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## Annual Heartland Cruise Car Show Sees Massive Turnout at Rader Park



Alexander Shook / WW

“The Zombie” was a crowd pleaser during Saturday’s Burnout Competition, complete with animatronics and pyrotechnics.



Alexander Shook / WW

Saturday featured over 80 awards up for grabs, all designed by Trey Graybill at Trey’s Speed Shop.



Alexander Shook / WW

Former Weatherford Police Chief Louis Flowers worked as the show’s PA.



Alexander Shook / WW

A number of businesses set up shop hours before the show began, selling everything from art, food, merchandise, and more.



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John Heidebrecht

Johnny William "John" Heidebrecht was born on September 4, 1929, in Corn, Oklahoma, to Carl and Tena Heidebrecht. He peacefully transitioned to his heavenly home on May 31, 2025, surrounded by love and cherished memories.



John's service will be Saturday, June 14, 2025, at 10:00 am, at the Mennonite Brethren Church, 100 W. Main St., Corn, OK 73024. Burial to follow at the Mennonite Brethren Cemetery in Corn.

John's early life was spent in Corn, where he accepted Christ as his Savior at the young age of 14 while out on the farm. He graduated from Corn High School in 1947. At 20, he ventured to Texas to work on a farm for a year but returned home after the passing of his father, during which time he met and married, Linda Plett.

John attended Nazarene College in Oklahoma City and Pacific Bible Institute in Fresno, California, where he and Linda became engaged. Shortly thereafter, he received draft notice for the Army, prompting a quick wedding on January 26, 1952, with the help of a pastor who facilitated his reassignment to pastoral duties.

Throughout his life, John faithfully served as a pastor in churches across Arkansas, including Pleasant View and Welcome Home, and in Oklahoma at congregations in Lawton and Indianahoma. His commitment to service extended to the Christian Servicemen's Center in Lawton, reflecting his deep devotion to his faith and community.

In addition to his pastoral work, John had a passion for carpentry, dedicating his time to restoring old houses, which provided supplemental income for his family.

John was preceded in death by his wife, Linda, in April 2005, and later by his second wife, Joyce Hiebert Peck, in June 2021. Also preceding him in death are his parents, Carl and Tena Heidebrecht; his son Charles; siblings Edna, Vera, Allen, and Harry; as well as several in-laws and his son-in-law Vincent Garner.

He is survived by his four children; Beverly Garner, Steve (Annette) Heidebrecht, Judy (Doug) Voska, and Tim Heidebrecht; grandchildren Tena (Mike) Sharp, John (Nicole) Heidebrecht, Blake (Marcia) Heidebrecht, Malachi Garner, Joseph (Laura) Voska, Rebecca Voska, Rae Prettyman, Aaron Heidebrecht, and Ashton Heidebrecht. John also leaves behind eleven great-grandchildren; his sister Mary Ann (Walt) Heinrichs; many nieces, nephews, extended family members, and countless friends.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made, in John's honor, to Friends in Action, PO Box 323, Elizabethtown PA 17022, online contributions may be made at [www.FIAintl.org](http://www.FIAintl.org).

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Virgil Buie

Virgil Lee Buie, 59, of Elk City, OK was born on March 23, 1966, in Batesville, Arkansas. He is the son of Virgil Vernon and Zelma Lou (Ring) Buie. He went to walk the heavenly streets of gold with his Lord and Savior on Saturday, June 7, 2025, at Great Plains Regional Medical Center, Elk City, OK, surrounded by his loving family.



Virgil enjoyed watching wrestling, especially Mid-South Wrestling. He could be found fishing and going to watch his nieces and nephews' ballgames. Virgil also enjoyed going to the park, watching the ducks, riding around Elk City and seeing all the new changes happening around town. He loved going back to Arkansas, visiting the White River, and attending family reunion's and Fourth of July's. He will be greatly missed and deeply remembered by all those who knew and loved him.

Cherishing his memory is his mother, Zelma Lou Ring of Elk City, OK; one brother, Terry Buie of Batesville, Arkansas; one sister, Debbie Reyes and her husband, Dee of Elk City, OK; several nieces, nephews, great nieces, and great nephews; his special family friend, Ron Wilson of Elk City, OK; and many other relatives and friends.

Virgil is preceded in death by his father, Virgil Vernon Buie; two sisters, Cathy Moss, Linda Buie; two nephews, Vernon Curtis, Glendale Phares; and his maternal and paternal grandparents.

LaDonna Williams

LaDonna Kaye Williams was born on September 15, 1962, in Watonga, OK, to Gary Lee Williams and Bobby Kaye (James) Williams. She passed away Tuesday, June 3, 2025, in Weatherford, OK, at the age of 62.



