



# Panther Basketball Senior Spotlights: Riley Dancer and Carson Brown

INSIDE 6A

# Van Alstyne Leader

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## Audits of outgoing county leaders come back clean

By Jerrie Whiteley

Van Alstyne Leader

In the list of things on the consent agenda for this week’s commissioners court meeting were a set of audits for those county leaders who left office recently.

The audits were performed on the offices of the County Court-at-Law 2, county judge, county engineer, justice of the peace 1 and 4, commissioners for precincts 2 and 4, and for juvenile services.

When asked about the audits after the meeting, Grayson County Auditor Suzette Smith said they are customary.

“We have regularly performed exit audits for outgoing elected officials if they have any assets or cash on hand in their office, in order to make sure everything is in order at the transition of personnel. However, they weren’t always put on commissioners court agenda in the past, nor were

they as noticeable for so many officials leaving at the same time. We usually send results to both the outgoing official and the incoming official.”

All of the audits came back with similarly worded results. For instance, the audit for the County Judge’s Office resulted in a report that said the audit was conducted from Dec. 12, 2022 through Jan. 26.

“A physical observation of assets was performed, with no exceptions noted. A current technology asset listing is attached, to show which assets were observed. There were no fixed assets assigned to the Judge’s Office with a value greater than \$5,000, which is Grayson County capitalization policy.”

The report went on to say that it “found nothing that would lead us to believe that all of the assets of the Grayson County Judge’s Office were not in order at the transition of offices on January 1, 2023.”

A copy of the audit was sent to both outgoing



County commissioners this week received results from an audit of all the offices of all of the county officials who left office recently. All of the audits came back with good results.

Jerrie Whiteley/ Van Alstyne Leader

Grayson County Judge Bill Magers and current County Judge Bruce Dawsey.

The two county commissioner’s offices involved in the audits this year did have significant assets listed that were valued at over \$5,000 be-

cause each precinct has its own equipment for road and bridge crews. Once again, all of the audits came back with the same finding that everything was as accounted for and kept in the proper way.

## County students prepare for annual livestock show

By Jerrie Whiteley

Van Alstyne Leader

The Texoma Exposition and Livestock Show is only weeks away.

After months of raising livestock from chickens to steers and everything in between, mastering woodwork, cooking, canning, sewing, welding and more, participants get the chance to compete for that grand champion ribbon. Some will even walk away with some cold hard cash. And the rest of the county gets to have a look at what it is like to produce the things we take for grant it like the food we eat and the clothes we wear.

“It starts on Monday the 27th of February. We have entries coming in on the 26th but it starts the 27th and runs through March 3rd,” TELS Secretary Joyce White said during a phone interview this week.

White said some 550 kids have entered into the livestock show and then there are others who are entering the creative arts.

“There are 1,237 entries in the livestock show,” she said.

Any youth in the county interested in ag or any of the creative arts and who are part of either a 4—H group or FFA or FCCLA group and have an advisor is eligible to enter if they are in the 3rd grade through a senior in high school.

The agriculture part of the program features everything from agriculture mechanics to all kinds of animals. There are 48 entries in agriculture mechanics this year which White said is about double what it was last year. Then there are entries in categories like breeding goats, market goats, pigs and heifers and steers along with 250 something rabbits and 230 so chickens that will be competing.

“This event teaches kids responsibility. It teaches them the value of agriculture and how it impacts their lives because you may not grow up on a farm or a ranch but you’re always going to be dependent upon agriculture for your food, for your clothing and things like that. These kids learn character when they are participating in these shows they are complimenting each other and helping each other when someone has a problem.”

All of the schools in Grayson County are represented at the event and between the animal exhibits, the wood working, the ag mechanics, there is something for just about any interest a youngster could want to pursue.

White didn’t have a number for the students were in the general exhibits that feature everything from cooking to photography to knife making and sewing because it was ongoing.

“Most anything that you could do inside the home is included,” White said.

“We would love to have people to come out Thursday night and support us in the general exhibit auction at 6:30 p.m. Then the buyer’s auction on Friday. Even if you can’t buy an animal or project, there are always add-ons.”

White explained add-ons are where people who maybe can’t afford to buy a whole cow add \$25 or \$30 to the price that the student will get for the cow or the knife they made. That helps the students recoup more of the money they invested into the project and allows more people to show their support for the FHA programs in local schools.

She said they would also love for people to come out to the Buyers Lunch which begins at 11 a.m. on Friday.

Here is the schedule for the TELS for 2023 as published on the TELS website:

Saturday, February 25, 2023  
8 a.m. — 6 p.m. — AGRobotics event.  
Sunday, February 26, 2023  
1 — 6 p.m. — AG Mechanics projects move in.  
Monday, February 27, 2023  
8 a.m. — 3 p.m. Barrow weigh—in & classification (at unloading)  
8:30 a.m. — 10:30 a.m. Rabbit Meat Pens check in and weigh  
8 a.m. — 2 p.m. Lambs and Goats admitted to show grounds  
10 a.m. — AG Mechanics in place  
noon — 3 p.m. AG Mechanics judging  
noon — 3 p.m. Lamb & Goat weigh—in (including Does)  
12:30 p.m. — Fryer rabbit judging  
1 p.m. — rabbit Meat Pen judging

1 — 10 p.m. Replacement Heifers admitted to show grounds and check in  
3 — 3:30 p.m. — Lamb classification  
5 — 8 p.m. — All Breeding Rabbits arrive and check in  
6:30 p.m. — lamb and got showmanship competitions  
10:30 p.m. — Lights out  
Tuesday, Feb. 28  
8 a.m. — All other animals admitted to show grounds  
8:30 a.m. — 2023 TELS Opening Ceremony — Mayor Arena  
9:00 a.m. — Judge Breeding Rabbits  
9:00 a.m. — Judge Market Lambs  
noon — Judge Breeding Goats (Does) and Market Goats  
6:30 p.m. — Judge Replacement Heifer show  
6:30 p.m. — Swine showmanship competition, Heifers and Market Steers in place  
7 - 8 p.m. —General exhibits arrive (previously entered online)  
10 p.m. — Release Replacement Heifers after show completion  
10:30 p.m. — Lights Out  
Wednesday, March 1, 2023  
8-10 a.m. General exhibits arrive (Previously entered online, no on site entries)  
8 a.m. — Weigh market Steers & Check Heifer papers  
9 a.m. — Judge market Barrows  
1 p.m. — Judge 4-H, FFA, FCCLA exhibits in General Exhibit building  
5- 8 p.m. — Breeding poultry arrives  
6:30 p.m. — Beef Showmanship competition  
10:30 p.m. — Lights Out  
Thursday, March 2, 2023  
7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m. — All Broilers arrive  
9 a.m. — Judge Breeding beef  
10 a.m. — Poultry show,  
2:30 p.m. — Judge market  
6:30 p.m. — Auction of General exhibit items in show arena  
7 p.m. — Floriculture exhibits arrive  
7:30 p.m. — Deadline to pick up items from general Exhibit Building



Just a few of weeks from now students all over the county will converge on Loy Park to compete in the Texoma Exposition and Livestock Show. Courtesy photo



Just a few of weeks from now students all over the county will converge on Loy Park to compete in the Texoma Exposition and Livestock Show. Courtesy photo

10:30 p.m. — Lights Out  
Friday, March 3, 2023  
8 a.m. — Floriculture live event and judging  
11 a.m. — Buyer’s Luncheon and Recognition of Life Members and Sponsors  
noon — Auction Sale in Show arena and premium event  
noon — Ag mechanics projects released

## Candy hearts, celebration at Meadowbrook Care Center

By Cindee Delavara

Special to the Van Alstyne Leader

Keeping seniors active and engaged is a focus of staff at Meadowbrook Care Center in Van Alstyne. Family and friends joined the facility’s residents to celebrate Valentine’s Day, Feb 14.

There was music, chocolates, hearts, gifts and pictures all around as the community room filled with seniors and community members.

“I look forward to the smiles on their faces and hearing their favorite memories,” said April Garner, Meadowbrook’s Activities Director. “I have a huge heart and care about people. I was always close to my two grandmothers and cared for them,” explained Garner, who was celebrating her own wedding anniversary to husband Ray Garner over the lovers’ holiday.

One Valentine greeting that arrived at Meadowbrook for the occasion was an oversized greeting card with all the signatures of four and five-year-olds at Wee School of Van Alstyne.

“The town is wonderful to do things for the residents here,” said Pam Rogers, who joined the party with her brother Mike Hulsey and their

mother Charlesene Hulsey, a resident at Meadowbrook. “The community is constantly doing things.”

90-year-old Charlesene Hulsey is a life-long community member of Van Alstyne, teaching for 13 years at Van Alstyne High School. She and her husband Jimmy Hulsey met through her younger brother at North Texas State College.

“Mom was trying to play matchmaker for our dad Jimmy, only to find out that he was interested in her,” laughed Rogers.

“Dad and mom were married Aug. 6, 1954 and dad passed away in 2002,” said Mike Hulsey.

“They were avid dancers and golfers, and one of the first members of the Hurricane Creek Country Club in Anna,” added Rogers.

Karen Clark, Administrator of Meadowbrook, helped host a Super Bowl party at the facility over the past weekend.

“Celebrations and parties are an important part of our activities at Meadowbrook,” said Clark. “It brings families, residents and friends from the community in to visit and join our seniors in celebrating much like many of them may



Meadowbrook Physical Therapist Lainie Blakeslee, Director of Rehab Gail Dye and Activities Director April Garner. courtesy photo

have done in the past. We like to keep them active and love to see their smiles.”

“We would always go all out,” recalled Charlesene Hulsey about celebrating Valentine’s Day.



Pam Rogers, Mike Hulsey with their mom Charlesene Hulsey sitting. courtesy photo

Meadowbrook Care Center is a 60-bed skilled-nursing facility that is dedicated to helping residents get back into the community or to support a healthy long-term living environment.

### News

Dallas brothers convicted of bank fraud, money laundering. **2A**

### History

Who was the man behind RL Thornton in Dallas?. **3A**

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# Dallas brothers convicted of bank fraud, money laundering

Eastern District of Texas

Two Dallas brothers have been found guilty of federal violations related to a fraud scheme in the Eastern District of Texas, announced U.S. Attorney Brit Featherston today.

On Feb. 13, 2023, Thomas Hughes Page, 46 and Jon Phillip Page, Jr., 54, were found guilty by a jury of conspiracy to commit bank fraud and conspiracy to commit money laundering following a six-day trial before U.S. District Judge Sean D. Jordan.

