



THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

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Brad Hunt selected as Gatesville police chief



Brad Hunt

BY JEFF OSBORNE
Senior Writer & Editor

A statewide search for Gatesville's next police chief led to the selection of a candidate who is well acquainted with Central Texas — Brad Hunt.

The current police chief in Keene — a community of about 6,500 people located in Johnson County — Hunt previously had a distinguished 25-year career with the Temple Police Department.

During a Meet the Candidates forum on Jan. 4 at Gatesville City Hall, Hunt said he is very familiar with Gatesville and Coryell County, having spent most of his law enforcement career in neighboring Bell County.

"I look at this as an opportunity to come

home to a place I know very well," Hunt said. "I feel like the community here is very tight-knit and it is an honor to be considered."

Gatesville City Manager Bill Parry, who made the selection, said he was impressed with the quality of candidates for the position, and that he hopes Hunt will be able to begin his new role by the end of January.

"I am pleased to announce that I have selected Brad W. Hunt as the next chief of police for the city of Gatesville," Parry said. "I have made, and Chief Hunt has accepted, a conditional offer to be the next chief of police." He added that the conditions are that all Texas Commission On Law Enforcement requirements for peace officers in Texas will be met.

"We are finalizing the details, but tentatively he will assume the position as Gates-

ville police chief during the week of January 30," Parry said. "I am excited to have Brad Hunt join the Gatesville team."

During his time with Temple PD, Hunt filled several roles, including serving as division commander over special operations. His role involved helping to coordinate community police relations, traffic control, the school resource officer program, investigation of violent crimes, helping oversee Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) operations, hostage negotiations, honor guard and public information.

Hunt played a primary role in the Temple Police Department obtaining recognized status in the Texas Police Chiefs Association Best Practices Program. As of 2021, fewer

PLEASE SEE **CHIEF** | A2

Local housing demand dips but remains strong

BY JEFF OSBORNE
Senior Writer & Editor

Anyone looking for a house or land to purchase — or those who just like to keep an eye on property values — can see a clear difference in availability of properties now compared to several months ago.

Data shows that houses are typically staying on the market for longer periods of time. But according to Mitch Fast, chief appraiser for the Coryell County Appraisal District, the county, including the Gatesville and Copperas Cove areas, is still considered to be a hot market.

"Historically, whenever you had six months of (property) inventory or less, it was considered a seller's market, and more than six months of inventory is a buyer's market," Fast said. "Typically, there would be between three and six months inventory. A year ago at this time, we only had about 18 days worth of inventory on the market, which is incredible. Now, there's about 2.3 months worth of housing inventory available."

Following the laws of supply and demand, along with rising property values are rising appraisal rates. That which is harder to obtain is generally considered to be more valuable. That means that when people begin to receive their appraisal notices in the mail, they will tend to reflect more of the hot property market that dominated the county for the first two-thirds of 2022.

The slowdown in the seller's market, which was seen more in the last third of the year, followed continued rises in the prime interest rate by the Federal Reserve. Local property owners can expect to see more of an impact on the slowing housing market on their own property values in 2024 — if the current trend continues.

Based on data from the Texas A&M Real Estate Center, Coryell County property appraisals are up about 15% from this point last year. That data includes commercial, rural land sales and residential property. Much of that increase is attributed to rural land sales, Fast said.

Because of higher inventory available, homes in Copperas Cove are typically priced lower than similar homes in Gatesville. Another factor in Gatesville's high price range, comparatively, is that the community is in a more rural area.

"Fueled partly by COVID, a lot of people in urban areas looked for property in smaller towns, so there was an increased demand for homes in smaller communities," Fast said. "It will be interesting to see if that trend continues, or if more people start to move back to bigger cities. Right now, dollar for dollar, houses are more expensive in Gatesville than in Copperas Cove."

Gatesville's proximity to hot housing markets in Waco, Temple and Killeen should mean that demand for property should not decline substantially anytime soon. Property developers in the Copperas Cove area continue to add large subdivisions, and a planned 590-plus house subdivision in the Oglesby area is another indication that builders anticipate continued demand for local housing.



COURTESY PHOTO

After a red hot market in which homes stayed on the market for an average of 18 days, there is now just over two months worth of housing inventory according to the Coryell County Appraisal District. A strong market is typically 3-6 months worth of housing inventory.

Property prices have risen dramatically for Coryell County in Gatesville priced in the \$70,000 to \$80,000 range," Fast over the past five or six years.

"Back in 2017, it was pretty common to see a lot of houses

PLEASE SEE **HOUSING** | A2

Local man recalls daring, harrowing helicopter sea rescue

BY JEFF OSBORNE
Senior Writer & Editor

As part of a helicopter rescue crew, Greg Couture has had quite a few memorable experiences, but perhaps none more so than a harrowing mission 300 miles out at sea with low fuel that could have resulted in having to be rescued himself.

Couture lived in places as varied as New York and Alaska before moving to Gatesville with his wife Kathy Harte, and he told the

Gatesville Lions Club about his traumatic mission that took place on Dec. 27, 1979.

At the time, Couture was stationed in Long Island, New York, and said the week between Christmas and New Year's Day was notorious for "something big in the rescue community always happening" during that time frame.

On that frigid day, Couture was part of a crew that went to the rescue of the John F. Leavitt, a 19th Century style schooner that

encountered disaster on its trip from Maine that was intended to take a cargo of lumber to the Caribbean.

"The ship was built with the idea that you could still make a profit the old-fashioned way sailing up and down the coast in a schooner," Couture said. In an era when large wooden ships were long relegated to history, the group that built the John F. Leavitt went with an old school approach, creating a wooden vessel that would sail via

the power of wind like the ships that were commonly in use more than 100 years earlier.