LaDonna was raised in Calumet, OK, where she attended Calumet Public Schools and was active in basketball and softball. After high school, she pursued her education at Dickinson Business School, earning a degree in accounting. At a young age, LaDonna married Paul Gardner, and they shared ten years together. On July 28, 1988, she married Rodney Dale Williams Sr. in Foster, OK. Together, they made their home in Alex, Lindsay, and later Geary, where they lived for 23 years before settling in Hinton, OK, 14 years ago.

LaDonna had a zest for life and a wide range of interests. She loved crocheting, ceramics, cars, card games, cruising, going to the lake, traveling, riding ATVs, fishing, cooking, reading, and spending quiet evenings watching movies on the back porch. She had a special fondness for hummingbirds and was a skilled makeup artist. She also enjoyed shopping on Amazon and Temu and loved listening to Joyce Meyer and Joel Osteen. Most of all, she cherished time with her family. She was a proud member of the Red Dirt Jeep Club and Frank's Jeep Club and attended the Christian Center Church in Chickasha, OK. LaDonna's vibrant spirit, generous heart, and joyful presence will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.

LaDonna is survived by her husband Rodney Williams of the home in Hinton; children: Rodney Dale Williams Jr. of Hinton, Rocky Gardner of Fort Worth, Texas, Josh Gardner and his wife Ashley of Oklahoma City, and Felicia Voegeli and her husband Justin of Chickasha; eight grandchildren: Bryce Gardner, Mickey Gardner, Sophie Gardner, Emily Voegeli, Emmett Voegeli, Felix Voegeli, Roxy Gardner, and Maximo Gardner; and one great-granddaughter, Donna Gardner. She is also survived by her brother, Frank Feters of Oklahoma City, first cousin, Shane James of Amarillo, TX, along with many other relatives, and countless friends.

She was preceded in death by her father, Gary Williams; her mother, Bobby Kay Gooden; her stepfather, Gene Gooden; and her sister, Diamond Cleveland.

# WRIGHT MEDIA

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LC Price

LC Price, 71, of Sayre, OK, passed away peacefully on June 5, 2025, at home, surrounded by family.



Born in Sneedville, Tennessee, LC lived a full life defined by love, laughter, generosity, and grit. He married his best friend, Anna Marie, in 2015 and together they built a home full of warmth and love for family.

LC was an entrepreneur and worked across several oilfield companies including Ferguson Oil, Williams Tool, Dalon, Price Tool, High Plains Services, Rockwater, Select, and Cornerstone. He also enjoyed life on his farm and building Price Farms into what it is today. He loved racing old cars and launching his truck, going to auctions, spending hours on the phone catching up with old friends, and most of all - feeding everyone around him. Watching Gunsmoke reruns and celebrating the 4th of July and Christmas with his grandkids were some of his favorite things. He gave generously and quietly, supporting Meals on Wheels, local schools, St. Jude hospital, and many other organizations. LC believed in giving people second chances and always showed up when others wouldn't.

Cherishing his memory is his loving wife, Anna; his children, Clif Price and wife Jessee of Midland, Texas, Josh Price and wife Tara of Elk City, OK, Cara Long and husband Zach of Elk City, OK, Cameron Brooks and wife Sarah of Elk City, OK, Peyton Hebel and husband Ethan of Elk City, OK, Erika Elston and fiancé David Lofy of San Diego, California, and Monica Elston of Paris, France; daughter-in-law, Leslie Price of Houston, Texas; grandchildren, Lonnie Price, Logan Price, Harrison Price, Lowry Price, Lily Price, Tucker Long, Lennon Long, Landon Price, Lensing Price, Leighton Price, Jace Brooks, Bella Sandoval, Ezra Brooks, Noah Brooks, and many more loving relatives and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Drewry and Ethel Price; his wife, Christi Price; his son, Lee Caleb Price; brothers Kyle Price, Tommy Price, and James Price; sisters, Dorothy Shepard, Clara Daniels, Zelma Smith, and Brenda Ragsdale; and his cherished friends, Don Broome, Larry Skelton, and Kenny "Tex" Barnett.

Sandra Poff

Sandra Maye (Youree) Poff, 87, of Elk City, OK was born on May 19, 1938 in Hedley, Texas. She is the daughter of Woodvin Virgil and Delilah Mae (Hansard) Youree. She went to look upon the face of her Lord and Savior on Tuesday, June 10, 2025 at her residence in Elk City, OK surrounded by her loving family.