According to information presented at trial, between approximately 2010 and 2017, the defendants used their company, Page Capital Group, to obtain multiple loans from PlainsCapital Bank (PCB), representing that the loans would be secured by a brokerage account worth at least \$2 million. However,

neither Thomas Page nor Phillip Page had access to such funds, as the brokerage account was never actually funded. Thomas Page and Phillip Page directed and paid a third individual, Clayton Wertz, to create and submit to PCB fraudulent brokerage statements for the brokerage account reflecting significant value. Once Thomas Page and Phillip Page received the money from PCB, they used the funds on various business and personal expenses. In addition, Thomas Page and Phillip Page took affirmative steps, such as providing occasional payments on the loan, to conceal and disguise their activity. As a result of the fraudulent conduct, the bank loaned Page Capital approximately \$3.6 million and eventually lost approximately \$3.25 million over the course of the scheme.

“These two brothers disguised and lied

to financial institutions in order steal large amounts of money for their personal use, depriving others of the legitimate business use of the money,” said U.S. Attorney Featherston. “Keeping all the balls (lies) in the air only lasts until the FBI comes knocking, then the balls come crashing down. The FBI and prosecutors in this case did an outstanding job investigating and prosecuting the case.”

“The defendants knowingly used deceptive methods to obtain a loan from a financial institution that was used for their personal benefit, in order to keep their illicit scheme afloat,” said FBI Dallas Acting Special Agent in Charge James J. Dwyer. “Financial Institution Fraud not only hurts the lender, but also innocent borrowers who are seeking genuine loans for their businesses. The FBI is committed to pursuing anyone that attempts to

defraud financial institutions, investors, or the public.”

The defendants face up to 30 years in federal prison at sentencing. The maximum statutory sentence prescribed by Congress is provided here for information purposes, as the sentencing will be determined by the court based on the advisory sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation – Frisco Resident Agency and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys in the Plano office.

## Austin College Law Symposium focuses on managing the modern law practice

Austin College

Austin College has opened registration for the 2023 Dr. Kenneth Street Law Symposium focusing on the theme, “Professional and Ethical Challenges of Managing the Modern Law Practice: Attorney and Judicial Perspectives.”

Lawyers, students, and others interested in the law profession are welcome to attend the discussion on Thursday, February 23, from 11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The symposium includes panel discussions, luncheon with keynote speaker, and a reception to follow. Approval of CLE hours is pending.

Symposium registration is \$50 for attorneys, \$25 for the general public, \$15 for members of the Grayson County Bar Association, and free to students from all colleges and universities as well as Austin College faculty and staff. Registration is required for all who will attend. Register online at [www.austin-college.edu/lawsymposium](http://www.austin-college.edu/lawsymposium).

The symposium will include four panel discussions in Sherman Hall’s Hoxie Thompson Auditorium and a noon luncheon in Mabree Hall in Wright Campus Center. Keynote speaker is Honorable Rebecca Simmons, former Justice of the San Antonio Court of Appeals. Simmons is an alumna of Austin College, class of 1978. At 11

a.m., a Judges Panel addressing Juries and Courtrooms in Today’s Legal Environment will include Honorable Nocole Mithell, U.S. Magistrate Judge, Eastern District of Texas; Honorable Jennifer Edgeworth, 219th District Court, Collin County; and Honorable Brian Gary, 397th District Court, Grayson County. The panel will be moderated by Dallas attorney, Thad Spalding of Durham Pittard & Spalding. At 2 p.m., the second panel, “Depositions from the Vantage of a Court Reporter” will include panelists Monte K. Hurst from the Dallas law firm Hallett & Perrin and Lucille Wyatt, CSR from the Wyatt Group. Hillary Luckett Clark, Austin College alumna from 2009, will moderate the panel discussion. Clark is an associate attorney with LeCrone Law Firm in Sherman.

At 3:15, a discussion on “Mediations” with panelists Bryan Green from Baron & Budd PC, Mark Teague from LeCrone Law Firm in Sherman, and Austin College alumnus Bill Uchereck II. The panel will be moderated by Adam Reed from the Austin College class of 1994.

The final session at 4:15 is titled “Survive & Thrive: Lawyer Wellbeing in the Modern Environment,” presented by Michelle Fontenot,

lead professional at Texas Lawyers Assistance Program.

A reception will follow the symposium at the Margaret Binkley Collins and William W. Collins Jr. Alumni Center at 809 N. Grand Ave.

The event honors longtime Austin College faculty member, the late Dr. Kenneth W. Street. A revered professor of political science at Austin College from 1959 to 1997, Dr. Street held the John D. Moseley Chair of Government and Public Policy and founded and directed the Social Science Laboratory. An award-winning educator, he also served many years as the advisor for students considering careers in law and launched many professionals in the fields of law and government. He remained active in the life of the College until his death in 2017.

The Law Symposium is organized by the Alumni “L” Law Association and Austin College Pre-Law Society, under the direction of Dr. Frank Rohmer, associate professor of political science and John D. Moseley Chair of Government and Public Policy.

The 2023 symposium sponsors include the Austin College Student Assembly, Austin College Pre-Law Society, The Sumners Foun-



Austin College is a private national liberal arts college located in the heart of Sherman.

Van Alstyne Leader

dation, Grayson County Bar Association, Adam B. Reed ’94 & Associates, LeCrone Law Firm, PC, Brandy Baxter-Thompson ’98, Buck ’60 and Robyn McChesney Files ’62, and Andy Porter ’95.

Austin College, a private national liberal arts college located north of Dallas in Sherman, Texas, has earned a reputation for excellence in academic preparation, pre-professional foundations, committed faculty, and hands-on, adventurous learning opportunities. One of 40 schools profiled in Loren Pope’s influential book *Colleges That Change Lives*, Austin College boasts a welcoming community that

embraces diversity and individuality, with more than 50 percent of students identifying as persons of color. The residential student body of approximately 1,300 students and an expert faculty of more than 100 educators allow a 13:1 student-faculty ratio and personalized attention. Related by covenant

to the Presbyterian Church (USA), Austin College cultivates an inclusive atmosphere that supports students’ faith journeys regardless of religious tradition. The College, founded in 1849, is the oldest institution of higher education in Texas operating under original name and charter.

## Obituaries

ROBERT W. CORCORAN  
1931-2023

Robert W. Corcoran passed from this life Tuesday, January 24, 2023, at Woodlands Rehabilitation Suites in Denison, Texas.

Robert (Bob) (Dad) (Corky) (Da) (Grandpa) was born on December 22, 1931, in Bisbee, Arizona to James and Agnes (Johnson) Corcoran. He was the seventh child in the family of five sisters and one brother.

Robert married Elaine Jay on the 23rd of August, 1952 in Bisbee at Saint Patrick Catholic Church and they were together for 69 years until Elaine passed away on January 1st, 2022. They raised five amazing children.

Robert was invited to join the US Army during the Korean War and was stationed at NATO Headquarters in Paris, France where he was a repairman of Cryptology Equipment. After his Army duty was completed, he attended the University of Arizona and received a Degree in Electrical Engineering. Several years later, he received his master’s degree in business administration from Pepperdine University.

The family lived in California, Arizona, Texas, Illinois and New Hampshire due to job related moves. Robert retired in 1998 as Vice President of International Sales and Marketing. For the next eleven years, he had a pest control franchise in Arizona.

In 2011, Elaine and Robert moved for their last time, to Van Alstyne, Texas, into their 20th home since their marriage in 1952. This move allowed them to be closer to their sons.

Robert was preceded in death by his mother and father, his wife, his five sisters and one brother and one son, Joseph.

He leaves three sons and one daughter, Larry and his wife Denise (Lavoie) Corcoran, Paul and his wife Karla (Anderson) Corcoran, Father Anthony Corcoran S. J. and Mary (Corcoran) and her husband Louis Giebel.

Robert chose to be cremated and a Funeral Mass will be held at Holy Family Catholic Church in Van Alstyne, Texas, 1 pm, Friday, February 17th. He will be buried at St. Mary’s Catholic Cemetery in Sherman, Texas, next to his wife and son Joseph.

A rosary will be held at 6 pm, Thursday, February 16th at Holy Family Catholic Church.

In Lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be given to Holy Family Catholic Church Building Fund, 919 Spence Rd, Van Alstyne, TX 75495. Online condolences may be made at [www.waldofuneralhome.com](http://www.waldofuneralhome.com)



## Still time to get tickets to 25th Chocolate Indulgence

By Jerrie Whiteley

Van Alstyne Leader

Though Valentines Day has come and gone, there will still be plenty of reasons to celebrate at this year’s Chocolate Indulgence event for Court Appointed Special Advocates of Grayson County.

CASA’s premiere fundraiser of the year features a “Breakfast at Tiffany’s”

theme this year and returns to the auditorium at the Municipal Ballroom at 220 W Mulberry St. in Sherman. The event starts at 7 p.m. and tickets are \$100 each or two for \$150.

Development Coordinator Blake Bray said there are still some tickets left for the 25th Chocolate Indulgence and those who attend should expect something a little different this time around.

The event has moved back to the Municipal Ballroom and instead of a sit-down-dinner, the gathering will offer tastes from five local chefs and sips from local wineries.

“It will be like a wine stroll but indoors ... more like a cocktail party than a sit-down-and-eat-your-dinner party,” Bray said.

In addition, there will be

activities like the live and silent auctions plus a jewelry pull, wine pull, photo opportunities and more. There will also be a jar of pearls that could lead one to win a necklace direct from Tiffany’s. Bray said the person who guesses closest to the number of pearls in the container will win the Tiffany’s necklace valued at more than \$400.

For more information about Chocolate Indulgence or becoming involved with CASA of Grayson County go to <https://casagrayson.com/> or call 903-813-5400.



Guests pose for a photo at a recent Chocolate Indulgence fundraising event. courtesy photo

# Texas History Minute: Who was the man behind RL Thornton in Dallas?

By Ken Bridges  
Special to the VA Leader

Sometimes the men dismissed for their failures early in life can become the greatest successes. The story of R. L. Thornton is the story of a man raised in poverty and with barely an eighth grade education became synonymous with the success of Dallas in the 1950s.

Robert Lee Thornton was born in 1880 in Hamilton County, just west of Waco. His parents were farmers. In 1887, the family had their land stolen from them in a title dispute. As a result, they lost absolutely everything and were left in deep poverty.

They moved to Ennis, just south of Dallas, where the young Thornton helped the family by picking cotton and taking whatever work he could find. As a result, his education was sporadic, and he quit school after the eighth grade. He continued to work odd jobs until he was hired as a store clerk.

Determined to make something of his life, Thornton attempted to restart his education by taking a business course in Dallas. After one course, around 1904, he tried his

hand at sales, becoming a traveling salesman in Oklahoma for a candy company. His success was lackluster, so he tried to start his own business. Thornton's first attempt, a stationery business, folded quickly. He quickly started a mortgage company, but it, too, failed.

