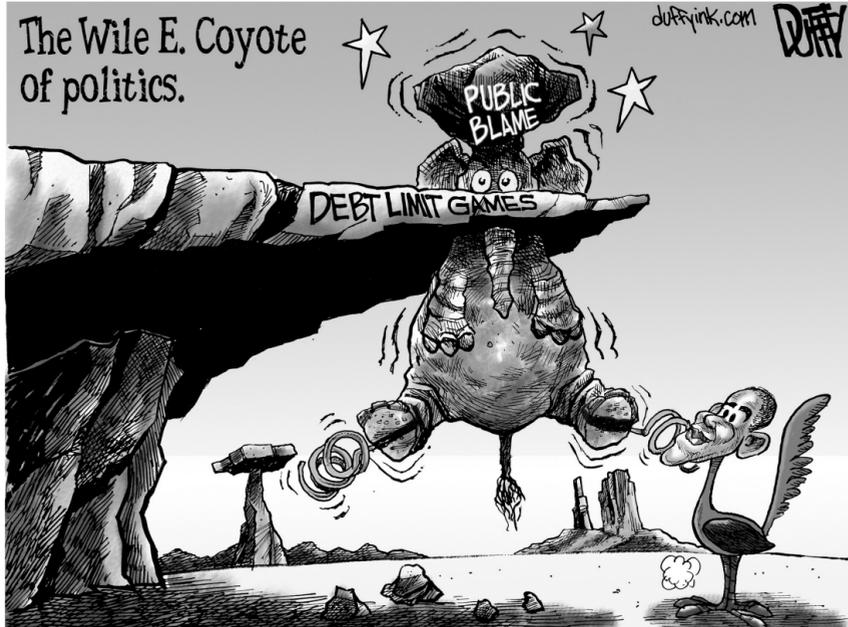
The City of Seminole is in the midst of seeing the expansion of its water future, as city leaders entered into an agreement last calendar year for a "100 year" supply of fresh water, which will be piped from the Trans-Pecos region into our city's system, addressing a need which many other West Texas communities are desperately facing.

The Seminole Hospital District and its officials, as well as Gaines County Commissioners, are looking respective building projects, which could be brought before their respective voters for consideration in municipal election process.

In this columnist's opinion, the "State" of our county and communities are good. We are thriving in a time where many others are not.

However, we must all be cautious that these times can change instantly, and we must be prepared for the worst of times as well.

I applaud our local leaders, and our local residents as a whole, for contributing to our thriving economy, and encourage all to continue to move our community, our county, forward, in order to make Gaines County continue to shine as a place to live and work for many, many years to come.



Letter to the Editor

P.O. Box 1200 Seminole, Texas 79360

Sign and include address and phone number...

You may also send your letter via the Internet send it to seminolesentinel.com

The Sentinel requests that letters be concise and reserves the right to edit for libelous content or inappropriate language and space. We will edit a letter to conform with the standards we use in publishing a responsible community newspaper.

Thanks for reading the *Seminole Sentinel*

Your News Leader the *Seminole Sentinel*