However, the ship was unable to withstand the raging power of the Atlantic Ocean that day, and an emergency call went to the air rescue crew that included Couture.

"We were getting ready for a training day, and someone shouted we had a mission,"

PLEASE SEE **RESCUE** | A2



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RESCUE

FROM PAGE A1

Couture recalled. The mission called for two rescue helicopters and a fuel tanker aircraft.

"We always had one (helicopter) ready to go, but we had to get another one ready, going through the checklist," Couture said. "We headed off from Long Island and the only information we had is there were nine people on a ship (in distress) 300 miles out to sea. That's why they called us. The Coast Guard couldn't get close to that."

Couture recalled a windy day with rolling seas, including waves of 40 to 50 feet.

"The HC 130 went out first and located the ship," he said. "They were reported to have a cargo of lumber that they were taking down to the Caribbean, and they left a week before Christmas on their maiden voyage."

When the rescue crews arrived at the scene, they found a ship that was "mostly awash, and the main mast was dipping in and out of the water," Couture said. "The sails had been ripped away and the survivors were all in the fantail section."

Compounding the problem with the ship was that a large beam intended to be used for assisting with loading and unloading cargo was "basically breaking the ship into pieces," Couture said.

The helicopters dropped a pair of rescue men out who employed a pair of 20-man life rafts, putting four survivors in one and five in the other.

One of the men pulled onto Couture's helicopter carried film from the voyage that can be watched on YouTube today. A movie, "Coaster," was later made about the ill-fated ship.

While the survivors were secured aboard the rescue helicopters, there was still a 300-mile flight back to shore — and that's before Couture's copter began to experience problems.

He said the rescue helicopters typically do not fly with a full allotment of fuel, because that makes it easier for them to hover. That shouldn't have been a problem with a tanker accompanying them, but malfunctions began.

"We were getting ready to refuel, had pulled up behind the tanker and were getting ready to plug in," Couture said. "It was snowing, and it was dark, so visibility was pretty minimal, and then all the lights went out. We lost all electricity except for a 24-volt battery. That meant we couldn't air refuel because it requires electrical power."

Couture's helicopter began the long flight back with the other helicopter and tanker escorting it. The closest land was the beach at Long Island where the rescue crew was based — still 300 miles away.

"We powered off everything that we didn't need, and we left one radio on," he said. "It was really getting cold. We didn't think we had enough fuel to get back. I had been in a low fuel situation before, but never anything like this."

In anticipation of the worst scenario — a crash landing at sea, Couture said the helicopter's 20-man raft was made ready.

"We were just hoping to make it back to the beach, but fortunately we were able to make it back to the base," he said.

After dropping off everyone, the helicopter's auxiliary power unit shut down, followed shortly by each of the two engines.

It was a close call, but Couture, the crew and the ship's survivors aboard were able to breathe a sigh of relief, limping back to base on



JEFF OSBORNE | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Gatesville resident Greg Couture participated in a rescue flight 300 miles at sea in late December 1979.

what must have seemed like mere fumes.

A check of the helicopter's equipment revealed the main generator had stopped, and a secondary generator that was supposed to provide backup did not have enough power to do the job.

"It's a day I'm going to remember for the rest of my life, believe me," Couture said. "I just thank God He took over."

Couture said he almost converted to Judaism, referencing a story in which oil which was supposed to light a lamp in the Jeru-

salem Temple for only one day miraculously lasted for eight days — which is still celebrated during Hanukkah.

"I figured that was what happened (for the helicopter's fuel to last as long as it did)," he said. "It was a long, cold flight."

First female active duty soldier becomes master gunner

FORT HOOD - The first female active duty soldier graduated from The M1A2 Abrams Master Gunner Course at Ft. Benning, GA.

Sgt. Cinthia Ramirez, assigned to Avenger Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, pushed through the course to motivate other soldiers to set goals and standards for themselves and achieve them.

"I was always getting in trouble as a private because I never really had a goal for myself other than 'get through this contract'. But once I got promoted and became a non-commissioned officer, everything changed," said Ramirez. "In the past, I had some examples of pretty bad leadership, and I told myself I did not want to be that type of leader. So I knew I needed to start setting standards and goals for myself to progress in my career."

To further improve herself as a soldier and NCO, Ramirez knew that her next step was to set the goal of graduating from the M1A2 Abrams Master Gunner Course.

"Getting into Master Gunner school was so hard, but that just made me even more determined to get in. Everyone kept telling me how hard it was, and I wanted to see for myself just how hard it was — and they were not wrong. I just want people to realize that just because you were never the best soldier or you've been in trouble — you can change and turn things around. The mistakes I made as a private will not define who I am as an NCO and a leader," said Ramirez.

Being tested during the course on weapons system platforms, the Master Gunner has the duty of advising commanders and being a part of the planning, development, execution, and evaluation of all combat and gunnery-related training.

"During the course, I was bombarded with information, which was overwhelming. There was a lot of new information I learned. As a tanker for 4 1/2 years already, a lot of what they taught us were things I would never really think about. It was a whole other level of knowledge," said Ramirez.

Course participants are tested on a multitude of curriculums, including Individual, Maintenance, Gunnery, and Gunnery Training. The required amount of skills and intellect to pass the Master Gunner Course has proven to be difficult, resulting in a very low graduation rate.

"I didn't pass the first time, and I got down on myself. I didn't want to go back. Thankfully, I had some amazing people on my side that believed in me and reminded me of my potential," said Ramirez.

Motivated to graduate from the course, Ramirez returned with the knowledge she gained from her last attempt and used her past experiences to her advantage.

"When I went back to the course a second time, it was a much better experience because I had a better grasp of what was being explained. The instructors were great at helping me understand the process behind things," said Ramirez.



