



GRANBURY ★ TEXAS

Hood County News

MORE THAN A NEWSPAPER | A HOOD COUNTY LEGEND SINCE 1886

Re-Elect
Roger DEEDS
 Hood County Sheriff
 PD, POLL, ADV, GOLDIE BOLTZ TREAS. FOR DEEDS CAMPAIGN

[SATURDAY, January 13, 2024]

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Visit Granbury Assistant Director Kristen Gibson, left, Executive Director Tammy Dooley, middle, and Event Coordinator Rhiannon Moline, right, pose with 15 Ray Cammack Marketing Awards of Excellence from the Texas Association of Fairs and Events.

FOR JAMES HODGES AND JOHN HENRY LUTON
A Very Special Thank You
 SATURDAY, January 13, 2024

Hood County congratulates two stalwarts of community service on over 50 years of service to First National Bank and the Hood County Community. **SECTION C**

Visit Granbury receives 15 awards in top statewide recognition

From Staff Reports

The City of Granbury Convention & Visitors Bureau - Visit Granbury is thrilled to have received 15 Ray Cammack Marketing Awards of Excellence from the Texas Association of Fairs and Events. The awards were presented at the TAFE State Convention in Galveston last weekend, with Visit Granbury receiving 11 first-place awards and three second-place awards in the state competition — and for the first time — Best Overall.

The Texas Association of Fairs & Events is made up of events and organizations from across the state of Texas. It includes fairs and festivals of all sizes, including city, county, regional and state-wide events, and event promotions. Granbury is in the category "Under 50,000." TAFE

also includes associate members that provide services and supplies to event members.

The TAFE Award of Excellence Marketing Competition recognizes organizations for outstanding promotions and superior examples of promotional and media initiatives. TAFE Marketing and Communications Awards allow members to learn from one another and share great ideas while also providing an opportunity to recognize the efforts of the staff, sponsors, volunteers and supporters who make events possible.

Visit Granbury received a total of 15 awards — including Best Overall — with 11 of the awards being first-place recognitions.

The Visit Granbury team included Director Tammy Dooley, Assistant

Director Kristen Gibson and Event Coordinator Rhiannon Moline. Additionally, Dooley — who serves on the State TAFE Executive Board of Directors — was elected to serve as the TAFE 1st vice president for 2024.

"This recognition is very special for Granbury and is truly a team effort," Dooley said. "We have the best tourism staff, city support and advertising partners you could wish for. Visit Granbury would like to recognize and thank Sinar Media, Hood County News, MPL Public Relations, Brian Clowdus Productions, Good Morning Texas, Simpleview, Inc., Trevu Creative, VYBE Marketing & Media and many others for making our vision a reality."

FIRST PLACE AWARDS

- BEST OVERALL - Visit Granbury - City of Granbury CVB
- BEST MAGAZINE AD - Color or B&W - Wild Celebrations - Dallas Cowboys
- BEST PROGRAM/BROCHURE/FLYER - four or more colors - Uniquely Granbury AAA Discover Texas
- BEST EVENT POSTER - 2023 Celebration Capital of Texas
- Best MEDIA GUIDE/PRESS KIT - Visit Granbury Media Guide

- BEST LIVE NEWS COVERAGE (LIVE) - Charlotte's Web Experience Granbury
- BEST NEWS COVERAGE (recorded or studio) - The Christmas Carol Experience Granbury, Texas
- BEST WEBSITE - visitgranbury.com
- BEST SPECIALITY VIDEO (UNDER TWO MINUTES) - Goosebump Jump Winter Guest
- BEST E-NEWSLETTER OR E-MAIL BLAST - Goosebump Jump Winter Guest
- BEST PIN, BADGE or BUTTON - Granbury Pin

- BEST MISCELLANEOUS MARKETING - Celebration Capital of Texas Banners

SECOND PLACE AWARDS

- BEST NEWSPAPER AD - COLOR - Celebration Capital of Texas
- BEST PHOTO - 49th Annual 4th of July Celebrations
- BEST SPECIALITY VIDEO (2+ MINUTES) - Small Town Big Celebrations

NRC names Strittmatter as resident inspector at the Comanche Peak nuclear power plant

Submitted Item

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has selected Henry Strittmatter as the new resident inspector at the Comanche Peak nuclear power plant in Glen Rose.

"Henry's Naval experience, coupled with the hands-on training he received during inspector qualifications, will help ensure the continued safety of Comanche Peak," said NRC Region IV Administrator John

Monninger.

Strittmatter joined the NRC in 2021 and has served as an emergency preparedness inspector since 2022 in the agency's Region IV office in Arlington. He is a 10-year veteran of the U.S. Navy and served on the USS George Washington aircraft carrier as a nuclear reactor division officer. He holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of New

Mexico.

Each U.S. commercial nuclear power plant site has at least two NRC resident inspectors. Strittmatter joins senior resident inspector John Ellegood at Comanche Peak. They serve as the agency's eyes and ears at the facility, conducting inspections, monitoring significant work projects, and interacting with plant workers and the public.

Commissioners approve purchase of GVFD apparatuses

BY ASHLEY TERRY
Staff Writer
ashley@hcnews.com

The Hood County Commissioners Court approved the purchase of new apparatuses and radios for the Granbury Volunteer Fire Department, reimbursed Granbury VFD for the purchase of its tanker, and approved the donation of funds to Texas EMS to be used toward the purchase of an ambulance during a regularly scheduled meeting Jan. 9.

Hood County Fire Marshal Jeff Young explained during the meeting the Granbury VFD was in need of five 3,000-gallon tanker trucks and five 2,000-gallon pumper tankers/fire engines from Siddons-Martin, the vendor he believed was the "best value for the dollar."

The five tankers are quoted from Siddons-Martin for up to \$2.46 million, while the five custom cab pumper tanker/fire engines were quoted for up to \$4.47 million, bringing the total for all to \$7,168,700. A discount of \$460,000 for paying half the purchase price up front brings the actual total to \$6,735,700.

"I'm gonna say that none of these trucks are under contract at this time, so the cost may fluctuate a little bit up or down," Young said, during the meeting. "Based on the estimates that I got from Siddons-Martin, I went with the high end of their estimate, so there could actually be some real-life savings on top of that as well."

Young added that with the new vehicles, he would also need to order 10 tri-band radios for each truck, totaling \$63,407.50.

"I did speak with Commissioner (Nannette) Samuelson yesterday. I did ask for 10 radios for the 10 trucks. Some of these trucks are going to be replacing others, and I won't need to purchase radios for those trucks if it works out that way," he said. "But looking at a 36-month delivery time, a lot could change between now and then. If I don't need 10 radios when the trucks are delivered, then I'm not going to purchase 10 radios."

On Young's proposal, he also requested the court consider reimbursing Granbury VFD \$334,000 for the purchase of the 3,000-gallon tanker in early 2023. He added he would like the court to consider providing Texas EMS \$350,000 to

PLEASE SEE **GVFD** | A4



138TH YEAR, NO. 2

Local, zone(s): 3 sections, 34 pages, plus supplements | State: 3 sections, 34 pages

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Clint HEAD LEADERSHIP ★ COMMITMENT
 JUSTICE WITH PROVEN INTEGRITY & CHARACTER

GOAL: To ensure fairness and objectivity for all involved in the legal system whether plaintiff or defendant

EXPERIENCE: 5 years Hood County floodplain administrator

For Hood County Justice of the Peace Precinct 1
 POL. ADV. PD. DANNY SHANE FLIPPIN TREASURER FOR THE HEAD CAMPAIGN

A SERVANT'S HEART

COMMUNITY BUSINESS

CHAMBER NEWS

Setting business resolutions for success: A Granbury Chamber of Commerce perspective

As the clock struck midnight and the calendar turned, individuals across Granbury embarked on the annual tradition of crafting New Year's resolutions. While personal goals often take center stage, the Granbury Chamber of Commerce encourages its members to extend this practice to their businesses for a prosperous year ahead.

New Year's resolutions are not only for self-improvement but can also be a powerful tool for business growth. The Granbury Chamber of Commerce understands the significance of setting achievable goals and has devised programs and resources to assist its members in realizing their professional aspirations.

One key resolution for businesses is to enhance their visibility within the community. The chamber offers networking events, workshops and collaborative platforms that facilitate connections among local entrepreneurs. By actively participating in these initiatives, businesses can increase their exposure, build valuable relationships and gain a stronger foothold in the local market.

Financial health is another crucial aspect to consider when formulating business resolutions. The chamber provides access to resources that can aid members in financial planning, budgeting and securing funding. With expert guidance, businesses can set realistic financial

goals, allocate resources efficiently, and achieve long-term sustainability.

For businesses seeking to expand their reach, the Granbury Chamber of Commerce advocates for adopting innovative marketing strategies. Through seminars and consultations, members can stay updated on the latest trends, harness the power of digital platforms, and create effective marketing campaigns. This resolution can increase brand awareness and customer engagement, ultimately driving business growth.

Employee development is a resolution that cannot be overlooked. The chamber offers training programs, mentorship opportunities and skill-building workshops



to empower businesses in fostering a skilled and motivated workforce. Investing in employees not only enhances productivity but also contributes to a positive company culture, making it an essential resolution for long-term success.

Embracing sustainability and corporate social responsibility is a resolution that aligns with the current global trends. The chamber guides

community engagement initiatives, helping businesses contribute to the well-being of society at large.

As Granbury businesses set their New Year's resolutions, the Granbury Chamber of Commerce stands ready to support them in achieving their goals. By actively engaging with chamber programs and leveraging the available resources, local businesses can turn their

resolutions into tangible achievements, fostering a thriving and resilient business community in the heart of Granbury. For more information on how we can best serve your business needs, feel free to reach out, stop by for a visit, or give us a call at 817-573-1622. We look forward to connecting with you and supporting your journey to success.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

We are thankful for our amazing Rising Leaders Granbury Committee Vice Chair, Krystal Woolley with Novelty HR! Krystal has been a part of our RLG program for one year! When asked why she loves being the RLG Committee Vice Chair, she said "Being part of RLG is like joining a cool club where we connect, collaborate, and bring our expertise, experiences, and passions together to make the world a better place. It's all about having a blast while making a difference!" Fun Fact: "I have overseen human resources operations across six continents."

Thank you, Krystal for being our RLG Committee Vice Chair of the Granbury Chamber of Commerce!

COURTESY GRAPHIC



MARY VINSON | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

The historic Hood County Courthouse

Granbury voted 53rd most picturesque skyline in America

From Staff Reports

MovingFeedback.com recently conducted a survey of 3,000 seasoned domestic travelers to rank the 70 most picturesque small-town skylines in America, with Granbury — Texas' only entry — coming in at 53.

Since the dawn of the skyscraper era with the construction of the world's first 10-story iron-framed marvel in Chicago over 130 years ago, cities globally have embraced and reimagined this architectural marvel, crafting skylines that are a spectacle in their own right. The U.S., being a haven of architectural innovation, boasts skyscrapers that defy traditional definitions, now being recognized more for their towering heights — anything beyond 492 feet — rather than the number of floors. These towering structures are not merely landmarks; they are a testament to architectural prowess. From the famed Space Needle and Empire State Building to lesser known yet equally awe-inspiring skyscrapers, the U.S. is home to 20 of the most breathtaking skylines.

But the allure of skylines is not reserved for large cities alone. Scattered across the American landscape are smaller towns with skylines that are nothing short of picturesque. Salem, Oregon, is a prime example, boasting a skyline that marries historic architecture, like the dignified Oregon State Capitol crowned with a gold-plated pioneer statue, with the lush allure of the Willamette Valley. Similarly, Mobile, Alabama's skyline is a captivating blend of historic and modern architecture, set against the tranquil Mobile Bay, mirroring the city lights at night — a scene that encapsulates the city's rich maritime heritage and southern style.

According to MovingFeedback.com, Granbury's skyline is characterized by its well-preserved historic buildings, including classic Texas-style storefronts and Victorian-era structures, contributing to its timeless appeal. Notable landmarks include the Hood County Courthouse, an iconic symbol of the town's history, and the historic Granbury Opera House, which adds cultural and historical depth to the cityscape. Situated along the Brazos River and surrounded by the rolling hills and natural beauty of North Texas, Granbury enjoys a serene and picturesque setting, emphasizing its connection to the Lone Star State's landscapes.

The following lists the top 10 picturesque skylines in America as voted on in the MovingFeedback's survey.

#1 New Bern, North Carolina

America's most picturesque small town is New Bern in North Carolina: New Bern enchants with its historic architecture and the confluence of the Neuse and the Trent rivers. Its skyline is punctuated by the distinct silhouette of the Tryon Palace, with its

colonial-era charm adding to the town's scenic riverfront vistas.

#2 Walla Walla, Washington
Known for its lovely downtown and wine country, Walla Walla's skyline is a blend of small-town charm and natural beauty. The Whitman College campus adds a stately presence, while the rolling hills of vineyards provide a stunning backdrop.

#3 Estes Park, Colorado
Nestled in the heart of the Rocky Mountains, Estes Park's skyline is dominated by the rugged peaks that surround it, offering a breathtaking panorama. The historic Stanley Hotel stands out, offering a glimpse into early 20th-century luxury.

#4 Ojai, California
Ojai's skyline is framed by the Topatopa Mountains, creating a dramatic backdrop for the town's Spanish Revival architecture. The famous pink moment at sunset casts a warm glow that highlights the unique beauty of this artsy community.

#5 Henderson, North Carolina
This charming mountain town boasts a skyline filled with historic buildings and churches, set against the Blue Ridge Mountains. The historic Main Street, with its antique shops and boutiques, is the jewel in Hendersonville's crown.

#6 Leadville, Colorado
At an elevation of 10,152 feet, Leadville's skyline stands high amongst the clouds, with views of the two highest peaks in Colorado. The town's Victorian architecture recalls its mining boom days, contributing to its distinct character.

#7 Bay St. Louis, Mississippi
The skyline of Bay St. Louis is a picturesque mix of coastal and historical influences, with the Bay Bridge stretching across the water. Its small-town feel is complemented by the scenic views of the Gulf.

#8 Valley City, North Dakota
Known as the 'City of Bridges,' Valley City's skyline is characterized by the Highline Bridge towering over the Sheyenne River, adding structural elegance to the city's panoramic views of lush river valleys.

#9 Bath, Maine
Bath's skyline is defined by its maritime heritage, with the mast of historic ships and the Bath Iron Works shipyard. The Kennebec River provides a stunning waterway that enhances the city's coastal skyline.

#10 Jonesborough, Tennessee
Tennessee's oldest town, Jonesborough, offers a skyline that is a mix of historic homes and buildings, with the mountains providing a timeless backdrop. The town's storytelling tradition adds an intangible charm to its scenic views.

To view the infographic showing the 70 most picturesque small skylines in America, visit movingfeedback.com/americas-favorite-small-skylines/.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

"Freddy's Frozen Custard & Steakburgers® was co-founded in 2002 by brothers Bill and Randy Simon with their friend and business partner, Scott Redler. It was named in honor of Bill and Randy's father. Together, they built a brand focused on quality, hospitality, cleanliness and timeless traditions."

Thank you for joining the Granbury Chamber of Commerce!

COURTESY GRAPHIC

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

"Granbury ISD DECA Program prepares emerging leaders and entrepreneurs for college and careers in marketing, finance, hospitality, and management."

COURTESY GRAPHIC

OUR MISSION: The Hood County News 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.

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FROM MY FRONT PORCH

Celebrating those worthy of celebration



BY SAM HOUSTON

Sam Houston is the publisher of the Hood County News. He is also an actor, author, playwright, performer and entertainment producer/promoter.

When I enter the calm oasis of my backyard deck, I sometimes let my mind drift to reflect on what is truly important in life. My regard for the "cowboy way" and attempting to live a life based on hard work, principle and honor may seem frivolous to some and downright old-fashioned to many others. Perhaps as I face the reality of being an old man and knowing the bulk of my life has passed, my mind has turned toward the sentimental. I still cling to the idea that men and women who have led exemplary lives should be celebrated. As such, when I learned of the retirement of two of Granbury's most prominent leaders, I knew something needed to be done.

I would love to be able to tell you John Henry Luton and James Hodges are my good and long-time friends. Unfortunately for me, that would be a misstatement of our relationship. My direct interaction with either man has been only passing moments: perhaps a newspaper interview or attending a civic meeting would be the best description. My knowledge of the two has come largely from the comments and positive thoughts expressed by their friends and neighbors. When I heard these two were retiring from the day-to-day operations at the First National Bank, I immediately felt a need to celebrate the lives they have led over their combined 100 years of service to FNB and their community. The Hood County News is honored to have created a

special section in this week's edition, celebrating two outstanding men who have served our community well. There are so many things to celebrate about these two lives. I begin with the business which they have nurtured, grown and evolved to become a shining example of what a community bank can and should be. Their work and leadership have played a vital role in expanding our community's economic base, growing our town, creating opportunities and a better life for our citizens. There have been so many economic ups and downs, countless business challenges, and so many bank regulatory changes during their work lives, yet these two have persevered. They not only survived but thrived. It is not just the banking business where James and John Henry excelled. I have personally never witnessed a business entity that provides more support to its

community than First National. Whether it be a charity, a school system, a club, or a not-for-profit entity, they are the first to reach for their checkbook or to dig in and lend a hand doing the day-to-day hard work. This attitude of improving the community and the lives of the people who live here is a direct reflection of the men who are retiring. Their leadership should be recognized. They should be honored, and most of all they should be respected. I wish I had moved to Granbury 20 or 30 years before I did. Maybe I would have had the opportunity to have worked closely with James and John Henry on a community project and been a firsthand witness to the many efforts they have made to make our world a better place. I am envious of those who have a close friendship with them. I hope in their retirement we can find a way for this old man to spend a tiny bit of time with

them because I know the interaction will make me a better person. These two have my respect, and it is not something I give away like Halloween candy. It must be earned. These men have done so through their labor and generous hearts. Gentlemen, best wishes as you move toward the next chapter in your lives. Enjoy your family, spend time doing what you love, and bask in the admiration of a thankful and grateful community. God bless you both! Well done! Thought for the day: Why is it when a man retires and time is no longer a matter of urgent importance, his associates generally present him with a watch? Until next time...I will keep ridin' the storm out! sam@hcnews.com 940-727-2145

Folks around town



MARY VINSON | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

Chris Oxford

Say hello to our neighbor, Chris Oxford!

Chris Oxford, a Hood County native, hails from a family that has been woven into the history of the county for generations. His mother, Jean Oxford, was the first kindergarten teacher in Granbury. Chris enjoys living in Hood County with his wife Barbara. They have two grown children, Case and Caitlyn. Case and his wife Shyla recently welcomed their daughter Kelli Jean into the world, making Chris and Barbara first-time grandparents. Caitlyn is happily married to Zach Willig. Chris has always appreciated the generosity and kindness of the people in Hood County and hopes that the county retains its small-town feel and experiences tremendous growth.

Chris has been in outside industrial sales for 21 years. In his free time, he volunteers for the Granbury Basketball Association, Hood County Livestock Raisers Association, and the Hood County Sheriff's Posse. He was a Granbury Volunteer Firefighter in 1984 and rejoined the GVFD four years ago after serving in the military.

The Oxford family has always been a friend of the Hood County News. They rely on the news source for local happenings, and over the years, they have enjoyed personal friendships with folks at the Hood County News. While Chris was serving in the Army, the family made sure he received every edition of the Hood County News. Chris says, "It's not just me; it's a family affair. My daughter Caitlyn has contributed several articles, two of which were on the front page."

Granbury Chic-Fil-A soon to be shut down for renovation

BY EMILY NAVA

Staff Writer emily@hcnews.com

Granbury residents will soon have to say sayonara to Chick-Fil-A Granbury as it is almost time for its \$2.2 million renovation project.

Beginning Jan. 18, the fast-food chain will be shut down for a total of 12 weeks with a reopening date set for April 11.

The project will include the permanent removal of the play area to compensate for the seating changes as preliminary plans show an enlarged and more complex kitchen extending to the doorway of the restrooms.

Many community members have voiced their concerns with the removal of the play area on social media as it was the only fast-food chain remaining in the town with a play center.

The renovation will also include a sec-

ond drive-thru lane installed to help alleviate the drive-thru times for customers and provide more efficient service. "This renovation is very needed, mainly for our kitchen. We currently are just stepping on each other's toes, and we are just out of room," owner/operator Aaron Grant told the HCN back in September. "We just want to serve our community as best as we can and uphold the values of Chick-Fil-A."

City now accepting registrations for adult co-ed softball league



STOCK PHOTO

BY ASHLEY TERRY

Staff Writer ashley@hcnews.com

The Granbury Parks & Recreation Department is knocking it out of the park with the announcement that registration is now open for an adult co-ed softball league.

For years, the P&R Department has hosted the adult co-ed softball league with the goal of providing a fun activity for adults to enjoy as a reprieve from the hustle and bustle of the daily grind.

"It just gives us an opportunity for adults to get out and do something," said Parks & Recreation Coordinator Crystal Brafford. "I mean, I'm busy with my kids' stuff all the time, so to be able to have just a little bit of time for myself is nice."

Teams will consist of 10 members,

with a minimum of seven men and three women on each team. The minimum age to play is 16, with members under the age of 18 required to submit a waiver signed by a parent or guardian.

If an individual is new to the area and wants to participate but does not have a team, Brafford said she will also help them connect with another team who is lacking in members.

"A lot of the coaches will reach out and ask if I have anybody that wants to play because 'I need a guy or girl' and I'll usually send them their number," she said. "But I am going to try something new this season to where if I get enough of those free agents, then I'll try to make a team for the free agents."

Brafford commented that many teams come out on Sundays to the Granbury City Park to practice, as games are normally held on Mondays.

The season will consist of a minimum of eight games throughout a four-week period, plus a single elimination tournament during the fifth week.

All teams must pay the \$300 registration fee in full by the first game of the season to avoid removal from the schedule.

Brafford said registration will close on or around Thursday, Feb. 2, as the season will kick off Monday, Feb. 6. She estimates she can register a total of 16 teams for this season.

A softball champion will officially be crowned around the first or second week of March, depending on any rain delays.

Anyone interested in signing up for the adult co-ed softball league will need to contact Brafford and register their team at 817-894-1926.



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CLASSIFIED DEADLINES
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GVFD

FROM PAGE A1

be used toward the purchase of a new ambulance cab and chassis.

The total estimated cost of the requests exercising pre-pay options is \$7,483,107.50, while the total estimated cost without pre-pay options is \$7,916,107.50.

Jim Sabonis, Hood County finance advisor, addressed the court with his recommendation of where the funds could be derived from — a simple strategic plan involving tax notes.

