



THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

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Looking back at some top events of 2022

BY JEFF OSBORNE
Senior Writer & Editor

The past year was full of many significant events in Gatesville and Coryell County, whether good, bad or somewhere in between.

Some of the memorable events for 2022 included:

WILDFIRES

Raging wildfires threatened significant portions of the county and also took a big toll on Fort Hood, resulting in local, regional and state assets being called to respond to the threat.

Damage done by the fires — and the strain placed on local fire departments — resulted in County Judge Roger Miller declaring the county a disaster area and seeking federal funds to offset expenses.

When fires at Fort Hood in late March burned out of control and even resulted in the evacuation of the community of Flat, local fire departments responded in a big way in helping to contain the threat.

Nine volunteer fire departments in Coryell County, as well as the Copperas Cove Fire Department, were all involved in responding to a massive blaze on the Army base that scorched more than 38,000 acres and was named the Crittenden Complex Fire. The volunteer fire departments involved were from Coryell City, Evant, Flat, Gatesville, Jonesboro, Levita, Oglesby and Turnersville.

Coryell County Judge Roger Miller said he appreciates all the effort and sacrifice made by local firefighters in responding to the massive fire, and he is thankful for those who served on the frontlines of the blaze to help avert tragedy.

“I want to highlight what a great value our volunteer fire departments are to our county,” Miller said. “It’s not just in the fire protection services they provide. We have seen a significant increase in the number of medical calls the firefighters respond to,

PLEASE SEE 2022 | A2



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Smoke from wildfires rises in the Mound community in eastern Coryell County in March of 2022. Dry conditions for much of the year stretched the resources of local fire departments, and also required multiple agencies to respond when fires raged at Fort Hood.

Celebrating Cotton Davidson’s legend & legacy



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Cotton Davidson participated in a book signing on Nov. 27, 2021 at the Coryell Museum and Historical Center. The book, “The Rifleman”, was authored by Davidson and Wayland Corgill.

Hometown football hero cast shadows far beyond Gatesville

BY DAVID SCOTT
Staff Writer

A man considered by many to be a hometown hero recently passed away at the age of 91. Cotton Davidson, a descendant of generations of the Davidson family who have resided in Coryell County, died on Dec. 23 in Waco.

Davidson, a well-known and much respected person in the county, was also recognized across the state of Texas and nationally for his many football accomplishments.

In November 2021, just a few days prior to his 90th birthday, Davidson was on hand for an official book signing event at the Coryell Museum to release a biography about his life titled “The NFL Rifleman.” He co-authored the book with Wayland Corgill which highlighted the many accomplishments of his life. The book chronicled Davidson’s amazing story from his growing up on the banks of Coryell

Creek through his many pro-football and coaching years, to returning to his roots in Gatesville in later years.

Following his graduation from Gatesville High School in 1949, Davidson attended Baylor University and later would play football professionally for the NFL’s Baltimore Colts in 1954 and 1957, and the American Football League’s Dallas Texans from 1960 to 1962, and the Oakland Raiders from 1962 to 1968.

He was selected in the first round of the 1954 NFL Draft by the Baltimore Colts. He played on the team for one year before being drafted into the Army, where he was named “All-Army quarterback” in 1956. Following his time in the Army, Davidson returned to Baltimore where he played quarterback with Hall of Famer Johnny Unitas. He would next play in Canada but was forced to depart midway through the season after suffering a shoulder injury.

Davidson returned to Baylor in 1959 where he became a member of the staff of head football coach John Bridgers. Later, he would sign with the Dallas Texans in 1960 for two seasons, being named Most Valuable Player in 1961. Davidson finished his professional career playing for the Raiders before returning to Central Texas with his wife, Carolyn, and went on to coach at Baylor University for 21 years. While at Baylor, he was considered to be a major contributor to Coach Grant Teaff’s Baylor Bear teams that won Southwest Conference championships in 1974 and 1980.

In 2021, Gatesville Mayor Gary Chumley presented Davidson with a proclamation declaring Nov. 27 to be known as Cotton Davidson Day in the city.

Davidson was born in the Pecan Grove community in Coryell County, spending his early childhood years in that area.

County leaders focus on groundwater concerns, sustainability

BY JEFF OSBORNE
Senior Writer & Editor

Looking for ways to help ensure that adequate water is available to meet growing demands, members of the Coryell County Commissioners Court met with Patrick Wagner, general manager of the Middle Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (MTGCD) during a recent workshop.

Continued growth in Coryell County will require access to reliable water sources, and managing the growth successfully is a top goal of county leaders.

Some of the concerns regarding water have stemmed from a planned development in eastern Coryell County near Oglesby that is scheduled to add an estimated 592 homes, which would require new wells to

serve that area. However, that is just one of the planned developments the county anticipates, with a significant number of people looking to move to Coryell County.

“What we’re trying to do is influence growth in a responsible manner to the extent we can so that current and future residents have access to water,” said County Judge Roger Miller. “We want to do that in a positive manner, and I am thankful for your (the MTGCD’s) involvement. I think it will help not just Coryell County, but the entire area.”

The MTGCD is currently gathering information on groundwater levels for the four counties it serves — Coryell, Comanche, Bosque and Erath, as well as Hamilton County.

This information will be used not just to confirm current groundwater levels, but to help make projections about groundwater availability as many as 50 years in advance.

“It helps us understand volumetrics and identifies areas of concern,” Wagner said. “Phase one will involve getting all the information in place, districtwide and county by county. This will include water levels and water chemistry.”

The data will also help determine why water levels may vary significantly from one area to another.

“You might have a couple of wells a mile apart and have an 80-foot difference — this will help us determine why,” Wagner said.

The district also plans to do a study of recharge and groundwater flow “that will

potentially allow us to look at the district in management zones,” he said. That will be helpful because “what’s going on in Comanche County is different from what’s happening in Coryell County.”

In 2022, Coryell County signed an agreement with the MTGCD that allows the two governing entities to collaborate on priorities.

Wagner said the district is working to “identify not only what is adequate water availability, but whether the water quality is good enough for people to live on.”

Miller asked the timeline for MTGCD to complete its data collection.

“We hope to have phase one done in

PLEASE SEE WATER | A2

2022

FROM PAGE A1

and several volunteer firefighters have worked to become EMT (emergency medical technician) certified.

"Sometimes it takes an event like this to truly appreciate and highlight all that is involved and the great efforts our fire departments make in helping to keep our communities safe."

