



Marquee games fill the week in Top 25 basketball

INSIDE 6A

Van Alstyne Leader

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2022 | VANALSTYNELEADER.COM

COVERING HOWE, VAN ALSTYNE, TEXAS | PART OF CHERRYROAD MEDIA

159 awarded GC degrees, certificates

By Anna. M. Hicks

Grayson College

Friends and family watched as 159 Grayson College students received diplomas and certificates Friday. The ceremony included pathways in arts, humanities, business and entrepreneurship, health sciences, industrial technologies, public services and STEM.

“At Grayson College, when you walk in the door the first time, we see you with a cap and gown on” Grayson College President Jeremy McMillen said during the ceremony. “From that moment on at Grayson College, everything we do is designed to help you complete your degree.”

Of the 159 students receiving degrees Friday, 73 associate degrees, six Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees, 73 certificates and seven enhanced skills awards were awarded. The college’s graduates for fall had a median of 25 years old, with the youngest being 17 and the oldest being 61.

In addition to the commencement ceremony held Friday, the college celebrated students in a variety of programs through several other awards ceremonies during the week. Other events held included an Adult Education Literacy and Center for Workplace Learning Recognition Ceremony, the Texoma Regional Police Academy graduation, and nursing pinning.

“Our relationship doesn’t end today,” McMillen concluded. “You’re a Grayson College Viking, and we are committed to you.”



Students earned degrees and certificates based on courses in arts, humanities, business and entrepreneurship, health sciences, industrial technologies, public services and STEM. Jim Smarr / Grayson College



Grayson College graduates received their degrees Friday during a ceremony at the college in Denison.
Jim Smarr / Grayson College

Salvation Army kettle bells going virtual

Salvation Army

Christmas is fast approaching! By now you will have seen the iconic Salvation Army bell ringers at red kettles outside stores around Grayson County. But did you know that you can set up your own virtual fundraiser and be part of The Salvation Army’s Red Kettle Campaign without even leaving your house? This is a simple and fun way to engage your family, friends, and coworkers while raising much needed funds that help those in need all year round.

The Virtual Kettle provides a new, online option to the traditional Red Kettles that raise funds supporting those in need. “You will still see friendly bell ringers and Red Kettles at area store fronts and retailers,” said Lt. Michael Cain of The Salvation Army. “However, the opportunity to set up and promote your own online virtual kettle makes it easy for people to get involved in Doing The Most Good this holiday season. You set your fund-

raising goal, share the link with your kettle with friends, family, and work colleagues, and challenge them to donate. This year has been difficult for many in our community, and you can be part of making a difference to ensure The Salvation Army has the necessary funds to help all year long.”

To set up a virtual kettle, go to www.salvationarmytexas.org/Sherman. Select “Give to Our Virtual Kettle,” register as an individual or team, set a goal, and get to work promoting your kettle.

“Less people are carrying cash and visiting the mall and stores these days. A Virtual Kettle provides a great way for people to show their support for The Salvation Army without having to leave the house,” said Lt. Cain. “Every dollar raised through the Red Kettle campaign makes it possible for us to provide financial assistance to struggling families, food to those who are hungry, and shelter to people dealing with homelessness.”



Salvation Army kettle bell
courtesy photo

In 2021, The Salvation Army in Grayson County raised just under \$80,000 in kettles. This year’s goal is \$100,000.

Volunteers are crucial to the success of the Red Kettle campaign throughout November and December. It’s easier than ever for individuals, families, groups and businesses to sign up this year! You can select the lo-

cation, day and time you would like to ring when you visit www.RegisterToRing.com. We hope to see you out there at the kettle!

For more information about The Salvation Army, please call us at 903-868-9602. And as always, secure donations can be made online at www.salvationarmytexas.org or by calling 1-800-SAL-ARMY.

Opportunities to celebrate the season still abound

Staff reports

With just a little over two weeks till Christmas, there are still plenty of ways for area families to celebrate the season. The following is a list of things happening in the next few weeks locally.

Bright displays of holiday spirit

Grayson County’s Holiday Lights in open from 6-10 p.m. through Christmas Day at Loy Park in Denison. There is no charge to drive through the display, but donations are taken up the end by volunteers. Those volunteers will also have a sweet treat for humans and a crunchy one for pups.

Skating fun in Denison

Through Dec. 31, folks can strap on some ice skates and take a spin in downtown Denison at 530 W. Main. Skating is available from 1-9 p.m. daily. Admission cost is \$10.

Dec. 16

D&D Play

Sherman Public Library is hosting a young adult D&D Day from 1-5 p.m. Places are limited so interested patrons should call 903-892-7240 to sign up.

Dec. 17

Snacks with Santa and a big lizard

Santa Claus and Santa Rez at the Sherman Museum, 301 S. Walnut Street in Sherman. The event begins at 11 a.m. and will continue through 3 p.m. and will include Christmas crafts, cookies and hot chocolate.

Dec. 18

Fun at the Movies

Family Movie Night at St. Mary’s Catholic Parish will feature the movie “The Star” and will start at 6 p.m. at St. Ann’s Place, 727 S. Travis St. in Sherman.

Dec. 19

A children’s party

Grand Central Station’s Children’s Christmas Party starts at 6 p.m. on Dec. 19 at 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The party will be held at GCS, 619 E. Houston in Sherman. Every child who attends will receive a present and those who want to attend do not need to pre-register.

Dec. 20

PJ fun at the library

Sherman Public Library will host Winter PJ Storytime starting at 6:30 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to wear their most comfortable jammies and settle in for winter themed stories. The event is geared toward younger children and parents, but all ages are wel-



There are loads of Christmas activities left for area families to enjoy.
Pexels/ courtesy photo

comed.

Dec. 23

Sounds of the Season

St. Mary’s Catholic Parish, 727 S. Travis in Sherman, offers Christmas Carols by Redemption Mater Diocesan Missionary Seminary at 7 p.m. There is a \$20 donation required.

Announcement

CherryRoad Media has decided to discontinue the Van Alstyne Leader with content that would previous appear in this publication to be integrated into the Herald Democrat. The final issue of the Van Alstyne Leader will be published on Dec. 30.

We appreciate and value our subscribers and hope they will continue to support local journalism with a subscription to the Herald Democrat.



News

Holiday driving safety event to be held at TxDOT Information Center. **2A**

History

Texas History Minute: Debakey’s influence on heart health. **3A**

Weather

High 45° | Low 31°
Partly Cloudy

Volume 26 | No. 201
To subscribe 561-820-4663
©2022

County leader to depart, others reflect on service to county

By Jerrie Whiteley

Van Alstyne Leader

Last week Grayson County’s Engineer Clay Barnett announced his upcoming departure from the county fold and this week the court heard about two more departures and discussed changes coming to the court in January.

Assistant Grayson County District Attorney Craig Price has worked closely with the court since 2016 as their legal advisor and Tuesday his boss Brett Smith announced Price will be leaving the county’s employment to follow a career opportunity in the Tarrant County.

“Craig has turned out to be a really phenomenal civil attorney. Our civil attorney that does all of our mental commitments, all our open records request, which I think we only got about nine of those last night, right?” Smith said.

He continued to point out that Price advised the commissioners court as well as other county leaders including Sheriff Tom Watt.

“Craig has probably hands down been one of the best attorneys in that role that we’ve ever had,” Smith continued.

After thanking the commissioners and his boss for the applause he received, Price said, “Thirty-three years of practicing law I’ve learned that the less I say, the better I do. So, let me just say I am thankful for the opportunity to work here, and I’ve enjoyed working with everybody immensely.”

Commissioners saved their feelings about

Price’s departure for the part of the meeting preserved for their comments.

Bart Lawrence, commissioner for Precinct 4, said “I just want to thank Craig because he has been huge to me, a lot of help.” Lawrence will be leaving the court at the end of the month after losing his most recent bid for reelection.

David Whitlock, commissioner for Precinct 2, will retire at the end of the month after 20 years in that position. Of Price, Whitlock said, “Craig, I’m gonna miss hollering at the lawyer in the hallway. But if you’ll remember, I told you a long ago, you do remember what I told you when you first got here — I said you’ll have less trouble Precinct 2 than any other Precinct and it’s been that way. I really have enjoyed being around you and you have done a good job.

Commissioner Phyllis James told Price she couldn’t have several years without him. “Because let me you, Precinct 3 we use Craig Price a whole lot down there in Precinct 3,” she said and then laughed. She then praised Price for telling her No when the situation warranted it.

“It’s just been fabulous working with you, and I wish you all the best,” she added to Price.

Commissioner Jeff Whitmire said, “You’ve golly, I don’t know what we are gonna do to stay out of trouble now.”

County Judge Bill Magers, who will also leave the court at the end of the month after losing his most recent bid for reelection,

praised Price for his work on turning around the Texoma Area Paratransit System.

“When I took office, TAPS was \$8 million in debt. We turned it around, assured it’s viability. They are building a brand-new terminal as we speak.”

Changes to the Court

Then the commissioners’ comments turned to upcoming changes to the court.

“Cause this could be our last meeting all five of us together and I don’t know about you, but it’s been such a blast,” said James, Precinct 3. “We’ve been an amazing team and I think everybody out there would agree for eight years. We’ve accomplished so much for Grayson County and man it’s tough. I’ve served with these fine gentlemen and enjoyed every minute of it and ya’ll are gonna be missed seriously, very much so.”

Whitlock said to Magers, “We are gonna miss you, Bill Magers.”

Whitmire, Precinct 1, like James, is staying on the court in January and said he will participate in next week’s meeting remotely.

“I want to echo Phyllis’ thoughts. We’ve had a great group for the last eight years Bill’s been here and ten years we’ve (he and James) have been here. We don’t always agree on everything but when we disagree we disagree in a amicable, professional way and don’t let it affect our personal relationships. I you all three friends and look forward to being able to work with you outside of this.”

Magers praised the Gunter High School football team before turning to his remarks to the commissioner’s court.

‘I want to thank my teammates here at Grayson County and I mean that in all sincerity. Elected officials, department heads, staff and especially my fellow commissioners, it

has been truly an honor of my life to serve beside each of you. We have a great team here at Grayson County, it is a great team and like the Gunter Tigers, we’ve racked up a few wins,” he said before listing some things that have happened while the five have served together like getting the county’s airport into the federal control tower program and bringing it into the black on the county balance sheet with a brand-new terminal that was constructed without cost to the county.

“We spearheaded, with local, state and federal partners, an effort, Clay Barnett led this charge, for a \$350 million dollar six-lane expansion of (U.S. Hwy.) 75 from the county line to FM 120,” Magers said. Additionally, he said, the court launched the construction of the first section of Grayson Parkway from the county line road to FM 120 with most of the cost coming from sources other than Grayson County. He mentioned the way TAPS had been turned around’ He pointed out that the commissioner’s road and bridge budgets have increased by \$2 million each and used COVID-19 money to make capital improvements like expansion to the jail and a new elevator for the courthouse. He said county leaders worked with the cities to either bring big businesses to the county or help them expand. And, he said, they had reduced the tax rate by 40 percent.

