



# THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

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## Rotunda demolition to begin soon

BY JEFF OSBORNE  
Senior Writer & Editor

Gatesville residents who live near the old Rotunda Nursing Home, located at 2525 Osage Road, have received good news — demolition of the structure and removal of debris is expected to start in mid-July. And, apart from any weather delays, the work should be completed by the end of July.

A public hearing/town hall meeting provided information on the upcoming demolition process for the building.

The meeting was held on June 22 and offered details on plans to demolish the dilapidated structure and clean up the property, which has been abandoned since 2000, and was acquired by the city of Gatesville through a tax foreclosure in 2008. The property, which has been identified as a public health hazard in danger of collapse as well as being an eyesore, will be demolished by RDNI Companies of Rockwall. RDNI has conducted several asbestos abatements and demolitions of old schools and other properties in the Dallas area.

Because of the cost involved, it has been a long process to eliminate the building. In 2010, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) performed an environmental assessment which determined the presence of asbestos.

The city funded a portion of demolition and asbestos abate-

ment in 2014 and 2015, but a lack of funding has delayed completion of demolition. On May 9, the Gatesville City Council awarded a \$176,636 contract to RDNI to complete work on the site. An EPA Brownfield Cleanup grant will fund 80% of the work, with the city set to pay the remaining cost.

Once the site has been cleared, it has been identified as a possible location for a new Gatesville Police Department.

Diana Cross, the contractor in charge of the demolition, said every effort will be made to secure the safety of nearby residents during the demolition and cleanup. The process will be done through a wet demolition, meaning a steady stream of mist will be part of the operation in order to ensure that dust and small particles from the work do not carry over to nearby property.

The demolition process will be overseen by John McRae, an environmental consultant with Baer Engineering & Environmental Consulting. He said the air will be closely monitored during the process to ensure no harmful particles impact area property.

Cross is a civil engineer with more than 27 years' experience.

"Every year we do demolitions and asbestos cleanup, and we



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

The old Rotunda Nursing Home, located at 2525 Osage Road and abandoned since 2000, is scheduled for demolition this month. The city of Gatesville held a public meeting on June 22 so that the contractor on the project and the engineering firm overseeing work could tell Gatesville residents about specifics related to the demolition and cleanup.

PLEASE SEE ROTUNDA | A2

## Ranch Rodeo in action



ALEX MEELBUSCH | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Gatesville Riding Club sponsored a Ranch Rodeo on June 24 at the Gatesville Rodeo Arena. The event featured five-man teams which participated in sorting, trailer loading, branding and stray gathering. For more photos, see Page A12.

## County approves subdivision plan

BY JEFF OSBORNE  
Senior Writer & Editor

The Coryell County Commissioners Court approved plans for the Ranches at Buena Vista, a 926-acre subdivision in the Evant area during the June 27 meeting of the court.

Justin Mannix with the road and bridge department has been working with the developers to ensure that the proper procedures are followed and went through an extensive checklist showing that documentation and requirements have been met.

Mannix said the development will feature 70 lots of varying size and will feature 28,587 feet of road through the property. The development will feature single family homes, and there will also be a couple of detention ponds on site.

"It's on top of a mountain basically, so there's no flood plain," Mannix said. "The property is accessing a farm-to-market road, and we got a letter from the TxDOT (the Texas Department of Transportation) saying they've approved the entrance."

Mannix said the estimated cost of improvements at the site is \$3,446,117.79, and the developers plan to have work completed by Jan. 19, 2024.

Drinking water will be provided by wells on site, and septic tanks, also known as on-site sewage facilities, will take care of wastewater. Electricity will be provided by Hamilton County Electric. A cluster mailbox will be located at the entrance to the subdivision.

"We received a letter from Middle Trinity (Groundwater Conservation District) stating they're OK with the well study," Mannix said.

"Do we have any concerns - there is a 90-degree turn in Buena Vista Drive, which is what appears to be to be the main thoroughfare in and out," said County Judge Roger Miller.

"It looks worse than it is," Mannix said. "It's right on top of a hill. County Road and Bridge Administrator Justin Latham asked if the documentation for the subdivision included when electricity will be installed.

"They're estimating some time in December according to the construction schedule," Mannix said.

Miller asked if everyone was comfortable that two cul de sacs (dead end streets) at Alta Vista and Northside drives do not connect, and that "both terminate within about a lot and

PLEASE SEE RANCHES | A2



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# Military, state department often work hand-in-hand

BY JEFF OSBORNE  
Senior Writer & Editor

When American troops are stationed overseas, the U.S. State Department works hand-in-hand with the military to help meet the needs of the local population.

Lt. Col. James Marques, who served in the Army (including the Army National Guard and Reserve) for 37 years before retiring in 2020, and was deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan, offered a glimpse into the efforts of the government in working closely with the military during overseas operations.

"When I was overseas in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the military was there parallel with the U.S. government," Marques said while speaking at a meeting of the Gatesville Lions Club on June 21. "We worked with the State Department, U.S.A.I.D. (the United States Agency for International Development) and the Departments of Agriculture and Commerce — anything to help them get started (in

*"When I was overseas in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the military was there parallel with the U.S. government."*

**JAMES MARQUES**  
Retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel

rebuilding those areas).

"We had a lot of civilians working there and they were all volunteers. They lived on base and we had to take care of them, feed them and give them a place to stay."

The U.S. State Department was the first department appointed by George Washington, the first American president, when it was originally called the Department of Foreign Affairs, Marques said.

The current secretary of state is Anthony Blinken, and the first

secretary of state was Thomas Jefferson.

Marques also talked about American intelligence gathering. Agencies involved in that in the past would often withhold intelligence information from other agencies. But following the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush appointed Tom Ridge as the first Secretary of Homeland Security to oversee all the intelligence agencies, which were required to share information with each other following 9/11.

Marques said anyone traveling to a third-world country or an area that could be considered unsafe for Americans should notify the State Department via state.gov.

"That lets the United States know where you are, and if you have any problems, the U.S. will get you out," he said. "Believe me, it works. Also, don't drive in those countries" (where traffic laws may be significantly different and conditions may be hazardous).



JEFF OSBORNE | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

**U.S. Army Lt. Col. James Marques (retired) gave an overview of how the U.S. State Department and military often work closely together in overseas operations.**

## ROTUNDA

FROM PAGE A1

work closely with the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) and TCEQ (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality)," Cross said. "We're not new kids on the block. We recently completed a similar project in South Dallas for the city of Dallas.

"This building (in Gatesville) is definitely a priority for all of you. It's a nest not only for crime but animals have been seen there. I think it is wonderful to get this done safely and in the proper way."

Asked how long the project will take, Cross said it should be completed in five to 10 days, depending on the weather and accessibility of the landfill taking materials. She said removal of overgrown vegetation in the area will not be part of that 5-10-day time frame.

"We're really excited about getting this done," McRae said. "We're a small environmental firm whose clients include the city of Austin, Apple, Tesla and Oracle. We definitely know what we need to do to make sure everything stays in compliance. We've got specifications RNDI will adhere to for environmental impact and safety."

"I've been doing this for about 16 years so this is not my first rodeo, either, when it comes to building demolitions. I previously worked for NASA's Johnson Space Center and was involved with 27 demolitions there. Ultimately, everything demolished will be removed and (2525 Osage) will be a wonderful location."

City Manager Scott Albert praised the efforts of the city staff and former city manager Bill Parry for putting together the team that will carry out the demolition and cleanup.

He noted that there had been six or seven attempts to secure grant funding to complete the demolition before the city was finally awarded an EPA grant.

"I'm excited. I know a lot of people want to see this building taken down and it's going to be down, hopefully by the end of July," Albert said.

Cross said the emphasis is on removing the danger to the public that the building presents. The scope of work for RNDI does not include removal of the concrete slab. However, Albert said the city might negotiate with RNDI depending on the Gatesville City Council's wishes to see that the slab is



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

**Large rats, snakes and crime are among the major concerns of those living near the abandoned Rotunda nursing home building, which will soon be demolished.**

also removed.

"Once the work is complete, the property will be super nice like the lot next door," Cross said.

Julie Hudson, director of the Gatesville Boys & Girls Club, said that the club is about a block and a half away from the Rotunda site and that children often ride their bikes there. She asked about safety precautions while work is being done.

"We'll make sure we secure it," Albert said. "I'll talk to the Chief (Brad Hunt) about adding additional patrols."

McRae said Baer Engineering will have someone on site dedicated to monitoring

"all fugitive emissions — which we don't expect hardly any. One of their (RNDI's) employees will constantly spray water on all that dust. An onsite air monitor will collect all particulate dust, and we'll be able to capture dust."

One of those attending the meeting said she had a lung condition and that she could leave the area and stay in Temple while work was being done if she was notified in advance.

Albert said he will notify the residents if they provide him with contact information, and that signs will be posted, and the city website will be updated to alert people of

impending work at the site. There is also a possibility of issuing a Code Red alert to notify neighborhood residents before work begins.

Another area resident asked if Animal Control will go in and make sure that snakes and rats that reside in the structure will be captured or eliminated so they do not escape into the surrounding neighborhood when work begins.

"There are huge rats living there (at the Rotunda) and that's a concern to the neighbors," the resident said.

Albert said he will talk to Chief Hunt about that and determine whether the city will take care of that concern or hire someone else to do the work.

"We definitely don't want them (rats and snakes) running all over the neighborhood," he said.

Another resident asked about the potential of water runoff from the demolition site affecting area properties.

"It won't be a concentrated deluge of water, but a steady spray," McRae said. "Runoff is not anticipated. It will be a mist instead of a stream of water. If there is a freak rain event during the demolition, everything will get diluted and washed away and there will be essentially no impact (to the nearby environment)."

One neighbor said she has cattle and deer living nearby and asked if they should be removed before demolition.

"No, especially with our environmental controls," McRae said. "I have a degree in veterinary medicine, and I know a thing or two about that. Engineering controls will control that aspect."

Cross said the asbestos on site will be contained so that it will not pose any hazard to surrounding areas and residents to prevent any materials from dispersing.

"How much dust and commotion will it create when you bulldoze the building?" a neighbor asked.

"There will be dust — we can't do anything about that," Cross said. "Whenever anything comes down there is dust. We have to control it with water, so it won't go very far."

Another neighbor asked what will happen if it is determined that air quality is a concern during monitoring of the work.

"We will issue a stop work action and re-evaluate specifications to determine how to stop problems and determine how to better control emissions in a more effective manner," McRae said.

## Battalion commander traces family legacy with Army aviation

BY LT. COL. JENNIFER BOCANEGRA  
1st Cavalry Public Affairs

Lt. Col. Brad DeLoach took command of 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment "Lobos", Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division in February 2022 while the battalion was deployed in Europe. The battalion which consists of seven different companies supports the largest and most diverse mission across the brigade.

DeLoach began his career as an aviation officer with the U.S. Army after receiving a commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps with Presbyterian College out of Clinton, South Carolina in 2004.

DeLoach said he chose a life of service because every male in his family aside from one grandfather served in the military in some capacity. His dad served in Korea with the U.S. Army band. His parents always encouraged him chase his dreams of becoming an Army Officer.

"I always wanted to join the service," he said. "Every male in my life served in the military growing up."

After being inspired to pursue a career with Army Aviation by 82nd Airborne Division pilot, Capt. Kimberly Hampton, who was killed during combat operations in Iraq, he was selected to serve as an aviator and went on to complete qualifications to operate CH-47 Chinooks and OH-58 Kiowas. During the past 19 years of service, DeLoach has held a range of leadership and staff positions at all levels of command. He currently leads a formation consisting of over 500 service members including enlisted Soldiers, warrant officers and commissioned officers who operate and maintain a fleet of CH-47 Chinooks, UH-60L and HH-60M Blackhawks that support a variety of missions from medical evacuation to transporting personnel and equipment.

"I love supporting the ground force commander either on their worst day or best day," he said. "I enjoy what I do and will continue to do this as long as I feel I'm still making contributions to the team and my family is still with me."

Almost three years ago while working

at the U.S. Army War College (USAWC) DeLoach, who adopted as an infant, connected with his birth family through an at-home genealogy test.