When the Crittenden Complex fire raged, "every fire department in Coryell County was involved," Miller said.

He worked with state officials and representatives of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on plans to reimburse local fire departments for the expenses incurred in responding to the blaze on Fort Hood.

"The total cost to our local departments in responding to that fire was \$70,030.74, using a FEMA cost analysis," Miller said.

JAIL/JUSTICE CENTER

The days before Christmas were not kind to Coryell County leaders looking to finalize funding plans for a new justice center off Leon Street, as well as expansion of the Coryell County Jail.

An unexpected \$3 million rise in the expected cost estimates from Butler-Cohen, the construction firm selected to build the facilities, posed at least a temporary delay until details could be worked out. Although the price increase was not expected to have nearly as much of an impact on the jail expansion, all plans were tabled for at least one meeting of the Coryell County Commissioners Court, which took place Dec. 19.

On Dec. 27, the commissioners court members were scheduled to revisit the issue.

In November, after a prolonged period of being placed on the state's noncompliance list for the county jail, county leaders approved a stopgap measure that will soon alleviate overcrowding and also reduce the number of inmates being sent to other counties.

The current jail was to be expanded to help address the problems, giving the county additional time to formulate plans for a more longtime solution.

The Coryell County Commissioners Court also approved plans to build a new justice center at the corner of Leons and Eighth streets, which will house two justice of the peace precincts. The old building the JP's office was located in was referred to as unacceptable by a county facilities committee, and was made a top priority, along with the jail concerns.

MURDER ARRESTS

Multiple arrests were made following the murder of a Waco woman, Elizabeth Ann Romero, in April of 2022.

Jessica Colleen Robinson was arrested in connection with Romero's death on May 19 and was charged with murder and theft of property over \$100 and under \$750. She was taken to the Coryell County Jail and held on bonds of \$1 million for the murder charge and an additional \$1,500 for theft.

In November, the Lone Star Fugitive Task Force arrested Coryell County fugitive Erin Baily Finchum on Nov. 21 at a residence in Hamilton.

Finchum, 36, was wanted by the Coryell County Sheriff's Office on warrants alleging murder and tampering/fabricating physical evidence with intent to impair related to Romero's death.

Also arrested in connection with the crime was Betsy Ayers Robinson, who was charged with murder and tampering of evidence.

INMATE ESCAPES

On the morning of Sept. 26, Coryell County Jail inmate Brandon Hogan escaped from a work detail at Seton Cemetery in the Leon Junction area.

Although law enforcement was immediately mobilized and participated in a wide search for the fugitive, Hogan was able to elude



GLADYS WHITENBURG | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

The Gatesville High School Fightin' Hornet Band advanced to state competition for the first time since 2008.

authorities.

Hogan, 37, a white male, 5 feet, 9 inches tall and weighing 160 pounds, was conducting grounds maintenance at the Seaton Cemetery as part of a three-inmate crew supervised by the Sheriff's Office Community Service Manager when he scaled a fence surrounding the cemetery.

Hogan had been in custody at the Coryell County Jail since Aug. 1, charged with assault of a family member impeding breathing/circulation with previous convictions, theft of a firearm, burglary of a habitation and criminal mischief.

He was added to the Texas Department of Public Safety's 10 Most Wanted List in October.

Authorities said Hogan was to be considered dangerous.

Coryell County Sheriff Scott Williams, during an October news conference, said, "We're going to look for you and never quit." He said Hogan would have to get lucky every day to avoid capture, "and we only have to get lucky once (to find him)."

GISD BUDGET CRUNCH

Responding to a budget shortfall, Gatesville Independent School District leaders enacted significant budget cuts that reduced the district's expenses by \$1.7 million.

"It's a sad picture, and we've made some pretty major cuts," said Darrell Frazier, chief financial officer for the district. He noted that \$674,000 of the cuts were made in the district's human resources department.

On a positive note, he said, "there have been no layoffs" and GISD employees will still be receiving salary increases for the 2022-23 fiscal year. However, "we have cut just about any open positions. There have been no (current) personnel cuts, but there have been some cuts by attrition" (people retiring or leaving the district and not being replaced).

The GISD Board of Trustees gave final approval to the 2022-23 budget and tax rate during a special meeting on Aug. 30, setting the budget at \$29,717,793 and the tax rate at \$1.0546 per \$100 property valuation.

CHARLIE WISE DIES

Local philanthropist and community leader Charlie Wise, who has made a significant impact on the community through his charity work and previously as a business leader, died in July.

About a month earlier, he had been honored as the Gatesville Lions Club's Lion of the Year.

Wise had served as president of Medical Plastics Laboratory, a company started with two medical doctors and a dentist in a garage. During his leadership, the company grew to a multi-million-dollar enterprise that still employs many Gatesville citizens.

Wise has said it was divine guidance that has directed his life and

the life of his wife, Mary Alice Wise.

"There's no doubt in our minds that God sent us to Gatesville, but it wasn't particularly to be in business; it was for us to get in the prison ministry," he told Baylor Magazine in 2010. "There's such a need inside the prisons, and many people don't see that's an opportunity to be a minister to those people's needs. There's a dynamic church inside the prison."

That ministry has also extended outside prisons, through the Hospitality House, which provides free lodging, food, fellowship and support for the families of those incarcerated in Gatesville. It also gives Hospitality House volunteers an opportunity to pray with those whose lives have been touched by difficulty, disruption and tragedy.

GATESVILLE LEADERS LEAVING
Gatesville Police Chief Nathan Gohlke and Gatesville City Manager Bill Parry both announced their retirement from those positions.

Gohlke's retirement is official as of Jan. 31, while Parry's departure will be at the end of February.

Gohlke became police chief in March 2005 and had a 31-year career in law enforcement, with nearly 25 of those years in Gatesville.

He is transitioning to a new career as a funeral planner and director with Scott's Funeral Home in Gatesville.

Parry became Gatesville's city manager in June 2015, and he has overseen a time of growth and significant investment in infrastructure upgrades.

Before coming to Gatesville, Parry had served as executive director of the Heart of Texas Defense Alliance, a non-profit organization that advocates for Fort Hood and all defense-related industry, organizations and institutions in the Central Texas region. He retired from the Army after 27 years of service, culminating with his final assignment as the Garrison Commander of Fort Hood from June 2001 through August 2004.

