

FROM THE TOP

This week, we continue our discussion on reasoning. It is good for people to reason. The Lord gave us brains so that we could use them. He even went so far as to say "Come, let us reason together," in Isaiah 1:18.

Is it unreasonable to believe in God and that He created the earth and all that is in it? Does such a belief qualify me for membership in the "Flat Earth Society?"

Obviously not, since a significant number of astronauts also believe in a creator. (Must be something about seeing the earth from space that leads one to believe that this is not merely a chain reaction set off by a giant gas explosion millions of years ago.)

It takes great intelligence and reasoning ability to be an astronaut. So does their belief in a creator mean these astronauts are uneducated simpletons who should join the Flat Earth Society? Hardly.

So, if it is reasonable to believe in a creator (God), is it so unreasonable to believe



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that He created the earth in six literal days? He is all-powerful, is he not?

There are those who believe that the earth is older than 6,000 years and God has slowly built and evolved the world over millions of years. I suppose that is not outside the realm of possibility, except that the book revered to be the Word of God teaches against this possibility.

Genesis 1:5 clearly states the "evening and the morning were the first day," not the first age, period, etc.

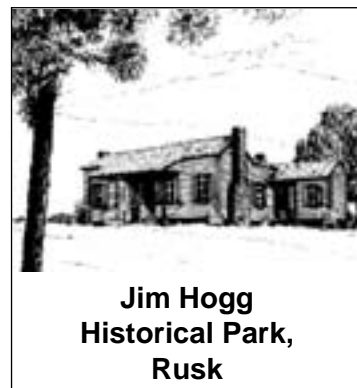
So, how did God create the world in six days? (Here is what qualifies me as a flat-

earther). I don't know. I do know He spoke it into existence and the Bible teaches (through the prophets) the angels were present praising His work through the whole thing (which explains why no one asked "what is man?") They were too busy praising God.)

If I knew all the ins and outs of God, He'd be a God I could master, thus He'd be no God at all. There are times it is appropriate to not understand how all the pieces fit together and just to praise God for this wonderful creation in which we live.

Psalms 24 says, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For He hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods."

This means God created the world, it belongs to Him and He makes the rules. It is up to us to figure out what He wants from us and how to make Him happy. These answers can be found in the Bible, or Lord-willing, in this column in the coming weeks.



Jim Hogg Historical Park, Rusk



Caddoan Mounds State Historical Site, Alto



Texas State Railroad State Historical Park, Rusk



SCENE IN PASSING

We need to catch up with reports on how some of our less than well, but getting better, folks are doing. For starters, how about the good news from Sarah Summers? She was told by medical advisers last week that she can begin to think about getting her golf clubs ready. She is happy and so are all of us who hold her in high regard. She has a special spirit that lifts others' spirits.

Another good news story is that of special friend, Dominique Taraborelli. He has been declared in a state of remission. He and his family are quite excited. Remission is a state of pure blessing. It says that a person has been to the edge of life and suddenly stopped. A few steps back and the turn around begins for the possibility of a bright future. Mr. Dominique and spouse Bobbie are all smiles, as we smile and thank God with them, for them.

Prayers at this writing are intense and serious for the well being of two of our own. Ronnie and Dottie Norton need an abundance of faith, courage, strength, hope and everything else to bring them through. She suffers from the same illness that the Better



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Half endured for so many years, Chrohn's disease. And Ronnie is the victim of being at the wrong place at the wrong time when another's problem landed on him. He became the victim of a bullet in his ankle, outside the ETMC Hospital where Dottie has been for more tests/evaluations. He will have a few weeks of rehab while his body heals. Perhaps it will comfort them to spend more time together while their bodies get better.

Dub Isaacs' family is happy to report that their beloved leader continues in his bout with complications caused by diabetes. He is expected to be back at his assigned post at his place of business on U.S. 69 North. This man has been described as having a

heart as big as Dallas. And I do know that he offers a huge helping hand to many we never hear about. Mainly, he doesn't want to talk about his good works. I hope some day he will. He is one of the few people still in business in Rusk, who was here when we arrived at the end of May in 1950.

Recently a sad letter was received from our beloved Lithana (Fanny) Sessions. She explains her problem. "I was born in Texas. Texas is still in me but I am in California." She still has a wonderful and positive sense of humor. She sent quite a number of pictures for me to help get to the grandchildren of the late Mr. and Mrs. D. C. McLaughlin. Now, I must start again trying to find that family in Lufkin. We still haven't negotiated the transfer of Mr. Mac's diploma of pharmacy certification, recently passed on to me by Greg Majors. Wow. That's a long story. One day, I will get all these loose ends tied down.

There is for me, the ongoing, unending story of the Texas State Railroad. Please don't just wait and wonder. Do something. Write a letter to the editor, any publication. Send letters to our state

Rep. Chuck Hopson, state Sen. Robert Nichols, also the governor, lieutenant governor and speaker of the house. Don't think for one minute that your voice doesn't count. Your opinion matters. Help all of us who are doing our best to save the train.