"What we're proposing is that the county issues a three-year tax note," he explained. "The tax note is a debt issue authorized by our Texas statutes. It allows you to fund anything that the county has issued debt for by simply approving an order. The really key point about it is that it is limited to a seven-year amortization, and it's meant for specifically things of this nature."

Sabonis explained that if the court approved the tax note, he would organize a competitive bid process, where the findings would be presented to the Hood County Commissioners Court Tuesday, Feb. 13. The winning bid would then be submitted to the attorney general and the funds would be available on March 12.

"We've studied the different proposals and believe this is the most efficient proposal, and it puts a position with the county where if they choose to fund something next year, it gives them an opportunity to deal with it," Sabonis said. "In summary, it's a very straightforward plan."

Hood County resident Tina Brown then had a concern regarding the verbiage of the donation to Texas EMS.

"I believe Texas EMS has an exclusivity contract with the county," Young said. "Parts of that contract allowed for them to ask for a subsidy and/or the purchase of an ambulance. The verbiage was put in there, because if the county buys the ambulance, we've now become an ambulance owner. If we donate the funds to Texas EMS, and they purchase the ambulance using the money, we'd be out of subsidy. We're giving them subsidy money for them to use the way they see fit. But it would be toward the purchase of an ambulance — that way we don't own the ambulance."

Precinct 2 Commissioner Nannette Samuelson commented that a better word instead of donating would be "subsidizing."

"This county is in a very unique position," replied Precinct 1 Commissioner Kevin Andrews. "There are two others in Texas that does not subsidize our EMS service in any way. Parker County, they run their ambulance service through the hospital district. Paid for by taxes. Erath County owns their ambulance service. Johnson

County except for Cleburne, Keene, and Joshua, EMS provides ambulance service to the rest of the county. Paying for ambulance service through a government subsidy is very, very common, and we have been very fortunate that there's been no subsidy whatsoever going to our ambulance service in Hood County."

Brown also questioned why the court was reimbursing Granbury VFD for the purchase of the tanker.

"I know some of the fire departments have their own apparatus and some are county-owned, so since they bought it, why are we reimbursing them? Or why would we consider that?" she asked.

"They don't have any assets," Andrews replied. "Granbury Volunteer Fire Department doesn't have an asset to borrow money against. Whenever they got this new tanker, they had to go take some extraordinary methods to get the loan through on this truck — what they asked

— and they will put a contract in there that this truck will stay in service in Hood County for a duration. But they can borrow money against it to buy another truck to use their subsidy in the future to buy more vehicles and build their fleet. It's basically giving them collateral, which they don't have right now."

Andrews said he also asked each fire department what their biggest need was and five of the departments revealed they needed new tankers.

"I'm just trying to figure out if we were going to buy a tanker for the Granbury Volunteer Fire Department, and we didn't and they bought it instead, why are we reimbursing them? We haven't reimbursed other departments for equipment, have we?" Brown asked.

"This is what Granbury asked us," Andrews said. "Like I said, whenever I went around and asked everybody, instead of saying, 'Yeah, buy me a tanker,' it's similar to that. This is Granbury's portion of the project here is just to fund that tanker."

As the court continued the public speaker comments, Hood County resident Mark Lowery said he was "100% behind the Granbury Volunteer Fire Department" and the first responders. He added that a couple of years ago, a vote was brought to the table on whether to have a "full-time career" fire department.

"The court voted against that," he said. "It was never presented to the voters."

Lowery quoted Precinct 3 Commissioner Jack Wilson as stat-

ing that "70% of the fire departments in the United States are volunteer."

"That sounds very, very good, but if you look at it, there's 19,500 incorporated cities in the United States today and 76% of those cities are less than 5,000 people; 92% are less than 10,000, so thank goodness, we're still small-town USA," Lowery said. "There are 29,452 fire departments in the country and 18,873 are all volunteers, while 5,335 are mostly volunteers. That's 82% of our fire departments that are mostly volunteer."

He explained that in the last 10 years, the number of volunteers have dropped by 139,700, adding that fire departments are having a tough time getting and retaining volunteers.

"My point in all of this is I think we can all admit that we got behind the eight ball on Highway 377 expansion in Hood County. I think we can all say we got behind the eight

he made a "very clear campaign," that he had a focus on emergency services.

"We've been analyzing this looking at this thing and trying to come up with what the best way forward is for four years," he explained. "I stepped back in as Lipan's fire chief in October, because there's a serious need going on there. I don't know if I need to apologize for waking up at two o'clock in the morning to go out and try to save somebody's life, trying to put their house (fire) out, or meet them out there in a bar ditch and try to take care of their medical needs until EMS gets there. I don't see that that's a conflict of interest. There's nobody in this room that doesn't understand I have a major focus on emergency services, and I want to see things moving forward."

Andrews also explained that the Lipan Fire Department doesn't make the same home runs or have the same call volume as Hood

County. He said Lipan is not getting a new engine and argued it should be given to another department that has a high call volume.

"I'm not looking for anything that puts Lipan above everybody. But I am standing behind these emergency services. I am standing behind the fact that this county needs these vehicles," he said.

He added that if the county staffed all 10 volunteer fire departments, the cost would be about \$25 million.

"Don't think that because it's a volunteer (department) that this is a second-run organization, because it absolutely is not second run, and I would dare say the value that you get from this fire department compared to what it would cost the taxpayer is extraordinary," he concluded.

Precinct 4 Commissioner Dave Eagle explained that a few years ago, one local fire department brought forth the concept of starting a petition to move to an ESD. He said he spoke to every volunteer fire department — nine at the time — and he said seven of the nine departments wished to stay as a volunteer fire department.

Eagle also commented that in moving all 10 fire departments to an ESD, there would have to be five members appointed to the board of directors for each department — adding up to 45 board members in total.

"I know that Commissioner Andrews is the most experienced on this court dealing with hands-on with volunteer fire departments, and I can tell you right now — and you can believe it or not — he did not go and become chief of that

department because he wanted to. He had to or he felt that he had to because there was no one there to do it, and I agree with him 100%," Eagle said. "And there is absolutely nothing wrong with him being on that volunteer fire department as the chief and being on this commissioner's court. Nothing, because we looked into that. He was concerned about that. You find a law that's different, you let us know."

Samuelson commented that she has heard several discussions about the potential benefits of having a paid fire department. However, she said she would need to see the "numbers" cost-wise of what it would take to pay a full-time staff as well as benefits like insurance, retirement and workers compensation.

"All of that analysis has to be done and presented to the voters, and as far as I know, there's just been a lot of talk about how we should do it, but I haven't seen any numbers along those lines," she said. "And then again, you know, what do the fire departments themselves want?"

Young then threw out a "bare bones minimum option" that had been discussed with the court in the past, where the firefighters would be compensated volunteers.

"It's not benefits, it's not retirement, it's not insurance. It's not anything other than giving them \$125 to sit at a station for 12 hours," he explained. "If we did that in all 12 stations, you're looking at an annual budget north of \$2.2 million just for compensated volunteers, and that's just barely scratching the surface."

"That's a discussion," Andrews said. "These are options that are being looked at."

"So, if there's an interested group of people that would like to take on that analysis and bring it to the court, I'm all ears," Samuelson said.

Hood County Judge Ron Massingill brought the conversation back to the topic at hand, which included paying half the pre-pay option cost for the GVFD equipment and donations up front totaling \$3,741,553.75.

Wilson made the motion to approve the tax note for the full \$7,483,107.50 for the discounted purchase of the Granbury Volunteer Fire Department equipment, the reimbursement to GFVD for the tanker totaling \$334,000, to donate \$350,000 to Texas EMS for the purchase of a new ambulance, and the eventual purchase of up to 10 tri-band radios at a cost of \$63,407.50. The motion also involved providing half the payment for the tankers and pumper/tankers up front to Siddons-Martin, generating a total savings of \$433,000.

The motion carried unanimously with Andrews abstaining from the vote.

"Let's do some analysis now in early 2024, so we're not behind the eight ball, three years, four years, five years, 10 years down the road"

MARK LOWERY

Hood County Resident

ball on the wastewater treatment plant within this community," he said. "But what I encourage the Commissioners Court to do is right now, let's start looking at the feasibility of going to a hybrid volunteer fire department and a career fire department. Let's do some analysis now in early 2024, so we're not behind the eight ball, three years, four years, five years, 10 years down the road and you have to make a decision immediately without having the analytical on the fiscal responsibility."

Hood County resident Michael Davis — who identified himself as a professional firefighter/EMT rescue tech — said in no way is he against first responders. However, he said he was against Andrews putting the Granbury VFD item on the agenda because of his new role as Lipan's fire chief.

"That's like insider trading," he said. "What this town needs is schools; not more apparatuses. It blows my mind that you're Lipan's fire chief and you're putting this on the agenda. My professional opinion is this should've been an ESD (Emergency Services District) a long time ago with the call volume and response area; it's ridiculous that it's a volunteer department, but we don't want to raise taxes, right? What you should do if you had morals and a sense of responsibility, and a little bit of ethics and integrity is recuse yourself from this vote. But I bet you won't."

Andrews responded that when he was running for commissioner,

Illegal dumping continues across Hood County

BY EMILY NAVA

Staff Writer
emily@hcnews.com

Hood County is seeing illegal dumping happening all over and is attempting to slow down the levels of littering. Illegal dumping is defined under the Texas Constitution as litter dumped anywhere other than in an approved solid waste site.

Under the Texas Health and Safety Code, there are three different misdemeanor charges that can be filed against those who litter and even a state jail felony. Typically, these incidents only result in a Class C misdemeanor citation, which is given to someone who illegally dumps waste that weighs five pounds or less or has a volume of five gallons or less.

According to Hood County Sheriff Roger Deeds, there were 55 trash dumping calls in 2023, up from 2022 when there were 40 calls.

"Most were checked into and the owner and the trash was found and then cleaned up," Deeds said. "There are some that we are still looking into. It's not as easy as just finding an envelope with a name on it, so we have to ask around to try to find witnesses and then go from there."

When it comes to this new year, Deeds and his team plan to "stay on top of all problems and encourage people to call in if they see

suspicious people that are dumping so we can check it out and take action."

John Shirley, Hood County Precinct 2 Constable is taking the issue into his own hands. About a year ago, Shirley took a course on illegal dumping in Hood County. He then created his own "Pile Up Program" with the county and gave free vouchers to community members for the citizens collection station. The collection station allows the community to pay a fee to dump recyclables and bulk items.

Shirley learned quickly that many people in the community don't have access to a vehicle, so he has gone around the county helping those who need to take loads to the collection station.

"As a county, we need to do more if we can and do it in a way that doesn't cost the taxpayers a bunch of money," Shirley said. Shirley added that in his role, it is important to do his best to help the community. He noted he has had a change of view on what his career means and has learned to think outside the box.

He took the initiative to start picking up trash on his own and doing illegal dumping investigations and hopes to bring awareness to the issue.

"My intent is not to put people in jail or fine people. My intent is to get the roads in Hood County cleaned up," Shirley told the HCN. "Change has to start some-



COURTESY PHOTOS BY JOHN SHIRLEY

Trash found along FM 51.

where, and it starts with you. Be the change you want to see in the world."

He added the trash piles around the county not only take away the beauty of the county but also can cause major health issues.

"We have one of the fastest growing counties in the country and

if we don't keep it clean, people aren't going to want to come here, be here, live here or spend their money here," Shirley said. "Let's make Hood County great."

Shirley hopes to eventually create and run an organization for the community to come together and work to pick up trash.

For more information on illegal dumping, visit the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality website at www.tceq.texas.gov and to report illegal dumping contact the Hood County Sheriff's Office at 817-579-3316 or contact Shirley at js Shirley@co.hood.tx.us.

'He's our hero and always has been'

Remembering Bob Cornett

BY EMILY NAVA
Staff Writer
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What appeared to be a routine 911 call for the Cresson Volunteer Fire Department on New Year's Eve ended up being a heartfelt and heavy loss for the entirety of the Cresson Community.

On Dec. 31, the Cresson Volunteer Fire Department received a call that 83-year-old William Bob Cornett had suffered cardiac arrest and CPR was underway. After multiple attempts at defibrillation and the administration of appropriate drugs, Cornett passed away.

Cornett proudly served his community as mayor of Cresson from 2003 to 2020. He also served as assistant fire chief at the Cresson VFD, where in December he was recognized for 35 years with the department.

Originally from Nebraska, Cornett and his family moved to Iowa where he met and married his high school sweetheart, Sandy. The two moved to Cresson in 1983 and built their dream log house alongside their family from the ground up. He turned his dream of having his family live near him into a reality and multiple houses were built nearby. His family said Cornett was very family oriented and would do

anything for any of them.

"He always wanted everybody together, whether it be for holidays, birthdays or just a sit-down meal, he always wanted to hear about what was going on in everyone's life," Cornett's youngest daughter, Kelly Flud, said. "He was always willing to give advice when needed."

While serving as mayor, Cornett worked to put Cresson on the map and discussed the Cresson by-pass. He also aimed to alleviate city taxes.

"It doesn't surprise me that he was so successful when he was mayor, because he was able to find middle ground with a lot of

people," grandson Jerad Gomez said. "He was well liked, and people respected him."

When Cornett first joined the Cresson VFD, there were only 12 firefighters in total, but it eventually grew. In 1995 he helped with building the upgraded fire station from the ground up. Cornett became an integral part of the department, and later became captain.

Members of the family even became members of the volunteer fire department including Sandy, Flud and Gomez.

"He was a great teacher and a great leader," Flud said. "He would help train them and go through all the classes and do everything that needed to be done to make them the firefighters that they are."

Up until Cornett stopped being active on calls, he was

still heavily involved with the fire department. He and Sandy would help put Christmas gift bags together for the volunteer firefighters as well as bags for children around the community.

"I knew Bob for over 33 years, I knew him from work-related times from where he retired and from the fire department days and worked with him as the mayor of Cresson," Hood County Sheriff Roger Deeds told the HCN. "He was a great man to work with and had many years of wisdom under his belt. He will be missed by all who knew him."

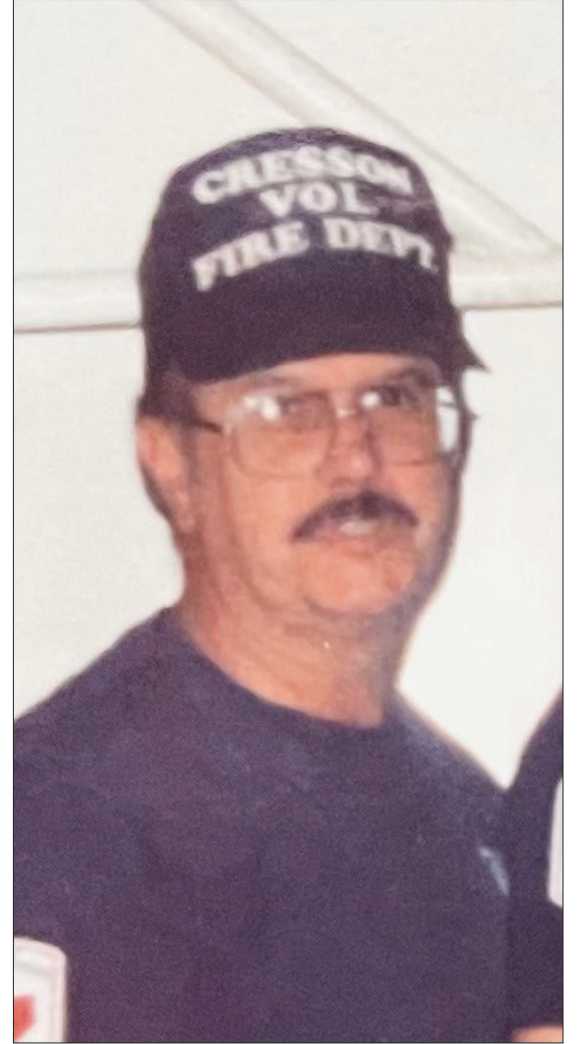
A celebration of life was held for Cornett Jan. 6 at the Diana Jones Memorial Training Center located at 9401 E. U.S. 377 in Cresson.

Sandy shared she will miss having him by her side. "He's our hero and always has been. He just was the light in our lives, but he's left a lot of good memories. He left a lot of good things," she said.

Gomez added the family has seen an outpouring of love from the community since Cornett's passing; Sandy called it "unbelievable."

During a regularly scheduled Cresson City Council meeting Jan. 9, the council read an official proclamation honoring Cornett for his service.

"Beginning in 2001, when the City of Cresson was incorporated, Bob Cornett gave the best of himself to bring to fruition the visions for Cresson to grow and prosper as a community; whereas our retired mayor is to be commended



COURTESY PHOTOS

William Bob Cornett

for outstanding service throughout the City of Cresson's history; and whereas, his service to the city includes many worthwhile and lasting accomplishments too numerous to name individually; and whereas, the retired mayor's outstanding service to the City of Cresson reflects well upon him and the city he led for so many years; now therefore, be it resolved that retired Mayor Bob Cornett is hereby honored for outstanding and dedicated service to the citizens of the City of Cresson, and be it further resolved that a copy of this proclamation be presented to the wife of retired Mayor Bob Cornett, Sandy Cornett. It is to become a permanent record of the city and be prominently displayed at Cresson City Hall," the proclamation read.



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POLICE BLOTTER

Granbury Police Department Criminal Activity Report

The following is a breakdown of activity reported through the Granbury Police Department during the period of Jan. 2-8. While there were many incidents, this is a partial list of more significant activity.

JAN. 2
10:52 a.m.: accident involving a pedestrian injury on W. Pearl Street

6:23 p.m.: theft of property reported on W. Pearl Street
8:26 p.m.: prowler reported on E. Bridge Street

** There were one major accident, a minor accident, a warrant service and 41 traffic stops reported on this day**

JAN. 3
8:49 a.m.: report of a burglary on E. U.S. Hwy. 377.
11:09 a.m.: report of viola-

tion of protective order on Shannon Circle

12:25 p.m.: theft of property reported on Lancaster Street

3:17 p.m.: theft over \$100/less than \$750 reported on E. U.S. Hwy. 377.

3:46 p.m.: found property reported on E. Pearl Street

5:09 p.m.: theft of property reported on U.S. Hwy. 377.
There were two minor accidents and one major accident reported and 35 traffic stops reported on this day

JAN. 4
7:00 a.m.: hit-and-run accident reported on E. U.S. Hwy. 377.

7:57 a.m.: theft of property reported on W. Pearl Street

9:42 p.m.: drug overdose reported on E. Pearl Street
10:07 p.m.: DWI misdemeanor reported on N. Houston Street

There were two minor accidents, three reports of fraud and 13 traffic stops reported on this day

JAN. 5
1:01 p.m.: credit card/elder abuse reported on S. Park Drive

3:11 p.m.: theft of property reported on E. U.S. Hwy. 377.

6:22 p.m.: theft of property over \$100/less than \$750 reported on E. U.S. Hwy. 377

7:02 p.m.: suicide threat reported on N. Baker Street

7:43 p.m.: minor in possession of alcohol reported on S. Morgan Street

8:36 p.m.: DWI reported on S. Morgan Street
There were three minor accidents, a warrant service and 16 traffic stops reported on this day

JAN. 6
2:00 p.m.: suspicious per-

son or circumstance reported on W. Bluff Street

2:27 p.m.: forgery reported on Walters Drive

There were a warrant service, a disturbance and 21 traffic stops reported on this day

JAN. 7
10:23 a.m.: suspicious person or activity reported on E. U.S. Hwy. 377

2:14 p.m.: hit and run accident reported on E. U.S. Hwy. 377

2:53 p.m.: suspicious activity reported on N. Travis Street

7:50 p.m.: assault reported on E. Bridge Street
There were a warrant service, two minor accidents and 23 traffic stops reported on this day

JAN. 8
2:43 a.m.: attempt to locate

reported on E. U.S. Hwy. 377

12:39 p.m.: theft over \$2,500/less than \$30,000 reported on E. U.S. Hwy. 377

2:44 p.m.: found property reported on W. Bridge Street

4:43 p.m.: property damage reported on E. U.S. Hwy. 377

5:09 p.m.: theft over \$200/less than \$750 reported on E. U.S. Hwy. 377

6:17 p.m.: fraud of credit card or ATM reported on E. U.S. Hwy. 377

There were three minor accidents, one major accident and 27 traffic stops reported on this day

North Hood County VFD seeks donations for upcoming projects, fundraisers

BY ASHLEY TERRY
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As the North Hood County Volunteer Fire Department prepares for a successful 2024, Chief Terry Worcester is doing his duty to ensure the department is equipped with the finest equipment and tools to best serve the residents of Hood County.

Worcester recently sent out a letter to everyone in the North Hood County VFD's fire protection area to keep residents, landowners and businesses informed about the department's request for donations.

"On average, 65% of our annual operating budget has come from tax deductible donations from our generous community," the letter reads.

With help from residents, the North Hood County VFD plans to complete several projects this year, like replacing one of the tanker chassis.

"Tankers are one of the most utilized assets in our fleet," the letter reads. "They assist in shuttling water to rural areas to fight all types of fires. Currently, we have a 1994 International Chassis that is in desperate need of retirement. We have received a Texas Forestry Service Grant for up to \$100,000 to assist in purchasing the truck chassis once found. We are still unsure what the final cost to finish out the truck will be."

The department also plans to acquire new firefighting tools and equipment, like a new battery-powered ventilation fan. The vehicle extrication equipment and the cardiac care equipment need to be upgraded as well.

"Over the last year, we've continued to apply for grants to replace our cur-

rent cardiac monitor with a new Lifepak 15," the letter reads. "The cost of a single new unit is \$31,000. Equipment such as this allows our members that are certified paramedics and EMTs to better assess and treat our patients prior to EMS arrival. This will keep us up to date with the latest in cardiac care and standardize our equipment with Texas EMS ambulance service."

Lastly, the department needs to upgrade its wildland turnout gear with new helmets, jackets, pants, boots, gloves and other miscellaneous gear for each of the members.

"We have seen an increase in mutual-aid requests from our nearby counties along with others further away. It is our mission to make sure our members have everything they need to remain safe while tending to these emergencies," the letter reads.

Worcester explained in the letter these are just a few of the many projects the North Hood County VFD plans to tackle in the coming year.

To assist with the donations, the North Hood County VFD is also planning several fundraising events like the annual Fish Fry fundraiser, as well as new events like a Spring Pancake Breakfast, a Fall Chili Cookoff, and a 30 for 30 Gun Raffle.

Worcester explained the annual Fish Fry fundraiser will take place Saturday, May 25, and will include "exciting changes" for this year's event.