"I checked the USAWC database and discovered a U.S. Army Aviation colonel named Edwin "Bud" Henry," he said.

After some preparation and consideration, DeLoach worked up the courage to reach out to Bud through a phone call.

Henry is now 81 years old and retired as a colonel.

"It was stunning. I listened to what he had to say very quickly and I said you are my grandson," Henry said. "This is the phone call I've been waiting 40 years for."

In reflection of connecting with his grandson, Henry expressed his joy in meeting his great grandchildren and hearing about DeLoach's career.

"It's been amazing. He is interested in my war, Vietnam, and we talk about both of our careers with the service," he said. "I'm so proud of his career. He is a people person who cares about his soldiers."

## RANCHES

FROM PAGE A1

a half of each other."

"I will say the terrain makes it very difficult to connect those two," Mannix said.

"You'd need to have a four-wheeler and something that flies," Commissioner Keith Taylor joked.

Miller suggested that the MRB engineering firm be given an opportunity to review the plans before the commissioners voted on the plat and suggested waiting until the July 11 meeting for a vote.

"I believe it would be a minimal cost," Miller said.

"It's my view if these were small lots, a city-type subdivision, it would warrant that," said Commissioner Kyle Matthews. "I don't see that it would be worth spending the money in this case. I recommend approval of the plat with a construction bond of \$3,446,117.79 and with a completion time of January 2024."

That motion was seconded by Taylor.

Commissioner Ryan Basham asked if Miller could find out how much it would cost the county to have an engineering firm review plat submissions in the future, and Miller said he would check on that.



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Submit all news articles, classifieds and display advertising by 10am Tuesday 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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**OUR MISSION:** The Gatesville Messenger shall provide news and insights to our readers through the independent and impartial presentation of information that educates, enriches and entertains. We are proud to be a community newspaper committed to the people we serve.

# Folks around town



ALEX MEELBUSCH | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Amy Gabriel

## Say hello to our neighbor, Amy Gabriel!

Amy is a Store Manager at Walgreens in Gatesville. She has been with Walgreens for more than a year and loves going into work each day. She enjoys working with customers and patients to meet their needs with the utmost customer satisfaction.

If you happen to see Amy around town, say hello! She is one of us!

FROM MY FRONT PORCH

# Friendship comes in all shapes, sizes, and ages.



BY SAM HOUSTON

Sam Houston is a syndicated columnist and newspaper executive. He is also an author, playwright, actor and entertainment producer/promoter.

Since I began writing this column, I have occasionally written about my friend Miss Jayne.

There has been enough written about her that I occasionally get comments from people on the street, or emails from readers wanting an update and asking how she is doing. For those of you who do not know Miss Jayne, she is a 93-year-old widow originally from Durant, Oklahoma, but has lived in Gainesville, Texas for over 70 years. She is a retired public school music teacher, a good Christian, and my close friend. Just a little over a week ago, I moved her from Gainesville to an assisted care facility located near me so I could do a better job of keeping an eye on her. It was tough for a 93-year-old to leave their adopted hometown and start a new life, but she is settling into her new location and doing fine.

Staff and residents in her assisted living facility have asked how Miss Jayne and

I are related, and she responds by saying, "we are not related by blood, we are related by love." I am not sure there is a better description of our relationship.

When my mother was alive but lived 400 miles away, she would call my neighbor Miss Jayne to find out what I was up to and how I was doing. Even though I called almost daily and traveled to see mom regularly, she wanted an independent source of information about how my life was going. The two senior citizens would contact each other and "conspire" to keep up on all my comings and goings. They never failed to offer me their advice, whether it was solicited or not. Maybe because I was single for so many years, the two women felt a duty and were compelled to attempt to "mother me."

Once mom died, and Miss

Jayne's son passed from a stroke shortly thereafter, she and I fell into a unique situation. We both had empty spaces in our hearts which needed to be filled and whether it be described as fate, an act of God, or blind luck, our hearts joined. We are close and care very deeply for each other.

For over twenty years we have listened to the problems of each other, offered advice and counsel, but most importantly, always offered support. It is a deep sort of friendship I fear many people never experience. Its very nature makes one feel warm and loved because the obligations between us are completely made by free choice, and not by the obligations of blood. To us, it makes what we share that much more special.

Miss Jayne is pleased with her new surroundings. The food is terrific, the staff is kind and considerate, and she gets to see me almost every day. While the 93 years of living have left their mark on her, she enjoys dining with her new friends, playing bingo, and watching westerns on TV.

We acknowledge the time we have left to share our friendship is dwindling; it may be hours or years, but we know it is short. Our intention is to "use up" every second and relish that we were blessed to have each other in our lives. We are blessed my wife understands our friendship and she so willingly and graciously shares me with Jayne.

Friendship cannot be bought. It cannot be traded for or otherwise acquired. It is one of the greatest assets in our "treasury" of life. Stop and think about your friends for a second. Write that letter or email you have been putting off. Pick up that phone and reconnect with someone who has slipped to the back corner of your life. Sit down with that special person who understands and knows you and tell them how much you love and appreciate them. You will never regret it.

Thought for the day: A true friend is someone who walks in, when the rest of the world is walking out.

Until next time...I will keep ridin' the storm out. sam@hcnews.com

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## County leaders update construction process on Leon Street projects

BY JEFF OSBORNE

Senior Writer &amp; Editor

Two buildings are down, and expansion and construction remain for county buildings on Leon Street.

The Coryell County Commissioners Court presented an update on county construction efforts at a June 27 meeting. Following last month's demolition of the old county jail, which has housed offices of justices of the peace, the old Poston Implements building, which had previously housed the Texas Department of Public Safety, was demolished June 26-27.

The site of the old jail will be used to expand the current jail facility from 92 beds to 147 beds. The old Poston site will become a parking lot for the Leon Street Annex, a justice facility. In the meantime, DPS officers are working from Gatesville Primary School. The justice of peace offices that had been housed in the old jail are temporarily located at the old Gatesville City Hall location across the street from the library. Sierra Demolition has been responsible

for the take down of the old jail and Poston buildings, and Commissioner Ryan Basham said as of June 27, most of the work has been completed.

"There hasn't been a lot of movement at the Leon Street Annex," Commissioner Scott Weddle said. "The engineering firm hadn't provided all the information to Jeff Heffelfinger and Southwest Architects." Weddle said he called the engineering company to make sure the architects had all the necessary information.

That information was due to Southwest Architects by June 29.

"They are supposed to provide a base plan which I've been (requesting) for three months," Heffelfinger said. He added that despite the delays, progress will be made soon.

DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

The old Poston Implements building, which housed the Texas DPS, was torn down June 26-27.



## Coryell County trapper announces upcoming retirement

BY JEFF OSBORNE

Senior Writer &amp; Editor

For nearly 25 years, Lawrence Pruett has been trapping feral hogs and other nuisance animals in Coryell County and the state of Texas, but he announced plans to retire in January 2024.

"As of sometime in January, I'm gone," he told the Coryell County Commissioners Court on June 27. "I've been doing this for 25 years and it's time. If you want to continue this program, we can get the job posted."

County Judge Roger Miller said "there are still nuisance

animals out there that need to be trapped — I don't know if we can let you go."

Pruett said there are "probably more feral animals out there than when I started."

He said the problem with feral hogs had especially become greater.

"I probably caught only three pigs the first three years I worked," Pruett said. The reported local number of feral hogs has since risen into the thousands annually.

The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department estimates there are 2.6 million feral hogs in Texas, and as of 2019, an estimated \$119 million worth of damage is done each year to Texas agricultural endeavors.

Miller said he is "certainly supportive of the (trapping) program continuing."

Commissioner Ryan Basham said he appreciates Pruett's work throughout Coryell County.

"Thank you, Mr. Pruett, for your service — we appreciate all you do," he said.

## County gets update on grant process

BY JEFF OSBORNE

Senior Writer &amp; Editor

A hiccup in following procedures shouldn't delay the county's pursuit of grant funds related to the Coryell County Hazard Mitigation Plan, but it could impact the county's efforts to seek Community Development Block Grant Mitigation (CDBG-MIT) funds.

That was the word reported to the Coryell County Commissioners Court by Steve Manning with Natural Resource Solutions (NRS) during a recent presentation to the court.

Manning said he and County Auditor Matthew Wood and Administrative Assistant Lisa Roebuck have been in discussions with Texas General Land Office (GLO) representatives about the procedural concerns.

"Regarding the HMP, overall, the conversation was positive," Manning said. "The GLO provided a series of steps (to ensure the county is following the proper procedures when it comes to procurement). The county self-reported that the proce-

dures weren't initially followed. With a letter correcting the items, the HMP should be acceptable."

The Texas Department of Emergency Management approved the county's HMP and sent the document to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for approval. The county is awaiting FEMA's response, which is expected later this month.

"I think we're going to be OK with the HMP," Manning said.

County Judge Roger Miller said, "the two biggest takeaways I have regarding the procurement process is to make sure we post items in the local newspaper so the public has an opportunity to see that, and we have a detailed outline of who does what in what sequence to prevent any of those issues in the future."

Miller said the county received 60 requests for information regarding the CDBG-MIT and is working with Langford Community Management Services on that.

"I've been told Langford has responded to

those," Miller said. "We are working so Lisa (Roebuck) can have access to those."

Manning said the county may have to reprocur some items following the proper procurement procedures.

"I don't think the money is at risk, but I think there may be some additional steps the county will have to take to clean that up," he said.

Lillian Reed with NRS said the county received \$300,000 through a Resilient Communities Program (RCP) grant that will focus on two segments — building codes and a land use plan.

"We received \$20,000 for building codes and requested \$280,000 for land use codes," Reed said. "The GLO suggested \$250,000, but we asked for \$280,000 because we will incorporate subdivision regulations in that."

The county will receive 11% of the requested \$300,000 back for administrative fees, Reed said.

"We're about three weeks out from an announcement on it, so it's good news overall," she said.

## Assault arrest made

On June 23, the Gatesville Police Department received a call in the 2000 block of Waco Street, where one person was stabbed.

Coryell County deputies responded to the suspect's location while Gatesville Police officers were processing the incident scene. Officers arrested the suspect and transported her to the Coryell County Jail without incident. The suspect was subsequently charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. She is identified as Kirstin Poston, a 24-year-old Gatesville resident, according to the GPD.

The victim was transported from Coryell Health to another hospital for treatment for life-threatening injuries.

# City of Gatesville presents July 4 fireworks show

**Staff Reports**

The City of Gatesville will present its annual fireworks show on Tuesday, July 4. Fireworks will begin at dark, around 9:30 p.m. The event

will be free for the public to attend.

The fireworks will be set off in the vicinity of Gatesville Independent School District and will be visible

from multiple parking areas around town.

For more information contact 254-865-8951.



COURTESY PHOTO

Independence Day is observed in Gatesville with a fireworks show as well as celebrations at a couple of local churches.

# Grace Bible Church to hold celebration July 4

**Staff Reports**

Grace Bible Church of Gatesville will hold an Independence Day celebration on Tuesday, July 4 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Grace Bible Church has built a permanent tabernacle, where the celebration is set to be held this year. This is a pub-

lic event for the community to attend, and everything is free.

Food will be served until 8 p.m. and includes barbecue sandwiches, hot dogs, chips, watermelon, snow cones, root beer, floats, sodas, water, and desserts.

Activities will include bingo with prizes, train rides,

inflatables, a corn cannon, music, a balloon toss game, corn hole, rat rollers, volleyball, and a dunk tank.

For more information on the celebration contact Grace Bible Church at 254-248-0053. Grace Bible Church is located at 4012 US Hwy. 84 in Gatesville.

# Gateway Baptist Church to hold July 4 event

**Staff Reports**

Gateway Baptist Church is to hold a July 4 celebration

from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. There will be plenty of fellowship, games, food, and fireworks. The event is completely free

for community members to attend.

The event will include lots of free food including chili,

hotdogs, and homemade ice cream. Activities will include a water slide, water balloons, cornhole games,

and observation of the city's fireworks show.

Gateway Baptist Church is located at 2819 South Hwy.

36 in Gatesville. For more information contact 254-865-6924.