Thornton tried again in 1916, starting a bank with two other partners. Thornton served as president of the Dallas County State Bank, later the Mercantile National Bank, for 30 years. The bank found early success by capitalizing on a new type of consumer loan for bankers – automobiles. America had fallen in love with the car by the 1920s, and Thornton became an immense success by becoming one of the first North Texas bankers to offer car loans. Soon, other businesses were asking him to serve as an executive with their businesses as well.

By 1933, the business community honored him by naming him president of the Dallas Chamber of Commerce. He was intensely active in Dallas civic affairs, serving with many charitable organizations. He helped bring the 1936 Texas Centennial Exposition to Dallas's Fair Park area, adding permanent

exhibits to the area. From 1945 to 1960, he also served as president of the Texas State Fair.

In 1952, at the age of 72, Thornton was ready for new adventure as he ran for Dallas mayor. Already known as "Mr. Dallas" for his many accomplishments for the city, he won the election easily.

Though Dallas and neighboring Fort Worth were intense business rivals at this time, the need for a modern highway connecting the business districts of the two growing cities was clear. Thornton pushed through the Dallas-Fort Worth Turnpike, which later became Interstate 30, which opened in 1957 and became an immediate success.

In 1957, the city also completed the new Dallas Memorial Auditorium, which eventually became one of the largest convention centers in the world. The city completed important renovations and expansions to Love Field.

Housing construction boomed while business leaders unveiled a string of ambitious development plans. "Keep the dirt flying" became Thornton's slogan for an ambitious city. Dallas's population increased dramatically, from just over 450,000 at the beginning of his term to nearly 700,000 by 1961.

In 1960, at the age of 80, he declined to seek another term as mayor. He entered into a quiet retirement in 1961 before his death three years later.

Thornton today is perhaps best remem-



R.L. Thornton, Mayor of Dallas, photo from Dallas Historical Society  
WikiMedia Commons

bered in the North Texas area as the namesake for the R. L. Thornton Freeway, a stretch of Interstate 35 East through Dallas as well as the city's R. L. Thornton Elementary School.

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: Feb. 17, House elects Jefferson president

Associated Press

Today is Friday, Feb. 17, the 48th day of 2023. There are 317 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 17, 1801, the U.S. House of Representatives broke an electoral tie between Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr, electing Jefferson president; Burr became vice president.

On this date:

In 1815, the United States and Britain exchanged the instruments of ratification for the Treaty of Ghent, ending the War of 1812.

In 1863, the International Red Cross was founded in Geneva.

In 1864, during the Civil War, the Union ship USS Housatonic was rammed and sunk in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, by the Confederate hand-cranked submarine HL Hunley in the first naval attack of its kind; the Hunley also sank.

In 1897, the forerunner of the National PTA, the National Congress of Mothers, convened its first meeting in Washington.

In 1944, during World War II, U.S. forces invaded Eniwetok Atoll, encountering little initial resistance from Imperial Japanese troops. (The Americans secured the atoll less than a week later.)

In 1959, the United States launched Vanguard 2, a satellite that carried meteorological equipment.

In 1964, the Supreme Court, in Wesberry v. Sanders, ruled that congressional districts within each state had to be roughly equal in population.

In 1972, President Richard M. Nixon departed the White House with his wife, Pat, on a historic trip to China.

In 1988, Lt. Col. William Higgins, a Marine Corps officer serving with a United Nations truce monitoring group, was kidnapped in southern Lebanon by Iranian-backed terrorists (he was later slain by his captors).

In 1995, Colin Ferguson was convicted of six counts of murder in the December 1993 Long Island Rail Road shootings (he was later sentenced to a minimum of 200 years in prison).

In 2014, Jimmy Fallon made his debut as host of NBC's "Tonight Show."

In 2015, Vice President Joe Biden opened

a White House summit on countering extremism and radicalization, saying the United States needed to ensure that immigrants were fully included in the fabric of American society to prevent violent ideologies from taking root at home.

Ten years ago: Danica Patrick won the Daytona 500 pole, becoming the first woman to secure the top spot for any Sprint Cup race. (Patrick covered the 2½-mile Superspeedway in 45.817 seconds, averaging 196.434 mph. A week later, Jimmie Johnson won the race, while Patrick finished eighth.) The Western Conference beat the East 143-138 in the NBA All-Star game played in Houston. Mindy McCready, 37, who'd hit the top of U.S. country music charts before personal problems sidetracked her career, died by her own hand in Heber Springs, Arkansas.

Five years ago: President Donald Trump's national security adviser, H.R. McMaster, told a conference in Germany that there was now "incontrovertible" evidence of a Russian plot to disrupt the 2016 U.S. election; the statement stood in stark contrast to Trump's claim that Russian interference in his election victory was a hoax. Japan's Yuzuru Hanyu made Olympic figure skating history in the men's free skate event in South Korea, becoming the first man to repeat as Olympic champion since Dick Button in 1952.

One year ago: U.S. President Joe Biden warned that Russia could still invade Ukraine within days and Russia expelled the No. 2 diplomat at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, as tensions flared anew in the worst East-West standoff in decades. (Russia would invade Ukraine three days later.) Anna Shcherbakova won a stunning gold medal in women's figure skating at the Beijing Games, while Russian teammate Kamila Valieva tumbled all the way out of the medals after a mistake-filled end to her controversial Olympics.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian Barry Humphries (aka "Dame Edna") is 89. Actor Christina Pickles is 88. Football Hall of Famer Jim Brown is 87. Actor Brenda Fricker is 78. Actor Becky Ann Baker is 70. Actor Rene Russo is 69. Actor Richard Karm is 67. Actor Lou Diamond Phillips is 61. Basketball Hall of Famer Michael Jordan is 60. Actor-comedian Larry, the Cable Guy is 60. TV personal-



U.S. HEAD OF STATE IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES DIPLOMACY HANDSHAKE  
Associated Press

ity Rene Sylar is 60. Movie director Michael Bay is 59. Singer Chante Moore is 56. Rock musician Timothy J. Mahoney (311) is 53. Actor Dominic Purcell is 53. Olympic gold and silver medal skier Tommy Moe is 53. Actor Denise Richards is 52. Rock singer-musician Billie Joe Armstrong (Green Day) is 51. Actor Jerry O'Connell is 49. Country singer

Bryan White is 49. Actor Kelly Carlson is 47. Actor Ashton Holmes is 45. Actor Conrad Ricamora is 44. Actor Jason Ritter is 43. TV personality Paris Hilton is 42. Actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt is 42. TV host Daphne Oz is 37. Actor Chord Overstreet is 34.

NEWS

LOOKING FOR THIS PAPER?

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# ENTERTAINMENT

## At the movies: Knock at the Cabin is worth a visit for M. Night Shyamalan and Dave Bautista devotees

By Doug Laman

Special to the VA Leader

Knock at the Cabin begins with grass-hoppers. Youngster Wen (Kirsten Cui) is catching them in a jar while on vacation in a cabin with her dads, Eric (Jonathan Groff) and Andrew (Ben Aldridge). She's never mean to these bugs and always promises to release them later, but these insects are objectively at the mercy of a larger being they cannot hope to control. Wen and her parents soon find themselves in similar circumstances once a quartet of armed human beings, led by Leonard (Dave Bautista), invade their cabin and hold the family hostage. Leonard then divulges to their trio of captives that he and his "work friends" have come with a mission: this family will need to sacrifice one of its members to prevent the apocalypse. A brutal choice will need to be made or else hundreds of millions will perish.

While two of Shyamalan's earliest directorial efforts (Wide Awake and The Sixth Sense) were told through the eyes of children, Knock at the Cabin represents another modern-era effort from this filmmaker (following Old) that's all about families grappling with mortality. He's gone from telling stories about characters at the start of their lives to spinning yarns about people who are all too aware that death could be coming any minute. Cabin opts to use this recognition for grim suspenseful sequences rather than an overabundance of trashy thrills like Old, but the thematic fascination remains the same. Given how this concept fascinates him, it's no wonder Shyamalan was drawn to adapting Paul G. Tremblay's novel The Cabin at the End of the World.

Beyond providing an intriguing demonstration of where Shyamalan's thematic fascinations are currently, Knock at the Cabin proves sufficient in providing some gripping thrills and not insulting your intelligence along the way. The screenplay by Shyamalan as well as Steve Desmond and Michael Sherman shows remarkable constraint in keeping the action contained to only the titular cabin, which works wonders in accentuating a claustrophobic aura that can lend grand significance to the tiniest gestures. Even the flashback scenes to earlier moments in Eric and Andrew's life sprinkled throughout the runtime manage to reinforce the intentionally cramped nature of the story by framing these characters in interior environments, often having to suppress parts of themselves.

The stripped-down aesthetic also offers a chance for a talented cast of actors to deliver a bunch of solid performances. Splattered all over the posters and other marketing materials, Dave Bautista is the



This image released by Universal Pictures shows Dave Bautista, from left, Abby Quinn, and Nikki Amuka-Bird in a scene from "Knock at the Cabin." (Universal Pictures via AP)

big-name draw here and he's fun playing against type as a soft-spoken man capable of exacting violence for a "righteous" cause. It's not a totally original juxtaposition, but Bautista's earnestness in delivering lines about how a children's show "must teach empathy and tolerance...I like that" gives it a jolt of uniqueness. For my money, the best performer in the movie, though, is Abby Quinn as Adriane, one of the four people convinced the apocalypse is nigh. Quinn's got some of the clumsiest dialogue in Knock at the Cabin, but she proves quite capable of nailing intentionally funny moments and providing moments of moving vulnerability. It's a complicated performance that Quinn is commendable in.

The suspense-driven sequence and performances in Knock at the Cabin are stellar, but the feature does, unfortunately, succumb to certain recurring faults in Shyamalan's directorial efforts. For one thing, like Old, Knock at the Cabin's final 20 minutes features some clumsy expository dialogue that just spells out the motivation and underlying thematic motivation for every bad thing we just saw. Ambiguity is your friend when it comes to making scary movies, but Cabin struggles to embrace that quality. The character of Andrew, meanwhile, is strangely written,

possibly because he's the character whose outside life keeps getting referenced the most out of all the people trapped in this cabin. Awkward mentions of his job or abrupt reveals about how much time he's spent in therapy just feel out of place in a movie that works best when we don't know what's going on. Again, restraint and ambiguity, they're your friend.