"We do have a pancake supper or breakfast in the planning stage for this year. A chili supper fundraiser also for fall of 2024," Worcester told the HCN. "We have a lot of rescue and fire equipment we still need or have to replace, and these fundraisers and donations help us achieve that for our commu-

nity. I wish our pockets were deeper, but even with county money given to us, it's never enough for such expensive equipment."

Worcester revealed in the letter that last year, the department was "blown away" by the outpouring of love from the community when the North Hood County VFD raised over \$40,000 total from donations alone.

With the community's help, the fire department was able to purchase a new 2023 brush truck last year for \$120,000. Members are currently awaiting the arrival of the new East Coast Rescue Forcible Entry Door that was purchased with a \$10,000 grant from the Texas Forestry Service. The department was also able to use the funds to update and renovate the meeting room and kitchen of the station to be more suitable for the needs of the department.

If anyone is interested in becoming a member of the North Hood County VFD, the department meets on Thursday nights from 7 to 9 p.m. at 3108 Sky Harbour Drive. New members are always encouraged to join the team of 34 to assist with fighting fires, running EMS calls and assisting with scene support for large incidents.

Donations to the North Hood County Volunteer Fire Department can be made online at nhcvfd.org, through PayPal at paypal.me/NHCVFD, or through Venmo: @NHCVFD20.

"As always, we welcome you to stop by the station, have a cup of coffee and see how we have grown in the recent years," Worcester concluded in the letter.

For more information, follow North Hood County VFD on Facebook.

Republican Women's Club to hold candidate forum Jan. 17

BY ASHLEY TERRY
Staff Writer
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The Hood County Republican Women's Club will hold a candidate forum for the 2024 election during its next meeting at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Jan. 17, at the Wiley Center, 420 E. U.S.

Highway 377.

During the meeting, Hood County residents will get an opportunity to learn more about the local republican candidates running for Hood County Chair and Hood County Precinct Chair.

Each candidate will get the chance to introduce themselves to the public and express why they are seeking office.

Leslie Thomas, the new state republican executive committee member for District 22, will also speak during the meeting.

The 2024 election primaries will be held on March 5.

For more information, follow the Hood County Republican Women Facebook page.

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Five Stars

County clerk's office recognized at commissioners court

ASHLEY TERRY | HOOD COUNTY NEWS
 Chief Deputy County Clerk Dean Armstrong, right, and Office Manager Kathryn Frost, left, present the Texas Department of State Health Services' Five Star Award to the Hood County Clerk's Office during a regular meeting of the Hood County Commissioners Court on Jan. 9. The Hood County Clerk's Office has received this award under the direction of County Clerk Katie Lang from 2015 to 2023. Jessica Galarza, Tonya Hoffman, Tracy Smith, Christine Ledermann and Frost also played a huge role in achieving the award.

Cancer screenings encouraged during Cervical Health Awareness Month

From Staff Reports

AUSTIN – As part of National Cervical Health Awareness Month this January, the Texas Health and Human Services Commission is encouraging women to get screened for cervical cancer.

"Routine cervical cancer screening is the most effective way to detect cervical cancer early," said Faith Sandberg-Rodriguez, associate commissioner of Family Clinical Services at HHSC. "However, many potentially eligible Texas women may not know about services in their area or experience other barriers to accessing care. HHSC helps low-income women access timely cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services."

Cervical cancer is the third-leading cancer diagnosis for women ages 20-39 and fifth-leading for women ages 40-49. According to the Texas Cancer Registry, an estimated 1,489 Texas women were diagnosed with cervical cancer. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend cervical cancer screenings for women ages 21-65.

The HHSC Breast and Cervical Cancer Services (BCCS) program provides low-cost and free women's health services for uninsured

and underinsured Texas women who meet eligibility requirements. Services include cervical and breast cancer screenings, clinical breast examinations, mammograms and breast biopsies.

BCCS helps fund clinics across the state that provide these lifesaving screening and diagnostic services. In fiscal year 2022, BCCS served 30,422 women, including 5,717 women who received cervical cancer screenings.

The BCCS program is partly funded through the CDC. The National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program awards funding to states for early detection of cervical and breast cancers. For fiscal year 2024, the federal program awarded BCCS more than \$8.3 million. The Texas Legislature appropriated an additional \$3.4 million in state funding.

To find BCCS providers or learn more about women's health services, visit the Healthy Texas Women website at healthytexaswomen.org or call 2-1-1. For more information on how breast and cervical cancer services are provided to Texas women, view the "Breast and Cervical Cancer Services: 2023 Statewide Look" link on the website.



A doctor discusses woman's health issues with a patient

STOCK PHOTO

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Mastering the art of meaningful conversations: A guide to building connections

BY MICKY SHEARON

Special to the Hood County News
micky@hcnews.com

People who don't know me well tend to think I'm this very Type A, outgoing and gregarious person. They may see me onstage at the Granbury Opera House or some community function, mingling with people, and assume I'm in my comfort zone being around a lot of people. In reality, however, nothing could be further from the truth. The truth is I am simply a high-functioning social introvert. I have learned over many years a few skills that have helped me cope with what can sometimes be a debilitating social anxiety.

Like many who seem to thrive while on stage in front of an audience, throw me into a room full of people I don't know and expect me to talk, and you have just committed me to my seventh circle of hell. While the Fear of Public Speaking has long been an oft-stated fear of the masses, social phobia/anxiety — or an intense fear of social interactions — can manifest itself even in one-on-one conversations.

Making small talk with someone you've just met can be terrifying. Common sense tells us we want to convince the other person we're smart, so we casually drop our job title, education, accomplishments, etc.

But it turns out that's precisely the wrong approach.

I just finished reading a new book, "NEXT! The Power of Reinvention in Life and Work," by Joanne Lipman, and in her book, Lipman interviews dozens of business leaders who, to one degree or another, suffer from social anxiety. She also interviewed numerous social psychologists about techniques for people who suffer from social anxiety to use in social settings that will help them relax and enable them to make more meaningful connections.

The technique her book focuses on is something seemingly so simple it tends to escape most people: ask for advice.

When you stop and think about it, it's succinctly brilliant! It immediately takes the perceived spotlight

off us and places it on the individual to whom we are speaking, yet in a very warm and positive way. The person to whom you are talking is immediately impressed. They figure the person asking for their advice must be pretty clever — partly because it's flattering to be asked for help.

In other words, they tend to think: They were smart to ask for my advice because I am smart.

But where do you go once you've asked the other person for advice? How do you avoid the awkward shifting of focus back to you? In the intricate dance of human interaction, the ability to forge meaningful connections is a skill that transcends boundaries, be it in the boardroom, at social gatherings, or during chance encounters. So, how can one navigate the delicate balance of conversation to leave a lasting impression? Here are the key elements outlined in Lipman's book that can transform your interactions into meaningful dialogues, fostering genuine connections with new acquaintances.

ASK FOLLOWUP QUESTIONS:

Building bridges of interest

The power of asking follow-up questions cannot be overstated. Actively engaging in conversations by probing deeper into the topics at hand demonstrates genuine interest and lays the groundwork for building a connection. Taking the conversation beyond the surface level creates a bridge between minds, fostering a deeper understanding and connection.

LISTEN ACTIVELY:

The art of thoughtful response

In a world filled with constant distractions, the art of active listening has become a rare and valuable trait. Paying close attention to the speaker and responding thoughtfully showcases your intellectual acumen and conveys respect. This skill transforms interactions into meaningful exchanges where each participant feels heard and understood.

SHARE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES:

Crafting relatable narratives

Anecdotes from your own life can serve as powerful connectors in conversation. Sharing relevant personal experiences adds a layer of relatability, making the dialogue more enjoyable and dynamic. By weaving your stories into the fabric of the conversation, you create a shared space where both participants can find common ground, solidifying the foundation for a meaningful connection.

EXPRESS VULNERABILITY:

Bridging the emotional gap

Occasionally expressing vulnerability is a courageous act that can lead to profound connections. In the vulnerability, we find our shared humanity. Opening up about challenges or personal experiences humanizes you, creating an environment where others feel comfortable reciprocating. This willingness to show a genuine, authentic self fosters a more profound sense of connection and understanding.

USE BODY LANGUAGE:

The silent language of connection


Communication extends beyond words, and non-verbal cues play a pivotal role in the art of conversation. Maintain eye contact, employ open body language, and be mindful of your gestures. These silent signals contribute to a positive impression, enhancing the overall quality of the interaction. A firm handshake, genuine smile or attentive posture can speak volumes, creating an atmosphere conducive to meaningful conversation.

Incorporating these elements into your interactions is a transformative step toward enhancing your communication skills. Whether navigating professional relationships, networking or forming new friendships, these practices can make you more effective in various aspects of your personal and professional life. So, the next time you find yourself in the midst of a conversation, remember these key points and watch as you effortlessly navigate the terrain of meaningful connections.



Navigating conversations is an acquired skill.

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- **WILLS AND BEQUESTS** – Bequests as part of an estate that designate Mission Granbury may reduce estate taxes.
- Itemizers may deduct cash gifts up to 60 percent of their adjusted gross income in 2023. Gifts to donor-advised funds, supporting organizations and most private foundations are not eligible.
- Individuals can make a qualified charitable distribution of up to \$100,000 from their IRAs. It must go directly from the IRA account to the charitable organization. The direct distribution to charity would not be included in taxable income.

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OBITUARIES

Ronnie Glenn Atkinson

May 4, 1941 - January 8, 2024

Ronald Glenn Atkinson left this world to meet Jesus on Jan. 8, 2024 at age 82. He was born in Louisiana. Granbury, Texas became his home for 50 years.

As a child, Ronnie was said to be the "favorite one" and that carried on throughout his entire life. Everyone loved him for his kind nature and always a positive attitude in every situation.

He was a member of First Baptist Church for 50 years. During that time he served as a deacon chairman and Sunday school director. He was a man who loved the Lord.

Ronnie met the love of his life, Linda, and what a wonderful life they shared together for 61 years. They adored their two children Karen and Kevin. Their grandchildren were everything to him.

The simplest pleasures in life brought great joy to Ronnie. The many Friday night football games, fishing trips with his buddies, and always being there for every activity of his children and grandkids. He was our biggest supporter and fan. He loved his family and enjoyed spending time with them.

Ronnie had a very successful career at Texas



Power & Light and retired as a supervisor with the company. His most favorite thing of that job was the friendships he made along the course of his career. After retirement, he started his own company R & L Electric & enjoyed those life adventures and the people he got to meet.

He will be missed by his beloved wife Linda, his daughter Karen and husband Tony Kegley, his son Kevin and wife Chrissy Atkinson. Grandchildren Josh and Madi Yarbrough, Lexi and husband Gabe, Colton and Abby Atkinson. There are also many loved family and friends.

A celebration of life will be held at 2 p.m. on Jan. 13, 2024 at First Baptist Church of Granbury, 1851 Weatherford Hwy Granbury, Texas.

Lawanda Hunt

December 28, 1934 - January 5, 2024



Lawanda "Granny Pants" Hunt, 89, beloved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, of Granbury, passed away early on Friday, Jan. 5, 2024 in Granbury.

Visitation will be held from 3 until 5 p.m., on Sunday, Jan. 14, 2024, at the Wiley Funeral Home, 400 Highway 377 East in Granbury. Burial committal services will be held at 11 a.m., on Monday, Jan. 15, 2024 at the DFW National Cemetery in Dallas.

Lawanda was born on Dec. 28, 1934, in Hereford, Texas to the late Ross and Lela Campbell. She married Gene W. Hunt on Sept. 30, 1953 and together had two daughters, Regina & Dian. Lawanda was a dedicated "Army wife" who faithfully traveled with her husband while he was serving in the United States Army. Together they lived in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, Japan, Okinawa, Panama, and New Orleans before retiring in Canyon, Texas. She was a champion golfer and enjoyed raising and showing quarter horses. Lawanda and Gene owned

and operated the Cowboy Café in Canyon, Texas for many years. She attended the Triple Cross Cowboy Church with her daughter. Most of all, Lawanda will be remembered for the love she shared with her family.

Lawanda is survived by her daughters, Regina Hunt and Dian and husband Wayne Williams; by her grandchildren, Heston Williams and wife Chloe Northrop and Brittany and husband Robby Hirst; and by her great-granddaughter, Aspen Rose.

In addition to her parents, Lawanda was preceded in death by her husband Gene W. Hunt in March of 2022.

Larry Duane Nace

February 15, 1936 - December 21, 2023

Larry D. Nace, 87, of Tolar, Texas, beloved husband, father and grandfather, passed away peacefully on Dec. 21, 2023 surrounded by his loving family.

Larry was raised in York County, Pennsylvania. He proudly served his country with a 20-year career in the US Navy. Larry's passion in retirement was raising and showing champion Arabian Horses.

Larry was predeceased by his parents and his sister, Sandy.

Larry is survived by his wife, Penelope Sloane (Peny) and four children, Larry II (Jackie), Jeff (Kelli), Lisa D'Addario and Kim Rains; and by eight grandchildren.

Funeral services celebrating Larry's life were on



Thursday, Dec. 28, 2023 at Wiley Funeral Center in Granbury. Larry was laid to rest at Long Creek Cemetery, Granbury, with Military Rites.

In lieu of flowers, expressions of sympathy may be made to the Cathedral of the Pines Foundation (War Memorial) in Rindge, New Hampshire.

www.cathedralofthepines.org

Robert Earl Brownlee

November 10, 1936 - January 4, 2024

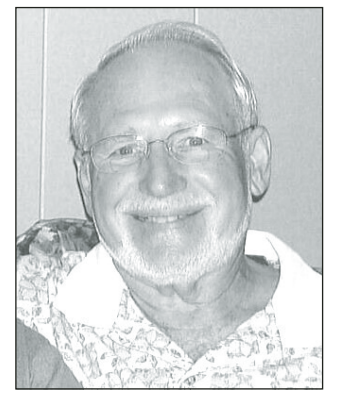
Robert Earl Brownlee passed from this earthly life into the kingdom of his Lord Jesus on Jan. 4, 2024, in Granbury with his wife by his side.

Robert was born in Ethelsville, Alabama on Nov. 10, 1936, to Robert Shaden and Mattie Jane Simpson Brownlee. His siblings were Bettie Burnett Brownlee and William Shaden Brownlee.

Robert attended schools in Columbus, Mississippi, graduating from S. D. Lee High School in 1955. Immediately following high school, he began a 39½-year career with Western Electric Company, later named AT&T, and still later named Lucent Technologies. He retired as an installations manager in 1994. This commendable career was twice interrupted by military service, he having enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1959, serving two years, and being recalled in 1961 for a few months. He enjoyed attending reunions of his high school class and of his fellow employees of Western Electric, remaining good friends with many of them.

Robert was blessed to be a father to his two sons, Michael Craig, and Ronald Jason. He coached their little league baseball teams and saw as many of their sports activities as his business travels allowed.

Robert accepted Christ as his Lord at the age of 17, and in about 1975 was ordained a deacon by Highland Baptist Church in Jackson, Mississippi. After his retirement, he and his wife Nancy built a home in Pecan Plantation, Hood County, Texas, where he was a member of Acton Baptist Church. At that time, the two became involved in missions, and served on many mission trips to Mexico, Texas, and New Mexico. Robert also served as an usher in his church. He loved belonging to his Agape class, having many dear friends in the class and in the church.



Robert and Nancy enjoyed travelling in their RV, often visiting family and friends in distant locations, or just spending part of the winter in Mission, Texas, where the sun usually shines each day.

When not travelling, Bob spent many hours maintaining one of the prettiest yards in Pecan Plantation. He planted vegetables for canning and flowers for their beauty. He loved gardening, hunting, fishing, and sharing "pass-along" plants with friends.

Being a pleasant, kind, faithful, reliable, generous, and cheerful man earned him the friendship of all those who knew him, from family to neighbors. He was a loving husband, father, and Papaw, and will long be missed and remembered.

Robert was preceded in death by his parents and brother William.

He is survived by his wife Nancy Sparkman Brownlee, his sons Michael "Craig", Ronald "Jason" and wife Tricia, the mother of his sons Anne Williams Brownlee, sister Bettie McLemore, sister-in-law Betty Ann, step-daughter Evelyn Mahler and husband Chris, step-son Andrew Beck and wife Laurie, and eight grandchildren. Mark Beck, Cadence Beck Bitterman, Tanya Beck Forgey, Carson Mahler, Laura Mahler, Amber Brownlee Weeks, Olivia Rose Brownlee and Shaden Brownlee.

Funeral services were held at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 9, 2024 at Wiley Funeral Home Chapel in Granbury.

SUBMITTING AN OBITUARY

Obituaries are submitted online at obituaries.hcnews.com. Advance payment is required and you may do so online when placing the obituary. Obituaries should come from the funeral home. Obituaries placed by next of kin must be verified with the facility handling the body or the church where service will be held. You must provide the contact info for verification when submitting the obituary. The Hood County News deadline for obituaries is 10 a.m. Wednesday for the Saturday paper. Deadlines are subject to change during holidays.

ACROSS

- 1 hangs down
- 5 in Concho County on U.S. 83 & 87
- 6 TXism: "___ lick" (none)
- 7 TXism: "tame as ___ dog"
- 8 TX Kenny Rogers sang "___ I Can Make It on My Own"
- 9 J.R. was shot in the final ___ of "Dallas" season 3
- 16 "those" in Mexico
- 18 TXism: "still wet ___ ears" (inexperienced)
- 21 TX Nolan pitched seven ___-hitters
- 22 rattling sound heard by a stethoscope
- 23 Clyde High class
- 24 fill 'er up (2 wds)
- 30 Highlands Mansion in Marlin has a stained-___ in the great hall
- 34 TX Tom Kite won ___ Open in 1992
- 35 this David was leader of Waco's Branch Davidians
- 36 Humble Oil once had Esso and this brand name
- 37 rep for TX Matthew McConaughey
- 39 county west of Sabine (2 wds.)
- 43 Nacogdoches old road: "La Calle del ___"
- 44 boycott, e.g.

DOWN

- 1 where TX Ted Cruz serves
- 2 this Rangers' Garcia hit 5 home runs against Astros in 2023 ALCS
- 3 "Whoopie ti yi yo, ___ little dogies"
- 4 TXism: "___ beans" (in a pod)
- 9 TX Banks who was "Mr. Cub" (init.)
- 10 TX A.C. Greene book: "A ___ Country"
- 45 TXism: "hard ___ nails"
- 46 wedding cake layer
- 47 Eagles & Giants to the Cowboys
- 49 sought to influence Texan in 1-down dir. to New Boston from Mount Pleasant
- 52 Texas cosmetics queen, Mary Kay
- 54 Texas pecan desserts
- 55 "___ jungle" (city)
- 58 on old XIT Ranch: "El Canyon ___ Casas Amarillas"
- 59 holiday egg drink
- 60 a Denton univ.
- 61 Biblical donkey
- 11 TX Trini sang "If ___ a Hammer"
- 12 farm storage tower
- 13 "___ band" (solo performance)
- 14 Duryea of 1954 "Ride Clear of Diablo" with TX Audie Murphy (init.)
- 15 Love Field arr. guess
- 17 TX wheeler-dealer: Billy ___
- 19 legend has it that Texas "Enchanted Rock" is this
- 20 this bunny gives gifts
- 24 Kennedy of film "Creepshow 2" with TX Lois Chiles

TEXAS CROSSWORD

by Charley & Guy Orbison
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- 25 Greek goddess of the dawn
- 26 TXism: "mobile mouse ___" (cat)
- 27 film categories, e.g.
- 28 TXism: "busy ___" (armed paper hanger)
- 29 this Denny won 1930 "Texas Open"
- 31 Texas fire ___
- 32 ___-fi, like "Avatar"
- 33 braggart, like some Texans
- 38 a Great Lake
- 40 state ___ is topaz
- 41 this info. agcy. was dissolved in 1999
- 42 the gullet
- 48 a Gulf fish
- 50 this will prohibit a Texan from a jury
- 51 TX Drown started noted Hotel ___-Air
- 56 ___ text (communicated)
- 57 farm machines

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Consider family meeting to discuss estate plans

TONY MOBLY Edward Jones Financial Adviser



Tony Mobly

At some point, you'll want to share your estate plans with your loved ones — and the first step in this process may be to hold a family meeting.

The best time to hold this meeting is when you're still in good mental and physical shape, and the enactment of your estate plans may well be years away. But what topics should you cover?

Consider these main areas:

■ Your wishes — and those of your family. Use this meeting to introduce your estate plans and, in a basic sense,

what you hope to accomplish with them — leave money to your family, support charitable groups and so on. You'll want to emphasize that you want to be equitable in what you leave behind, but there may be issues that affect this decision, such as disparities in income between grown children or an allowance for a special-needs child. But you'll also want to listen to what your family members want — and you might be surprised at what they tell you. Consider this: More than 80% of the millennial genera-

tion would rather know their parents are financially secure throughout their retirement, even if this means that their parents will pass on less money to them, according to an Edward Jones/Age Wave study.

■ Estate planning documents — At the time of your family meeting, you may or may not have already created your estate planning documents, but in either case, this would be a good time to discuss them. These documents may include a will, a living trust, financial power of attorney, health care power of attorney and possibly other arrangements. At a minimum, you'd like to give

a general overview of what these documents mean, but at an initial family meeting, you don't necessarily have to get too detailed. For example, you might not want to talk about specific inheritances. This is also an opportunity to inform your loved ones of the professionals involved in your estate plans, such as your attorney and your tax advisor.

■ Roles of everyone involved — Not only does a comprehensive estate plan involve moving parts, such as the necessary documents, but it also includes actual human beings who may need to take on different roles. You will need an executor for your

will and, if you have a living trust, you'll need a trustee. Even if you choose to serve as the initial trustee, you'll still need to identify one or more successor trustees to take your place if you become incapacitated, or upon your death. Plus, you'll need to name people to act as your power of attorney for health care and finances. Choosing the right people for these roles involves thought and sensitivity. Obviously, you want individuals who are competent and reliable, but you also need to be aware that some family members could feel slighted if others are assigned roles they feel they could do. By being aware

of these possible conflicts, you can be better prepared to address them.

Here's one more suggestion: Let your family know that this initial meeting doesn't mean the end of communications about your estate plans. Encourage your loved ones to contact you with questions whenever they want. You may need to hold additional family meetings in the future, but by laying the initial groundwork, you will have taken a big first step in establishing the legacy you'd like to leave.

Sallie Ann Edith Garland

April 21, 1939 - December 30, 2023

Sallie Garland, loving wife, mother, grandmother and friend of everyone she met, died at the age of 84 on Saturday, Dec. 30, 2023, in Fort Worth, Texas. A memorial service will be held at First Presbyterian Church, Granbury, Texas on Jan. 18, 2024 at 11 a.m., and she will be buried in Machpelah Cemetery, Le Roy, New York.

