

Kind sheriff solves problems for 36 years by being friendly

STANTON (AP) — You couldn't find a better next-door neighbor than Dan Saunders.

From childhood, when he got acquainted with amiable Martin County sheriffs such as Milt Yater and Morris Zimmerman, Saunders was impressed.

Saunders is a former president of the Sheriffs Association, whose 23,000 members include sheriffs, policemen, deputies, marshals, Texas Rangers and Federal Bureau of Investigation agents.

And the sheriff, who earns \$27,400 a year in a county that's relatively rich in cotton, cattle and oil production, is not in the job for the money, McGilvray said.

Saunders, who at 63 has been the Martin County sheriff since 1953, is known as amiable, understanding, temperate, compassionate and outright nice.

Particularly, he recalls Zimmerman. Way back, young Dan Saunders respected and admired the sheriff who, like Saunders is today, was a friend of youth.

Saunders is a father-figure to rookie sheriffs, says Midland County Sheriff Gary Painter, 41. "If a guy needs assistance, he is always there. He never turns anybody down.

And Saunders figures no man "amounted to a hill of beans" if he worked only eight hours a day.

"I made a mistake," he said. "The rumor got out that I was not going to run."

"I thought he was rich," Saunders recalled. "I can see now he was just like me — had an overdraft and bought groceries on credit."

Martin County Attorney James McGilvray says he is impressed with his neighbor in the courthouse.

"There is not a farm or a ranch in Martin County that I can't go to at 3 o'clock in the morning, and that sure helps me serve people."

So, another Democrat, who hadn't a prayer, challenged the sheriff and, of course, lost.

"I'm a firm believer in dancing with the one that brings you," smiled Saunders, who says he is a "dyed-in-the-wool" Democrat.

James McGilvray, Martin County Attorney

Saunders, who gets along well with judges, other officials, and lawyers, said that he thanks God "we live in a land where we can be tried before a jury of our peers. It may not be a perfect system, but it is the best in the world, and I respect it."

Well, the sheriff's work here is not finished and neither is he. And "they" already are talking about Dan Saunders — a country boy and a farmer's son who was raised on a cotton farm at neighboring Lenorah.

"I don't believe that anybody has ever called up Dan that he wouldn't help them. He doesn't help people for what they can do for him. He helps them because he likes to help people. It's a different approach than what a lot of people take."

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Butch Howard, the Martin County treasurer who farms and ranches, said Saunders would be sorely missed were he to leave office.

Spelunker explores new realms

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. (AP) — James H. Smith was a terrified, 14-year-old Boy Scout growing up in Georgia when he entered his first cave.

Income from U.N. stamps sales goes into the general budget, reducing the assessment member nations pay. It does not go to the cause or agency pictured on the stamp.

U.N. stamps vary in their value to collectors. The 1954 Human Rights stamp had a face value of 3 cents. It now sells for up to \$9.50.

In 1979-80 there was a boom in all collectibles because of a high inflation rate that cooled in the 1980s, says Lawrence.

Smith received the 1988-Lew Bicking Award, presented by the National Speleological Society to outstanding explorers.

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Smith is credited with tripling the number of known caves in Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia that are more than 400 feet deep.

Lawrence says that sales by nations such as Andorra, San Marino, won six of eight places in the finals and all three top positions in the final race.

Duck also has appeared on the "Tonight Show" and has been featured in several national magazines.

She says most of the agricultural crops and wild foods grown in the United States were first domesticated by Neolithic societies.

By going into a cave, you are making a contribution to the understanding of unknown realms within this earth."

Another of Duck's flock, Pride of the 62nd Army Band, won the 1988 race in late August with a time of 1.08 seconds, shattering Oliver South's record. Duck's 28 entries

But he says it's not true he'll do anything for a fast duck.

Also, state and local regulations for gathering plants, seeds and fruit

Large families survive financially tough times by sharing clothes, love

ODESSA, Texas (AP) — Steve and Laurel Vore knew when they were sweethearts at Permian High School that they wanted to have a large family.