“Finally, I want to wish Judge Elect (Bruce) Dawsey, Commissioner Elect (Matt) Hardenberg and Commissioner Elect (Art) Author great success. We benefit from your success. I trust you will enjoy the opportunity to serve as much as I have. I hope you’ll run to work every day and (be) eager for the challenges that each day brings. Good luck and God bless you and your families.”

Holiday driving safety event to be held at TxDOT Information Center

TxDOT

TxDOT’s Travel Information Center on US 75 north of Denison will host a holiday impaired driving safety event from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Dec. 16.

TxDOT personnel, local law enforcement representatives and first responders will be on hand to share the dangers and legal consequences of drinking and driving. Several fun, interactive activities are also planned, and visitors can learn more about tourism opportunities statewide.

This event is part of TxDOT’s Holiday

Impaired Driving public education campaign aimed at reminding drivers to drive sober, or find a sober ride to and from festive events this holiday season. Impaired driving, especially during the holidays, contributes to the growing number of fatalities and serious-injury crashes on Texas roads each year, TxDOT officials said.

The Denison center is located at Exit 74 on US 75 north of Denison. Exit right and follow the signs to the center if traveling north from Denison; if traveling south across the Red River, exit from the right lane at the

Texas-side of the Red River bridge.

TxDOT’s 12 travel information centers promote tourism to and within Texas, provide visitors with a vital rest stop, offer vending for snacks and beverages, serve as a Wi-Fi hot spot, and provide travel assistance from travel counselors. The centers and counselors create a positive first impression of Texas, help travelers choose travel routes, and provide detailed information on destinations, events and road conditions.

For more information, call (903) 737-9213 or the center at (903) 463-2860.



The event will be held at the TxDOT Information Center in Denison.
Van Alstyne Leader

Eastern District charges 21 in money laundering scheme

Eastern District of Texas

According to court documents unsealed today, 21 individuals have been charged for their roles in transnational money laundering networks, including those that laundered millions of dollars stolen from United States fraud victims through romance scams, business email compromises, technical support schemes, and other fraud schemes.

U.S. Attorney Brit Featherston of the Eastern District of Texas, William Smarr, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service’s (USSS) Dallas Field Office, and Inspector in Charge Thomas Noyes of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service announced Operation Crypto Runner, an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) investigation into transnational cryptocurrency money laundering networks that facilitate the movement of fraud proceeds from victims in the United States to foreign criminal organizations.

“These defendants orchestrated highly organized and sophisticated schemes to launder fraud proceeds through cryptocurrency,” said U.S. Attorney Brit Featherston. “Today’s announcement sends a clear message that money laundering networks that service fraud schemes targeting American victims, especially the elderly, will not be tolerated, and those operating such networks will be held accountable. By acting as domestic money launderers for foreign co-conspirators, these defendants played indispensable roles that allowed foreign actors to reach from overseas to target victims in communities across the United States.”

“Today’s announcement demonstrates the investigative capabilities of the Secret Service and highlights the success of our collaborative efforts through Operation Crypto Runner to dismantle and disrupt transnational money laundering networks,” said William Smarr, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Secret Service’s Dallas Field Office. “These arrests are just the beginning. We are committed to bringing each of the remaining perpetrators to justice.”

“These cases stem from a multi-year operation initiated in the Eastern District of Texas by Postal Inspectors and the Secret Service,” said Thomas Noyes, Inspector in Charge of the Postal Inspection Service’s Fort Worth Division. “Cybercrime has become an all-too-common way for foreign criminal actors to prey on Americans. Interagency cooperation is essential to be effective in disrupting organized crime. I commend the exceptional work of our law enforcement partners and emphasize our agency’s ongoing commitment to combatting fraud and money laundering schemes.”

To date, the Operation has disrupted more than \$300 million in annual money laundering transactions, seized and forfeited millions in cash and cryptocurrency, and identified thousands of victims.

Some of the schemes alleged in the indictments include the following:

U.S. v. Zenobia Walker, 6:20-CR-91-JCB/KNM (11/19/2020)

Zenobia Walker, 65, of Temple Hills, Maryland, pleaded guilty on January 6, 2022, to conspiracy to operate an unlicensed money transmitting business and was sentenced to 18 months in federal prison on November 2, 2022. Walker was involved in a scheme

in which she received cash by mail, money orders, wire transfers, and cashier’s checks obtained from victims of romance scams and from victims of other fraud schemes. The funds were deposited into Walker’s personal bank accounts and withdrawn and deposited into other bank accounts in order to exchange the funds for cryptocurrency. Between December 2019 and September 2020, Walker exchanged \$308,800.00 for cryptocurrency on behalf of her foreign co-conspirators.

U.S. v. Tulasidas Konda, 6:20-CR-31-JDK/JDL (4/23/2021)

Tulasidas Konda, 57, of Amelia Court House, Virginia, pleaded guilty on May 5, 2021, to conspiracy to commit money laundering. Konda led and organized a multi-year money laundering conspiracy involving the laundering of criminal proceeds derived from various scams. Konda’s organization opened bank accounts and mailboxes that were used to receive and transact victim funds, received the victim funds, engaged in subsequent financial transactions, routinely structured in amounts under \$10,000 in an effort to evade reporting requirements and to conceal the nature and source of the criminal proceeds, and moved the criminal proceeds to foreign co-conspirators. Konda’s organization routinely exchanged the criminal proceeds for cryptocurrency and directed the cryptocurrency to wallets under the control of their foreign co-conspirators. In the course of the operation, Konda was personally responsible for laundering \$4,172,061.58 in criminal proceeds.

U.S. v. Deependra Bhusal, 6:21-CR-32-JDK/JDL (4/23/2021)

Deependra Bhusal, 46, of Irving, Texas, pleaded guilty on April 30, 2021, to conspiracy to commit money laundering and was sentenced to 46 months in federal prison on April 6, 2022. Bhusal was a key member of the Konda Organization. In the course of the operation, Bhusal was personally responsible for laundering \$1,437,358.99 in criminal proceeds.

U.S. v. Lois Boyd, et al., 6:21-CR-43-JDK/KNM (6/16/2021)

Lois Boyd, 76, of Amelia Court House, Virginia, pleaded guilty on June 14, 2022, to a violation of the Travel Act. Boyd, also a member of the Konda Organization, is alleged to have conspired with others to receive victim money derived from a variety of fraud schemes and launder the proceeds through cryptocurrency. Boyd routinely structured deposits in order to avoid transaction reporting requirements and to conceal the nature and source of the criminal proceeds. Boyd and others in the Konda Organization exchanged the criminal proceeds for cryptocurrency and directed the cryptocurrency to wallets under the control of their foreign co-conspirators. In August 2020, Boyd and others traveled to Longview, Texas, where they attempted to exchange more than \$450,000 for Bitcoin.

U.S. v. John Khuu, 6:22-CR-62-JCB/JDL (5/18/2022)

John Khuu, 27, of San Francisco, California was named in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury charging him in a money laundering conspiracy. According to the indictment, Khuu is alleged to have conspired with others to launder the proceeds of his drug trafficking organization through cryptocurrency. The defendant allegedly distributed

counterfeit pharmaceutical pills and other controlled substances on dark web markets to customers across the United States. Customers paid for their purchases by transferring cryptocurrency, usually Bitcoin, from their dark web market customer accounts to one of Khuu’s vendor accounts. Khuu and his co-conspirators traded the Bitcoin for U.S. currency and laundered the proceeds through hundreds of transactions and dozens of financial accounts. During the course of the conspiracy, Khuu and his co-conspirators allegedly laundered more than \$5,350,000.00. On August 17, 2022, Khuu was also charged by a federal grand jury in the Northern District of California in a two-count indictment charging him with unlawful importation of a controlled substance.

U.S. v. Randall V. Rule, et al., 6:22-CR-64-JDK/KNM (5/18/2022)

Randall V. Rule, 71, of Reno, Nevada, and Gregory C. Nysewander, 64, formerly of Irmo, South Carolina, were named in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury charging them with money laundering conspiracy, money laundering, and a conspiracy to violate the Bank Secrecy Act. According to the indictment, Rule and Nysewander are alleged to have conspired with others to launder the proceeds of wire fraud and mail fraud schemes through cryptocurrency. The defendants converted funds from romance scams, business email compromises, and real estate scams, and other fraudulent schemes into cryptocurrency and sent the cryptocurrency to accounts controlled by foreign and domestic co-conspirators. The defendants and their co-conspirators made false representations and concealed material facts, in order to avoid discovery of the fraudulent nature of deposits, wires, and transfers, such as providing instructions to co-conspirators and victims to label wire transfers as “loan repayments” and “advertising.” The defendants also made false representations and concealed material facts when completing account opening documents and when communicating with financial institutions and cryptocurrency exchanges. During the course of the conspiracy, Rule, Nysewander, and their co-conspirators allegedly laundered more than \$2.4 million. Rule and Nysewander are also charged with willfully violating the money services business requirements of the Bank Secrecy Act.

U.S. v. Sharena Seay, 6:22-CR-110-JDK/JDL (8/17/2022)

Sharena Seay, 37, of Jacksonville, Florida, was named in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury charging her with money laundering. According to the indictment, Seay is alleged to have laundered the proceeds of her drug trafficking operations through cryptocurrency. The defendant allegedly supplied alpha-Pyrrolidinopentiphenone (alpha-PVP), which is often called “flakka,” and similar synthetic cathinones, such as Eutylone or alpha-PiHP. Seay distributed alpha-PVP and other controlled substances to various customers across the United States. Customers who purchased controlled substances from Seay paid for their purchases with cash. Seay laundered the cash proceeds through cryptocurrency in order to purchase more controlled substances on the dark web and to conceal her criminal activity. During the course of the conspiracy, Seay allegedly laundered more than \$1.2 million.

U.S. v. Fnu Ankush, et al., 6:22-CR-111-JCB/KNM (8/17/2022)

Fnu Ankush, 35, of Fishers, Indiana, Jenisha Katuwal, 40, of Fishers, Indiana, Sukhwinder Sandhu, 44, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Inder Singh, 37, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Mukul Khanna, 37, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Satinder Singh, 36, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Ramneek Singh, 28, of Levittown, New York, Muninder Singh, 52, of Fairfax, Virginia, Sandeep Heir, 43, of Fresno, California, and Rachel Mullins, 36, of Jacksonville, Florida, were named in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury charging them in a wire and mail fraud conspiracy. According to the indictment, the defendants facilitated technical support schemes by creating a financial infrastructure in the United States that involved establishing shell companies with names intended to resemble names of legitimate companies. The defendants opened and controlled business bank accounts in the names of the shell companies in order to facilitate the computer tech scheme. The defendants also established websites for many of the shell companies in order to make the shell companies appear legitimate. Then, through false and fraudulent pretenses, representations, and promises, and concealment of material facts, the defendants and their co-conspirators persuaded victims to deposit, wire, or transfer funds into designated bank accounts or to mail funds to designated addresses.

These efforts are part of Operation Crypto Runner, an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at <https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF>.