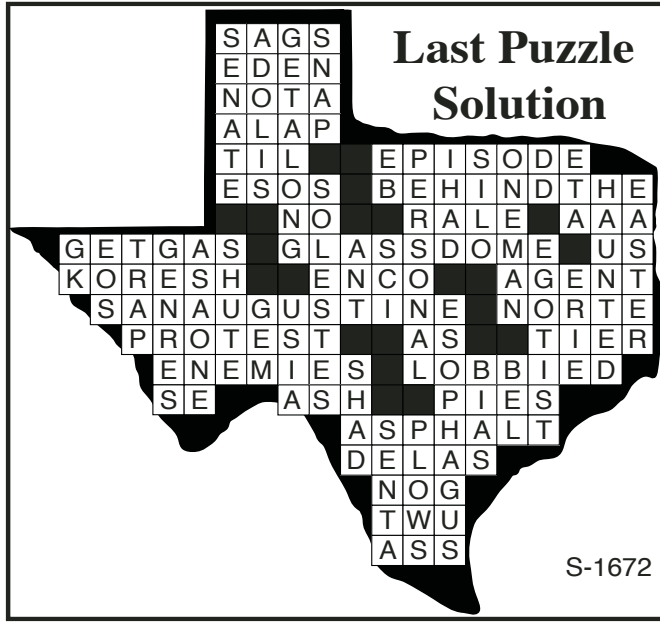


Sallie was born in Batavia, New York and lived her early years in Le Roy, New York. She attended Marietta College in Ohio. Sallie loved to sing and was a founding member of the Granbury Civic Chorus. She also sang with her church choir and Melody Bells.

Sallie was preceded in death by her parents. Sallie is survived by her loving husband of 62 years, J. Peter Garland, their two children Ellen (Tegan) Bren-

nen, Steven (Jennifer) Garland and by three grandchildren Shelby (Jeremy) Adams, Avery Brennen and Elye Garland.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Sallie's memory to the Memorial Fund at First Presbyterian Church, Granbury, Texas. A memorial service will be held at 11 a.m. on Jan. 18, 2024 at First Presbyterian Church, 303 W. Bridge St., Granbury, Texas.



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SUPPORT SYSTEMS

EVERY DAY
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS. Do you or someone you know have a problem with alcohol? Meetings daily at 10 a.m., noon and 7 p.m. at 1205 Lipan Hwy., Granbury.

ACTON 12-STEP Group. Meeting daily at 7 p.m. 3609 Acton Highway (behind Madison Park).

EVERY SATURDAY
WOMEN'S WAY Out AA-Alcoholics Anonymous. Closed discussion for women only. Meets every Saturday at 10 a.m. at 301 W. Bridge St. For more information call 317-772-8124.

EVERY SUNDAY
STARTING A New Life is a grief support group for those who have lost a loved one through death. This includes the loss of a spouse, child, parent, sibling or close friend. For the past 26 years this group has helped people work through their grief process. If you, or someone you know, is suffering from the loss of a loved one, come or bring them to our next session that began March 19. We are Christian-based, non-denominational and welcome all who are suffering. We meet 3-5 p.m. on Sundays in the parish hall of St. Frances Cabrini Catholic Church. For more information, call Ben Bradley at 575-706-5703 or Sherry Bingham at 817-657-0822.

EVERY MONDAY
PROMISES AL-ANON group meets every Monday at 6 p.m. First Presbyterian Church, fellowship hall, west entrance, 303 W. Bridge St.

EVERY TUESDAY
PUNCHIN' PARKINSON'S in Granbury. 12:30-1:30 p.m. A non-contact boxing and fitness program designed for people with Parkinson's Disease. First Christian Church, 2109 W. U.S. Highway 377 (next door to Tractor Supply).

GRIEFSHARE 14-WEEK seminar Sept 13. to Dec. 13, 6:30-8 p.m. Presented by StoneWater Church, Granbury, this program is a support group designed to help rebuild lives. Book for course, \$20, "Finding hope after the loss of a loved one." Register: GriefShare.StoneWaterChurch.com or call 817-579-9175.

PEDALING FOR Parkinson's hosted by the Hood County YMCA will be from 1 to 2 p.m. at 1475 James Road. The program is led by a certified group fitness instructor and consists of a pre- and post-fitness evaluation, and 45-minute spin/cycling session. Program will last 12 weeks. For more information call 817-624-9791 or e-mail communityhealth@ymcafw.org.

EVERY THURSDAY
TAKE OFF Pounds Sensibly (TOPS). 8:45-10:45 a.m. Lakeside Baptist Church, room 133C, 500 W. Bluebonnet Dr. Maximum weight scale: 400 pounds.

GRIEFSHARE RECOVERY seminar and support recovery seminar and support group meets at 10 a.m. at Interim Hospice, 1314 Paluxy Drive, Suite 200. Childcare is not provided. Fee for Griefshare workbook is \$15. Details: 817-573-7474.

RE ENGAGE marriage enrichment meets every Thursday at 6:30 p.m. at StoneWater Church in Granbury. For more information email paige.kitchens@stonewaterchurch.com

EVERY FRIDAY
PUNCHIN' PARKINSON'S in Granbury. 12:30-1:30 p.m. A non-contact boxing and fitness program designed for people with Parkinson's Disease. First Christian Church, 2109 W. U.S. Highway 377 (next door to Tractor Supply).

FIRST MONDAY
ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT Group, join others to share concerns, 10 a.m. at Acton Methodist Church, 3433 Fall Creek Highway. Details: 817-326-2355.

FIRST TUESDAY
ALZHEIMER'S CAREGIVERS support group, 10:30-11:30 a.m. in the 1894 Building at Acton Baptist Church, 3500 Fall Creek Highway. For caregivers, family members, friends and anyone in the community. Details: 817-326-4693.

SECOND SATURDAY
GRIEF SUPPORT group for anyone grieving a loss in their life. This is an informal gathering over breakfast. Please join us for conversation and community, location varies. Call for info: Amy Dwight at 817-894-2449 or Danny Dwight at 817-219-9833.

THIRD MONDAY
ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT Group, join others to share concerns, 10 a.m. at Acton Methodist Church, 3433 Fall Creek Highway. Details: 817-326-2355.

THIRD TUESDAY
ALZHEIMER'S CAREGIVERS support group, 10:30-11:30 a.m. in the 1894 Building at Acton Baptist Church, 3500 Fall Creek Highway. For caregivers, family members, friends and anyone in the community. Details: 817-326-4693.

FOURTH TUESDAY
PARKINSON'S SUPPORT Group, 1 p.m. at Lakestone Terrace, 916 E. U.S. Highway 377. Open for those with Parkinson's and their families wanting to understand more about this disease. Details: 817-999-1470.

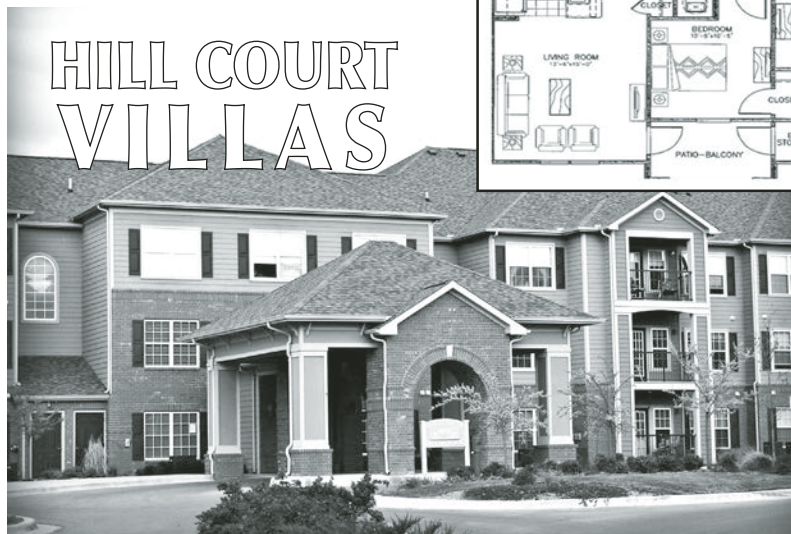
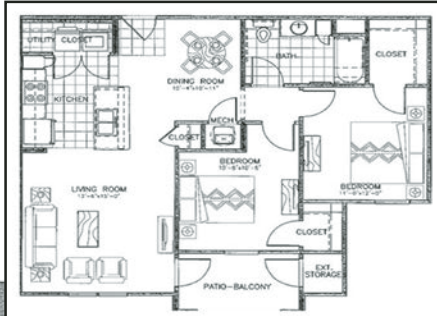
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GRIEF SUPPORT group for anyone grieving a loss in their life. This is an informal gathering over breakfast. Please join us for conversation and community. Location varies. Call for info: Amy Dwight at 817-894-2449, or Danny Dwight at 817-219-9833

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REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

1020
Cemetery Lots

Burial plot in Holly Hills Cemetery next to Veteran's Garden. Call (817)682-7658

Holly Hills Lawn Crypt. Double depth next to chapel #326. Valued at \$5,500 asking \$4,200. (817)243-7321

1070
Lots for Sale

LOT - DECORDOVA BEND ESTATES Nice lot for sale by owner, 6114 Laredo Ct. Listed below appraisal. Leave message at number. \$37,500 dcapra@st-tel.net (970) 846-2674

1080
Mobiles for Sale

Used singlewide mobile homes to be moved. Purple K Ct. Granbury, Texas. 817-219-0122.

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

1510
Apartments for Rent

Nice, clean 1 room efficiency apartment with washer/dryer hookups. 1 person only. Next to lake with dock. \$850/mo, \$450 deposit. Water paid. Leave message, 469-781-1114.

1520
Commercial for Rent

Warehouse/Office/Retail space for lease. 1200 + sf. Hwy 377 W from \$650/mo. 817-349-2535

1540
Homes for Rent

2-1, near square, carport, fenced backyard, newly remodeled, \$1,900/mo. 3-2-2, large corner lot, Acton side of town, lake access in community, \$2,300/mo. 3-2-2, Acton side of town, large corner lots, newly remodeled, \$2,400/mo. 254-396-5188.

2-bedroom, 1 bath, no smoking absolutely no pets. \$900/mo, \$500 deposit. 707 E Moore St. 682-500-5543.

1/1 CABIN in Glen Rose. W/D hookups. Vaulted ceilings in den. 960 Sq. ft. \$1,000/mo, \$500 dep. Water/sewer furnished. 1 pet limit with \$200 non-refundable dep. (254)386-7387

1550
Mobiles for Rent

Several refurbished mobiles for lease. \$1050/mo to \$1450/mo Call 817-578-9906

1560
Rooms for Rent

Clean furnished bedroom in Tolar, \$120/week. \$150 deposit. 817-964-0933. Available now.

Furnished room for rent with TV & wifi. All bills paid. Use of kitchen & w/d. Must be employed or retired & have own vehicle. \$500/mo. \$100 dep. Avail 2/1/2024. 817-736-6511.

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5070
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5210
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5220
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5240
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5330
Storage

For lease: 2-car garage, 24x24, no utilities, Brandi Ln, Granbury. \$250/mo, 1 month deposit. John 817-578-1045.

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6620
Miscellaneous

WAGON YARD.COM: We sell local honey, Watkins, Howard Products, Mexican Vanilla. Repair Battery Clocks, Elec Lamps. 817-573-5321

WE BUY OLD US COINS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS. Call 817-559-3131

LIVESTOCK & PETS

8030
Pets

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JULIE'S DOG HOUSE GROOMING
Very Reasonable; Senior Discount (817) 408-5288 wilsonjulianne@gmail.com

LOOKING FOR A COMPANION? If you are looking for a companion animal to give a forever home, OPT TO ADOPT!
Call or visit Hood County Animal Control 1550 Weatherford Highway, Granbury, Texas 76048 817-573-4277

Red 5-month-old F1B Golden Doodle, kennel trained and up to date on all shots. \$600 (817) 637-4678

Pets Lost & Found

IF YOU HAVE LOST OR FOUND AN ANIMAL, please contact Hood County Animal Control, 1550 Weatherford Hwy, Granbury, Texas 76048. 817-573-4277

EMPLOYMENT

8510
General

ASSISTANT SELF-STORAGE PROPERTY MANAGER
PAY: \$18 PER HOUR

PART TIME position requiring alternating Saturdays with manager. Schedule must be somewhat flexible. Requirements include strong administrative and computer skills including Microsoft Word, Excel and personable phone skills. Daily duties include processing payments, rental agreements, daily reports, record /file processing and property inspection. Light property maintenance duties required which include some light to moderate lifting. Computer skills and math test may be required upon interview. Paid time off after eligibility.

Email or mail resume to: ACI Shops & Storage 1650 S. Meadows Dr. Granbury, TX 76048 acistorage76048@gmail.com

Busy cleaning business needs responsible people to help clean residential/commercial some nites/weekends. Must speak English. Must have clean driving record - pass background. 254-396-3417

8520
Construction

General construction work-farm, ranch or home. (408)595-2146

Tractor work-Excavation, clearing, grubbing, shredding and mowing. Including driveways, roads and concrete work. (408)595-2146

Office Employment

ALL - SEASONAL ASSISTANT Applicant needs the ability to work a flexible schedule during the tax season from February to April.

DUTIES/DESCRIPTION:
-Answers and directs calls.
-Greet clients in a personalized, friendly, and inviting manner.
-Maintain office cleanliness and organization of resources with team members.
-Operates standard office equipment such as a multi-function print/copy/scan machine on a regular basis.
-Other duties as assigned.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:
-High school diploma or equivalent.
-Must be able to read, write, speak and understand English.
-Must have excellent verbal and written communication and customer service skills.
-Strong typing and phone skills.
-Strong computer skills required, including proficiency with Google and Outlook
-Must be able to work independently and be team oriented, organized, detailed, goal, and results driven.
-Comfortable with routinely shifting demands.
-High degree of attention to detail.
-Working knowledge of general office equipment such as computer and multi-function print/copy/scan machine.
-Occasional/intermittent lifting and carrying objects/equipment weighing up to 25 pounds.
-Continuous use of bilateral upper extremities in fine motor activities requiring fingering, grasping, and forward reaching between waist and chest level.
Applications accepted via e-mail: granburyresumes@yahoo.com

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NOTICES

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Public Notices

LEGAL AD
Hood County Commissioners' Court has received an application to consider a revision of the plat for:

SUMMERLIN, PHASE ONE, Lots 24R-1R & 26-R-1R.
The Hood County Commissioners' Court will meet to consider the application and to hear any protest to the revision on Tuesday, January 23rd, 2024, at 9 a.m. in the Central Jury Room of the Ralph H. Walton Jr. Justice Center, 1200 West Pearl Street, Granbury, Texas 76048.

Notice of Self Storage Sale
Please take notice Lancrow Self Storage located at 1409 N Plaza Dr - 1301 N Plaza Dr / 2721 Fall Creek Hwy - 4071 Acton Hwy Granbury TX 76048/76049 intends to hold a public sale to the highest bidder of the property stored by the following tenants at the storage facility. The sale will occur as an online auction via www.storageauctions.com on 1/30/2024 at 11:00AM. Unless stated otherwise, the description of the contents are household goods and furnishings. Shena Kiser, Jason (Hvac) S. Bates. All property is being stored at the above self-storage facility. This sale may be withdrawn at any time without notice. Certain terms and conditions apply. See manager for details.

LEGAL AD
Hood County Commissioners' Court has received an application to consider a revision of the plat for:

BLUE BRANCH RANCH, LOTS 76 - 79
The Hood County Commissioners' Court will meet to consider the application and to hear any protest to the revision on Tuesday, January 23rd, 2024, at 9 a.m. in the Central Jury Room of the Ralph H. Walton Jr. Justice Center, 1200 West Pearl Street, Granbury, Texas 76048.

PUBLIC NOTICE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ELECTION EDUCATION
SERVICE CENTER REGION 11

Persons desiring to have their name placed on the ballot for the Education Service Center Region 11 Board of Directors election to be held during March 2024 are to file a written application in the Executive Director's Office at the ESC, 1451 South Cherry Lane, White Settlement, Texas 76108, in person or by certified mail between February 1 and February 20, 2024.

Positions to be filled are Place 1 (representing Johnson and Somervell Counties), Place 4 (representing Erath and Hood Counties), and Place 7 (representing Tarrant County) for three years each on the Board of Directors. Terms of office begin June 1, 2024.

Persons desiring to have their names placed on the ballot must (1) be at least 18 years of age and a citizen of the United States, (2) reside in the place for which filed, (3) not be engaged professionally in education, (4) not be a member of a school district board of trustees, and (5) not be a member of a governing board of any Region 11 institution of higher education.

Application forms are available in the office of the Executive Director of the ESC.
Dr. Clyde W. Steelman, Jr.
Executive Director
(817) 740-7590

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF CO-INDEPENDENT EXECUTORS
Notice is hereby given that on December 28, 2023, Letters Testamentary as Co-Independent Executors upon the Estate of LYNVOL JOE ARTHUR, Deceased, were issued to ILLAYNA ARTHUR MILLER A/K/A ILLAYNA ARTHUR, who resides at 400 Hulen Place, Apt. 145, Fort Worth, Texas 76107, and GARRETT TOMLINSON ARTHUR, who resides at 4301 Charlemagne Court, Austin, Texas 78727, by the Honorable Probate Court of Hood County, Texas, in Cause No. P10239, pending upon the Probate Docket of the Court.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is now being administered are hereby required to present same to the Executors' attorneys, NORMAN & NORMAN P.C., at the address shown below, within the time prescribed by law.
Respectfully submitted,
NORMAN & NORMAN P.C.
BY: /s/ Catherine M. Norman
CATHERINE M. NORMAN
State Bar No. 00791358
NORMAN & NORMAN P.C.
Attorneys
3200 RIVERFRONT DRIVE
SUITE 100
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76107
Phone: 817-335-5000
Fax: 817-335-5013
catherine@normanestatelaw.com
ATTORNEY FOR EXECUTOR

Granbury Independent School District is soliciting proposals for RFP-1003 for Real Estate & Broker Services. Bid proposals are available online on https://granbury.ionwave.net. The bids are open immediately and will close 1/26/24. Please contact purchasing office at 817-408-4087.

9031
Public Notices

Docket No. 54698
Notice for Publication
NOTICE OF APPLICATION OF CRESSON MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT (MUD) NO. 1 OF HOOD COUNTY TO OBTAIN A CERTIFICATE(S) OF CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY TO PROVIDE WATER UTILITY SERVICE IN HOOD COUNTY, TEXAS
Cresson MUD No. 1 of Hood County has filed an application with the Public Utility Commission of Texas to obtain a water certificate of convenience and necessity (CCN) for the provision of retail water utility service in Hood County, Texas.

The requested area overlaps the district boundaries of Brazos River Authority. If this district does not request a public hearing, the Commission shall determine that the district is consenting to the Cresson MUD No. 1 of Hood County's request to provide retail water utility service in the requested area.

The requested area includes 0 customer connections, is located approximately 1 mile(s) southwest of downtown Cresson, Texas, and is generally bounded on the north by the intersection of United States Highway 377 and Old Granbury Road; on the east by the intersection of United States Highway 377 and Old Granbury Road; on the south by the intersection of United States Highway 377 and Putteet Hill Boulevard; and on the west by the intersection of United States Highway 377 and Putteet Hill Boulevard.

The requested area includes approximately 568 acres, comprised of uncertificated area to amend (add) to Cresson MUD No. 1 of Hood County and the issuance of water CCN number.

The application proposes the addition of approximately 568 acres and the issuance of water CCN number to Cresson MUD No. 1 of Hood County.

A copy of the maps showing the requested area are available at: 14755 Preston Rd., Suite 600, Dallas, TX 75254

Persons who wish to intervene in the proceeding or comment upon action sought should contact the Public Utility Commission, P.O. Box 13326, Austin, Texas 78711-3326, or call the Public Utility Commission at (512) 936-7120 or (888) 782-8477. Hearing- and speech-impaired individuals with text telephones (TTY) may contact the commission at (512) 936-7136. The deadline for intervention in the proceeding is (30 days from the mailing or publication of notice, whichever occurs later, unless otherwise provided by the presiding officer). You must send a letter requesting intervention to the commission which is received by that date. The letter must include the person's name, address, email address and fax number if applicable.

If a valid public hearing is requested, the Commission will forward the application to the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) for a hearing. If no settlement is reached and an evidentiary hearing is held, SOAH will submit a recommendation to the Commission for a final decision. An evidentiary hearing is a legal proceeding similar to a civil trial in state district court.

A landowner with a tract of land at least 25 acres or more, that is partially or wholly located within the requested area, may file a written request with the Commission to be excluded from the requested area ("opt out") within (30) days from the date that notice was provided by the Utility.

All opt out requests must include a large-scale map, a metes and bounds description of the landowner's tract of land, landowner's name, address, email address and fax number, if applicable.

A landowner that opts out from the requested area releases the applicant's obligation to provide retail water or sewer utility service to the removed land for any reason.

Persons who wish to request this option should file the required documents with the:
Public Utility Commission of Texas
Central Records
1701 N. Congress, P. O. Box 13326
Austin, TX 78711-3326
In addition, the landowner must also send a copy of the opt out request to the Utility. Staff may request additional information regarding your request.
Si desea informacion en espanol, puede llamar al 1-888-782-8477.

LEGAL AD
A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, February 13th, 2024, at 9 a.m. during the Hood County Commissioners' Court in the Central Jury Room of the Ralph H. Walton Jr. Justice Center, 1200 West Pearl Street, Granbury, Texas. The Commissioners' Court will meet to discuss, consider, and take appropriate action on the infrastructure development plan for BANDED BARREL, located at 8232 Paluxy Hwy, Tolar, TX

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9031
Public Notices

NOTICE OF BID OPENING FOR REAL PROPERTY
Granbury Independent School District is accepting sealed bids for the purchase of the following real property (the "Property") as described in this Notice of Bid Opening:

All of Lot 2, Block 1, consisting of 7 acres, more or less, on Acton School Road Hood County, Texas according to the Replat thereof recorded in Slide P-959 of the Plat Records of Hood County, Texas and described by metes and bounds: available upon request at Granbury ISD Admin. 217 N Jones St.

It is the intention of Granbury ISD to sell all of the Property based on the best value bid that is submitted. If in the judgment of the Granbury ISD bids submitted do not represent the fair value of the Property, Granbury ISD will reject all bids. Should any bid be accepted, a contract for sale of the Property shall be executed upon a form acceptable to the GISD Board of trustees.