She married the love of her life, J. L. Poff, on September 17, 1960 in Pampa, Texas. He preceded her in death on December 21, 2011.

From 1984 to 1994 Sandra worked for the Dr. Pepper Bottling Plant. Sandra enjoyed wrapping presents, cooking, sewing, taking care of her flower and vegetable gardens. She would read the paper each day and clip out articles that the children were mentioned in, put them in a card and send them to the children just to make sure they got a copy of the article they were in.

Sandra was a member of the First Baptist Church in Elk City, OK for many years.

Cherishing her memory is her daughter, Christy Poff of Bethany, OK; four grandchildren, Zachary Hollandsworth and his wife, Amanda from Norman, OK, Randa Burch and her husband, Maxwell of Luther, OK, Jared Hollandsworth and his wife, Brittany of Portland, Oregon, Christopher Poff of Grand Junction, Colorado; five great-grandchildren, JayMichael Burch, Charlotte Burch, Ellis Burch all from Luther, OK, Aelyn Hollandsworth and Nora Hollandsworth both from Norman, OK; one sister, Joan Mabry from Pampa, Texas.

Sandra is preceded in death by her husband, J.L. Poff, son, Jay, three brothers, Jimmy Youree, Ronald Youree and Donald Youree.

Memorials can be made to the American Diabetes Association in care of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home, P.O. Box 707, Elk City, OK 73648.

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Sunny/Windy  
  
H: 97° L: 74°  
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Sunny/Windy  
  
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## SWODA Invites OK to “Paint the Town Purple” for Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month



**Chloe Nutley**  
SWODA Obudsman Supervisor

June is Alzheimer’s & Brain Awareness Month, a time to recognize the impact of Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias on families and communities. The Western Oklahoma Alzheimer’s Collaborative (WOAC), based in Elk City, is leading local efforts with Paint the Town Purple Week, taking place June 17–21.

WOAC partners with local businesses, restaurants, and organizations to raise awareness and support for those affected by dementia in Western Oklahoma. Highlights include the Virtual Dementia Tour on June 18 in Elk City and June 19 in Clinton, where participants can experience what it’s like to live with dementia—an eye-opening tool for caregivers and professionals. The week wraps up with “Dancing Through the Decades” on June 20 at Lake Elk City Beach, featuring music, food, games, and fundraising activities.

As a supporter of the initiative, Chloe Nutley, long-term care ombudsman supervisor with SWODA’s Area Agency on Aging, encourages the public to get involved. “Many long-term care residents in our region are living with Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia,” Nutley said. “We want to help raise awareness and promote resources that make a difference.”

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program advocates for residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, working to ensure their rights, dignity and quality of care are protected. WOAC invites everyone to wear purple, shop local, and take part in events throughout the week. If you would like to volunteer or have any other questions or concerns regarding the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, please contact your local ombudsman supervisor, Chloe Nutley, by calling 580-821-4068 or emailing [chloe@swoda.org](mailto:chloe@swoda.org).



**ONLINE SILENT AUCTION**  
July 28 - August 8, 2025

**LIVE AUCTION & DINNER**  
Saturday, August 9, 2025

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6:30 PM - Dinner  
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## Vacation Bible Schools 2025

In Weatherford OK

**Weatherford Church of Christ**  
Date: June 15th-18th  
Age: Kindergarten-5th Grade

**Calvary Baptist Church**  
“Bible Mountaineers”  
Date: Aug 6th-8th  
Time: 6:00pm-7:30pm

**Pine Acres Church**  
Date: July 9th  
Be watching in your neighborhood for a location.

**First United Methodist Church**  
“RoadTrip”  
Date: June 22nd-26th  
Time: 5:30pm-8:00 pm  
Age: Pre-K-6th Grade (25-26 school year)  
Free meal for kids provided each day

**First Baptist Church**  
Date: July 21st-24th  
Age: Completed K-6th Grade

**Emmanuel Baptist Church**  
Date: July 14th-18th  
Age: Finished K-6th Grade




[Sign-up here](#)

# HIGHER GROUND

## Psalms for Prayer & Meditation

*(Follow along with your Bible)*



**Jim Morrison**

**Psalms 1:2** God cause me to find joy and expectation when I meditate on your word. May I seek your truth as I would seek for hidden treasure.

**Psalms 2:10-11** Holy Father I pray that you would give wisdom to the rulers of nations. Give them a fearful heart as they think of your eternal judgment.

**Psalms 3:5-6** Lord, I thank you for your promises of protection. May I learn not to fear all the obstacles or problems that seem to be impossible to overcome. Deepen my trust and faith in your loving and sovereign care.

