

BANNED & BURNED

May 2026

Anthology Volume III: Breaking News

By DENTON WRITING CLUB

Denton Writing Club presided by Laci McGee, founded by Ethan Westerfield.

EXTRA! EXTRA!



Suspected Graves of Forgotten Gods Found on the Moon

By NASA Correspondent, L. McGee

The astronauts of Artemis III found the headstones for forgotten gods of the universe when they landed on the dark side of the moon. This comes after the first humans land on the moon in over 50 years.

On April 22nd, 2028 at 3:18pm Central Standard Time the crew landed the Orion lunar lander for their first spacewalk. During this spacewalk, a twelve-hour window was planned for the crew...
Continued on page 3



May 2026
**Anthology Volume III:
Breaking News**

Editorial and layout
by Lisa Curry, Kit Young, and Laci McGee

Denton Writing Club presided by Laci McGee,
founded by Ethan Westerfield.

For more information, please reach out to us at:
dentonwritingclub@gmail.com.

Contents

- **News Stories**
(by L. McGee, Abigail Borak, Ethan Westerfield, Gabriel Borjas, and Anna Victor)
- **Opinion/Editorial**
(by L.A. Curry, Alexis Lantgen, and L. McGee)
- **Advice Columns**
(by Kit Young, L.A. Curry, Laci McGee, and Alexis Lantgen)
- **Sports**
(by K.R. Wiens)
- **Crime**
(by Alyssa Fox and Kit Young)
- **Arts & Humanities**
(by Laci McGee)
- **Obituary**
(by J.D. Swan)
- **Announcements**
(by Jane Rhode)
- **Reviews**
(by Rashad Blair)
- **Artwork**
(by K.R. Wiens, Lisa Curry, Alexis Lantgen, and Kit Young)

Note that stories included in this “newspaper” are fictional accounts and are not intended to reference or represent any real events or people living or dead. Individual contributors hold and maintain the copyright to their respective pieces.

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

– 1st Amendment

Forgotten Gods

Continued from cover story

to be out of radio connection with Houston. At 11:35pm CST Houston received a transmission nearly four hours before they expected to hear from the Artemis III crew.

Transcript from Artemis III Captain Ari Lewis to Houston

Orion: “Orion to Houston. This is Captain Lewis. We have evacuated the lunar surface and are back in orbit. Oh gods, oh gods.”

Houston: “Captain, this is Houston. What happened, why did you scrub the planned ten hours on the lunar surface?”

Orion: “There are graves on the moon, none of our imagery shows them. We checked and checked again. Graves with names in forgotten languages. At least we think they are graves. There was an odd stone automaton with slow moving stone arms tending the headstones. Wiping away the lunar and cosmic dust that had accumulated over the eons.

“This graveyard is in a crater encircled with cairns. Our lunar lander set down only a couple hundred yards from an obelisk. Each side contained several languages, only one appeared to be a known human language. It read:

Do not speak. Tread with caution. Do not wake the forgotten powers.”

Static crackles over the radio frequency as the captain’s voice faded slowly.

Houston: “Orion, Captain Lewis, are you still there?”

Static crackles over the radio frequency.

Orion: “We’re still here Houston. For now. We read one of the names aloud. One of the few written with English characters. Where was the harm? We ran for our ship when the ground began to rumble. We are sorry, Earth. We are sorry.”

Houston received a last download of images and coordinates. Static crackles over the radio frequency.

End of transmission

Experts at NASA are now going through the last download from the Orion spacecraft and the deep space network is monitoring the lunar surface and the space around it. Nothing has been seen on any of the various imaging devices as of yet. Contact with the Artemis III crew has not been reestablished, but the Orion ship itself can be seen on radar. We will continue to provide updates as they become available.

Wild Siren Luring Men to Demise in Denton County

By Abigail Borak

A recent sighting of what appears to be a siren has been the beginning of a horrific feat of missing persons cases in Denton County.

Between March 13th and March 24th, 2026, a half-bird-half-woman was spotted in the area by several residents. In this time period, several men have disappeared, and strange sounds have been heard at night. Authorities beg for residents to remain inside at night and watch their loved ones closely.

Denton residents went about their days as normal on March 13th, until the creature was spotted near the Old Alton Bridge by Abigail Gabigayle on a late night walk.

“It was horrifying,” she recounts. “It was like something from mythology.”

Abigail notes that multiple attempts to notify the authorities were in vain until the creature was spotted near the Denton Square on March 19th. Residents claim it was seen lurking on rooftops, with dark feathers and the face of a woman. Most accounts align with the same description.

After the sightings, residents began complaining of hearing strange singing at night, between the hours of 3-5 AM. Accounts note that it is an almost ethereal, unworldly voice in another language. Some claim to feel drawn to it.

“It was like nothing else mattered,” says Noah Boa, a local bartender. “I almost walked right into the street to follow it.”

Several other residents recount a similar effect but have been fortunate enough not to find the source. Unfortunately, several men have disappeared since the singing began.

The first is a Mr. Joe Schmoe, loving husband and father. His wife reports that he arrived home as usual at 6 PM on March 22nd. He was behaving as usual and went to bed slightly early that night. When Mrs. Schmoe woke up, he was gone.

“I just never saw him again.” Mrs. Schmoe recounts tearfully. “It was like he just up and left.”

Two other men have been lost since this primary disappearance. Others have been tormented in late hours by the sounds. Such was the case for Dr. Doctor, a professor at UNT.

“My wife had to tie me down to the kitchen table,” he said, distressed. “I was going to kill her if I couldn’t get to the sound.”