Bids shall be delivered in writing, signed by the bidder or an authorized representative, and enclosed in a sealed envelope to the Granbury ISD-Purchasing Office, 217 N Jones St. Granbury, TX 76048. All proposals shall be plainly marked "BID TO PURCHASE REAL PROPERTY -- ATTN: Houcine Chraibi, Purchasing Manager." Bids must be received before 2:00 p.m. on Thursday February 8th, 2024, and any bid received after that time will not be considered.

Bidders may contact the Granbury ISD, Purchasing Manager, Houcine Chraibi 817-408-4029 or by email houcine.chraibi@granburysd.org for clarifications and questions.

PUBLIC SALES

9570
Auctions

AUCTION: BLUFF DALE
Sat, Jan 13, 10 am
Frederick and Jennifer Snowdon
14485 CR 156
Bluff Dale, TX
19 +/- acre, home, shop, RV Park, tiny homes.
ONE OF A KIND!!!
Skidsteer, tractor, PUs, trailers, side-by-side, tools, equipment.
FOLKS DON'T MISS THIS SALE!!!
Big County Auction
881 E Hwy 80
Abilene, TX
J. Vaughn, Auctioneer #TX12058

Granbury 76048
Garage Sales 76048

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Granbury 76049
Garage Sales 76049

ESTATE SALE BY CARING TRANSITIONS: GRANBURY 4907 Viejo Ct.- Vintage toys, games, childrens' books; nostalgic items of all kinds since 1940s; stained glass; LP albums; furniture; appliances; MANY quilts. Photos at estatesales.net. 12p-5p THR 9a-4p FRI 9a-1p SAT

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Hood County News

9000
Happy Notes

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Happy 17th birthday!
We love you,
G-team

WILDER
God bless you on your
17th birthday and always!
We love you,
Gram & Grampy

- WILDMAN -
We love you!
Happy 17th!
Uncle Jordan, Aunt Carol & Cody

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510 W Pearl St.
Granbury, TX 76048
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THURSDAY, JAN. 18

Acton Methodist Church, 3433 Fall Creek Hwy., will host a Community Awareness Event on Human Trafficking at 6:30 p.m. It will involve training, experts in the field and survivor leaders sharing their stories.

Hood County Democrat Club will meet at Annex 1, 1410 W. Pearl Street, with dinner at 6 p.m. followed by meeting at 7 p.m. Questions? Text 817-233-5453.

SATURDAY, JAN. 20

Goosebump Jump hosted by Visit Granbury. The event will take place at the Granbury City Beach and end with warm festivities at the Hilton Garden Inn. Registration is at the Lake Granbury Conference Center parking lot adjoining City Beach Park entrance. The event schedule: 10 a.m. registration and sign in; 11 a.m. costume judging and awards; Noon: Official Jump; 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. slide activities. To warm up after the jump there will be hot tubbing fun provided by JR Spas. Hilton Garden Inn will host the Coffee/cocoa/cookies after party to begin immediately following the jump.

SATURDAY, JAN. 27

Open Hearts Sanctuary offers a free Holistic Fair from noon-6 p.m. located at 616 Fall Creek Hwy., Granbury. There will be psychic readings, energetic clearing and protection, psychic gift activations, crystals, candles, potions, amulets, spiritual guidance, life coaching and Reiki sessions.

MONDAY, FEB 12

Texas Democratic Women of Hood County monthly meeting. Guest speaker: Hannah Bohm, Democratic Candidate for State Representative, District 59. 11 a.m., Spring Creek Barbeque, 317 E. Hwy 377, Granbury. Details 254-716-5195.

TO SUBMIT CALENDAR ITEMS

Information should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event for consideration. The Community Calendar is a free listing in the Hood County News to inform readers of programs, special meetings and nonprofit events. The event should be open to the public and free to attend. Email the who, what, when and where. Include the meeting location and a street address for the location. The topic for the meeting, program or guest speaker must be included.

Email to: calendar@hcnews.com.

Calendar information runs in chronological order as space is available.



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Boxing up Christmas

Unwrapping the true gifts of the season

BY MICKEY SHEARON

*Special to the Hood County News
micky@hcnews.com*

'Tis the season for boxing up Christmas! As the last strand of tinsel is carefully tucked away, and the ornaments find their cozy spots in their snug boxes, one can't help but feel a twinge of nostalgia. Yet, amidst the flurry of packing tape and attic ascents, let's remember that some things from the holiday season are meant to be unwrapped and cherished year-round.

In the grand tradition of post-holiday cleanup, the Great Christmas Boxing-Up Extravaganza begins. The sound of crinkling wrapping paper and the satisfying thud of cardboard flaps echo through homes everywhere. But wait, before you seal that last box, let's explore the treasures that shouldn't be confined to the attic.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS:

More than a date on the calendar

As the calendar flips to a new year, it's easy to think the spirit of Christmas is exclusive to December. However, the magic of the season is not bound by dates. It's a feeling that can be unwrapped whenever the need for joy, love and good will arises. So, why not sprinkle a little Christmas cheer in July? Break out the festive socks, play your favorite carols, and spread joy regardless of season.

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING:

Because generosity knows no season

Sure, the presents have been exchanged, and the stockings emptied, but the spirit of giving need not hibernate until next December. Random acts of kindness, charitable deeds and a helping hand are gifts that keep on giving. Whether buying a coffee for the person behind you in line or volunteering at a local charity, the joy of giving transcends the holiday season.

THE SPIRIT OF KINDNESS:

Unwrap it daily

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, it's

easy to forget the simple power of kindness. So, let's not box up the warmth and compassion we feel during the holidays. Carry the spirit of kindness with you all year. Hold doors open, smile at strangers and spread good will like confetti. It costs nothing, but the impact is immeasurable.

THE SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE:

A year-round attitude

As the ornaments return to storage, let's not stash away the spirit of gratitude. Take a moment each day to reflect on what you're thankful for. It could be a breathtaking sunset, a cup of coffee or the kindness of a friend. Gratitude is a gift you can unwrap daily, bringing joy in abundance.

THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY

Building connections beyond the holidays

The holiday season often brings people together, fostering a sense of community that warms the heart. However, the spirit of community is not limited to Christmas gatherings. Attend local events, support neighborhood initiatives and build connections that extend far beyond the festive season. A strong community is a year-round gift.

THE SPIRIT OF FAMILY:

Beyond the turkey and tinsel

While the holiday feast and family gatherings may be over, the spirit of family endures. Make time for loved ones, share laughter and create lasting memories throughout the year. Family is not just a Christmas ornament; it's the sturdy tree that stands tall in every season.

As we bid adieu to the tinsel and twinkling lights, let's remember the true gifts of Christmas are not meant to be boxed up and stored away. They are the ever-present ornaments adorning the tree of our lives, bringing joy, warmth and love every day of the year. So, here's to unboxing the spirit of Christmas and embracing its magic all year round!



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All the way to the top — Two Granbury High School students earn chairs in All-State Band

BY EMILY NAVA
Staff Writer
emily@hcnews.com

Two Pride of Granbury High School Band students were selected to perform with the 5A Texas All-State Symphonic Band in San Antonio Feb. 10 in a concert sponsored by the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA).

Seniors Layla Escatel, who plays the flute, and Ivan Perez, who plays the clarinet, were selected to be a part of the prestigious group after going through a lengthy and challenging audition process. The students had to compete at district, regional and area levels starting in September.

All-State is the highest honor a Texas music student can earn. Over 72,000 student musicians across the state competed for a spot where 1,780 students were selected. There are 15 ensembles including bands, orchestras and choirs.

Each student must perform a piece of selected music in front of a panel of judges where they rank each instrument. Only the



COURTESY PHOTO

Seniors Layla Escatel, who plays the flute, and Ivan Perez, who plays the clarinet, were selected to be a part of the prestigious group after going through a lengthy and challenging audition process

top 2.4% of musicians who initially auditioned became All-State musicians.

The All-State musicians will participate in three days

of rehearsals directed by nationally recognized conductors to prepare for the performance that will take place at the Henry B. Gonzales

Convention Center.

This is Escatel's second time to be selected for the All-State band; she described her first experience as mem-

orable and knowledgeable.

"I am extremely grateful to have been selected for it again this year," Escatel said. "The three days spent at the

convention and rehearsals (last year) have changed my perspectives on music and taught me things I would've never learned without it. The music is extremely challenging yet chilling once they all put it together."

"The experience was filled with so many different emotions from both spectrums. Determination and stress to joy and excitement," Perez described. "I am very excited to have this opportunity of a lifetime."

Chair placements will be determined based on recordings the students are required to make playing the audition materials. Following placement, the students will receive their music and practice as much as possible up until the performance Feb. 10.

For those interested in attending the convention to watch the performance, tickets will be available at the visitor's registration booth located at the convention center. A single day adult ticket is \$95 and a multi-day ticket is \$150. High school and middle school students' tickets will cost \$15 with a school ID.

Persevering through: Granbury student continues to compete at Junior Livestock show following loss of goat



COURTESY PHOTO

Granbury High School Sophomore Kynlee Greene shows off her lamb in the ring during a competition back in December.

BY EMILY NAVA
Staff Writer
emily@hcnews.com

The Hood County Junior Livestock show is a much-anticipated event for kids all over the county. The show, produced annually by the Hood County Junior Livestock Raisers Association, had a total of 938 entries for the five-day event that took place from Jan. 9-13. One entrant in particular has persevered through hard times to continue to be part of this annual show.

Kynlee Greene, a sophomore at Granbury High School, participated in her first show last year. She initially was inspired to compete by her mom who had shown in high school. Greene decided she would follow in her mom's footsteps and show as well, and Greene picked a goat to show.

Greene was beyond excited to pick up her first ever lamb and even chose the name "Buddy" before picking him

up. After getting Buddy settled into his new home, Greene went to bed for the night.

The following morning, Greene's mother woke her up and told Kynlee they needed to head to the barn because something unexpected had happened. Greene's mother told her the agriculture teacher called and informed them Buddy had passed away the night before.

"I immediately broke down in tears. This was a major setback for me," Greene told the HCN. "But I didn't let that stop me from pursuing this dream of mine."

Greene was able to take in another lamb after the loss of Buddy and get out in ring. This past summer, Greene was able to earn some banners following multiple wins. She now has a total of three lambs and will be showing two at the livestock show.

"Being a sophomore, I still have a lot more to learn and experience," Greene said.

"My favorite part would have to be the opportunity to meet new people. I love getting to hear other people's stories and experiences they have faced. I also love getting to spread the truth about agriculture and how it has impacted my life deeply."

She was selected to be a Granbury FFA officer last April after a lengthy process. First, she had to take and pass a quiz as well as create a video about why she wanted to become an officer. The video was shown to the FFA members who voted for those they wanted to represent them. Greene then had to go through an interview process. She successfully obtained the role and said it has led her to many great opportunities.

Greene plans to pursue a career related to agriculture following graduation.

"Showing has taught me many lessons and continues to," Green said. "I can't wait to see where agriculture will take me next."

Making a splash: Granbury High School swim teams take home first place

BY EMILY NAVA
Staff Writer
emily@hcnews.com

Granbury High School's swim teams clinched first place at their first meet of the new year Jan. 6 and closed out their regular season.

The competition consisted of 12 events ranging from distance diving to freestyle and everything in between. The Granbury team consists of a boys' team with 17 students and a girls' team with 14 students. There is a variety of ages among the students, but they all have the same passion for swimming.

Each student is ranked based on their performance and then scored by a point value. Once each event is finished, the points are then counted to see where the most points landed. The boys team raked in a total of

361 points with the next closest school coming in at 244 points. The girls team earned 437 points while the next closest team scored 308 points.

Kensington Loving and Avery Young placed first in the 200-yard medley relay; Mylie Erez placed first in the 50-yard freestyle as well as the 200-yard relay alongside Madison Erez and the 400-yard freestyle relay alongside Young; Braxton Heffernan placed first in the 50-yard freestyle as well as the 200-yard freestyle relay alongside Noah Brown; Jina Kim placed first in the 100-yard backstroke; Michela Petretto placed second in the 200-yard IM; and Heffernan and Cameron Ward placed second in the 400-yard freestyle relay.

"It was really exciting and great to see them come together as a group,"

GHS head swim coach Charles Overton said.

"They really all started to click and mesh, and coming home with a first-place win at a big invitation like that for the first time this season was really great. We went up against some really fast teams, and it was nice to see their hard work and dedication they have put in all year pay off."

The teams are now getting ready to compete at the district meet Jan. 26, where the boys team hopes to redeem its title as previous district champion; the girls placed third last year. The boys team also was the regional runnerup for the fourth year in a row. The girls' team placed fourth at the Regional level. Five students also qualified for the state championship.

"We would love to win district for both the boys



COURTESY PHOTO

The Granbury High School Swim Teams took home first place at their first meet of the new year on Jan. 6.

and girls and then be regional champions as well," Overton said. "We are going to try to get as many

kids as we can to qualify for state and make a big impact at that level."

To keep up with the

teams, follow them on Facebook under Granbury High School Pirate & Lady Pirate Swim Team.

'The best athletes at Granbury High School'

GHS cheer coach reflects on successful state competition

BY EMILY NAVA
Staff Writer
emily@hcnews.com

The Granbury High School Cheer team competed at the annual University Interscholastic League (UIL) Spirit State Championships Jan. 4-6. The team took home first place overall in district and 12th overall out of 71 teams in its division.

This competition was especially successful after the team received its highest score ever with a 90.67, four points higher than the previous year. The team has now been in the top 20 the past three years and first in district the past two years.

The team is composed of 37 students with 30 who competed on the floor during competition. These hard-working athletes have been prepping for the Game Day competition since September with hours upon hours of training. The competition is broken down into three categories including a band

dance, crowd-leading and fight song.

The band dance portion allows for the cheerleaders to dance along to music a band would play during a football game. The cheerleaders shout out their game day chants and school colors. Crowd-leading gives the cheerleaders a chance to get the crowd involved and responsive to the cheers. The fight song lets the cheerleaders chant their classic fight song. Within these categories, there are many different aspects where the team is judged.

The 5A division is comprised of 71 teams in the preliminary round and cuts were made multiple times before getting down to the top 20.

"In those moments, it's just a building of excitement. Hours go by and more teams get cut and then you get told you made it to the finals," GHS varsity head coach Kathleen McLaurin said.

The team then is able to look over its score sheet, go over corrections, and wake up the following day and do it all

over again.

"I told them; you have the knowledge. Now it's about going out and performing it. Just go and do it," McLaurin said.

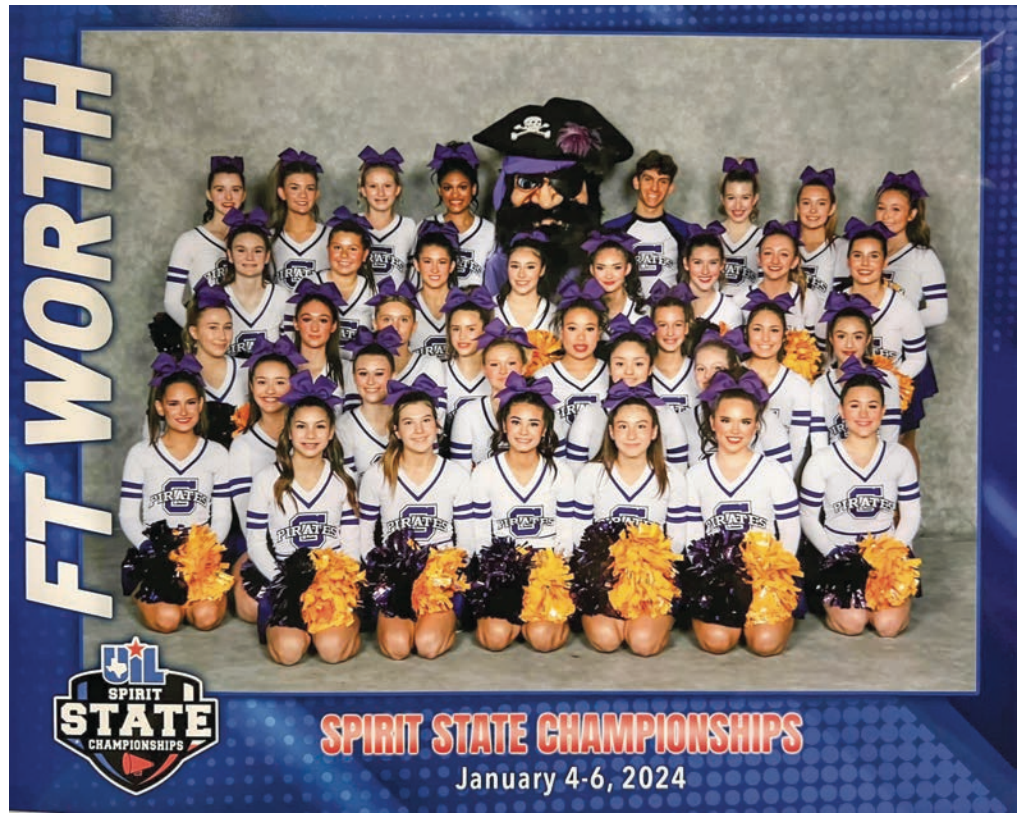
McLaurin described the atmosphere at the competition as "very high energy and very competitive". Not only were these athletes prepping for this competition, they also were attending and cheering at football and basketball games throughout the year.

Some of McLaurin's favorite moments from the competition are a compilation of watching the cheerleaders succeed and the excitement that is felt.

McLaurin has been coaching cheer for 18 years and was thrilled to end her career with this team.

"It's bittersweet. I've been with them since they were freshmen," McLaurin said.

"I'm just so incredibly proud of this team and I'm very blessed to get to work with the best athletes at Granbury High School. I'm glad to be going with a good team."



COURTESY PHOTO

Pictured is the Granbury High School Spirit team that competed at the UIL State Spirit Championship that took place Jan. 4 through Jan. 6.

Voice of Granbury Main Event returns Jan. 18

BY ASHLEY TERRY
Staff Writer
ashley@hcnews.com

Hood County's favorite vocal talent competition The Voice of Granbury will return for its sixth annual main event Thursday, Jan. 18, at 7:30 p.m. at The New Granbury Live, 110 N. Crockett St.

The Voice of Granbury is a singing competition where 10 local talents will compete for audience votes to be crowned as the official Voice of Granbury for 2024.

Competitors include Jen Maroney, Hayden Phillips, Crystal McCraw, Lisa Sudbury, Lois Akers, AJ Sarcione, Nate Milson, Jackson Powell, Josh Lee and

Pete O'Carroll.

The following bios were emailed from the contestants to the event organizers:

JEN MARONEY - Jen is

excited to be part of the fundraising effort for Granbury Kiwanis again after winning the Audition Night event in August. Jesus, family and the city of Granbury are dear to her heart. Recent music theater roles include portraying Charlotte in BCE's production of "Charlotte's Web" and Emily in "Elf the Musical" with Granbury Theatre Company. In her free time, Jen enjoys leading worship at StoneWater Church, where she also works in communications.

Jen wants to thank her husband and kids for their never-ending support.

HAYDEN PHILLIPS - Hayden

is 16 and from Springtown. He is in his junior year at Springtown High School. He enjoys playing basketball, baseball and hanging out with friends and family. He also plays golf and is learning how to play guitar. He just started singing a short while ago, and he has really developed a passion for it and is anxious to continue singing to see where it goes.

CRYSTAL MCCRAW - Crystal

is a wife to her best friend, Joe, and mother of two

boys, Oryon and Cyrus. She's a hairstylist by day and a grumpy, tired bear ready for hibernation by night. She loves to hike, read and travel. She fell in love with singing as a young girl watching her mother sing with a band. She hopes to do the songs she's chosen justice, and most importantly, she hopes we raise lots of money for a good cause.

LISA SUDBURY - Lisa started

singing a cappella in church and listening to R&B, soul and Broadway records as a child. She has sung with praise bands and has written and performed songs for friends commemorating birthdays and other events.

Lisa hasn't been on a stage of this size since portraying "Betty from Boston" in a college production of "No, No Nanette." Lisa is grateful for the support of family and friends and hopes you all have a wonderful time supporting a great organization.

LOIS AKERS - Lois has been

in the Granbury area for five years and loves it here. She's been singing in some form all her life. For over 20 years she directed various church choirs, and she currently is in the Granbury Civics Choir. She's part of the ministry "For His Glory" which entertains at local senior living centers, singing God's praises and sharing

His love. She and her husband are fundraising consultants, assisting churches with capital campaigns. She is a blessed mother of four and grandmother of five.

AJ SARCIONE - AJ is a resident

of Granbury, who is the previous head of mojo and head of internal marketing for Verizon and Yahoo, respectfully. He now runs a business helping to develop and inspire leaders and teams to achieve their greatest potential. Music has been a big part of AJ's life; he has performed since a young age and throughout his edu-

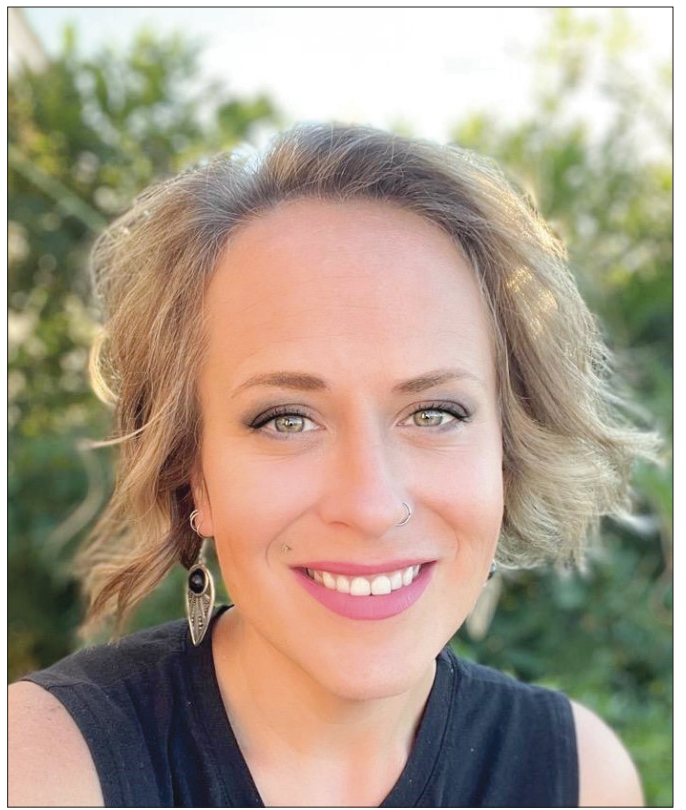
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Voice of Granbury participant Jen Maroney.

Voice of Granbury participant Hayden Phillips.

Voice of Granbury participant Crystal McCraw.