It is true that I let my thoughts turn to the past to write for this space. That's because I know the past so much better than the present or future. Now that's supposed to make you smile, at least. And it lets me begin a new thought about new people. Many brand new citizens are all around us, no doubt. But until our paths cross, we don't know each other. We've had wonderful opportunities recently to meet several welcomed additions to the community of Rusk. One is Doug Byfield who with his wife Lela lives in the beautiful Guinn Hill Home on top of Guinn Hill. They have renamed this historic structure Grace Manor and they are promoting it as the potential site for others' historic moments, like weddings. Doug is the admitted "honey do" man and he is working his heart out to bring this mansion of beauty to a pristine state of remembered elegance. Watch for more on this couple as time goes by. Another couple is Ann Hunicutt who with

her spouse are proud owners of another historic structure in downtown Rusk. They have bought property that once belonged to the Moseley family. But Ann is pursuing its history, starting with the architect who played a major role in Rusk's early development.

For all of you program chairmen seeking speakers for your special organization, here are two new names for you to find, meet and invite to come and talk to your group.

They are wonderful people and no doubt will contribute greatly to the future of our community. To keep these highly important, historic properties alive and well is a significant contribution. I can only wish for them the long life of love and work in Rusk that it has been our privilege to enjoy.

February is traditionally Black History Month. I am grateful that a month was finally designated to focus on a body of people who have contributed so much to the growth and development of our nation and world. In recent copy crossing my desk, this statement by the late Martin Luther King spoke to my heart and sense of humor.

Please enjoy. "We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now." Go ahead. Grin.

HIGH POINTS FROM EL CAMINO REAL

Texas Independence Day came and went along El Camino Real without much fanfare. I often wonder how our little stretch of the old road looked back in the days when Texas was fighting for its independence. We have a rich history that we can be proud of, but it seems that the holidays that haven't been commercialized just get forgotten. Our early Texas pioneers fought and won us a pretty good place to live and I guess we ought to do more to remember them. Fortunately I haven't forgotten your four bits' worth of news.

We were saddened to hear of the passing of **Bennice Russell**. Ms. Russell is the mother of Vicki and Dixie Russell who teach at the Alto Middle School. Ms. Russell passed away Saturday after a short illness. Please keep the Russell family in your prayers as they mourn the passing of their loved one.

Pat Lindsey fell at the post office a couple of weeks ago and shattered her knee. She is in a Palestine rehab center getting better. We need to keep Pat in our prayers and maybe we'll have her home and on the mend before long. Get well soon, Pat! We miss you in Alto. Our friend, **Elvin Pea-**



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cock suffered a heart attack last week and underwent bypass surgery Friday at Nacogdoches Memorial Hospital. The surgery went very well and hopefully he will be home before too long. I am always amazed at what doctors can do with hearts these days. Lots of prayers have been lifted up for our friend and we better keep him on our prayer list until he gets home and is fully recovered. Elvin is an important part of our community, and he had us all worried for a few days. Get well soon, Elvin!

Judy Landrum told me in church Sunday that her son **Noel Bradford** received a big award last week. Noel is a Lt. Colonel in the Air Force and is stationed in Colorado Springs, Colo. Noel was named Field Grade Officer of the Year for U.S.

Northern Command. Admiral Tim Keating presented Noel with his award at the ceremony held in Colorado Springs. Noel had been in the Air Force for a good many years and we don't get to see him here in Alto as much as we would like to. We are all proud of him and the job he is doing for our country. Keep up the good work, Noel.

Some of our Alto FFA members showed their agriculture mechanics projects at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo last week. Parents and students worked into the early hours of Tuesday morning doing the last minute touches on the projects. A restored 1957 John Deere Tractor, two trailers, a feeder and a nice metal light stand were carried to the show. **Lauren Pierce** won second place overall for the portable light stand on wheels that she entered. She received a portable welder, a helmet and a bunch of tools as her prize. I know the boys who went had to have been pretty disgusted about being beaten by a girl, but women's lib has arrived to stay. I don't think Lauren will be heading to Alaska to work as a welder on the new pipeline or building ships in a shipyard, but we are proud of her big

win in Houston. Lauren was proud of her win, but she was even prouder that she didn't break a manicured fingernail while building her project. The steers are being shown this week in Houston and next week the heifers will be making the trip. Good luck to all the participants in the show. Now it's time to get ready for the best show of all, the Cherokee County Junior Livestock Show. It will be held at the end of this month.

The Alto Youth Baseball fields came alive on Saturday morning in spite of the cold weather when our area youth poured out for the annual baseball tryouts. Baseball were flying every which way as the little guys and gals warmed up for the tryouts. I figured that I got away lucky without getting hit in the head by one of those stray balls. It seemed to me that there were a lot more kids up there than usual, so we ought to be in for a great year of baseball and softball. It never ceases to amaze me at how excited these kids get over baseball season. They love it and their enthusiasm is contagious. I hope you'll get a chance to go out and enjoy a game or two sometime this season. I'll keep you posted on the upcoming activities and the date of the opening day ceremonies as they become available.

Members of the State

Champion Alto Yellowjacket football team will be receiving their state championship rings this week. They will undoubtedly be the topic of most of the conversations around town this week. The players have been waiting patiently and when the coaches got their rings a week or so ago, the kids became even more anxious. I can't wait to see our boys flashing them around the county. Wear them with pride - you earned them.

Spring Break will be kicking off next week for many area schools. A week off to rest from all the drudgeries of school should be just the thing to get our kids through the rest of the school year. A week away from the little darlings won't be nearly enough for many of our teachers. After preparing for the TAKS test and all the other little extras that go with teaching, I'm sure many of our teachers can only dream of summer.

I guess this just about covers all the Alto news for this issue.

Keep the news pouring in and I'll keep redirecting it to the masses. I'll see ya next week! And remember, **We each need the maturity to recognize that the things that we share are far more important than the disagreements that we have.**

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