

KYRIE O'CONNOR
Commentary



Just how in the heck do you say that town's name?

A few weeks ago, when I promised I'd write a column on how Texans pronounce place and street names, several people wrote and asked: Are you going to tell The Joke?

I knew exactly what they meant and so, probably, do you. But for the half-dozen newcomers, here goes:

Two men are driving through Refugio looking for a place to eat lunch. They start arguing about how the town's name is said. One guy insists on "Ray-fyou-ree-oh." The other says "Ree-foo-gee-o."

The pull into a DQ and walk in, and address the woman behind the counter. "How do you say the name of this place?" the first guy asks.

She pauses. "Day-ree Ka-ween," she replies.

I started learning about funky Houston pronunciations before I even moved here, almost 10 years ago to the day. I was having a goodbye lunch with Michael Wilson, who had left his post at the Alley Theatre and was then the artistic director at Hartford Stage. (Now he's a big-deal Broadway director.) "BissoNETT," he told me. "San FILL-i-pee. San Jah-SIN-toe. KIRK-en-doll."

This was essential information. I wish I'd had more. It took me forever to figure out that "Bear County" and "Bexar County" were the same thing. I picked up that "Mexia" and "Ma-HAY-ah" were the same pretty quickly, but I confess it was only a couple of months ago that I learned that "Manor" was "MAY-ner."

I'll never understand who put the "Per" in Pedernales, or why simple New Braunfels so often comes out as "New Braunsfel."

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FITNESS



Billy Smith II photos / Houston Chronicle

Jamie Carter, from left, Janet Black and Beth Spearman run sprints at Atomic CrossFit in Stafford. The three women form a team with three men — Daniel Ward, Will Maloy and Ben Bacon — for the CrossFit Games in Carson, Calif., that began Wednesday.

There's no 'I' in 'team'

Competitors emphasize encouragement as much as toughness

By Elizabeth Pudwill

They look tough. Their bodies are ripped with muscles. During a workout they grunt, groan and even scream from their efforts. Their faces are set, mouths in grim lines, eyes focused as they lift, push, run. They have nicknames like Panda, Teach, Baconator and Junior and call each other "Beast."

They also hug and giggle as they exercise, supporting and encouraging each other. This is Team Atomic CrossFit.

CrossFit, founded in 2000 by a former gymnast, is a wicked, high-intensity routine that combines weights, cardio work and gymnastics, and also targets endurance, balance and flexibility. More than 6,000 gyms across the



Spearman completes an overhead squat as her coach, Jim Kelly, keeps her time.

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United States now offer the program.

Atomic CrossFit, in Stafford, is where Daniel Ward, Will Maloy, Ben Bacon, Janet Black, Beth Spearman and Jamie Carter met and now train together. As Team Atomic CrossFit, they are in Carson, Calif., to compete in the CrossFit Games, which are the equivalent of the Olympics to anyone involved in the program.

Elite CrossFit athletes — known as "Firebreathers" — are a rare breed, likely to be

Team continues on E10

BELIEF

Filmmaker explores inspiring lives of American nuns



Courtesy Mary Fishman

The Sisters of Mercy, here bound for Peru, are featured in "Band of Sisters," about American nuns' transition since Vatican II.

By Diane Cowen

Her beliefs and values were shaped by Catholic clergy, so it's no surprise that when Mary Fishman was looking for a subject for a film documentary that she would be inspired by a book about how nuns lived.

Fishman grew up in Catholic schools in Chicago and graduated from the University of Notre Dame, but it was later — after a 20-year career in architecture and urban planning — that she turned to filmmaking.

At the same time, she was caring for her aging mother when her sister gave her David Snowden's book "Aging With



Mary Fishman produced and directed "Band of Sisters."

Grace." The book focuses on the well-known "nun study" that looked at aging and Alzheimer's disease among nearly 700 members of the School Sisters of Notre Dame religious order.

As she read the book and cared for her mother, she saw the nuns come to life in a way she'd never imagined. She set out to make a film about their lives and the way their role in

the Catholic church — and in their communities — changed since the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s. Instead of working primarily as teachers and nurses, they could take on any number of roles in society.

The result is "Band of Sisters," an 88-minute documentary that will have four screenings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston starting Thursday. Fishman took time recently to talk about her film and the new view of nuns she gained along the way.

Q: As you embarked on your filmmaking career, you

Fishman continues on E4

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