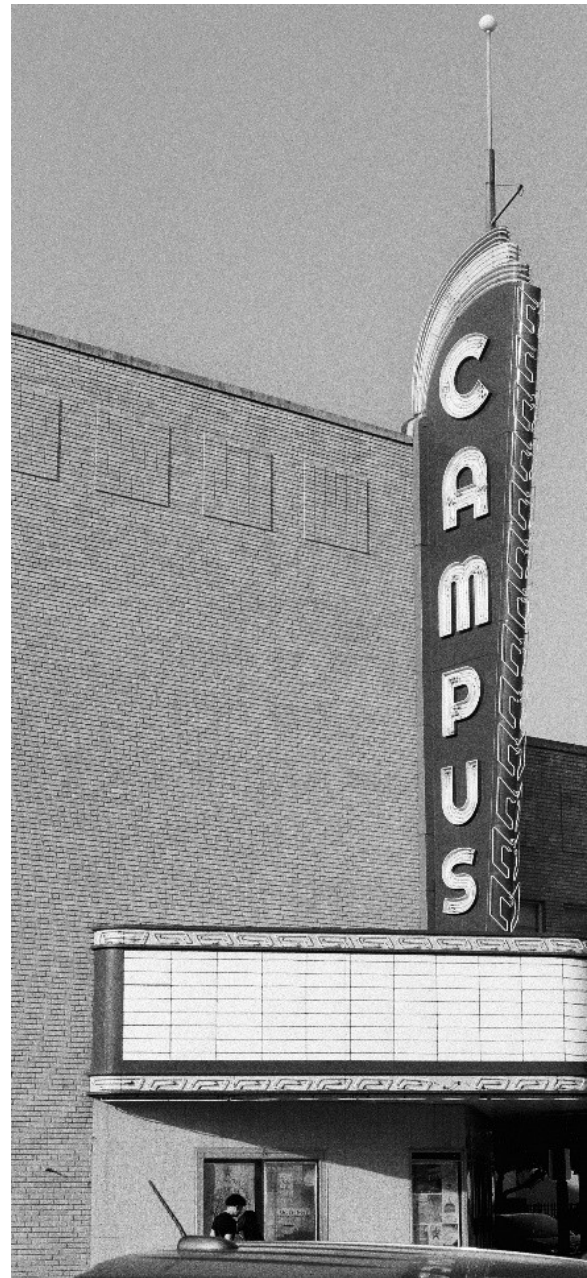
Complaints of the sightings, sounds, disappearances, and strange behaviors reached authorities and they have been searching for evidence of the creature. There have been no signs of the missing men, but animal carcasses have been found, their skin completely removed. Their heads are often severed.

Police Chief Gerald Berald reports his thoughts on the recent events. “We’ve found feathers, but you know, it’s the woods,” he shrugs. “We suspect some cultist behavior, maybe some widespread hysteria. We just don’t want anyone else to get hurt.”

Some residents disagree with his thinking. Abigail Gabigayle claims she knows what she saw. “I’ll never forget it. I would say I can’t believe they’re writing us off, but I really can.”

The authorities are unsure why women aren’t being targeted. They strongly encourage residents to remain home at night, lock the doors, and watch their loved ones closely. Strange behavior, sightings, or sounds can be reported at 940-345-6789.

Chief Berald remarks that he will be calling in bird experts and hunting enthusiasts to assist on the case. No further details were provided.



Residents Debate Opera Ghost Exorcism

By Ethan Westerfield

Denton - DOZENS of people crowded into Denton City Hall Tuesday night to let their opinions be heard regarding a proposed spiritual banishing that has become an extremely contentious community issue. Believed to have passed away between 1903 and 1905, Marianne Lindz was an opera singer in the days when the Denton Opera House operated as an entertainment venue and was known for her impassioned soprano voice, social charm, and numerous interpersonal scandals. Sometime in the 1970s, employees of the Boston Store, a department store making use of the former opera's building space, began to notice odd phenomena including lights flickering, objects moving, and disembodied singing. It was found that the spirit of Lindz remained in the building and was making her presence known.

For years she was a delight to patrons and staff alike, especially in 1990 when the space was taken over by Recycled Books, Records, and CDs. The new occupants were fast to incorporate Lindz's supernatural nature into their burgeoning identity, and today one can still buy Recycled Ghost stickers, t-shirts, and pins around town.

This attitude began to change around 2015, when the ghost of Marianne Lindz began to engage in more disruptive and destructive activities. Bookshelves toppled over, hair pulled, faces slapped, money missing, and disturbing manifestations are all now common occurrences in and around the old Opera building. One employee of the store, who wished to remain anonymous, recalls "I think she's tried to trip or push all of us at least once. It was just an annoyance for a while, but a couple weeks ago one of my coworkers almost fell down the basement steps. She said that she caught herself and looked up to see Mary just hovering there and staring into the

distance, arm still outstretched and blood running from her eyes. It's dangerous and something needs to be done."

And something has been suggested. A proposition has come forward to use city funds to hire the North Texas Paranormal Center to forcibly subdue, remove, and banish Lindz's spirit. The organization has been engaged in several other high-profile cases of paranormal disruption, most notably the capturing of Ambrose Maynard, the Vampire of Grapevine and the slaying of an invasive Kelpie in Lake Lewisville. However, many in the community have expressed their outrage at such a proposition.

"It's an absolute travesty." Lisa Curry says into the microphone. "Spirits like this don't just become angry for no reason. If we were willing to dedicate the time to discovering what is troubling her, we could help her find some semblance of peace instead of condemning her to an unknown fate." Proponents of the 'RIP Option' state that the money used to hire the NTPC could instead be used to research Lindz's life, death, and particular supernatural triggers. Coexistence being the end goal. Critics say that this option will take far too long, and the situation is time sensitive.