COURTESY PHOTO

Many business and government offices will closed Tuesday in observance of Independence Day.

# Closures announced for Fourth of July holiday

Businesses and governmental offices across Coryell County will join the rest of the nation on Tuesday, July 4 in celebration of Independence Day.

Closings in the area include:

**GOVERNMENT**

The offices for the cities of Gatesville and Evant will be closed on Tuesday, July 4. The city of Oglesby offices will be closed on Monday, July 3 and Tuesday, July 4. Coryell County Government offices including the Coryell

County Courthouse will be closed as well.

The Farm Service Agency will also recognize the holiday and will be closed on Tuesday, July 4.

**FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

Extraco, Cadence, Educator's Credit Union, and the First National Bank of Gatesville, Evant, and Oglesby will be closed on Tuesday, July 4.

**POST OFFICES**

All local post offices will be closed on Tuesday, July 4.

**LIBRARY**

The Gatesville Public Library will be closed on Tuesday, July 4.

**SENIOR CENTER**

The Gatesville Multi-Service Center will be closed on Tuesday, July 4.

**MUSEUM**

The Coryell County Museum and Multi-Service Center will be closed on Tuesday, July 4.

**NEWSPAPERS**

The Gatesville Messenger office will be closed on Tuesday, July 4.



**FIRE ANT TOUR**

**GATESVILLE EXCHANGE CLUB**

**The Fire Ant Bicycle Tour is our annual scholarship fundraiser.**

Without the faithful support of these businesses and individuals, we would not be able to provide the scholarships we give each year to graduating seniors. Thank you for helping us continue this effort that benefits our outstanding young people.



The Exchange Club of Gatesville would like to thank the following sponsors for their support in our 27th Annual Fire Ant Tour:

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Bicycle World • Morrell's Dirt Farm • LMNT • Christian Cycling • East Texas Sonar • Scott's Funeral Home

American Legion Post 42 • Leon River Premium Beef • Sun Country Bicycles • Poco Automotive

Comfort Inn and Suites • Bayer Auto • Fincher's Body Shop • Eastwood Baptist Church • Sawdust and Splinters

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# Oglesby community to celebrate July 4

**Staff Reports**

The community of Oglesby will hold a July 4 celebra-

tion Tuesday from 6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

There will be plenty of activities including a bounce

house, free hot dogs, a cornhole tournament, and fireworks show.

To register for the corn-

hole tournament, contact Diane at 254-223-1395 by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, July 4. The cost will be \$40 per person

and all proceeds made will be paid to the winners of the cornhole tournament.

The event will be held on

Main Street in Oglesby.

# Gatesville Riding Club Rodeo to be held July 27-29

**Staff Reports**

The 86th annual Gatesville Riding Club Rodeo will be held Thursday, July 27 through Saturday, July 29. The rodeo starts at 7:30 p.m. Admission is \$12 for adults and \$7 for kids ages 6-12. Kids ages 5 and under get in free.

Each night of the rodeo Mutton Bustin' will be included, which will start at 7 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, and at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday. It will be limited to 20 riders per night and there will be a \$30 entry fee. There will also be a Calf Scramble, which does not require pre-registration.

To register for Junior Barrels, call 254-493-8954 on Monday, July 25 from 7 p.m.

to 9 p.m.

Once again, the rodeo will have its "Bubble Balls and Bulls" event for the spectators to enjoy.

Thursday will be "Military Appreciation Night" with admission fees of \$10 per adults and \$5 for kids ages 6-12. Military ID is required for discount admission.

Friday will have a "Back the Blue" theme, and those attending are encouraged to wear blue to support law enforcement officers. On Saturday, the rodeo will feature an appearance by the Fort Hood 1st Cavalry Horse Platoon.

Gates to the rodeo will open at 6 p.m. The arena is located on Veteran's Memorial Drive in Gatesville.

## CORYELL HEALTH SPONSORS WALK-A-THON



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Coryell Health recently sponsored a Walk-a-Thon for The Longest Day to walk against Alzheimer's. The event was held on the stadium track at Gatesville High School. Coryell Health employees walked with family and friends while remembering those who battle the relentless disease. To raise money for the event, walkers were sponsored for every mile they walked.

# Righteous Roots announces current weekly class schedules

**Staff Reports**

Righteous Roots has started holding weekly classes for the community to attend. The classes will be held in the Righteous Roots building located at 904 East Leon Street in Gatesville.

Each Monday there will be a women's Bible study at 10 a.m., a parenting class held from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and a youth Bible study group at 6:30 p.m.

Every Tuesday there will be a parenting class from 3

p.m. to 4 p.m., a parenting class from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and a men's Most Excellent Way group at 7 p.m.

On Thursdays, an anger management class will be held from noon to 1 p.m., a parenting class from 3 p.m.

to 4 p.m., and a women's support group at 6 p.m.

Righteous Roots is a Christian organization established in 2018. Righteous Roots seeks to provide education, emergency safe housing, and advocacy to

individuals fleeing abusive situations. Their mission is to provide safe refuge and guidance to individuals experiencing abuse-related trauma.

For more information contact Righteous Roots at 254-

651-3600 or by email at melanie@righteousroots.org.

# Be sure to stay hydrated in our Texas summer heat

**Staff Reports**

As temperatures rise throughout the summer, it is essential to stay hydrated to keep body joints lubricated, to regulate body temperature, to prevent infections, to deliver nutrients to cells, and to keep organs functioning properly.

According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, "An increase in hot summer days, where it felt at least 90 degrees, was associated with an average of 1,373 deaths each year. This ranged from an additional 752 deaths in 2008 to 2,337 in 2011."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said,

"Anyone can be at risk to the health effects of heat, but some are more vulnerable, including pregnant people, people with heart or lung conditions, young children, older adults, athletes, and outdoor workers."

The CDC has provided the following tips to keep cool in the hot summer:

1. Keep your body temperature cool to avoid heat related illness.

— Stay in an air-conditioned indoor location as much as possible.

- Schedule outdoor activities carefully, and be sure to wear loose, lightweight, light-colored clothing and sunscreen.

- Take colder showers or baths to cool down.

- Do not leave children or pets in cars.

- Check on individuals most at-risk twice a day including the elderly, the very young, and people with chronic diseases or mental illness.

2. Be sure to stay hydrated because your body loses fluids through sweat, and you can become dehydrated during times of extreme heat.

- Drink more water than usual.

- Don't wait until you are thirsty to drink more fluids.

- Drink from two to

four cups of water every hour while working or exercising outside.

- Avoid alcohol or liquids containing high amounts of sugar.

- Remind others to drink enough water.

3. Stay informed on local weather forecasts so you can plan activities safely when it's hot outside.

- Check local news for extreme heat alerts and safety tips.

- Watch for the symptoms of heat illness. Heat exhaustion symptoms include heavy sweating; weakness; cold, pale, clammy skin; a fast or weak pulse; nausea; or fainting.

Heat stroke symptoms include a high body temperature above 103 degrees Fahrenheit; hot, red, dry or

moist skin; rapid or strong pulse; and possible unconsciousness.



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## LETTER

**No offense, but here's my opinion.**

This is not intended to OFFEND ANYONE, BUT as a tax payer I do feel I have the right to express my opinion.

I love small town Gatesville, knowing people personally, especially our local businesses.

My personal opinion (which isn't worth much) is there are many ways we can improve our town:

1. Traffic - many people are willing to run red lights, talk on cell phones - endanger others - finding a way to STOP this.

2. Making more accessible transportation for the elderly who no longer can drive.

3. Personal safety - not the need for tourists - many elderly women, especially, live alone - want to

feel safe.

4. Continue to care about our neighbors - look after each other.

Yes, there are always changes in life, some changes are good, some are not so good, only about MONEY.

Yes, money is required for many projects, but what is best for TAX PAYING CITIZENS. All of everything belongs to God to begin with.


I, for one, do not want to be McKinney, Waco, Austin, etc.

What does it mean to become an economic engine for the community (MORE TAXES)?

Sorry, I do not believe we need a FIRM to tell us what Gatesville needs; how about listening to the Gatesville citizens and what THEY WANT and NEED.

A very elderly citizen,  
**Lissa Derrick  
Gatesville**

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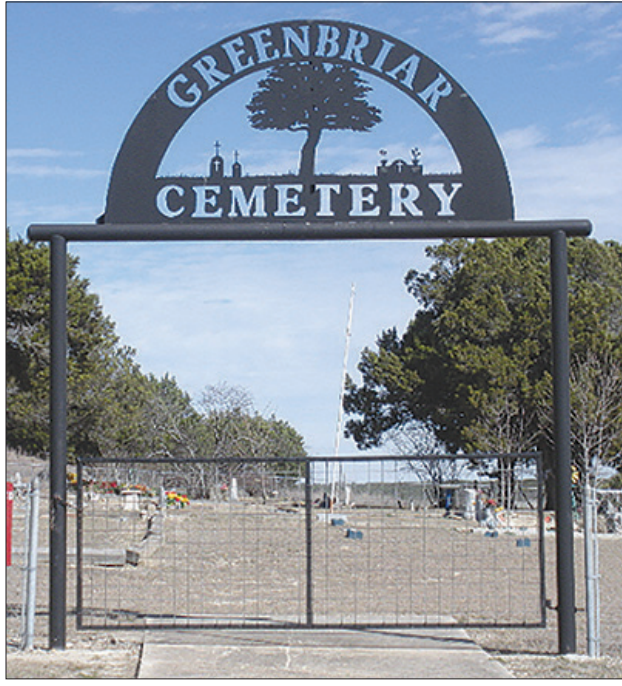
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COURTESY OF FIND A GRAVE

Greenbriar Cemetery

## Greenbriar Cemetery receives Designated Texas Historical Cemetery honor

BY SHERRY LAWRENCE  
Coryell County  
Historical Commission

The Greenbriar Cemetery, located on Greenbriar Road near South Mountain, has been honored with the Texas Historical Commission's approval as a Designated Texas Historical Cemetery. The designation brings protection at the highest level of Texas law, as well as historical distinction to another Coryell County cemetery.

Greenbriar Cemetery originated with Robert Crofford Burt's donation of one acre of his land for use as a public cemetery, shortly after he and his family settled on his 136-acre Texas land grant, in 1878. R.C. Burt and his wife Margaret Emeline Duncan Burt's infant son John Wesley Burt, born and died in 1880, is the earliest known burial in the Greenbriar Cemetery.

Although Greenbriar Cemetery was a public burial ground throughout most of its existence, the majority of those buried there are descendants

of the various branches of the R.C. Burt family. These burials include former distinguished military servicemen, community leaders, and one nationally acclaimed professional football legend, Clyde "Bulldog" Turner.

The original one-acre cemetery property expanded to two and one-half acres when the W.R. Burt family deeded the cemetery to the Greenbriar Cemetery Association in 1975. Additional property was deeded to the association in 2009, by Peggy Burt Blanchard.

In 2009, the Greenbriar Cemetery Association decided to limit future burials to close relatives of those who were buried in the cemetery at that time, making the cemetery a private burial ground.

Application for a Texas Historical Cemetery Marker will begin in 2024, and approval for the marker will add to the historical recognition for this important Coryell County cemetery.

# OBITUARIES

## Tracy Sullivan

December 28, 1964 - June 25, 2023

Tracy Lynn Sullivan, age 58, of Gatesville, went to be with her Lord and Savior on Sunday, June 25, 2023.

Funeral services were held at 2 p.m. on Thursday, June 29, at First Baptist Church, with Keith Steward officiating. Private family interment followed the service at Restland Cemetery.

Tracy Lynn Sullivan was born on December 28, 1964, in Gatesville to Jerry Dale and LaRue Painter Sullivan. They were and always remained a treasured part of Tracy's life. She went to school in Gatesville from the 1st through the 12th grade, graduating from Gatesville High School in 1983. After graduation, she attended McLennan Community College and graduated from Baylor University in 1990 with a Bachelor of Science in Education. As well as being a devoted "Gatesville Hornet," she was proud to be a "Baylor Bear." After graduating from Baylor, she taught 2nd grade for fourteen years and one year of 1st grade for Killeen Independent School District. She then taught 4th, 5th and 6th grade for fourteen years for Gatesville Independent School District. She retired in 2018 after 28 years in education.