In October 2017, the Elder Abuse Prevention and Prosecution Act (EAPPA) was signed into law. The EAPPA’s purpose is to increase the federal government’s focus on preventing elder abuse and exploitation. Subsequently, the Department of Justice launched the Elder Justice Initiative (EJI). Through the EJI, the Department has participated in hundreds of criminal and civil enforcement actions involving misconduct that targeted vulnerable seniors. The Department has conducted hundreds of trainings and outreach sessions across the country. The EJI website contains useful information, including educational resources about prevalent financial scams so you can guard against them.

In August 2020, the Eastern District of Texas announced its own initiative, in partnership with law enforcement and private financial institutions, to identify and prosecute transnational elder fraud. This EDTX initiative is designed to combat these criminal organizations, both foreign and domestic, as well their networks of associates and money mules who launder the stolen funds.

The investigations arising from the operation are being conducted by the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and are being led and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Nathaniel C. Kummerfeld and L. Frank Coan, Jr., with assistance from the Criminal Division’s Fraud Section and Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section and the Department’s Office of International Affairs.

Texas History Minute: DeBakey’s influence on heart health

By Ken Bridges
Special to the Anna-Melissa Tribune

For generations, doctors were often reluctant to perform any type of operation involving the heart. The lack of a clear understanding about the heart made treating many conditions difficult. Texas surgeon Michael DeBakey spent decades researching and developing new techniques that have completely changed the understanding of the heart and heart disease. Throughout his career, DeBakey became world-renowned for not only life-saving surgical breakthroughs but also for his innovation in health care.

Dr. Michael Ellis DeBakey was born in September 1908 in the Southeast Louisiana city of Lake Charles. His parents were both Lebanese immigrants and were determined to give their children the best education possible, with both sons becoming respected surgeons.

DeBakey completed his undergraduate studies at the prestigious Tulane University in New Orleans, where he also graduated medical school in 1932. He worked hard during medical school and even began experimenting with new devices to aid in surgery. One, a peristaltic pump, or roller pump, became a key component in heart-lung machines developed later. He completed his residency in New Orleans and traveled the world studying with the most respected surgeons of the day.

Early in his career, he developed a rep-

utation for carefully researching all sorts of medical questions and becoming a problem-solver. In 1939, his research led him to conclude that smoking was a leading cause of lung cancer, a find that was confirmed by other researchers and ultimately became one factor in the Surgeon General’s report warning of tobacco’s dangers decades later.

He served as an army surgeon during World War II. DeBakey advocated stationing surgeons closer to the front lines to reduce transport time and thus give patients more of the life-saving minutes they needed to survive. Survival rates increased to the point that the army was inspired to create the famed Mobile Army Surgical Hospitals (MASH units) during the Korean War. He also advocated developing a system of veterans medical research centers to help with the special needs of wounded veterans.

DeBakey was hired by the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston in 1948 where he continued his research into the heart. In the 1950s, he developed grafting techniques to repair broken blood vessels and arteries. He also developed bypass surgeries, operations where surgeons bypass a clogged artery with arteries taken from another part of the body, allowing normal blood flow. The technique is a standard tool in modern heart surgery.

He also worked with the development of the artificial heart. Teams of doctors around the world were researching artificial pumps

and hearts to aid surgeries and even one day replace diseased hearts. DeBakey and Dr. Domingo Liotta in 1966 successfully implanted a ventricular assist device, a device that aided blood circulation, in what became one of the first procedures of its kind.

In the 1960s, DeBakey made another innovation by having surgeries filmed so medical students could further study different life-saving techniques. He was a revered figure on the Baylor campus, serving as president of the college from 1969 to 1979 and then as chancellor until 1996.

In addition to serving on numerous health commissions, he wrote several books to educate the public on new understandings of the heart. These books included The Living Heart (1977) and The Living Heart Diet (1984). Millions of people began thinking about the health of their hearts because of these books, inspiring them to exercise more and move to healthier diets.

In 2005, he suffered a rare aortic dissection, a tear in one of the layers of the main artery leading from the heart. DeBakey initially declined surgery, but after he fell unconscious, doctors performed the life-saving procedure that DeBakey himself developed. The 97-year-old was the oldest person in history to undergo the operation. The total cost of the operation and his recovery reportedly cost more than \$1 million.

After the operation, he continued to work in medicine. He attended the groundbreaking ceremonies for the new DeBakey Library and Museum at he Baylor College of Medicine. He continued to advise his fellow surgeons and researchers until his death in July 2008,



heart surgeon Michael DeBakey
WikiMedia Commons

just two months before his one hundredth birthday.

He was honored by dozens of organizations for his work during his lifetime and afterward. It was estimated by biographers that DeBakey operated on as many as 60,000 people in his 75-year career, equivalent to the entire populations of Anderson or Wise counties. DeBakey saved untold numbers by his own hands or through research that fundamentally transformed medicine. Because of his work, heart conditions of most types are now treatable and even preventable.

Ken Bridges is a Texas native, writer and history professor. He can be reached at drkenbridges@ gmail. com. The views and opinions expressed here are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect those of the Anna-Melissa Tribune.

Today in History: December 16, Battle of the Bulge begins

Associated Press

Today is Friday, Dec. 16, the 350th day of 2022. There are 15 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Dec. 16, 1944, the World War II Battle of the Bulge began as German forces launched a surprise attack against Allied forces through the Ardennes Forest in Belgium and Luxembourg (the Allies were eventually able to turn the Germans back).

On this date:

In 1653, Oliver Cromwell became lord protector of England, Scotland and Ireland.

In 1773, the Boston Tea Party took place as American colonists boarded a British ship and dumped more than 300 chests of tea into Boston Harbor to protest tea taxes.

In 1907, 16 U.S. Navy battleships, which came to be known as the “Great White Fleet,” set sail on a 14-month round-the-world voyage to demonstrate American sea power.

In 1950, President Harry S. Truman proclaimed a national state of emergency in order to fight “world conquest by Communist imperialism.”

In 1960, 134 people were killed when a United Air Lines DC-8 and a TWA Super Constellation collided over New York City.

In 1991, the U.N. General Assembly rescinded its 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism by a vote of 111-25.

In 2000, President-elect George W. Bush selected Colin Powell to become the first African-American secretary of state.

In 2001, after nine weeks of fighting, Afghan militia leaders claimed control of the last mountain bastion of Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaida fighters, but bin Laden himself was nowhere to be seen.

In 2011, in San Francisco, eight years of being investigated for steroid allegations ended for home run king Barry Bonds with a 30-day sentence to be served at home. (Bonds never served the sentence; his conviction for obstruction of justice was overturned.)

In 2014, Taliban gunmen stormed a military-run school in the northwestern Pakistan city of Peshawar, killing at least 148 people, mostly children.

In 2019, House Democrats laid out their first impeachment case against President Donald Trump; a sweeping report from the House Judiciary Committee said Trump had “betrayed the Nation by abusing his high office to enlist a foreign power in corrupting democratic elections.”

In 2020, the first COVID-19 vaccinations were underway at U.S. nursing homes, where the virus had killed 110,000 people. Tyson Foods said it had fired seven top managers at its largest pork plant after an investigation confirmed allegations that they had wagered on how many workers at the plant in Iowa would test positive for the coronavirus. (An outbreak centered around the plant infected more than 1,000 employees, at least six of whom died.)

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama visited Newtown, Connecticut, the scene of the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre; after meeting privately with victims’ families, the president told an evening vigil he would use “whatever power” he had to prevent future shootings. A 23-year-old woman was brutally raped and beaten on a bus in New Delhi, a crime that triggered widespread protests in India. (The woman died 13 days later.)

Five years ago: Two female couples tied the knot in Australia’s first same-sex weddings under new legislation allowing gay marriages.

One year ago: U.S. health officials said most Americans should get the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines instead of the Johnson & Johnson shot; the decision came after government advisers reviewed new safety data about rare but potentially life-threatening blood clots linked to J&J’s shot. A federal judge rejected OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma’s sweeping deal to settle thousands of lawsuits over the toll of opioids; the judge found flaws in the way the bankruptcy settlement protected members of the Sackler family who owned the company from lawsuits. The last 12 hostages from a U.S.-based missionary group who were kidnapped and held for ransom in Haiti were freed and were flown out of the

country following a two-month ordeal; five others had been released earlier. Urban Meyer’s tumultuous NFL tenure ended after just 13 games — and two victories — when the Jacksonville Jaguars fired him because of an accumulation of missteps.

Today’s Birthdays: Civil rights attorney and co-founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center Morris Dees is 86. Actor Joyce Bulifant is 85. Actor Liv Ullmann is 84. CBS news correspondent Lesley Stahl is 81. Pop musician Tony Hicks (The Hollies) is 77. Pop singer Benny Andersson (ABBA) is 76. Rock singer-musician Billy Gibbons (ZZ Top) is 73. Rock musician Bill Bateman (The Blast-

ers) is 71. Actor Xander Berkeley is 67. Actor Alison LaPlaca is 63. Actor Sam Robards is 61. Actor Jon Tenney is 61. Actor Benjamin Bratt is 59. Actor-comedian JB Smoove is 57. Actor Miranda Otto is 55. Actor Daniel Cosgrove is 52. R&B singer Michael McCarty is 51. Actor Jonathan Scarfe is 47. Actor Krysten Ritter is 41. Actor Zoe Jarman is 40. Country musician Chris Scruggs is 40. Actor Theo James is 38. Actor Amanda Setton is 37. Rock musician Dave Rublin (American Authors) is 36. Actor Hallee Hirsh is 35. Actor Anna Popplewell is 34. Actor Stephan James is 29.



These are some of the signs carried by some 2,500 persons as blacks held a rally in Hurt Park in downtown Atlanta, Georgia, Dec. 16, 1963. The rally was held to show dissatisfaction with Atlanta’s racial image. Dr. Martin Luther King was the principal speaker. (AP Photo/Horace Cort)

ACROSS

1 Garden City is seat of Glass County

5 archaic "soon"

6 softest mineral found in Texas

7 TXism: "got ____ in the oven" (pregnant)

8 British mother

9 org. for academic psychology

12 TXism: "skinny as ____"

17 "trees" in Spanish

19 military NCO

21 Stamford's "Texas Cowboy"

22 TXism: "tight enough to pick a ____" (good fence)

23 Texas tennis teams can raise funds with a "____-thon"

28 ooze

29 catch one's breath

30 Queen Elizabeth II had ____ of 70 years

31 audience reaction at a comedy club

35 TXism: "got ____ under his saddle" (irritable)

36 "The Big Tree" at Goose Island is the ____ state (live oak)

42 TXism: "numerous as ants on ____"

44 rub out

46 TXism: "about ____ Red River mud" (confusing)

48 TX-born Ann Doran 1955 film: "Rebel Without ____"

49 dir. from Buna to Orange

50 prefix meaning "large"

51 TXism: "down to ____ and bones" (thin)

52 TXism: "shin ____" (party)

53 TX "Cactus Jack" said the vice-presidency ____ worth a bucket of warm spit"

54 TX Garrison who won 1988 Olympic medals in tennis

56 TXism: "____ New York second" (quick)

57 where many Texans fought, for short

58 lamb's down

DOWN

1 Ruff Rider Regatta, e.g. (2 wds.)

2 TXism: "loud as boot heels ____ floor"

3 seat of Colorado County

4 Corpus Christi FM

9 falsehood (2 wds.)

