



Basketball season underway

INSIDE 6A

Van Alstyne Leader

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Help is on the way: Dispatchers talk answering in an emergency

By Jerrie Whiteley
Herald Democrat

At this time of the year many people stop to reflect on the people and things in their lives for which they are thankful. Often that is family and friends, but it can also be those who are there to help in some of the worst moments of our lives and the life of our community.

The Grayson County Sheriff's Office has a team of dedicated employees who make answering calls for help with all types of emergencies the focus of their careers. Whether they have been 9-1-1 operators for just a few years or for decades, the 10 operators and their supervisor work to help keep both first responders and community members safe.

GC 9-1-1 Communications Supervisor Jami Brown said answering emergency calls is just one part of the work the staff does. Dispatchers include Ashlin Caver, Alixx Frazier, Kristian Molina, Marinda Owens, Gracie Castaneda, Angie Hatchell, Kenady Price, Naomi Harriman, Shannon Doggett and Ivon Wood.

Brown, who worked for a bank before joining the county's staff 14 years ago said she knew it was time to do something helping people when she left her corporate job.

"I ended up becoming a 9-1-1 dispatcher, because I always had an interest in helping people and I love watching investigation shows. My mind loves to watch and find out how the investigators work the cases and are able to close the case. Therefore, I thought this profession would be a good fit," she said recently.

She said what she loves about the job is, "that we are the calm voice during the caller's most chaotic time of their lives. To be able to be a part of the process, of getting help to them, makes this job worth all the stress we endure."

The job, she said, "is like reading a novel up until the last chapter. Then the book is taken from you, so you do not know the outcome or resolution to the story. That is the best analogy I can provide about 911. You take the call; listen to their struggle, screams and cry's. However, you never find out if they survived or what the ending of the story is. Because you have to move onto the next call."

She said the GC communications center is different from those in other counties and in this county.

"Most centers only have call takers and dispatchers. Then they have a separate department for Warrants/Emergency Protective orders. In addition, normally their jail division would process the entire book in/out for the inmates. Up until June 2022, we had three departments on the shoulders of the 12 Dispatchers. We took all incoming 911 and non-emergency calls. They also processed the book in paperwork for the Deten-



Alix Frazier



Naomi Harriman



Angela Hatchell



Graciela Castaneda



Marinda Owens



Kenady Owens



Shannon Doggett



Jami Brown



Ashlin Caver

tion center, and they entered all the warrants for the County. This includes all of the Police department's warrants, on top of the county warrants. In June 2022, the Detention division took back their paperwork. This was a huge weight off our shoulders; however, we still have two departments wrapped into one."

On top of all of that, they also have process warrants in a timely manner and handle emergency protective orders. But still, they have to answer 9-1-1 calls within 20 seconds of the first ring.

Brown said one of her most memorable calls actually involved the death of one of GCSO's team members. In April of 2013, she was working when she dispatched Deputy Chad Key to the

scene of a wreck where he was struck and killed while working. She said she will never forget the sound of her Sergeant's radio traffic at the time of the incident. She said it is ingrained in her heart and on her mind for life.

As a group, the dispatchers said that their job and the stress of it make the team feel more like a family than just a work crew.

Assistant Supervisor Ashlin Carver

California native Caver, 25, has been with Grayson County for three years and won the telecommunicator of the year award through Texoma Council of Governments her first year with the county.

The daughter and granddaughter of police

officers, she has been in Grayson County since grade school and has three siblings. She enjoys the fast-paced environment and being able to help the community in a way that most others do not understand.

Alix Fraizer

Bonham native Fraizer is 25 years old and comes from a large family. Her hobbies include reading, spending time with family and friends, shopping and going to concerts.

She has been in telecommunication for two years and won the Telecommunicator of the year award in 2021 and was part of the award-winning team for 2021. She said she knows the job can be very stressful, but she likes knowing she can make a difference in people's lives.

Kristian Molina

The oldest of seven siblings, Molina has three teens the oldest of which is 17. Her children, Seth, Kodi and Gavin mean the world to her. She is married to Jorge and they love to travel together. Molina graduated from Callisburg High School in 2003 and pursued a career in healthcare before becoming a dispatcher.

She loves that her job allows her to make a difference in the lives of people in their moments of need but said the job is not for the faint of heart because it can be very stressful.

Marinda Owens

Though she has been with Grayson County for seven years, Owens has 27 years' experience as a telecommunicator.

A self-confessed "trauma junkie", Owens said she loves that no two days are the same in the job. She was said she was working as a dispatcher back in 2004 when a call came in that she will remember forever. An attack at a local apartment complex left a young mother and her two small children brutally murdered. Andre Thomas would later be convicted of capital murder and sentenced to death.

His execution date has been set for next year.

Owens was working alone that morning and had to notify all of the officers, investigators, command staff, chief of police and Texas Rangers. She was also there a few hours later when Thomas walked into the police department lobby and turned himself in.

Gracie Castaneda

Sherman native Castaneda loves to travel and try new foods. While she knew she wanted to be a part of the community, Castaneda never thought she would end up working for the GCSO. But an opportunity presented itself.

She said dispatching is not for the faint of heart, but it can be a very rewarding career and one that brings something different every day.

Angie Hatchell

See DISPATCHERS, Page 2A

Nabors joins the force



Steve Nabors was sworn in on Nov. 28 as the newest Van Alstyne ISD Police officer. He joins Chief Jeff Burge on the recently formed force. The department hopes to add an additional officer by early next year. Long-term plans call for each campus to eventually have its own dedicated police officer.

courtesy photo

Tree lighting set for Saturday

By Joshua Baethge

For the Van Alstyne Leader

The city of Van Alstyne will light its Christmas tree this Saturday, Dec. 3 at the Central Social District. The event begins at 7 p.m. and will feature performances from the Van Alstyne ISD choir and the Van Alstyne ISD brass ensemble. There will also be performances from Fierce Motions in Dance, Rogers Martial Arts, and Certain Music. Even Santa Claus himself will be on-hand to join in the festivities.

Don't worry about dinner beforehand. The Tacos Benditos food truck and Crazy Red Rooster food truck will be selling tasty eats for all to enjoy.

This is just the beginning of Van Alstyne's annual "Christmas Town" festivities. The annual Christmas parade will take place the following Saturday, Dec. 10.



Crew began installing the Central Social District Christmas tree during the week before Thanksgiving. It will be lit this coming Saturday night.

Photo courtesy city of Van Alstyne

Storms causes wastewater discharge

Staff reports

On Nov. 28, The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality issued a public notice that 142,500 gallons of wastewater was released from a wastewater collection system near the intersection of Newport Drive and San Carlos Drive. The incident occurred between Nov. 24 and Nov. 27.

According to the notice, the affected area extended approximately 150 feet east and 800 feet south and east of the collection system. The area has since been cleaned up and disinfected.

Anyone who uses a private drinking well

within a half-mile of the spill should boil their water before using it to drink, brush teeth, bathe or prepare food.

The public should avoid contact with soil or material in the affected area. Anyone who does come in contact with the contaminated area should thoroughly bathe and wash their clothes as soon as possible.

It is not uncommon for heavy rains to cause some untreated wastewater to escape. All cities in Texas are required to post a public notice when the amount exceeds 100,000 gallons.

Entertainment

Exploring a memory: Designer re-creates a dress for Diana. **4A**

News

Cream of the crop earn 'A' in food safety reports released in Nov. 2022. **2A**

Weather

High 66° | Low 52°
Mostly Cloudy

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Cream of the crop earn ‘A’ in food safety reports released in Nov. 2022

Staff reports

Some local eateries really shine when it comes to keeping things safe in the kitchen.

Sanitarians from the Grayson County Health Department routinely inspects all businesses that serve food to the public. Such establishments are given an “A,” “B,” “C” or “F” score. An “A” means sanitarians reported no or only a few minor violations. Those with a “B” were found to have several minor violations but nothing major. Restaurants with a “C” might have a major violation or repeat offenses, but in the inspectors’ opinions, nothing bad enough to warrant an “F.”

An “A” means sanitarians reported 10 or fewer demerits. Those with a “B” received 11-20 demerits. Restaurants with a “C” had 21-30 demerits and restaurants with “F” ratings received more than 30 demerits.