COURTESY PHOTO

Sgt. Cinthia Ramirez, assigned to Avenger Company, 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, earns the title of Master Gunner. Sgt. Ramirez became the first active duty female ever to earn the title.

After going back to the course for a second time, Ramirez graduated from the course and became the first active duty female soldier to graduate from The M1A2 Abrams Master Gunner Course.

"Mistakes shouldn't stop you from wanting to be a better person. So, just because we as females might fail the first time we try, it doesn't mean we stop. We have to keep going and pushing," said Ramirez.

Gatesville Meals on Wheels volunteers sought

Meals on Wheels is currently in need of volunteer drivers. Meals on Wheels is a federally funded program for older adults who are homebound, unable to prepare a meal, don't drive, and have no one to cook for them. The program provides home-delivered nutritious meals to seniors in our community on local routes only.

The Gatesville Senior Center is looking for four drivers per day to drive four different routes. The shifts will

be Monday through Friday, starting at 10:30 a.m. The Meals on Wheels run will take approximately one hour to complete. Volunteers can build their own schedules with no contract necessary. If you are a volunteer age 55 or older, you may be eligible for different perks.

The Gatesville Senior Center is located at 208 N. Lutterloh in Gatesville. For more information contact the Senior Center Director, Pam Rudolph at 254-865-8234.

Morris Federation to meet

Members of The Morris Federation will have their first meeting of the new year on Saturday, Jan. 14, at 10:15 a.m. in the James Coryell Room of the Coryell Museum and Historical Center.

The program, titled, "Things Seniors Need to Know," will be presented by David Myers, Clinical Social Worker Specialist in Gatesville. Myers has more than seven years of diverse experiences, especially in Clinical Social Work, and he cooperates with many other doctors and specialists in the medical group at Coryell County Memorial Hospital Authority.

HOUSING

FROM PAGE A1

said. "Now, a lot of those homes are priced around \$150,000. Just 2% of the houses sold in 2022 (in Coryell County) were for less than \$100,000."

The interest rate increase has dampened the housing market somewhat. That's great for qualified buyers,

who are seeing the amount of houses on the market increase and stay there longer, but not as good for sellers, who often were able to get bids in less than three weeks.

"What the interest rates did was increase what had been maybe a \$1,000 monthly house payment to \$1,200, and that decreased the number of people who

were able to qualify for a loan," Fast said.

Appraisal rates won't start to reflect those economic patterns immediately.

"Property values are a lagging (economic) indicator," Fast said. "We're usually about a year behind, and it will take a while before we catch up (to any slowing conditions)."

CHIEF

FROM PAGE A1

than 10% of the state's police departments had obtained this standard. Hunt said one of his goals is to elevate the Gatesville Police Department to this level.

The program evaluates a police department's compliance with 170 best practices for law enforcement, which were developed by a committee of police chiefs and command level officers from throughout Texas. The practices include standards ranging

from off-duty employment to vehicle pursuits, policies related to use of force, searching and transporting prisoners and response to hostage situations.

"These are great standards for any law enforcement agency, and it's important for any agency I'm a part of to follow these," Hunt said.

Hunt is a graduate of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Va. He earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Stephen F. Austin State University with a minor in psychology.



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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

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COURTESY PHOTO

Pecan Grove Baptist Church

HISTORICAL MARKER SPOTLIGHT

Pecan Grove Baptist Church

Text on the marker is as follows:

On August 7, 1882, this church was organized as Coryell Creek Baptist Church of Christ by Monroe M. Smith, James M. Davidson, Joe F. and Martha J. Alsup, and Cordelia C. Beaty, with the help of D. J. Hardin and the Rev. J. M. Wright. An additional seven members joined that day.

Early services were held at Blackfoot and Davidson Schools and at annual brush arbor meetings at Pecan Grove on the west side of

Coryell Creek. In 1903 the congregation, then known as Coryell Creek Missionary Baptist Church, built a tabernacle on the east side of Coryell Creek on land donated by Frank M. Martin.

In 1929 the congregation changed its name to Pecan Grove Baptist Church and began building a sanctuary at this site. In 1930 the tabernacle was enlarged to accommodate the large number of people attending annual camp meetings. Church facilities have been enlarged and modernized

over the years.

Pecan Grove, recognized by Baylor University for its support of ministerial students, has held memberships in the Leon River, Coryell, and Tri-River Baptist Associations, and the Southern Baptist Convention. As many as six generations of some local families have been members of this congregation. Pecan Grove continues to serve the area with various outreach programs. (1994).

FROM MY FRONT PORCH

Hold the phone: What's the number?

SAM HOUSTON

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



Houston

Seems like everyone has a mobile phone these days. Mobile devices have become so popular it is becoming rare for people to have a land line in their house.

Mobile phones are convenient, effective, and because of their processing capabilities, can keep all of us connected to the internet no matter where we are. It allows us to keep in touch with family or friends and certainly makes it easier to transact business. Of course, to some degree, it does eliminate the ability to "disappear" and not accept calls. Even on vacation, Sunday afternoon, or late at night, people can find you.

Mobile phones are quite a change from back in the day when landlines were few and far between. Years ago, the dialer would have had to go through the operator to be connected to the party they were calling. Lots of younger folks may not realize, but at one time phone numbers also had letters, which indicated the "exchange" — a fancy way of saying the station where the operator was located. My phone number at my childhood home was WY3-2493. Later, when we moved to another part of town, the number was EV5-6282.

Eventually the system improved, and direct dialing became available. How many of you ever experienced a "party line"? A "party line" meant that two to four families shared the same line. It was common in rural areas because of the expense of running cable.