Tracy accepted Christ at the age of eleven, joining First Baptist Church of Gatesville. She loved her



church and never considered going anywhere else. She served as Chairman of the First Baptist Church Academy for three years and taught Sunday School, where she made many good friendships to include Lera Lam and Linda Lam.

She was preceded in death by those she loved dearly, her Grannie and Papa, Jim and Elsie Graves Painter; Nannie, Eudell Sullivan; aunt and uncle, Wayne and Nellie Sullivan.

Tracy is survived by her parents, Jerry and LaRue Sullivan; dear cousins, Brenda Liddicoat and husband, Rod, Melissa Blaisdell. She is also survived by a cousin, Jimmy Glover and wife, Nancy, and special friends, Bobby and Joan Harrington.

In lieu of flowers, Tracy requested that memorials be made to her church, First Baptist Church, 912 E. Main Street, Gatesville, TX 76528.

## Dannie Fay Harrison

June 9, 1948 - June 19, 2023

Dannie Fay Harrison, of Willis, went to be with the Lord on June 19, 2023, at the age of 75, while surrounded by her family.

Fay was preceded in death by her parents, Troy and Pearl Whisenhunt; sister, Martha Baize; brother, Troy Lee Whisenhunt; and daughter, Laura Harrison.

Fay is survived by her husband, Bill Harrison; son, Trey Harrison, wife Deanna, and their children Emillie and Will; son, John Harrison, wife Candi, and their children Lilliann and Walker, and their granddaughters, Heather Harrison and Hannah Harrison-Cornwall, as well as a host of other loving relatives and friends.

Fay was raised on her family's ranch in Turnersville. This is where her love of gardening and livestock all began. Fay was the salutatorian of Turnersville High where she enjoyed playing volleyball and basketball. She was also crowned Coryell County Farm Bureau Queen her senior year.

Fay met her husband Bill at Sam Houston State University and they soon married, 11 months later, in 1970. When the family came along, Fay and Bill's home was always busy with fair-bound chickens, pigs, and cattle as well as active children. Fay was not only a mother to her own children, but she cared for many others who were always welcomed with open arms into her home.

Fay's home was always filled with the wonderful aromas of her delicious home style cooking.

Specialties included delicious venison with cream gravy, pot roasts, and fresh vegetables from Fay's well-tended, prolific garden. Fay was always prepared to feed any and all friends and strangers that the family brought home with the warmest of smiles.

Fay was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Conroe for over 25 years. As a retired educa-



tor of forty-two years, Fay will be fondly remembered by many former students and faculty of Willis and Conroe Independent School districts where she served as a math teacher and high school guidance counselor. She was described as being patient, kind, loving and a friend to many.

Bill and Fay were married for fifty-three years and often celebrated their anniversary at the Annandale Ranch near Sabinal, TX. Swimming and tubing in the beautiful Frio River, early morning deer hunts, delicious cookouts around the campfire, visits to the bat cave at dusk and the wonderful fellowship of friends and family are some of the most cherished of memories that the Harrison family shared. Fay was at the heart of these memories and loved returning there even after Alzheimer's had begun to take its grim toll. At her request, her ashes will be distributed in the Frio River near the place she loved so much.

She supported many local organizations such as the North Montgomery County Support Group, Willis Ag Boosters Club, and the Montgomery County Fair Association.

A memorial service for Dannie Fay Harrison was held June 30th at 10 a.m. at the North Montgomery County Community Center located in Willis, Texas. In lieu of flowers, donations to the Willis Ag Booster Club would be appreciated (PO BOX 1735 Willis, TX 77378).

## Preston Shelton

December 26, 1951 - June 25, 2023

Preston Shelton, age 71, of Gatesville, passed away on Sunday, June 25, 2023.

Memorial services are scheduled for 12 p.m. on Wednesday, July 5, at Flat Baptist Church with Carlos Webb officiating.

Preston Wayne Shelton was born on December 26, 1951, to the late Allen and Nell Altum Shelton of Gatesville. He grew up and attended school in both Flat and Gatesville. In 1969, he enlisted in the United States Army and was stationed in Korea until 1971. He was a plumber by trade and also worked as a truck driver for a short period of time.

He enjoyed fishing and jeep riding. He was also a beloved father, grandfather, great-grandfather, and brother.

Preston was preceded in death by his parents; sisters, Betty Summers, and

Connie Hodges; and great-grandson, Isaiah Cole Richards.

He is survived by his children, Chance Shelton and wife, Laci, Davinda Restivo and husband, Greg, Amanda Avery and husband, Brian, Terri Shelton and fiancé, Matt; sisters, Peggy Smith and husband, Michael, Bonnie Webb and husband, Walt; brothers, Ricky Shelton and wife, Pam, Eddie Shelton, and Billy Shelton; brothers-in-law, Eddie Summers, Gary Hodges; grandchildren, Steven Cochran, Tucker Bruton and wife, Jayme, Dylan Richards, Jaylen Richards, Kooper Hughitt, Presley Shelton, Kyler Shelton, and Kason Shelton; great-grandchildren, Shawna Bruton, Keira Bruton, and Sophia Richards; and several nieces and nephews.

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## Genealogical Society to meet July 11

### Staff Reports

The Coryell County Genealogical Society will meet at 6 p.m. on July 11, 2023, at the Gatesville Public Library. Sherry Lawrence will present a program on methods for sharing family genealogical information.

After spending countless hours accumulating and organizing family records, genealogists are faced with a common problem: what to do with the information. In the past, genealogies were published in books; but that method of sharing and ensuring preservation is now joined by several digital options. Other possibilities include decorative albums featuring individual ancestors or family groups. The inclusion of photographs and copies of fam-

ily records is a way to make your information more interesting and bring life to your presentations.

No matter the choice for sharing and preserving your information, genealogists should take measures to make their family aware of the importance of preserving your hard work. Even if immediate family members have no current interest in your work, making the information available for future genealogists will assure that your family's contribution to society will not be forgotten.

The Coryell County Genealogical Society members welcome the public to their meetings and hope everyone who shares our interest in genealogy and local history will join them.

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COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL



# The man who designed the Coryell County Courthouse

BY DAVID SCOTT  
Staff Writer

With the upcoming 125th celebration of the Coryell County Courthouse getting closer, some history buffs might be interested to know about the actual construction of the building and about the architect who was responsible for the planning of the grand structure.

In May 1897, architect Wesley Clark Dodson was commissioned to draw up plans and specifications for a third Coryell County Courthouse at a contract price of 3.5% of the total building cost.

The only stipulations imposed were that the struc-

ture exhibit a cupola with a Seth Thomas Clock, that the cupola be clad in copper, have a bell not less than 800 pounds, and a metal roof.

Dual statues of Liberty and Justice were to be located at the north and south entrances. A district feature of the statuary is that the Goddesses of Justice statues were to be without blindfolds, depicting "Justice is never sightless, but rather all-seeing, all knowing."

The architectural styles reflected the character of the designer and the people of Coryell County as well, since most architects were hired by the ballot of local resi-

dents who favored one style over another. The courthouse construction was estimated to cost \$74,000.

Dodson, a native of Alabama, was a Civil War veteran who was wounded while in battle and later it was reported that he returned home from the war "broken in health and cripple." Although Dodson never completely recovered from his war wounds, his work as an architect "seemed to have soothed his creative spirit."

From Alabama, Dodson traveled to Galveston, Texas and later moved to Waco.

When Dodson was commissioned to build the Co-

ryell County Courthouse, he had already been hired to build courthouses across the state during a 15-year period, from 1883-1898, which was often referred to as the "Golden Age" of courthouse construction.

Courthouses designed by Dodson were considered to be the most aesthetically pleasing of the 254 courthouses in Texas - most of which have been included on the National Register of Historic Places - including the Coryell County Courthouse.

Dodson's architectural details such as doorways, tower clocks, window, and roof treatments are often adapted or identically re-used in all of his courthouse designs that were constructed in the 1880s and 1890s with the exception of the Coryell County Courthouse.

An important feature of Dodson's Coryell County creation is the massive classical porticos, differing somewhat in scale and treatment from the north and south entries.

The south portico has paired corner columns, while the north has single columns. The porticos rise from a one-story base of rusticated stone with arched entries in the lower level.

Red sandstone Corinthian columns support white sandstone pediments, with the five-pointed start of Texas inset in contrasting carved stone.

Scottish stonemasons, some of whom worked on the state capitol building, were hired to lay the stones.



COURTESY OF FINDAGRAVE

Coryell County Courthouse architect, Wesley Clark Dodson

The Scotsmen chiseled and pre-cut the stones to the exact size at the local quarries. The stones were numbered before being hauled to the building site in horse-drawn wagons. The numbers were used to show just where the stones belonged in the construction of the building.

Mary Helen Dodson, the great-granddaughter of the architect, described her great-grandfather as being "a remarkable man, a peaceful man of great faith and integrity. I learned how his faith and his determination to lead a useful life gave him the resilience he sorely needed." She continued, "I came to understand why Wesley built courthouses, jails, schools, and churches, institutions he believed Texas needed in order to become what he called 'a good society.' He became one of the foremost post-Civil War architects during that Gold-

en Age of courthouse construction."

The architect of the famed Coryell County Courthouse died on August 1, 1914, in Waco at the age of 85. He was buried at Oakwood Cemetery in Waco alongside many other Texas dignitaries including Governor Pat M. Neff who was born and raised in Coryell County and was a frequent visitor to the courthouse in Gatesville.

The Coryell County Historical Commission, in conjunction with Coryell County Judge Roger Miller and the Coryell County Commissioners will host the 125th anniversary celebration of the courthouse on the south lawn on Saturday, July 22. Coryell County residents are encouraged to attend this special celebration to honor the history of this nationally recognized structure created by Wesley Clark Dodson.



DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

A few of Dodson's blueprints of the courthouse are on display on the first floor of the courthouse.

## A history of Erichsdahl's European cathedral on the Texas Plains



BY TUMBLEWEED SMITH

Tumbleweed Smith of Big Spring is a newspaper columnist and producer of The Sound of Texas radio series.

I was privileged to be the guest speaker for the Memorial Day Ceremony at Erichsdahl. The only thing there is a church and a cemetery, but the sense of community is extremely strong.

People came from the nearby communities of Stamford, Avoca, Lueders, Pleasant Valley and other

places farther away. The program included patriotic songs and poetry, prayers, a flyover of four aircraft and a

bagpiper dressed in Scottish attire who played Amazing Grace. The event was held in the cemetery that had nearly 100 American flags on the graves of veterans. Then the crowd went to the church for refreshments.

The Bethel Lutheran Church is 100 feet tall and has a steeple that can be seen for miles in any direction. When a member dies, the bell rings the age of the deceased. Church historian Phil Swenson said that the church has about 150 members and attendance is about 45 to 50 for Sunday services.

"It really does look like something you'd find in Europe. Growing up we called it a castle," he said.

The church dates to 1905 when the first services were held around a chuck wagon on land donated by S.M. Swenson, a rancher responsible for a lot of Swedish people settling in Texas. Erichsdahl is named for his son, Erik Dale. In the church's early days, the sermons were in the Swedish language and Swedish customs prevailed. The first church building went up in 1907 and was known as The Little White Church on the Hill. The cost of building it was \$2,520. Services were both in Swedish and English.

"The present church was built like a church in Germany," Swenson said. "The architect wanted it to appear as rising from the red hill

where it is located. It was to have a value of \$42,000 plus \$25,000 for native stone and donated work. It was completed in 1943 when workers were scarce because so many were fighting in World War II. The seating capacity is between 450 and 600 people. Families in the community donated dozens of stained-glass windows. The original bell, over 100 years old, is still used every Sunday."

The pastor who guided the church through several decades was Hugh B. Haterius. He became the fourth pastor in 1919 and served 49 Years. He died in 1970. Reverend Haterius supervised the building of the church and the parsonage, both built

with stone dug up from the church pasture. Horses and mules pulled sleds or fresnos to scrape up the boulders that were then broken up by sledgehammers and crowbars, then hauled away in wagons to the building site. Three professional stonemasons and carpenters did the building with the assistance of church members who volunteered their time and money. It took four years to build.