RIGHTEOUS ROOTS HOME

The Righteous Roots outreach secured a much larger building to minister to clients, taking over the former Scott Funeral Home building just off the Coryell County Courthouse Square. The organization's move-in day was in December.

The non-profit serves area families, and assists those who are dealing with abuse, recovery and various other types of crises.

CHARGES DROPPED

The Texas Attorney General's office has filed motions with the 440th District Court to dismiss human trafficking charges against nine people who were arrested and charged in June 2021.

Charges have been dismissed without prejudice, meaning they could be re-filed in the future. When a charge is dismissed with prejudice, that means they have

been permanently dismissed.

"We believe the dismissals speak for themselves and we have no further comment at this time," wrote Patty Ramon, press secretary for the Office of the Attorney General of Texas in an email response to The Messenger asking about the dismissed charges.

GISD ADDS POLICE

The Gatesville Independent School District's Board of Trustees voted to form a district police force, and the transition was made during the fall school semester.

Previously, the city of Gatesville had provided school resource officers for the district.

Gary Stiles, a former Texas Department of Public Safety and Gatesville police officer, was selected as the first GISD police chief.

OLD HOSPITAL DEMOLISHED

The former location of Coryell Memorial Hospital on Lutterloh Street across from H-E-B was demolished in early December because the building had fallen into disrepair.

"After Winter Storm Yuri (in 2021), we had extensive water damage there," said County Judge Roger Miller. "Central County Services (which provides mental health services) had previously occupied the building. There was extensive damage to the floor, walls and ceiling (as a result of the winter storm) that made it cost prohibitive to repair."

Miller said the insurance proceeds the county received will pay for the building to be demolished, but those funds would not have covered repairs.

"We believe (demolition) is in the best interest of the taxpayers of Coryell County," he said. "We believe it will enhance the value of the property. It could be utilized by the county or we could sell it."

Miller said the building's historical significance is not forgotten. A lot of us can say we were born at that hospital," he said. "It served our community well and the building stood for 82 years — I believe it was built in 1940."

RED KETTLE REVIVAL

After a year of not having a local Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign, the Gatesville Lions Club stepped up to make sure the charity fundraiser was back for 2022.

All proceeds raised by donations to the Gatesville Red Kettle Campaign stay in the area.

Stephen Schmidt, pastor of First Methodist Church in Gatesville and a member of the Gatesville Lions Club and Ministerial Alliance, said when the Red Kettle program for Gatesville was announced earlier this year that it makes a big difference in the community.

"It is vitally important to those who have needs in our community," Schmidt said. "These funds help so many people, and without

the Red Kettle Campaign, it makes a significant difference, and not in a good way. These funds are needed to help the community."

GROWTH CONCERNS

Oglesby area residents made their presence felt at multiple Coryell County Commissioners meetings to voice their concerns about a large subdivision that was being built in their neighborhood.

Among the concerns were that the area did not have the infrastructure — including water and roads — to support the massive growth expected as a result of major construction.

Blayr Barnard of Oglesby said she is not an opponent of development and growth, but a proposed 592 house subdivision that would be located near here has raised several concerns for her and several other neighbors.

Barnard voiced her concerns during the Sept. 13 meeting of the Coryell County Commissioners Court. She recently organized and hosted a town hall meeting for area residents on a Sunday earlier this month. That meeting was attended by County Commissioners Scott Weddle and Kyle Matthews.

"I am submitting 139 letters for review from concerned citizens," she told the commissioners court.

"It's been said I'm against development and growth. That's not true, I worked in development previously, and that's why I had no qualms hosting a town hall meeting with two days' notice."

Barnard said she has concerns about those who want to profit from the development of the land, and that they don't care about the impact it will have on the community.

BAND EXCELS

The Gatesville High School band advanced to the state's University Interscholastic League state marching band contest for the first time since 2008.

Dedication, hard work, and the ability to overcome adversity helped the GHS Band achieve a goal that few bands in the state accomplish — the opportunity to compete in the UIL state contest.

In addition to musicians, the color guard, dance team, directors, assistants and family members all played a role in helping the GHS band program reach the lofty milestone. Following the announcement in area competition, those associated with the band felt a surge of excitement and energy that kept them up well past midnight.

"We still have not come down from that feeling," said head band director Jose Sanchez, whose bands at Gatesville have come tantalizingly close in the past — and finally managed to earn the long-awaited prize.

The state contest was held Nov. 9 at the Alamodome in San Antonio.

WATER

FROM PAGE A1

early 2023 and then to finish phase two within four to six months after that."

"Phase two will help to identify any anomalies that stand

out?" Miller asked.

"Yes — and you can actually narrow in on areas of concern," Wagner said.

Miller said the information will be valuable to the county in helping to protect water resources.

"We've got significant interest from our citizens and we are trying to meet their expectations while also making the

best decisions for everyone moving forward," he said.

Wagner said the work will go a long way in helping lay a foundation for managing and protecting area groundwater resources.

"This is not the be-all, end-all," he said. "There are more things we'll be working on. This will help us better serve the citizens of all our counties, and this is just the start."



THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

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DEADLINES:

Submit all news articles, classifieds and display advertising by 10am Friday for the Wednesday issue and 10am Wednesday for the Saturday issue.

Articles about events that have occurred 30 days prior to submission will not be accepted. However, they will be accepted as paid advertisements.

All articles and advertisements must meet our standards and

newspaper format as determined by management.

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COURTESY PHOTO

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON: Members of the Morris Federation attending their Christmas luncheon are, standing, from left, Marcelle Parrish-Russell, Catherine Taylor, Grace Tennon, Grace Dallimore, Nancy Garvin, Marsha Lee, Velva Riddle, Marilyn Secrest, Jo Anne Rogers. Seated, Luci Zahray, Bennie Hansson.

Morris Federation celebrated Christmas

MARSHA LEE
Contributing writer

In December, ladies of the Morris Federation met at the Feed Mill for a Christmas luncheon. The program, titled "Legends, Symbols, and Traditions of Christmas," was directed by Marsha Lee and was presented by the members themselves.

First, each member drew a piece of paper describing a symbol or legend associated with Christmas and

shared that story. Some better-known symbols included candy canes, stockings, candles, nutcrackers, poinsettias, and Santa Claus. Others were less known, such as the donkey, Christmas spider, robin, pickle, etc.

Members then took turns talking about their family traditions or special memories of Christmas.