Also, M. Night Shyamalan, I don't know what happened between you and James Newton Howard (who composed all his works from The Sixth Sense through After Earth) but y'all need to patch things up. Some of Howard's best works as a composer came through his collaborations with Shyamalan, with this artist excelling in delivering such big and memorable orchestral accompaniments in movies like Signs. Starting with Split, though, Shyamalan has embraced a series of lesser-known composers that don't deliver bad work per se, just stuff that's never good enough to make you stop wondering "what could James Newton Howard have done with this material?" Knock at the Cabin composer Herdis Stefánsdóttir, alas, falls prey to this problem, his compositions just never being super remarkable even if one didn't have a bevy of Howard/Shyamalan collaborations to compare them to. Let's get the Howard/Shyamalan and back to-

gether again soon! The world needs it! Knock at the Cabin suffers from some of the issues that dragged down earlier M. Night Shyamalan misfires like The Village or Lady in the Water, but being firmly back in the world of small-scale thrillers (after a detour into blockbusters with The Last Airbender and After Earth) continues to suit this filmmaker well. Constrained to minimal characters and one primary location brings out some imaginative thrills and nicely-executed bursts of grim darkness in Shyamalan's directing. Granted, even more restraint would've helped this movie live up to the likes of Unbreakable and The Sixth Sense. But if you just want to appreciate some suspenseful set pieces and the talents of actors like Dave Bautista, Knock at the Cabin is, as a Simpsons character would say, a perfectly cromulent experience.

*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.*

## Review: A Marvel villain comes into focus in ‘Ant-Man 3’

By Lindsay Bahr

AP Film Writer

Peyton Reed's "Ant-Man" films have generally served as a kind of palate cleanser to the world-ending stakes of the larger Marvel Cinematic Universe. Paul Rudd's Scott Lang is just an ordinary dude, or so they keep telling us, who still can't really believe that he's part of the Avengers at all. He gets to be the wide-eyed middle-aged fanboy of the group in those films. In his own films, he's just living a blue-sky life in San Francisco as an affable single dad and ex-con who was once fired from Baskin Robbins and who has occasional enemies to defeat.

In this third film, "Ant-Man and The Wasp: Quantumania," in theaters Thursday, he's coasting on his own post-Blip celebrity with

a best-selling memoir out, lots of fans around town and a generally sunny disposition — when he's not breaking his teenage daughter Cassie (now played by Kathryn Newton, always an enjoyable presence) out of jail for civil disobedience.

There is a fun, light, sitcom-y touch to these early scenes in which he and his makeshift family, Hope Van Dyne (Evangeline Lilly), Janet Van Dyne (Michelle Pfeiffer) and Hank Pym (Michael Douglas) sit around the table for takeout pizza. They use their particle technology to blow up the tiny pie.

"I just saved us \$8," Pym declares proudly. But Ant-Man is part of the larger chess board of the MCU, so naturally he's doomed to be sucked into the multiverse mess, setting up

pieces for more Avengers films to come with the introduction of a new villain, Kang (played with a maniacal sorrow by the great Jonathan Majors). And the results are mixed. Reed has returned to direct with a new writer, Jeff Loveness, who has also been tapped to write "Avengers: The Kang Dynasty" and it's hard not to empathize with both for the logic gymnastics required to back Ant-Man and his gang into this conflict.

Loveness, who cut his teeth in comedy and has an affinity for comic book and B-movie absurdities, gives Ant-Man his own "Star Wars"-adjacent adventure. There's quite a bit of unrest in the Quantum Realm, with scrappy rebels battling against a powerful ruler with an army of faceless soldiers. But he takes that conceit further and gives the rebels some personality and humor, including William Jackson Harper as the mind-reading Quaz. The villain's a killing machine, M.O.D.O.K., that looks (knowingly) straight out of a "Mystery Science Theater 3000" movie and it is quite entertaining. It's both a nod to the fun of the ridiculousness in sci-fi and a reminder that Serious Superhero Films are sometimes just one crazy special effect away from being Silly Superhero Films.

"Quantumania" also gives Pfeiffer a lot more to do as we, and Hank and Hope, learn a little bit more about Janet's 30 years in the Quantum Realm and the various compromises and allegiances she made to stay alive. Pfeiffer is an unambiguous delight and the real center

of the movie despite what the title might claim. Ant-Man just finds himself in the middle of the mess, which starts to drag on in a muddle of sci-fi furnishings that individually are probably quite inspired and interesting but together just blend into a dreary mess.

It's a shame because Reed's films are generally so crisp and styled and are best when focused on characters, not worlds and Quantum Realms. "Quantumania" shines when it is keeping things light and quippy.

But Kang, for what we can assume are bigger story needs, needs to be more serious. Majors is certainly chilling and captivating, but Kang seems like a mismatched foe for a stand-alone Ant-Man film and the result is a "Quantumania" that is trying to be too many things. One thing it is not is a Wasp movie, though. Lilly gets a lot to do but not a lot of — or any — character development.

"Quantumania" sticks the ending, however. Without giving anything away, we'll just say that Reed and Rudd get to return to their sweet spot, with a bit of a twist.

"Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania," a Walt Disney release in theaters Thursday, is rated PG-13 by the Motion Picture Association for "some sci-fi action violence." Running time: 122 minutes. Two and a half stars out of four.

MPA Definition of PG-13: Parents strongly cautioned. Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.



This image released by Disney shows Evangeline Lilly and Paul Rudd in a scene from "Ant-Man and the Wasp: Quantumania." (Disney/Marvel Studios via AP)

ACROSS

1 Guadalupe River floater

5 TXism: "busy as \_\_\_\_\_ tender on pay day"

6 Laredo smelter turns stib. into antimony

7 large TX family

8 TXism: "\_\_\_\_\_ mouth" (discouraged man)

17 TXism: "sticks like tar \_\_\_\_\_ road"

18 TX Willie Nelson & George Strait, e.g.

21 TXism: "let it \_\_\_\_\_"

22 TX "\_\_\_\_\_ -Million"

23 Gates risked everything on barbed wire

24 famous TX heart surgeon, Denton

29 flowerless plant

30 soldier beds

31 Cowboy or Texan score (abbr.)

32 near Newton: \_\_\_\_\_

33 "Canyons" trails

34 charged atoms

35 Stetson can be used to \_\_\_\_\_ a fire

36 TXism: "\_\_\_\_\_ old range cow"

37 Houston beat Santa \_\_\_\_\_ at San Jacinto

38 TX Willie film: "Honeysuckle \_\_\_\_\_"

39 an account to pay taxes and insurance for property

40 TXism: "hook, \_\_\_\_\_ and sinker" (all)

41 TX Patrick Swayze film "\_\_\_\_\_ Dancing"

42 sax's sound? (2 wds.)

44 "Get along, little \_\_\_\_\_"

45 TX singer Orbison (init.)

46 TXism: "plows \_\_\_\_\_ row" (dependable)

48 news/weather program

49 Garth Brooks album: "\_\_\_\_\_ the Wind"

50 TXism: "\_\_\_\_\_ like red ants out of a burning stump"

51 played for 2022 nat'l title but lost badly to Georgia

52 TXism: "if \_\_\_\_\_ a rooster, he'll crow"

DOWN

1 TX Patrick Swayze's former spread in California (2 wds.)

2 Taylor County seat

3 TXism: "\_\_\_\_\_ boardinghouse cat"

4 current style

9 TXism: "horse \_\_\_\_\_" (western)

10 "\_\_\_\_\_ Wild"

11 gun assn. (abbr.)

12 "\_\_\_\_\_ I knew then . . ."

13 in Montague County on U.S. 82

14 horse gaits

15 health care groups

16 TXism: "slippery as an \_\_\_\_\_"

19 sample again?

20 TX William Porter was O. Henry

22 TXism: "feel like I've \_\_\_\_\_ rode hard and put up wet"

24 dir. to Pittsburgh from New Boston

25 TXism: "I \_\_\_\_\_ to"

26 TXism: "high tail it"

27 track sprint (2 wds.)

28 bitter resentment defects

29 holder of TX Blue Bell scoops

30 TX George W. is \_\_\_\_\_ of George H.W.

34 TX Dennis Quaid 1987 sci-fi film

35 TXism: "would trade all the mineral rights in Texas \_\_\_\_\_" (highly desired)

37 TXism: "what he don't know \_\_\_\_\_ learning" (smart)

38 TXism: "it's a smart piece" (far)

40 TXism: "he couldn't beat a drum"

41 TXism: "runnin' with the big \_\_\_\_\_" (going well)

43 bronze body color

44 this Malouf wrote "Cattle Kings of Texas"

47 small saclike cavity in a gland

# SGLY: Come alongside

**By Tiffany Chartier**  
Special to the VA Leader

I recently found myself in the emergency room, and the doctor asked, “Where does it hurt?” He proceeded to take the next steps based on my answer.

Resting at home the following day, I spoke with my mother over the phone. She was kind and supportive, even though neither of us had a straight answer as to what happened to put me in the emergency room. I knew it would be a process and that waiting for answers could be as taxing on my mind as it was on my body. Throughout our discussion, my mom reminded me of the doctor. By checking on me emotionally, my mom was basically asking, “Where does it hurt?”

Comedian and director Woody Allen said, “Showing up is 80 percent of life.” Regarding relationships, in addition to showing up, I would add three things: being respectful, empathetic, and trustworthy. Most people would agree that a certain level of peace comes from knowing we are not alone. Perhaps better put, a certain leveling comes from knowing we are not alone: good company can help calm a torrent of thoughts. This “leveling” does not require someone to come up with answers but to simply come alongside.

What does coming alongside someone look like?

For me, it was having a friend sit beside me while I was being tested in the emergency room. My friend’s chair was uncomfortable, the hours were long, and the temperature was chilly. Yet, my friend did not complain, did not prattle in a conversation, nor become overly distracted by other things. My friend remained near me and did not once complain. And even though I found myself dozing in and out of sleep, waking up and seeing my friend countered my fears.

Coming alongside someone in their struggle is to accompany them on their journey rather than making it about you, the cause, or the answer. Simply put, it is meeting someone where they are at and loving them.

Years ago, I would make visits to hospitals to be with people who were terminally ill. I never brought a card, flowers, or a casserole into their rooms. I knew the patients in these states did not need things or fluffy pick-me-up speeches or a sermon. And they did not need to know me other than to know I was there for them. I was always touched by what it meant to different people to have someone come alongside them during these moments.

A patient in the latter stages of Alzheimer’s held out his hand to me, and I pulled up a chair next to his bed and held his hand. No words were exchanged, yet so much transpired in 15 minutes of touch.