My grandparents were on a party line and their "ring" was two longs and a short. Can you imagine the world of today operating with multiple people sharing the same phone line! What a mess that would be! Not sure teenagers would ever get over it.

This week, two new employees started at the newspaper. As I checked them in and asked for their emergency contact information, they both pulled out their phone to acquire the phone number of the contact person they wanted to use. Neither knew from memory the phone number they needed because like all of us, they rely on the phone numbers being stored in their contacts portion of their mobile device.

It got me to thinking, whose phone number do I know by memory? I call my Miss Jayne at least once every day, and I have no idea what her phone number is. Same for my wife. I never dial the number; I use speed dial and the next thing I know I am connected. If I got hit by a truck and was lying on the side of the road and was asked for a phone number by emergency personnel, I would draw nothing but blanks.

Wait, I do know the newspaper phone number by heart because I find myself giving it out to those who

need to reach the paper. Other than the newspaper, there is not a single active number I can recall, other than my own. I do recall my long since passed grandmother's phone number because my mother drilled it into my head in case I was ever lost. GL7-3820. I wonder what mothers teach their children nowadays.

I am sure there will be further technological developments that will change how we communicate. Technological evolution will make our lives easier, more efficient, and will also lead to change. Change is always part of life, whether it be in our phones, our transportation, fashion, or music. With each change, a little bit of history and a lot of old habits go by the wayside. Maybe that is a good thing, that is unless you are hurt on the side of the road and you cannot tell the EMT whom to call!

Thought for the day: People are prisoners of their phone, which I guess is why they are called "cell phones."

Until next time, I will be riding the storm out.

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Mother Neff State Park to host first program of 2023

Mother Neff State Park will host its first program on the new year on Saturday, Jan. 14.

The public is invited to join Lt. Ricky Dolifka as he takes a walk-through hike of Mother Neff while explaining the history of Buffalo Soldiers and the frontier.

There will be two opportunities to participate in the hike. The first hike will begin at 10 a.m. and the second

hike will take place starting at noon. The hikes will be at a beginner skill level.

There will be no fee for the hikes, but a park entrance fee of \$2 is required. Children under 12 years of age can enter free of charge.

Mother Neff State Park is a 259-acre state park located on the Leon River west of Moody.

As well as hiking, park visitors can picnic, camp, geo-

cache and observe nature. Those interested can also enjoy the wildflowers in the prairie and explore the canyon trails. Due to river conditions, swimming and fishing are not allowed at Mother Neff.

The park is located at 1921 Park Road 14 near Moody. For any further information contact the park at 254-853-2389.

Whatever happened to....

20 YEARS AGO (2003)

Former Gatesville resident, Keith Dyer, a 1982 graduate of Gatesville High School, had been named executive director of the Texas Baptist Children's Home in Round Rock. He was the son of Eugene and Janis Dyer of Gatesville.

The Rev. John Mark Heckmann was to be installed as the new pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church at The Grove. He had been ordained on June 30, 1985 and served more than 17 years as pastor of St. John Lutheran Church in Crete, Nebraska.

Garrett Baize, son of Gary Baize and Gay McCarty of Gatesville, was deployed to the Persian Gulf as a crew member aboard the USS Valley Forge. He had recently been promoted to the rank of E-5 and had received several honors since his enlistment.

Tommie Ford was celebrating her 100th birthday. She was born January 19, 1903 at Turnersville to the late Tom and Elizabeth Brim. Mrs. Ford taught in the public schools in Hamilton and Coryell County for 11 years.

30 YEARS AGO (1993)

County inmates had installed a shoeshine stand at the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Gerald Kitchens was one of the first customers to take advantage of the new enterprise. The inmates shined shoes for \$1 a pair, and all revenues went toward the

Inmate Fund.

Evelyn Dyer, owner of Dyer Restaurant in Fort Gates, had sold her business and was retiring. Mrs. Dyer, owner and operator of the restaurant since 1965, sold her business to Donna King of Flat. King planned to keep the name of the establishment the same.

Alderman Randy Rigney was elected as the new mayor of Evant by a decision of the city council. Rigney, who was employed with the Copperas Cove Fire Department, also served with the Evant Volunteer Fire Department.

Army Spec. Roger A. Miller, an artillery fire-direction specialist, had arrived for duty at Fort Richardson, Anchorage, Alaska. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Miller of Gatesville and was a 1984 graduate of Gatesville High School.

40 YEARS AGO (1983)

Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Painter, Jr. of Gatesville were to be honored on their 25th wedding anniversary with a reception at the Westview Baptist Church of Gatesville. Hosts for the silver anniversary were to be the couple's children.

Three Temple Junior College students from Gatesville were cited for their academic achievement. Charles P. Basham and Mary A. Herring were named to the dean's honor list. Wanda G. Johnson was also named to the dean's list.

Rus Bel, a 1982 graduate of Gatesville High School,

made the dean's honor roll at Central Texas College with a 4.0 average. Only 330 made the dean's honor roll out of 5,203 students.

Plans were underway by the school board to erect a fence along the south and east sides of the Gatesville Primary School's playground area. The cost for the new fence was expected to be in the neighborhood of \$4,000.

FIFTY YEARS AGO (1973)

Edwin Powell, a 26-year-old Gatesville attorney, had been appointed to a two-year term on the Coryell Memorial Hospital board of directors. Powell's appointment was announced to the public by County Judge Doug Smith.

Carlton Wiggins of Oglesby had been appointed as a new deputy sheriff by the county commissioners court. He was to be assigned to work in the Oglesby area of Coryell County.

Sadie Gaston had been appointed to the newly-created post of director of dietary services at Coryell Memorial Hospital. Mrs. Gaston first joined the hospital's kitchen staff in 1961 as a relief cook.