**Psalms 4:3-4** Lord, forgive us as a nation when we bring shame upon you by our rebellious ways. Bring us face to face with our poverty of spirit. May we seek truth and righteousness and turn away from false gods. Thank you that you promise to set apart those who seek you with a pure heart. Hear our prayer as we cry out.

**Psalms 5:3** Lord, thank you for the quietness of the morning. May I guard those precious moments alone with you. Lord, help me to learn how to wait upon you and expect your answer.

**Psalms 6:3-4** When I am hurting in my heart, please turn and deliver me from my pain. May the knowledge of your love for me be all that I need.

**Psalms 7:9** Lord, you know the evils that cloud the hearts of wicked and violent men. Bring their plans crashing down. Make the plans or our military secure and successful.

**Psalms 8:3-4** Lord, when I think about the wonder of the heavens I am overwhelmed that you know me with all my concerns and problems. It is even more amazing that you care for me, personally, out of all the billions of people on the earth.

**Psalms 9:9-10** Lord, when I feel overwhelmed, you are my hiding place. You are my strong tower to which I flee when trouble comes. I will place my trust in you for you have never let me down.

**Psalms 10:4** Lord I pray for those around me who live their lives on the basis of selfish desires and plans. Intrude into their thoughts and draw them to seek you with all their heart. May I sense your presence and always make room for you in my heart.

**Psalms 11:3** Lord, the foundations of our culture are crumbling. I pray that you would bring about a sweeping revival and renewal. Make us aware of sin and its destructive power. Keep our hearts focused on your ways and laws. May we not depart from them.

**Psalms 12:6** Thank you for the great and precious promises. I pray that my faith will increase. I praise you for making your Word available and free. Increase my understanding and give me wisdom to apply your truths.

**Psalms 13:5-6** Lord, may the depth of your love cause me to trust in you even in difficult days. I have deep joy because you have brought salvation to me. Truly I will praise you for you have been so good to me.

**Psalms 14:1** Lord, how foolish to live my life apart from you. May the cry of my heart be an eternal, “Yes, God.” I pray for those around me who live out their lives as if You were absent. Use me to demonstrate your reality to someone today.

To comment: [jhm82@outlook.com](mailto:jhm82@outlook.com), 1-800-302-1142.



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Mike Smith  
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## Connections Names May Volunteer of the Month



Chris Tomasi is our May volunteer of the month for 2025 sponsored by Laura Sweeney Eagle Realty-The Morley Group.

Chris is an active volunteer with her church college group as well as an active shopping assistant volunteer with Connections Food and Resource Center twice a week. She is full of fun and loves to help our clients out and hear their stories.

Chris comes to us from colorful Colorado but now represents our Weatherford ZIP code service area. We are so happy she chose to come to Oklahoma. Thanks, Chris, for supporting your neighbors in need!

If you or anyone else would like to volunteer, please don't hesitate to contact us by emailing [Volunteer@ConnectionsCenter.org](mailto:Volunteer@ConnectionsCenter.org)



Connections Food & Resource Center / Facebook

The Weatherford Church of Christ's Summer Servants spent a day working with Connections Food & Resource Center. From early morning to closing, a rotating cast of youth group members cleaned the building and managed client relations (the day's last group is pictured).

**WASHITA CO / ZERNICEK** - A Burns Flat man has been recently charged in Washita County District Court with 3 counts of sodomy and one count of lewd or indecent acts to a child under 16. 23-year-old Sean Mark Zernicek allegedly engaged in sexual acts with a 13-year-old female. Zernicek is due back in court for an attorney date next Monday.


**ELK CITY SB / CELL PHONES** - The Elk City School Board of Education recently approved a policy that will ban the use of cell phones while students are inside school buildings during the entire school day for the next three years. Superintendent Mike Sparks cited a Princeton University study while discussing how the ban could benefit students academically. "One group [was told] not to be on their phones but allowed to keep their phones. Another group's phones [were confiscated]. What they found was the [first] group, even though they weren't supposed to be on it, was constantly [distracted by its presence]. In the group that didn't have the phone, their academics increased about 25%." Sparks says the district plans to enforce the policy with a warning on a first offense. He says by implementing the three-year cell phone ban, the district can qualify for grant money to eventually obtain pouches that would be utilized to securely store the cell phones during the school day and then can be retrieved by students at the end of the school day.

**CLINTON / HOSPITAL UPDATE** - Voters in the city of Clinton gave more than 92% support to allowing Clinton Regional Hospital to use the building as collateral in the sale of the hospital. Chief Executive Officer Lyn Lacefield says he is hopeful that the sale to Rural Hospital Solutions will close by the end of July.