The following is a list of eateries that received a “A” grade on inspections shared with the Herald Democrat in November:

Hilton Garden Inn, 5015 S. US Hwy. 75, in Denison;
Quik Trip, 6120 Hwy. 75 North, in Sherman;
The Terrace at Denison, 1300 Memorial Dr., in Denison;
56 Deli, 301 W. Main, Whitesboro;
Beggars, 7272 Dexter Rd., in Whitesboro;
Food of Dreams Mobile, 111 W. Main St., in Whitesboro;
Lil Max, 113 E Main St., in Whitesboro;
Namiku Mobile, 122 N Union St., in Whitesboro;
Victorian Inns, 1013 Hwy 82 West, in Whitesboro;
Doughboy Donuts, 206 W. Texas, in Denison;
Jack in the Box, 121 S. Henry Hynds Expsw. in Van Alstyne;
Kwik Chek, 1001 W Stephens, in Van Alstyne;
McDonalds, 1001 W. Stephens, in Van Alstyne;
NTX BBQ Supply, 327 W. Crawford, in Denison;
Taylor’s Sweet Shop, 350 Redwood, in Van Alstyne;
Taylor’s Sweet Shop, 350 Redwood, in Van Alstyne;
J & W Minit Mart, 102 W. Hwy. 1417, in Sherman;
Kiotee Club, 623 S. Mirick, in Denison;
Mariana’s Gorditas, 901 E. Lamar in Sherman;
Star Mart, 1728 South FM 1417, in Sherman;
Tyson Café, 4700 Highway 75 South, in Sherman;
Walgreens, 1828 Texoma Pkwy., in Sherman;
Tejas Mexican Grill, 112 W Grand, in Whitewright;
TMC - Cafeteria, 5016 S. US Hwy. 75, in Denison;
TMC - Volunteer Gift Shop, 5016 S US Hwy. 75, in Denison;
TMC-Revolution Coffee Co., 5016 US Hwy. 75, in Denison;
Buffalo Wild Wings, 4066 N U.S. Hwy. 75, in Sherman;
Get & Go, 2001 S. Crockett St., in Sherman;
The Horse’s Axe, 131 W Main St., in Denison;
American Legion Post #376,293 Jay Rd., in Van Alstyne;
Cheddar’s Café, 3300 Hwy 75-North., in Sherman;
Degenhardt’s Brat Haus, 388 N Waco St., in Van Alstyne;
Koti Academy of Howe, 105 Doyle St., in Howe;
Pit Commander BBQ, 224 E Jefferson St., in Van Alstyne;
Red Lobster, 3600 US Hwy. 75 N, in Sherman;
Tracy Events Catering, 211 S Preston, in Van Alstyne;
Cotton Patch Café, 500 N. US Hwy. 75, in Denison;
Jalapeno Tree Denison, 3520 W. FM 120, in Denison;
Oasis@ The Lighthouse, 300 Lighthouse Dr., in Pottsboro;
Passport Howe, 100 N. Collins Frwy., in Howe;
City Limits, 4521 Texoma Pkwy., in Sherman;
Gunter Elementary School, 200 W Elm St., in Gunter;
Gunter High School, 1102 N 8th Street, in Gunter;
Gunter Middle School, 410 Tiger Lane, in Gunter;
Northside Pie, 610 N 8th St., in Gunter;
Van Alstyne High School, 1722 N. Waco, in Van Alstyne;
Van Alstyne High School-Culinary Arts, 1722 N. Waco, in Van Alstyne;
Van Alstyne Middle School, 1314 North Waco, in Van Alstyne;
Van Alstyne Partin Elementary School, 201 Newport, in Van Alstyne;
Van Alstyne Sanford Elementary School, 300 Williams Way in Van Alstyne;
Best Western Plus, 810 N. US Hwy. 75, in Denison;
Chicken Express,1824 Texoma Parkway, in Sherman;
CVS, 1830 Texoma Parkway, in Sherman;
Denison Food Mart, 401 E. Main Street, in Denison;
Hot ‘n Creamy Donuts, 700 Hwy 120 E., in Pottsboro;
Super Shack, 4817 Texoma Parkway, in Sherman;
Taco Bell, 3420 W. FM 120, in Denison;
Bay at the lake at Highport, 120 Texoma Harbor, in Pottsboro;
Cackle & Oink BBQ, 3210 Texoma Parkway, in Sherman;
Chicken Express, 3606 W. FM 120, in Denison;
M G’s Restaurant, 1715 N Woods St., in Sherman;
Magic Smoke BBQ, 2600 N Travis St., in Sherman;
Pottsboro Passport, 7606 Hwy 289N, in Pottsboro;

Salvation Army, 5700 Texoma Pkwy., in Sherman;
Silver Leaf Assisted Living, 4318 W. Crawford St., in Denison;
Howe High School, 200 E Ponderosa, in Howe;
Howe Middle School, 300 Beatrice, in Howe;
Howe Summit Hill Elem School, 701 Summit Hill Parkway, in Howe;
Whitewright Elem/Middle School, 305 Highland, in Whitewright;
Whitewright High School Cafeteria, 304 Echols Lane, in Whitewright;
Pepe’s Street Tacos, 300 Charlie Dr., in Whitesboro;
Bayou Bugs & BBQ, 27014 State Hwy. 56, in Whitesboro;
Big Mineral Camp, 2889 Big Mineral Road, in Gordonville;
Cowboy Club, 15027 US Hwy. 75, in Van Alstyne;
Denison High School, 4200 Hwy 91 N., in Denison;
Enterhealth Life Recovery Cnt, 524 N. Lincoln Park Rd., in Van Alstyne;
Meals On Wheels/Van Alstyne Center, 148 S Main St., in Van Alstyne;
Pelican’s Landing Restaurant, 500 Harbour View Road, in Gordonville;
Eisenhower Yacht Club (boat dock), 2141 Park Road, in Denison;
Lone Star Food Store, 4411 Hwy 75-N, in Denison;
Panera Bread, 4040 Highway 75 N. in Sherman;
Red River Café, 4411 Hwy 75 N., in Denison;
Sherman Middle School, 2201 E Lamar, in Sherman;
Anchor Nutrition, 101 Hwy 102, Pottsboro;
Don Chano’s Taqueria, 4909 Texoma Pkwy., in Sherman;
El Burrito Taqueria, 101 FM 120 W., in Pottsboro;
Pizza Hut of Sherman, 2020 Texoma Pkwy., in Sherman;
Raising Cane’s Chicken Fingers, 3700 N Sam Rayburn Fwy., in Sherman;
Ruby’s Cuisine, 1821 Texoma Pkwy., in Sherman;
Target, 4160 Town Center Rd., in Sherman;
Wendys Old Fashioned Hamburgers, 4100 N. Hwy. 75, in Sherman;
Lone Star Food Store, 3315 FM 120, in Denison;
Masterkey Bilingual Academy, 106 N Sunset Bld., in Sherman;
Papa John’s, 3515 W. FM 120, in Denison;
The Good Stuff, 503 N Travis, in Sherman;
Andreas, 110 Hwy 289, in Gunter;
Smalltown Sweet Tooth, 110 S Hwy 289, in Gunter;
Sprinkle Donuts & Breakfast, 110 S. Hwy 289, in Gunter;
Almost Grandma’s Childcare, 1531 S. Waco St., in Van Alstyne
Kiddie Kampus I, 1500 W Crawford St., in Denison;
Kiddie Kampus II, 117 N Lillis Ln., in Denison;
The Crazy Red Rooster Kettle Corn, 13790 Windham Dr., in Van Alstyne;
Up Town Kids Childcare, 498 Spence Rd., in Van Alstyne;
Collinsville Food Mart, 705 Hwy 377 North, in Collinsville;
Dairy Queen, 103 Sunset Blvd., in Sherman;
Focused Care at Sherman, 817 W Center St., in Sherman;
Healing Springs Ranch, 100 S. Texas St., in Tioga;
Mom’s Bakery, 1703 N Woods St. in Sherman;
North Rig Grill, 414 U.S. Hwy. 75 N., in Denison;
Papa John’s, 2918 US Hwy 75, Sherman;
Southern Classic Daquiri Factory, 2918 US 75, in Sherman;
Wingstop, 4001 N. US Hwy 75, in Sherman;
Abby’s, 110 E. Haning, in Howe;
Dons Smoke House, 111 E Haning St., in Howe;
Domino’s Pizza, 385 N. Henry Hines Expswy., in Van Alstyne;
Family Dollar, 102 N Britton St., in Tom Bean;
Lichita’s Restaurant, 515 S. Walnut, in Sherman;
Nutrition To the Max, 976 W Van Alstyne, in Van Alstyne;
Pre School For Little Zebras, 1211 Blanton Dr., in Sherman;
The Jolly Good Shop, 120 S Main Dr., in Van Alstyne;
CJ’S Coffee, 5101 Gateway Blvd, in Denison;
Lettuce Indulge, 5101 Gateway Blvd., in Denison;
Little Caesar’s, 2114 Texoma Pkwy., in Sherman;
Ni Ni’s Café, 2114 Texoma Pkwy., in Sherman;
Preston Place, 620 Blanton Dr., in Sherman;
Subway, 2114 Texoma Pkwy., in Sherman;
Sunset Food Mart, 111 N Sunset Blvd. in Sherman;
Track’s, 109 N Woods St., in Sherman;
Chik-Fil-A, 3500 U.S. 75 North, in Sherman;
Armstrong Food Mart, 500 S Armstrong in Denison;
Bears’ Smokin BBQ @Food Truck Park, 121 S. Imperial, in Denison;
Boy’s & Girl’s Club of Denison, 2100 S Mirick Ave., in Denison;
Haddock’s Burger Barn, 4906 F.M. Hwy 1417, in Denison;
Lone Star Food Store, 2121 N Hwy 1417 in Sherman
Martinez Street Tacos, 225 W Crawford, in Denison;