Tasks range from setting the table to washing and drying one load of laundry.

"We believe that it's a special privilege to be entrusted with God's children," Mrs. Vore said.

"We change the schedule often," Mrs. Vore said. "But if we didn't do it this way, with so many of us messing the house up, it wouldn't get done. We have to share the work."

The east Odessa couple made good on their high school plans. They have six children: Chris, 18; Erin, 16; Kerry, 14; Nathan, 12; Britney, 8; and Rebekah, 7 months.

"The rule is simple in the Hopkins household.

"Sometimes it seems like a lot, but sometimes it seems like someone's missing," said Vore.

"If you want anyone to come over as a guest, you help clean up," Hopkins said.

That's a feeling shared by Karen Hopkins, who also wanted a large family. Having only one brother, Hopkins decided she wanted at least six children.

"Money for Christmas and birthdays is also monitored closely.

And Saunders figures no man "amounted to a hill of beans" if he worked only eight hours a day.

"We allot about \$100 per child for Christmas," said Mrs. Vore. "But as each child gets older, the amount graduates. For example, the 17-month-old may not need \$100 worth of toys, but the 18-year-old may need a senior ring."

"A sheriff has lot of power," he said. "I may under-do my power, but I have never over-done it or used this badge on my left chest to abuse people. I treat them with dignity."

The children draw names to decide who they'll buy a gift for. They get an allowance and can spend up to \$15 on the gift.

And Saunders, who knows the county and its people well, says: "There is not a farm or a ranch in Martin County that I can't go to at 3 o'clock in the morning, and that sure helps me serve people."

Hopkins has much the same plan. So much money is allotted to each child.

Butch Howard, the Martin County treasurer who farms and ranches, said Saunders would be sorely missed were he to leave office.

"This Christmas was smaller than usual," said Dot Yates, Hopkins' mother. "But we had our traditions and everyone was very grateful."

"He's going to be hard to do without one of these days," Howard said. "Real hard. He's one of a kind. There will never be another like him."

Birthday celebrations are small in both families as well.

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The birthday child in the Vore household is allowed to have two close friends spend the night, go to a movie or go out to dinner.

Chores are shared in both families. In the Vore family, a computer readout tells each child what he must do on any given day, including when he has a day

Friends are an important part of any birthday at the Hopkins home as well.

"Everybody in the trade and in the business who has children tells me their own children don't collect. My children don't collect. They aren't interested."

"We always have something, whether it's a piece of cake and a balloon," Yates said. "But as long as they've got their friends, they're happy."

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Attention can be just as scarce in a large family. The parents work hard to make sure no child is swallowed up by the demands of too many brothers and sisters.

"Everybody in the trade and in the business who has children tells me their own children don't collect. My children don't collect. They aren't interested."

"They say the oldest is an over-achiever, the middle child is outgoing, the youngest is quiet," Vore said. "We have an example of each in our family. But each has his own interests and we encourage them."

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Hopkins believes having so many brothers and sisters was a big help to her children this past year.

United Nation's stamp sales fall, stamp collecting declines

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Lichtenstein and Monaco, which aggressively market their stamps for collectors, suffered a slump in the 1980s.

Earnings from the sale of U.N. postage stamps fell two-thirds in the 1980s, a problem the U.N. postal agency blames on unpopular themes and a vanishing generation of collectors.

U.N. stamps vary in their value to collectors. The 1954 Human Rights stamp had a face value of 3 cents. It now sells for up to \$9.50.

In 1979-80 there was a boom in all collectibles because of a high inflation rate that cooled in the 1980s, says Lawrence.

"Our base group of collectors started in the 1950s and it is dying, to put it bluntly," says Gisela Grunewald, head of the U.N. Postal Administration.

A recent audit of all U.N. agencies noted that net income of the U.N. Postal Administration declined from \$13.5 million in 1980 to \$4.5 million in 1987. It criticized the agency for lacking a marketing plan and for leaving two of three marketing directors' posts vacant.