Christmas is celebrated in many ways. Sometimes the ways people observe Christmas are based on legends of

long ago (mistletoe, hanging stockings, the Christmas tree, Santa Claus, the yule log). Sometimes they are based on family customs handed down (cutting down our own tree, preparing certain foods in certain ways, opening gifts at a special time). But Christmas is a time of peace, joy, love, and warmth. Most of us will always have special thoughts and memories associated with this time of year.

luggage, and toys among the stolen items.

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Play Store. You never have to give your name, and if your information leads to an arrest, you may be eligible for a cash reward.

Crime Stoppers, citizens, police, and the media working together can make our community a safer place to live. Together we can make a difference.

FROM MY FRONT PORCH

Some like it hot, some like it cold

SAM HOUSTON

Sam Houston is a newspaper publisher, an actor, author, playwright, performer and entertainment producer/promoter.

With the recent turn to cold and blustery conditions, a lot of conversation has been focused on the weather. Texas weather in December and January is always an interesting and dicey topic.



Houston

One day might be 75 degrees with people wearing T-shirts and flipflops, and just as easily the next day could be below freezing temperatures with wind blowing a gale. Neither extreme seems to last very long, but they sure become the focus of attention.

Our recent spat of cold caused the cancellation of thousands of air flights during the peak holiday season and kept well-intended travelers from getting to their holiday destinations. Pipes froze, fireplaces were burning, and folks generally stayed at home praying the electric grid would keep up.

I will never understand why but seems people are either cold-weather people or warm-weather people. When it is July and the temperature is in the 100's for days on end, lots of folks complain and beg for fall to arrive. Not saying 100-degree heat is pleasant, but I have always found the heat much more comfortable than temperatures that are below freezing. I could always play ball, build fences, or haul hay in the heat, and it never seemed to stress me much. On the other

hand, seems like I could never dress in enough insulated underwear, scarves, and gloves to stay warm when the weather was acting like winter. I think the worst part of cold weather is the uncertainty of travel. Few things are as annoying as driving on icy roads.

Twenty years ago, I worked in Alpena, Michigan one January. Alpena is about 100 miles north of Detroit. It would snow almost every day, and I could look out on the Great Lake and see it was frozen. Folks there loved the winter and told me how much fun it could be with the availability of ice fishing, cross country skiing, and snowmobiling. Though the work was profitable, after three or four weeks I concluded that my "window" must face the south, quit the job and I headed home to Texas. When my truck crossed the old Red River, a smile returned to my face, and I felt an inner warmth that had been missing the whole time I was gone. I shiver and get goosebumps even thinking about Alpena. I'm still not certain if it was the warm weather or being back

in Texas that put a smile on my face.

It won't be long until the threat of winter has passed. Folks will be looking for flower seeds and garden things to plant, and begin looking forward to activities on the lake, a spring baseball game, and sitting outside on the porch. There are still weeks to go, and a few more chilly nights, but spring will be here before we know it. For those of you who truly like the cold, the wind and the snow, I hope you get to go to New Mexico or Colorado and enjoy some winter before it disappears. Take plenty of photos and be sure and let me know how much you prefer the cold over the heat. I am going to be patient and wait until spring arrives. It cannot be soon enough for me.

Thought for the day: The temperature just went from 75 to 20, like it was traveling through a school zone and saw a state trooper.

Until next time.

sam@hcnews.com | 817-573-7066, ext. 260

Storage units recently burglarized

Centex Crime Stoppers can use your help in solving a case of burglary of a building.

Between December 13, and December 24, 2022, an unknown person(s) forced entry to a storage unit in the 100 block of Magaldi St. No suspect description is available. The victim reported household items, electron-

DISPATCH

The following is a partial breakdown of activity reported through dispatchers during the period of December 25 - 27. Persons are reminded that only emergency calls should be made to 9-1-1, while all other calls to the police department should be made to 865-2226 or to the Sheriff's office at 865-7201.

City of Gatesville Police Department
Dec. 25

1:45 a.m., a brush/grass fire was reported in the 700 block of Old Pidcoke Road.
6:04 p.m., a reckless driver was reported in the 900 block of E. Main Street.
7:43 p.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 2500 block of Oak Drive.

9:37 p.m., a theft was reported in the 100 block of Mulberry Avenue.

10:37 p.m., a welfare concern was reported in the 1200 block of W. Main Street.

Dec. 26
12:25 a.m., an assault was reported in the 500 block of Fieldstone Drive.

11:44 a.m., a burglary was reported in the 2200 block of E. Main Street.

7:41 p.m., criminal mischief was reported on FM 2412.

9:11 p.m., a threat was reported in the 2000 block of Waco Street.

10:02 p.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 2100 block of Waco Street.

Dec. 27
12:19 a.m., a welfare concern was reported in the 2500 block of E. Main Street.

11:02 a.m., an accident was reported in the 2500 block of Bridge Street.

11:40 a.m., a theft was reported in the 300 block of E. Leon Street.

2:00 p.m., a brush/grass fire was reported in the 400 block of Bluestem Drive.
6:54 p.m., a hit and run accident was reported in the 100 block of Sandy Lane.

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Coryell County Sheriff's Office
Dec. 25

10:16 a.m., a major accident was reported on CR 356.

3:19 p.m., a vehicle fire was reported in the 1100 block of Lutheran Church Road.

5:23 p.m., a structure fire was reported in the 400 block of CR 3390.

6:33 p.m., suspicious persons were reported in the 500 block of E. Leon Street.

11:05 p.m., an assault was reported in the 2900 block of

E. FM 217.

Dec. 26
8:56 a.m., criminal trespass was reported in the 500 block of CR 366.

3:45 p.m., a grass fire was reported in the 800 block of Bald Knob Road.

7:22 p.m., an abandoned vehicle was reported on FM 116 and Hwy. 84.

7:35 p.m., shots being fired was reported in the 1300 block of Baldrige Road.

10:28 p.m., the burglary of a habitation was reported in the 2000 block of Lutheran Church Road.

Dec. 27
8:46 a.m., a livestock com-

plaint was reported on FM 1241 at CR 96.

3:36 p.m., suspicious persons were reported in the 1500 block of CR 339.

7:37 p.m., an abandoned vehicle was reported on W. Hwy. 84 at CR 128.

10:36 p.m., an animal complaint was reported in the 100 block of Lakewood Drive.