Roma’s Pizza, 682 FM 120, in Pottsboro;
Starbucks Coffee, 5131 S. US Hwy 75, in Denison;
Texoma Healthcare Center, 1000 Hwy 82-East, in Sherman;
TI- American Food & Vending, 6412 S Hwy 75, in Sherman;
Two Brothers Hibachi Mobile, 2916 US HWY 75, in Sherman;
Catipillar-Ave C/Southern Markets, 3501 S. FM Hwy 1417, in Denison;
Cold Stone Creamery, 4062 Highway 75 North, in Sherman;
Gateway 58, 2241 Pettit Pkwy., in Whitewright;
Grayson College Cafeteria/Great West. Dining, 6101 Grayson Dr., in Denison;
Hometown Donut, 515 N. Waco St., in Van Alstyne;
Myth & Ember Coffee House, 212 E Marshall, in Van Alstyne;
Domino’s Pizza, 1915 N. FM 1417, in Sherman;
Finish Line Pizza, 303 N Pecan St., in Bells;
Four Rivers Outreach, 210 South Rusk, in Sherman;
Meals On Wheels/Sherman Center, 1500 N Broughton St., in Sherman;
Momo’s Donuts, 2121 FM 1417, in Sherman
Rio to Red Winery, 212 N Walnut, in Sherman;
Taco Factory@Bells Market, 104 Bells Blvd., in Bells;
Dollar General, 929 North 8th Street, in Gunter;
The Bridges Golf Club, 2400 Fred Couples Dr., in Gunter;
Baylor Scott & White Surgical Hospital, 3601 N. Calais Dr., in Sherman;
Golden Chick, 151 S. Henry Hynds Expressway, in Van Alstyne;
Lone Star Food Store, 1007 North Travis, in Sherman;
Pizza Hut of Denison, 129 W Heron Street, in Denison;
Sonic, 1130 W. Van Alstyne Pkwy., in Van Alstyne;
Starbucks Coffee, 3121 Regency LN, in Denison;
Taste of China, 4801 Texoma Pkwy., in Sherman
Kona Ice -Walker Frozen Ice Sunset Mobile,12288 CR 270, in Anna;
La Michoacana, 1000 North Travis St, in Sherman;
Belden Street Montessori School, 618 W. Belden St., in Sherman;
Chipotle Mexican Grill, 875 Northcreek, in Sherman;
Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, 3501 US Hwy 75 North, in Sherman;
Firehouse Subs, 853 North Creek Drive, in Sherman;
Grayson College Culinary Arts, 6101 Grayson Dr., in Denison;
Highport BBQ, 83493 State Hwy. 289, in Pottsboro;
Lone Star Food Store, 990 W. Van Alstyne Pkwy., in Van Alstyne;
Southern Maid Donuts, 1712 Loy Lake Rd., in Sherman;
Tacos Bendiots, 227 Sherbrooks St., in Van Alstyne;
Tuck Street Early Edu. Ctr @Harmony Baptist, 2111 E Tuck St. in Sherman;
Whataburger, 3609 N US Hwy 75, in Sherman;
Elks Lodge #238 Lakesite, 298 Elks Blvd, in Pottsboro;
Hobo Joe’s, 3023 Loy Lake, in Denison;
Lone Star Food Store, 3707 S US HWY 75, in Sherman;
McDonalds, 3612 S HWY 75 S., in Sherman;
Panda Express, 3150 S US Highway 75, in Sherman;
Subway, 3427 W FM 120., in Denison;
Chuck E. Cheese’s, 3808 US Hwy 75, in Sherman;
Jakes Place Food Truck Park, 4801 S State Hwy. 91, in Denison;
Knife & Whisk, 130 W Acheson, in Denison;
Lucky Stop, 5006 Hwy 1417-South, in Denison;
McDonald’s Denison, 600 Hwy. 75 N., in Denison;
McDonald’s Texoma Pkwy, 2217 Texoma Pkwy. in Sherman
Munchie Mobile, 4801 S State Hwy 91, in Denison;
My Montessori School, 2527 FM 691, in Denison;
Pop Around The Corner, 113 N. Travis, in Sherman;
Poppa’s Pit BBQ, 1975 Mackey Rd., in Howe;
Roger Country Store, 7015 FM 120 W., in Denison;
The Usual Food Co.@The Railyard,507 W Main, in Denison;
Aloha Fuel, 86544 N. Hwy 289, in Pottsboro;
Dollar General, 81940 Hwy 289, in Pottsboro;
Domino’s Pizza Denison, 3415 W FM 120, in Denison;
Rising Stars Learning Center, 826 N. Crockett, in Sherman;
The Library Grill, 5147 N Travis, in Sherman;
Cardinal Quick Stop, 100 E. 120, in Pottsboro;
Chosen for Change Bakery, 101 E Main St., in Denison;
Dollar General, 702 E FM 120, in Pottsboro;
Lone Star Food Store, 529 W Lamar St., in Sherman;
Lucky Stop, 2826 W. Morton Street, in Denison;
Skatelands of America, 2629 S Woodlawn, in Denison;
Super Stop, 2510 US Hwy 75 N., in Sherman;
Bakers Dozen Donuts, 406 West Haning Street, in Howe;
Dollar General, 31340 Hwy 377, in Gordonville;
Dollar General, 604 LB Kirby Ave., in Howe;
Kroger Food Store, 1820 Loy Lake Rd., in Sherman;
Schwans Home Service Warehouse, 607 Bethany Rd., in Sherman;
Sherwood Food Mart, 32210 Hwy 377, Gordonville;
Whitesboro Hayes Primary School, 117 4th Street, in Whitesboro;
Whitesboro High School, 1 Bearcat Drive, in Whitesboro;
Whitesboro Middle School, 600 W Fourth St., in Whitesboro.

A mom’s reflections on thanksgiving

Claire Stanley

Prosper Press

Like many parents, I have spent days thinking about how best to celebrate Thanksgiving with my children. Should I make all the traditional sides, even though they will not eat them? Should I get an entire turkey, despite there being only four people in our family? Should I insist that we use the “good plates,” even though the dishwasher is on the fritz, or can we use paper plates this time?

I have looked at crafts for the children to do to talk about being thankful. My children are spread out: high school kid, middle school kid, and the baby is in elementary school. None of the crafts looked like something I could convince all of them to do. Really, none of the crafts were things I really wanted to do.

After my fretting and Pinterest scrolling, I decided to make a simple meal and try to get the children to stay at the table for thirty minutes to talk. We could have a conversation about how blessed we are, and the ways we could help others. It was a great goal.

I decided to make a turkey breast, macaroni and cheese, and each kid could pick a fruit or vegetable. Steamed corn, apple sauce, and carrot sticks were chosen, but they agreed to eat them, so I agreed. My middle child likes to bake, so they took care of the pumpkin pie. I added rolls at the last minute. My family of origin has a tradition of burning a roll each Thanksgiving, so we needed a sacrificial roll for that purpose.

There was some bickering, but everyone

agreed to sit at the table. There was some negotiating but everyone found a chair, napkin, and plate that they could use. (Next time - less options!)

What struck me was the fact that these three children are actually starting to turn in to real people, with real opinions, and we could have actual conversation. I felt proud listening to them chat with each other instead of relying on me to help lead the conversation topics. I saw them give advice to each other about friendships and what to do about a problem with a teacher.

We did talk about being thankful at some point. My baby had quite the list: Barbies, the friends next door, the neighbor that lets her come in and help take care of her turtles, that she likes to do math, and that she no longer has to sit next to someone on the bus.

Middle child had a list of things, some of which I do not immediately recognize: some YouTube star, something important in Minecraft, her best friend is finally talking to some boy she likes, and that her at Marshmallow has taken to following her around.