In 1962 the church started a public smorgasbord, which draws huge crowds. It takes place every other year. The proceeds go to the upkeep of the church.

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## 88th annual Kinsey, Coskrey family reunion

Submitted Item

Descendants of early pioneer families of Coryell County, the Kinseys and the Coskreys, will gather for their annual reunion on July 21, 22, and 23, 2023. This will be the eighty-eighth time that the reunion has been held; the first time was in 1934.

The family will gather for dinner and fellowship on Friday evening, July 21, at the Senior Citizen Center, 208 N. Lutterloh, in Gatesville. There will be an open meeting at the same location on Saturday, July 22, beginning at 8:30 a.m. There will be a brief business meeting, genealogical programs, door prizes, and other activities.

Family members will be able to do local research. Dinner will be at Rancher's on Saturday evening.

A covered dish meal will be held on Sunday, July 23, at the Senior Citizen Center. The building will be open early for visiting, games and memorials of those family members who passed away in the two years. Descendants of Thomas Kinsey Sr. and Sarah Jane McNutt, and descendants of James Knox Polk Coskrey and Nancy Dorentha Vining are encour-

aged to attend. As in the past, family members will bring covered dishes for lunch.

All descendants and interested persons are invited to attend the gatherings. For more information, contact Barbara Huntley, 254-223-1802, or Cathy Wood Osborn, 254-721-0674.

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# CLASSIFIEDS

099  
**PUBLIC NOTICES**

Request for Proposal (RFP)  
Development of Coryell  
County  
SS4A Action Plan

June 27, 2023

Re: Coryell County 2023 Safe  
Streets and Roads for All  
(SS4A) Action Plan RFP

Project Overview:

Coryell County is seeking qualified firms or individuals to Create a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan for Coryell County. The County has applied for funding from the United States Department of Transportation to complete a plan as indicated in the Scope of Work set out in the RFP.

Service providers should submit proposals for the completion of all the activities listed in the Scope of Work. The County will, in its sole discretion, determine the contract awarded, and may decide not to award any contract.

The submission requirements for this proposal are included in the published RFP, which can be accessed on the Coryell County Website at:

<https://www.coryellcounty.org/page/coryell.Bids.RFQ>

The deadline for submission of proposals is July 24, 2023 at 4:00 p.m. It is the responsibility of the submitting entity to ensure that the proposal is received in a timely manner. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered for award, regardless of whether or not the delay was outside the control of the submitting provider. Coryell County reserves the right to negotiate with any and all service providers submitting timely proposals.

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- ▶ 11 +/- acres, Arnett, TX in Coryell County. Good tree cover, nice home site, will need to be fenced on the east boundary. MCWSC may be available. \$179,500
- ▶ 11.64 acres, 3/2 home south of Evant, TX in Coryell County. Nice porch, large master bedroom and bath, barn, workshop, seasonal creek, Hwy 281 Frontage. \$850,000
- ▶ 17.85 acres, 296 Cross Timbers Lane, Gatesville. 2 homes, main home 3 Br, 2 Ba brick home, open floor plan, second home 2 Br, 2 Ba single wide mobile home, 2 covered parking spaces, good tree cover, rolling terrain, storage building, excellent fences, 1 stock pond. \$749,500
- ▶ 20.02 acres, Evant, TX, CR 421, Hamilton County. Lot No. 21 Mulberry Creek, rolling terrain, good tree cover. \$250,000
- ▶ 20.02 acres, Evant, TX, PR 42107, Hamilton County, Lot 43 Phase 6 Rio Escondido, rolling terrain, good tree cover, season creek. \$265,000.
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- ▶ 33.43 acres, near Coryell City, Coryell County, FM 929 & CR 260 frontage, rolling terrain, good views. \$295,000
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- ▶ 41.0457 acres, Hamilton, TX, CR 404 in Hamilton County. Rolling terrain, scattered tree cover, approx. 25 acres farmland, 2 stock tanks, & good fences. \$449,000
- ▶ 47.332 ac. south of Ireland, TX. Good tree cover, rolling terrain, good fencing on 3 sides, southside will need to be fenced. \$395,000
- ▶ 50.24 acres, 3/2.5 home, 2171 CR 419, Evant, TX. Rolling terrain, 40% being good tree cover, the remaining balance being open pasture, great views. \$675,000.
- ▶ 58.51 acres, 3 Br, 2 Ba frame home, 6630 FM 183, Evant, TX, water well, several outbuildings, rolling terrain, scattered tree cover & 2 stock tanks. \$585,000
- ▶ 60.23 acres, CR 238 near Turnersville, TX. 1 stock tank, good fences, scattered tree cover, rolling terrain. \$421,610
- ▶ 68.9 acres, 3/2.5 rock home, 101 Mac Dr., Gatesville, TX. Approx. 2900 ft of Leon River frontage, ceramic tile floors, carpet in the bedrooms, vaulted ceiling, rock fireplace, granite countertops, breakfast bar, garden tub, metal building approx. 45 ft x 24 ft, older barn approx. 50 ft. x 30 ft., cattle pens, 1 stock tank ,approx. 48 acres of coastal. \$1,249,500
- ▶ 82.43 acres west of Evant, TX, Mills County. Open pasture, scattered mesquite tree cover, native grasses, 1 stock tank, fenced on 3 sides. \$560,524
- ▶ 88.007 acres, 36 ft. Travel Trailer, 25 ft. x 30 ft. metal barn, Electricity, 1 tank, seasonal branch, water well, scattered tree cover, good hunting. \$720,000
- ▶ 105 acres south of Pearl, TX on Self Rd. Good tree cover, rolling terrain, small branch, barn, rain harvest system. \$743,775
- ▶ 106 +/- acres, CR 180, Purlmela, TX, Coryell & Hamilton County. Good tree cover, rolling terrain, 1 tank, paved road frontage, electricity is across the road. \$832,100
- ▶ 179.562 acres, 1.6 miles south of Gatesville, TX. FM 116 frontage, great views, stock tank, rolling terrain & scattered tree cover. \$1,230,000
- ▶ 199.86 acres, 4 BR, 2 Ba Manufactures Home, 1856 sq. ft., 1805 CR 180, Purlmela, TX in Coryell County. Front porch, fully furnished, 2 stock tanks, 8 ft. x 40 ft storage container, storage building with water storage tank, barn, cattle pens, water well 560 ft deep, rolling terrain, good tree cover and paved road frontage. \$1,568,901

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GAME ON

# Raft

*The most fun you'll have while being attacked by a shark*



BY JENNIFER HARRISON

My opinions on computer gaming and some of my favorite games. I've been playing games on the home computer since the days of the Trash 80. I love indie, open-world, unique, puzzle, and resource games. The cake is a lie.

If floating on a raft in the middle of the ocean, catching fish, staying hydrated, and avoiding shark attacks is your cup of distilled water, then "Raft" is the game for you.

"Raft" is an open-world sandbox survival game. It was developed by three Swedish students from Uppsala University as the studio Redbeet Interactive. First released as a free download on the indie platform Itch.io in 2016, it became very popular, and was released as an early access game on Steam on 23 May 2018 by Axolotl Games. The game is playable as single player or cooperative.

Instead of land, you're on the ocean on a tiny little raft. Your only tool is a plastic hook with a rope attached. You can use this hook to gather resources from the water, like planks, palm leaves, plastic, and the occasional barrel or crate.

Thirst and hunger are big obstacles in the game. You start out with your thirst

and hunger levels at full, but you'll need to solve your thirst and hunger problems before doing anything else. If you don't drink or eat, you will eventually die.

As if that's not tough enough, at timed intervals a shark will attack the boat. He'll come by and nom on one of your raft squares, and you can choose to try and defend your raft with a sharp stick, or just wait and rebuild it after he goes away. The shark will also attack you if you get in the water.

The game is mostly on the open ocean, but sometimes you'll find an island to explore. After you make yourself an anchor (because your raft will drift off if you don't) you can get off the raft and explore the island and the shallow water around it for more resources.

Eventually had to turn the sharks off because I kept having anxiety attacks every time I fell in the water, and gaming is supposed to be fun.

Raft has four gameplay modes. In Hard Mode, if you die, you have to start over. Regular Mode allows you to resurrect on the raft if you die. If you build a bed, you'll be resurrected with more health. Peaceful Mode is the regular game, but without being attacked by animals like sharks and bears. Creative Mode allows you to build with unlimited resources, but you won't be able to go anywhere.

**RAFT GAMEPLAY**

Eventually you'll have enough resources to create a way to distill your own drinking water. You learn how to build tools and weapons. You need a fishing pole to catch fish, and you'll need to build a little grill to cook your fish. Expand the raft with planks and plastic and armor the edges so the shark can't chew up your raft.

Build a larger grill to make a bunch of food (and cook the larger fish,) build a cooking table and have fun assembling recipes from the ingredients you find, even build a smoothie machine to use up all that fruit you'll be gathering. Some recipes give you health bonuses that give you a boost when exploring or fighting.

You'll become a farmer because you'll need a sustainable source of food. Collect seeds from the foods

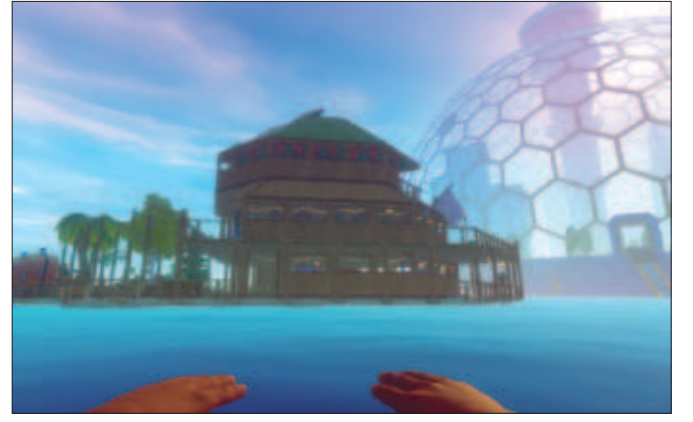
you gather to plant them. You can capture animals for milk, wool, and eggs, or hunt them using a bow and arrow. You can even grow trees so that you have a source of wood.

One of the most fun, yet useless things in this game is that it's also a raft design game. After a while you stop needing to grind for more planks, palm leaves and plastic. You can expand the raft, put more floors on, put engines and a fuel system on it, and decorate it with various objects from the destinations in the game.

**RAFT STORYLINE AND PUZZLES**

As you progress through the game, you'll learn how to build various items. One of the most important components is the receiver. It tells you where large islands are located. It also starts the 'story' of the game. Soon after building the receiver, you'll find an island with coordinates for a radio tower. You'll pick up clues that will go into your journal to lead you to the next destination. As you solve the puzzles and find more clues, you'll learn about the fate of the planet, hear stories of other travelers trying to survive on the open ocean, and encounter other characters that are playable in the game.

The puzzles in this game are pretty decent but aren't



SCREENSHOT COURTESY REDBEET INTERACTIVE

My raft at one of the story destinations in Raft, called Tangarora.

all that difficult. Most of them fall into the move this box, move that box. But there are a couple of puzzles that require agility and accuracy, and I find that kind of gameplay incredibly annoying. If I had agility and accuracy, I would be outside playing basketball. It's the Lara Croft Tomb Raider problem - to solve some puzzles the character has to jump up a series of platforms, and with one wrong step they'll fall and have to start over, or worse yet, die, requiring you to reload the game from that position and try again.

So, I look for loopholes within the game. With an open-world system, there are multiple solutions to some of the puzzles. For example, instead of navigating a path by jumping, I'll find

the rock wall behind the path, and figure out a way for my character to jump to the top of the wall, and then jump into the next environment and skip it entirely.

I finished Raft a couple of months ago. I first got Raft as part of their Early Access in 2018. They finished creating assets and environments for the game in 2022. I loved the discovery of the new environments, sailing or motoring up to the location and cruising around it to see what it looked like. Now I have seen all of it, there is nothing left to discover, and I'm kinda bummed. I still play it just so I can go fishing or work on the raft. It's now a three-story monstrosity with plants, trees, a llama, a goat, and two chickens. And a piano.