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GARDEN PATCH

New year brings fresh trends

BY PHYLLIS WEBSTER



Phyllis Webster earned a degree in journalism before embarking on a long career in public relations and marketing. A Granbury resident since 1998, she has been deeply involved in the community. She is an award-winning writer and photographer, as well as a Master Gardener. She has authored Garden Patch since 2001.

This year, home and commercial landscapes could shift from having negative effects on natural resources to spaces that benefit the planet. Many 2024 garden trend forecasts point to a bigger concern for environmentally conscious design, climate-adapted plants and pollinator preservation.

Lessons taught for many years are finally gaining traction, due to ongoing effects of the pandemic and anxiety about climate change. Provided this year's predictions are realized, home gardening will be on a path toward sustainability. Trends include:

WEATHERWISE — As weather extremes continue to stress home landscapes,

gardens must be adapted to continually withstand record heat and cold. Along with temperature fluctuations, also come floods, drought, wildfire and wind. Most experts recommend native plants over exotics for the best weather resistance. Natives also benefit wildlife. Many well-adapted plants also hold up well to climate excess.

EDIBLES — Whether grown in containers indoors or in the ground, more people are consuming locally-grown produce, particularly home-grown fruits and vegetables. Herbs are also growing in popularity because they occupy little space, are low-maintenance and serve a dual purpose - ornamental

and edible. This duality has given rise to a new term — edimentals.

NATURALISTIC — The continued popularity of native plants combined with the desire for lower impact gardens has resulted in a softer aesthetic. What does this look like? Plantings are arranged in drifts, seeds are scattered, and plants are allowed to self-sow. It is not a neglected look, but it is not manicured. It is structured, yet free from constant maintenance. The focus is on plant diversity and a more natural approach that favors wildlife, particularly pollinators. This style is sometimes called chaos planting because it is viewed as rebellious, going against established norms.

BUG FRIENDLY — Along with an appreciation for pollinators, this trend embraces all garden creatures, excluding pest infestations of course. It is an approach

that scorns harsh chemicals and endures chewed leaves. Plantings are chosen with concern for protecting insect populations, such as butterfly/butterfly gardens.

LESS IS MORE — With the goal of water conservation, this movement eliminates or minimizes lawns. Also, fewer plants are used. Native, drought-tolerant plant groupings are surrounded by mulched or gravel-filled spaces to make a bold statement.

CUTTING EDGE COLOR — Color trends come and go, so embrace them or NOT! This year, cyber lime reigns supreme. This "wow" color contrasts with the dark, moody foliage and flower colors embraced by the "goth" garden look. Paraphrasing designers, "Bright lime is a meeting of nature and high-tech, while moody schemes align with trendy "cemetery tourism." Yes, you read that right! Add



COURTESY PHOTO BY PHYLLIS WEBSTER

Naturalistic plantings and a tolerance for beneficial insects are trending in 2024.

goth into your landscape with pottery and statuary. And don't rush to tidy dead and dying plants; they have unique "spooky" features. For answers to your hor-

ticulture questions, please call the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Hood County at 817-579-3280 or go online to visit lakegranburymastergardeners.org.

BRIDGE STREET HISTORY

A little bit of Southern hospitality

BY ROGER ENLOW



Roger Enlow grew up in Granbury, graduated from Granbury High School in 1973, and worked at the Hood County News from 1976-2021. He is a member of the Bridge Street History Center Museum's Board of Directors.

Perhaps no one accomplished more for the city of Granbury than late Mayor David Southern. Because of his vision, Granbury offers a quality of life and tourist destination unparalleled to most small Texas cities.

Due to Southern's tireless devotion to Granbury, The Bridge Street History Center Board of Directors unanimously recommends renaming the Lake Granbury Conference Center the David Southern Lake Granbury Conference Center. The Granbury City Council is expected to consider the request in early 2024.

Under Southern's leadership, the conference center and Hilton Garden Inn were built as a partnership to enhance Granbury's marketability and local tourism. He once wrote, "With the completion of the park system and most of the hike and bike trail, we had achieved a trifecta — the dedication of Hewlett Park, the new conference center across the street joining the new Hilton Garden Inn and newly-expanded and vastly improved beach all on the same day, Oct. 3, 2008."

Southern died on Dec. 13, 2022 at the age of 72. After his death the Hood County News reported, "A man

who remained calm when others sometimes didn't, he advocated for development regulations that, while sometimes controversial, were designed to enhance the city's beauty and give it a cohesive appearance."

David and his wife Claudia first visited Granbury in 1976 when they were living in Abilene. He was a staff psychologist at Abilene State School; she was a speech teacher and debate coach at Abilene High School. They fell in love with Granbury.

"We thought it would be a great place to live and raise children," David said. "Little did we know that four short years later we would be opening a business in Granbury."

They bought a house on North Thorp Springs Road to start a group home for people with intellectual disabilities. The city council approved, and the home opened in the summer of 1980.

The Southern's plan for a similar home in Cleburne didn't go as smoothly. In fact, the debate went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court after Cleburne did not approve due to its ordinance relating to "feebleminded" adults. Said Southern, "You could have a hospital, an apartment complex, a sorority or fraternity,

or even a leper colony in this zoning, but 'feebleminded' adults could not live there." The Supreme Court decision helped knock down similar ordinances across the nation. It also stirred Southern's interest in city government.

In 1985 Southern was elected to the Granbury City Council, a position he held for a decade. He was then elected mayor, serving for 15 years. He was considered the longest-serving elected official in the history of Granbury.

"One of the things that surprised me most was how bad the city's finances were," Southern wrote about his early days on the council. "The other big surprise was the lack of adequate water storage. I lived in the Southtown addition at the time and was surprised when firemen had to come through that part of town to ask us to turn off our water sprinklers in order for them to fight a fire on Highway 377."

Southern helped lead the charge to raise the sales tax a half cent in order to lower property taxes.

"This ordinance not only lowered property taxes by half, it became the source of revenue to pull us out of a big financial hole," Southern wrote. The city eventually improved its bond rating to double A, "the best any city our size could expect," and water storage soared from 275,000 gallons to over 5 million gallons.

PLEASE SEE **HISTORY** | B6

HOOD OUTDOORS



COURTESY PHOTO

Pictured left to right is Gage, Aaron and Carl Aasletten with their catch of Granbury striped and white bass caught last week.

Something different on the table

BY MICHAEL ACOSTA



As a licensed professional fishing guide, Michael Acosta shows you how to find them. A Granbury resident of more than 35 years, he has been fishing all of his life, and has been a licensed guide since 1998.

After all the holiday food in December, maybe some fish on the menu would be a good choice? I get asked all the time about how I prepare fish. I'm not a chef, but I will discuss three methods to prepare your catch. When the weather keeps us at home you may want to prepare some of that fish you have in the freezer. Fresh caught fish is always better if you have that option.

The first step to good-tasting fish is to prepare your catch properly. I generally clean my fish with fresh water at the lake as I don't want to bring the mess home (I carry fresh water in my truck). If I am cleaning striped bass, I remove the blood line (red meat). This is easily done by notching the fillet on either side of the bloodline and it will actually pull out (you can cut it out also). When you get home, it is a good idea to reclean the filets prior to preparing them. If you are going to freeze the filets, I like to put the clean filets in a freezer bag filled with water. The best way is a vacuum packing device if you have one. Many folks will soak

their fish in salt water or milk. Either will work. Once you have your filets ready you can use one of my simple recipes below. Don't forget to prepare and fry your homemade hush puppies in the oil before you fry your fish. Pick up some cajun hushpuppy mix and add jalapenos or whatever you desire.

For fried fish, which the kids generally prefer, I use either cornmeal or a Louisiana fish fry batter available at your grocer. The cornmeal is inexpensive and works great for any fried fish. Heat your oil of choice to 375 degrees, coat the fish and fry. You can spice up your fish slightly by coating the fillet with Tabasco sauce before rolling or shaking in the batter. This works on chicken also.

Here is a broiled recipe that many enjoy and it is probably the easiest to fix. Place your prepared filets seasoned with lemon pepper or your favorite seasoning in tin foil. Add butter and lemon juice, seal the foil and place on the grill until the fish is done. It only takes a few minutes and makes for some awesome eating!

Blackened fish is one of my favorites and it is easy to fix as well. It's best to cook this outside as you don't want to smoke up your house. You need a hot iron skillet, some Pam butter flavored cooking spray, and cajun seasoning. Dry the filets first and spray the butter flavored cooking spray on both sides of the fillet and then cover one side of the fillet with cajun seasoning. Cook that side down and sprinkle the Cajun seasoning on the other side while in the skillet. Cook both sides in the hot skillet (does not take long). Pam butter flavored spray is low in calories, however you can use real butter. This is an awesome spicy dish.

Enjoy the fish you catch this season and enjoy the New Year. See you on the water.

HOOD COUNTY FISHING REPORT

Granbury water temperatures have fallen into the low 50s and the fishing for crappie, white bass and striped bass has been good. Granbury water level is near normal. Best crappie action is on submerged structure on small jigs fished from Water's Edge to the Peninsula. Striped bass to 10 pounds and large white

PLEASE SEE **OUTDOORS** | B4

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HCNEWS.COM

SUDOKU
Solution for the puzzle on Dec. 30 (Puzzle 63).

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

Puzzle by websudoku.com

Former GISD students land on Dean's List

Staff Reports

Angelo State University in San Angelo has announced the students achieving the Dean's List for the 2023 fall semester. Four former Granbury ISD students are on the list including James Ashwood who is studying account-

ing, Logan Bennett studying management, Lesa Easley studying management, and Enrique Ruiz studying animal science. To be eligible for the ASU Dean's List, full-time undergraduate students must maintain a 3.25 or better grade point average on a 4.0 scale.

OUTDOORS

FROM PAGE B3

bass are staging on the upper ends in the river channel from Western Hills to Hunter Park. Best baits for striped and white bass are flukes/swimbait in the 3- to 5- inch size worked near schools of baitfish huddled near the channel. Largemouth bass to 5 pounds are best near laydowns on the upper ends and in the river. Texas-rigged soft plastics and spinner baits are putting largemouth in the boat. Big blue and yellow catfish are good on cut bait fished on the upper ends near Hunter Park.

Comanche Creek (formerly Squaw Creek) continues to boast on numbers of channel catfish and largemouth bass. Eater-sized channel catfish are good on prepared baits. Largemouth bass to 6 pounds on this power plant lake are good on soft plastics near submerged creek channels and tanks. I do not have a Tilapia report. On other reservoirs, Lake Whitney sand bass, striped bass and crappie are being caught on the upper ends and in the river near Kimball Bend. Possum Kingdom striped bass are good to 15 pounds from Broadway to the Island on soft plastics. Look for the birds.

Resolving to thrive: A fun and insightful journey into the history and art of New Year's resolutions

BY MICKY SHEARON
Special to
Hood County News
micky@hcnews.com

Now that we are a week or two into the New Year, it's time to do a quick check-up on those New Year resolutions that were made back on Jan. 1. To be honest, most all of us make resolutions to one extent or the other. Some of the most common resolutions we make include:

- Losing weight
- Sticking to a healthier diet
- Exercising regularly
- Making better financial choices
- Quitting smoking
- Spending more time with family

All great and worthy goals, to be sure. Now, for the bad news. A recent Forbes Health/One Poll survey found the average resolution lasts just 3.74 months. Only 8% of respondents tend to stick with their goals for one month, while 22% last two months, 22% last three months and 13% last four months. Those are fairly bleak numbers, to say the least.

So, what is it that makes us want to make New Year's resolutions every year, even though most of us usually are not successful — at least not completely? It turns out making resolutions is not-

ing new. In fact, the practice has been a part of our human history for thousands of years. Let's look at the history of resolution-making and a few tips to help defy the odds and possibly keep your resolutions. The tradition of making New Year's resolutions dates back over 4,000 years. The ancient Babylonians, pioneers of this practice, celebrated the new year during the spring, making promises to the gods during the grand Akitu festival. Fast forward to ancient Rome, where Jan. 1 became the starting point for resolutions, paying homage to Janus, the two-faced god of transitions. For early Christians, the new year marked a time of reflection and renewal, with the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, establishing the Covenant Renewal Service. Today, despite its religious origins, New Year's resolutions have evolved into a predominantly secular practice, focusing on self-improvement. But enough of the history of resolutions. Now, let's dive into practical steps to enhance your chances of keeping those resolutions and making 2024 your most transformative year yet.

tions like "lose weight" or "be more productive," opt for a specific, achievable goal. Whether it's shedding 10 pounds, creating daily to-do lists or conquering a half-marathon, specificity lays the groundwork for success. Realism is key; set a goal that challenges you without overwhelming.

LIMIT YOUR RESOLUTIONS/FOCUS ON ONE GOAL AT A TIME
Success breeds confidence. Instead of spreading yourself thin with numerous resolutions, focus on one goal at a time. Break larger goals into manageable chunks, making each step a victory in itself. This approach not only makes the journey less daunting but also significantly boosts your chances of success.

MAKE A DETAILED PLAN
A written plan is your roadmap to success. Consider potential challenges and devise strategies to overcome them. Define your goal, list actionable steps and anticipate obstacles. Armed with a detailed plan, you'll be better equipped to stay on track and navigate any hurdles that come your way.

small, sustainable steps. Rapid, drastic alterations to your routine may lead to burnout. Instead, focus on gradual progress, building habits that will propel you toward your ultimate goal.

REMEMBER, CHANGE IS A PROCESS
Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither are positive habits. Acknowledge that change takes time. Be patient with yourself, understanding the habits you're aiming to change likely took years to form. Embrace the journey, learn from missteps and persist on your path to success.

GET SUPPORT
The buddy system is not just a cliché; it works. Having a support system keeps you motivated and accountable. Enlist a like-minded friend or family member to share the journey. Camaraderie not only enhances the experience but also makes sticking to your resolution more enjoyable. As we stand on the threshold of a new year, let's embrace the rich history of resolutions and leverage practical strategies to turn our promises into lasting achievements. May 2024 be a year of triumph, growth and self-discovery as we navigate the exciting path of self-improvement together.

CHOOSE A SPECIFIC GOAL
Rather than vague resolu-

START WITH SMALL STEPS
Avoid the pitfall of overwhelming change by taking

FORWARD TRAINING CENTER Seeds of success: cultivating lives at Forward Training Center

BY KATY OFFUTT



Katy Offutt is executive director of Forward Training Center of Hood County. Her community leadership roles include: Help Ministry coordinator, Stonewater Church; alumnus and past president, Leadership Granbury; vice president, Granbury Housing Authority; president, Public Facility Corporation; Nominating Committee chair, LGMA; and volunteer with Ada Carey Center.

In the heart of Hood County there is a special garden, not of flowers or vegetables, but of lives flourishing. At Forward Training Center, we see our role as planting seeds for future growth. Each person who walks through our doors is like a seed, full of potential, waiting to bloom. With education, mentorship and opportunities, we provide the nurturing soil and care needed. Consider Yolanda, a single mom who came to us uncertain about her path. With our support, she found her passion and skills, blossoming into a confident professional supporting her family. Or Thomas, who needed direction and found purpose through our programs, now thriving in his chosen field. Using the job skill training and confidence-building tools along with the professional resumes and interview skills learned at the center, individuals and families potentially can become self-sufficient with secure jobs and careers. And what about our youth, graduating with a confidence and sense of value they didn't come in with as they learn a work

ethic that will prepare them while they pursue their vocational endeavors? At Forward, our story doesn't end when the seeds are planted; it's about what comes next. We recall Paul Harvey's words, desiring to reveal the "rest of the story." Our graduates' success isn't limited to our building; it's promotions earned, diplomas proudly received, and lives transformed, as they flourish and become self-sufficient community citizens. It's about the ripple effect on Hood County's economic horizon. Sometimes Forward cannot capture these ongoing valuable moments. We'd love to share more success stories, so if you or someone you know has a story as a graduate or has witnessed the success of our programs in a family member or friend, please send these stories to stories@forwardtrainingcenter.org. Your experiences help us showcase the impact of results in the community. The Hood County News has been a beacon, sharing these stories and celebrating our graduates' successes over the years, making their



Heather Albreth, JFL graduate assisting in computer classes, with students, Gary Wheatley, and Theo Mthombeni and Zac Courville.

achievements a part of our community's narrative. Consider becoming involved with Forward, not as just an act of kindness, but rather as an investment in a brighter future for Hood County. Join us in nurturing these seeds of hope and witness the ongoing impact of changed lives. We have instructor, mentor and class leader volunteer roles available. Come for a tour and inquire about volunteering. Imagine seeing in the Hood County News how the community rallied together to support its own. Your contribution, no matter the size, or how, will make a difference. Together, let's continue to create more

opportunities that foster long term individual sustainability. Thank you for considering being a part of our story by sharing your story. Support is appreciated from those whose lives you will help cultivate, nurture and grow, through your participation.

Send stories to: stories@forwardtrainingcenter.org, call 817-573-6677, visit www.forwardtrainingcenter.org to make donation, schedule an interview to volunteer, or register in class, or take a tour at 600 Pearl St. Granbury, TX 76039.

katy@forwardtrainingcenter.org | 817 219-5655



Seeds being planted, left to right, Kelsey Wallen, Theo Mthombeni, Sarah Rosencrantz, Esther Schreiber, Jim Lilly, and Jesan Sorrelles.



Mentor Esther Schreiber in the JFL class with students Felicia Buchanan and Jasmin Austin.

CINERGY

ENTERTAINMENT

Friday, 12 January 2024 - Thursday, 18 January 2024

Anyone But You (R)
Fri: 4:50PM, 10:15PM.
Sat: 4:35PM, 10:00PM.
Sun: 11:10AM, 4:35PM.
Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs: 5:00PM

Aquaman and the Lost Kingdom (PG13)
Fri: 2:00PM, 7:20PM.
Sat: 10:45AM, 1:40PM, 7:10PM.
Sun: 1:40PM, 7:10PM.
Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs: 2:05PM, 7:35PM

Mean Girls (PG13)
Fri: 2:00PM, 4:45PM, 7:30PM, 10:15PM.
Sat: 11:00AM, 1:50PM, 4:40PM, 7:30PM, 10:20PM.
Sun: 11:00AM, 1:50PM, 4:40PM, 7:30PM.
Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs: 2:00PM, 4:45PM, 7:30PM

Migration (PG)
Fri: 2:15PM, 4:35PM, 7:00PM, 9:30PM.
Sat: 10:00AM, 12:20PM, 2:40PM, 5:00PM, 7:20PM, 9:40PM.
Sun: 10:00AM, 12:20PM, 2:40PM, 5:00PM, 7:20PM.
Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs: 2:20PM, 4:40PM, 7:05PM

The Beekeeper (R)
Fri: 2:10PM, 4:45PM, 7:20PM, 9:55PM.
Sat: 11:30AM, 2:05PM, 4:40PM, 7:15PM, 10:00PM.
Sun: 11:30AM, 2:05PM, 4:40PM, 7:15PM.
Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs: 2:20PM, 4:55PM, 7:30PM

The Boys in the Boat (PG13)
Fri: 2:00PM, 4:50PM, 7:40PM, 10:30PM.
Sat: 10:30AM, 1:20PM, 4:10PM, 7:00PM, 9:50PM.
Sun: 10:30AM, 1:20PM, 4:10PM, 7:00PM.
Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs: 2:00PM, 4:50PM, 7:40PM

Wonka (PG)
Fri: 2:00PM, 4:40PM, 7:20PM, 10:00PM.
Sat: 10:45AM, 1:25PM, 4:05PM, 6:45PM, 9:25PM.
Sun: 10:45AM, 1:25PM, 4:05PM, 6:45PM.
Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs: 2:00PM, 4:40PM, 7:20PM

• Showtimes Subject to Change Without Notice

(682) 260-5920 | cinergy.com/locations/granbury/

2024

Matching Gift

Please team up with our sponsors for this year's Match fund for **Habitat for Humanity of Hood County.** Habitat believes affordable homeownership changes lives. You can help "build" that change with a donation to the Match.

Donations received November 15, 2023 - January 31, 2024 will be matched up to the amount of the fund.

Please mail your donations to:
Habitat for Humanity of Hood County
PO Box 1866, Granbury, TX 76048
or give at habitatofhoodcounty.org

SAME PAPER AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

HCNEWS.COM

Family, friends request birthday cards for Korean War veteran's 96th birthday

BY ASHLEY TERRY
Staff Writer
ashley@hcnews.com

Indian Harbor resident and veteran Charles "Pops" Hornberger officially turned 96 years old Jan. 2 — but his family and friends are determined to make this birthday extra special.

Kendra Hofeldt, one of Pops' neighbors, made a post on social media and asked the Hood County community to send him birthday cards in the mail as a surprise gift.

"I was just sitting here yesterday and wanted to do something to make him smile," Hofeldt told the HCN via Facebook Messenger Jan. 3. "I thought surprising him with as many birthday cards as possible would do the trick. I'm a little extra."

The post blew up on the Hood County Breaking News! Facebook page, with 229 reactions, 140 comments and 15 shares, as many residents wished Pops a happy birthday

and requested his address so they could mail him a card.

"A wonderful stranger messaged me and asked what Pops' favorite snacks were. Then she brought him all the snacks over to the house. He was so pleased," Hofeldt said. "We have a new friend now! What a blessing!"

Hornberger is a Navy veteran and served five years in the Korean War — a topic that he doesn't like to discuss often, according to his stepdaughter Karen Russell.

"I like to watch war movies. But Pops doesn't like to talk too much about when he was in Korea," she said. "He was only there five years, but it was during the bad part."

Hornberger is originally from Tishomingo, Oklahoma. He moved to Granbury in 1990, with his late wife, Lorena, who passed away in 2019.

"Her (Lorena) and I both liked to fish," Hornberger told the HCN. "When we lived in Greenville, we used to go

down to the lake at least once a week. We enjoyed it. I like to catch fish and look at the lake out here. It's a good place to fish. I love it down here. It's a nice town."

Hornberger also served as a pharmacist for a total of 63 years, with 17 of those at Granbury Drug.

"I'd be working somewhere, and I'd have a bad habit where if they didn't treat me right, I'd get upset and move," he said. "I'm sure I moved about 10 times in those 63 years. I'm a hardheaded German, I guess. I got set in my ways."

Russell describes Hornberger as someone who doesn't complain and loves talking to people — even though he can't hear them most of the time.

"He dropped his hearing aids in the toilet or something," she said, chuckling. "I'm just glad I got to stay with him because my mother had dementia. I'm the only one that isn't married and

has a house, so I was lucky to come and stay with him. He's been a blessing."