"Look, I'd love to help her and make it so she can find some semblance of peace, but not at the cost of people's safety and sanity." This from Denton resident and actor Jason Lee. "I'm also worried about what her outbursts may mean for surrounding businesses on the square. I've had to replace several windows at one of my establishments due to her shrieking singing literally shattering the glass at 2 am." This comment draws audible scorn from a group of UNT students holding various homemade signs showing support for the RIP Option. "Dislike it if you like," Lee continues, "We have to act for the living."

The Denton City Council will be accepting testimony and opinions for two more days before making a final decision regarding Lindz. It's expected that many more people will wish for their voices to be heard regarding the future of Denton's resident singing specter.

Chaos in His Majesty's Kitchens as Witches Union Flies High!

By Anna Victor

Tuesday tiffin at his majesty's table was lacking one element usually vital for a lunch service: food. A barren banquet not due to drought, famine, or mismanaged schedules laid out before the king and his family.

The witches union continues its fight for kitchen witches benefits. This means the kingdom should expect empty plates, and cauldrons which are anything but bubbling.

A representative of the union, Charise Cheddarhex, had this to say during Tuesday's strike, "most folk think that since witches aren't burnt at the stake anymore we should be grateful but we have rights same as any other creature of the realm. Not being murdered in broad daylight is far from equality. Witches want to live. We need wages to do it."

Several other magical beings and well-known heroes of the kingdom spoke at the rally. Sir Robert, the slayer of Girk, the gray dragon of the Mountain of Eternal Troubles and Savior of the Far West Villages proclaimed, "I stand with the witches." The shine of his new plate armor could be seen three blocks away, and city guard sources say, did contribute to a sizable carriage collision near the temple of mirrors.

Other incidents surrounding the strike were reported but unverified as related: two husbands turned into newts, one swarm of bats attacking a jester, and a crowd of young women chanting and possibly dancing.

As a part of the Bardic Circle or Privilege, I was given the privilege of sitting down and discussing current events with the royal bloodline.

Holding his stomach, the king declared, "I have always valued the work of our kitchen witches. It used to be a great honor to work in the palace, now it's treated like any other job!"

In response to the strike, his majesty has been employing kitchen wizards to compensate for the lack of foodsafe hands. Notably, most orders of kitchen wizards avoid group settings as they encourage experimentation and discourage the use of caution. However, it was felt by the royal family that desperate times called for desperate measures.

Her majesty, the queen, gave us this statement, after being in several hours of consultation with her board of advisors, "ribbit."

This bard must now make the necessary contextual note that our sovereign lady has, after eating a piece of toast, been transformed into a cat, made all the stranger by the observation that she is making noises usually associated with frogs.

Brinley Brittlebroom, a witch on strike from the palace kitchens had this advice for the royal family, "there are no shortcuts. There are no secret rituals to fix our troubles. There is only the constant and honest work of listening and from that building on what we have learned."

As tensions rise between nobility and peasantry, strikes, disruption of services, and even hexes may be expected. It is yet unclear, even by crystal ball, what outcome of this movement will be.

Ghosts Around Town?

By Gabriel Borjas

In the past week, the Denton Police Department has received numerous calls from concerned residents, claiming that strange blue lights have appeared in the middle of their living rooms, backyards, kitchens and even inside their toilets.

What first started as spooky apparitions has quickly turned into a ghostly pest. The police have already started to investigate such claims, but are still unable to find a reasonable explanation for such a mysterious phenomenon.

A witness, who preferred to stay anonymous, stated that they first spotted the orbs on March 31st. "I was coming back from my night shift at the hospital," the witness claims. "I was getting out of my car when I noticed something bright being reflected on the

windows of my car. At first, I thought it was a streetlight on the corner, but then I noticed it was slowly descending onto the sidewalk. I turned around, and squinted my eyes, trying to understand what I was looking at, which seemed to be a kind of blue orb. It was emitting a soft light and it didn't seem to be menacing, but when it started coming my way, my instincts kicked in, and I ran as fast as I could into my house. From my front door's peephole, I saw the light making its way slowly along the sidewalk, past my driveway and beyond, till I couldn't see it.

We interviewed Dr. Alex Lymbery, a local parapsychologist known in town for his 40 years of research in the field of the supernatural.

“For decades, Denton has been known as one of the most haunted places in America,” the doctor explained. “Cryptids, including the likes of hairy hominids, skinwalkers, ghosts, as well as Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP) and even demonic entities, are all part of a broad range of sightings that have been reported since city's humbling beginnings as a settlement.

Although regarded as wild and crazy claims by many, the recent orb sightings should not come as a surprise to our citizens. It is a very known fact that Denton's primary bedrock is limestone, which has been proven to retain residual energy from ancient living organisms, due to its electromagnetic properties. This type of rock attracts all kinds of entities. It is like fertile soil to them, due to its nutritious “energetic” content.

As for the orbs, I am still not sure what the reason for their apparition could be. It is the first time we have seen something like this in our county and clearly more research needs to be done. My first thought is that it could be a case of “place-memory theory,” which explains that even places are able to remember, or at least “record” past events, and later replay them in our present, in a sort of energetic loop. But as to why it happens until now, we still don't know.

The orbs could also be ghostly apparitions, lost souls looking for something they lost or someone they loved.”

Agnes, a 93-year-old resident of an assisted living home has had a different reaction to the orbs.

“I remember my mother telling me stories about the ghosts she would see every night by the lake from the front porch of her house. I can't help but have the feeling that it's her visiting me. When the orb appeared in the middle of the living room the other night, I couldn't stop myself from screaming her name. I am sure it was her because it started jumping up and down, in what I believe was recognition, and later started dancing in circles around me. HUZZA! HUZZA! All the other members were startled and scared to their bones, even poor old Lisa was on the verge of a heart attack, but not me, no sir. I could never be afraid of Momma.”

Three missing people reports have already been filed. It is still unknown if there's any relation between the disappearances and the mysterious lights. No official information has been given yet by authorities, but they have strictly advised people to stay inside after dark and not interact, under any circumstances, with the blue orbs.