10 TX Patrick Swayze was this periodical's 1991 "Sexiest Man Alive" (2 wds.)

11 fed. ID no.

12 Texas "fire ____"

13 drilling rig workers

14 Santa ____, Texas

15 a lake in South Texas never ____ over in the winter

16 many Texas towns are encircled by one

18 TXism: "more than ____ way to skin a cat" (alternative)

20 Texas "Monkee," Nesmith (init.)

23 "Alamo City" init.

24 Astro Verlander stat.

25 country singer McEntire

26 "widow" in Spanish

27 fancy word for "exit"

32 TXism: "old ____ sin"

33 Longhorn univ. in Austin

34 U.S. Army soldier

36 "O" of IOU

37 good farming soil

38 a Houston doctor who had a national television spot: "____ Duke"

39 TX Sam Bass was a ____ robber

40 what a ghost might do in the house where he died?

41 suffix denoted the female gender

43 state I.D.

45 boot width

47 on highway 496, ten miles northwest of Fort Worth

48 largest continent

55 TXism: "he's on a first ____ basis with the bottom of the deck" (card cheat)

ALL TOGETHER NOW.

Print, Digital & Social Solutions for our Advertisers & Readers. Call Today! 870-453-3731

The World's Greenest Carpet Cleaners®

Oxi FRESH

CARPET CLEANING®

Veteran Owned

903-870-4080

SCHOLARSHIPS

up to \$1,025!

New to Grayson College Van Alstyne Campus

Pharmacy Technician Class starts January 30

apply by Jan. 8

SCAN ME

- 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm
- Monday/Wednesday
- Earn a nationally recognized credential

grayson.edu/cwl

GRAYSON COLLEGE

Center for Workplace Learning

At the movies: Women Talking is as emotionally devastating as it is deeply human

By Doug Laman

Special to the Anna-Melissa Tribune

Based on the Miriam Toews book of the same name, *Women Talking* chronicles a collection of women living in a Mennonite colony who have a choice to make. They’ve uncovered the truth that the men in their colony have been raping them, an act the elders of their community are eager to dismiss altogether. These women are now grappling with what to do next. Do they just continue their existence, stay and fight, or leave for an unknown future? Much of Polley’s script focuses on eight women, including the haunted Salome (Claire Foy), the dubious Mariche (Jessie Buckley), and the hopeful Ona (Rooney Mara), debating their varying perspectives and hopes for their future. They’ve been silenced for so long. Now, they have a chance to speak.

A friend of mine compared *Women Talking* in its scope and atmosphere to *12 Angry Men* and that’s a pretty apt comparison. Much like that 1957 Sidney Lumet film, *Women Talking* is proof you don’t need a multitude of locations or an expansive scope to grip people’s attention. Confining much of *Women Talking* to the top floor of a barn turns out to be a wise decision for the intimate story Polley is telling. We as viewers need to feel how few options these characters have, their world is so limited that they’re unaware of the names of places lying far beyond their community. The limited scope of *Women Talking*’s story quietly reinforces how trapped these characters are well, while the tight backdrop also affords more opportuni-

ties for the varying personalities in the script to smash into one another.

Such compelling drama unfolds when *Women Talking* just focuses on these dialogue exchanges, which are often punctuated by appropriately startling and abrupt images of the past (such as teeth falling out of a woman’s mouth or another character waking up in the middle of the night and screaming in pain). This editing technique brings us into the minds of these women as they offer up their testimonies and, internally, re-experience their trauma all over again. We get to hear the words they choose to finally express themselves while also getting a glimpse into the horrifying realities they’re reeling from. It’s such a great piece of editing and directing that lends further insight into the minds of these characters without proving disruptive to the immersive world Polley is creating.

Much of that immersiveness comes from the fully realized performances within the ensemble cast. Though they’re playing women who inhabit a colony where individuality is strictly forbidden, there are still such welcome idiosyncrasies in each of their performances. Claire Foy, for instance, lends such vibrant and compelling (not to mention justifiable) passion in her line deliveries, while Rooney Mara lends believability to the poetic observations of Ona. This is a character who could have easily lapsed into being a parody of herself, but Mara just makes Ona’s lines feel true, not trite or straining for profundness. Meanwhile, Ben Whishaw, as August, a man tasked with pen-

ning the minutes of these meetings between women, is outstanding in portraying such a complicated soft-spoken fellow. It’s a role that makes great use of Whishaw’s gift for quiet yet impactful performances and this actor’s talents in that area delivers some of the most striking emotional moments of *Women Talking*.

These performances and other critical parts of Polley’s understated yet moving filmmaking speak to how well *Women Talking* handles harrowing material. But what’s also impressive are the handful of moments where levity breaks into the story. A well-timed joke involving an elderly character thinking she’s gone blind only to then realize her glass have merely fogged up, for instance, may have seem like a weird tonal digression in a lesser movie. But here, these and other superbly placed moments of humor accentuate the complexity of these characters who are capable of experiencing every emotion under the sun. By seeing them laugh together, we are reminded of the joy they are largely deprived of in the community they inhabit. These unique tonal moments highlight how, in this barn with just other women (plus August), Saloma, Ona, Mariche, and every other lady can finally be their complicated varied selves.

As a filmmaker, Sarah Polley has never shied away from brutal material. Her directorial debut, *Away from Her*, was about an elderly couple fragmented by Alzheimer’s, she basically jumped into the deep end as a filmmaker right away. Meanwhile, her 2012 documentary *Stories We Tell* was an unflinching look at both her family’s history and her own identity. That streak continues on with *Women Talking*, with Polley’s gift for handling heavy concepts flourishing inside this feature’s rule-breaking spirit. Traditional rules of movies say that you can’t center narratives about sexual assault on people who’ve experienced it (even the recent *She Said* followed this rule), yet *Women Talking* focuses its runtime on several people who’ve survived rape. The history of cinema, meanwhile, is lit-



This image released by United Artists shows Rooney Mara, from left., Claire Foy, Judith Ivey, Sheila McCarthy, Michelle McLeod and Jessie Buckley in a scene from “Women Talking.” (Michael Gibson/Orion - United Artists Releasing via AP)

tered with the erasure of trans characters and performers, yet *Women Talking* makes room for trans experiences with the character of Melvin (August Winter). On and on the list goes as *Women Talking* constantly redefines “normal” in cinematic language, often without viewers even realizing the norms have been shattered.

Both Polley being in rare form as a director and the rule-breaking standards of this production have the incredible domino effect of also bringing out the best in all the other artists working on *Women Talking*, including the various members of the movie’s stacked ensemble cast. A work as richly human as it is subversive of cinema norms, *Women Talking* is nothing short of outstanding.

Women Talking begins its theatrical release on December 25 and will expand to Dallas/Fort Worth theaters beginning on January 6.

A lifelong movie fan and writer, Douglas Laman graduated from UT Dallas and is currently a graduate student at the University of North Texas. The views and opinions expressed here are the author’s own and do not necessarily reflect those of Anna-Melissa Tribune.

‘Aftersun,’ ‘Banshees’ lead AP’s best films of 2022

By Jake Coyle and Lindsay Bahr
AP Film Writers

The Associated Press’ Film Writers Jake Coyle and Lindsey Bahr’s picks for the best movies of 2022:

- JAKE COYLE:
1. “Aftersun”: Rarely does such a delicately crafted tale pack such a wallop. Charlotte Wells’ breathtaking feature debut, starring newcomer Frankie Corio and Paul Mescal as an 11-year-old girl and her father on vacation in Turkey, is such a keenly observed accumulation of detail and feeling that you hardly notice the undertow of heartache that will, in the end, absolutely floor you.
 2. “Belle”: Though it was a hit in Japan, it was easy to miss Mamoru Hosoda’s glorious anime back in January, when it arrived in North

- American theaters. It’s a dazzling blend of “Beauty and the Beast,” a girl’s wrenching battle with grief and self-doubt, and possibly the best movie ever made about the Internet. It’s a lot, maybe too much, but “Belle” reaches the most beautiful of climaxes.
3. “The Banshees of Inisherin”: Martin McDonagh’s latest is a lean fable that throbs with existential conundrum. It plays out between a quizzical Colin Farrell, a doom-laden Brendan Gleeson, an exasperated Kerry Condon and a much-cherished donkey. What else could you possibly need?
 4. “Decision to Leave”: The Korean master Park Chan-wook marries a police procedural and romance, and the twisty noirish results are at turns delightful and devastating.
 5. “Descendant”: Margaret Brown’s expan-

sive, ruminative documentary reverberates with history and stories passed down through time. The central incident is the discovery in Mobile, Alabama, of the Clotilda, the last known slave ship to arrive on U.S. shores. But Brown’s roaming, wide-lens film is most powerful for the way it captures the community of Clotilda descendants — a contemplative and compelling cast of characters — as they weigh slavery’s present-day legacy.

6. “No Bears”: Jafar Panahi may be the most vital and courageous filmmaker in the world right now. The Iranian writer-director has been banned from making movies or traveling since he was arrested in 2010 for supporting protesters. Yet Panahi has, ingeniously, continued to find ways to make thoughtful, playful, defiant films that reflect his predicament while slyly capturing the Iranian society around him. “No Bears,” which dramatizes Panahi making a film along the Turkish border, is one of his best. It’s grown only more piercing since Panahi was jailed on a six-year prison sentence earlier this year. In one bleakly stirring moment, Panahi stands on a darkened borderland, contemplating fleeing.
 7. “Everything Everywhere All at Once” and “Nope”: In a movie world where spectacles often come with little within, both of these films were absolutely brimming with ideas and images. You could call the Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert’s film and Jordan Peele’s latest opus overstuffed. But their sheer cinematic abundance made them nourishing, vibrant exceptions. Much the same could be said of James Cameron’s equally visionary “Avatar: The Way of Water.”
 8. “Lingui, the Sacred Bonds”: Chadian filmmaker Mahamat-Saleh Haroun’s film is one of the year’s most tender mother-daughter portraits. Rihane Khali Alio and Achouack Abakar Souleymane star in this extraordinarily vivid tale, set in the outskirts of present-day N’Djamena, of abortion, motherhood and female solidarity.
 9. “The Fabelmans”: Steven Spielberg’s natural mode as a filmmaker might not be introspective. He’s not historically been one to phone home. And while that awkwardness can sometimes be felt in his movie memoir, there are many scenes here unlike anything he’s ever shot before, and among his very best.
 10. “Kimi”: A great benefit of the so-called “pandemic movies” is that they were made fast, loose and of-their-moment. This year, many filmmakers, maybe as a result of all that time shut-in, released inward-looking films. Often better were the ones that more directly dealt with the pandemic reality around us. Steven Soderbergh’s fleet-footed thriller starring Zoë Kravitz as an agoraphobic tech contractor deftly channeled the times into a riveting little pop gem.
- Also: “Compartment No. 6,” “Till,” “One Fine Morning,” “The Cathedral,” “The Woman King,” “Saint Omer,” “Apollo 10 ½,” “Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery,” “Emily the Criminal,” “Bones and All”
- LINDSEY BAHR:
1. “The Banshees of Inisherin”: Martin McDonagh’s film is a sharp, funny and utterly devastating work about the end of a friendship on a small Irish island. Colin Farrell uses his wonderful brows (and acting chops) to ensure ultimate heartbreak as his world and sense of self crumbles and rots. But it’s the ensemble, including Brendan Gleeson, Kerry Condon, Barry Keoghan and on down, who imbue this deceptively simple set-up with gravity and depth.
 2. “Tár”: Todd Field’s brilliant, restless “Tár” reminded me how much I love movies (and tricked me into believing that I was some kind of scholar of classical music for a few hours). Cate Blanchett is transcendent in bringing this flawed genius to life, challenging the audience to consider big questions about power, status and art. It is demanding but immensely rewarding cinema that is not easily defined, which is perhaps why audiences aren’t taking a chance on it in theaters (which is a mistake).
 3. “Women Talking”: Sarah Polley’s film hasn’t even been released to the general public and it’s already considered “divisive,” which is one of the best reasons to seek it out. Aren’t you curious which side you’ll be on? I’m one who



This image released by Searchlight Pictures shows Colin Farrell in a scene from “The Banshees of Inisherin.” (Jonathan Hession. Searchlight Pictures via AP)

was spellbound by her heady, spiritual vision of a group of abused women in an isolated religious colony questioning their reality and wondering if life could somehow be different than what they know.