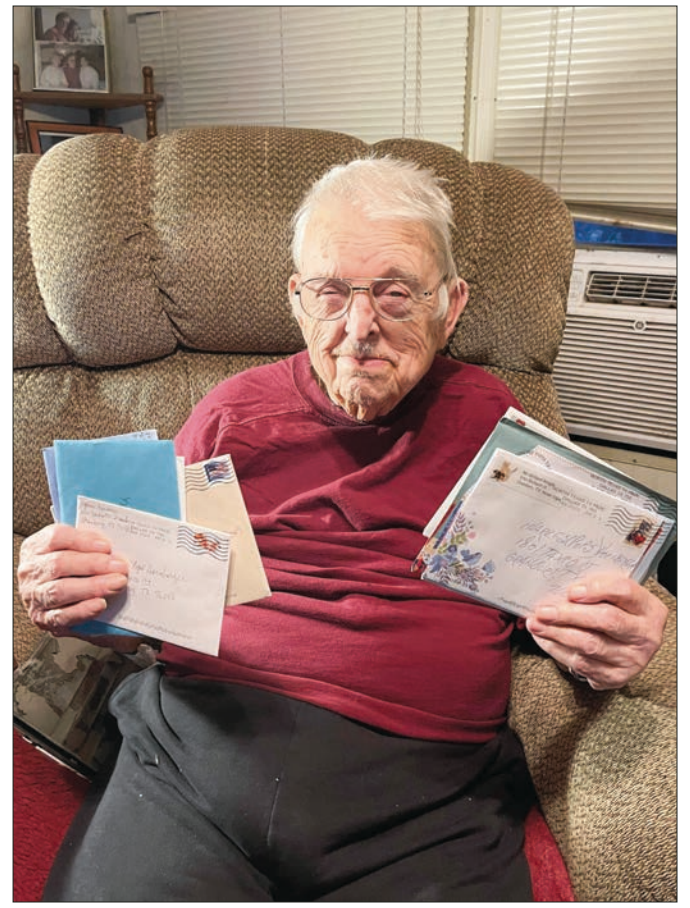
She commented that sometimes the pair would get in a small argument, but Pops would tell her, "You know what? I would have had to be in a rest home if it hadn't been for you."

"He's my hero in life," Russell said. "I'm so proud of him. He loved my mother, and I'm glad I'm here to take care of him."

When asked how it feels to be 96, Hornberger replied that it feels great, adding that he's glad he's made it this long — and hopes to make it 10 more years.

Anyone interested in mailing a birthday card to Hornberger or "Pops" can text Hofeldt at 817-690-8641 and request the address.

"He doesn't know about this, but I expect some cards to be arriving (as soon as possible). He will know then," Hofeldt added. "What a grand surprise for Pops!"



COURTESY PHOTO

Indian Harbor resident and veteran Charles "Pops" Hornberger officially turned 96 years old Jan. 2 — but his family and friends are determined to make this birthday extra special. Pops Pictured with his cards

'Hair' today, gone tomorrow

Cheeky Peach Wax Studio now open in Granbury

BY ASHLEY TERRY
Staff Writer
ashley@hcnews.com

As the new year brings new resolutions, new hope and new beginnings, Hood County residents can now take their "new year, new me" mantra a step further by getting a physical transfor-

mation at Granbury's newest business.

The Cheeky Peach Wax Studio & Esthetics located at 1509 W. Pearl St. can provide customers with a full makeover — complete with full body waxing, facials, brow tints, lash tints, lash extensions, brow laminations and a variety of hair services.

But customers won't be the only ones making changes for the new year.

Even though she officially opened her new business recently, owner Billie Watson revealed to the HCN this isn't her first career.

PLEASE SEE PEACH | B7



COURTESY PHOTO

The Cheeky Peach Wax Studio & Esthetics located at 1509 W. Pearl St. can provide customers with a full makeover — complete with full body waxing, facials, brow tints, lash tints, lash extensions, brow laminations and a variety of hair services.

GO PLAY

GO PLAY calendar will feature recurring activities that are open to the public. These items will run each week along with other activities across the area. Submit Go Play listings to calendar@hcnews.com and include the day, date, time and location — including street address.

MONDAYS

HEALTHY CONNECTIONS exercise classes. 9 a.m. exercise; 10 a.m. Tai Chi; 10:30 a.m. exercise; 11:15 a.m. chair yoga. 1321 Waters Edge Drive, Suite 1001. Details: 817-579-2979.

GRANBURY BRIDGE Club will hold an ACBL-sanctioned duplicate bridge game at noon each week at the Acton Methodist Church, 3433 Fall Creek HWY, Granbury, TX 76049. Entry \$8/person. All are welcome, come with a partner and compete for ACBL masterpoints! Info & reservations: 225-933-4074.

SONS OF the American Legion Post 491 of Granbury Burger Night. 5 - 7 p.m. American Legion Post, 3409 Davis Road. Funds raised are used to support veteran and community youth programs. Open to members and guests. Details: 515-554-6498.

GRANBURY CIVIC Chorus rehearsals, 7 p.m. at Acton United Methodist Church, 3433 Fall Creek Highway. Details: granburycivicchorus2001@gmail.com.

mail.com. December program will feature songs of Christmas from around the world. www.granburycivicchorus.org

TUESDAYS

LINE DANCING 2 p.m. Healthy Connections, 1321 Waters Edge Drive, Suite 1001. Details: 817-579-2979.

GRANBURY JAM Session 7:30-10:30 p.m. at Brock's Food and Drink, 4012 Acton Highway. Bring your instrument or get up and sing! Details: 505-710-5100.

BEGINNERS' CHAIR Yoga 45-minute Class. Tuesdays at 1:30 p.m. - Donations for Local Charities are accepted. Class will take place at Emmanuel Lutheran Church located at 2301 Fall Creek Hwy, 76049. For more information call 817-326-2201

PEDALING FOR Parkinson's hosted by the Hood County YMCA will be from 1 to 2 p.m. at 1475 James Road. The program is led by a certified group fitness instructor and consists of a pre- and post-fitness evaluation, and 45 minute spin/cycling session. Program will last 12 weeks. For more information call 817-624-9791 or e-mail communityhealth@ymcafw.org.

WEDNESDAYS

HAND AND Foot game day. 10 a.m. Healthy Connections, 1321 Waters Edge Drive, Suite 1001. Details: 817-579-2979.

HABITAT FOR Humanity of Hood County Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. We are building in the 4000 block of Sundown Trail. No experience or tools needed. Just come build with us.

THURSDAYS

HEALTHY CONNECTIONS exercise classes. 9 a.m. exercise; 10 a.m. tai chi; 10:30 a.m. exercise; 11:15 a.m. chair yoga. 1321 Waters Edge Drive, Suite 1001. Details: 817-579-2979.

CHESS CLUB, 5-9 p.m. at YMCA, 1475 James Road. U.S. Chess Affiliate, all ages and skill levels, children 10 and under must be accompanied by adult. Y membership not required. Details: HoodCountyChess.com.

GENERAL TRIVIA, 7-9 p.m. at Brew Drinkery, 206 E. Pearl Street. Prizes and fun. Use your phone to play. Free.

THE GRANBURY Disc Golf Club has Mini tournaments every Thursday at 5:30 p.m. at 600 W. Moore St. Welcoming all levels of disc golfers. Show up at least 15 minutes early to pay the \$12 entry fee and warm up.

PEDALING FOR Parkinson's hosted by the Hood County YMCA will be from 1 to 2 p.m. at 1475 James Road. The program is led by a certified group fitness instructor and consists of a pre- and post-fitness evaluation, and 45 minute spin/cycling

session. Program will last 12 weeks. For more information call 817-624-9791 or e-mail communityhealth@ymcafw.org.

SATURDAYS

HOOD COUNTY Hummers Walking Club, 8 a.m., meet every Saturday at Hilton Garden Inn, 635 E. Pearl St., for 5K or 10K walk for fun, fellowship and fitness. Details: 972-567-3278.

HABITAT FOR Humanity of Hood County Wednesdays and Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. We are building in the 4000 block of Sundown Trail. No experience or tools needed. Just come build with us.

SUNDAYS

THE GRANBURY Disc Golf Club has Mini tournaments every Sunday at 2 p.m. at 600 W. Moore St. Welcoming all levels of disc golfers. Show up at least 15 minutes early to pay the \$12 entry fee and warm up.

FIRST MONDAYS

HOOD COUNTY Amateur Radio Club meets on the first Monday each month at 7 p.m. at the Hood County Emergency Operations Center, 401 Deputy Larry Miller Drive.

LOVE KNOTS Prayer Shawl Ministry. The ministry is in need of people to crochet, knit, or use a knitting loom to make gifts to comfort the

ill, bereaved, infants, etc. 1 - 3 p.m. Acton Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 3500 Fall Creek Highway. Details: 817-326-4693.

FIRST TUESDAYS

GRANBURY DOLL Club meeting, 2 p.m. Granbury Doll House Museum, 421 E Bridge St. All doll appreciators are welcome!

SECOND TUESDAYS

GRANBURY KNITTING Guild meets to knit, learn and share knitting tips each month at First Presbyterian Church Annex, 303 W. Bridge St. Coffee at 9:30 a.m. and meeting from 10-11:30 a.m.

FOURTH TUESDAYS

HOOD COUNTY Historical Society meets the 4th Tuesday each month (except November and December) at 7 p.m. at the Historic Granbury Railroad Depot, 109 E. Ewell St. Contact Karen Nace 817-279-2995 for additional details.

FIRST THURSDAYS

BRAZOS RIVER Corvette Club meets on the first Thursday each month for fellowship, planning events and other business. Dinner, if desired, at 6 p.m., meeting from 7-8 p.m. at Spring Creek Barbeque, 317 E. U.S. Highway 377. Details: bskaggs8@aol.com.

SECOND THURSDAYS

HOOD COUNTY CERT meets on the second Thursday of every month at 6 p.m. at the Emergency Operations Center located at 401 Deputy Larry Miller Dr. HoodCoCert@gmail.com

THIRD THURSDAYS

THE HOOD Sommersville A&M Club Club meets the 3rd Thursday (except June, July & August) at Spring Creek BBQ located at 317 W Hwy 376 Granbury at 6 p.m., dining/social, 6:30 p.m. meeting. Other activities, fundraisers and meeting changes can be found at hscaggies.org

SECOND SATURDAYS

2ND SATURDAY Showoff at Fuzzy's Taco Shop, 115 W. Pearl St. Car show, 8:30-10:30 a.m.

THIRD MONDAYS

GRANBURY QUILTERS Guild meets on the third Monday each month at United Coop Electric, 320 Fall Creek Highway, 6 p.m. Details: 817-296-8186.

LOVE KNOTS Prayer Shawl Ministry. The ministry is in need of people to crochet, knit, or use a knitting loom to make gifts to comfort the ill, bereaved, infants, etc. 1 - 3 p.m. Acton Baptist Church Fellowship Hall, 3500 Fall Creek Highway. Details: 817-326-4693.

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HISTORY

FROM PAGE B3

One of the biggest challenges during Southern's tenure was when the state highway department announced it would be replacing the old iron bridge over Lake Granbury, which would mean no bridge for two to three years. That bridge was the shortest route from the Metroplex into downtown Granbury. Southern and others wanted the city to help fund an economic impact study, but not all on the council agreed.

"The day before the city council was to vote," Southern related, "First National Bank President Johnny Luton called me into his office to ask how the council would vote. I told him unfortunately that I only knew of one other council-

erson beside me who would be voting aye. He told me not to worry he would take care of that. The next night the vote was 3 to 2 to fund the economic study. I went by to see Johnny the next day and asked him how he got the third vote. Well, as it turned out one of the councilman's sons was a loan officer for the bank, and Johnny had called the councilperson in and told him without the bridge he would need fewer loan officers. Johnny Luton had saved the day."

The highway commission agreed to do a staged construction where two lanes would always be open. It saved the city an estimated loss of 60% of economic activity.

With Southern's leadership the city built a new and larger city hall, expanded the airport to draw business jets, and brought two major busi-

nesses — Home Depot and Lowe's — to town.

He spent decades in service and leadership of the Lake Granbury Kiwanis Club helping children through donations and scholarships. He was seen at many community fundraisers throughout the years donating money and auction items for charity.

Southern served as chair of the Granbury Cemetery Board and served on the city's Planning and Zoning Commission. He helped families and veterans, serving as president of the Northwest Central Texas Housing Finance Corporation and first vice president of the Texas Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies. Both organizations promote affordable housing. He also served on the board of Veterans Freedom Retreats, which helps veterans and

their spouses cope with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Elected officials usually aren't without controversy and Southern was no exception. The "million dollar parking lot" was once the talk of the town.

"The first issue was price," Southern wrote. "The owners wanted \$2 million. I negotiated the price to \$1 million which came to approximately \$13,000 a parking space and it also included some raw land with about a hundred feet of main body lake frontage. To people in the community that didn't know what parking spaces cost, in the heart of an active tourist district, this seemed like a waste of money. Despite the fact that the city of Fort Worth was building a parking garage in the Will Rogers District for approximately twice the cost per space on land they already owned, the

paper said it was extravagant. My opponent and the paper decided that the council authorizing me to finalize the agreement for the purchase of the parking lot, did not mean to buy it. So I went in short order from a successful hard-working mayor to what the paper referred to as a "crook." Needless to say I lost the election albeit narrowly."

Southern wasn't without humor. CNN chose Granbury as one of four cities in the Central Time Zone to be part of the CNN millennium celebration coverage. Reporter Candy Crowley was to interview Southern live just before the fireworks show at midnight celebrating Jan. 1, 2000, but the interview was preempted by Queen Elizabeth traveling to the Millennium Dome in London. "I was privileged to be preempted by the queen,"

Southern said later.

Not long before his death, Southern reflected on Granbury's transformation. "The community has changed dramatically since 1980. There were two restaurants in the whole community then. We live a block from the square and can walk within two blocks to 14 restaurants today."

Because of Southern's vision, Granbury prospered while still maintaining its small-town charm.

After his death, Doc Adams, a Kiwanis lieutenant governor, said about Southern, "He was a soft-spoken man, but there was power in his conversation. He had a great sense of humor. He had a depth in his wisdom. He had sacrificial love for his family, for Kiwanis and for the great city of Granbury."



COURTESY PHOTO

Voice of Granbury participant Lisa Sudbury.



COURTESY PHOTO

Voice of Granbury participant Lois Akers.



COURTESY PHOTO

Voice of Granbury participant AJ Sarcione.

VOICE

FROM PAGE B2

Once asked to perform by Whitney Houston, AJ has sung with various music artists, performed on national television, and has recorded numerous self-written songs.

NATE MILSON – Nate, born and raised in Granbury, has worked regularly with both Granbury Theatre Company and Plaza Theatre Company for the past decade. You may have seen him on the Opera House stage in "9 to 5: The Musical," or as Gaston in "Beauty and the Beast" at Plaza Theatre. Both were in 2023. When not on stage, Nate enjoys playing games with friends and is a frequent patron of the local game store.

JACKSON POWELL – Jackson is from Granbury, where he is a junior at Granbury High

School. He's been in choir ever since his first year of middle school. In his second year, he tried out and made varsity. He then went on to letter his freshman year. His father, Michael, is a former winner of this competition.

JOSH LEE – Josh is from Granbury and moved here a little over 25 years ago. He's 35 years old and has been singing since he was 2. His mother and father gifted him with a natural talent and love for all genres of music. He's been a part of a few bands over the years and played locally and around the state. He is super excited to be a part of the lineup and can't wait to see what happens.

PETE O'CARROLL – Pete was born in Memphis, Tennessee and moved to Granbury at age 2. He is a junior at Granbury High School and enjoys performing with both

the GHS Tenor/Bass and A Capella Choirs. He has been selected to the All-Area Choir for the ongoing TMEA All State Choir selection process for 2024. He also sings as a co-lead vocalist in the Lakeside Baptist Church Youth Praise Band. He is a member of the GHS varsity soccer team and runs for the GHS cross country team in the off-season.

Each of the 10 singers will perform a song in round one, and the audience will vote on who advances to the next round using their voting tokens. The second round will consist of the top five singers, who will then perform a second song, followed by another round of voting. The top three finishers will advance to the final round, where they will perform a third song. After a final round of voting, the Voice of Granbury for 2024 will be crowned and will also receive \$350.

Audience members will

have three votes each. Votes may be cast in any round, and anyone may purchase an unlimited number of additional votes for \$10 each to cast in any round. All proceeds benefit the charitable work of the Lake Granbury Kiwanis Club, a local volunteer service organization dedicated to improving the lives of children.

"This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, and it helps us fund many programs that help local kids," Matt Mills, event director told the HCN. "We have another great lineup, with our winner from last August, Jen Maroney, returning to the stage. We're also excited to have two Granbury High School talents to showcase along with our veteran singers."

To purchase tickets, visit thenewgranburylive.com online and search for "The Voice of Granbury." Tickets are \$30 each.



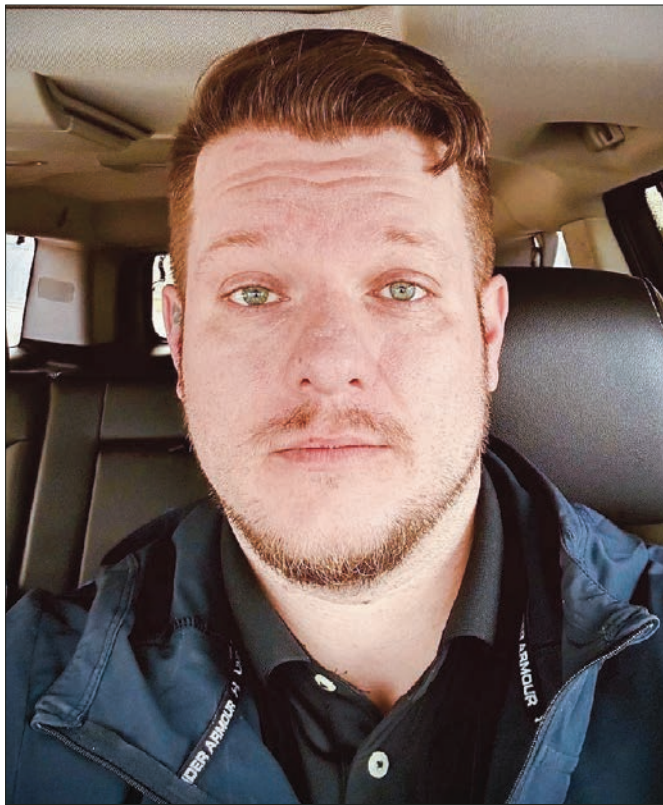
COURTESY PHOTO

Voice of Granbury participant Nate Milson.



COURTESY PHOTO

Voice of Granbury participant Jackson Powell.



COURTESY PHOTO

Voice of Granbury participant Josh Lee.



COURTESY PHOTO

Voice of Granbury participant Pete O'Carroll.

SAME PAPER AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Pirate Soccer

PHOTOS BY LAYTH TAYLOR | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

Tuesday Jan. 9 the Granbury High School Pirates Soccer team beat the Mansfield Summit Jaguars 6-3.



BOOK REVIEW

Did you get it?

By Terri Schlichenmeyer

Come on, you had plenty of time, opportunity, and you knew exactly where it was, so you don't have a lot of excuses here. Either you got it, or you didn't... and if it's the latter, as in the new novel, "First Lie Wins" by Ashley Elston, you're gonna wish you weren't you.

Evie Porter wasn't surprised at her boyfriend, Ryan's, friends. She had them pegged the minute

she walked over to their table: frat-boys and gossipy, entitled women who'd tear her apart by text the minute she and Ryan walked away.

And that was fine, whatever. Evie wasn't there to impress his friends. She was there to somehow "accidentally" meet Ryan, and become a part of his life. She was there to collect data about his across-the-border Texas business for her boss, Mr. Smith, who'd dispatched her to Ryan's

Louisiana hometown a few months ago.

She was not there to fall in love.

That had never happened before, not once since she was a teenager in trouble with the law and Mr. Smith offered her a job with big money - but it happened now: Evie. Ryan. And an unseen boss who made Evie into a first-rate con and who didn't seem to notice when she bent

PLEASE SEE **BOOK** | B8



PEACH

FROM PAGE B5

For seven years, Watson served as a middle school math teacher for Fort Worth ISD and then, for the last six years of her career, she worked as a gifted and talented teacher for elementary school students in the same district.

"I was a teacher for 13 years and last year, in May 2023, I left teaching to go to esthetician school," Watson said. "It's just something I've been interested in for a while and the stars aligned."

Filled with a new burst of passion upon graduating from esthetician school in September, Watson landed a job working at The Hairless Cat Wax Studio & Salon in Granbury doing Brazilian waxing. However, it wasn't long before Watson was told The Hairless Cat would be closing Dec. 1.

"I was like 'Well, if she's closing down then there's not another wax studio here,' so I thought 'Let's just open up our own place,' and here we are," Watson said. "I had my last day of work Dec. 1, and then I got the keys to this place Dec. 8 and just got to work. My grand opening was

Jan. 2, and (Jan. 3 was) my first day of business."

Since Watson was previously employed at The Hairless Cat — a name that always drew several snickers and chuckles — she decided to also have a unique and quirky name for her new business as well.

"I was trying to think of other terms for female anatomy and 'peach' just kind of came up," she said, chuckling. "I like snarky, funny things, so you know, being 'cheeky,' so I thought, 'Well, that's kind of a play on words,' because we do your cheeks, and we also (remove) the peach fuzz on your face. I felt like there was a lot to do with that name; I just thought it was funny and cute."

Although Watson plans to offer several services at The Cheeky Peach, she said she wants to market her new business as mainly a wax studio.

"I've heard there's one other person that will do intimate waxing here in Granbury, but now that the wax studio that I worked at is closed, I think this is the only 'wax-like' place that blatantly offers it," she said.

While Watson will be serving as the main esthetician

for The Cheeky Peach, Emily Barton will serve as a second esthetician, and Kirstie Leslie will serve as a hairstylist.

"I will be getting a couple hairstylists in here as well because there's a whole salon area," she said. "I don't do hair, like I'm not trying to do that here, but there are people here who will (provide that service)."

One unique aspect that sets The Cheeky Peach apart from other waxing studios, Watson said, is its "relaxed atmosphere," and her "easygoing" personality.

"I like to have fun," she said. "I've worked really hard to make this place a pretty comfortable, relaxed environment."

At this point in time, Watson said The Cheeky Peach's hours of operation will not be set in stone, as she wants to figure out her client base and their availabilities first.

"Honestly, I live eight minutes away, and my thought was, 'I kind of want to be available all day, every day,' for a while just until I figure out what the patterns are out here," Watson said. "I mean, a lot of spas are only open during business hours when people work. As a person who



COURTESY PHOTO

Billie Watson, right, owner of The Cheeky Peach Wax Studio & Esthetics is pictured with Emily Barton, left, who will serve as the studio's second esthetician.

worked a normal business hour job for years, it sucks whenever you're off and now everything's closed."