Another patient asked me to return the following week. “On Monday,” she said in a demanding tone. I thought her to be rather gruff, but I still returned. When I arrived on Monday, the woman pointed to a small stack of papers, hole punched and bound together by brass-plated fasteners. “I asked my daughter to bring the book up to me this weekend,” the woman said as she adjusted a pillow behind her back. “She can only come on the weekends because she works full-time and isn’t nearby.”

I picked up what she called “the book” and held it with both hands. I had a feeling it had been read for more years than I had been alive. I started to hand it to her, and she shook her head. “No, reading brings on the headaches. Just read it to me.”

I soon realized what I was about to read: a stack of 16 hand-written letters this woman had composed to her daughter. “Every year, starting when she was one year old, I wrote her a letter,” she said. “I saved them all and gave them to her on her 16th birthday.” She shook her head and almost smiled. “Hard to believe she has two kids of her own. I was probably close to her age now when I wrote these letters.” She waved her hand as she put her head on the pillow and closed her eyes. “Please. Please, read them to me.”

I never got to meet her daughter, but I found out through the letters that her name was Evie, and Evie took her stuffed bear with her everywhere when she was two years old. When Evie was 10, she learned how to play the piano. At age 15, she went with her mom to pick out her first gown to wear at a dance — the gown was pale blue. Even though the woman fell asleep before I finished, I read every word aloud. Upon leaving, I returned the book to the side table. The following Monday, I came back to find the room empty.

What does coming alongside someone look like to you?

As we move through the days ahead, may we challenge ourselves to be present for one another. The world needs people to love them where they are at and be present in faith and biblical love. The world needs you, and your world could be the person living in your home, working in your office, or someone you speak with over the phone today.

Ask God to show you how you can come alongside someone this week.

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](mailto:connect@tiffa-nykayechartier.com). Follow on Facebook: Tiffany Kaye Chartier.*

# Gardener’s mailbag: What is the live expectancy of a redbud tree?

**By Neil Sperry**  
Special to the VA Leader

**Dear Neil: We bought a house with a redbud tree near our driveway about five years ago. It seems like it’s going downhill. It hasn’t bloomed as well the past two years, and its leaves turn brown around their edges by late summer. Any idea what their life expectancy might be?**

I’m a fan of redbuds and have been growing them in Texas conditions all of my life. I’d predict their productive life expectancy in a landscape to be 30 to 40 years, although some of the grafted varieties seem to struggle more quickly than that if their growing conditions are less than ideal. With the species *Cercis canadensis*, the type that’s native over much of the eastern United States, they often will send up secondary sprouts that can be trained into clump-form trees once the original trunk has been taken down. I’ve seen that give redbuds a useful “second life” of another 15 or 20 years. However you look at it, they’re well worth planting.

**Dear Neil: Do you recommend dethatching St. Augustine lawns? If so, when?**

I do not. Thatch isn’t usually a big problem with St. Augustine, especially compared to hybrid bermudas. For the record, thatch is undecomposed

organic matter that accumulates between the runners and the top of the soil. Let’s just assume that you might have thatch in your St. Augustine. If you were to dethatch your lawn you would be tearing the runners apart to loosen the thatch. That’s a quick way to ruin your turf. Even with bermuda, if you have a buildup of actual thatch, a core aerator that pulls plugs of soil and thatch up and out of the soil would be a far better solution. That’s something you would do in mid-April or later. But again, it’s very unlikely that you will ever need to do that with a St. Augustine lawn.

**Dear Neil: Our daughter lives in the Metroplex. She has been told that cotton root rot killed one of her roses-of-Sharon shrubs. She has several more in a row. Is there anything she can do to prepare the soil prior to replanting so the next plant won’t suffer the same fate? I guess the old one died almost overnight.**

Cotton root rot is a particularly damaging disease, and those symptoms do sound right – sudden death is its trademark. It can affect a majority of our cultivated tree and shrub species, and we have limited things we can do to prevent it and basically nothing to do to cure it. It is the reason that so little cotton is now grown in the Blackland Prairie along

I-35 across Texas. The fungus remains dormant in the soil for many years. Houses get built in old cotton fields, and when we plant ornamental plants that are susceptible to it, it may only be a matter of time until they succumb. Roses-of-Sharon are a form of hibiscus. They’re in the cotton family, so they share its high degree of susceptibility.

Your daughter could try adding copious amounts of agricultural sulfur to the planting area. It’s an observed fact that cotton root rot is not nearly as common in acidic soils. I would certainly be applying sulfur soil acidifier several times each summer around the surviving plants. I have seen this disease move right down lines of crabapple trees and pears, one tree per year. The same with Indian hawthorns.

**Dear Neil: What can I do with the beautiful amaryllis, hyacinths and miniature daffodils I received at the holidays now that they have finished blooming? I would like to plant them and enjoy them again.**

Plant the daffodils in an appropriate part of your perennial garden where they can grow undisturbed. Be careful not to break their leaves. The foliage is important in making and storing “food” in the bulbs for next year’s blooms.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Meeting Notice:  
South Grayson SUD

South Grayson Special Utility District will hold their regular monthly meeting on Thursday February 16th, 2023 at 2:00 p.m. at the corporate office.  
Secretary Treasurer.  
828550

CITY OF VAN ALSTYNE  
Notice of Public Hearing

The Van Alstyne City Council will a conduct public hearing on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 6:30 p.m., at Grayson College, located at 1455 W Van Alstyne Parkway, Van Alstyne, Texas, Room SB 117, to consider the following item:

A request for a Specific Use Permit, to allow a Changeable Electronic Message/Reader Board Sign in the Central Business District (CBD), for First Christian Church, located on the northwest corner of Waco Street (SH 5) and W. Fulton Street.

A request to rezone an approximately 1.4-acre tract of land from Commercial District-General (C-2) and Thoroughfare Overlay District (THOR), to Planned Development District (PD) with an underlying zoning designation of Commercial District-General (C-2) and Thoroughfare Overlay District (THOR), in order to modify development standards and sign regulations, to allow for service station (QuikTrip), located on the southeast corner of S. Henry Hynds Expy. (US 75) and W. Van Alstyne Pkwy. (FM 121).

The meeting shown above is open to the public. You will have the right to speak for or against the proposed request during the public hearing portion of the meeting. For additional information contact Alex Glushko: e-mail at [aglushko@cityofvanalstyne.us](mailto:aglushko@cityofvanalstyne.us).

839850

There is a NEW group of people EVERY day, looking for a DEAL in the classifieds.

PUBLIC NOTICE

CITATION BY PUBLICATION - DETERMINATION OF HEIRSHIP  
The State of Texas  
To all persons interested in the Estate of Helen Ruth Jones, Deceased, Cause No. 2023-051P, in the County Court of Grayson County, Texas  
Karen Michelle Jones filed an Application to Determine Heirship in this estate on 01/30/2023, requesting that the Court determine who are the heirs and only heirs of **ESTATE OF HELEN RUTH JONES, DECEASED**, and their respective shares and interests in such estate.  
The court may act on this application at any call of the docket on or after 10:00 a.m., **February 20, 2023**, which is the first Monday next after the expiration of 10 days from the date of posting this citation, at the Grayson County Courthouse, 100 W. Houston, Sherman, Texas 75090. All persons interested in this case are cited to appear before this Honorable Court by **filing a written contest or answer** to this Application should they desire to do so. **To ensure its consideration, you or your attorney must file any objection, intervention, or response in writing** with the County Clerk of Grayson County, Texas **on or before the above-noted date and time**.  
Given under my hand and seal of the Probate Court of Grayson County, Texas at the office of the Grayson County Clerk in Sherman, Texas on this 7th day of February, 2023.  
DEANA PATTERSON, COUNTY CLERK, GRAYSON COUNTY, TEXAS, By Bri'ana Savage, Deputy Clerk  
845460

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CITY OF VAN ALSTYNE, TEXAS

PRESS RELEASE

CITY OF VAN ALSTYNE  
WW COLLECTION SYSTEM OVERFLOW  
FEBRUARY 7, 2023

This press release is being issued in accordance with regulatory requirements by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. The City of Van Alstyne is providing this based on identification of a spill from the wastewater collection system on February 7, 2023.

On February 7, 2023, City of Van Alstyne utility crews discovered a spill of untreated wastewater from the collection system located east of State Highway 5 on the north side of FM 3133.

The following information is provided as required by TCEQ regulations Chapter 319, Rule 319.303:

- The spill is from a manhole in the wastewater collection system
- The wastewater collection system is owned and operated by the City of Van Alstyne
- For further information regarding this notice, contact Lane Jones, City Manager at 903-482-5426
- The location is at a wastewater manhole located on the north side of FM 3133 approximately 1,200-feet east of SH 5
- The spill was noticed at approximately 9:00 AM on February 7, 2023
- The estimated volume of the spill is 790,000 gallons
- The spill is from domestic wastewater flows
- The area impacted is a wet-weather creek located north of FM 3133 flowing through an uninhabited area of dense trees & brush for an estimated distance of approximately 4,400-feet – NOTE: this is the same creek that the City of Van Alstyne wastewater treatment discharges to
- The suspected cause of the spill is a blockage of the flow located at or near the manhole identified – Crews have begun work to identify and repair the problem – repairs will be completed as soon as possible
- Actions as a result of the spill
  - The TCEQ regional office was notified once the spill was identified
  - Local officials have been notified including the City Manager and the Mayor of Van Alstyne
  - Following repair of the damaged system, clean-up activities will be made by utility crews from the City of Van Alstyne

Additional information will be provided to the TCEQ as required following the completion of repairs to the wastewater collection system.

TCEQ Chapter 319 – Rule 319.303 regarding notification of a spill exceeding 100,000 gallons – note other issues such as proximity to water supply do not apply in this circumstance

(a) Persons responsible for a wastewater spill must ensure notice complies with subsections (b) and (c) of this section. Responsible persons may contact the commission to obtain a template which may be used in the event of a wastewater spill.

(b) For all wastewater spills as referenced in §319.302(b) of this title (relating to Notification Requirements) the notice must contain the following:

(1) one of the following statements:  
(A) a spill from a wastewater treatment facility has occurred; or  
(B) a spill from a collection facility has occurred;

(2) the facility name;

(3) person to contact for further information;

(4) the location of the spill;

(5) the estimated date and time of the spill;

(6) the estimated volume of the spill (number of gallons);

(7) the type of the spill (domestic, industrial, etc.);

(8) a description of the area potentially affected, including a down-gradient and lateral distance from the spill site;

(9) the suspected cause of the spill; and

(10) a list of actions that have been taken including, but not limited to:

(A) notification of:  
(i) appropriate local government officials; and  
(ii) the TCEQ regional office;

(B) containment of the spill;

(C) increased monitoring of water supply systems; and

(D) initiation or completion of clean up activities.