According to the Purlmela News that appeared in The Gatesville Messenger, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Myers were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. The couple were visited by many members of the Myers family.

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The DISPATCH

The following is a breakdown of activity reported through dispatchers during the period of January 4 - 7. While there were many calls to the dispatcher, this is a partial list of more significant activity. 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

January 4
1:07 a.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 1600 block of W. Main Street.
8:19 a.m., a burglary was reported in the 2600 block of Mears Drive.
11:00 a.m., a livestock complaint was reported in the 300 block of River Ridge Road.
11:47 a.m., a threat was reported in the 1200 block of W. Main Street.
3:16 p.m., an animal complaint was reported in the 2000 block of Waco Street.
4:42 p.m., a case of fraud was reported in the 1500 block of W. Main Street.

January 5
1:13 a.m., a disturbance was reported in the 2000 block of Waco Street.
11:25 a.m., a prowler was reported in the 400 block of S. 7th Street.
1:01 p.m., a theft was reported in the 2100 block of E. Main Street.
2:46 p.m., a burglary was reported in the 3200 block of S. State Hwy. 36.
4:25 p.m., harassment was reported in the 400 block of E. Main Street.
5:40 p.m., an assault was reported in the 2000 block of Waco Street.

January 6
11:16 a.m., a burglary was reported in the 1600 block of St. Louis Street.
1:50 p.m., a theft was reported in the 2800 block of S. State Hwy. 36.
4:57 p.m., a threat was reported in the 500 block of Bridge Street.
5:12 p.m., a theft was reported in the 2000 block of Waco Street.
5:35 p.m., an assault was reported in the 2200 block of Bridge Street.
11:18 p.m., a theft was reported in the 2000 block

of Waco Street.

January 7
3:39 a.m., a noise disturbance was reported in the 2300 block of E. Main Street.
12:24 p.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 200 block of Ash Drive.
2:17 p.m., a disturbance was reported in the 2400 block of E. Main Street.
5:22 p.m., criminal mischief was reported in the 700 block of S. Lovers Lane.
5:41 p.m., a theft was reported in the 2100 block of Waco Street.
11:00 p.m., suspicious activity was reported in the 500 block of Bridge Street.

January 5

9:50 a.m., a livestock complaint was reported in the 500 block of FM 116.
9:50 a.m., trespassing was reported in the 4400 block of FM 930.
11:31 a.m., a theft was reported in the 500 block of CR 366.
12:11 p.m., animal neglect was reported in the 1000 block of Lutheran Church Road.
1:01 p.m., mail tampering was reported in the 100 block of FM 1996.
10:33 p.m., a domestic disturbance was reported in the 1400 block of CR 107.

January 6

10:17 a.m., an assault was reported in the 100 block of FM 183.
12:03 p.m., a minor accident was reported in the 6800 block of W. Hwy. 84.
2:34 p.m., a civil matter was reported in the 4300 block of FM 930.
4:58 p.m., shots being fired was reported in the 100 block of CR 231.
7:40 p.m., a civil matter was reported in the 500 block of Mountain Road.
9:30 p.m., a livestock complaint was reported on CR 244 and CR 4255.

January 7

6:35 a.m., a suspicious vehicle was reported in the 200 block of CR 349.
12:33 p.m., mailbox damage was reported in the 700 block of Flintrock.
1:17 p.m., a missing person was reported in the 2700 block of Tanglewood.
2:16 p.m., a reckless driver was reported on S. Hwy. 36 and Lydon Lane.
8:10 p.m., a welfare concern was reported in the 8600 block of FM 1783.
11:17 p.m., a prowler was reported in the 300 block of Thackston Road.

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CORYELL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

January 4
6:18 a.m., suspicious activity was reported on CR 174 and Plum Creek Crossing.
9:18 a.m., a livestock complaint was reported on FM 1241.
11:15 a.m., a stolen vehicle was reported on CR 238.
6:17 p.m., an animal complaint was reported in the 100 block of Herrell Drive.
8:42 p.m., a welfare concern was reported on FM 116 and Elijah Road.
10:55 p.m., a suspicious vehicle was reported in the 2400 block of FM 185.

OBITUARIES

JERRY RAY BELL

March 16, 1939 - Jan. 1, 2023



Jerry Ray Bell was born in Belton on March 16, 1939, and passed away peacefully in his home in Wimberley on January 1, 2023. He was 83. Jerry was educated in Moody, Texas where he graduated in 1957, excelling in all sports. After receiving a basketball scholarship to Howard Payne, he decided to stay home and commuted to Mary Hardin-Baylor and Temple Junior College where he received his AA degree and served as the President

of the Student Body. He also lettered in basketball.

He worked at Scott and White Hospital in the X-ray department. In 1961, he joined the U.S. Navy and was assigned to the guided missile cruiser, the USS Albany. He was honorably discharged in 1967. He married Connie Bartek in 1963 in Temple, Texas, and after graduating from Sam Houston State University, the couple moved to Gatesville where Jerry became City Manager. Later, however, he received his teaching credentials and worked at the Gatesville School for Boys. Shortly thereafter, Jerry became a teacher and golf coach at Gatesville High School.

Jerry and Connie had their only child, son Bradly "Brad" Bell in 1970. Jerry retired in 1995, and he and Connie moved to Ruidoso, New Mexico where they enjoyed traveling, hiking, eating NM Mexican food, skiing and watching horse racing. Jerry loved watching TV, especially anything sports related to the Texas Longhorns.

