



7th Grade Volleyball A Team

Front row left to right: Brittany Moore, Angel Mason, Laura Taylor, Kayla Machart, Kayleigh Pausewang, Coach Angela Richter. Back row left to right: Jerrisa McAfee, Oleatha Coleman, Lori Peterson, Katlyn Tesch, Mallory Thomas, Melissa Hassin.

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Diabetic Support Group Meeting

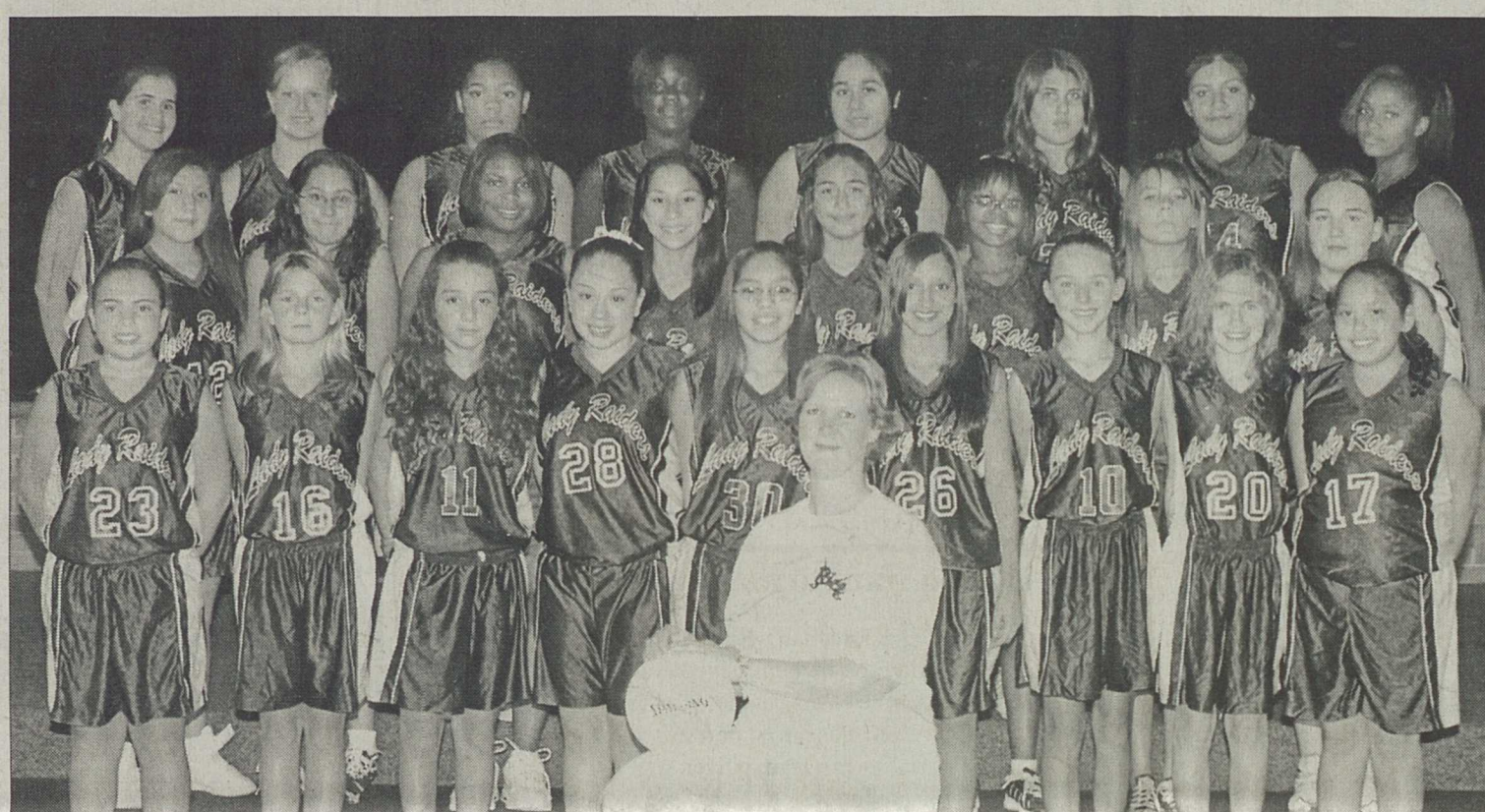
Every Third Tuesday 6-7 p.m.
Methodist Fellowship Hall
200 W. Prairie St.

ALL diabetics and their
friends are welcome.

The meeting will be held by and for
diabetics as a means of support.

This meeting will not offer medical
treatment and is not affiliated with
the Methodist Church.