(c) If the wastewater spill meets the conditions of §319.302(b)(2) and/or (b)(3) of this title then the notice must also contain the following precautionary statements:  
(1) Persons using private drinking water supply wells located within 1/2-mile of the spill site or within the potentially affected area should use only water that has been distilled or boiled at a rolling boil for at least one minute for all personal uses including drinking, cooking, bathing, and tooth brushing. Individuals with private water wells should have their well water tested and disinfected, if necessary, prior to discontinuing distillation or boiling.

(2) Persons who purchase water from a public water supply may contact their water supply distributor to determine if the water is safe for personal use.

(3) The public should avoid contact with waste material, soil, or water in the area potentially affected by the spill.

(4) If the public comes into contact with waste material, soil, or water potentially affected by the spill, they should bathe and wash clothes thoroughly as soon as possible.

Rule 319.302 regarding spill

(a) The owner of a facility must designate a responsible individual to comply with this subchapter.

(b) In addition to the noncompliance notification to the commission required by §305.125(9) of this title (relating to Standard Permit Conditions) and any notification required under Chapter 327 of this title (relating to Spill Prevention and Control), the owner of a facility, through its responsible individual, must notify appropriate local government officials and the local media (see §319.301 of this title (relating to Definitions)) whenever one of the following types of spills occurs from the facility:  
(1) a spill, regardless of volume, that the facility owner knows or has reason to know, will adversely affect a public or private source of drinking water;

(2) a spill with a volume of 50,000 gallons or more where one or more of the following conditions also exists:  
(A) the spill occurs within 1/2-mile of a public or private source of drinking water;

(B) the spill occurs within 1/2-mile of a private drinking water well which is located within 1/2-mile of a public water supply well;

(C) the spill occurs within 1/2-mile up-gradient of a surface water intake of a public or private source of drinking water;

(D) the spill occurs in an active groundwater recharge area;

(E) the spill occurs up-gradient and within 1/2-mile of a karst terrain or shallow alluvial well that is a source of drinking water;

(3) a spill of 100,000 gallons or more.

(c) The responsible individual must issue the notice as quickly as possible, but not later than 24 hours after the facility becomes aware of the spill. The notice may be hand-delivered, sent by facsimile, e-mail, or by phone with follow-up written notice. The contents of the notice must comply with §319.303 of this title (relating to Notice to Local Officials and Local Media).

(d) Within 48 hours of providing notice to appropriate local government officials and local media, the responsible individual must provide to the commission regional office in whose region the spill occurred a copy of the notice, the date notice was provided to local officials and local media, and a list of notice recipients.

834890

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ads every day.

# SPORTS

## Panther Basketball Senior Spotlights: Riley Dancer and Carson Brown

By Griff Servati

For the Van Alstyne Leader

Leading the Panther basketball team this season have been two seniors, the only seniors on the team, Riley Dancer and Carson Brown. The Panthers wrapped up the regular season this week and are looking to the playoffs starting next week.

Both players knew going into the season their leadership would play an essential role in the season. Riley shared that he led by action and then by words if needed, “I have shown leadership by making sure not to give up and making sure everyone is giving it their all.” Carson said, “I knew going in we would have a young team. Graduating key players was going to be tough, but by playing hard and having a great cast behind me, we still have a chance at a playoff birth.”

The Panthers entered the last week of the playoffs with a win at Celina. They lost by double digits to the bobcats on their home court in the first round of district

play. The senior leadership was evident in the way that they were able to return the favor. The win set up a current tie between the two teams for third place in the district.

Riley’s favorite memory of playing sports is the playoffs; he shared, “Last year’s area playoff game in basketball when we hit a buzzer-beater to move on in playoffs.” To those in the stands, that will be an all-time favorite game. Carson took a different approach to the questions, “My memories center around hanging out and eating with the team.

In their time at Van Alstyne, they have had many teachers who helped shape and develop them as students and people. Riley shared that VAHS teacher Mrs. Burkhalter “comes to my mind first, because she has taught me to be joyful every day in life.” Carson shared that VAHS English teacher Karen Endicott challenged him and, because of that, changed him, “She pushed me the most out of any teacher. She made me realize I needed to be better.”



Carson Brown



Riley Dancer

Both boys expressed their gratitude to their parents for helping them be the best they could be on the court; Carson spoke of Mandi and David Brown, “My dad is a former basketball coach, knew what I needed to do to be better. I would always have to run or lift or shoot to push myself to be my best.” Riley shared, “My parents’ (Brent and Diane Dancer) have always helped ensure that I won’t regret the time I was in high school playing the games I love.”

The two seniors will be finishing up their time on the court soon, and both have plans for the next season in life. Riley plans on heading to Tarlton State to pursue a degree in business. Carson has plans to follow his parents in the education field while coaching basketball. He is currently still deciding where to attend school while looking for opportunities to continue his basketball career at the next level.



Carson Brown



Riley Dancer

## Lady Panthers earn Bi-District blowout.

By Griff Servati

For the Van Alstyne Leader

The Lady Panthers opened up the post-season with a Bi-District matchup with North Hills Prep, a Dallas area charter school. The Panthers jumped out with a full-court press for the first quarter. The Lady Panther press was stifling, not allowing a bucket or even a possession on the court’s opposite side for the first frame. The Panthers would lead 21-0 at the end of the first quarter. In the second frame, the Lady Panthers would continue to

steal the ball and head straight to the back, running up a 19-2 second quarter and would lead 40-2 at the half. The Lady Panthers continue the pace of stealing and scoring into the second half and would walk away with the 83-21 victory.

Scoring for the Lady Panthers were Ryleigh Miller 19, Lanie Thorpe 13, Rylee Adams 11, Kaelyn Miller 9, Tess Cutler 6, Elaina Flores 7, Libby Carson 6, Jaidan Servati 4, Lacey Thorpe 4, Paige Scarbro 2, and Sarah Wyatt 2.



The girls basketball team poses with their trophy.  
Griff Servati / For the Van Alstyne Leader



Lacey Thorpe  
Griff Servati / For the Van Alstyne Leader

TEXAS

Outdoors Digest

Calendar  
Through Feb. 15 – Oklahoma quail season.  
Through Feb. 26 – Texas quail season.  
Through March 12 – Light Goose Conservation Order spring season in Texas’ East and West Goose Zones.  
Feb. 17-19 – Troutfest TX 23 near New Braunfels, Texas, sponsored by the Guadalupe River Trout Unlimited Chapter. For information, visit [www.grtu.org](http://www.grtu.org) .  
Feb. 13-March 30 - Oklahoma Conservation Order Light Goose Season.  
Feb. 25-26 – 6th Annual Texas Fly Fishing & Brew Festival at the Mesquite Convention Center. For information, visit <https://txflyfishingfestival.org>.  
March 7 – Red River Fly Fishers monthly meeting and fly tying session, beginning at 6 p.m. at the Rec Hall of Eisenhower State Park. For information, visit [www.rfff.org](http://www.rfff.org) .  
March 8-12 - Bass Pro Shops RED-CREST IV on Lake Norman near Charlotte, N.C. For information, visit [www.major-leaguefishing.com](http://www.major-leaguefishing.com) .  
March 11 – 8th Annual TRWD Fly Fest in Fort Worth. For information, visit <https://trwdflyfest.com> .  
March 18-April 30 – Texas South Zone Rio Grande turkey spring season.  
March 24 – 2023 Texoma Ducks Unlimited Spring Event at the Mayor Arena of Loy Lake Park. Doors open up at 6 p.m. and tickets are \$60 for individuals and \$70 for couples. For information, visit [www.ducks.org](http://www.ducks.org) .  
Outdoors Notes As Tuesday approaches, Happy Valentine’s Day from the Herald Democrat Outdoors staff...As the spring conservation fundraising season kicks off, local quacker backers should note that the 2023 Red River Valley Ducks Unlimited Dinner in Gainesville this weekend on Saturday, Feb.11 is an official sell-out according to event organizers...Next month, the Texoma DU Chapter will host its annual Spring Event, this year at the Mayor Arena at Denison’s Loy Lake Park on Friday, March 24 beginning at 6 p.m.... The 2023 version of the Guadalupe River Trout Unlimited Chapter’s long-running Troutfest is scheduled for next weekend. The Troutfest TX 23 event will run from Feb. 17-19 at the Lazy L&L Campgrounds not far from New Braunfels, Texas. For information, visit [www.grtu.org](http://www.grtu.org) ...The sixth annual Texas Fly Fishing & Brew Festival is coming up quickly, getting ready for a Feb. 25-26 run at the Mesquite Convention Center. For information, visit [www.txflyfishingfestival.org](http://www.txflyfishingfestival.org) ... The 2023 season for pro bass anglers is about to kick off with the SiteOne Bassmaster Elite Series derby kicking off its Feb. 16-19 run at South Florida’s Lake Okeechobee. That will be followed by the Gamakatsu Bassmaster Elite Series event from Lake Seminole from Feb. 23-26...On the Major League Fishing side of things, after an off-season of change that saw the retirement of a couple of key MLF leadership figures and a move of the organization’s headquarters from Tulsa, Oka. to Benton, Ky., the organization’s Bass Pro Tour (BPT) kicks off for the 2023 season with the BPT Stage One event near Orlando next week on Florida’s Kissimmee Chain of