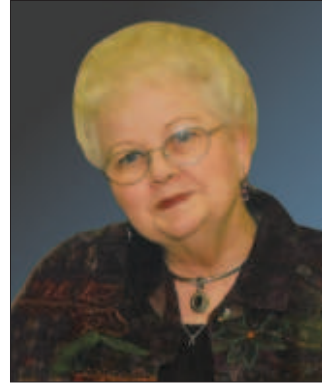
Jerry was preceded in death by his mother, Pearl Robinette Bell, his father, Armed B. Bell of Moody, Texas, his sister, Joyce Kimbro of Lake Belton, Texas, his brothers, Billy Bell of Lake Belton, Texas, Clarence Donald Bell of Rankin, Texas, and Jack A. Bell of Fruita, Colorado, and several nieces and nephews.

He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Connie Bell of Wimberley, Texas, son, Bradly "Brad" Bell and wife, Britt, of Austin, Texas, and the joys of his life, triplet grandkids, Blythe Ann Bell, Brownlee Cash Bell, and Barrett Cole Bell of Austin, Texas.

Cremation was performed by Thomason Funeral Home in Wimberley, Texas. No service is planned at this time. Arrangements are under the direction of Thomason Funeral Home, 14700 Ranch Rd 12, Wimberley, TX 78676. For more information and to sign the online registry, please visit thomasonfuneralhome.com

PAT JONES

Feb. 19, 1942 - Jan. 6, 2023



Pat Jones, age 80, of Gatesville, passed away on Friday, January 6, 2023.

Graveside services were held at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, January 10, 2023, at Restland Cemetery, with Dr. Lynn Parks officiating.

Patsy Ann Wehering Jones was born on February 19, 1942, in Gatesville. She grew up in Gatesville and graduated from Gatesville High School in 1960. She married Dewey H. Jones on July 25, 1964. Throughout her working life, she was employed at White Auto Store, Lone Star Gas, Texas Department of Public Safety Driver License

office and for 20 years for Texas Department of Criminal Justice until her retirement. Her husband preceded her in death on Jan. 10, 2021. She was a member of Eastwood Baptist Church.

She was also preceded in death by her parents, Sam and Osha Trammell Spence and a sister, Betty Wilson.

Pat is survived by her sons, Rob Jones and wife, Alexandra, of Waco, Jimmy Jones and wife, Lynn, of Gatesville; two grandchildren, Cameron and Lauren Jones; and a great-granddaughter, Riley.

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church to celebrate 75th anniversary

Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Gatesville will be celebrating its 75th anniversary as a church on Feb. 12, 2023.

Bishop Joe S. Vasquez, the Bishop of the Diocese of Austin, will come and celebrate Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes at 1108 West Main St. in Gatesville with the parishioners and anyone who would like to attend.

After the Mass there will

be a celebration at 1 p.m. at the Gatesville Civic Center with a meal, entertainment, social time, children's games, a talent show, and Loteria (Spanish BINGO). There will also be an Our Lady of Lourdes History Book and Directory available for \$35 per copy.

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish was established in 1943 as a mission church under St. Mary's in Lampasas. It was the first Catholic Church in Coryell County. Five years later, Bishop Reicher designated Our Lady of Lourdes a separate parish with the responsibility of minister-

ing to the Catholics at the State School for Boys in Gatesville. The parish also served the many Catholics in the military who were stationed at Fort Hood during World War II.

The church would like to invite the public to the celebration. They are encouraging those who want to attend the meal to purchase meal tickets ahead of time at the cost of \$5 each so that a head count can be taken. Tickets may be purchased after Sunday Masses, or you may call the church office at 254-865-6710 for more information.

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300-400 lb.	200-265
400-500 lb.	190-235
500-600 lb.	175-205
600-700 lb.	150-185
700-800 lb.	140-165
No. 1 Heifers	
under 300 lb.	160-210
300-400 lb.	160-220
400-500 lb.	160-210
500-600 lb.	150-185
600-700 lb.	140-165
700-800 lb.	120-145
Slaughter Cows	
High Yielding	75-88
Low Yielding	55-65
Fats	67-80
Thin & Shelly	30-40
Packer Bulls (1250-2075 lb.)	
Yield Grade 1&2	70-110
Cow & Calf Pairs	
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PEARL NEWS

New marriage celebrated in Pearl on New Year's Day

BETSY CLARK

Mound News Correspondent

We wish to congratulate Denise Medart Dyer and Judd Wall on their marriage, which took place at the Pearl Community Fellowship Church on New Year's Day.

We wish the happy couple the very best and are so glad that they chose Pearl for the site of the beginning of their lives together!

We are so sorry to report that Betty Gomez, age 91, passed away at her home in the Beehouse/Pearl Community on Jan. 2. Memorial services will be held Jan. 15, at the Pearl Community Fellowship Church at 2:30 p.m. Lunch for family and friends will be held at the Pearl Community Center at 11:30 a.m. prior to the service. Well-known Pearl resi-

dent Pam Bowers is Mrs. Gomez's daughter. We extend our deepest sympathy to the family.

The next Pearl Bluegrass/Pearl Cottage Bookstore event will be Feb. 4. More details to come.

This week's Bible verse comes from Colossians 3:12-13: "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other;



Clark

as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive." (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.

County, District Clerk offices have changed their hours of operation

The Coryell County Clerk's Office, joined by the District Clerk's Office, have changed their hours of operation beginning Tuesday, Jan. 3.

The County Clerk's office, normally closed for lunch 12-1 p.m., will now remain

open. The office will close early at 4:30 p.m. each weekday. After-hours appointments can be made for those needing to come in between 4:30 and 5 p.m.

The District Clerk's Office will also remain open during

their scheduled lunch hour and will close each day at 4 p.m.

"I think this will be beneficial for all concerned," Coryell County Clerk Jennifer Newton said.