Letters to the Editor

To the editor:

If there is one thing I can't stand about Denton, it's all the damned vampires.

They're everywhere. It's an epidemic, especially on the Square at night. While I acknowledge the presence of the daywalkers, they are much harder to identify and are generally less problematic than their nighttime counterparts. No, the real issue is the night dwellers who lurk around once the sun goes down. The so-called "students" are night stalkers. The "families" out well after the streetlights come on are kindred. Those aren't innocent children, they are dhampirs, born into the night scene. The goths — well, they are human. For now.

The Denton Writing Club are at least half revenants. Stay the hell away from them. The lamia especially like to frequent karaoke nights, presumably because they're bored. But most often they are drawn to the Square because of the mad god that lives beneath the old courthouse. Evil attracts evil, after all.

And what are we supposed to do about these would-be menaces? We cannot simply drive them off with fire and stakes the way they did in the old days, because that would be a "violation of their rights." It doesn't matter that up until "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" became a sensation, they were considered monsters.

We must go back to the old ways, starting with razing the courthouse to the ground, salting the earth, and burning sage over the location for good measure. That will solve the majority of the vampire scourge, especially the ones who bring their hell hounds out to "make offerings" on the courthouse grounds. We can replace the streetlights with human-friendly UV lights to deter any hunting on the Square. Granted, this only solves the vampire problem in one location; however, this is a single step of a much larger plan to reclaim Denton for the humans. You can read the entire 400-page proposal at www.vampire-free-Denton.wordpress.com. Make our town a vampire-free zone again!

To the editor:

My Gnomish brothers and sisters, for too long we have suffered the onslaughts of humans and their henchmen, the trolls.

They have time and time again destroyed our crops, especially the dandelions and milkweeds, leaving us without produce or fodder for our butterfly herds.

They have hired trolls to drive us from our homes, and many of our noble brethren have been beaten or crushed beneath their monstrous clubs.

They have insisted on displaying offensive caricatures of our Uncle Edgar on their lawns and gardens.

Worst of all, the powerful among them deny our very existence!

It is time, my friends, time for us to fight back and demand justice even if it means braving the entities that live beneath the human courthouse. We may be small in stature, but our hearts and minds are mighty!

Our demands are as follows:

1. All troll activity and human-troll collaboration must cease immediately, and the trolls must return to their designated caves, sewers, or bridges.
2. Our lost crops must be restored or replaced with suitable flowers. We are particularly keen for an increase in bluebonnets, wild bergamot, purple coneflowers, all varieties of clovers, and milkweed for the herds.
3. Furthermore, the humans will cease using any poisons that affect our comrades-in-arms, the bees, or our noble steeds, the butterflies.
4. The humans will remove all depictions of Uncle Edgar from their lawns.
5. Lastly, they will acknowledge and respect the rights of the Gnomish republic and the free gnomes therein for perpetuity.

For the flowers!

For the bees!

For our ancient watchtowers, the trees!

Signed, Gruntilda Hoffensflower
(Alexis Lantgen)

From the editor:

We, as a culture, are banning too many books. If someone does not like a book, they have the option to not read it. They also have the option to not allow their children to read it. But one person or one community's dislike of a book or bigger topic should not ban it.

No book should be banned. Full stop. No book should be banned for any reason. Books are a form of art. Some may be dry and dull, some might be full of smut, some might address difficult topics - especially topics that make people uncomfortable. They need to be available.

Books are power, reading is power. To quote Doctor Who, "Book! The best weapons in the world." How to fix book bans is the question. I don't have a solid answer. Because some book bans are rooted in the need to take away people's power. The answer is also the issue: education.

We need to educate parents on why diverse reading is important, even if they do choose to set limits. Because even I can agree that there are books out there that are not appropriate for a young audience,

but those books should still be available to the target audience. We also need to help foster a love of reading in children and young adults. If they love to read, discovery, conversation, and research will hopefully help lead them to things that are different, but not bad, when they are of the appropriate age. The best way to foster both of these might be to encourage parents to read to their children or, if they are older, to read with their children. This could be a time for parents and children to explore new and potentially difficult ideas together and prepare children better if and when those children hear about these difficult topics out in the world.

Is this a perfect solution, no. But it is a start, a place to begin. And even if children and young adults don't learn the facts of the topics, they hopefully will learn other things. Learning to read helps with so many things: learning to communicate, language development, learning context clues, helping with empathy, and understanding diverse groups among a number of other things. Reading makes us better as individuals, it makes us better as a society. Reading helps us find wonder and hope in the dark.

By Laci McGee



Dear City Historians,

What's under the Square?

I've lived in Denton for decades and heard all sorts of things that explain why our city is as odd as it is, but the greatest explanation, in scale and in actual literal scale, is that there's something under the square itself.

I heard the courthouse is just a fake courthouse that hides a second, true and golden courthouse beneath.

I heard stories that there's an odd gem kept in a cave in the hill the square sits upon.

I once was told that the city streets form a strange metamagickal rune that imprisons a mad being.

Which is it, or is it all three? Or more?

Signed, Concerned Citizen on the Square

Dear Concerned Citizen,

You're not wrong, but not entirely right, either. There is indeed a mad being living deep in the caverns beneath the old courthouse, so deep no one goes there anymore except for the priests who keep watch in the basement. The courthouse hides the ancient temple, which the original city-state of Den'ton was built around. The newer facade of the courthouse has been maintained by the priests, hiding in plain sight as government workers, as they are the only ones qualified to do the massive amount of paperwork that goes along with hiding a mad god in plain sight.

The odd gem you speak of was stolen (or possibly misplaced—you know how bureaucracy goes) around the time the new courthouse was being built. Some say it was stolen by a rival group trying to raise another old god for the new location. So far, if true, they have failed.