Lakes from Feb. 13-18...Meanwhile, the first MLF Tackle Warehouse Invitational is underway this week with a Feb. 8-10 stop on South Florida’s Lake Okeechobee. As of press time, Bran Latimer had the lead with 42-pounds, 14-ounces over Jonathan Dietz, who was only 11-ounces behind...As a reminder, even though the water is cold right now, zebra mussels continue to be a threat across Texas. As a result, TPWD reminds anglers and boaters that to prevent the spread of zebra mussels, the law requires draining of water from boats and onboard receptacles when leaving or approaching public fresh waters....Have a whitetail buck or a bull elk to be scored for Oklahoma’s Cy Curtis Program? ODWC has announced that its OKC headquarters will host the 2023 edition of Rack Madness at its offices from 12 p.m. until 7 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 24....Meanwhile, the 2022-23 entry deadline for the Texas Big Game Awards Program ([www.texasbiggameawards.org](http://www.texasbiggameawards.org) ) is also quickly approaching with its annual March 1 post-mark deadline...  
Hunting Report  
The local hunting seasons for 2022-23 are winding down quickly with the end of the Oklahoma quail hunting season coming up next week on Wednesday, Feb. 15 and the end of the Texas quail season approaching on Sunday, Feb. 26...Meanwhile, after the Oklahoma white-fronted goose season ended on Feb. 5, the Sooner State’s light goose and dark goose hunting seasons conclude on Sunday, Feb. 12...The next day, the Oklahoma Conservation Order Light Goose Season will kick off, running from Monday, Feb. 13 through Thursday, March 30...The Texas Conservation Order Light Goose Season is already underway, beginning on Jan. 30 in the state’s East Goose Zone and Feb. 6 in the state’s West Goose Zone. In both Lone Star State goose hunting zones, the spring light goose conservation order season concludes on Sunday, March 12...After that, it’s on to spring turkey season with several opening dates coming up over the next couple of months. Stay tuned for more on spring turkey hunting seasons and prospects in both Texas and Oklahoma...  
Fishing Report  
After last week’s sub-freezing weather and winter storm, and this week’s heavy rainfall, take area lake conditions with a grain of salt as the weather stabilizes...At Lake Texoma, water is stained; water temp is in the upper 40s and lower 50s; and the lake is 1.48 feet below normal pool level. Adventure Texoma Outdoors guide John Blasingame tells TPWD that striped bass are fair in 25-40 feet of water off ledges for those using Alabama-rigs. Fishing under birds in the first and last hour of sunlight while dead-sticking Flukes is also working. On a cloudy day, Blasingame says that the birds may work longer...Meanwhile, Texoma Guaranteed Guide Service guide Jacob Orr tells TPWD that striped bass are good on Flukes for those fishing anywhere in 50-80 feet of water while drifting with a two-ounce jig heads. The full moon has made the morning bite inconsistent according to Orr, so the midday to afternoon bite has been better. A lot of fish are now

west along the river channel by the islands as the spring spawn begins to approach. Meanwhile, Orr says that crappie are slow on jigs for those fishing in 15-20 feet of water over brush piles in the Little Mineral Arm of the lake. Electronics are playing a big role in locating active fish that will chase a lure or bait out of the brush. And finally, catfish are slow on cut shad and whole shad for those drifting in 25-30 feet of water along lake flats and the mouths of the rivers on the west end of the lake...As Valentine’s Day approaches early next week, over on the Oklahoma side of Texoma, Bryan County game warden Garrett Beam tells ODWC that the water temp is 49 degrees and the lake elevation is normal for this time of year. His report indicates that striped bass are good on Flukes, live shad, and Sassy Shad when fished around creek channels, on flats, over points, and in the main river channels. Blue, channel, and flat-head catfish are fair on chicken liver, cut bait, dough bait, hot dogs, live shad, and Power-Bait fished around creek channels, in coves, near docks, over points, in the river channels, and near the river mouths. Crappie are fair on caddis flies, hair jigs, jigs, minnows, and nymphs fished around brushy structure, in coves, around creek channels, over points, and near standing timber. “Fishing this week has been good,” noted Beam. “Stripers continue to be good (when) dead sticking. Catfish are being caught on jug lines with live and cut bait. Crappie are being caught on jigs near and around brush piles.”... At Lake Ray Roberts, water is clear; water temp is 48 degrees; and the lake is 1.31 feet below normal pool level. Guide Jim Walling of Ucatchem Guide Service tells TPWD that white bass are in 70-feet of water, suspended 50-feet down. Dead-sticking with small slabs with a fly above is the best approach according to the long time guide. Walling says that it will take a few days of nice weather for the bite to improve and that few anglers have been on the water due to the recent cold and inclement weather...At Lake Fork, water is stained; water temp is 56-59 degrees; and the lake is 4.38-feet below normal pool level after last year’s work on the dam...Down south at Lake Fork, Lake Fork Pro guide Marc Mitchell tells TPWD that “Fork had a warmer early week, but dropped off in temperatures (after last week) and so the bite went with it for the most part.” He says that the shallow fish were on spinnerbaits and chatterbaits early in the week in 3-5 feet of water while Texas-rigs and Viper XP jigs were doing good on docks with brush in 4-7 feet of water. “Black and blue and green pumpkin were the best colors. Still had a few catches on squarebills in red and orange in 4-6 feet along creeks, but with the weather getting colder that should drop-off.”...Meanwhile, Alex Guthrie of Fly Fish Fork Guide Service tells TPWD that “Black bass are slow and in the early stages of pre-spawn. Try slow moving suspending streamers and sculpin patterns in 5-7 feet of water. Look for larger bass to begin early spawning in flooded treetops in deeper creeks and ridges (soon). Smaller males should begin to cruise the shorelines around spawning areas on warmer days.”...For Fork crappie fishing

enthusiasts, Jacky Wiggins of Jacky Wiggins Guide Service tells TPWD that the slab bite on Fork has been up and down with the crazy weather changes of late. “Fish are on trees as deep as 48-58 feet and we also have fish that have moved up into water as shallow as 18-25 feet,” he said. “Black crappie should begin to move shallower than 18 feet in the next few weeks if the (weather) warms (up).” Wiggins notes that the water temperatures did rebound a bit with the warmer days and sunshine this week and the good thing right now is the Lake Fork jig bite has fired up in recent days, so catching fish on soft plastics and hand-tied jigs will start producing more. Meanwhile, as usual, minnows will still work especially on finicky crappie...There is no ODWC report from the Blue River this week, but one report received from a local angler indicates that the Johnston County stream is running high and muddy after this week’s cold rainfall equaling an inch plus of precipitation. That could mean that anglers can expect tough trout fishing for another day or two, but small flashy streamers for fly fishing enthusiasts should produce a few strikes. Same for conventional anglers using inline spinners, small spoons, and scented PowerBait trout nibbles...At McGee Creek near Atoka, ODWC reports that the lake elevation is two feet low, but rising after this week’s heavy rainfall. The water temp is 46 degrees after last week’s cold weather and conditions are stained. After this week’s heavy and cold rain, ODWC reports that largemouth bass and spotted bass are slow on Alabama-rigs, crankbaits, in-line spinnerbaits, soft plastic baits, and Sassy Shad plastics fished around brushy structure, coves, docks, and in the main lake. Crappie are slow on jigs, small lures, and tube jigs fished around brushy structure, in the main lake, and over points... Down on the lower Texas Gulf Coast, it will soon be “Gator Trout” season as anglers catch some of the year’s biggest speckled trout. That’s not the case right now, however, after last week’s cold front and winter storm chilled down the salty water even south of Corpus Christi. “Fishing continues to be slow for all species with a few catches in deeper water using live shrimp under a popping cork,” said Baffin Bay Hunting and Fishing’s Gilbert Barrera in his report to TPWD this week. “The water temperature got down to 51 degrees after the last cold snap, and is slowly climbing back up. Look for fishing to improve as the water temperature increases to the mid-60s.”...  
Outdoors Tip of the Week  
The Pope and Young Club ([www.pope-young.org](http://www.pope-young.org)) has just announced its newly updated 9th edition of the Bowhunting Big Game Records of North America. The Club is taking pre-orders for the limited press run of the two volume record book set, which will be released at P&Y’s 2023 convention this April in Reno, Nev.. To read more about the new bowhunting record book from Pope and Young, please visit Bowhunter Magazine at <https://www.bowhunter.com/editorial/9th-edition-bowhunting-big-game-record-of-north-america/468932>.

Rain, wind or cold snow, a fishing I will go



By JB Webb  
Special to the VA Leader

Tuesday was the best-looking of any of the days before I needed to get a story in for this week. I’m sorry for no article last week as it was hectic out here.  
That morning, Peaches and I made the morning cart run early enough we had to dodge school buses. There was a light rain falling as I got to the locked gate. I unlocked it, went in and I let our puppy smell out everything down there.  
We went back to the house where Tombstone was already hooked up. After filling my YETI with hot coffee I was back on the water

in about 20 minutes. If you are retired and live at the lake like I do, going fishing is easy. This old mule will see his 80th year start on the ninth of this month. I’m still blessed, frisky as a colt and have worn out three or four guardian angels. I’m not letting that old man in.  
Now when all that ice was on the ground, I was careful walking around as a nine-tailed cat in a room full of rockers. I was doing great and headed for my shop on a cement sidewalk. All at once I saw my feet in the air as my back, then my head, pounded the walk.  
I wasn’t hurt but having a little trouble getting up as it was slicker than snot. I was just getting to my feet when I heard Susan asking if I was hurt. Looking around at the front door her and Peaches had their heads peeking out at me. I swear Peaches was grinning.  
I was lucky my head took most of the blow. It’s the hardest thing on my body. I was back on my feet and holding on to anything

I could grab to make sure I didn’t fall until I got to the tool shed and got a pitch fork I used for the rest of the day to assist my walking.  
Back to this past Tuesday morning, I was on my first hole as the sun came up. I could have slept a little longer. After 30 minutes without a bite, I headed for my second stop. When I cleared the marina I was in and hit the lake, the northeast wind had some rollers coming down.  
I decided to not make that run and went to Hole No. 3. I never left; even when I was getting no bites. I kept working this spot as my records show this time of year my I had caught fish here. About 10:30 a.m. I was just getting ready to untie and go in when I felt a light tap, set the hook and gently brought a three-plus pound smallmouth to the boat.  
The fish jumped and rolled around on the surface. I had just bought a new net to make Goober happy and I used it on this fish. I set there for another hour and caught two more solid fish. One was a Kentucky over two

pounds and the third fish was a largemouth going around four pounds. It was the biggest largemouth I have caught in the new year.  
The fish came off a sand drop from 10-24 feet of water. Every fish came on a 1/4 oz Blakemore Road Runner with a 3.5 inch YUM Pulse doused in YUM Shad Fish attractant. It was a good day with no one else around. Hot coffee and fishing sure make the outdoors great.

Little Dixie Bass Club is holding their second tournament of the year. They will go out of Catfish Bay the 11th and 12th from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. I’ll have the results next week.  
The outlook for the end of this week looks good. Bass fishing at least for me is slow. Striper fishing is likely the best way to go if you are wanting to get your string pulled. The gulls are still here so finding the fish make it a little easier.



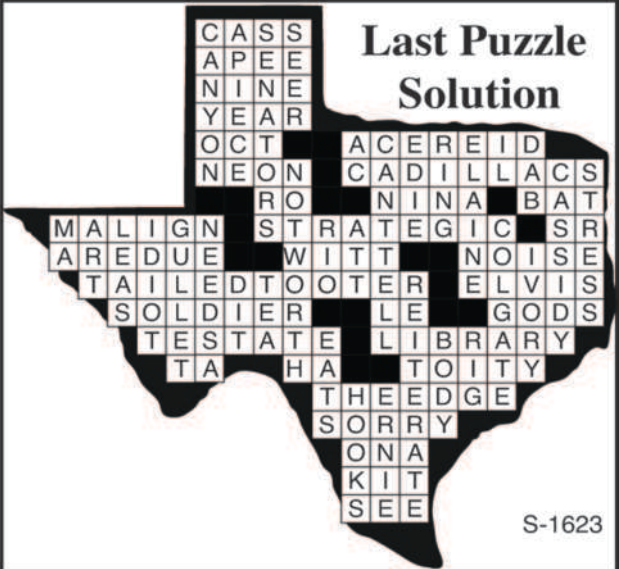
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S-1623

# Growing beautiful things

**Becky Emerson Carlberg**  
The Shawnee News-Star

The 23rd Gardening with the Experts was put together by the Multi-County Master Gardeners with help by Carla Smith, Pottawatomie County 4-H/Horticulture Educator, contributors and vendors.