My oldest, in her senior year, is starting to see the bigger picture. She is thankful for video games, of course, but also thankful for things like a safe house and enough to eat. I see this big kid, so close to being an adult, and I am proud of who she is becoming. These glimpses are priceless.

To those parents who are in the very hard season of parenting: it does get easier. Part of it is that I have learned to lower my expectations a bit. I do not overwork myself to make sure that every holiday is “picture perfect.” I am sure Miss Manners would have a word or two about the napkins on the table or our haphazard place settings. We did not do a single craft and, after our talk, those children headed off to look at screens in their rooms. But we had a good meal with amazing conversation. Our house is full of love. I truly hope each of you had an amazing Thanksgiving.

Dispatchers

Continued from Page A1

Hatchell has lived in Grayson County most of her life but has only been with the GCSO since 2021.

She is wife to Craig. Mom to Kyler and Emily and Mimi to Swayze. She and Craig like to go to sporting events and concerts and spend time with family. She loves being able to help people in their time of need but doesn’t like that she often doesn’t get to know the outcome of the calls she takes.

She said people often ask her about the worst situations she has heard about on calls, but she never wants to burden people with those stories.

Kenady Price
Price has been with the GCSO for almost five years but has lived in Grayson County most of her life.

She stumbled across the application for the dispatcher’s job by chance while at the courthouse. She said the dispatcher position is a tough one as they work 12-hour shifts in which they dispatch for more than 12 police offices, 11 fire departments and four emergency management services.

She agreed with her co-workers that dealing with that stress together makes them more like a family than just people who work together.

She said the bad calls can be haunting and they can end up taking the shift’s experiences home with them but in the end they just have to have confidence that they have made the right decisions.

Naomi Harriman
Twenty-eight-year-old Harriman has been with GCSO since January of 2020.

She has a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice and a masters in linguistics and lived in Mexico for a couple of years after high school to learn Spanish. She loves to read and spend time outside. Originally from the Dallas area, she and her husband are building a home in Van Alstyne.

The couple is expecting their first child together but also have twin 15-year-old girls. Harri-



Dispatchers at Grayson County Sheriff’s Office send help to those calling for assistance.
Courtesy photo

man loves the unpredictability of the dispatcher’s job.

She described a situation where a woman called saying she was being chased by a man with a gun. Harriman could hear the woman running and continued to work with her trying to get information to help.

Suddenly she began to hear the woman vomiting and after the call escalated, Harriman learned that the woman on the other end of the line was actually, “under a heavy influence of narcotics and having manic hallucinations.”

Shannon Doggett
Forty-four-year-old Doggett is a lifetime resident of Grayson County who worked as a jailer in Collin County for 22 years before she decided to become dispatcher.

She loves the family-like atmosphere of the GCSO team. She loves that the work they do leaves her with a feeling of community service. The worst calls, she said, are always the ones involving children.

Ivon Wood
Born in Mexico, Wood’s home has been Sherman for most of her life. She said helping people is the most rewarding part of the job of dispatcher.

The worst part of the job is when they are not able to help the people who call in. She said though she doesn’t have one call that stands out in her mind, she always enjoys the ones where they are able to help senior citizens.

How Frederick Avery became Tex Avery

By Ken Bridges

Special to the Herald Democrat

Cartoons have captivated and delighted children – and the young at heart -- for generations. As the motion picture industry emerged, cartoons became a staple feature of the matinee. As television later emerged, they became normal fare on Saturday mornings and late afternoons after school. Even in the modern age of DVD players and wireless streaming, they still delight audiences of all ages. Young children still enjoy discovering and watching the same cartoons from as early as the 1930s and 1940s that their parents and grandparents grew up watching. One of the early and most important pioneers of animation was a Texan known simply as Tex Avery.

Frederick Bean Avery was born in Taylor, just northeast of Austin in 1908. The family moved to Dallas when he was still young. He later attended North Dallas High School where he occasionally drew cartoons for the student newspaper and yearbook; and students often greeted each other with, “What’s up, Doc?” He graduated in 1926 and took a summer drawing course at the Art Institute of Chicago before returning to Texas.

In 1928, he and a few friends took a train trip to California. Avery struggled at first, taking menial jobs loading the docks or

painting cars while sleeping on the beach at night. Within a few months, he landed a job at Universal Studios painting the animated cels for their different cartoon productions. Along the way, he picked up the nickname “Tex.” He began looking at the different stages of cartoon production, slowly mastering the process. Many of the cartoons he worked on were for the “Oswald the Lucky Rabbit” series, an early creation of Walt Disney. Avery wrote his first cartoon story in 1932 and even offered voices on some of the early cartoons. He ultimately worked on dozens of different stories in his years with Universal. By 1934, he directed the first of 143 cartoons in his career.

He lost his job with Universal in 1935 and began working at Warner Brothers Studio a few months later. He immediately began working on the emerging Looney Tunes series. Avery and his crew created such characters as Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, and Bugs Bunny, who gained the name from a nickname for one of the staff animators. It was Avery’s idea, remembering his high school days, to give Bugs Bunny his classic “What’s up, Doc?” catchphrase in 1941.

Avery often said, “In a cartoon, you can do anything.” He thus encouraged writers and animators at the studio to be creative and



A cartoon by Tex Avery
WikiMedia Commons

appeal to both adults and children in the audience. While children enjoyed the vibrant imagery and slapstick comedy, adults could enjoy the subtle political and social satire that was often on display. While he worked well with his fellow animators, he often clashed with his own superiors. He left Warner Brothers in 1941 and began working for MGM.

At MGM, Avery helped direct and write cartoons promoting the war effort during World War II. He also began directing and writing stories for the Droopy and Barney Bear cartoons. He also directed many of the Tom and Jerry cartoons produced in the 1940s and early 1950s.

He left MGM in 1954 and began working with his old colleague from Universal, Walter Lantz. Here, he helped produce the Woody Woodpecker cartoons. By the late 1950s, Avery moved on to animated commercials be-



A cartoon by Tex Avery
WikiMedia Commons

fore retiring in the early 1970s.

He spent more than 40 years working in animation in his long career, working alongside some of the most important animators and writers and creators in the history of the genre, leaving his own, unmistakable imprint on animation and giving the world so many memorable characters. Tex Avery died at his home in California in 1980, leaving behind animated stories that will continue to delight for many more years.

Today in History: December 2, Senate condemns McCarthy

Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Dec. 2, the 336th day of 2022. There are 29 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Dec. 2, 1954, the U.S. Senate passed, 67-22, a resolution condemning Republican Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin, saying he had “acted contrary to senatorial ethics and tended to bring the Senate into dishonor and disrepute.”

On this date:

In 1823, President James Monroe outlined his doctrine opposing European expansion in the Western Hemisphere.

In 1859, militant abolitionist John Brown was hanged for his raid on Harpers Ferry the previous October.

In 1942, an artificially created, self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction was demonstrated for the first time at the University of Chicago.

In 1957, the Shippingport Atomic Power Station in Pennsylvania, the first full-scale commercial nuclear facility in the U.S., began operations. (The reactor ceased operating in 1982.)

In 1980, four American churchwomen were raped and murdered in El Salvador. (Five national guardsmen were convicted in the killings.)

In 1982, in the first operation of its kind, doctors at the University of Utah Medical Center implanted a permanent artificial heart in the chest of retired dentist Dr. Barney Clark, who lived 112 days with the device.

In 1993, Colombian drug lord Pablo Escobar was shot to death by security forces in Medellín (meh-deh-YEEN’).

In 2000, Al Gore sought a recount in South Florida, while George W. Bush flatly asserted, “I’m soon to be the president” and met with GOP congressional leaders.

In 2001, in one of the largest corporate bankruptcies in U.S. history, Enron filed for Chapter 11 protection.

In 2015, a couple loyal to the Islamic State group opened fire at a holiday banquet for public employees in San Bernardino, California, killing 14 people and wounding 21 others before dying in a shootout with police.

In 2016, a fire that raced through an illegally converted warehouse in Oakland, California, during a dance party killed 36 people.

In 2020, in a video released on social media, President Donald Trump stood before a White House lectern and delivered a 46-minute diatribe against the election results that produced a win for Democrat Joe Biden, unspooling one

misstatement after another to back his baseless claim that he really won. Britain became the first country in the world to authorize a rigorously tested COVID-19 vaccine, giving the go-ahead for emergency use of the vaccine developed by American drugmaker Pfizer and Germany’s BioNTech.