10:58 p.m., a domestic disturbance was reported in the 1600 block of Oak Springs Road.

11:29 p.m., an animal complaint was reported in the 8500 block of FM 182.

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THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

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Coryell Quiz Bowl Teams Dominate District 8 Contest

BECKY COWARD
County Extension Agent
4-H Youth Development

With 32 Coryell County youth competing in this year's district quiz bowl contest, the locals led all other counties in both participation and results.

The 4-H Quiz Bowl contests enable youth to study facts about their respective divisions and then showcase their knowledge by answering questions. 4-H offers Family Community Health,

Horse, and Livestock Quiz Bowl divisions.

Quiz Bowl teaches life skills such as self-discipline, observation, listening, and making and defending decisions.

The contest setting helps youths learn skills that include:

- Developing reasoning and critical-thinking abilities;
- Making sound decisions;
- Developing quick and accurate powers of observation;
- Expressing themselves

concisely;

- Developing poise, self-discipline, and self-confidence;

Increasing project knowledge and skills and participating as a member of a team, thus developing cooperation and teamwork among project members.

Senior Level teams, by placing in the top three in their respective contests, qualified for the Texas 4-H Roundup Quiz Bowl contests to be held in June, when they will represent both Coryell County and the 21 coun-

ties that make up District 8. Complete results are as follows:

Senior Division: First place Team Livestock Quiz Bowl Team: Jack Bussey, Lane Kinsey, Cayleigh Coursey, and Jeret Burks.

Senior Division: First place Horse Quiz Bowl Team: Carol Marie Szustak, Kinsley McPherson, Irena Murphy, and Ludwika Rodriguez.

Senior Division: Second place Horse Quiz Bowl Team: Chase Janke, Presley Shelton, Cooper Aulabaugh, and Trinity Aulabaugh.

Junior Division: First place Family Community Health Quiz Bowl Team: Anna Gutierrez, Emily Boose, and Aiden Toombs.

Junior Division: First place Horse Quiz Bowl Team: Allie McPherson, Mia Conley, Ava Hagen, Isela Rodriguez, Marilyn Duncan, Marcy Conley, and Joslin Duncan.

Junior Division: Second place Horse Quiz Bowl Team: Isela Rodriguez, Marilyn Duncan, and Joslin Duncan.

Junior Division: Fifth place Horse Quiz Bowl Team: Pete Wallace, Samantha Hadley

and Hagen Milam.

Junior Division: Second place Livestock Quiz Bowl Team- Clancy Archie, Kace Laster, and Ryli Bryson.

Junior Division: Fourth place Livestock Quiz Bowl Team- Anna McPherson, Thomas Belt, and Lilly Kinsey.

A BIG thank you to all 4-H leaders and parents who accompanied the teams and helped throughout the day at the district contest!



COURTESY OF

SENIOR LIVESTOCK TEAM – FIRST PLACE: Jack Bussey, Lane Kinsey, Cayleigh Coursey, and Jeret Burks.



COURTESY OF

FIRST PLACE JUNIOR FCH TEAM: Coach/County Extension Agent Becky Coward, Anna Gutierrez, Emily Boose, and Aiden Toombs.



COURTESY OF

SECOND AND FOURTH PLACE JUNIOR LIVESTOCK TEAMS: Coach/County Extension Agent Becky Coward, Anna McPherson, Ryli Bryson, Thomas Belt, Lilly Kinsey, Clancy Archie, and Kace Laster.



COURTESY OF

FIRST AND SECOND PLACE JUNIOR HORSE TEAMS: Coach/ County Extension Agent Becky Coward, Allie McPherson, Mia Conley, Ava Hagen, Isela Rodriguez, Marilyn Duncan, Marcy Conley, and Joslin Duncan.



COURTESY OF

JUNIOR HORSE QUIZ BOWL TEAMS: Marcy Conley, Marilyn Duncan, Allie McPherson, Ava Hagen, Mia Conley, Pete Wallace, Isela Rodriguez, Samantha Hadley, Joslin Duncan, and Hagen Milam.



COURTESY OF

SENIOR HORSE TEAMS – FIRST PLACE TEAM: Carol Marie Szustak, Kinsley McPherson, Irena Murphy, Ludwika Rodriguez, and County Extension Agent Becky Coward. **SECOND PLACE TEAM:** Chase Janke, Presley Shelton, Cooper Aulabaugh, and Trinity Aulabaugh.

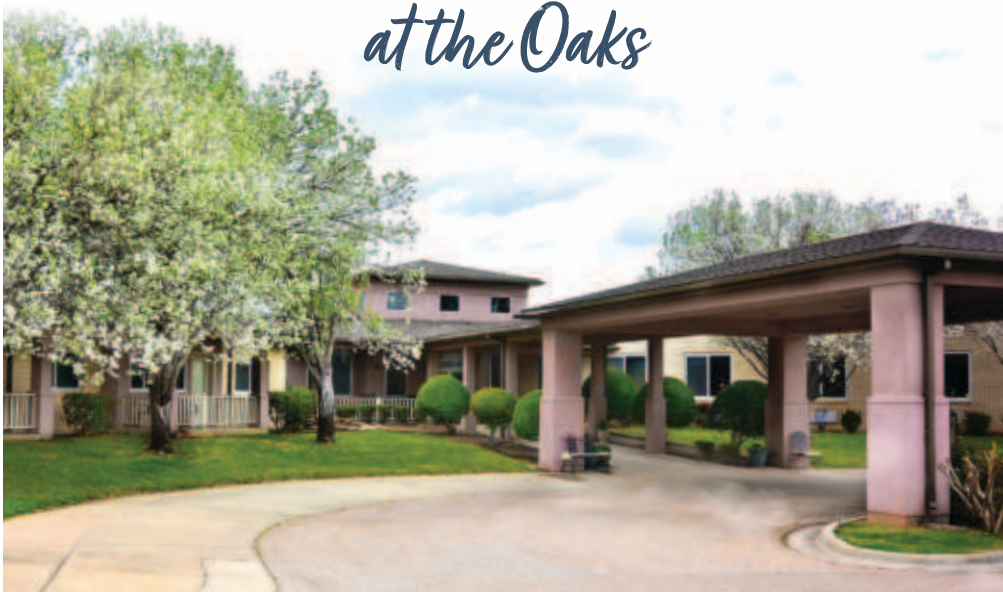


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Pearl News

We're hoping to see you in Pearl in 2023

BETSY CLARK
Pearl News Correspondent

We hope that everyone is enjoying their 2023 so far and that it becomes one of the best years yet! We hope you will spend at least a day or two in Pearl during this coming year! See the following:



Clark

The next Pearl Bluegrass event and Pearl Cottage Bookstore Day will be January 6. What a great way to celebrate the beginning of a new year! Live music in the Community Center usually begins around 10 a.m., and the Book Cottage opens at 10 a.m. Don't forget that there are full hookups available for RV parking on the grounds of the Pearl Community Center (30 amps is \$25 and 50 amps is \$30) for those who would like to come in early or stay late. If you have a group and would like to play on the stage for at least 45 minutes, you can get either a free meal or a free night's stay in your RV!! Best deal around!! Picking can be

enjoyed starting around 5 p.m. on Friday the 6th for those who would like to come early. The Bluegrass kitchen opens at 11 a.m. on Saturday and closes at 5 p.m., and you don't want to miss the homemade food this kitchen has to offer at very reasonable prices! The Pearl Book Cottage has over 6,000 used books in various genres, all in excellent condition. The price in most cases is "buy what you want, pay what you want," and all proceeds benefit the bookstore's various local charities! It's the friendliest store in Texas, and you can't beat the music and fun at the Pearl Community Center. (Don't forget about the monthly Junk-In-Your-

Trunk opportunity. Only \$5 to park and sell your wares. Contact Linda Ray at 254-865-9282 for more information! Y'all come and bring friends! There's no place like Pearl!

This week's Bible verse comes from Psalm 98:1—Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have worked salvation for Him. NIV

Be sure and like the Pearl Community Center, Texas Facebook page and the Pearl Cottage Bookstore and Resale Shop Facebook page! Please send any Pearl news to betsyclark47@yahoo.com.

New contact information available for Coryell County Veterans

The Coryell County Veterans Service office now has a new phone number which is 254-248-0676. The office has two locations to serve veterans. One office is located at

312 S. Main Street in Copperas Cove and the other office is located at 800 E. Main Street in Gatesville.

Their office hours of operation are from 8 a.m. until

1 p.m. Other hours are available by prior arrangement. All services are by appointment only. The Veterans Service Officer is Richard W. Smith.

Tarleton State University announces Gatesville/Coryell County graduates

Tarleton State University recently held its 227th commencement exercises in Stephenville. Gatesville and Coryell County were well-represented among the graduates crossing the stage in the heavy fog-covered Memorial Stadium on Friday, Dec. 9.

These students faced the challenge of completing a degree through COVID. They were a part of Tarleton history as the university has continued to grow to the current enrollment of over 13,000. They have also experienced the university becoming an NCAA Division I school.

Following is a list of Gatesville and Coryell County graduates who received de-

grees between two ceremonies held that day:

Samantha Aguilar, Bachelor of Science Wildlife, Sustainability and Ecosystem, Cum Laude; Carlos Angulo, Bachelor of Business Administration - Marketing; Jesus Angulo, Bachelor of Business Administration - Accounting; Kennedy Berry, Bachelor of Science - Geoscience, Honors graduate, Summa Cum Laude, Outstanding Student - College of Science and Mathematics; Benjamin David Bourland, Bachelor of Science - Construction Science and Management; Madison Brand, Bachelor of Business Administration - General Business; Emmy Clay, Master of Science - Management;

Mecka Clarke, Bachelor of Science - Agribusiness; Kammi Dunn, Bachelor of Applied Arts and Sciences - Criminal Justice Administration; Brandy Egger, Bachelor of Science - Psychology; Saxon Cole Foster, Bachelor of Science - Wildlife, Sustainability, and Ecosystem; Sarah Garrett, Bachelor of Science - Nursing, Upper Level Honors Graduate; Kayylie Hobgood, Bachelor of Science - Kinesiology - President's List; Braden Luensmann, Bachelor of Business Administration - Management; Austin Stuard, Bachelor of Business Administration - Management; Danielle Welch, Bachelor of Science - Criminal Justice - President's List.

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* Ensure compliance with all company rules, policies, and procedures.
* Resolve complaints and project issues in a timely manner.
* Review field timesheets and completed work orders for completion and accuracy
* Review and approve all invoices related to projects and production
* Review completed project files and turn in for final billing.
* Perform project close-out process.
* Additional tasks as assigned.
Email resumé lf Fuller@jroof.com 00029815

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Coryell HEALTH REHABILITATING AT THE MEADOWS

- RN Unit Manager – FT
- RN FT & PRN – All Shifts for Charge Nurse and Nursing
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• CMA - PRN

Home Health:
• PCA PRN – for Gatesville and Surrounding Counties

Infection Prevention:
• BSN-RN – FT; Preferable Certified Infection Control & Epidemiology

Medical Clinic:
• LVN – FT
• Scribe – FT
• Certified Medical Assistant/CMA – FT

Culinary:
• Cook – FT (Food Handlers Certification preferred)
• Cook Assistant – FT

EMS:
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• RN – PRN all shifts
• ED Admission Clerk – FT -

Thurs. thru Sat. 7pm-7am
Health Information Management:
• Certified Medical Coder – FT

LAB:
• MLT PRN – Nights & some weekends

Material Management:
• Housekeeper – FT & PRN

Med Surg:
• RN House Supervisor – FT Nights
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• RN/LVN – FT nights
*\$10,000 SIGN ON BONUS
• CNA – FT All Shifts
*\$4,000 SIGN ON BONUS
• RN or LVN – PRN All shifts

Radiology:
• CT/X-Ray Tech – PRN; TDH MRT & ARRT W/1 yr. exp. in CT/X-Ray
• Cath Lab Tech – FT experienced
*\$10,000 SIGN ON BONUS

Surgery:
• PACU RN – FT
*\$10,000 BONUS

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*\$4,000 FT SIGN ON BONUS
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LAB:
• MLT PRN – Nights & some weekends

Material Management:
• Housekeeper – FT & PRN

Med Surg:
• RN House Supervisor – FT Nights
*\$10,000 SIGN ON BONUS
• RN/LVN – FT nights
*\$10,000 SIGN ON BONUS
• CNA – FT All Shifts
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• RN or LVN – PRN All shifts

Radiology:
• CT/X-Ray Tech – PRN; TDH MRT & ARRT W/1 yr. exp. in CT/X-Ray
• Cath Lab Tech – FT experienced
*\$10,000 SIGN ON BONUS