**CADDO COUNTY / FATALITY** - The Oklahoma Highway Patrol says a one vehicle accident at the intersection of U.S. 281 and a Caddo County Road, two miles north of Lookeba, claimed the life of an El Reno teen. Troopers say the name of the victim is being withheld due to their juvenile status. The driver of the vehicle, 18-year-old Chiloh J.T. Whiteshirt of El Reno was last listed in fair condition at Integris Hospital. OHP says the cause of the accident remains under investigation.

**OK SENATE / KOCH CANDIDACY** - A western Oklahoma businessman is entering the political arena. Rick Koch of Weatherford officially announced his candidacy for the Oklahoma State Senate. Koch is running for the seat currently held by Senator Darcy Jech. "Rick got where he is because he's not afraid of hard work and he's going to bring that to the campaign and to the position eventually as well," expressed Jech. With the seat becoming vacant in about a year-and-a-half due to term limits, Koch is the first to step forward to announce his intention to seek the senate seat. "I feel like I've got the energy, definitely got the experience to do different things, but also I still have them open minded enough that I know there's a lot to be learned," said Koch.

**BECKHAM CO / TAYLOR** - A Sayre man is due back in Beckham County District Court July 29th for a preliminary hearing. 43-year-old Cade Rex Taylor is charged with among other things, four counts of first-degree rape by force or fear. Court records allege that Taylor repeatedly committed sexual assaults, physical abuse and coercive control of a female. The victim told authorities of a sustained pattern of physical abuse by Taylor dating back to 2022.



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at HAPPY Day to YOU!  
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**Christian Free Store** – Donations of school supplies, clothes, shoes, etc. are needed or if you are in need. Please call (580) 637-2345 or (580) 291-3875. **Alfalfa, OK, Community Center** "Bible Study," Every Monday Night from 7:00 to 8:00 Hwy 58. Five miles South of Hwy 152. For more information contact (405) 643-9211. Free and Open to the Public. **OK Parkinson's Alliance**, monthly support group meeting the second Thursday of each month, excluding December, at 5:30 p.m. at Weatherford's Pioneer Center, 1000 Gartrell Place. Patients, caregivers, family or friends are welcome. Questions? Contact OK Parkinson's Alliance (405) 810-0695 or [info@OKpa.org](mailto:info@OKpa.org). **Iron Sharpens Iron** is a Christ-centered adult support group every Tuesday night at 7pm. 233 E Main in Hydro, First Christian Church.

**Happy Birthday Wishes for June 18th** - Kambri Buckner, David Burton, LaDonna Cook, Mark Ferguson, Gary Fox, Libby Gregston, Kaitlin Keuhne, Julie Schneberger, Tara Vaughan; **June 19** - John Arriaga, Brandon Ashcraft, Carol Sue Bentley, Alyssa Dowty, Rodney Hines, Amber Hudson, Abby Janning, Jessica Kasper, Nicole Nelson, Roger Oehler, Denton Payne; **June 20** - Nikki Bates, Nelson Dougherty, Brad Jones, Kaden FlyingOut, Kinson Kaiser, Charlene Killgore, Sharil McCoy, Darby Morgan, Jennifer Neely, Lyndon Perry, Camille Sharry, Lisa Shirey; **June 21** - Jared Broadbent, C.L. Goodwin, Debby Green, Barbara Holt, Gladys Jones, Beverly Kissler, Charm Reeves; **June 22** - Mark Becton, Brownie Browne, Tyler FlyingOut, Sage Fox, Robert Ingram Jr., Monty Proffitt, Keenan Taylor, Shawny Twins; **June 23** - Debbie Blakeslee, Ruby Dillon, Madison Dudgeon, Stetson Flaming, Gary Friesen, Meg Hook, Rayna Lax, Ruby Polly, Lisa Rockett, Steve Sauer; **June 24** - Bruce Belanger, Heather Hall, Chelsea Lantz, Genny Lathrom, Naveenah Matrix, Dorothy Sloan, Dalton Sloan, Cecil Smith, Betty Snider.



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Thanks to the generosity of Oklahomans, letter carriers across the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma's service area collected 503,291 pounds of food during the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. The drive, which was presented by the American Fidelity Foundation and OG&E, also collected \$118,454 in donations. During the drive, Oklahomans were asked to leave a bag of nonperishable food donations by their mailbox. On May 10, letter carriers collected the donations along their routes and transported them back to their local post office for volunteers to sort. In the Oklahoma City metro, 370 volunteers helped sort donations at 20 post offices.