The U.N. Postal Administration got an extra lift early in the decade, says Grunewald, because it opened an office in Vienna, joining those in New York and Geneva. It also launched a series of flag stamps and had other popular special issues that boosted sales.

Stamp sales also are hampered by agency reliance on political and social themes: "Our subjects are much more political; we cannot put out a puppy-dog or LOVE stamp," Grunewald adds.

Grunewald says a marketing plan will be in place by the end of the year.

Stamp collectors generally start the hobby as children, drop out in their teens and take it up again in their late 20s or 30s.

While most political stamps simply fail to attract collectors, some political issues actually repel them.

The agency has been unable to fill marketing posts under the U.N.'s general hiring freeze, but other employees have been performing most of those duties, she says.

"It is not easy for us to find collectors at the young age because of our topics," says Grunewald. Marketing surveys show political subjects are the least favored by collectors, while stamps featuring butterflies and flowers are the most popular.

In 1981, the General Assembly instructed the U.N. postal agency to issue a stamp proclaiming "the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people."

"There is an inherent Catch-22 situation in trying to run a commercial enterprise in an organization with bureaucratic restraints," she adds. "It's not something that comes as a surprise to any of us, although it's sometimes very frustrating."

"In all postal administrations, the question is 'How can we get 6-, 7-, 8-year-olds to switch off the video and go to stamp collecting?'," she says. "I have to tell you that I have not heard a convincing strategy yet."

Michael Lawrence, editor and publisher of Linn's Stamp News, the authoritative guide for collectors, says the stamp was a disaster because "many of the stamp dealers in the United States are Jewish."

"I think we answered 20,000 letters on that issue," says Grunewald. "There was a rumor that the U.N. was issuing a stamp to honor the PLO and that revenue from the stamp would be sent to (Yasser) Arafat. It is very difficult to explain to the public the difference between the PLO and the Palestinian people."

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For Smith, caving has been a way to push himself beyond limits he once thought impossible.

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She says most of the agricultural crops and wild foods grown in the United States were first domesticated by Neolithic societies.

"I've always been afraid of heights," Smith says. "When you're exploring a cave, you have to expose yourself to heights. That took a lot of repetition and coaxing by more experienced people."

Duck racing has flourished in Deming since it started as an afternoon gathering in 1980. Several hundred ducks from several states competed this year and were cheered on by several thousand spectators.

Niethammer says she was inspired to cook wild plants after reading the "Global 2000 Report to the President," which among other things predicts a 100 percent increase in food prices by the next century. But there are things the consumer can do about it, she says.

"You are going into black voids and dropping ropes back out. I've always had an adventurous spirit, and I've always wanted to test my own ability and daring. Even after 19 years of caving, I still have not found my limits."

The original idea was to get maybe 50 ducks out to the park, maybe 150 people or so, have a barbecue, a good time and go home," Duck says. "Then the national news media picked it up and it has absolutely gone bonkers since."

"No rule says you have to use ancient techniques in preparing ancient foods," Niethammer writes. "Blenders, food processors and slow cookers can make quick work of what took Indian and settler women all day. In other words, it is not necessary to go to a stream bed and pound mesquite bean with a 20-pound pestle in a bedrock mortar."

Smith asked his future wife, Pamela Duncan, for their first date while they were caving.

Several trainers show up with 20 or more ducks at \$10 an entry.

"Just as ancient foods can fit into our modern cooking techniques, so also can they be incorporated into our modern dishes."

Smith's wife, Pamela Duncan, likes caving, but does not share his passion for it, Smith says. She works, enabling him to study and to explore caves.

Duck says he first entered the race because of his last name, and got serious about it because of the money.

One caution, however — plenty of wild foods are poisonous and can cause illness or death. Be certain you know exactly what you are picking, as many desert plants look alike.

Eventually, he says he hopes to find a job that will allow him to take off three months a year to go caving.

Duck says he first entered the race because of his last name, and got serious about it because of the money.

Also, state and local regulations for gathering plants, seeds and fruit

"When you explore a cave," he says, "you are actually going to one of the few places on the face of the earth where nobody ever has been."

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