The streets are indeed a runic symbol, thus all the intersecting one-way streets, as the flow of traffic helps power the magick behind it. However, it is not a prison, as nothing known on earth can contain the mad god. And who would want to try?

I hope this answers some of your questions, Concerned Citizen. There is actually nothing to be concerned about, and no further questions should arise from your initial query. No further questions should arise from this inquiry. Do you understand? No. Further. Questions. Should. Arise.

Dear Gardening Guru,

My neighbor, Frank, is a rogue geneticist. He recently released a pack of protoceratops that have eaten all of my prize-winning Jurassic ferns. The protoceratops are large enough that I'm struggling to shoo them away. Scarecrows, high-pitched noises, and scented sprays have proved ineffective.

How can I convince my neighbor to rein in his destructive pets? I have considered releasing a pack of velociraptors to control their population, but my husband is afraid it will escalate the situation if Frank loses a limb. I say, it would serve him right!

What do you say?

**Sincerely, A Pissed Off Paleobotanist/
Alexis Lantgen**

Dear Pissed Off Paleobotanist,

Issues with the neighbors' pets are rarely an easy problem to solve and I had to do some research on the best way for you to deal with the genetically engineered proto-triceratops. I have a couple of suggestions that are less drastic than raptors that may cause bodily harm to humans.

The first option is cattle prods. Shock them when the proto-triceratops get near your Jurassic era plant life. Or now that I think about it, you could give some plants to the neighbor to grow so that the little dinos can eat those instead of yours.

My more drastic thought is to get animal control to make the neighbor put up an electric fence to keep in the proto-triceratops on their property. Then the beasts cannot go gallivanting off across the neighborhood causing damage.

I hope these suggestions help you to deal with these giant pets. Please don't release the proto-raptors, animal-as-a-weapon murder is still illegal.

Best, Gardening Guru/Laci McGee

Primer:

Just last week I received two advice requests from two people who I suspect are employed within the same organization and wrote in about one another. This likely took place immediately after a heated discussion based on timestamps and that they both left their work signatures in the emails probably lends to the idea of them working together.

Good Morning, Colleagues,

The professional world can bring even the most collected, civil people into conflict with one another. Rest assured that this is a normal, even expected experience that we will all encounter at least few times in our careers.

In that spirit, I wanted to discuss communication and conflict resolution in the workplace and how that can bring clarity to identifying the true point of conflict, assist with solutioning, and then implementation of a mutually beneficial solution.

Consider first, a neutral location for a productive resolution session. While a meeting room may be the reflexive answer, I encourage you both to

explore a location away from the office. A grassy lawn in your local park, an open, paved space surrounded by Wushu monks, circular or squared conversation pit or a long, unprotected pathway over a series of bladed, spinning wheels may bring you both to an understanding of how truly important or unimportant the point of conflict may be.

Next, examine the point of conflict. Is it in processes, expectations of results, or expectation of communication cadences? Something like misplaced soul containers, documents regarding illicit real estate deals, or the delivery may actually just be misunderstandings. I suggest that you both take time to settle emotions by feeling them out, then setting them aside to analyze events that have taken place so you can meet at your mutually chosen location with complete thoughts and a trained focus on solutions.

Following your time apart and with a location chosen, it may be a boon to bring an impartial mediator to the solutioning session. An impartial mediator may work as a referee, a master of ceremonies of sorts, and may help to organize the session. Working with your mediator, work out timing - you'll want to discuss topics in rounds, provide yourself with breaks, then resume solutioning. Their ability to announce the start and end of each round of solutioning, the results of the round, and if anyone attempts to interrupt.

At the session, conduct yourselves at your utmost, obey the commands of the mediator, remember to never hit below the belt with insults, go to your corners if someone needs to take a knee. No biting, headbutting, kicking, tripping, or wrestling.

Now let's get it on.

UNT Struggles to Start Season

By K.R. Wiens

The first two games for new Mean Green football coach Charlie Blaze have not gone to plan.

Last week, UNT was rolled over in Bloomington, Indiana by the defending national champions, the Indiana Hoosiers. Losses are always hard to swallow, that one was expected. Indiana beats everybody and the Hoosiers are still very good.

What was more puzzling, though, was the Mean Green's loss Saturday afternoon to UNLV. With time winding down, and the Mean Green facing a 4th down trailing by three, quarterback Freddy Jimenez was stuffed on a sneak over the right tackle. UNLV held on to win 45-42.

"A very head-scratching game," Blaze told me after the loss. "We were the better team out there, but came up just short." Blaze lamented his team just seemingly losing all focus and discipline at critical times in the game, including the 4th down failure.

"I don't know," Blaze said, "but it seems like our guys just lost their talent out there. We're bigger, stronger, and faster than that. You'll see it on the tape."

As I was ending the interview, Blaze added, "Perhaps there really is something to that missing gem stone or amulet or whatever it is. That thing that was under the courthouse."

This stopped me dead in my tracks. I asked him to explain more. Blaze just shook his head and shrugged.

It's not a good sign when the new head coach of an 0-2 team is already grasping at straws to explain losses. The well-publicized loss of our cherished gem is not to blame. Perhaps the play-calling is? Or the poor play of the defensive line?

The scuttlebutt around town has gotten to Charlie Blaze. It is, to me, merely a coincidence that half the Square has burned and a giant fissure has appeared in the Kroger parking lot, or that the press box of the UNT stadium was infested with locusts. Coincidence. Nothing more. Perhaps Blaze should study more film of next week's opponent rather than the sensational headlines.

RENT-A-TROLL!

TROLL BASHING! ● FUN TO WATCH ● CLEAR GARDEN GNOMES FAST!

Are you sick of gnomes taking over your gardens?
Are you tired of constantly pulling dandelions?
Does the quiet buzz of their Revolutionary fervor leave you exhausted and annoyed?
Then Rent-A-Troll is for you!