Ten years ago: Hundreds of concrete slabs, each weighing more than a ton, fell from the roof of a highway tunnel west of Tokyo, crushing vehicles below and killing nine people. Dustin Hoffman, David Letterman, Led Zeppelin, Chicago bluesman Buddy Guy and ballerina Natalia Makarova received Kennedy Center Honors.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump changed his story on why he fired Michael Flynn as his national security adviser, now suggesting that he knew at the time that Flynn had lied to the FBI about his contacts with Russians. ABC News suspended investigative reporter Brian Ross for four weeks without pay for an erroneous report about Flynn. (Ross had reported that then-candidate Trump had directed Flynn to make contact with the Russians; Ross clarified the report hours later, saying that his source now said Trump had not done so as a candidate, but as president-elect.)

One year ago: Nevada’s Supreme Court ruled unanimously that gun manufacturers could not be held responsible for the deaths in the 2017 mass shooting on the Las Vegas Strip because a state law shielded them from liability unless the weapon malfunctioned. Jason Meade, the Ohio sheriff’s deputy who shot Casey Goodson Jr. in the back five times as the Black man entered his grandmother’s house, was charged with murder, as Goodson’s family also filed a federal civil rights lawsuit. (Meade has pleaded not guilty.) Major League Baseball plunged into its first work stoppage in a quarter-century when the sport’s collective bargaining agreement expired and owners immediately locked out players. (An agreement would end the lockout after 99 days; the start of the season was delayed by about a week.)

Today’s Birthdays: Former Attorney General Edwin Meese III is 91. Actor Cathy Lee Crosby is 78. Movie director Penelope Spheeris is 77. Actor Ron Raines is 73. Country singer John Wesley Ryles is 72. Actor Keith Szarabajka is 70. Actor Dan Butler is 68. Broadcast journalist Stone Phillips is 68. Actor Dennis Christopher is 67. Actor Steven Bauer is 66. Country singer Joe Henry is 62. Rock musician Rick Savage (Def Leppard) is 62. Actor Brendan Coyle is 59. Rock musician Nate Mendel (Foo Fighters)



The famous Radio City Rockettes present the Highland Fling, Dec. 2, 1940, in New York, marking the first time they performed Scottish style. (AP Photo)

is 54. Actor Suzy Nakamura is 54. Actor Rena Sofer is 54. Rock singer Jimi (cq) HaHa (Jimmie’s Chicken Shack) is 54. Actor Lucy Liu (loo) is 54. U.S. Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough is 53. Rapper Treach (Naughty By Nature) is 52. Actor Joe Lo Truglio is 52. International Tennis Hall of Famer Monica Se-

les is 49. Singer Nelly Furtado is 44. Pop singer Britney Spears is 41. Actor-singer Jana Kramer is 39. Actor Yvonne Orji is 39. Actor Daniela Ruah (roo-ah) is 39. NFL quarterback Aaron Rodgers is 39. Actor Alfred Enoch is 34. Pop singer-songwriter Charlie Puth is 31.



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ACROSS

1 TX John Wesley Hardin was killed in the ____ Saloon

5 TXism: "it's right ____" (location)

6 Asian River catfish

7 "Houston Museum of Fine ____"

8 works a job (3 wds.)

16 "____ the tail on the donkey"

17 death notices in the Hereford Brand

21 "____ Kendall Inn" in Boerne

22 TXism: "fits like ugly ____ ape"

23 seat of McMullen County

24 COVID caused us ____ our hands often

29 TXism: "happy as ____ with two tails"

30 state has an official herd of ____ bred Texas Longhorns

31 TX Willie recorded "All of ____" (1978)

32 TXism: "sweating like ____ water"

34 Fort Hood is a U.S. ____ post in Texas

35 TXism: "run it ____ lawyer" (finalize)

36 ____-Busch has a brewery in Houston

37 "weighs ____" (heavy)

38 TX Roddenberry's show: "Star ____"

DOWN

1 "busy as a bartender ____"

2 former Cowboy star safety, Waters

3 Stanton's county

4 TXism: "wipe the slate clean"

9 western "____"

10 Belle Starr" (1953)

11 TXism: "____ of bones" (skinny)

12 TX actor Rip (init.)

TEXAS CROSSWORD

by Charley & Guy Orbison

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39 great Aggie RB who also played for the Chicago Bears briefly (2 wds.)

41 TXism: "big crop of locks"

42 Chris ____Doux sang "Cadillac Ranch"

43 a person who was raised in 44-across

44 the Lone Star State

45 Santa ____ TX

46 "Dead" Smith's job in the Texas revolution

13 Winnboro's ____ Trails Festival" in October

14 Texas is 3rd largest ____ state in U.S.

15 Perry's creator ____ Stanley Gardner

18 TX Pride hit: "____ Rather Love You"

19 this architect designed the state capitol (3 wds.)

20 TXism: "____ as an egg-sucking dog"

22 fragrance-free

24 when repeated, a British "adios"

25 TXism: "at the drop ____ hat" (impulsive)

26 TXism: "three sheets to the ____"

27 TXism: "worthless ____ a hair cut"

28 actress Wilson who was on "Dallas" and "Walker, Texas Ranger"

29 camping shelter (2 wds.)

30 paid athletes

33 "got no ____ for it"

34 TXism: "got ____ ear" (tone deaf)

35 Dennehy of "The Big Year" with TX Owen Wilson

37 former McAllen company: "Right ____"

38 DFW transports

40 large exhibitions

41 chops wood

44 "three" in Mexico

47 chicken fried steak, e.g.

49 swap

ENTERTAINMENT

At the movies: Steven Spielberg compellingly delves into the past with The Fabelmans

By Doug Laman

Special to the Anna-Melissa Tribune

They say “you can’t go home again,” but leave it to Steven Spielberg and writer Tony Kushner to prove that axiom wrong, at least in the very specific circumstances of The Fabelmans. With this film, Spielberg has torn the veil of allegory and just made an autobiographical drama reflecting his upbringing. Broken families have always been a part of this man’s work, but now we get to see the genesis of where that fascination came from. There’s a version of The Fabelmans that becomes too insular, the cinematic equivalent to a therapy session we feel uncomfortable watching. Thankfully, much like in their prior collaborations such as West Side Story, Munich, and Lincoln, Spielberg and Kushner have knocked it out of the park with The Fabelmans. Whether you know a little or a lot about this man, The Fabelmans will surely work its magic on you.

The Fabelmans makes its potency and thoughtfulness clear from the very get-go in a scene depicting an adolescent Sammy Fabelman (Mateo Zoryon Francis-DeFord) nervously waiting in line to see The Greatest Show on Earth at the movie theater. The camera is initially positioned in a way so that we don’t see his parents from the waist up, a perfect way to suggest that we’ll be seeing this movie primarily through the eyes of Sammy. As he expresses constant nervousness about seeing a feature on the big screen, his parents, Mitzi Schildkraut-Fabelman (Michelle Williams) and Burt Fabelman (Paul Dano), try to console him in ways that reflect their individual personalities. Burt gets wrapped up in explaining how the film projector works while Mitzi just tells her son that movies are like dreams. It isn’t long before Sammy is sitting in that theater and discovering how right his mom was. Movies are dreams...and he doesn’t want this dream to end.

From here, The Fabelmans chronicles Sammy (who eventually grows up into a 16-year-old played by Gabriel LaBelle) as his passion for making home movies grows increasingly elaborate. This stand-in for the adolescent Spielberg is apparent in this youngster’s love for shooting all kinds of films, but it’s also clear in the increasingly tumultuous home life Sammy must navigate. As the scope of Sammy’s homemade motion pictures expands, so too does the tension between his parents. Burt becomes so wrapped up in his work that he’s constantly moving himself and the

whole family (Sammy also has three younger sisters) while Mitzi is prone to depressive episodes. It isn’t just the images on the silver screen that will mold Sammy’s life. Familiar turmoil will also shape his worldview.

A few days before I saw The Fabelmans, me and a buddy were joking about corny ways this movie could show a young Spielberg stumbling onto the ideas for his future movies (“Wow, that shark sure has big jaws!”) in the same vein that many actual music biopics like Bohemian Rhapsody deliver moments where musicians stumble onto the ideas for their most popular tunes. These dumb references were good for a laugh between pals, but they were also helpful in illustrating everything The Fabelmans does right. This isn’t a film infatuated with making endless references that only Spielberg devotees will get or that attempts to provide a tidy narrative about how this filmmaker transformed into his recognizable self in the span of a weekend. In other words, there are no scenes like the one in Darkest Hour where Gary Oldman’s Winston Churchill gets the name for Operation Dynamo by gazing at a nearby fan.