"We are incredibly grateful for the passionate support of our letter carriers, the generosity of Oklahomans and the commitment of our presenting sponsors, the American Fidelity Foundation and OG&E," said Stacy Dykstra, chief executive officer. "Their dedication made Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive a success, once again, helping provide much-needed meals to our neighbors living with hunger."

Letter carriers in 144 communities participated in this year's Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. The Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive has collected more than 14 million pounds in Oklahoma since it first began in 1992.

"Helping provide more than 760,000 meals through the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive shows the incredible generosity of Oklahomans and the power of community partnerships," said Christi Woodworth, OG&E vice president of marketing and communications.

"It's inspiring to see how our employees, neighbors and partners come together year after year to support families facing food insecurity," expressed Woodworth.

The Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is additionally sponsored by CSAA-AAA Insurance, Bank of Oklahoma, Diamondback Energy, Express Employment International, WEOKIE Foundation, Tyler Media, LocaliQ and Lamar Outdoor.

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# Oklahoma History: Project Blue Book and UFO Sighting in Oklahoma



Courtesy UFO Database

This Project Blue Book photo shows a multi-colored, disc-shaped object the Air Force classified as a structured craft roughly 30 feet wide.



Courtesy The Wichita Falls Times

A Texas story published on 09/28/1960 highlighting Fort Sill and Wichita Falls's search for a reported "brilliantly glowing ball of light."

**Chase Wright**  
Staff Writer

From the Army artillery ranges of Fort Sill to the granite peaks of the Wichita Mountains, the Lawton area became a hotspot for strange aerial sightings in the 1960s. Locals in Lawton and nearby communities (Cache, Elgin, and beyond) reported mysterious lights and disks hovering in the wide Oklahoma skies. In late July and early August 1965, a wave of UFO sightings swept across the state. Witnesses described “weird-shaped hovering objects” with greenish metallic glow that “emitted red, white and blue lights.” What began near Ardmore around 10:30 p.m. on August 1 soon “filled the sky over the area” as residents across southern Oklahoma rushed outside and even crowded highways to watch the “flashing, cone-shaped oddities” dart around.

In one report, observers counted as many as eight saucer-like objects at once, some appearing to spin “like a top” before streaking away at tremendous speed. Police and highway patrolmen joined astonished citizens in witnessing the multicolored lights. On August 3, 1965, an Oklahoma state trooper even radioed in reports of UFOs over Lawton, as well as the towns of Turley and Erick, during this state-wide “flap”. The outbreak was so widespread that it spanned at least four Midwestern states, and even law enforcement officers in Kansas, Texas and New Mexico filed similar reports.

Eyewitnesses struggled to find words for what they saw. “They’re hard to describe,” admitted one Ardmore resident, comparing the objects’ motion to a spinning top. Many felt a mix of wonder and unease. “It sure gives you a weird feeling to stand here and watch those things just play around up there. Sorta makes you wonder if they’re watching us,” one onlooker remarked as several luminous “flying cones” danced in the night sky. Local radio stations fielded a barrage of calls, and at least one station hosted an impromptu talk show as dozens of people gathered with binoculars and a telescope in a parking lot to collectively gaze at the mysterious lights. What had begun as a quiet summer evening turned into a spectacle; by mid-1965, Oklahoma had experienced a huge UFO outbreak, starting in the south near Lawton and extending north through Oklahoma City and Tulsa.

Reports of unidentified flying objects in the Lawton/Fort Sill region did not go ignored by authorities. Project Blue Book, the U.S. Air Force’s official UFO investigation program, dispatched personnel to inquire into these sightings. Throughout the 1960s, Blue Book logged dozens of Oklahoma cases, from odd lights tracked on radar at Tinker Air Force Base in 1965 to unusual objects reported near the Red River. In fact, declassified records show that Oklahoma generated hundreds of case files during the Blue Book years. Many incidents received prosaic explanations, but a few stood out as truly puzzling. On the night of September 28, 1960, for example, residents just across the Texas border saw a “brilliant ball of light” fall silently near Wichita Falls, an event so bizarre it prompted a Blue Book inquiry (some speculated it was a downed space capsule). And during the great 1965 flap, Blue Book’s analysts famously tried to explain the multicolored formations as misidentified stars and planets. The Air Force secretary claimed the previous nights’ UFO reports were merely Jupiter or bright stars like Rigel and Capella, but local astronomers swiftly refuted that explanation – those stars “were on the other side of the earth at the time”, the Oklahoma City planetarium curator noted in disbelief.