Surgery:
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060 GARAGE SALE

Featuring WALL HANGINGS Tues, 01/03-Sat, 01/07! The Boys & Girls Club Resale Shop, 1706 E. Main. Tuesday-Friday, 8a.m.-5p.m. & Saturday, 9a.m.-3p.m. 00029798

55 LOST AND FOUND

HAVE YOU SEEN LUCY?
She's been missing since 12/21 from Leon Street around the Dairy Queen area.
She's a small, black and white long-haired dog.
Please call Brandi:
254-368-3199



55 LOST AND FOUND

099 PUBLIC NOTICES

Sealed bids for furnishing Coryell County with a Depository bank will be accepted in the office of the Coryell County Treasurer until 9:00 A.M. on January 27, 2023, at which time the bids will be opened for inspection by the Commissioners' Court. The bids should be addressed to the Honorable County Treasurer and the Commissioners' Court of Coryell County, Texas. The contract will be awarded to the successful bidder on February 14, 2023. For bid packet or questions, contact Randi McFarlin, County Treasurer at 254-248-3104 or county_treasurer@coryellcounty.org. 00029805

099 PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLISHER'S NOTICE:
All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any preference, limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status or national origin, or an intention, to make any such preference, limitation or discrimination." Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians, pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18.
This newspaper will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of the law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this newspaper are available on an equal opportunity basis.
To complain of discrimination call HUD toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. The toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.



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45th Annual Cattleman Bull & Female Sale 12:00 Noon, Jan. 21, 2023, El Campo Livestock Exchange, El Campo, Texas. 100 bulls, 250 females, cattlemansale.com.

Bob's Baseball Tours – DC Cherry Blossom Tour: Mar. 31-Apr. 4, 2023, home games at Washington Nationals, NY Yankees & Boston Red Sox. East Coast Tour: Aug. 18-27, 2023, home games at Yankees, Red Sox, Orioles, Phillies, Nationals, Mets & Little League World Series. Tours include sightseeing, motor coach transportation and hotels/game tickets. Call or Text 507-217-1326.

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TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY™

Tarleton's Segun Ijiyera earns academic football All-America recognition

Tarleton Sports Information

The goal of any collegiate student athlete is to excel both on the playing field and off it, and no one accomplished that better than Tarleton State University football defensive lineman Segun Ijiyera in 2022. For his efforts, he was named an Academic All-American on Dec. 20.

Ijiyera was selected to be on the 2022 Football Academic All-America Second Team by the College Sports Communicators. Both he and wide receiver Darius Cooper were named to the 2022 Football Academic All-District Team in November.

Ijiyera is one of 51 NCAA Division I players nationwide to earn CSC Academic All-American recognition, and one of just eight defensive linemen. In order to be eligible for the award, players must have finished with a 3.5 grade-point average or higher, plus played in 50 percent of their team's games. Based on the pool of players who met the criteria, perfor-

mance both in the classroom and on the field decided who was selected to be on the teams.

A senior athletically and a graduate student academically, Ijiyera, earned a 4.0 GPA in his pursuit of a management master's degree this past fall at Tarleton State University. He earned his bachelor's degree with a 4.0 GPA at Houston Christian University before transferring to Tarleton to study and play his final collegiate season of football.

On the field, Ijiyera played in all 11 games (10 starts), recording 34 tackles, 8.5 tackles for loss, 2.5 sacks, two fumble recoveries, a forced fumble,

five quarterback hurries and a pass breakup. He finished with the most fumble recoveries on the team, along with the most quarterback hurries, tied for the most forced fumbles, had the second most quarterback sacks and for the tied-second most tackles for loss.

Ijiyera, a Corinth, Texas, native, spent his previous five years at Houston Christian (previously called Houston Baptist), where he played in 28 total games. He was on the Southland Conference Commissioner's Academic Honor Roll there for two years. In 2016, he was an Academic All-State honorable mention at Lake Dallas High School.

Tarleton State University defensive lineman Segun Ijiyera was named as an Academic All-American on Dec. 20.

PHOTO COURTESY OF TSU



PHOTO BY TOBY RHODES | TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

Tarleton State University's men's basketball squad exploded for a 58-point margin of victory, 114-56, on Dec. 22 at home in Wisdom Gym, setting multiple team records in the process.

Texans crush Huston-Tillotson, 114-56, move to 4-0 at home

Tarleton Sports Information

The Tarleton State University men's basketball team went off against Huston-Tillotson on Dec. 22 at Wisdom Gymnasium, establishing multiple season records in route to a 114-56 victory over the Rams.

The Texans' Player of the Game, Lue Williams dropped in 30 points (10-17 FG, 6-9 FT) and is now the leading scorer for the Texans this season. Including that game, a Texan have scored 30 or more points only five times in the past five seasons, now Williams is one of

only four Texans to have reached that milestone in the previous five seasons. He also grabbed six rebounds and had four assists.

Shamir Bogues picked up 15 points (7-8 FG), five rebounds, three assists and a season-high six steals. KiAndre Gaddy scored a season-high 15 points, tied a game-high seven rebounds and made two steals. Shakur Daniel recorded a team-high eight assists against the Rams, scored 12 points and recorded four steals. Jakorie Smith picked up his second seven-rebound game of the season along with eight

points and two steals.

Also for the Texans, Garry Clark recorded eight points, six assists and four rebounds. Jalen Thomas picked up a season-high eight points and earned three rebounds and assists. Tiger Booker picked up six points and three steals. Coreyoun Rushin earned four points and three rebounds. Noah McDavid returned to the court for the first time since Nov. 7, recording four points and two rebounds. Rod Brown scored four points and five rebounds.

With the win over Huston-

Tillotson (4-9, 2-3 RRAC), Tarleton (6-6, 0-0 WAC) is now 4-0 at home on the season for the first time in 7 years.

The Texans' 58-point margin of victory was their largest of margin since Feb. 9, 2021, when they routed McMurry 112-54. That was also the last game Tarleton scored 100 or more points. The Texans recorded their first double-digit three-point game of the season.

Williams is only the fourth Texan in the past five seasons to score 30 or more points in a game. Tarleton set season records in team re-

bounds (51), assists (29) and steals (21).