Instead, Spielberg and Kushner’s script delivers a story that functions as a standalone work, with the events onscreen gaining extra (but not essential) resonance for those familiar with the former artist’s background. The Fabelmans is much more interested in contemplating matters that are accessible to all audience members, such as contemplating how to juggle your passions and your loved ones as well as that never-ending process of realizing your parents are complicated human beings. The latter element is especially potent in how it’s realized within The Fabelmans, with much of Mitzi’s storyline focusing on how she’s messy and imperfect rather than the postcard-ready image of a dutiful 1950s housewife. She’s a human being. The idea that the people who raised you are in fact just ordinary people unsure of where to go or what to do is an overwhelming fact to consider when you first contemplate it.

It isn’t just Spielberg and Kushner that excel in The Fabelmans. Everyone’s in rare form here, particularly Michelle Williams, whose tasked with portraying a pastiche of Spielberg’s mom. The bones of this performance sound like a recipe for a distracting caricature, including Mitzi’s very distinctive voice (which often sounds like she’s on the verge of tears) and the character’s tendency for splashy displays of emotions. Williams tackles it all



Tony Kushner, co-writer of the film “The Fabelmans,” poses for a portrait at the Four Seasons Hotel, Monday, Nov. 7, 2022, in Los Angeles. (AP Photo/Chris Pizzello)



Steven Spielberg walks the red carpet as he arrives to receive a lifetime-achievement prize, at the David Donatello awards ceremony in Rome Wednesday, March 21, 2018. (AP Photo/Gregorio Borgia,file)

with such finesse, lending Mitzi the same level of believability as her performances in works like Wendy and Lucy or Certain Women. Traits that could’ve been distracting flourishes in another actor become organic parts of a compelling portrait of tormented motherhood in the hands of Williams.

It’s a very exciting indicator that you’re watching a special movie when you realize you can consider its greatness from so many different angles. Visually, narratively, as an acting exercise, as something to make you cry multiple times, as the newest collection

of John Williams compositions, or even in its forays into comedy (a scene with Sammy and a High School flame in the latter character’s bedroom is so hysterical largely because of the very precise visual details in Spielberg’s filmmaking), The Fabelmans works like gangbusters. It’s a movie that’s simultaneously far more than just a biography of Steven Spielberg’s childhood yet it also offers so much insight into how his complicated persona as an artist was molded. I guess when you’re Steven Spielberg, you actually can go home again.

Exploring a memory: Designer re-creates a dress for Diana

By Danica Kirka

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — This is a dress with a story, and Elizabeth Emanuel wants to tell it.

Shocking pink with a plunging, ruffled neckline and body-hugging shape, the gown was designed by Emanuel for Lady Diana Spencer to wear at a Buckingham Palace party a few days before her marriage to Prince Charles in 1981. It was a visual coming-out event for the future princess, until then largely known for her conservative sweater-and-pearls look.

“This was definitely not a wallflower dress,” said Emanuel, who also co-designed Diana’s wedding gown. “This was a dress to be seen in and celebrated.”

It was also soon forgotten. In an era before smartphones put a camera in everyone’s pocket and social media made private events public, the dress was mostly seen by the party guests, including Queen Elizabeth II, Princess Grace and Nancy Reagan, but no one else. Emanuel doesn’t know where it is, or even if it still exists.

So she has re-created it, out of bolts of shiny, satin taffeta cut and stitched to match the dramatic sketches she made more than 40 years ago.

Acting on an idea that took shape during Britain’s long coronavirus lockdowns, she did it for herself, for her archive. But also because

she wanted to show another side of Diana, who Emanuel believes has been misrepresented by “The Crown,” the popular Netflix series that has brought the story of the princess and her ill-fated marriage to a new generation.

A fan of the series’ first three seasons, Emanuel said she found it hard to watch the last two because of the way Diana was depicted.

Creating a bespoke dress is a long process, requiring multiple fittings that give client and dressmaker lots of time to talk. And throughout the hours they spent together, Diana came across as a happy, vibrant young woman, not the shrinking girl “The Crown” portrays as being buffeted by events beyond her control, Emanuel said.

“She wasn’t like that,” Emanuel said. “She was always very upbeat. And, you know, I like to feel that we were close enough that if she was having huge issues that we might have been aware of it at the time, because those fittings are fairly intimate.”

One of the things the series does right is retrace Diana’s style journey, from the cardigans and bows she wore when she first stepped into the public eye, to frothy ballgowns with frills and flounces and finally to her becoming a global fashion icon in Versace, Dior and Chanel.

Diana grew up in the country, looking to her older sisters for fashion cues. This was a

world of hunting, shooting and fishing, where Barbour coats and Wellington boots were everyday wear. It was a culture where no matter how much you cared about your appearance, you had to seem like you weren’t trying too hard.

Diana brought that style sense with her when she moved to London after leaving school and soon became the archetype of the Sloane Ranger, the media name for the wealthy young people who lived near London’s Sloane Square and cultivated the look of bohemian aristocrats.

She was, as former BBC royal reporter Michael Cole put it, “this Sloane Ranger with her sort of pie crust collars and Fair Isle sweaters and rather voluminous skirts. She was a product of the English countryside.”

But after her engagement to the future King Charles III, she began to grow into the glamour of being a princess.

“It actually was a bit of an effort for her to adapt to that role,” Cole said. “She did appreciate and came to understand the power of clothes, the power of image. It helped very much that she had good taste, and I think she had some good advisers.”

In other words, she evolved and learned how to use clothes to project a message.

And perhaps the journey began with the hot pink party gown.

After losing weight, Diana asked Emanu-

el, her former husband David, and their team to create a dress that would show off her new supermodel figure and transform her image for the celebrities and world leaders invited to the palace.

“She wanted something really spectacular and eye-catching to wear for that because the whole world was going to be there at that party,” Emanuel said at her London studio.

“I think there was a message being sent with this dress, really. That she’d been previously known as Shy Di, but in this dress she definitely was no longer a Shy Di.”

But for Emanuel, the project is about more than simply setting the record straight. It’s about one friend remembering another and the helping hand the princess gave to her career.

There is something touching about the way she looks at this copy and adjusts it on a mannequin roughly as tall as Diana, plainly remembering her famous client.

She re-created a dress that belonged to the Diana she knew, who broke the mold, who was brave, who was ready to walk out on stage. And as she worked, Diana was in her head the whole time.

“As I’m looking at it, I’m imagining her face,” Emanuel said. “The last time that we saw her in the dress was actually at that party and looking so radiant and fantastic. And then all these years later, you know, to re-create it again, it’s kind of strange.”



Building Community Engagement Through the Power of Local News

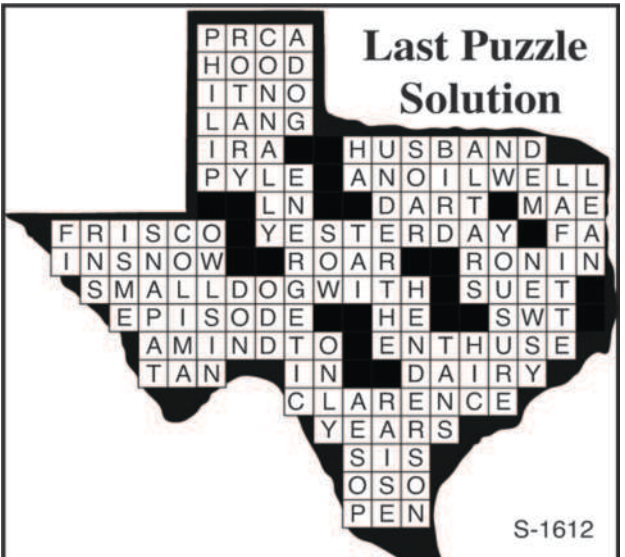
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SELL IT FAST IN THE CLASSIFIEDS!

FEATURES

SGLY: Grace upon grace



By Tiffany Chartier

Specialty to the Prosper Press

Feelings are fickle friends, especially around the holidays. We often look forward to attending parties, gathering around the table with loved ones, and listening to our favorite Christmas music. However, as events draw closer and December pushes to close another year, we sometimes hear the music differently. The songs that we sang jubilantly now leave us feeling melancholy. There might be several plausible reasons for this shift, or we may not know how a veiled emptiness snuck its way into our music and moments. All have experienced the feeling of being a stranger in their own skin. When life tilts our world, we are given a different perspective no matter how valiantly we try to adjust.