One of the most compelling local cases came in early 1966, when Project Blue Book case #10270 put Lawton’s vicinity on the UFO map. In the pre-dawn hours of March 23, 1966, a man on a dark road near Temple, just south of Lawton, had a close encounter of startling detail. William “Eddie” Laxson, a 52-year-old civilian instructor from nearby Sheppard Air Force Base, was driving to work before dawn when he slammed on the brakes, encountering an object like a “wingless airplane fuselage” that was parked squarely across the highway. Stepping out of his car, Laxson got a clear look: the metallic craft was about 75 feet long, 8 feet high, with “a Plexiglas bubble on top” and bright forward and aft lights. As he approached, he saw a human-like figure wearing what looked like a mechanic’s baseball cap climb up into the object via steps in its underside. In the next instant, the craft emitted a high-pitched whirring sound and shot off into the sky, accelerating an estimated 720 mph in a southeasterly direction. Stunned, Laxson drove on and soon met another motorist pulled over, C.W. Anderson, who excitedly confirmed he too “had seen the craft” flying off toward the Red River.

“I know that people will say that Laxson is damned crazy. But that’s what I saw,” Anderson insisted to a reporter the next day. Laxson himself was open-minded about the object’s origins – given his aviation background, he initially suspected a secret military project, speculating it might be “some type of Army or Air Force research aircraft” being tested in the area.

Project Blue Book took the Temple incident seriously: investigators interviewed Laxson and checked for any experimental aircraft activity at the time, but no helicopter or plane could be placed in that area at 5:05 a.m. that morning. The case was ultimately logged as “unidentified” by the Air Force – one of the rare Blue Book cases deemed unexplained. (Blue Book’s archive of “Unknown” cases indeed includes the Temple sighting, noting it occurred on March 23, 1966, near the Texas–Oklahoma border.) Locals dubbed the mysterious craft the “Temple Torpedo,” and it drew enough attention to hit the front page of Lawton’s papers as well as the Wichita Falls Record-News. According to later research, Laxson’s sketch of the object bore an eerie resemblance to a famous UFO from New Mexico – the egg-shaped craft Lonnie Zamora encountered in 1964 – including strange symbols on its side. Such parallels only deepened the mystery.

Another moment happened when a multicolored disc was captured on film over Tulsa, on August 2, 1965. Multiple witnesses saw the object change from white to red to blue-green; Project Blue Book analysts agreed the photo showed a real 30-foot object less than a mile away, though they noted it resembled the effect of photographing a bright revolving light.

Blue Book personnel also scrutinized physical evidence when available. During the 1965 statewide sightings, an enterprising teenager in Tulsa managed to snap a now-famous photograph of a glowing saucer. Alan Smith, 14, took a snapshot of a “multi-colored UFO” that hovered low over his suburban backyard in the early hours of August 2, 1965. The color photo – showing a luminous disc against the night – was published in newspapers and even Life magazine. The Air Force’s Photo Analysis Division at Wright-Patterson AFB examined the image for Project Blue Book and concluded the object was a material craft roughly 30 feet in diameter at close range. However, they cautiously suggested the appearance “resembled the effect obtained by photographing a multi-colored revolving filter flood light”. In other words, Blue Book left the Tulsa photo officially unexplained but hinted it might have been a clever hoax or optical illusion. (Years later, independent analysts using computer tools argued the photo actually showed a structured craft, keeping debate alive.)

These dramatic events left a deep imprint on the Lawton region’s culture. For a time in the mid-’60s, UFOs became a staple of coffee-shop conversation and local headlines. The Lawton Constitution and Morning Press ran attention-grabbing stories like “Temple Man ‘Meets’ UFO on Highway”, treating Eddie Laxson’s story with a mix of curiosity and gravity. In neighborhoods around Fort Sill, children and adults alike scanned the skies on clear evenings, wondering if the strange lights might return. Some residents admittedly felt a little uneasy living under what seemed to be a cosmic spotlight. As one farmer’s wife told a reporter after watching the glowing orbs over her pasture, “I didn’t sleep a wink that night – every time I closed my eyes I’d see those lights dancing”, encapsulating the anxious wonder many felt. Yet Oklahomans also approached the UFO craze with their characteristic good humor and skepticism. Jokes circulated that the “little green men” must be interested in Lawton’s new mall or that Fort Sill’s artillery school had accidentally shot shells all the way to Mars. Area newspapers published editorial cartoons lampooning flying saucers, even as they dutifully reported each new sighting.