Steve Owens of Bustani Plant Farm in Stillwater was the first to have a go. Always entertaining, Steve was a presenter in 2001 and has made a few return engagements. Steve recommendations:

When building garden beds, the soil is usually amended with organic matter. Not when growing native plants. They prefer a lean soil. In rich soil, the natives may grow too large for their own good. Native plants often do not have the defense mechanisms for those organisms that live in moist, rich soils.

Watch the water, but some natives like a bit more, such as the Penstemon. One good soaking a month, or give them a drink when dry. The native garden does not require aggressive weeding but Steve has erected an Armadillo fence around his garden!

Some gardens lack contrast. Use attractive hardscaping to divert attention. Incorporate plants with colorful foliage. Grass-like sedges have more interesting foliage than their flowers.

Native perennials: The Giant Coneflower from eastern OK. Loves hot, muggy summers. Amsonias (Bluestars) give fall color. Milkweeds: Pink swamp milkweeds smell like bubblegum tape. While in the milkweeds we were introduced to the Tarantula Hawk, the two-inch spider wasp. The female paralyzes a tarantula with her stinger, takes the docile spider back to her burrow, lays one egg on its stomach, covers the burrow entrance and lets the future wasp eat away.

Gregg’s Mistflower attracts Queen butterflies (similar but smaller than Monarchs). The male butterfly absorbs phytochemicals from the plant nectar and makes a pheromone to attract the female Queen. Narrow-leaf sunflowers explode with blooms in fall. The Hummingbird Shrub, native to west Texas and Arizona, can be cut back to six inches above ground each spring.

Native annuals: Bitter sneezeweeds are tough and have delightful bouquets of yellow flowers. False Gaura produces flower clusters on spikes. The Ten Petal Mentzelia, a western OK Blazing star, has a deep taproot. Velcro leaves that attach themselves to sheep and four-inch flowers bloom in the evening. Attracts moths.

Non-natives: Anemones form ground covers in shade. The Tractor Seat plant (Farfugium japonicum) has large leaves, but keep the soil moist for this shade lover. Partial sun Japanese Roof Iris (did actually grow on Japanese Roofs) can get out of hand. In the past, rhizomes were dried, ground into a powder and used to make the white faces of Geishas. Chinese Red Sage is a Salvia with purple flower petals. What’s red? The roots were used in medicines. Dead-heading this plant keeps it blooming.

Last thought: Rock gardens can be meccas for native and non-native plants. Just go small with the plants so the rocks are visible. Bustani Plant Farm outside Stillwater OK will be open April 11-15 by appointment and for business April 18th-June 3rd



nature books

from 9am-6pm.

You have seen Dr. Shelley Mitchell, Oklahoma State University, give short presentations on the OETA “Oklahoma Gardening.” At Gordon Cooper, she talked about growing plants and children. “If they grow it, they will eat it.” Let children own their own gardens and do their own thing within reason. Feel, touch, see, smell and hear the garden and what it produces.

Small plastic containers with little chunks of veggie roots were passed out. We tasted the first white cube. Carrot? No, parsnip. The second white cube was more mysterious. Rutabaga? The ladies thought she said the Hiccup plant. Jicama it was. The Mexican turnip. The large white lumpy radish-like root at the end of a vine. Eat it cooked or raw. Perfect kid fodder. Non-boring plants children can grow. Grown-ups too!

After the break, Arborist Sam Grimmer introduced us to Scissortail Park in OKC. Sam has been a crew leader and arborist for 15 years. He arrived on the scene in 2019. Over 1,000 trees now grow in the 70-acre park south of the Myriad Botanical Gardens to near the Oklahoma River. Irrigation water comes from Scissortail Lake. Eventually the park will loop through Bricktown to the OKC city center. No shade yet. Most the trees have trunks with 6-inch bases. Sam quipped visitors are “Poor little fellows sweating bullets on 100-degree days.” But this will change.

Trees reduce pollution, cool temperatures, control water runoff, conserve energy, increase property values and clean the air. Plant a tree. Begin with the seed, acorn or nut. The roots of a tree in a pot are modified to accommodate constricted growth. Potted larger trees with bases 2-2 ½ inches in diameter are best when building a forest. Sam’s experience is two-inch trees will beat the five-inch trees in size within 10 years. Plant smaller potted redbuds. The short-lived trees will have better root systems. Redbuds take 15-25 years to reach maturity (6” base).

Before buying a tree at the nursery, carefully examine the tree. Cut into the burlap ball to see



Steve Owens, Shelley Mitchell, Carla Smith and Sam Grimmer

the root flare. Plant trees high to assure good root growth. Use Gator bags or 5-gallon buckets with pencil-width holes to allow the water to slowly soak into the root ball.

“Cake Tasting Method”. Take a spear or stick and put it into the ground. If it comes out cold or dampish, good. Sloppy wet means too much water. Dry stick says should have watered yesterday. No stick? Modify a golf club.

Know the proper tree species for planting under power lines or in house landscapes. Plant large trees at the street for front access or in mass on edge of property. Create a forest environment. Humans forget they too are forest animals. Symbiotic network in the soil can better control the temps and water. Forest replenishment is an ongoing cycle. To build a forest at home, plant smaller trees near older trees.

Rotate plants. Example: plant one row of pines. In 5 to 10 years plant another pine row behind. For screening views, pines have the fullest foliage around 7 to 10 years. Time to cut the older row. Keep rotating.

European saying “Tree grows up, then it grows back down again.” Each species has a finite life span.

Drought will be an increasing problem. The water transporting xylem can experience failures to move water in tree and the tree begins to die from the top down. Drought buffer: A good ground layer insulates root systems. Plant different drought tolerant species: Junipers, Arizona Cypress, Lacebark elms and Redbuds.

Trees and construction are not compatible. Be proactive at the beginning of construction. Put up signs around the tree. Alert the contractors. Make an honest attempt to protect the tree. Increase awareness. May take 3 to 7 years for tree to go into decline. It then becomes more hazardous.

Hazard tree identification: Look at the tree. Have a formal inspection every year. Note if the ‘target’ presents little, some or permanent problem. If the tree has reached maturity with long horizontal limbs, it may be topped. Reduces the



Steven Owens in action

impact of high branches.

Root zone calculation: For every inch in tree trunk diameter move one foot out. Example: 12 inch diameter trunk, 20 foot radius around the tree where the roots live.

Trenching beside a tree is bad. A one foot deep trench will sacrifice 45% of the tree roots. Use directional boring. Attach a water hose to a PVC pipe. The water moves the soil away without cutting roots

Scissortail trees. The Scissortail streetscape trees live in sand with a structured soil system underneath. They drink huge amounts of water. The hackberries are stressing in the park as are the pines. Reasons: Soil pH too high and borers present. Scale on crape myrtles. Soil drenches of pesticides have been used.

At the park, the Redbud cultivars struggle. Oklahoma freezes have affected maples, live oaks and hollies as well. The sap freezes, the trunks crack and split, the water and food vacuum systems are damaged and the trees go into decline. For cracks and sunscald on trunks: Use a felt wrap, not burlap. Much better.

Come visit Scissortail Park in March. 160,000 daffodil bulbs have been planted the last 3 years. The park will host their tree sale the end of March on Friday and Saturday.

WRITERS/ PHOTOGRAPHERS

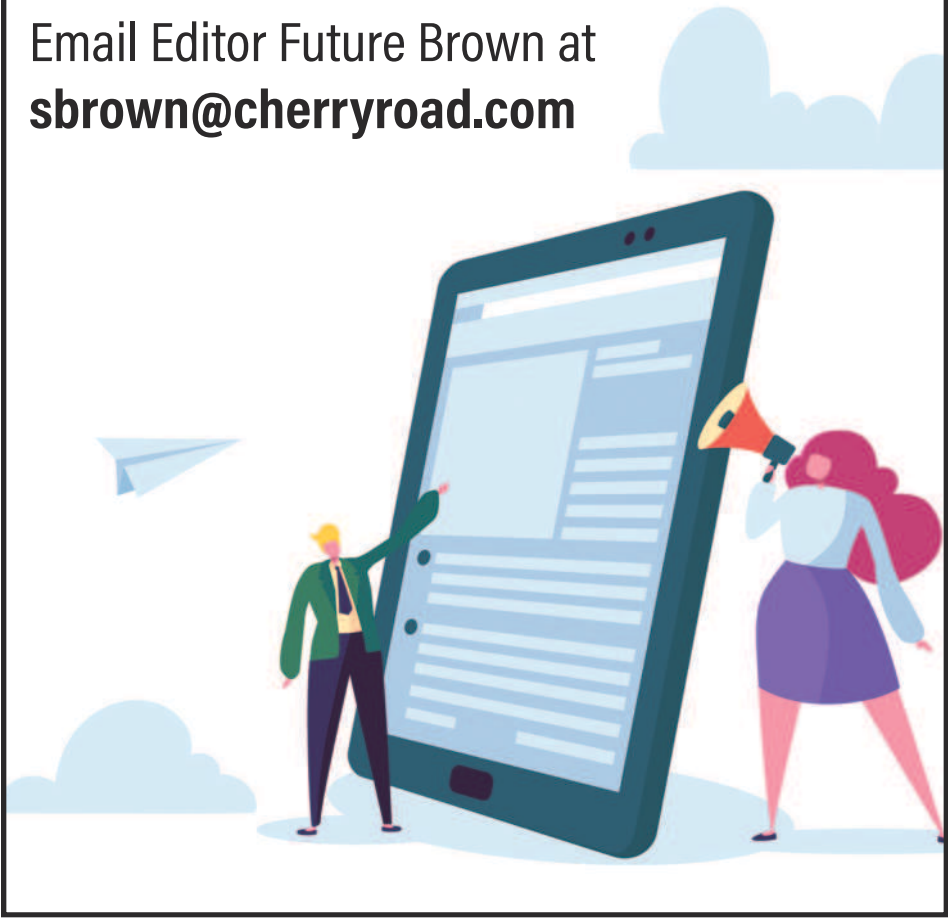
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