Some respond by RSVPing “no” to the gatherings or making excuses because the energy required to attend would seem unauthentic. And in a time when things already feel strange, the last thing needed is to compound discomfort with questions from others, small talk, or pretend everything is fine. There is no formula for grieving or healing — no recipe to follow like there is to make Grandma’s green bean casserole or Mom’s pecan pie. Some sit out for a season to quiet themselves, to learn a new normal. Others may exhibit avoidance, hunkering down at work, and distracting themselves from themselves and others at home. Whether it be a death, divorce, separation from a loved one, diagnosis, chronic pain, or another significant change, our entire perspective tilts from the moment we first become aware, knowing life will never return to the way it was before. During the holiday season, it is vital not to detach from our dependency on God. It is also good to remember that God created us as relational beings. I confess to writing these words as part of my struggle: I am dependent upon God, but I am often unwilling

to let others know or see my wounds until I feel healed. And yet, as this article started, we know feelings are fickle friends. Some detach because they do not wish to burden anyone, or they know their struggles are not as big as others, or maybe they do not feel that there is a safe space to share. If you are struggling, please find someone to share with: a counselor (telehealth allows you to get support without leaving your home), a clergyperson, a family member, or a trusted colleague or friend. Accept their help and hospitality. In doing so, another shift will commence, and the veiled emptiness that snuck its way into the music and moments will eventually be revealed, recognized, and released. It may or may not entirely leave our orbit, but the trajectory will right itself enough so that our world feels like it is moving from a standpoint that we can learn to walk without feeling so heavily weighted. Jesus came to us in a messy manger. Nothing much has changed. Jesus still comes to us in our mess. As we focus on the birth of Christ our Savior, may we be reminded that the GREAT I AM created us. And our Cre-

ator takes care of His children. We are never alone. Even if we silently mourn the ones who are missing from the table or struggle because life does not look as we planned, we can be honest with where we are and still have hope. We can be grateful for God’s unfailing promises. We can also be real in our gratitude, knowing that hope does not equate to happiness every moment. But the peace of knowing Jesus came, lived, died, rose, and will return for His children gifts us something more valuable than the feeling of temporal happiness. This truth is the real present: eternity with Christ because of His grace upon grace. SGLY, dear friends. (Smile, God Loves You.) *Tiffany Kaye Chartier is an inspirational author and columnist. To share feedback or request a topic for consideration, visit <http://www.tiffanykayechartier.com> or email connect@tiffanykayechartier.com. Follow on Facebook: Tiffany Kaye Chartier.*

Gardener’s mailbag: Did we waste money our money?

By Neil Sperry

Special to the Anna-Melissa Tribune

Dear Neil: We applied the pre-emergent as you recommended last spring. It helped a great deal with this year’s lawn through the summer (until the drought). We intended to apply it again two weeks before the average date of the first killing freeze this fall, as per your book, but we had an early first freeze and never got it down until recently. Have we wasted our money? Please check the dates in my book again. You want to make two applications in late winter and late spring for the warm-season weeds (notably crabgrass and grassburs) and one application around September 1 for the cool-season (winter and early spring weeds). I think where the confusion came in was in the spring applications. The first one, no matter where a gardener lives, should be two weeks before the average date of the last killing freeze for that area. So that’s going to put the application in February for South Texas, early March for Central Texas and late March into early April for the coolest parts of Texas in the Panhandle. The second application would come 90 days after the first (since the pre-emergents are effective about 100 days). The most common products are Dimension, Halts and Balan, and any of the three should do a good job for you if applied at those times. Then the third application the last week of August or the first week of September would be for annual bluegrass, rescuegrass and ryegrass. They germinate in the fall and become unsightly as spring unfolds. I can’t speak to how much good such a late application will do. I hope that helps. **Dear Neil: This is an unusual seedling that has come up in the middle of one of our oleanders. Should we try to save it? I don’t even know what it is.**

I’ve been doing this column for 50 years and I’ve never had this tree sent for identification. You have a Chinese parasol tree (Firmiana simplex). It will grow to be 20 or 25 ft. tall and wide. As you can already tell, it’s going to have very large, bold-textured leaves. What will be most dramatic about it, however, will be its green trunks. It can be a bit messy and seedlings will come up in your and neighbors’ yards just as this one has. This could either have come from another varnish tree in the neighborhood, or it might have fallen into the pot in the nursery where

the oleander was grown. If you do decide to transplant it, you’re going to have to do so with a sharpshooter spade and by digging very carefully this winter. Otherwise, you’ll tear up your oleander in the process. **Dear Neil: Last year I had a beautiful poinsettia. After Christmas I put it on the patio expecting it to meet its maker quickly. However, it survived and has grown. Its leaves are smaller, but they appear to be turning red now. Is there anything I can do to help it thrive?** First, keep it from freezing. If we lived where we could be assured they would never freeze, poinsettias could be grown directly in the ground. In such a setting they would grow to be 8 or 10 ft. tall and wide. The larger the plant is, the smaller the floral bracts are. However, you’ll also have more of them, so the overall display will be showy if you can keep it from freezing. Full or nearly full sunlight will also be required. Good luck with it! **Dear Neil: Why did my pears, wisteria and Carolina jessamine all have flowers this fall? Do I need to worry about spring blooms?** Those plants typically all bloom coming out of the winter dormant season. Summer also causes them to go essentially dormant for several months (especially this hot, dry summer), so this fall bloom was prompted by the return to good growing conditions. It will have no impact on their spring bloom. **Dear Neil: I have seen bay laurel trees grown outdoors in parts of Texas. What is their Hardiness Zone? I have one that my mom raised from a 4-inch pot. It is very special to me. The plant (still in a pot) is getting very large. I’d like to plant it outside if I can.** Bay laurel (Laurus nobilis) is winter-hardy to Zone 8 (southern half of the state, if you go by the 2012 USDA Zone map). That means that it’s vulnerable to temperatures into the low teens, but I’d have protection available for it anytime it drops below 20. February 2021 would have wrecked it in most of the state. Also, if possible, wait until spring, so it will have a full growing season to become acclimated.

Dear Neil: I have a lovely bed of hardy red hibiscus. I’ve not grown it before. Should I cut it back now that the leaves have turned brown and the stems are bare? Yes. Its stems have died back to the



Chinese parasol tree courtesy photo

ground. I always cut mine back to about 3 inches, so I can see where they are planted. The garden looks a lot tidier, and that way I don’t start rototilling right through them during the winter. As a forewarning, they will be one of the last perennials to send up new shoots come spring. Don’t be impatient. **Dear Neil: I am trying to grow episcias in a bright east window. I’ve tried three or four varieties and none has done well. What is the secret?** They are related to African violets. In fact, they’re often referred to as “trailing African

violets.” They need morning sun through an east window, a porous and well-draining potting soil and constant moisture and nutrition. I grew several in self-watering pots and they thrived for a good while. Just don’t let them sit in hot sun in the summertime, and don’t let the plants get dry to the point of wilting badly. *Have a question you’d like Neil to consider? Mail it to him in care of this newspaper or e-mail him at mailbag@sperrygardens.com. Neil regrets that he cannot reply to questions individually.*



Odd when pears bloom in the fall courtesy photo



Tempting to save poinsettia after the holiday courtesy photo

SPORTS

Basketball season underway

Staff reports

The Lady Panthers and Panthers basketball season is now underway. The teams recently competed in the Fantasy of Lights tournament; the Lady Panthers finished with a third-place finish, and the boy’s team with a fourth-place result.

This weekend, you can see live local bas-

ketball in the Highway 5 Tournament; Van Alstyne, Anna, and Melissa host the tournament. Games are played in all three towns, with all high school JV and Varsity teams in action.

To find updated game and location information, use the following link: tinyurl.com/hwyfiveball.



Senior Carson Brown
Griff Servati / For the Van Alstyne Leader



Senior Bailey Henderson
Griff Servati / For the Van Alstyne Leader



Junior Kade Ramer
Griff Servati / For the Van Alstyne Leader



Senior Lacey Thorpe
Griff Servati / For the Van Alstyne Leader

Lady Panthers Volleyball earns post-season awards.

By Griff Servati
For the Van Alstyne Leader

The Lady Panthers finished their season in the third round of the playoffs. It was clear to local volleyball fans that the Lady Panthers were in the toughest district in the state. The playoffs confirmed that belief. Fellow district opponents Celina and Aubrey met in the regional finals, and Aubrey captured the 4A State Championship.

In such a competitive district, earning post-season awards should be considered an honor. Twin sisters led the Lady Panthers post-season awards; Lacey Thorpe made the Co-Libero of the year and Lanie Thorpe on Co-Setter of the year. The libero is an all-defensive position playing solely on the back row. Lacey led the Lady Panthers in digs with her all-out effort to get every ball into play. The setter in volleyball is the critical second-touch player; Lanie was the crucial effort player to get the ball wherever it was

to the front row players for the kill. For the Lady Panthers, most plays would be a Thorpe-to-Thorpe combination for two of the three touches on the ball.