While the frenzy eventually quieted, the legends endured. In the decades since, the 1965–66 UFO flap around Lawton has become part of Oklahoma folklore. Books like More Mysterious Oklahoma by David Farris and Sooner Saucers: Oklahoma UFOs 1947–1969 by Marilyn Hudson have kept these stories alive, recounting how “shocked observers could only stare wide-eyed” as the unknown flew over their towns. Local historical societies preserve the newspaper clippings, and the tale of the Temple incident is still told in Stephens and Comanche counties.

Why did the Lawton area experience such a cluster of UFO reports in the 1960s? Historians and ufologists point to a confluence of factors.

First, Fort Sill’s military presence likely played a role. The sprawling Army post (established in 1869) was an artillery and missile testing center during the Cold War, home to experimental weapon trials and frequent training flights. It wasn’t uncommon for flares, high-altitude parachute drops, or night-time helicopter maneuvers to light up the skies above the Wichita Mountains. Some unusual sightings were no doubt misidentified military activities, and conversely, if truly unknown craft were in the vicinity, they might have been drawn to observe the Army’s installations (a pattern reported near other bases in that era). Laxson’s initial hunch that he’d stumbled upon a secret Army project attests to this military context – in 1966 the U.S. was deeply engaged in Cold War weapons development, and the public knew cutting-edge aerospace projects were often cloaked in secrecy. Indeed, many Oklahomans in the ’60s believed some “UFOs” could be advanced U.S. or even Soviet spy craft being tested in remote skies.

Secondly, Cold War-era jitters primed residents to look up. The Soviet launch of Sputnik in 1957 had turned eyes skyward around the world; by the mid-60s, satellites and rocket stages regularly streaked over Oklahoma. Air raid drills and talk of spy planes were part of everyday life. In this climate of vigilance, a bright meteor or an unusual aircraft light was more likely to trigger a UFO report than in quieter times. Additionally, the public imagination had been stirred by the space race and science fiction; flying saucers were on magazine covers and TV shows. When actual lights appeared, citizens were ready to interpret them as possible visitors from beyond.

Finally, geography and visibility gave southwest Oklahoma an edge. This is big sky country – the plains around Lawton are broad and relatively free of light pollution, and the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge offers elevated vantage points like Mount Scott from which a person can see for dozens of miles. In 1965, observers in one town could often literally see the same UFOs observed in another town 50 or 100 miles away, simply because there was little to obstruct the view across the plains. The Ardmore sightings, for example, were confirmed by witnesses as far north as Norman and as far south as Texas. A single bright object at 20,000 feet could be spotted over half the state. This regional visibility meant that once excitement began, every unusual light had many sets of eyes on it – and multiple reports from different locations made the phenomenon harder to dismiss. Lawton’s proximity to the Texas border also put it near Sheppard Air Force Base and other military sites, widening the potential range of aerial activities (or anomalies) that locals might witness. All these factors combined to make the Lawton/Fort Sill corridor a perfect stage for the UFO drama of the 1960s.

When the furor of the 1960s UFO wave finally subsided, it fell to Project Blue Book to issue a verdict. Project Blue Book, headquartered at Wright-Patterson AFB, had been systematically collecting and analyzing UFO reports since 1952. By the time it ended in 1969, Blue Book had cataloged 12,618 sightings, of which 701 remained officially “Unidentified.” The Air Force’s conclusions, announced as Blue Book wrapped up, were clear: “no UFO reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force has ever given any indication of threat to our national security.” Moreover, investigators found “no evidence” of technological abilities beyond current science and “no evidence indicating” any sightings were extraterrestrial vehicles. In short, Blue Book found no proof of alien visitation in Oklahoma or anywhere else. The unexplained cases were chalked up to insufficient data or likely misperceptions, and the official stance was that no further USAF inquiry was warranted.

When Project Blue Book closed, it marked the end of an era. In Oklahoma, as elsewhere, UFO enthusiasts and private groups picked up where the Air Force left off. The International UFO Bureau, founded in Oklahoma City by Hayden Hughes in the late 1950s, grew in prominence and attracted scientists, police, and citizens into its fold. Hughes had been a keen follower of the Lawton-area reports and continued investigating sightings statewide after Blue Book’s conclusion. The legacy of the 1960s sightings around Lawton thus lives on both in government archives and in the collective memory of the region. Today, those declassified case files are available to the public at the National Archives, allowing a new generation to marvel at the original reports, photographs, and military memos from that period. And in the Lawton evenings, keep an eye open to the sky, you may see the next unexplained mystery.

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Krystal Blackwell / WW

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Krystal Blackwell / WW

Weatherford Boomers (right) took home the 12U softball season championship, while the Weatherford Peaches (left) earned second place.



Alexander Shook / WW

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