4. “Aftersun”: In a year full of autobiographical films from very famous names, it was the one from the unknown that made the biggest impression. You don’t have to know anything about Charlotte Wells to get wrapped up in “Aftersun,” an inspired and fully realized memory piece about an ordinary vacation some 20 years prior that will leave you in pieces (which is somehow possible even when the “Macarena” is also stuck in your head).
 5. “Saint Omer”: A young woman is on trial for the death of her 15-month-old daughter in this haunting French courtroom drama, a tremendous debut feature from documentarian Alice Diop, that upends your notions of what the genre can be in its examination of trauma, the immigrant experience and expectations of motherhood.
 6. “Mrs. Harris Goes to Paris”: This is the kind of romantic confection that’s a bit of an outlier on a list like this, but that’s why it’s here. Anthony Fabian’s film about an English house-cleaner and war widow (Lesley Manville) in the 1950s who saves up to travel to Paris to buy a couture Christian Dior gown is a balm -- heartwarming without being schlocky, reverential of high fashion artistry but critical of its exclusionary ways and just a supreme delight.
 7. “Kimi”: Sorry “Top Gun: Maverick,” you were very entertaining too, but Steven Soderbergh’s “Kimi” was my favorite popcorn experience of the year — a taut, paranoid thriller with a modern, Alexa/Siri-inspired spin on the overheard crime scenario of “Blow Up,” with a sharp performance from Zoe Kravitz, who can even make an agoraphobic shut in extremely cool.
 8. “Murina”: There is rot beneath the punishingly beautiful, sun-soaked Adriatic setting of Croatian filmmaker Antoneta Alamat Kusijanovic’s sublimely menacing debut feature about a 17-year-old girl who is starting to question the ingrained misogyny around her. The family dynamics are as rocky and dangerous as the picturesque backdrop.
 9. “Corsage”: Beauty, waistlines, aging, celebrity, duty and desire haunt Empress Elisabeth of Austria in Marie Kreutzer’s intricate and interpretive portrait of dynamic mind and soul that’s been stifled by her position and myriad traumas. Vicky Krieps is perfect as the deliriously subversive “Sissi.”
 10. “White Noise”: The supermarket dance to LCD Soundsystem’s “New Body Rhumba” might not come until the very end of Noah Baumbach’s Don DeLillo adaptation but there is a dazzling rhythm to the entire epic, from the controlled chaos of the overlapping dialogue to the hectic choreography of a family making breakfast. But maybe the most surprising thing is that behind all the wit, the style, the commentary on American society and the banal and the profound in the everyday, there is a real emotional weight too.
- Also: “Happening,” “The Eternal Daughter,” “Avatar: The Way of Water,” “Fire of Love,” “Catherine Called Birdy,” “EO,” “Bodies Bodies Bodies,” “All the Beauty and the Bloodshed,” “Cyrano.”

GO VOTE

Elite Painting and Epoxy Coatings as the Best Home Painting Service & Best Locally Owned Business in Whitesboro!

The Official Community Choice Awards
TEXOMA
MARKETING AND MEDIA GROUP
HeraldDemocrat.com

VOTE FOR ME!

“Texoma’s most trusted painting company”

FEATURES

SGLY: Unconditional love



By Tiffany Chartier

Special to the Van Alstyne Leader

Since I no longer have kids at home, my cooking and baking have gone from daily to rarely. I subscribe to a meal service that offers balanced nutrition with microwaveable convenience. Even still, there are nights I am too exhausted to open the freezer, much less wash a fork. Not properly eating leaves me more fatigued, and the cycle perpetuates. Recently my daughter came for a visit and opened my refrigerator. “Mom, you literally have two things in here – yogurt cups and Body Armor drinks. What are you eating?”

“Open the freezer,” I replied, not answering her question. Upon looking at the pre-packed frozen meals, she let out a sigh. “It looks like the same amount that was in here last time. Are you eating?”

“Well, I renew for another month when I run low,” I said.

“That doesn’t answer my question. When was the last time you received a new order?”

I had forgotten how persistent my daughter could be; her clever question left me to tell the truth. “A couple of months ago.”

“So, you basically just answered my question: you don’t eat even though you have

a freezer of food.”

A week later, my conversation with my daughter returned to mind as a holiday baking championship aired on television. My appetite for watching television is almost as poor as my desire to eat healthily at night. Both consume energy I would rather spend elsewhere, but the artistry of the baking challenge intrigued me. The finalists were creative and did not shy away from their bold, romantic, or eccentric style. Throughout the competition, I gradually became an armchair cheerleader (occasionally while eating a meal from the freezer).

The baking challenge that proved to be one of the most difficult for the contestants was making a Charlotte Royale, which featured thin slices of Swiss roll cake made in a dome shape and filled with a mousse or cream filling. One baker had exceptional artistry in her presentation, but once the cake was cut, the inside was not set, and it became a messy glob. In contrast, another baker’s cake looked sloppy in presentation but tasted flawless. The episode illustrated the adage, “Don’t judge a book by its cover.” I thought about my empty refrigerator and packed freezer of untouched meals.

I wonder how many people are starving even though their cupboards are full? And how many are content regardless of the size of their portions?

We each probably know someone who swaps one toy for another, from cars and trucks to motorcycles, detailing each with the

best packages. Yet, something inside them is not set or settled; they barely enjoy what their money has purchased before trading it in for something else. Others keep themselves busy, allowing little time to linger with their thoughts. They have a glorious life on social media, posting images of their latest vacation or concert. Yet, in their company, their eyes speak to a weariness born beyond the physical. Perhaps you know someone with all their goods and services lined up for display: they regularly attend church, give generously to causes, and appear at almost every community event. Their involvement and smile are paraded about town, but inside they are shrouded with shadows, hurting themselves with pride, jealousy, and contempt. These are a few examples of those whose cupboards are full but continue to have hunger pains: they have yet to acknowledge or receive what they truly need.

Then some have little desire to compare; they encourage others, even when they are going through a tough patch. They do not need to block their view with an abundance of material things as they would rather look kindly upon the artistry of God in blooms, sunsets, and the diversity of life itself. These are the people who create and share more than collect and clutter. They may have a stockpile of goods and services, but rarely is their generosity known as they give with a big heart and in a quiet manner. They do not need to appear at every event or be bestowed accolades; they know their worth is not based on their attendance or the opinions of others. They persevere, survive, and thrive by faith, grace, the Holy Spirit, and with the promis-

es and light of Jesus Christ. These are a few examples of those who are content and satisfied regardless of the size of their portions or worldly prosperity.

We live in a world where we have everything we want at our fingertips, yet we are out of touch with ourselves. Many have lost the ability to sit with themselves without being lonely or anxious. Others have lost their voice, choosing to go through the motions of familiarity in their relationships rather than speak of their unmet needs. And then some tire themselves digging for earthly treasures when they need not a shovel but a Savior.

Would you say you are content? Name two things you feel are missing from your life.

What will you do today to draw nearer to Christ?

As we think upon these questions and our answers, may we ask God to show us what we need to put down, who we need to ask forgiveness from or forgive, and who we have pushed aside because we were stuck in our whirlwind of happenings.

Let us not neglect our blessings. May we relinquish our guises and burdens, coming as we are into the presence and refuge of God. In doing so, we will discover what many crave and all need: unconditional love.

SGLY, dear reader.
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@tiffa-nykayechartier.com. Follow on Facebook: Tiffany Kaye Chartier.

Gardener’s mailbag: Can I clip my devil ivy and make new plants?

By Neil Sperry

Special to the Van Alstyne Leader

Dear Neil: I have a pot of devil’s ivy that was given to me at a company party (centerpiece). It has now produced runners that are longer than the table it’s sitting on. Can I clip them and root them to get a new pot?

Yes, easily. Take lengths of stems with 3-4 leaves each. It helps if they have growing tips at their ends, but that’s not a requirement. There are a couple of good ways to get them started. You can either plant them directly into shallow 6-inch pots, 5 or 6 cuttings per pot, or you can put them into a glass of water for 6-8 weeks. Put it in a bright spot out of direct sunlight on a countertop indoors. They will soon develop roots, at which point you can pot them up into that same 6-inch pot, multiple plants per pot. Use a loose, highly organic planting soil.

Dear Neil: I have a live oak tree in my front yard. It is surrounded in all directions by Asian jasmine groundcover. The past two years, the oak has lost all its leaves in the jasmine. Do I have to remove the tree? The leaves and acorns are a mess.

Oh, my. That would be, in a plant guy’s opinion, extreme over-reaction. Any tree that you plant there is going to have leaves that will fall at one point or another, and most will produce seeds as well. Live oaks are in rare air when it comes to Texas tree quality – just about the best. So, how can we save both the tree and your serenity? As a compromise, try mowing the jasmine bed in January or Febru-

ary. Set the mower at its very top setting, so that you’re mowing at 4 or 5 inches. It will take the groundcover back to somewhat leafless stem stubble the first time that you do it, but it will come back beautifully with the first warm days of spring. In successive years, the trim won’t be all that traumatic. That will get rid of the leaves that are still there, and it will give you a low, smooth groundcover surface from which a good blower will easily propel the leaves out onto the lawn, where you can mow and bag them for use as mulch. The live oak is worth fighting for!

Dear Neil: I have a large bed of purple fountaingrass. Should I cut it back to the ground now that it has turned brown? In fact, will it come back next spring?