Turnersville Community Center to hold meeting, January 16

The Turnersville Community Center will hold its quarterly meeting on Monday, Jan. 16, at 6 p.m. The meeting is scheduled to take place at the community center and will be open to

the public. Election of new officers is one item on the agenda.

The community center is a family-friendly gathering place for recreation, education, and the arts. It is located

at 8115 FM 182 in Turnersville.

For more information about the quarterly meeting, please call 254-494-0110.

Gatesville TOTS perform at Baylor ladies basketball game



Hunter Briggs

COURTESY OF GLADYS WHITENBURG



Mason Whitenburg

COURTESY OF GLADYS WHITENBURG



Mason Whitenburg

COURTESY OF GLADYS WHITENBURG

Hunter Briggs

COURTESY OF GLADYS WHITENBURG

Students from Let's Grow Learning Center showed off their ball-handling skills at a recent Baylor Ladies' basketball game. Hunter Briggs and Mason Whitenburg, along with many other students, performed at the Baylor game through a program with Teams of Tomorrow (TOT). TOT works with pre-school and elementary students and are focused around improving children's physical and mental growth through movement and music.



Business Directory

 <p>WHITT Building Supplies</p> <p>Billy Latham Sales</p> <p>Office (254) 865-2190 Cell: (254) 223-2272 billy@wbsupplies.com</p> <p>1411 N. Hwy. 36 Bypass Gatesville, Texas 76528</p>	 <p>Brian Riddle Project Manager</p> <p>brianriddlerunningmroofing@gmail.com</p> <p>Running M Roofing & Construction, LLC</p> <p>FREE INSPECTIONS - 254-223-1971</p> <p>Commercial • Residential • Claims Specialists</p>	 <p>GOSSETT TRANSMISSION SERVICE</p> <p>P.O. Box 291 • 1900 Main St. Gatesville, TX 76528</p> <p>JIM GOSSETT RAY GOSSETT</p> <p>254-865-5791</p>
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Jimmy Hall named to SPC Fall 2022 Dean's List

Jimmy Hall, a 2022 graduate of Gatesville High School, was recently named to the South Plains College Fall 2022 Dean's List. Hall was among more than 680 stu-

dents to be named to the list. To qualify, students must earn a grade-point average of 3.25 or higher and complete a minimum of 12 credit hours.

South Plains College is a comprehensive, two-year community college that serves the greater South Plains area of Texas with innovative educational pro-

grams that span the arts and sciences, technical education, continuing education, and workforce development. Serving a 13-county area that comprises the southern por-

tion of the Texas High Plains, the college's main campus is located in Levelland. SPC also offers educational programs at three locations in Lubbock.

Awards ceremony held at Gatesville Primary School

The Gatesville Primary School recently held an awards ceremony for students to recognize their

achievements during the last nine weeks of school.

Select pre-K students received "Super Star" awards,

similar to a "good citizenship" award in addition to perfect attendance awards. Kindergarten students re-

ceived "Courage" awards along with perfect attendance certificates. The past nine weeks was focused on

"courage," and kindergarten teachers recognized students who had exhibited some form of courage.

Pulled Pork Fundraiser to benefit Gatesville Prospects Baseball

The Gatesville Prospects Baseball Team will hold a Pulled Pork Fundraiser on Sunday, Jan. 15, from 11:30 a.m. and until everything is sold out.

The fundraiser will be held at Vintage Royalty, where sandwiches can be purchased for the cost of \$10. This will include a sandwich, chips, and a drink.

Coaches of the Prospects Baseball Team are not only teaching baseball, but they are also preparing young men for the future.

Vintage Royalty is located at 2401 S. TX-36 Ste. 100, in Gatesville.

Free seminar offered by Bell County Master Gardener Association

The Bell County Master Gardener Association will have its free monthly seminar on Thursday, Jan. 19, at 6:30 p.m. at the Texas Agrilife Extension Office located at 1605 N. Main in Belton. Master Gardener Wayne Schirner will be present a program titled "Gardening Myths" — refuting many of the common garden myths in circulation today. The public is welcome to attend the presentation.

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association offers scholarships for 2023

Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association will award scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each for the 2023-2024 school year (\$500 per Fall and Spring semester).

To be eligible you must:

- Be a senior attending a high school within the HCEC service area and graduating in May 2023.
- Be a dependent of an active HCEC member.
- Reside full-time in the home of a parent or guardian who is a full-time student in a HCEC's service area.
- Must have applied for admission as a full-time student in a technical school, college, or university.

Please visit the link below to receive more information and to download the scholarship application:

<https://www.hamiltonelectric.coop/news-and.../scholarship/>

Applications are now available and will be accepted until March 31, 2023. Scholarship winners will be chosen by a committee independent of Hamilton County Electric Cooperative Association.



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Gatesville Primary Pre-K students received the Super Star award.



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Kindergarten students at Gatesville Primary received the Courage award. Some also received certificates for perfect attendance.



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Kindergarten students at Gatesville Primary received the Courage award. Some also received certificates for perfect attendance.



COURTESY OF A J LOPEZ

Kimberly Sieperda (right) shakes hands with Dr. JuliAnn Mazachek, President of Midwestern State University during her graduation ceremony.