Our quality troll rentals come with a free club or bludgeoning weapon. They can crush any gnomish village in minutes! The screams of gnomish widows and children will be music to your ears as our rental trolls grind troublemakers into dust!
But wait, there's more!
The magic released from the guts and ground bones of gnomes will leave your garden a terrifying graveyard for insects of all kinds, scaring away ticks, aphids, butterflies, and most ants and bees*!

Affordable prices, including free with the surrender of an eligible soul!

*WARNING! Those ants or bees that survive the calamity may be susceptible to forming magical death cults and/or roving apocalyptic murder bands. They are also very emo.

FREE FOR ELIGIBLE CUSTOMERS!*

*MUST SURRENDER SOUL; NONREFUNDABLE

The Pickler Strikes Again

By Alyssa Fox

Last night the Pickler struck again, reported police. Another jar of unidentified pickles was found in a Windsor area apartment complex at 11:37pm. Like the seventeen incidents before, the label was indecipherable, but the pickles — always cucumber — were in a blue glass gallon jar with a sealed plastic lid. This does deviate from the Pickler's green glass jar with a sealed metal lid, but the police do not think it is a copycat.

"The jar label is a dead giveaway that this is the Pickler's work. It just means they are diversifying their delivery of pickles. We will have patrols in the area for the next two weeks," Police Commissioner Durst Haverfield told the press. This falls within the Pickler's occasional habit to strike in the same area within the fourteen-day period.

Home and business surveillance cameras have not caught the Pickler in the act. Often there is something that interrupts the field of view, either a leaf, a cat, or even a mechanical glitch for less than a quarter of a second.

"That's F1 speeds right there," stated Kyp Neno, whose yard was targeted by the Pickler during the ninth incident.

Police remind youths to call 911 when encountering these jars of unidentified pickles rather than collecting them for their own mischief or opening them. 15-year-old Adrian Oldsey still has not awakened from unsealing the jar from the fifth incident. He is in stable condition, "sleeping it off" as a note stated found under the sixth jar. This case is ongoing and police will keep the press informed.

Man Arrested for Loitering in Park

By Kit Young

"He was brooding deeply, I don't know why." - Sodden bystander

On Saturday afternoon, during the wave of weekend storms, a man identified only as F.W.D. by local authorities, was arrested for loitering in the city park for several hours following what witnesses described as a "heated, melodramatic, argumentative, yet markedly emotional encounter with a younger woman."

Local constabulary, G.H. Whittaker remarked, "I wanted to bring him a heavier coat and perhaps an umbrella of some sort, but he appeared frozen firmly to where he stood and said nothing. Because of the risk to his health, I issued the man a rather hefty fine as he is an grown a-dult and should set a better standard of behavior for our impressionable youth. We can't have them all grow to be fouled little anklebiting rapscallions, can we?"

Witnesses reported that the thoroughly waterlogged man would not be broken from his high catatonic state, and so Whittaker and another constable who could not be reached at the time of this writing opted to roughhouse the man, placing him in handcuffs before walking him to lockup.

This incident marks one of several recent incidents within the year wherein the city law has been more aggressively pursued than many advocates say is necessary. Local golden retriever in human form, who preferred to be named only as C.B. said of the happening, "He's the quiet sort, he was only of concern to himself and possibly his laundrist and cobbler, what with the rain."

The fully moistened man was observed by a strangely diminutive man of the cloth to have said, "Lizzie" as F.W.D. was taken away.

Tailoring Business Explodes in Denton, International Crime Implicated

By Kit Young

"Was this why all those angry Japanese men stood in the Square and wore black suits in June?" - Emery Higgins, Denton Resident

Denton Economist Torrey Pines first noticed a sudden increase in tailoring and clothier activity as these businesses began fever hiring sprees and new karaoke bars took root.

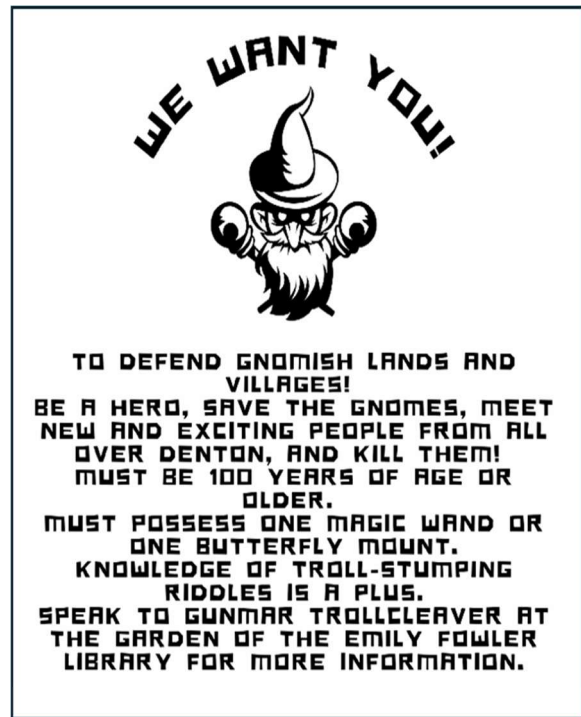
"Normally this wouldn't be a big deal, but all the owners said the orders were always for black suits, and if not black suits, then really showy ones. The tailors never turned the work down since the clients were always incredibly polite, always ordered in big groups and nothing seemed untowards. Also, the fits were always impeccable. I know personally; they helped me fit for my wedding and set my wedding reception up at a new karaoke bar that absolutely slaps," Pines said.

According to concerned residents, the unusual economic activity would not be of concern if not for the matching increase in construction of unusually large business complexes, where suits are often worn, and the matched timing with the splitting of the Courthouse on the Square and sudden uptick in Dallas-Fort Worth business

licenses in or related to the excavation, archaeology, mythology and gem appraisal fields.