Purple fountaingrass is an annual in all but the warmest parts of South Texas. That’s not a huge issue for most of us, because it allows us to vary our plantings from one season to the next. If it’s in a protected spot where you think it might come back, trimming the browned leaves off now (as I’d recommend for almost all perennial types of ornamental grasses) will lessen the likelihood of a fire starting in the dead foliage. Call me paranoid, but I’ve always worried about the dried grass blades whenever dry spells hit during the winter.

Dear Neil: I’ve been given a potted amaryllis as a gift. It’s blooming beautifully, but I can’t see it growing in that pot in that box for very long. What do I do with it? Can I set it into the garden?

Those are tropical bulbs that typically bloom following dry spells in their native homes. But, because they are tropical, they can’t handle much cold. Successes growing them outdoors in Texas really tie specifically to the lowest temperatures they encounter. They’ll usually freeze and die in the northern half of Texas, unless they’re protected during extreme cold. In South Texas, they’re more dependable. However, many people have even better luck just leaving them in 7- or 8-inch pots. Even though your plant will finish blooming soon after the holidays, you’ll want to allow the foliage to grow through the spring and summer. Then, to simulate dry spells in your plant’s native home, lay the pot on its side for 6 or 7 weeks in late summer and early fall. The leaves will shrivel and dry. You have to force your nurturing nature to let that proceed. Then in early October take the plant out of its pot and replant it, perhaps back into the very same pot, into fresh potting soil. Put the pot back in the upright position and water it deeply. Keep the plant moist and bright all fall, and most years it will bloom again soon after Thanksgiving. And, just for the record, this plant shouldn’t be confused with “hardy amaryllis,” the heirloom Texas bulb that’s more commonly called St. Joseph lily. That handsome perennial grows outdoors in most of the state, blooming bright cherry-red in mid-spring each year.



absorb the sun’s warming rays.
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.



Purple fountaingrass is tender annual grass that can be started by dividing clumps from nursery pots, but best to buy new plants each spring courtesy photo

Tangled Cotton

BOUTIQUE

BEST OF TEXOMA

★★★★★

THE OFFICIAL WOMEN'S FASHION AWARD

TEXOMA

ReadCentral.com

VOTE FOR ME!

VOTE FOR TANGLED COTTON AS BEST PLACE TO BUY WOMEN CLOTHING AND BEST LOCALLY OWNED BUSINESS IN WHITESBORO

ALL TOGETHER NOW.

Print, Digital & Social Solutions for our Advertisers & Readers.
Call Today! 870-453-3731

TEAM IM SO MENU AN BIT CULP ENSLAVE RAMPART CLAIRE ELLADONIA FIN SOY

TAKES A HARNESS AERIALS DROP ITT LOSE KOA

IDAHO AN NABOB LAS GRE ONE

Last Puzzle Solution

S-1614

SPORTS

Marquee games fill the week in Top 25 basketball

By John Marshall

AP Basketball Writer

The holiday break is usually a quiet time in college basketball, many of the top teams playing small-conference schools at home or taking extra time off before conference schedules start in full.

The season isn't quite there yet and this week is loaded with marquee games, including two involving No. 16 UCLA.

The big day is Saturday when No. 4 Alabama faces No. 15 Gonzaga in Birmingham, Alabama, No. 6 Tennessee is at No. 9 Arizona and No. 8 Kansas hosts No. 14 Indiana. UCLA also faces No. 13 Kentucky in New York on Saturday after playing at No. 20 Maryland on Wednesday.

The most intriguing game Saturday might be No. 5 Houston at No. 2 Virginia.

The Cougars (9-1) lead the nation in scoring defense (49.7 points per game) and field goal defense (33.8%) despite losing to Alabama last week. The Cavaliers love to grind out possessions and are 13th nationally in scoring defense, allowing 57.9 points per game.

First one to 50 wins?

The Alabama game is the Zags' latest against a high-level opponent.

Gonzaga (7-3) has dropped in the AP Top 25 after starting at No. 2 in the preseason, thanks to losses to No. 7 Texas, top-ranked Purdue and No. 11 Baylor. The Zags do have wins over No. 13 Kentucky and Michigan State on their resume.

Saturday's game won't be easy.

Alabama (8-1) climbed four spots in this week's poll after joining Oklahoma in 1990 as the only teams to beat two No. 1 teams in the same season. The Crimson Tide outlasted North Carolina in four overtimes on Nov. 27 and proved it was no fluke by topping Houston 71-65 on Saturday.

The Tennessee-Arizona game will be a head-butting of strengths.

The Volunteers (9-1) are one of the nation's best defensive teams, leading the country in 3-point defense (20.2%) while ranking in the top six in scoring defense, field goal percentage against and steals.

Arizona (8-1) leads the nation with 91.2 points and 21 assists per game.

Tennessee looked unstoppable while building an 18-point lead against No. 20 Maryland on Sunday, then had to hold on down the stretch for a 56-53 win. The Wild-



Houston guard Jamal Sheard (1) drives past Alabama guard Mark Sears (1) on his way to score during the second half of an NCAA college basketball game, Saturday, Dec. 10, 2022, in Houston. (AP Photo/Kevin M. Cox)

cats bounced back from a loss to Utah with lopsided wins over California and No. 14 Indiana.

The Hoosiers (8-2) get another massive test playing the Jayhawks at Allen Fieldhouse. Indiana allowed Arizona to go on a 17-0 run in Las Vegas, rallied to make it close and faded down the stretch without stellar freshman guard Jalen Hood-Schifino due to a back injury.

Kansas (9-1) has been solid after winning its fourth national title last season, its only loss coming to Tennessee in the Battle 4 Atlantis title game. The Jayhawks have wins

over No. 12 Duke and No. 22 Wisconsin, and they blew out rival Missouri last weekend.

UCLA (8-2) may have the toughest task of all, facing two ranked teams in the same week for the second time this season.

The first go-round didn't go so well. The Bruins lost by nine to No. 18 Illinois and by five to No. 11 Baylor in Las Vegas. UCLA has won five straight since, including victories over Stanford and Oregon to begin its Pac-12 schedule.

Maryland (8-2) has looked good in its first season under coach Kevin Willard, but has lost its last two games.

The Terrapins allowed Wisconsin to score 13 straight points, but held the Badgers without a field goal over the final 4:03 before losing 64-59 last week. Maryland then fell into another hole against Tennessee in Brooklyn before pulling together another rally that came up short.

After the Terps, the Bruins face maybe an even tougher test.

Kentucky (7-2) has been dominant at times and its only losses were to Michigan State in double overtime and to Gonzaga in Spokane. The Wildcats also figure to get strong support at Madison Square Garden.

Inside the NBA's process on changing trophies

By Tim Reynolds

AP Basketball Writer

There's been an evolution of the NBA's Most Valuable Player trophy in the 70 or so years since it was first dreamed up.

It used to be called the President's Trophy. Players used to do the voting. In time, it all changed; the trophy was known as the Maurice Podoloff Trophy, and a media panel of 100 writers and broadcasters now handles the voting.

As of Tuesday, there's a new trophy and a new name — The Michael Jordan Trophy. It's loaded with tributes to his career, foremost among them that it weighs 23.6 pounds and stands 23.6 inches tall; the 23 for his jersey, the 6 for his six championships. That took some serious work on the design end, but in the end, it was exactly what Jordan and his team wanted.

It is the biggest move in a long line of trophy tweaks and twists by the NBA in recent years. A look:

WHY IS THE NBA RENAMING TROPHIES?

Commissioner Adam Silver has made clear, especially after the league went into the 2020 season restart bubble at Walt Disney World because of the pandemic, that the NBA needs to do even more to pay tribute to its greatest players — particularly some of the league's Black players from a generation or two ago, whose stories may not necessarily resonate among younger fans of today.

Rebranding and redesigning is not an easy process, particularly in a league that considers itself to be steeped with tradition.

It was not a coincidence that the six new division championship trophies introduced late last season were named for Black pioneers of the game — Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton, Wayne Embry, Earl Lloyd, Willis Reed, Sam Jones and Chuck Cooper.

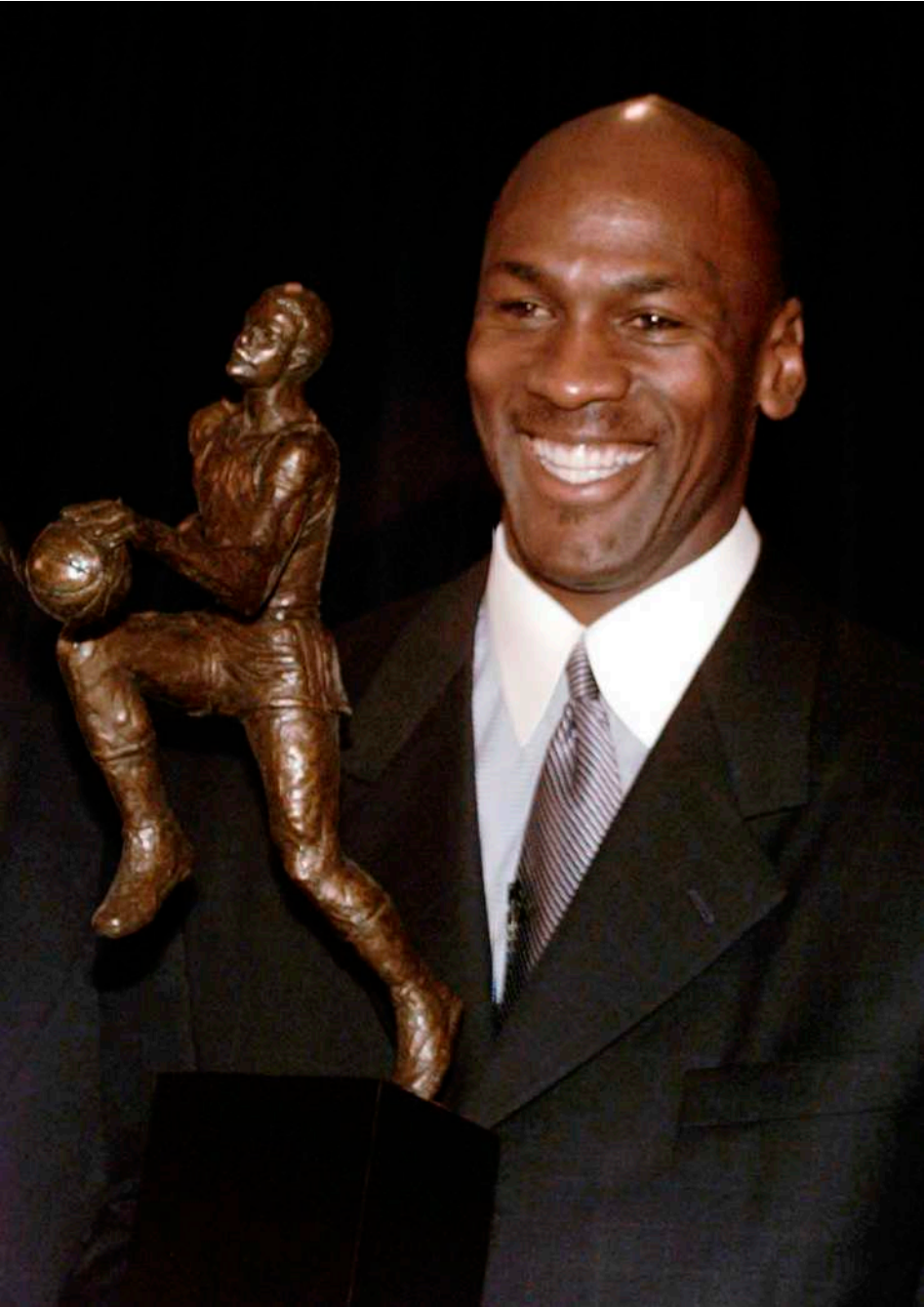
"I know that what we do in this league is important symbolically, not just for sports but for other industries, and people watch us all around the world," Silver said at last season's NBA Finals.