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# Ridin' & ropin' at the Ranch Rodeo



**ALEX MEELBUSCH | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER**  
Cowboys from throughout the area had a chance to test their skills during a Ranch Rodeo on June 24 at the Gatesville Arena sponsored by the Gatesville Riding Club.

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## GISD tennis courts named for Vernons

Submitted by GISD staff

The Gatesville Independent School District recently voted at their June 19th meeting to name the Gatesville High School tennis courts after long-time supporters of the GHS tennis program, Glenn and Sue Vernon.

Both graduates of Gatesville High School and both prolific tennis players, Glenn and Sue have dedicated their lives to teaching the sport to young people. They were extremely appreciative of the honor and recognition.

The formal dedication of the courts will most likely take place once the weather cools.

Sue (Yows) Vernon, a 1965 graduate of Gatesville High School, learned to play tennis while at Southwest Texas State University (now Texas State University) from 1965-1969. She played singles and doubles in women's tennis leagues in the Central Texas area and also competed in USTA tournaments while travelling with Glenn during his journeys across Texas to play as well.

"I played with my friends many years for exercise and fun...tennis is a lifetime sport," she said.

Sue began offering tennis lessons in 1971 at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor under the direction of tennis professional Dr. Lewis Hilley. She began teaching tennis at Gatesville High School in 1973, back when the two asphalt courts were located on the GHS campus and has been doing individual lessons ever since.

Her regimen now includes year-round lessons that can run anywhere from three to six days a week and are scheduled morning and afternoon, most of which are a minimum of one hour.

"I teach junior high and junior varsity players, then turn them over to Glenn once those kids reach the varsity level," she said.

Glenn Vernon, also a graduate of Gatesville High School, took up playing tennis a year after graduating from GHS in 1972. He learned the game from Robert Trogolo, who was at that time one of the Top 100 players worldwide.

"I competed in major tournaments throughout Texas and was a top-ranked player for a number of years winning in both singles and doubles. I competed against teaching professionals, college players, and some former touring professionals," he noted.

Glenn gave his first tennis lesson to a



ALEX SCOTT THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

The Gatesville Independent School District tennis courts have been named for Gatesville High School graduates Sue and Glenn Vernon, who have been instrumental in working with Gatesville youth and helping to develop a strong love for tennis locally.

GHS player in 1974 and also taught several adults. He has tutored many Hornet players during that time, including many whose names are on the accolade boards at the courts for successes at the district, regional and state levels. Now, he gives lessons 10 months out of the year and averages 25-30 hours per week on the courts with lessons that last anywhere from one to two hours.

"I'm on the court seven days a week, unless there is a school tennis match taking place. I do take off two months in the fall for deer hunting season," he said.

In addition to giving lessons, Glenn and

Sue are almost always in attendance and supporting the student-athletes at Gatesville High tennis matches in the fall and spring seasons. They have also been there for district, regional, and state competitions that required a trek across state in support of Hornet athletes. They also encourage the tennis players to participate in tournaments outside of school and attend many of those events as well.

In reaction to the naming of the courts, Glenn and Sue Vernon responded:

"We are both humbly honored that the tennis courts will bear our names. We both

have played tennis about 50 years and have taught lessons almost that long. We have especially poured our hearts and bodies into helping the Gatesville High School tennis program over the last six years. We couldn't do any of this without the support from parents that are providing an opportunity for their child to improve. Equally important is the support from the GHS tennis coaches, athletic director, superintendent, school board and a school system that allows and encourages community involvement."

## Gatesville's Dunahoo chosen to officiate at state level

BY ALEXANDRA MEELBUSCH  
Staff Writer

Gatesville resident David Dunahoo was recently selected to officiate at the UIL Class 4A State Softball Championship game held in early June in Austin at the Red and Charline McCombs Field.

Each year, the Texas Association of Sports Officials (TASO) selects umpires from across the state to officiate a state championship game. The rigorous selection process includes background checks, training sessions and rules conferences, which includes taking a test to receive a score of over 90% on rules and knowledge, as well as a history of playoff games.

Dunahoo was nominated to officiate at the 4A State UIL Championship game by his local Central Texas TASO chapter.

"There are over 150 local chapters of TASO that organizes officials for UIL sport," Dunahoo said. "Our board shares the nominations with the chapter members as a way to honor those that have worked hard at their craft and inspire others to do the same."

Dunahoo has been involved in many sports throughout his lifetime. He coached his daughters from early on for many years in different sports. Later, when his daughters entered high school sports, he started to search for ways to stay connected to the sports he loved. A couple of long-time local officials urged him to look into becoming a umpire for softball.

Dunahoo first began umpiring in 2014 for Gatesville's local league, and later decided to officiate for high school softball and baseball in the spring of 2015.

"My love of the game, outdoor nature, and interest in seeing young people compete in a fair and positive atmosphere, have influenced me to constantly improve my abilities," Dunahoo said.

Recently, he had been officiating 8U girls coach-pitch softball in the spring.

"I am part of several softball organiza-

*"If I do my job right, no one should ever remember I was there. ..."*

**DAVID DUNAHOO**  
Softball umpire

tions that keep me busy," Dunahoo said.

He calls in select tournaments from Dallas to San Antonio, and has been asked to travel to Louisiana, Arkansas, Georgia, and Colorado. He has been officiating in junior college games for several years, and recently added NCAA Division III college softball games to his schedule as well.

Umpiring is not the only thing Dunahoo does as a career. His main occupation is as a shop foreman at Kaibas Machine & Tool. Being a foreman provides him with the freedom to pursue his umpiring goals.

"I would like to thank the owners and my staff for that," Dunahoo added.

From calling for the Gatesville Parks and Recreation, youth softball and baseball, flag football, and moonlighting once or twice at volleyball games, he has worked endlessly to officiate for any game he can.

To officiate at a state championship game is an honor, and getting there takes training on rules and knowledge, working to perfect the craft, and by giving the game your full attention.

"If I do my job right, no one should ever remember I was there, because the focus should be on the athletes," Dunahoo said. "An umpire must have a level head and a calm demeanor."

During any game there is a large range of emotions from coaches, players, and fans.

"Navigating these emotions and relationships is sometimes tricky, but someone who can stay calm and keep the players and



COURTESY PHOTO

David Dunahoo of Gatesville (top left) was recently selected to umpire the UIL Class 4A state championship softball game in Austin.

coaches focused on the game can succeed," Dunahoo said.

Dunahoo believes that the key to success in umpiring comes from respect for the game and its participants.

"Competition and team sport creates a

system of relationships and accountability that helps young people push each other to succeed, be humbled in those successes, and be gracious in the losses," Dunahoo said. "We do not go through life alone; we are always part of a team."

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# Gatesville youth track competes in McGregor



GLADYS WHITENBURG | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Gatesville summer youth track participants recently competed against other area children from throughout Central Texas at a track meet in McGregor. The Gatesville athletes have also competed in meets in Riesel and Gatesville.



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# Night at the Museum coming to Gatesville July 8

**Staff Reports**

The Boys and Girls Club of Gatesville and the Coryell County Museum and Historical Center have collaborated to present the community with a "Night at the Museum" on July 8. Included will be a tour of the museum, dinner, and a performance put on by Gatesville's youth. Guests are to arrive by 6 p.m. Upon entry, guests will take a tour of the museum and members of the Boys and Girls Club will put on live action skits throughout

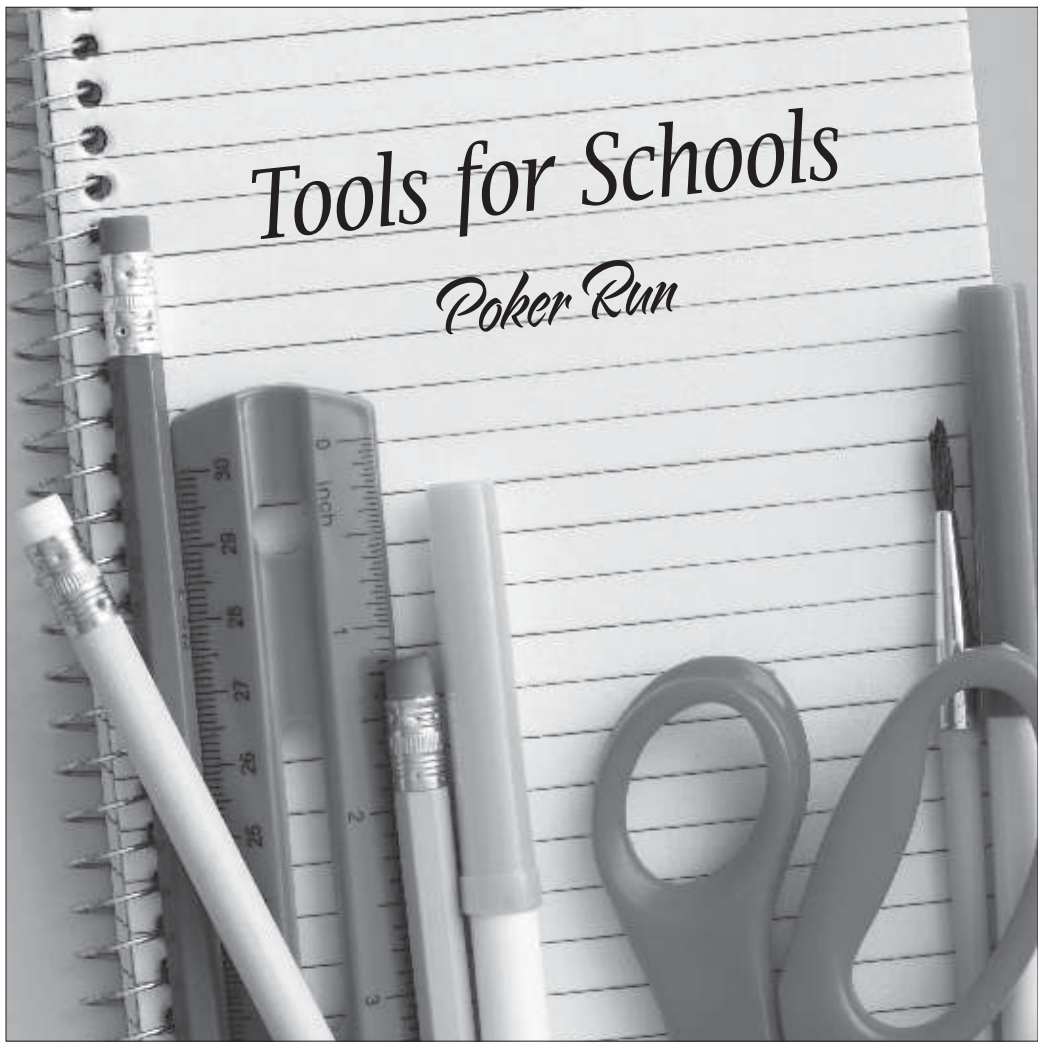
the museum while portraying historical figures of Coryell County. A dinner will follow including Marry Me Smothered Chicken, garlic mashed potatoes, and green beans. Following the dinner, a performance with entertainment will be held in the Gilbreath Room. Playwright Terri Schexnayder has been coaching the Boys and Girls Club kids to help them with their roles in the "Night at the Museum" segment of the evening. The students participating will be Jadan Moore who will be

in the Spur Room playing the part of Mr. Lloyd Mitchell; Rose Van Calcar who will be in the schoolroom playing the part of an early day teacher; Caleb Blum will play the part of the night watchman; Brent Hudson will be stationed at the Model T car where he will portray a Justice of the Peace; Braxten Bell will be stationed in the Soda Shop/Drug Store and doctor's office where he will be portraying Dr. Lowrey; and Haven Wiley will be portraying the first and only female sheriff of Cory-

ell County, Mrs. W.W. (Willie Birdie) Hollingsworth who served in 1934. When the tours of the museum are over, the attendants will lead the visitors and guests upstairs for dinner and entertainment. Creative writer and poet, Jena Kirkpatrick, will be assisting the kids performing onstage during the dinner hour. Jena has been working with Gatesville's youth for about seven years in poetry and creative writing workshops and has done amazing work with the youth and allows

them space to put their feelings on paper. The Boys and Girls Club staff that will be helping with the evening will include Julie Hudson, Ramona Romero, Ruben Romero, Patricia Chisholm, and Gabi Robles. Heather Ashley and Hannah Ashley will be servers. The docent and museum volunteers that will be on hand to help with the evening will be Cathy Taylor, Rebel Brown, Gavin Williams, Bethany Como, Nancy Garvin, Sherry Hopson,

Rhonda Mohler, Jann Dworsky, Mary Williams, and Erv Adams. Only 75 tickets will be sold, as there is limited space available for the event. Be sure to stop by the Boys and Girls Club, located at 2533 E. Main Street in Gatesville to reserve your ticket, or by contacting 254-865-8347. The Coryell County Museum and Historical Center is located at 718 E. Main Street in Gatesville.



