

Romania files lawsuit for paintings

The Associated Press
 NEW YORK — Once upon a time in Romania, Communists forced the king into exile. But as he left, he stripped his castle of art treasures and spirited them abroad.
 Romania charges in a \$500 million lawsuit that the 40 paintings by El Greco, Rembrandt, Titian, Breughel, Caravaggio, Van Dyck and others belong to the country.

Michael, 72, contends that the paintings are his because the 1889 will of his grandfather King Carol I bequeathed the art to the Romanian Crown, and he is still the legal king despite being forced to abdicate on Dec. 30, 1947.
 The current Romanian government, which overthrew the Communists in 1989, filed the lawsuit in state court in May. It was filed here because two of the paintings may have been sold at a New York art gallery.

Attorney Pamfil Riposanu, who filed the lawsuit, said King Carol's will does not permit any member of the royal family to take the paintings out of the country.
 The paintings "absolutely" belong to the Romanian people, he said.
 In court papers filed on behalf of Michael, who lives in Versoix, Switzerland, attorney Daniel Kornstein asked for dismissal of the lawsuit.

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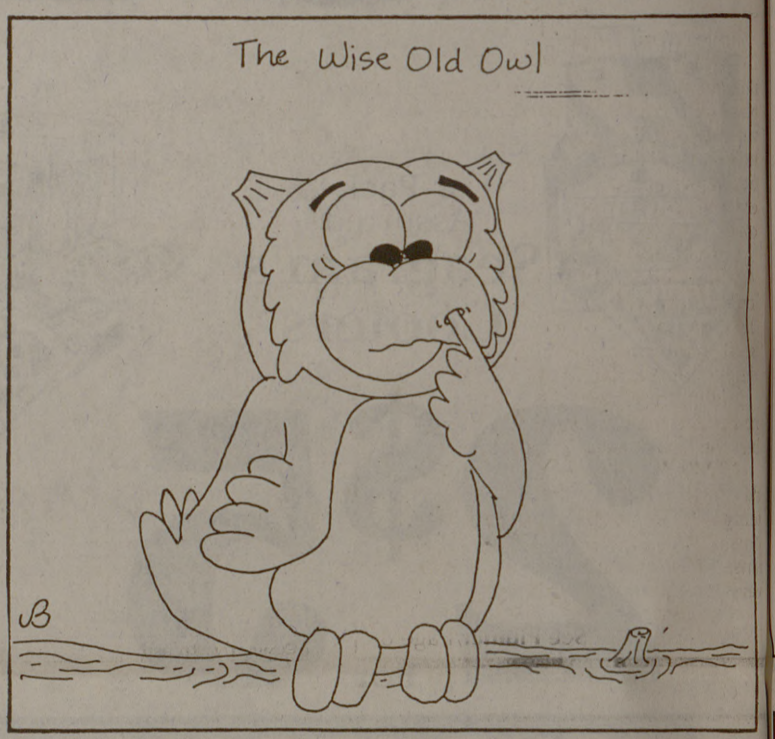
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Ding Dong: town known for its name

The Associated Press
DING DONG — Yes. Ding Dong.
 Ten miles south of Killeen, on a banked bend of Farm Road 440, sits an inert burg where the most noticeable edifice rising from the Central Texas plains also is the only place of commerce. It is named, appropriately, "The One Stop."
 Visitors there are greeted by the sight of an under-the-counter refrigerator labeled "Worms" and a wall decorated by more snuff signs than, well, more than you could spit at.
 This dormant farming hamlet got its name in the 1920s from a sign made for a long-gone general merchandise store owned by third cousins I.B. Bell and Z.O. Bell, said Yvonne Harton, I.B.'s daughter.
 The sign showed two bells, one captioned "Ding" and the other "Dong." The nicknames stuck, and the town was thus christened.
 I.B. Bell, last of the Ding Dongs, died in 1990 in Lampasas at age 100, Harton said. And townspeople here say every new Ding Dong sign that state highway crews erect is usually stolen within a few days.

Ding Dong is one of the hundreds of towns with peculiar names that dot the Lone Star state, stretching from the parched plains of Notrees, near Odessa in West Texas, to the righteous red clay of Fairplay, which is close to Carthage in East Texas.
 The monikers range from the obvious to the obscure, bizarre to banal, weird to weirder.
 Lots of towns have male names, such as Melvin, Nolan, Donie and Brae.
 Some towns went a little farther and used surnames, too: Ben Arnold, Ben Wheeler, George West and Tom Bean.
 Special kudos go to Howard County, itself a given-named enti-

JUST THE BEGINNING



By Jason Brown

ty and home to the communities of Vincent and Luther, as well as Otis Chalk and Ross City.
 But the big winner is a four-bagger: Ben Bolt in Jim Wells County.
 Women are represented, too. There's Alice, Mercedes, Helena, Diana, Bebe Aubrey, Peggy and Donna. Collin County, north of Dallas, has Celina and Anna. Other female-related names: Sisterdale, Twin Sisters, Lovelady and Seven Sisters.
 Some town names describe their location — Brushy Creek, Plains, South Plains, Flat, Redwater.
 Others are misleading. Grandfalls is in a desert, Maple sits on the treeless plains and Big Lake doesn't have one.
 A handful of town names are verbs such as Rule, Speaks, Grow, Draw, Tell, Crow and Pine. Others are commands — Needmore and Circle Back.
 Hungry? Try Oatmeal, Okra, Grapeland, Pear Valley, Fruitland, Muenster, Lollipop, Honey Grove and Pecan Gap.
 Some names are tributes to famous people or characters: Tarzan, Ivanhoe, Wadsworth, Killdare, William Penn, and Ben Franklin.
 In the same vein, the Panhandle has Conway in Carson County, and 55 miles away, Twitty in Wheeler County.
 The famous country singer took his first name from an Arkansas town, but Twitty, named after a settler, is the source of his last name.
 Some names are stolen from other cities or places — Atlanta, Detroit, Paris, Pittsburg (with a Texas spelling), Naples, Manchester, Boston, Liverpool, Newcastle, Scotland, Peoria, Newark, Dublin, Egypt, Columbus, Amherst, Sudan, London, Memphis and Miami, Port-Au-Prince.

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