Earning first-team honors were juniors Kaelyn Miller and Maci Densmore. Miller for her play as a defensive specialist, and Densmore led her team in kills for the season. Earning second-team honors were fellow front-row players Senior Jaidan Servati and Junior Lydia Carroll. Servati led the team in blocks from her Middle Blocker position. Carroll was a team leader in kills for the season. Junior Ryleigh Miller and Freshman Savannah Young earned Honorable mentions for their play.

Earning All-Academic honors for the team were Lydia Carroll, Maci Densmore, Bryleigh Duncan, Kyleigh Hayes, Phoebe O’Brien, Lauren Moore, Kaelyn and Ryleigh Miller, Jaidan Servati, Lacey and Lanie Thorpe, and Savannah Young.



Lacey and Lanie Thorpe led the Lady Panthers in post season honors.
Griff Servati / For the Herald Democrat

Once forbidden, gambling now embraced by NFL

By Josh Dubow
AP Pro Football Writer

Gambling has gone from the forbidden topic in the NFL to a key part of the league's present and future.

The days of lobbying against widespread legalized sports betting, preventing broadcast partners from even discussing point spreads and even prohibiting players from holding a fantasy football convention because it was at a casino are firmly in the past.

With a team playing in Las Vegas just a short walk from the casinos on The Strip, sponsorship deals with gambling companies who pay millions for in-game advertisements and teams having sports books next to their stadiums, the relationship between America's richest sports league and gambling is stronger than ever.

"The NFL has evolved quickly with the growing importance of sports betting on the overall ecosystem," said Robert Fishman, a senior analyst with MoffettNathanson, a division of SVB Securities.

"Sports betting is continuing to grow in importance and will continue to be a driver of growth. We're still in the very early days and there will be a natural evolution of how this continues to grow."

The growth has been astronomical already

since the U.S. Supreme Court overturned the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA) in 2018, setting the stage for legalized sports betting to spread outside Nevada to most of the rest of the country.

More than 30 states and Washington, D.C., allow sports betting either online or in person with several more set to join them in the next few years.

The NFL is doing its best to capitalize on that just a handful of years after Commissioner Roger Goodell sent a letter to the court considering the overturning of PASPA that said sports betting "threatens to damage irreparably the integrity of, and public confidence in, NFL football."

While there have been some issues like star receiver Calvin Ridley getting suspended for the season for betting on his own team's games while being a member of the Atlanta Falcons, it has been a relatively smooth evolution.

"We're happy with the growth and the structures that we're seeing across most places," said David Highhill, the NFL's vice president, general manager of sports betting,

"It's hard to call anything smooth when you're dealing with a state-by-state structure. But overall we've been happy with the partnerships we've built."

Highhill said the league also is focused on "responsible gambling" and gave a grant to the

National Council on Problem Gambling to focus on that area.

The NFL has signed deals with DraftKings, FanDuel and Caesars Entertainment that reportedly could be worth about \$1 billion for the league over five years.

Those companies have fueled an advertising spending spree that saw gambling companies spend \$129 million in advertising during NFL games during the 2021 season, according to research from the Kantar Group.

Research from MoffettNathanson shows that legalized sports betting revenue in the United States grew from less than \$500 million in 2019 in the first year after PASPA was overturned to more than \$3 billion in 2021.

"In a few short years, the very idea of sports betting has been transformed from a taboo and sub rosa vice into a major business opportunity," the company said in the report. "From sports leagues to rights owners to consumers, it is clear how important sports betting is today and how quickly sentiment has reversed the stigma that once was attached to this industry."

The company projects the legalized sports betting market will generate \$12 billion in revenue in 2025, with the NFL the most popular sport for bettors.

A poll conducted by Morning Consult for the American Gaming Association reported that about 47 million people plan to bet on NFL

games in 2022, a 40% increase from just two years ago as sports betting has been legalized in more and more states.

More than one-third of NFL fans plan to bet on games this season with many taking advantage of innovations like same-game parlays.

"We're also seeing there's more casual betting interest," Highhill said. "We see overall less people that are totally uninterested in sports betting. So the people that are interested are sort of more interested and the people that had more issues with it we see less and less of that. It shows broadly the population is getting used to sports betting and interested in it."

Teams are taking advantage of the opportunities with the Arizona Cardinals opening a 17,000-square-foot sportsbook next to their stadium and the Washington Commanders planning to open one adjacent to their stadium.

Several other teams having betting lounges where fans are able to place wagers on their phones.

That could one day lead to fans being able to place live in-game bets from their seats in a stadium.

"That's certainly possible," Highhill said. "For those bets to have scale and significance to the operators that are creating them they're going to need a lot of people interested in placing those bets."

Prayers go on, sometimes out of sight, in prep football

By Larry Lage
AP Sports Writer

WEST BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP) — Surrounded by a slew of players with their arms draped over shoulders, West Bloomfield High School assistant coach Justin Ibe bowed his head and led a Christian prayer before a recent Friday night game.

Forty yards down the sideline, three Muslim young men were having a quiet moment of their own.

"Ameen," the players quietly said, using the Arabic word for amen.

Across America, most high school football seasons are winding down. Thousands of games, the first since the Supreme Court in June ruled it was OK for a public school coach near Seattle to pray on the field. The decision prompted speculation that prayer would become an even bigger part of the game-day fabric, though that hasn't seemed to be the case.

Fouad Zaban, the head coach at Fordson High in Dearborn, calls the area just outside Detroit the "Middle East of America" and it is indeed home to thousands of people of Arab descent. After the court ruling, Zaban said, he was flooded with requests to use his platform and constitutional right to pray publicly. After thinking about it, he chose to keep his team's prayers behind closed doors to avoid potential anti-Islamic jeers from fans in other commu-

nities.

"That was a concern that they were going to get backlash," Zaban said.

With the nation's culture wars spilling into education, it is challenging to have teachable moments about big news — like a precedent-setting court ruling — and coaches such as Zaban would rather punt than pray publicly.

"It's harder, whether you're a coach, librarian, teacher or counselor," said Lara Schwartz, an American University professor whose specialties include campus speech and constitutional law. "There are activist groups targeting books and ideas, saying you can lose your license if you have these conversations. That to me is a threat to people having good constructive dialogue in classrooms, or with coaches."

In Michigan, some teams with multiple religions represented on their rosters have found ways for everyone who wants to participate to do so if they wish.

"We don't force anybody to do that," said Ibe, the defensive line coach in West Bloomfield. "We just take that moment to really just come together and give glory to God at that moment."

At Crestwood High School in Dearborn Heights, where most of the football team is Muslim, the entire team gathers before practices and games to pray on one knee. First, most of the players recite Al-Fatiha. Then, a player says a Christian prayer to the attentive group.

"Between those two prayers, they're pretty much all the same," said Adam Berry, a senior and a team captain. "Asking God for protection, asking God for forgiveness, and asking God for any way to help us through our game."

According to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, a majority of Americans think a coach leading a team in prayer (60%), a player leading a team in prayer (64%) and a coach praying on the field without asking the team to join in (71%) should all be allowed in public high school sports.

Still, the team plays it safe at Fordson High, where coaches clear the locker room and leave players to pray if they wish.

"No one can ever say that we were involved in it," Zaban said, adding he just wants to coach instead of drawing attention.

Hassan Shinawah, a senior and team captain at Fordson, said players supported keeping their prayers in the locker room and away from the public. The only exception this season came when Senior Day festivities and pregame messages from coaches ran long and players gathered quickly on the field to pray before kickoff.

"We don't know if people are comfortable," he said. "We don't know what their opinions are about it. We just don't want any conflict with anybody else."

In the South, at least three high schools, two in Alabama and another in North Carolina,

received letters in recent months from the Freedom From Religion Foundation. The nonprofit that advocates for atheists and agnostics said it fielded complaints about the promotion of religion surrounding football games. Jefferson County (Ala.) officials were asked to "ensure that its schools are no longer scheduling prayer at school-sponsored events, including football games."

The Associated Press left multiple messages for athletic directors and principals at the schools in both North Carolina and Alabama that were not returned.

Outside Detroit, coaches gave time and space for their players to pray, showing the teenagers that accommodations can be made for different faiths as well as the right to decline.

At West Bloomfield High, an assistant football coach once walked miles with a Jewish player — whose faith would not allow him to ride in a car one particular day — to make sure he got to his hotel after a road game. The unique nature of having Christians, Muslims and Jews playing on the same team was not lost on one of the players who participates in a pregame Islamic prayer.

"Some other teams, they probably don't have the same thing," said Mohamed Menisy, a 16-year-old junior offensive tackle. "We're one team, one family. We just respect each other."

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