## American Legion Post 42 presents Tools for Schools July 22

**Staff Reports**

American Legion Post 42 of Gatesville invites the community to participate in a Poker Run called Tools for Schools on Saturday, July 22. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. at the American Legion, and the Poker Run will begin shortly after. There will be a \$20 buy-in fee. Tools for Schools is a charity event to raise money for children to get backpacks for the upcoming school year. Poker Run is like the original poker game, except with a creative twist. Instead of sitting down at a poker table, you and some fellow riders will ride motorcycles between checkpoints. Depending on the version of poker, there are usually between five to seven checkpoints. Once you arrive at the first checkpoint, everyone gets a card from a deck of playing cards. Then everyone rides to the next checkpoint. Once there, everyone gets a second playing card. Then the process repeats until you've reached the final checkpoint. At that point, everyone shows their cards, and whoever has the best hand wins. According to the Guinness Book of Records, the largest poker run happened in 2013 in Fort Collins, Colorado, where 1,494 participants raised \$13,000 for the Realities for Children fund. American Legion Post 42 of Gatesville is located at 214 Watts Lane. For more information contact 254-865-4134.

**CORYELL Kids**

**COLOR Time**

**NATIONAL Camera DAY**

June 29

**National Camera Day**

Words can be found in any direction (including diagonals) and can overlap each other. Use the word bank below.

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

Camera	Image	Digital
Lens	Photo	Exposure
Film	Shutter	
Flash	Print	

**Great FACTS**

- ⦿ The first camera was invented in 1826 by Joseph Nicéphore Niépce, and it was called a "camera obscura."
- ⦿ The first photograph was taken in 1827 by Niépce. It took about 8 hours to expose and create the image.
- ⦿ The first handheld camera was invented in 1888 by George Eastman, and it was called the "Kodak."
- ⦿ A camera works by capturing light through a lens and recording it onto a light-sensitive surface, such as film or a digital sensor.
- ⦿ The quality of a photograph depends on several factors, including the camera's resolution, the lighting, and the skill of the photographer.
- ⦿ Megapixels are a common measurement of a camera's resolution. The more megapixels a camera has, the higher the quality of the image.
- ⦿ Some cameras have interchangeable lenses, which allow the photographer to choose the best lens for the shot they want to take.
- ⦿ There are many types of cameras, including point-and-shoot cameras, DSLR cameras, mirrorless cameras, and action cameras.
- ⦿ Many smartphones have built-in cameras, and they have become a popular way to take photos and videos.
- ⦿ Photography is a popular hobby and profession, and it can be used for a wide variety of purposes, such as capturing memories, creating art, and documenting history.

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PEARL NEWS

# Come see us today... you'll be glad you did!



BY BETSY CLARK

Pearl News Correspondent

**T**oday's the day! The Pearl Cottage Bookstore and the Pearl Bluegrass events are going on now! Be sure and grab friends and family and join in the fun at the Pearl Community Center and the Pearl Cottage Bookstore. You'll be glad you did!

The remaining dates for 2023: Aug. 5; (second Saturday in September) Sept. 9; Oct. 7; Nov. 4; and Dec. 2.

The Ray family enjoyed a day of track and field events in Gatesville last Saturday. Trent placed first in discus and shot put, and Ryley placed second in discus. Alyssa ran hard in the 800 meters which is not easy when it's 110 degrees or more on that track. I think she deserves a gold medal for even attempting such a fete! Congratulations to all!

The annual Pearl Church of Christ Revival will be held July 8-9. The Saturday evening service begins at 7 p.m. with Wil Smith preaching. A homemade ice cream supper follows the service. Sunday morning's service begins at 10:30 a.m. with Chris Halpayne speaking. A meal will follow that service. In September, the annual

Atchley Fish Fry and Labor Day Auction benefiting His Kids takes place on Sept. 3. Just a little teaser as to one of the items in the auction — a grandfather clock! Everyone is always invited to all of these events, and everyone is always invited to this wonderful church! Their service time is 10:30 a.m. each Sunday morning.

Notes from The Pleasure and Profit Club, June 22, 1933 (90 years ago): "The club met with Mrs. Henrie Elam. The afternoon was spent quilting a quilt and piecing a double wedding ring quilt. After the working period, the house was called to order. The minutes were read and approved. Eleven members and several visitors were present. The

motion was made and carried that we disband at this meeting for the summer. It was also voted that we elect new officers before we disband. The following officers were elected: President Mildred Manning, Vice President Mrs. C. J. Shook, Secretary Vera Whitt, Assistant Secretary Eliouse Nabors, Reporter Bonnie Brown. A committee was appointed to write a constitution for the Pleasure and Profit Club."

This little book is available for purchase at the Pearl Cottage Bookstore for \$15. If you have any connection to Pearl, you will enjoy the book immensely as it carries us through the ages as to what wonderful deeds these dear ladies accomplished in the community and the

Pearl Community Center. Their motto was "With malice toward none, with charity to all." What a timeless council still today!

This week's Bible verse comes from Psalm 25:4-5: Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. NIV

Be sure and like the Pearl Community Center, Texas Facebook page and the Pearl Cottage Bookstore and Resale Shop Facebook page! Please submit any Pearl news to [betsyclark47@yahoo.com](mailto:betsyclark47@yahoo.com).

## Log jam being removed at Mother Neff State Park

BY DAVID SCOTT  
Staff Writer

The recent completion of the Leon River bridge on SH 236 at Mother Neff State Park, made way for the removal of a massive log jam. Work on the log jam began on June 12.

In the past, seasonal flooding at the park was an issue which resulted in many log jams that have occurred at the Leon River bridge. The log jams, often massive in size and length, would occur when the logs became wedged between the low water bridge piers which resulted in the lower park grounds and buildings to be submerged in water.

The new bridge was constructed to be longer and to have an increased elevation of the road from both approaches. Without the piers underneath, in the future logs and debris can pass under the bridge without causing another massive log jam which would result in more flooding.

According to Melissa Chadwick, Superintendent of Mother Neff

State Park, the park along with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department have been working closely with U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service in a joint effort to remove the log jam from the Leon through the Emergency Watershed Protection Program.

The massive number of submerged logs and above water level debris in the actual jam, is taking several manhours to remove.

"Hopefully the job will be completed by the end of summer," Chadwick said.

As far as restoration of the original park site along the river, Chadwick stated: "Planning discussions for the original part of the park have already begun, but no restoration projects have been initiated yet."

"The completion of the TxDOT bridge on 236 and the log jam removal project have been the first steps before proceeding with restoration for the historic structures and in the river bottom section of the park," she said.



Workers slowly removing massive amounts of timber in the log jam from the Leon River at Mother Neff State Park.

DAVID SCOTT | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

## Whatever happened to....

**20 YEARS AGO (2003)**

Jane Pitts, daughter of John and Patricia Pitts of Oglesby, attended the American Legion Auxiliary Bluebonnet Girls State at Texas Lutheran University in Seguin.

Air Force Airman Michael J. Orlando had graduated from basic training at Lackland Air Force Base. He was a 2002 graduate of Evant High School.

James Geaslin, son of Jimmy Knox of Gatesville and James and Carol Shaw of Waco, had advanced to the National Speed Skating Championships in Lincoln, Nebraska.

Several members of the Gatesville Lions Club, and family members, had traveled to Kerrville to tour the Texas Lions Camp. The facility provides camping experience for children with special needs.

Organizers for the 2003 Relay For Life were astounded by the response to the American Cancer Society fundraiser when it raised more than \$40,000.

**30 YEARS AGO (1993)**  
Carl and Mary Wright celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary with a dinner on the Brazos Queen II. Carl Wright and the former Mary Lavauhn Ritchie were married on July 2, 1943, in Belton.

Kelsey Sage of Gatesville participated in the Gatesville Track Club meet at McKamie Stadium. Sage, competing in the girls' 5-6-year-old division, won four events.

Ciril Pearce was to be honored on his 76th birthday with a come-and-go party at the January Care Home in Evant. His children, Patsy Pearce Elliston and Al Pearce, hosted the party.

Fred Daschofsky was being honored by the Farmers Insurance Group Companies for outstanding sales achievements during 1992.

Texas House Speaker James "Pete" Laney offered praise to state Representative Allen Place for his skillful handling of the state's Penal Code and for his leadership.

**40 YEARS AGO (1983)**  
A retirement party honored Bonnie Chappell for 30 years of work. The re-

tirement party was held at the Gatesville Country club, where she was showered with the crowd's best wishes.

Lisa Melton and Melanie Jones served as counselors at Glen Lake Methodist Camp. Youngsters attending the camp were Adam Wilkins, Todd Traylor, Kathryn Miller, Debbie Ozmer, Lisa Pruitt, and Stacy Pruitt.

Construction was underway on the new \$75,000 Ward Insurance Agency building located at 1107 Main Street. A tentative completion date was thought to be in October.

Carol D. Zeigler received his 30-year service award from the State Department of Highways and Public Transportation. His wife was the former Nell Haines of Gatesville.

Coryell Memorial Hospital's Employee of the Month was Pam Keeton of the nursing department. Keeton worked as a nurse's aide and LVN student at the hospital for two years.

**50 YEARS AGO (1973)**  
Dr. Stephen Eeds, a 26-year-old, became a new

dentist in Gatesville. He joined the staff at the Williams-Kenworthy Dental Clinic. Eeds received his Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from Baylor College of Dentistry in Dallas.

Shana Barba, five-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gary M. Barba of Gatesville, had placed first runner-up in the La Petite division at the Texas State Our Little Miss Pageant in Waco.

Airman Ray L. Wright, son of Mrs. S.K. Strafford of Gatesville, had been assigned to Lowry Air Force Base in Colorado after completing Air Force basic training.

Michael James, age 18, son of Deputy Sheriff and Mrs. Alvin James of Gatesville, had volunteered for a four-year tour of duty in the Marine Corps. He was a 1973 graduate of GHS.

Laura Simmons, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Simmons of Oglesby, was the subject of a feature story in an issue of People, published by the Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio.

### SUDOKU

Solution for the puzzle that ran June 24.

6	4	7	1	8	5	2	3	9
1	2	8	3	9	4	5	6	7
5	3	9	6	2	7	8	1	4
2	9	1	5	4	8	6	7	3
4	8	3	7	6	2	9	5	1
7	5	6	9	3	1	4	2	8
8	6	5	4	1	3	7	9	2
3	7	2	8	5	9	1	4	6
9	1	4	2	7	6	3	8	5

Puzzle by websudoku.com

5	9		2			6	4	
			7			2		
		6			4		5	8
		8			3			7
9								1
6			4			3		
2	5		3			8		
		9			5			
8	6				2		7	9

Puzzle by websudoku.com

## Coryell County 4-H to hold summer awards party July 19

Staff Reports

Coryell County 4-H will hold its summer awards party on Wednesday, July

19. All 4-H friends and family members will need to RSVP online at <http://coryellagrillife.org> by Wednesday, July 12.

The awards presentation will be held at Raby Park located on South 8th Street

in Gatesville, and will begin at 7 p.m. A swimming party will take place shortly after the awards presenta-

tion from 8-10 p.m. at the Gatesville City Pool located at 300 South 8th Street in Gatesville.

For more information contact Coryell County AgriLife Extension Office at 254-865-2414.