Gatesville native accomplishes childhood goals in Respiratory Care at MSU Texas

ANDY NEWBERRY
MSU Texas

Kimberly Sieperda entertained desires to be in the medical field for as long as she can remember. Her father was an EMT, inspiring her as a kid to want to help people the way he did. Sieperda is doing just that. She earned her bachelor's degree in respiratory care in December from Midwestern State University. Every graduate walks a unique path to reach the graduation stage, and that was certainly true of Kimberly. She's 44, a wife, and a mother. "I can say I am very proud of myself, but I would not be where I am without God and the husband He has given me now, and all my

girls and my dad," Kimberly said. After high school in Gatesville, Kimberly worked at the local hospital as a dispatcher for the ambulance service. She got interested in respiratory after talking to the respiratory therapy director in the hospital. But continuing her education wasn't realistic at that time. "My parents didn't go to college and couldn't afford to send us, so I went to a school through the online/mail." She said it was difficult to teach herself online, but she earned her Certified Respiratory Therapist (CRT) license and began working. She also got married and started a family. But that desire to com-

plete her Registered Replacement Therapist (RRT) didn't burn out, even when personal tragedy struck. "Fast forward 14 years later, my husband gets sick and passes away within less than one month of us finding out," Kimberly said. "I am left with three girls, ages 7, 10, and 11, in the year 2014. That particular year the job openings only wanted those with RRT, not CRT." She thought to herself, what could she do? She searched and found the Weatherford College Respiratory Program and applied. She completed the entire program so she could "learn it all again and be a better therapist." She graduated, took her state boards, and became

an RRT. And then decided to continue at Midwestern State to earn her bachelor's. "I wanted to show my girls you can set out to do anything you set your mind to, at any age, even after a devastating situation has occurred," Kimberly said. "And that is exactly what each one of them has told me at different times." The education mission is complete. But Kimberly's mission continues. "My goals after graduation are to help any patient or family member at least once a day, even if it's just a smile, and turn their life around," she said. "My tip for future students is don't ever think you know it all because, in that very moment, you know nothing!"

Coryell County Veterans Service has new phone number for contact

The Coryell County Veterans Service office 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.

RECIPE

This recipe appeared in the "Methodist Best" cookbook in 2008. The Gatesville Messenger plans to run a series of recipes from that cookbook.

CHEESE CHICKEN SOUP Vicki Melton

- 4 chicken breasts
- 1/3 c. chopped onion
- 1 c. chicken broth
- 1/2 c. milk
- 1/2 c. water
- 1/2 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 cans of cream of chicken soup
- 1 pound Velveeta cheese cubed
- 1/3 cup of chopped celery



Boil chicken until tender. Sauté onion and celery in a little butter. Add everything except for the chicken. Heat until cheese is melted. Dice chicken and add to soup mixture. Cook until bubbly hot. If it is too thick, add a little milk. This soup can be frozen.

If your church has a cookbook or if you would like to submit your own recipe of a favorite dish for possible publication, please email it to: editor@gatesvillemessenger.com.

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KID SCOOP FINANCIAL LITERACY SERIES

Eree Fun!

Do you hear people around you worrying about money? You can help by finding ways to have fun without spending any money. There are lots of **FREE** things you can do each and every day! Try some of the fun activities on this page—some might be more fun than playing with expensive toys and games!

Make a Sock Puppet!

Turn a sock into a puppet. Sew on buttons for eyes. Use markers to make a mouth. Thread string or yarn through the sock to make hair.

Have your puppet read one of your favorite books aloud!

Grow a Little Garden

Next time you eat a carrot, cut off the top and use it to start a plant. Use several carrot tops and you can start a garden.

- Cut the carrot tops off so they are about one inch long. It works best if there is a little bit of growth at the end of the carrot.
- Eat the rest of the carrots!
- Plant the carrot tops in a container filled with dirt. Be sure a little of each orange top peeks above the dirt. Keep the soil moist, but not soggy. Be sure your container has a hole for drainage. Place the container by a sunny window.
- Watch your carrot plants grow! When you plant carrots this way, your plants won't make new carrots. But they will have pretty leaves to decorate your home.

Number the pictures in order.

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

Make Your Own Dominoes

Start by taking a walk around your neighborhood. Collect 28 flat light gray stones that are about the same size. Use a black marker or paint to draw dots and lines so that the stones look like the set of dominoes at right.

Put on some music and DANCE, DANCE, DANCE!

Look carefully! Can you find the two identical dancers?

Go to the Library

Imagine a room with all kinds of **free** books that you can take home! That's a library! Visit your local library and check out fun books to read. Ask the librarian to help you find books that interest you.

Reading Riddle

Gabriella loves nothing more than listening to the rain at night as it patters against the window panes. She has never read this book. And she will never finish it. Use the code to find out why!

A=14	E=11	R=4
B=2	G=9	S=10
C=7	I=6	T=17
D=19	L=13	U=15

Fun Search

Look through your local newspaper for information about festivals, museum exhibits and other free fun. Share what you find with your family and see if you can attend together.

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Use the newspaper to locate information.

Write On!

A Penny Saved

There's a famous saying that says a penny saved is a penny earned. Write about what that means to you.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Ben, Bobbie and Brendan can't remember who will play which base today. Use the coach's clue to help them out. Draw a line from each player to the base they will play.

COACH'S CLUE:
The third baseman's number is twice the first baseman's number plus 2.

Standards Link: Mathematical Reasoning: Use strategies in the problem-solving process.

Double Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

R	Y	K	H	C	N	I	D	S	L
N	N	T	B	N	U	F	O	W	K
P	N	R	O	X	D	G	N	A	P
U	Z	A	R	G	K	O	R	A	
P	S	P	R	Y	R	D	M	T	
P	Q	L	I	B	R	A	R	Y	T
E	C	N	A	D	Y	G	C	V	E
T	P	P	B	O	O	K	S	Z	R
V	Q	M	O	N	E	Y	S	O	S
E	F	R	E	E	F	R	E	A	D

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

Kid Scoop FIT & FUN

Nature Walk Bingo

Go for a nature walk with some friends. Each of you select one of the bingo cards below. When you see one of the things shown on the card, cross out that space. The first person to black out their card wins!

Standards Links: Physical Education: Understand the benefits associated with participation in physical activities.