IS THIS A CONFLICT FOR JORDAN?

No, this is not a conflict for Jordan even though he owns the Charlotte Hornets. Jordan rarely enters the spotlight anymore and picks his spots very carefully; he did not want this trophy to be in his likeness, did not speak out about Tuesday's announcement and rarely offers public comment on any topic.

The MVP trophy tends to be presented by the commissioner; it wouldn't seem likely that Jordan would be called upon to do so, even though there is no rule — tampering-related or otherwise — that would prevent it.

The NBA asked Bill Russell to present



Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan holds the Maurice Podoloff Trophy awarded to the NBA basketball Most Valuable Player for the 1995-96 season in Northbrook, Ill., May 20, 1996. The trophy carried Podoloff's name for about 60 years, and has now been reimagined and renamed for Jordan. (AP Photo/Charles Bennett, File)

the NBA Finals MVP trophy that bears his name and he did for many years, until the pandemic and his health prevented him from continuing that tradition. Russell died earlier this year.

HOW MANY NAMED TROPHIES DOES THE NBA HAVE?

It's a lot. There's the Larry O'Brien (NBA champions), the Jordan (MVP), the Russell (NBA Finals MVP), Red Auerbach (coach of

the year), Joe Dumars (sportsmanship), Larry Bird and Magic Johnson (conference finals MVP's), Kobe Bryant (All-Star MVP), and the six divisional trophies.

There's also a slew of new or rebranded ones announced Tuesday -- Hakeem Olajuwon (defensive player of the year), John Havlicek (sixth man), Wilt Chamberlain (rookie), and George Mikan (most improved). A new trophy this year is the Clutch



In this photo provided by Andrew Kenney/NBA, The Michael Jordan Trophy is displayed in Los Angeles, Dec. 7, 2022. The NBA unveiled the new trophy on Tuesday, Dec. 13, 2022, which will be given to the basketball league's Most Valuable Player starting with this season. (Andrew Kenney/NBA via AP)

Player of the Year, named for "Mr. Clutch" himself, Jerry West.

"There are few greater thrills as a basketball player than coming through for your teammates and fans when they need it most," West said. "This new trophy will be awarded to the player who best delivers in those moments."

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar has the league's social justice champion trophy bearing his name, David Robinson the NBA Community Assist Monthly Award one, and Bob Lanier has the Community Assist season-long trophy.

WHO CHANGES THE NAMES?

This wasn't one or two people. The league formed a group of about 20 people, from at least a half-dozen different departments, to meet and decide how to change the trophies and in some cases the namesake elements.

The process took several months, the league said.

WHAT NEXT?

It doesn't seem right that David Stern — the league's commissioner for 30 years, Silver's predecessor and mentor and one of the people who basically helped saved the league from financial peril in the 1980's — doesn't have a trophy bearing his name.

If the league adds an in-season tournament, and there are plans in place to have one possibly as soon as next season, Stern would seem like a candidate for that trophy.

TEXOMA

Moving or staying is the question as winter nears



By **JB Webb**
For the Prosper Press

That’s a question everyone who fishes as the water temps starts dropping likely asks. The cooling water is moving bait and fish toward their winter homes. Right now, the water is still warm enough that coves and creeks are holding bait and the fish follow.

Also don’t think just because there are gulls working it’s only stripers under them. Tuesday, I pulled two nice bass out of one of those gull parties after they left. We are going into my favorite fishing time; lake temperature now is in the low 50s. This is still warm enough for you to move around and catch those fish in the creeks.

Once it gets in the 40s I quit running and stay on one of my deep holes for a lot longer. This time of the year I can dress warmly, have a heater for Tombstone, a Yeti full of hot coffee and it’s not uncomfortable at all.

Now there is also a safety side in winter fishing as I do, it lets me sit in a comfortable seat and lessen the chances of me going swimming by accident. Now with the luck Goober

and I have when we get together, I keep a complete change of warm clothes in my boat, a small aluminum pot, fire starter and bottle of water.

If you do fall in and can get to the shore, starting a fire is not much of a problem. It’s not a bad idea for anyone fishing this winter to do the same.

There is one more thing I do in the winter because I fish a lot alone; if you look at the front of my boat you will see two nylon lines with snaps. I hook one of them to me. God forbid I do fall in, my boat can’t drift away from me. I can likely pull myself back in the boat.

Here is a tip: I was working at a winter fishing show and when a portly fellow fisherman and I starting talking about falling in, he told me that winter or summer if you needed back in the boat and can’t pull yourself over the side, go to the back stand on the planing plate and hit the up-trim button.

It will likely pick you up enough to pull yourself over the transom into your boat. He said he had used this to get back in his boat one time. The safest thing you can do is never fish alone in winter. Now having said that, I do fish alone but I take a lot more care.

I’m a staying winter fisherman; I will likely not move more than three times in a day. This time of year, lure choice is easier also. I use YUM Plastics by choice; I like to keep my lures now small the YUM 3.5 Pulse is always

tied on one rod. My second choice is a War Eagle or Cotton Cordell 3/4 oz Cotton Cordell jigging Spoon and likely a Rod with a 3/8 oz Cotton Cordell Gay Blade metal bait.

If the 3/8 Gay Blade isn’t heavy enough for you it has a brother in the Heddon Lure line called a Sonic that comes in heavier weights. As all these baits are worked slow; they fit right in with my winter fishing.

Tuesday morning I went fishing and it was a perfect day – little wind, overcast and surface water was 51 degrees. I made three moves in four hours. This is where a lot of fishermen get antsy and the water always looks bluer over there and they move a lot.

My first two stops, despite working 30 minutes apiece, had no bites. At my third stop I put the trolling motor down and moved around in one cove. I also hooked on some boat stalls to keep me in one place.

Finally I saw some fish break water. Moving down to easy casting range with the YUM Pulse I let it get to the bottom before a sharp jerk to hop it off the bottom and I started slowly reeling it back. I got a tap but no fish.

I eventually got a bite that hit it three times, set the hook and had a nice striper on. My next catch was a big sandbass, then a heavy Kentucky black bass. The bite slowed and I switched to my Gay Blade and caught two fish – one a small striper and the other a big sandbass.

I stayed and kept working the same area I caught another striper. There was a boat with two older men who were fishing as I was coming in. They finally made their way close enough to see me catch my fish and ask me what I was using. I told them to come join me. They did and thanked me but kept away.

I made a cast and got a big fish. It didn’t give up easy. Thinking it was a striper, I didn’t worry much about it getting off. All at once the water exploded and a big bass came boiling to the top.

The two men quit fishing and just watched a heck of fight. I had my hands full for a while. Finally, I got the bass close enough to go for a belly lift. When I touched him, he almost jumped in my boat and splashed everywhere before he got off.

I’m glad I had some watchers see that fish, I’m sure it was well over five pounds. The YUM Little Pulse and I lost this fight. Before I left, I trolled over and showed them what I was using. I was home by noon and this old mule put on the feed bag.

This is the only football trip I’m not going to make since Gunter plays in Abilene. Going there and back is like almost driving across Texas. Canadian is coming down almost as far. To those attending you should see fur flying as the Tigers and Wildcats go at it. The old predictor is saying Gunter wins by 10.

MLF, TPWD team up for Fish Habitat Improvement



By **Lynn Burkhead**
For the Prosper Press

Today’s column subject matter isn’t really in Texomaland’s backyard, and I’ll readily admit to that.

But this column references an interesting note this week in one of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department’s news releases, an idea that just about any angler would be interested in. With any luck, this topic will one day find its way north to the Red River Valley and help out one or more of the small and medium sized lakes in our region.

For now, the news from TPWD’s Inland Fisheries Division involves local anglers and the Bryan Texas Utilities Department (BTUD), which have recently collaborated with Major League Fishing on a project that is installing a considerable amount of new fish habitat in Lake Bryan.

According to the TPWD news release, MLF Fisheries Management Division, in partnership with Berkley Labs, has spearheaded the initiative that seeks “...to improve catfish, crappie, largemouth bass and bluegill spawning survival, adult population density and catchability.”

And any angler, regardless of where he or she might live and fish, is probably in favor of such an outcome, right?

How will they achieve that in Lake Bryan, an 829-acre Brazos County reservoir impounded five miles west of Bryan back in 1974? Habitat improvement, that’s how.

Incidentally, it might be appropriate to point out that the small Central Texas water body has fair fishing for largemouth bass and crappie, and good fishing for catfish and sunfish species, at least according to TPWD’s website (www.tpwd.texas.gov). But the fish in Lake Bryan aren’t terribly big — by Tex-

as standards, at least — with the lake record largemouth bass mark being 8.70-pounds and the lake record channel catfish mark being 2.35 pounds.

With any luck, the new habitat improvements, the lake’s various regulations, and maybe some additional fish stockings in the future, can help change some of those numbers right in the heart of Texas A&M Aggie country.

One of the keys to improved fishing at Lake Bryan will be the new habitat structures put into place recently. And according to the news release, TPWD’s Inland Fisheries Division deployed its brand-new habitat barge to aid in the installation of those new habitat structures, which were assembled by TPWD, MLF, and BTUD staff along with local volunteers.

The project reportedly took a couple of days and it showcased how the agency, fishing industry partners, and local anglers can work together to enhance Texas fisheries.

“We were excited when we were contacted by Steven Bardin (MLF Fisheries Management Biologist) about this project,” said Niki Ragan-Harbisson, a TPWD Fisheries Biologist for the College Station — Houston Inland Fisheries Division District, in the agency’s news release.

“BTUD has been a tremendous asset as well by not only allowing the project to take place, but also by providing their equipment, facilities, and manpower, as well as contributing to the habitat additions. Exciting things are happening at Lake Bryan and we all look forward to seeing how the fishery responds in the coming years.”

What exactly was deployed during the two-day habitat improvement work? According to TPWD, the structures deployed included 14 40-inch MossBack Fish Habitat Conservation Cubes, 12 Spawning Beds, 21 Trophy Tree XLs, and 21 Safe Haven XLs.

I’m a big fan of things like the commercially produced MossBack habitat structures, and all of that should be a big contribution to helping attract fish at Lake Bryan, as well as

aiding in spawning success and young fish recruitment.

In addition, TPWD notes that BTUD provided 33 concrete trash receptacle enclosures for use as catfish spawning habitat on the mid-sized Central Texas lake. And the local Lowe’s store in Bryan donated 100 cinder blocks for the MossBack structures, along with pea gravel to fill the spawning beds.