Tarleton led Huston-Tillotson for all but the first 43 seconds of the first half. The Texans quickly grew their lead to double digits after five minutes of play. By the end of the first half, Tarleton led the Rams by 28 points. With just over four minutes left in the game, the Texans established their greatest lead of the game of 61 points.

Tarleton was scheduled to open WAC play at Wisdom on Thursday, Dec. 29, against UT Arlington (5-8, 0-0 WAC).

Final phase of TSU football field house renovation set to begin

Tarleton Sports Information

Tarleton Football debuted one of the top field houses in college football just under two years ago, and now final touches to complete the project have begun.

Tarleton announced its final phase of the field house renovation on Dec. 21, further enhancing the

student-athlete and coaching experience as the program nears the end of its reclassification period from NCAA Division II to Division I.

Additions to the field house for the 2023 season include a multi-purpose room, nutrition bar, film room, nine coaches offices, an academic advisement office and a full

service barber shop.

Tarleton opened its multi-million-dollar field house and locker room in 2021. The new facility expanded to 16,000 total square feet of space, which includes a unified locker room, training room, hydro room and equipment areas.

Also, Memorial Stadium has un-

dergone major upgrades recently, including new north end zone seating to boost football game capacity to 24,000 this past season. In 2019, a grandstand was built on the west side of the stadium, plus a video board was added on the south side — a \$26 million renovation.

The continued investment helps

keep the momentum surrounding Tarleton's football program growing, one of the rare ones that has started its Division I era with three straight winning seasons. Only three other teams in the country since 2004 have begun their reclassification period with three winning seasons.

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Looking back at a special season



GLADYS WHITENBURG | THE GATESVILLE MESSANGER

The Gatesville Hornets finished the year with a 7-4 record and finished third in district. Plenty of talented players are returning for the 2023 season.

Hornets enjoyed success in 2022, laid foundation for future

BY CHRIS ALLMAN
Sports Correspondent

In early December, as I watched Gatesville High School's 2022 football awards banquet via Hornet Broadcasting and listened to head coach Aaron Hunter heap praise on his players, I thought back to a conversation I had with defensive coordinator Jose Aguirre after the Hornets had dismantled Mexia, 49-14.

After taking a shutout late into the game, Aguirre told me that his defensive players were realizing they had a chance to be special — if they continued to do the jobs they were assigned and trusted in their coaches and each other.

Special is a fluid word in sports. You can't really define what makes someone or something special. Some teams are objectively special, and others are special in relation to a person or program or an era.

For the Gatesville Hornets football program, it doesn't get any more special than their undefeated 2000 state title team. When that team is called "special," everyone nods their head in agreement.

In more recent memory, the Cole Edmiston-led team of 2015 would absolutely qualify as special. A 13-1 squad that made a deep, unexpected playoff run gets to wear the "S" on their chest for sure.

I guess "special" is in the eye of the beholder when talking about Gatesville's 2022 football team.

Objectively they were a good football team. They won seven games for the first time since 2017 and did it in a variety of ways.

They beat Taylor and Mineral Wells thanks to defensive stops in the closing seconds. They beat Mexia, Godley, and Salado with offensive outputs that would make your head spin. They beat McGregor when they were undisciplined and sloppy, and they beat the brakes off Robinson when they were laser-



GLADYS WHITENBURG | THE GATESVILLE MESSANGER

Strong play on the front lines played a significant role in the Hornets' prowess on both sides of the ball.

focused and surgical in their attack.

There is no analysis of the 2022 Gatesville Hornets that leads to the conclusion that they were not a very good football team. But were they special? I think so.

Did they win a state title? No. Did they win their playoff game? No — and that will eat at

these kids for a while.

Did they have special players? More than I can list. I will tell you from standing on the sidelines for almost every game that guys like Lucas Garcia don't come around very often. Neither do players like Tyler Shea or center/part-time comedian Steven Bomar. And rarely do you get a pair of 5-foot, 6-inch cruise missiles like Lawson Mooney and Sean Aguilar dominating on defense.

Two sons (Kason Herbelin and Mason Mooney) joining their dads (Eric Herbelin and Matthew Mooney) on the Hornets Wall of Honor is about as special as it gets for those two families.

Did they move forward a program that is still recovering from the stigma of 2019 by leaps and bounds? You bet they did.

Special takes shape a little bit more when you zoom in closer and examine some of the moments. When it comes down to it, sports are ultimately about the stories we tell and the things we remember. Special creates tales that are told and retold at 10- and 20-year reunions.

I had a unique perspective on this. I get to carry a camera around and film footage of the team so coach Hunter gave me free reign to go wherever I need to in order to get as much footage as I could.

This meant that I had an up-close-and-personal view of many of the great moments that made up the 2022 season. It also meant that I had a view of some moments that didn't occur in plain sight. It's the closest I have ever been to the incomparable energy and chaos of a football sideline, and I loved it.

I was often just a few feet away from coach Hunter as he had "discussions" with officials. I was in huddles during timeouts listening to coaches and players scheme on the fly and I was there for the raucous rendition of the

GHS school song in Taylor's locker room after the season opener.

I stood in the back of the end zone in Taylor and watched the Hornets grow from unknown to dangerous in a matter of two Jacob Newkirk-to-Kyle Shafer scoring plays.

I heard every big hit delivered by Lawson Mooney and Thiele Alvarado. I had games where I couldn't take my eyes off of Adrian Smith because a guy his size shouldn't be able to do what he does.

I stood on the sidelines and watched Trevor Smith catch ball after ball after ball after ball. I also ran down the sidelines, camera in hand trying to keep up with him in Mexia and Salado as he sprinted past defenses for touchdowns.

I witnessed just about every one of Rayshon Smith's 1,092 rushing yards on the season — 1,091 of which seemed to come after someone had failed to tackle him on their first try.

I lingered nearby as teammate after teammate and coach after coach came over to Aydan Necessary in Salado and offered their embrace as this poor kid finished his season on crutches for the second year in a row.

The knock I hear most often these days is about parents who seem to think their kid is special. They think that their kid is above the rules or exempt from them. When we hear the phrase, "They think they are special" we often say it as an insult.

But when it comes to the 2022 Gatesville Hornets football team, I think it's simply just an accurate statement. It was a special group led by special coaches. If you ask me, this won't be the last Hornets team we refer to as special. I think there are even better things ahead for coach Hunter and his program.

The years ahead may be special. The one in our rear view most certainly was.



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Coach Aaron Hunter helped lead the Hornets to their best record since 2017.