## GISD Choir to hold a bake sale fundraiser on July 22

Staff Reports

The Gatesville Independent School District Choir

boosters will hold a bake sale on Saturday, July 22 to support their travel funds for their trip to California.

The bake sale will take place from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Vintage Royalty. There will be plenty of baked

goods including cookies, cupcakes, brownies, and cakes.

The Coffee Saloon will be in attendance as well and will be donating 15% of its proceeds back to the GISD Choir Boosters.

For more information visit [gisdchoir@gatesvilleisd.org](mailto:gisdchoir@gatesvilleisd.org) online.

# TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY™

## SADDLE UP

Tarleton's Gaillard places sixth in CNFR saddle bronc riding competition

TSU Sports Information

STEPHENVILLE — Tarleton State University saddle bronc rider Gus Gaillard saved the best for last in his first College National Finals Rodeo, earning an 81 in the championship finals of saddle bronc riding on June 17 in Casper, Wyoming.

Gaillard, leading three Tarleton rodeo athletes in the short go, finished sixth in the event. He earned his finals spot with a 78.5-second score on his opening ride and 74.5s in rounds two and three.

The sophomore agribusiness major from Morse, Texas, qualified for the CNFR as the 2023 National Intercollegiate Rodeo Association Southwest Region reserve champion saddle bronc rider.

Team roper Wyatt Bray and barrel racer Jordan Driver also represented Tarleton in Casper.

Bray and partner Cutter Thomison from Western

Texas College in Snyder, regular-season regional event champs, missed their steer Saturday for no score. However, they posted a 6.2, 6.6 and 5.6 during the week, good enough for seventh in the average.

Jordan Driver, representing Tarleton in the College National Finals Rodeo, finished ninth in barrel racing.

Driver, an integral part of the Southwest championship women's team, finished ninth among barrel racers with a 14.34 run Saturday. Her best time in Casper came in the first round when she flashed a 14.25 in the cloverleaf. She followed that with a second-round 14.56



PHOTO COURTESY OF TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY

Gus Gaillard of Tarleton State University placed sixth in the College National Finals Rodeo's saddle bronc riding competition in Casper, Wyoming.

and a 14.37 to qualify for the finals.

Driver was the 2023 reserve champion in the re-

gional all-around competi-

tion, as well as the regional title holder as a breakaway roper.

## Kalyn Hill to join sister Kelci playing for Tarleton softball team

TSU Sports Information

STEPHENVILLE - After the recent additions of a pair of pitchers from the transfer portal, Tarleton State University's head softball coach Mark Cumpian announced the signing of class of 2025 Seattle University catcher, Kalyn Hill.

Kalyn joins her sister Kelci in Stephenville, reuniting the pair for the first time since playing together at Murrieta Mesa High School in California when Kelci was a senior and Kalyn was a junior in 2020.

Kalyn Hill spent her first two seasons of her collegiate career behind the dish for Seattle U. In two seasons, she batted .297 with eight home runs and 57 RBI. She posted

a slugging percentage of .430 and reached base 35.8 percent of the time. She is 11 hits short of reaching 100 at the collegiate level.

Last year as a sophomore, Kalyn Hill batted .319, which was more than 40 points higher than her mark as a freshman. She also increased her slugging percentage to .435 in 2023. In seven less games played, Hill had one less hit and drove in 24 runs while hitting three home runs.

In 2022, she started 55 games, primarily behind the plate. She ranked third on the team with nine doubles. She drew 19 walks, the second most by a Redhawk on the season. Her 33 RBI tied for second on Seattle U.

Kalyn Hill graduated from Murrieta Mesa High School in 2021. She spent four years on the varsity squad and was named captain her last two seasons of her prep career. She was tabbed first team All-League her senior season. She was the recipient of the Team PRIDE Award awarded to a student-athlete who exhibits school pride the most on and off the field.

The Murrieta native isn't moving closer to home with her transfer, but she is given the opportunity to play with her sister, the third pair of sisters to play together with the Texan softball program, and the first since 2020.

Hill indicated that she intends to major in Kinesiology at Tarleton.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TARLETON SPORTS INFORMATION

Tarleton State University has announced the signing of Seattle University catcher Kalyn Hill, who will be joining her sister Kelci in playing softball for the Texans.

## Veteran football assistant Pepe Pearson to coach Tarleton's running backs

TSU Sports Information

STEPHENVILLE — The depth of experience on the Tarleton State University football coaching staff keeps growing. This time it's on the offensive side as the Texans announced Friday they have hired Pepe Pearson as an assistant coach to lead the running backs.

Pearson arrives in Stephenville with 21 years of collegiate coaching experience, with stops at Tennessee State (2021-22), Marshall (2016-20), Youngstown State (2015) and Ohio Dominican (2001-14). Pearson starred as a running back himself in the 1990s, playing for several NFL teams after rushing for more than 3,000 yards and 30 touchdowns as a college player at Ohio State University.

"We're very blessed to be able to hire Pepe, a highly, highly decorated player

back in the mid-90s," head coach Todd Whitten said. "He's been highly recommended by every head coach he's ever worked for, so I feel very fortunate to get him at this late day. I think he's going to be really good for our backs. It's always good when a guy has played the position at the highest level to continue coaching that. He's just a really good hire for us and he's an equally good person. I'm excited and looking forward to working with him."

Pearson coached under his former Buckeye teammate Eddie George the last two seasons at Tennessee State. Last year his main two running backs totaled 1,153 yards on 245 carries (4.7 yards per game). In 2021, he helped his lead back to Second Team All-Ohio Valley Conference honors. "I would like to thank Coach Whitten for giving me this amazing opportunity to coach in the great state of



COURTESY PHOTO

Pepe Pearson, a former college and NFL player, has been signed as an assistant football coach to lead the running backs at Tarleton State University working with head coach Todd Whitten.

Texas and work with an outstanding group of coaches," Pearson said. "I am also excited to work with a talented group of players. I have had amazing support

in my short time here and the people at Tarleton State University have certainly extended a warm welcome to me and my family. I am ready to get to work and

help this team achieve a high standard of success on the gridiron. Go Texans!"

Pearson spent five years as the running backs coach at Marshall, where he helped lead the Conference USA's Most Valuable Player to the tune of 1,387 rushing yards and 11 touchdowns in his award-winning season. The Herd made a bowl game in each of his last four seasons there.

Before a season spent at Youngstown State, Pearson served 14 seasons at Ohio Dominican, where the Panthers won four conference championships. He was the running backs coach and special teams coordinator there. In 2013, Pearson had two 1,000-yard rushers, the first time in school history a pair reached the 1,000-yard mark in the same season.

As a running back in the NFL, Pearson spent time with the Detroit Lions, San Francisco 49ers, Chicago

Bears, Pittsburgh Steelers and Cleveland Browns. George and Pearson shared the backfield at Ohio State for two seasons (1994-95), and in 1996, Pearson became a preseason Heisman candidate. That year he exploded for 1,484 yards on 299 carries (5.0 yards per game) and 17 touchdowns in 12 games. He led the Buckeyes to a Rose Bowl win in 1997. Across his four-year career at Ohio State, Pearson was twice All-Big 10, twice the team's MVP, and the Buckeyes were 41-10.

The Euclid, Ohio, native was the runner-up Mr. Ohio at the prep level. He rushed for almost 4,500 yards and 49 touchdowns in high school, earning a USA Today All-America award and Northeast Ohio Player of the Year honors.

Pearson and his wife, Semoine, have three children.

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# Wrenches to Wheels project held at Evant ISD

## Staff Reports

The first Wrenches to Wheels project was held at Evant Independent School District on June 20 from 9 a.m. to noon. The program is designed to empower sixth- and seventh-grade students by offering them an opportunity to build their own bicycle with the

help of local professionals. About 20 Evant ISD students and volunteers joined in on the action and built more than 17 bikes in total. Central Texas Workforce Solutions of Central Texas hosts the Wrenches to Wheels program to partner with local school districts and industry leaders. The

event is designed to take place each year during the months of June and July. Participants include Evant ISD, Copperas Cove ISD, Killeen ISD, and Temple ISD. For more information visit <https://workforcesolutionsctx.com>.

COURTESY PHOTOS  
Evant ISD students recently participated in a Wrenches to Wheels project which allowed students to build their own bike to take home. The program helped students broaden their knowledge in mechanics while learning to build their bikes.



# Gatesville Hornet Volleyball Camp to be held July 10

## Staff Reports

For the past 20 years, Gatesville High School has held a Hornet Volleyball

Camp for Gatesville Independent School District students. This year, first through ninth grade students will be able to partici-

pate. The camp will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. from Monday, July 10 through Wednesday, July

12, at the the high school's Sidney L. Pruitt Gymnasium. Registration will begin at 7:45 a.m. on Monday, July 10, or you can register on-

line by using the QR code located on the front of the camp flyer. Gatesville High School is located at 205 South Lovers Lane.



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# LET'S CELEBRATE THE FOURTH!

## Fun facts about America's national anthem



July 4, 2023 marks the 247th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Fireworks will illuminate the night sky, the rich smell of barbecue will be in the air and the country will be awash in red, white and blue splendor. Chances are the swelling melody of 'The Star Spangled Banner' will be broadcast over the radio and on various firework display telecasts.

The national anthem is synonymous with the United States America, and its notes very well may be the patriotic glue that binds the country together. Although the lyrics and music of the song are widely known, many may be unfamiliar with the rich history behind the beloved tune.

### A poem is born

America began its fight for independence from Great Britain in 1775, and the Declaration

of Independence was signed in 1776 to identify the 13 colonies that succeeded in winning their independence from Britain. However, the battles with Britain stretched on. Fights over territories kept disputes between the British Empire and the newly formed United States raging on, and it was during one such fight, and not during the Revolutionary War as some may think, that 'The Star Spangled Banner' was written.

The War of 1812 was de-

clared by the United States to set to right some of the issues that were not resolved after the Revolutionary War. Francis Scott Key was an American lawyer at the time of this war, negotiating for the release of an American hostage being held by the British. Although Key won the hostage's release, he was not able to leave the British fleet where the negotiations took place until the British completed their attack on Baltimore. Key witnessed the British fiery bombs on Ft. McHenry on Chesapeake Bay.

Just before dawn on the morning of September 14, 1814, Key was said to have noticed a huge American flag still waving above Ft. McHenry in defiance to the British attack. This imagery helped inspire the words of a poem that eventually would become the national anthem.

Key penned the poem on the back of a letter he held in his pocket. After the battle was over, and Key was released, he completed the poem at the Indian Queen Hotel, where he was staying. The poem was titled, 'Defense of Fort M'Henry.' The poem was put to music to fit the popular melody 'The Anacreonic Song' by English composer John Stafford Smith. Key's brother-in-law, Judge Joseph H. Nicholson, anonymously made the first printing of the lyrics to the melody and the song was printed in two newspapers. The song quickly became popular and soon after, Thomas Carr of the Carr Music Store in Baltimore, Maryland published the words and music under a new title, 'The Star-Spangled Banner.'

### 'The Star-Spangled Banner' takes off

'The Star-Spangled Banner' became one of the nation's most beloved patriotic songs in the 19th century. According to Smithsonian, the song gained special significance during the Civil War, a time when many Americans turned to music to express their feelings for the flag and the ideals and values it represented. The military used the song for ceremonial purposes, requiring it be played at the raising and lowering of the colors. But many versions of the song were used during these ceremonies and celebrations.

By the 20th century, President Woodrow Wilson wanted to establish a standard version, so he tasked the United States Bureau of Education to provide an official version. In response, the Bureau of Education enlisted the help of five musicians, including Walter Damrosch, Will Earhart, Arnold J. Gantvoort, Oscar Sonneck and John Philip Sousa, to agree on an arrangement. This new standardized version was first played on December 5, 1917 at Carnegie Hall.

It wasn't until March 3, 1931 that 'The Star-Spangled Banner' became the official national anthem of the United States when President Herbert Hoover signed this designation into law.

This Fourth of July, people may be struck by the magnificence of the fireworks or the enjoyment of the parades. But as the music swells, they can also think twice about the significance of the events that inspired the creation of the country's national anthem.



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