For more information call 234-2853 (nights)



7th Grade Volleyball B Team

Front row left to right: Kelsey Janow, Shaniah Hardcastle, Yamilex Rodriguez, Veronica Vega, Dalia Zapata, Ashely Rodriguez, Mackenzie Krpec, Mackenzie Wiese, Marilyn Tapia. Middle row left to right: Katarina Gonzales, Ruby Flores, Shayla Kuykendall, Sabrina Llanos, Sonaida Rodriguez, Dewesha Hemphill, Thalia Llanos, Selena Perez. Back row left to right: Erin McConnell, Christina Mittel, Toni Tyler, Taylor Thomas, Yesnely Flores, Gabrielle Herrera, Alma Olivares, Sharon Fogle.

Aging White-Tail Deer On The Hoof

By Bobby Eichler
Texas Parks and Wildlife

As a wildlife biologist, hunter, and long time white-tailed deer enthusiast, I have seen a dramatic shift in the harvest strategy among whitetail hunters and managers in the past decade.

Quality habitat management has proven to be a huge success in increasing both quantity and quality of white-tailed deer throughout the state.

With the "value" of quality whitetails increasing, the need to accurately determine the age of whitetail bucks on the hoof has become increasingly important.

The one question I hear more often now that reflects this trend is, "How old is he?" as opposed to "How big is he?"

Managers and hunters are becoming increasingly aware of the parallel between "quality" and age, and many hunters are letting younger bucks "walk" in order to maximize age.

Why is aging important?

Whitetail bucks usually produce their best antlers once their bodies have fully matured.

Most bucks complete their skeletal growth during their fourth year.

Until the buck reaches this age his body development will take precedence over antler development.

That's why older bucks, 4.5 years old and older, usually produce the largest antlers.

It is important to understand there are many variables to consider when aging deer on your individual property.

Factors like short term and long term nutrition, time of the

year, feeding programs (including food plots), high fences vs. low fence, food plots, and many other variables need all be considered when aging white-tails on the hoof.

Any of these variables that might affect nutrition are important to consider.

Under the best of circumstances, aging whitetails on the hoof is a calculated guess and every property has its own limitations.

However, with dedication and practice you can be successful.

When observing and field judging whitetail bucks only 4 categories or groups need to be used to manage for quality.

Bucks should be put in one of the following four groups: yearling bucks (1.5

year olds), immature bucks (2.5-4.5 year olds), mature bucks (5.5-7.5 year olds), and post-mature bucks (7.5 plus year olds).

Managers and hunters need only to group whitetails using these 4 general categories for successful management.

Yearling bucks have slender necks and bodies.

There is a very distinct junction between the neck and shoulders at this age.

Their tarsal glands are usually lightly stained.

They appear dainty with long, baby faces and thin necks.

Most resemble a doe with antlers.

Antler mass is small.

Stomachs are very tight and they often seem very playful. Some managers choose to remove lower scoring bucks at this age.

Age-specific behavior makes the yearling bucks an easy target for those conducting "spike hunts."

In many counties special seasons and antler restrictions allow for removal of some bucks from this group strengthening antler quality.

Learning to age judge deer on the hoof is a much-needed skill for quality deer management.

In the next issue we will discuss the other age categories of whitetail bucks and the characteristics that they acquire as they age.

If you would like to contact your local biologist, see our website at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/wildlifebiologist>.



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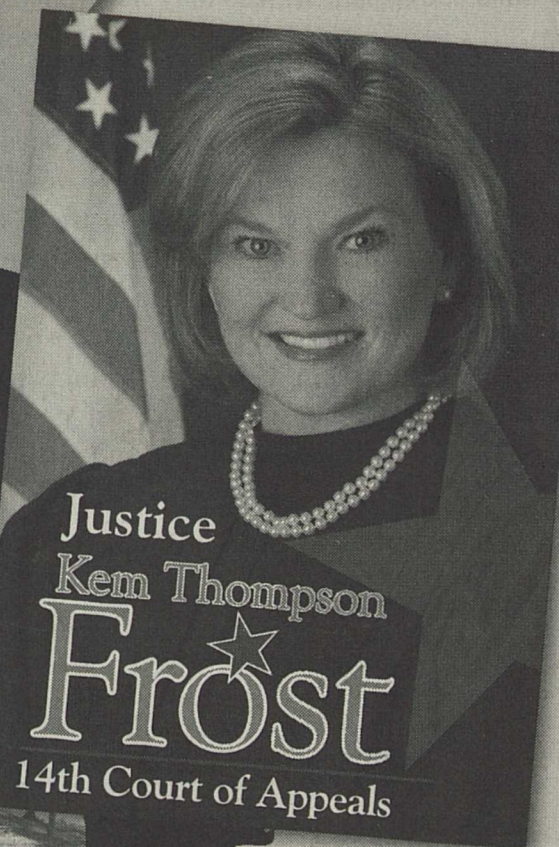
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