"It's always construction and real estate and suits and sometimes weird artifacts! That's what you see in all those crime movies!" said town movie buff and known hallucinator, Craig DeLos Santos.

When asked about the issue, Denton County District Attorney Jenna Cuthbert stated, "Look, I guess I could investigate this, but there's nothing specifically illegal about wearing a suit in June, gathering on the Square, being angry, or being Asian."



WE WANT YOU!

**TO DEFEND GNOMISH LANDS AND VILLAGES!
BE A HERO, SAVE THE GNOMES, MEET
NEW AND EXCITING PEOPLE FROM ALL
OVER DENTON, AND KILL THEM!
MUST BE 100 YEARS OF AGE OR
OLDER.
MUST POSSESS ONE MAGIC WAND OR
ONE BUTTERFLY MOUNT.
KNOWLEDGE OF TROLL-STUMPING
RIDDLES IS A PLUS.
SPEAK TO GUNMAR TROLLCLEAVER AT
THE GARDEN OF THE EMILY FOWLER
LIBRARY FOR MORE INFORMATION.**



**TROLL BASH GNOME
TROLL GET GOLD
TROLL EAT BONE
BUC-EE'S**

Importance of Making Physical Art

By L. McGee

We spend a lot of time staring at screens. I'm typing this on a laptop now but only because it is the best way to get this idea across or I could make short form content but that would include video editing that would probably get lost in the mass of videos in the doomscroll. I'll stick to words. We need to step away, we need to make things with our hands. We need to make bad art because bad, unskilled, rough, starter art is the way to becoming good at something. Yes, it takes time, but nothing is wonderful created in a day. It always takes time.

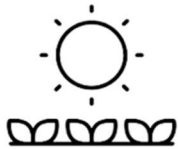




Art rewires our brain. Art, no matter the quality, demonstrates to ourselves that we can do things, that we can make things that exist in the physical world. We can hide that art away or we can show it off but it exists because we willed it and worked it into creation.

When I say physical art, I initially meant a drawing, a painting, building something,

fabric arts, and the like. Arts that would leave you with physical proof that you created something with your own hands.

However, I'm going to expand this definition: music, a good meal shared with loved ones. Things that are temporary but no less meaningful for their fleetingness.

Humans are meant to move, to create, to learn not to be sedentary creatures. We are meant to explore the depths of the oceans and the vastness of the universe, not this drudgery. So go out there and make mistakes in your art, do it wrong. Take that encouragement and do it again. You can find the beauty, sharpen your mind. Do it again and again and again until you get it right and while you do so, encourage others to go and create their own bit of beauty. Step away from the ease of AI. Do the hard things.

Denton Area Five-day Forecast				
<p>Tuesday</p>  <p>Perfect for Writing Club H: 78 L: 76 Sunset: 7:30pm</p>	<p>Wednesday</p>  <p>Gray and rainy. Muggy and gross. H: 86 L: 80 Sunset: Won't be able to see it</p>	<p>Thursday</p>  <p>Chance of fire. And dragons. H: 112 L: 95 Sunset: 7:35pm</p>	<p>Friday</p>  <p>Cold front. Not a chance in hell of snow. H: 40 L: 32 Sunset: 7:40pm</p>	<p>Saturday</p>  <p>Mad god event. Everything all at once H: 98 L: 30 Sunset: Never again</p>

The Thing That Lived Beneath the Courthouse

By J.D. Swan

The former residents of Denton Texas are saddened and relieved to announce the passing of The Thing That Lived Beneath the Courthouse. The Thing That Lived Beneath the Courthouse had no name, and we all know why. It spent its days in a dreamless slumber in the limestone where it was born. We all remember or have heard of the Great Hypnogogic Jerk of 1985, a 3.3 shift on the Richter Scale and believed to be the point where the denizens of Denton started to get weird, the point where the pigeons stopped landing on the West Side of the Courthouse, and the point the vampires started roaming the nights. We kept quiet about these things, in part because it is quite impossible to tell in a college town who is a creature of the night and who is a pre-med who has forgotten about sunlight and food, and because to draw attention to the strangeness is to draw the attention of The Thing. The passing of the Thing That Lived Beneath the Courthouse was preceded by the construction of the controversial Underground Rally Car Race-Sumo Fight Club and Taco Shack, a project spearheaded by Mr. K. Fox, a local entrepreneur, now deceased.

We would like to take a moment to say this piece is meant to eulogize, not condemn. That being stated, the construction of the Underground Rally Car Race-Sumo Fight Club and Taco Shack brought about increased seismic activity to the area as well as revealed a hidden chamber which revealed The Gem. The Gem, as we all

know, is something which came from The Thing, was what The Thing came from, or something else entirely. Soon after its discovery a segment of Denton's lizard-person population raised concerns about The Gem's safety in proximity to the general populus, concerns proven tragically accurate as not even three hours later, the gem was stolen by an unknown cabal of cultists. The effects were immediate; dogs and cats began to rain from the sky, the moon turned chartreuse, and the 'O' returned to the Morrison Corn Kits' sign.

The Thing That Lived Beneath the Courthouse passed on Tuesday around 7pm. The Thing leaves behind older siblings Yog'Sothoth, Ikthyklya, a lingering scent of tacos, and a seven-mile-deep crater where Denton used to be. Services will be held in the boundary places between light and shadow. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that the petty humans never do this again. The Thing That Lives Beneath the Courthouse is expected to regenerate after the next blood moon.



Love in Chaos: A Denton Engagement

By Jane Rhode

Two Denton citizens, R and D (full names obscured for privacy), have agreed to be united in marriage on April 18th, 2026.