The desired goal for all of this, as noted above, is to help boost the fish and their production in the lake, and ultimately, to make for better angling for the anglers that utilize Lake Bryan.

To that end, within the next few weeks, TPWD notes that it will post GPS coordinates for the new fishing structures on the lake’s fish habitat structures website. The agency also notes that coordinates will be available in downloadable files, making it easy for anglers to input those numbers into their fishing electronics.

On the local Texomaland angling scene, there have been similar efforts over the years from Dan Bennett and his TPWD Inland Fisheries Division staff out at Lake Texoma as Georgia Cubes and other habitat structures have been put into place on smaller lakes like Waterloo Lake, Dean Gilbert Lake, and Pickens Lake.

Those efforts have definitely paid off, and some anglers have found success because of them, but more habitat structures in these small, aging Grayson County lakes would be nice.

Another thing that would really help the local water bodies is an increase in native vegetation, and that’s something that Bennett has had his eye on over the last few years. While invasive vegetation like what’s found at Loy Lake is not a good thing, the proper mix of native vegetation can certainly help aid angling success and the spawning and recruitment efforts of game fish like largemouth bass, bluegills, crappie, and of course, catfish.

If I were Santa Claus for a day this month, it wouldn’t be long before a good number of other Conservation Cubes, Trophy Trees, Safe

Havens, Spawning Bed Structures, concrete barrels, cinder blocks, old natural Christmas trees, and native vegetation would be on its way to the small lakes that make up Grayson County fishing outside of Lake Texoma. And I’d be sure that such habitat improvement work also included Randell Lake to the north of Denison, a lake that I think could end up being a veritable fishing gem with a little TLC.

The fishing isn’t bad in any one of those spots already mentioned on the local angling front, but with the incoming numbers boost due to upwards of \$50 billion of economic development projects in the Sherman area and all of the business and residential growth that will bring, the pressure on all of our local fishing spots is going to quickly increase in the coming months and years.

What’s needed to offset all of that incoming pressure is some TLC for the habitat in these small lakes, and maybe, along with Creator’s help each spring, a boost of fishing possibilities through additional habitat improvement work.

For that to happen at the level that it could happen — and maybe even needs to happen — in the coming months and years, the model for getting such work done is likely what TPWD is pointing to this week down in Central Texas.

And that’s a cooperative effort between government entities, natural resource agencies, fishing industry groups, and private individuals who love to fish. Working together, hand in hand and combining all of our collective resources, who knows what can happen?

Maybe one day soon, that will include the issuance of a news release from TPWD highlighting the incredible partnerships taking place here in Texomaland to sustain fisheries for years to come, to increase angling success, and to provide a little wildlife conservation work in the face of increasing urbanization, all because a few people got together and combined their resources and efforts.

When we all do that, the sky is the limit, right? Well, we can certainly hope so.

A few more Christmas gift ideas for hunters

By **Lynn Burkhead**
For the Prosper Press

We’re very much into the Christmas shopping season and with only a few more weeks to go before December 25, the chance to order something online for the outdoors enthusiast on your gift list is probably slipping by the wayside pretty quickly.

So, with a nod to local stores like Big O’s Archery Shop in Sherman, the Sherman Academy Sports + Outdoors store in Sherman, area Walmart locations, and the Metroplex trio of Bass Pro Shops, Cabela’s, and Scheel’s among others, here’s some encouragement and a few more outdoors themed Christmas gift ideas if your gift getting list isn’t fully checked off just yet.

To start with, let me point out that I’ll focus on hunters this week and anglers next week. Lots to come in that department, trust me.

For the hunters on your list, you can always opt to go the gift card route, especially if a big ticket item like a new bow, a new waterfowl wing or upland bird hunting shotgun, or a new deer hunting rifle falls within your budgetary needs. Ditto for a gun safe; a new scope or pair of binoculars from makers like Maven, Vortex, Leupold, and Bushnell. Or maybe you’ll be wanting to find a new Block archery target, a Morrell Yellow Jacket bag target, or a big 3-D Glen Del buck archery target.

But if you’re trying to find something smaller — maybe even a stocking stuffer idea — then read on, St. Nick, and his gift buying associates.

If a knife that works in the kitchen or out in the field is on your list, there’s no shortage of such knives available this December. One I’ve been experimenting with lately is the 15500 Meatcrafter by Benchmade (<https://www.benchmade.com/15500-meatcrafter.html>). Perfect for slicing up a brisket or boning out a whitetail hindquarter, this knife uses SelectEdge technology, a 28 inclusive edge angle on CPM-154 stainless steel, and an engineered blade flex to work in the field and in the kitchen.

Another great cutlery option is a hunting knife by Charles Allen’s Denison-based Knives of Alaska company. You can’t go wrong with the Strike Force folder, the Bird/Trout folder, the Steelheader (especially handy in cleaning a limit of Texoma stripers), the Cub Bear skinning knife, the Legacy fixed blade, or the Alaskan Brown Bear Cleaver, which are all excellent choices.

There’s also KOA’s year-old Professional Boning Knife option (<https://www.knivesofalaska.com/Store/professional-boning-knife/professional-boning-knife---flexible/>), a great hunting and kitchen blade that I’m hoping to find under the tree next week. St. Nick, are you taking notes?

Available in flexible or semi-flexible models, the KOA Professional Boning Knife comes with D2 blade steel, a 18-20-degree bevel, and a Rockwell Hardness of 59-61. With a Sure-Grip handle, this is perfect for getting a rack of ribs ready for the smoker or trimming the silver skin away from a prime cut of venison

backstrap or a tenderloin!

You can find KOA knives — or those by KOA’s sister company, DiamondBlade — at several outdoor retailers around North Texas, at the local KOA office at 3100 Airport Drive in Denison, or by calling 903-786-7366.

If you’ve got a Grayson County bowhunter on your list, a new bow from Mathews, Hoyt, or BowTech might be just what Santa ordered. And with all of the new 2023 compound rigs coming out and arriving soon at Big O’s Archery Shop in Sherman, this is a great time to be in the market for a new bow. See Orvie, Jr., and get a new bow hot off the delivery truck, or maybe even a gift certificate if you’re not entirely sure which bow your archer wants under the tree this year.

Also keep in mind that archers need arrows, broadheads, targets, treestands, flashlights, and bow accessories, and Big O’s has plenty, as do several other area outdoor retailers.

And stuffing a YETI Rambler thermos bottle in a backpack or a YETI hard side cooler in the back of the truck will never hurt a bowhunter’s feelings. If that sounds good, you can find YETI products at most local retailers.

What about stocking stuffers? Well, since bowhunters have to get agonizingly close to whitetails, a bottle of Tink’s 69 doe-in-estrous scent or a bottle of Dead Down Wind Field Spray is always welcome in a hunting pack. So is the new Dead Down Wind Dead Zone 2 Go Ozone Car Plug-In, which fits nicely in a stocking.

How about some new hunting clothes? If that’s a consideration, you can find all kinds of Mossy Oak and Realtree camouflage offerings at local Walmart stores, Academy locations, and other outdoors retailers down in the Metroplex.

You can also find lots of Sitka Gear at Big

O’s Archery Shop in Sherman (1520 N. Texoma Parkway; 903-870-2114). Good choices for deer hunting across the southern Great Plains include several clothing options in the company’s Open Country pattern. The Fanatic hoody, the Apex pant, and a Kelvin Aerolite Vest in Open Country will fit the bill for most cool morning hunts in Texas and Oklahoma. They’ll also help a hunter blend into any Lone Star State landscape where a mixture of hardwoods, mesquite trees, upland grass, and/or cactus flats are going to be found.

While Sitka Gear is a bit pricier than some other camo clothing options, it’s warm, dry, comfortable, quiet, and extremely well built for numerous seasons of rugged use. In short, if St. Nick is willing to deliver such hunting duds — and duck hunters have their own lineup of Sitka Gear clothing available in Optifade Marsh and/or Timber pattern options too — it will bring a smile to the face of the hunter on your list for several years to come.

Speaking of duck hunters, decoys are always a can’t-miss gift idea because we never have enough of the plastic fakes stowed away in the garage or attic. I’ve typically purchased Avery’s Greenhead Gear decoys over the years, but my two 20-something year old sons swear by the great looking blocks produced by Avian-X. Decoys by Tanglefree and Higdon also work well, and most can be found at North Texas retailers.

Duck calls are always a great thing to slip into a Christmas stocking, and one that is well received, made in Texas, and sounds great is the Sure-Shot Game Calls Yentzen One 2 double-reed. Another good double-reed is the Zink’s Green Top Rocker. And you can’t go wrong with a Rich-n-Tone call, either the Original, the Short Barrel, the Daisy Cutter, or the Mondo.



HOLIDAY DECORATING | FURRY FRIENDS

Pet-Perfect Holiday

Don't leave your fur-babies out when you're planning your holiday celebrations. Here are some ways you can bring Fluffy and Fido into your festivities.



© YDOBE 2LOCK

ADD PET TREATS TO YOUR HOLIDAY BAKING

Making a tasty cookie for your four-legged friends is just as easy as making a delectable dessert for your human friends. This recipe pleases cats, dogs and everything in between.

- 3 jars baby food, meat or veggies
- 1 ½ cups wheat germ or cream of wheat

1. Mix ingredients together. Drop by the spoonful on a wax paper-covered plate. Seal with wax paper over the top and microwave for 5-8 minutes. Check that treats are formed and firm, then store in the fridge for a quick snack.

TAKE A PICTURE WITH SANTA

Many humane societies and rescue organizations offer Santa pics as a fundraiser during the holiday season. Dress your pet up in their best and have a pic snapped for a great cause.

Sometimes, mall and department store Santas will also set aside a time for pet pictures. Check your local community calendars for more information.

MAKE A PAWPRINT ORNAMENT

Take the salt dough recipe from earlier in this section and make paw print ornaments. Personalize it with the year for a special keepsake.

STOCKINGS AND PRESENTS

Add stockings full of tasty treats and toys just for your favorite pets to your giving list. And don't forget donations to rescue organizations and shelters.

The holidays can be a tough time for these organizations. Your contribution or even your time might be a huge help for them.

STAY SAFE

The holidays can be a tough time for your pets, too. Keep them safe with these tips from the ASPCA:

- Anchor your Christmas tree to keep curious cats and dogs from knocking it over. Also keep pets away from candles and light displays.
- Avoid mistletoe and holly. These festive plants are pretty, but they can be toxic to pets. Use artificial plants instead.
- Keep the people food out of reach, especially bones, cocktails, pork dishes, raisins and grapes, nuts and nutmeg. All of those can make your pet sick or even kill them.



3D/4D/5D
Sonogram

SneakPeek®
CLINICAL
Early Gender DNA Test



Premiere Baby Imaging
SONOGRAM STUDIO

Gift Certificate or E-cards available



- Heartbeat Animals
- Baby Shower Gifts
- Baby Boutique
- Gender Reveal Products

Call or visit our website to schedule your appointment today!

www.premierebabyimaging.com | (903)771-2495 | Sherman, Texas