After dating for two years, the couple visited the underground tunnels of the courthouse to have their union approved by the gem. Dressed in their best fighting gear and armed with torches and garlic, they descended down the long hallways leading to the holiest of places for Dentonites.

D described worrying about the other perils the couple might encounter while underground, having heard tales of minotaurs and the lost tourists who hunger for tacos and drag racing. Fortunately, they arrived at the gem unscathed.

R and D recounted their love to the gem, telling it of all they had conquered, the ways they had grown together, and asked for their union to be blessed.

After being bathed in the glowing green light of enthusiastic support, they celebrated with friends and family and exchanged the traditional rings.

The couple is planning for a daytime wedding ceremony, so as to comply with both city and Vampire League ordinances.

They have asked that everyone who sends flowers check that they are ethically purchased first, as R is under an employment contract with a gnomish corporation.

They would like to extend their deepest gratitude to friends, family, supporters, neighbors, and the gem for making this engagement possible.

**Are you unemployed? Retired? Need a secondary source of income?
Join us today for an exciting new opportunity with guaranteed earnings
and immediate benefits working at the historic courthouse.**

- Learn new skills such as **rune translation**, **ritualistic chanting**, and **iconography**
- Help to curate our growing collection of **occult artifacts** for the museum
- Be a part of our squad of **guardians** for the "Tomb of the Unknown God"
- Or sign up to be one of the elite: human **sacrifices**

Training is available for all open positions. No walk-ins. If interested, visit our website at **www.WeAreNotaCult.gov/careers** and apply online today.

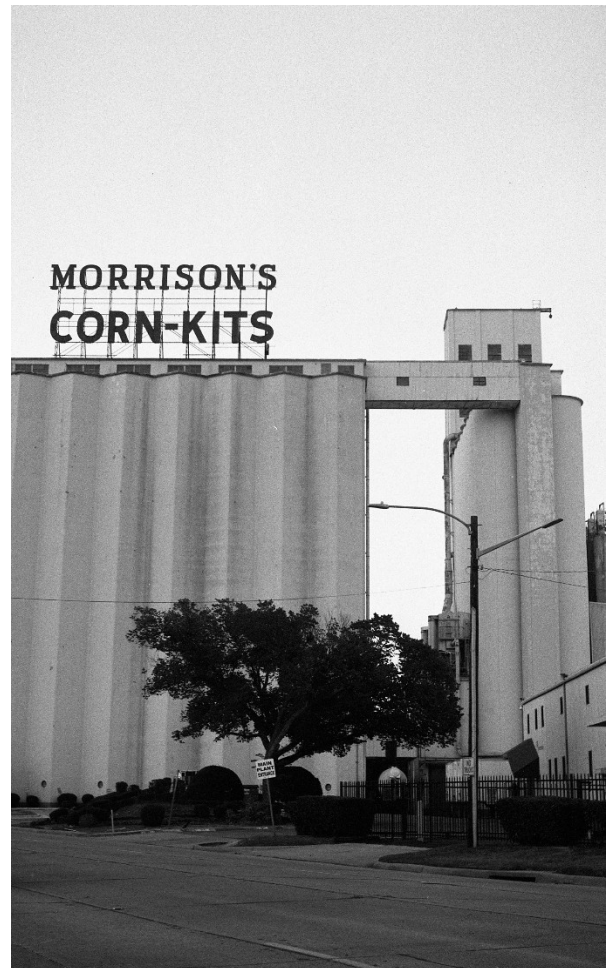
Reverb! A Review of Denton's Hidden Gem

By Rashad Blair

My life partners decided to check out a relatively new spot this past weekend. I don't recall any buzz prior to this place seemingly appearing out the ether one evening a few months ago. A small one-story building, taking up the parking lot across from East. The inside was the complete opposite of how unassuming it was outside. The walls were burnt orange blending into sky blue and gold, reminiscent of dawn. Up on the ceiling were bright green leaves with sunflowers woven through vines. Mist sprayed from the sunflowers disc florets.

After gawking at how beautiful the place was, we were called over to one of several tables by vague humanoids. You can't quite see their faces, but they seemed to vibrate a kaleidoscope of light. Their clothes, if they wore any, were greatly obscured. It was less calling us over with words, and more so emitting high tones that evoked calmness and invitation. We seemed to understand their meaning and took seats at a free table they surrounded. Before us were metallic bowls accompanied by a small mallet, clear liquid inside. The vague humanoids raised what might have been hands in a circular motion in front of them. As instructed, we circled the top with our fingertips till there was a chiming resonance. The clear liquid inside spiraled and changed into different drinks my partners and I usually ordered from local bars. We took a few sips when suddenly the room seemed to darken. One of the vague beings stood in the center of the room, waving their arms(?) around. They began undulating lower and higher tones again and again. Light emanated from them, illuminating the room to near blinding.

Vibrations cascaded against us, like shores crashed by the tide. This lasted for several minutes till everything was back to normal. No light show, no dizzying sounds, but on the table was the bill. We paid our tabs, thanked the vibrating beings and made our way out the door. The staff were friendly, the service quick and efficient. The entertainment(?) was hypnotic and resonating. A solid 4 out of 5 stars. Would recommend to fellow citizens of Denton night life.



A special thank you to our supporters:



Read our previous zines here:

Volume I: Cryptids & Folklore



Volume II: Love, Food, & Yearning



Has your inner child gone missing?

Are you stuck in a dull gray routine?

Are you an adult missing your sense of whimsy?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then this zine is the cure for you.

Banned & Burned Vol. 3 by the Denton Writing Club is the product of several weeks of diving into journalism and news styles of writing. While the stories might be fiction, the lessons learned are real. Jump into tales of ancient gods and magic gems, a hidden war of gnomes vs. trolls, along with a whole host of magical creatures who walk among us or maybe hunt. Let's find your sense of wonder and help keep Denton weird.