She said she hopes to be open from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. most days and explained she will figure out a more permanent schedule down the road. "Obviously, I'll get it all figured out, but for now it's like,

I kind of want to start paying myself back," Watson said. "I'll do whenever — just tell me a time and I'll be here."

To set up an appointment at The Cheeky Peach Wax Studio & Esthetics, message Watson through her business page on Facebook.

"I've never been a business owner," she added. "This is

something I've always wanted to do but was scared, so I'm excited to see how the fruits of my labor pay off. As a teacher, it doesn't matter how hard you work, you get paid the same, so I'm excited to see what I can accomplish by just putting forth all my effort."



SPORTS Roundup

PHOTO BY LAYTH TAYLOR | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

Granbury Pirate player with the ball working down the field at the Tuesday Jan. 9 game against the Mansfield Summit Jaguars.

Pirates soccer second in tourney, Lady Pirates third

BY RICK MAUCH

Special to the Hood County News

The Granbury Pirates soccer team began its second season under the leadership of head coach Drew McKinnie this past weekend in the Castleberry Tournament. They finished second.

The Pirates (4-1) defeated Cornerstone Christian 3-1. Weston Cantrell scored a goal and had two assists, while Peter O'Carroll IV and Habran Espinosa each had a goal and Salvador Briones had an assist. Goalkeeper Omar Oviedo had eight saves.

They followed with a 2-0 win over Fort Worth Eastern Hills with goals from Ethan Townsend and Drake Montoya and an assist from Briones. Oviedo recorded the first of two shutouts, the second coming in a 1-0 win over Mineral Wells as Cantrell scored a goal off an assist from O'Carroll.

They fell 3-1 to Diamond Hill Jarvis in the championship game as Kevin Aguado Espinosa scored a goal.

The Pirates returned home Tuesday, Jan. 9 and defeated Mansfield Summit 6-3, already matching their victory total for all of last season. Cantrell posted a hat trick (three goals) with a pair of assists, Kevin Aguado scored a goal, Robby Castaneda had a goal and three assists and O'Carroll had an assist.

The team returns 13 varsity players from the 2023 squad that finished 4-16-4 overall and 3-9 in District 5-5A.

McKinnie noted that O'Carroll and Aguado are going to be key players moving up in the depth chart this season. Also, Briones, a freshman, is expected to make an immediate impact, he said.

"We have some high-quality players returning this season and they will be paired with several really good new guys on the varsity roster," McKinnie said. "The team chemistry has definitely gotten better since May. This group has potential to break the playoff drought."

The Pirates are seeking their first playoff berth since 2015.

Granbury is playing in the Crowley Tournament this weekend. They travel to Fort Worth O.D. Wyatt Tuesday, Jan. 16 and host Abilene Cooper Jan. 19, both games at 6:30 p.m.

GRANBURY GIRLS SOCCER

The Lady Pirates (3-1) began the season in the Irving Tournament, finishing third after defeating Irving High School on penalty kicks 4-2 following a 0-0 tie at the end of regulation.

Scoring goals in the shootout for Granbury were Dominique Callahan, Emery Kirby, Presley Davila and Addy Clark. Sharai Rosas was in goal in the first half and shootout, with Zoey Dunagan in during the second half.

Granbury opened the tournament with a 2-1 win over Carrollton Newman Smith as Callahan scored a pair of goals with assists from CJ Burnfield and Tessa

Rholeder.

They followed with a 1-0 loss to Irving Nimitz.

Kirby and Elise Mikulskis were named all-tournament.

The Lady Pirates returned home to shut out Everman 4-0 Jan. 9. Kirby had a hat trick, while Rholeder had one. Rholeder, Callahan and Mikulskis each had assists. Rosas was in goal.

The Lady Pirates return five starters from last season's second-round playoff team. They are juniors Mikulskis (defender, midfielder, striker, utility), Rholeder (striker, attacking midfielder), along with seniors Callahan (attacking midfielder, striker), Riley Morris (centerback/sweeper) and Kirby (striker/winger).

Key reserves back include seniors Lesly Briones (midfielder and defender), Kelly Zschiesche (defender, midfielder) and Bryleigh Ortiz (midfielder); junior Rosas (goalkeeper); sophomores CJ Burnfield (outside back), Clark (defender, midfielder), Allie Oelschig (outside back), Angelia Crabtree (striker); and freshmen Presley Davila (center back) and Dunagan (goalkeeper).

As for newcomers who could make an immediate impact, coach David Winkleman said, "Zoey Dunagan and Sharai Rosas as keepers, and Presley Davila as a freshman has been rocking it. She has played just about everywhere and wherever she is she wins the ball and makes good runs/passes. She's just an awesome young player with a great attitude."

Rosas was in goal in the first half and the shootout against Irving, while Dunagan was in goal for the second half.

Winkleman is entering his 31st season as a head coach for Granbury and his 20th coaching the Lady Pirates. He's actually coached the fathers of Callahan and Clark.

"I'm really excited about this year. I'm looking forward to these young ladies pulling together as a team and kicking butt," he said. "I am really looking forward to seeing what this team is made of. They are a great bunch of young women who have enormous character. I'm proud of their effort and perseverance."

Granbury is playing in the Waco Midway Tournament this weekend. They host Crowley Tuesday, Jan. 16 at 7:15 p.m. before play-

ing in the Heights and Hills Tournament Jan. 18-20.

Against Everman, the Granbury junior varsity Purple won 6-0 as Kaylin Quicksall, Emilie Walls and Ruth Power each had two goals, with assists from Jaden Marburger, Rylie Breeden and Mamie Moore.

GRANBURY BOYS BASKETBALL

The Pirates (15-7, 2-1 in District 5-5A) split a pair of league games this past week, winning 42-33 at home against Justin Northwest Jan. 5 and falling 46-43 at Saginaw Jan. 9.

The Pirates pulled away late, leading Northwest by four with a minute to play. Dylan Couto led with 14 points, Daylon Webb added 9 and Miller Schenewark scored 7 key points off the bench. Isaiah Trejo's stout defense forced numerous Texans turnovers.

Against Saginaw, Kensington Colston paced the Pirates with 14 points and Webb scored 13.

The Pirates were hosting Aledo at press time and will host Brewer Tuesday, Jan. 16 before visiting Azle Friday, Jan. 19, tipoff for all games is 7:30 p.m.

GRANBURY GIRLS BASKETBALL

After surpassing the 1,000-point career milestone earlier in the week, Ella Garner scored 21 points to lead the Lady Pirates (16-9, 4-1 in District 5-5A) to a 53-15 home win over Northwest Jan. 5. They followed with a 52-29 victory at Saginaw Jan. 9.

Fayth Fry added 10 points against Northwest. In defeating Saginaw, Garner (13) and Fry (10) combined for 23 points.

Following a home game against Aledo at press time, the Lady Pirates have 6:15 p.m. home tipoffs against Brewer at home Jan. 16 and at Azle Jan. 19.

In subvarsity action, the junior varsity defeated Northwest 34-32 and Saginaw 41-21, while the freshmen won 31-8 over Northwest and 44-11 over Saginaw.

TOLAR BOYS BASKETBALL

The Rattlers (10-13, 2-1



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID WINKLEMAN

Emery Kirby (left) and Elise Mikulskis were named all-tournament as the Granbury Lady Pirates placed third in the Irving Tournament this past weekend.

in District 11-2A) made short work of DeLeon Jan. 5, winning 75-41 at home as Matthew Behrens scored 27 points and delivered 6 assists. Merritt Imel had a double-double with 15 points and 13 assists, also collecting 8 steals. Zane Terrell scored 19 with 8 rebounds.

The Rattlers then traveled to Poolville Jan. 9 and lost 58-30. Statistics from this game were not available at press time.

At press time, the Rattlers were hosting Lipan. They host Santo Tuesday, Jan. 16 and travel to Hico Friday, Jan. 19, both games tipping off at 7:30 p.m.

TOLAR GIRLS BASKETBALL

The Lady Rattlers (16-10, 5-0 in 11-2A) had little trouble with visiting DeLeon, posting a 62-35 win behind a double-double from Senne Imel (21 points, 10 rebounds) and 19 points from Jaycee Jones.

That was followed by a 73-17 win at Poolville on Jan. 9. Trinity Rousseau paced the Lady Rattlers with 22 points and Jones added 14.

Tolar was hosting Lipan at press time in a battle for first place in district, followed by a home game against Santo Jan. 16 and a trip to Hico Jan. 19. All games tip off at 6:15 p.m.

LIPAN BOYS BASKETBALL

The Indians celebrated their new No. 1 state ranking with a 66-28 win at Santo Jan. 5. Lipan (19-4, 3-0 in District 11-2A) followed with

a 51-21 victory at Hico Jan. 9.

Alberto Andreatta was the leading scorer with 13 against Santo and tied with Darius Steed for top honors with 16 against Hico. Also against Santo, Tucker Tims and Court Gaylor each scored 11, Payton Cornelius and Darius Steed had 9 each and Tyson Tarpley added 7.

Following Friday's game at Tolar, No. 18 in the state, Lipan travels to Ranger Jan. 16 and hosts DeLeon Jan. 19, all at 7:30 p.m.

LIPAN GIRLS BASKETBALL

The Lady Indians (22-3, 0-0 in 11-2A), who like the Lipan boys, ascended to the top of the state rankings last week, won 78-15 at Santo Jan. 5 and 69-27 at home against Hico Jan. 9.

Ten Lipan players scored against Santo, led by Hanna Gaylor with 21 points, Finley Shockley with 12 and Olivia Benitez with 10. Also, Alisha Green scored 8 and Taylor Branson and Ashlyn Clark each had 7.

Against Hico, scoring leaders were Madison Cornelius, 13; Kynzi Callaway, 12; Gaylor and Shockley, 9 each; and Branson and Clark, 7 each. The Lady Indians hit 10 3-point baskets against Hico, led by Cornelius and Shockley with three each and Gaylor with two.

The Lady Indians were at Tolar at press time, followed by a trip to Ranger Jan. 16 and a home game against DeLeon Jan. 19, all at 6:15 p.m.



PHOTO BY LAYTH TAYLOR | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

Granbury player with the ball at Tuesday Jan. 9.

BOOK

FROM PAGE B7

his rules once or twice. Mr. Smith played games, she counteracted. Tit for tat.

Would that come back to bite her later? Maybe. For now, though, she lied about her background and her life, watching Ryan's friends and watching Ryan, waiting for further instructions from a boss who seemed to be dangerously edgy lately.

And then Evie met Ryan's old pal, James, and

James' girlfriend, Lucca Marino.

The minute Lucca introduced herself, Evie knew she was in trouble. Lucca Marino was Evie Porter's real name. "Lucca's hometown was Evie's real hometown. Her story was Evie's real story, and Evie knew she was on notice. Had the job on Ryan suddenly changed?"

Or was this another game Mr. Smith was playing?

Just one more chapter. Keep telling yourself that. Also say, "I can quit

reading any time," though you won't. "First Lie Wins" is one of those tight-as-a-drum, stay-up-all-night, grip-with-your-fingernails kind of books that you love, and you won't quit it. You can't. You'll need to know if you've got it all figured out (you haven't), so get cozy. You'll be awake for awhile.

This isn't the kind of book you want if your heart is weak, or if you're used to silly little made-for-TV kinds of novels. No, this is a whip-smart, curled and coiled thriller

set in a world in which truths are lies, lies are life-saving, fast thinking is mandatory, and dummies need not apply. Be warned that author Ashley Elston plays with her readers. Be warned that you'll love every minute of it.

There's a lot of winter left to read, plus that spring vacation you're eager for, and this is the book to take - if you can manage to wait that long. Just find "First Lie Wins" and get it.



COURTESY OF AIMEE BALLARD

Photo of author Ashley Elston and her book First Lie Wins.

TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY™

Williams' three-pointer in final seconds lifts Texans to victory against UT Arlington to stay perfect in WAC play

Tarleton State University

STEPHENVILLE — Tarleton State narrowly escaped UT Arlington's upset bid with a Lue Williams triple in the final seconds to hold on for a 78-76 victory Thursday, Jan. 4 in Wisdom Gym.

Three-point shooting was key for the Texans (10-4 overall, 3-0 WAC) knocking down 12 from long-range, one shy of tying the Tarleton D1 era record of 13 set 1/20/21 against Howard Payne. Four players scored at least 15 points each for the Purple and White for the first time in Tarleton's D1 era. The Texans handed the Mavericks (6-8, 1-2) their second WAC loss of the season on the Purple and White's way to remaining perfect in league play.

"This is conference play," said acting head coach Joseph Jones postgame. "It's going to come down to one or two possessions every game. I'm glad we were on the winning side of it this time."

Williams had the hot hand in the second half scoring 14 of his 16 total points in the final 20 minutes of the contest. The Atmore, Alabama native stopped and popped the eventual game-winning three-pointer with 24 ticks on the clock. Williams connected on

a season-best four of his five attempts from beyond the arc after the break. He added a pair of steals and assists and shot a perfect 2-for-2 from the charity stripe.

Emmanuel Innocenti led the Texans with a career-high 19 points and tied a career-high four steals. He also added six boards, all on the defensive end, and three assists while shooting 7-for-12 from the floor and 2-for-4 from behind the arc.

Devon Barnes posted 18 points and dished out a game-high five assists. Jakorie Smith tallied 15 points all in the first half. He left the game with a foot injury early in the second half. Traivar Jackson tallied one of the most unusual stat lines of the season with a game-best eight boards and zero points. KiAndre Gaddy found himself in foul trouble in the second half playing just under 20 total minutes and picking up his fifth and final foul with five minutes to play. Gaddy finished the night with five points and five rebounds.

The Mavericks had four players with at least 10 points including Makaih Williams who led all scorers with 24.

The Texans' largest lead of the night came with 6:20 to go in the second half. Tarleton led 70-57 and seemed to have

control in the game; it just needed to coast to close out its third-straight conference victory, but the Mavericks had other plans. UTA's Dajuan Gordon started the rally with a bucket followed by a pair of made free throws by Shemar Wilson. A Phillip Russell triple followed by three points by Gordon cut the Texans' lead to three, 70-67, in just two minutes of action leaving 4:00 on the game clock.

The stage was set for another classic ending in Wisdom, like the Texans' last WAC game when Smith's shot heard 'round Stephenville, a three-point buzzer beater, gave the Texans the victory. Bubba Benjamin drew a foul and connected on a pair at the line to bump Tarleton's lead back to five. UTA responded in the next possession with a three-point play to cut the score to 72-70 with 2:21 remaining. Innocenti streaked down the floor in response to put the Texans up four at the two-minute mark.

UT Arlington converted on a lay-up after three consecutive misses and offensive rebounds to bring it within two. After forcing the Texans to turn the ball over, Makaih Williams drove to the basket through traffic to tie the game at 74 with just 48 ticks



COURTESY PHOTO

Tarleton State narrowly escaped UT Arlington's upset bid with a Lue Williams triple in the final seconds to hold on for a 78-76 victory Thursday, Jan. 4 in Wisdom Gym.

remaining. The Texans took the next possession down to the final seconds of the shot clock when Barnes flicked a pass out to Williams at the top of the arc where he buried a triple sending Wisdom Gym to its feet with 24 seconds remaining. UTA drew a foul with 6.01 seconds left and converted both freebies to pull within one.

The Mavericks sent Benjamin to the line where he missed the first and made the second giving the Mavericks a chance for a last second mira-

cle with four seconds remaining. UTA drove the ball up the floor but fell just before half court where the ball juttied away as time expired, sending the Texans into jubilation as they escaped with the 78-76 victory.

Tarleton held a five-point advantage in the first half, 42-37. The Purple and White earned its 42nd win as a Division I program when leading at the break and improved its record to 8-1 this season.

The Texans shot a season-best 55.6% from behind the

arc on 12-of-21. It's the best single game mark by the team since the squad shot 58.3% last January in Wisdom Gym in an 81-62 upset victory over eventual WAC Tournament Champion, Grand Canyon. Tarleton shot 27-for-57 from the floor, a 47.4% clip. The Purple and White won the turnover battle for the tenth time this season, 16-15. UT Arlington tied the Texans on the battle of the boards, 30-30.

Third quarter derails Tarleton at UTA in WAC restart



COURTESY PHOTO

The first half was neck-and-neck between Tarleton State and UT Arlington at the College Park Center Thursday, Jan. 4, but the third quarter was all Lady Mavs as they won the first game of the WAC restart over the Texans.

Tarleton State University

ARLINGTON — The first half was neck-and-neck between Tarleton State and UT Arlington at the College Park Center Thursday, Jan. 4, but the third quarter was all Lady Mavs as they won the first game of the WAC restart over the Texans.

Tarleton (4-8, 1-2 WAC) fell 73-49 in Arlington, finishing its four-game road trip 2-2. UTA (5-8, 1-2 WAC) won its fourth straight game after starting the year 1-8 overall.

It was a 28-25 contest at the break. After Tarleton tied it 30-30, UTA raced out to a 13-0 run, finishing the quarter on a 26-6 marathon to win the quarter 28-11 and take a 20-point lead. The Lady Mavs

made 11-of-18 (.611) in the frame while Tarleton shot 4-of-12 (.333).

Jakoriah Long led the Texans with 13 points, adding two rebounds, two assists and two steals. The reigning WAC Player and Newcomer of the Week Faith Acker pulled down 10 rebounds, adding eight points and three assists. Tyler Jackson tallied nine points, three rebounds and two assists. Lexi Bull made her third start of the season and notched five points and nine rebounds.

Overall, UTA outshot Tarleton 28-of-60 (.467) to 17-of-58 (.293) and outrebounded them 45-35.

Teams traded the lead throughout the opening frame, with neither leading by

more than four. UTA led by a point after one, 14-13. The same was true in the second quarter as well, and the Lady Mavs took a 28-25 lead into the break. After the one-sided third quarter, UTA maintained about a 20-point lead throughout the fourth.

Four Lady Mavs starters scored in double figures, led by Adela Valkova's 15 points, eight rebounds, four blocks and three assists. Avery Brittingham recorded 13 points on 5-of-10 shooting, six rebounds, three assists and three steals. Taliyah Clark finished with 13 points on 4-of-6 shooting and three rebounds. Gia Adams notched 10 points and five assists.

Tarleton Athletics announces Hall of Fame class of 2024

Tarleton State University

STEPHENVILLE — Tarleton State's storied programs featuring elite student-athletes span the decades, but only a select few can call themselves Hall of Famers.

Eight more Texans can do just that, as Tarleton Athletics announced its Hall of Fame class of 2024 Tuesday, Jan. 9. Four individuals and one team have been voted into the prestigious Tarleton Athletics Hall of Fame: Texan Football's Kyle Masters, Texan Softball's Alicia Petersma (now Alicia Mathney), Texan Track and Field's Lane McNamara, Texan Women's Basketball's JoAnne Jones, plus Texan Track and Field's 1992 Women's 2-Mile Relay Team, consisting of Audra Bierman, Carmen Colon, Linda Garcia (now Linda McAfee) and Michelle Musgrave (now Michelle Heavyside).

The Hall of Fame induction ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, May 4, in Stephenville.

"It is my honor to announce these prestigious student-athletes, whose time here that spans from 1975 to 2010 among them, will be inducted into the exclusive Tarleton Athletics Hall of Fame this coming May," Vice President for Intercollegiate

Athletics Lonn Reisman said. "This group includes All-Americans, conference winners and former student-athletes who raised their programs and our national profile. All of these individuals should be very proud, and we're excited to honor them soon."

The individuals inducted become the 180th, 181st, 182nd and 183rd members of the Hall of Fame, and the women's 2-mile relay team will serve as the 184th member.

Masters becomes the 180th member of the Tarleton Athletics Hall of Fame, one of the best tight ends in Texan Football history. He is the 73rd football player to enter the Hall of Fame as an individual, and the 76th football member.

Masters played for the Purple and White from 2000-04, accumulating 76 receptions for 1,087 yards and seven touchdowns while helping Tarleton to its first two NCAA playoff appearances. He was an NCAA All-American honorable mention in 2003 after tallying 20 receptions for 259 yards and a pair of touchdowns. The Wheeler native was a four-time All-Lone Star Conference selection, including back-to-back first-team honors in 2003 and 2004, and was named LSC Freshman of

the Year in 2001. As a freshman that year, he caught the second NCAA playoff touchdown pass in program history against No. 3 Chadron State on Nov. 17, en route to Tarleton's first NCAA playoff victory 28-24.

Masters came to Tarleton State as part of the 2000 recruiting class in head coach Todd Whitten's return, and played for the all-time winningest head coach for five seasons. The Texans won the LSC three straight years during Masters' tenure from 2001-03.

Petersma enters as the 181st member of the Tarleton Athletics Hall of Fame, one of the best hitters in Texan Softball history. She played four seasons for the Purple and White from 1999-2002, serving as a designated player her first two years, a third baseman in 2001 and a utility player in 2002. She is the fifth player from the Texan Softball program to earn Hall of Fame honors.

Petersma still is in the top-five in most of Tarleton's all-time hitting categories from her time on the team nearly 25 years ago. She is tied-second in career walks (83), third in doubles (49), tied-third in home runs (31), fourth in RBI (129), tied-fourth in runs scored (128), fifth in total bases (342) and fifth in hits

(192). She's played in the fifth most career games (203) and logged the fifth most career at-bats (607).

Petersma made All-LSC four times in four seasons, including twice as First Team All-LSC in 2000 and 2002. Her freshman year she was also named Second Team NFCA All-South Central Region and was named the LSC Hitter of the Week three separate times.

McNamara will be inducted as the 182nd member of the Tarleton Athletics Hall of Fame, one of the top student-athletes from Texan Track and Field. He will become the 29th track and field individual to enter the Hall of Fame, and the 31st overall.

McNamara competed in Stephenville from 1975-78, cementing his Tarleton career by making the finals in the NAIA Nationals Decathlon. He also ran in the NAIA National Track and Field Meet in Mile Relays three separate times, in 1975, 1976 and 1977.

The Plano native was named Tarleton's most valuable in field events by head coach Joe Gillespie in 1978 as he helped the Texans become TIAA champions in both 1977 and 1978.

She will be the 17th women's basketball student-athlete to enter as an individual, and the 18th overall member.

Jones is one of 22 Texans in the program's 1,000-point club, finishing with 1,148 points (10.2 PPG) and 636 rebounds (5.7 RPG) across 111 career games played from 2006-10. Across Tarleton's all-time career records, she's second in blocks (158), fourth in offensive rebounds (266), ninth in field goal percentage (.532, minimum 350 attempts), 11th in rebounds, 12th in free throw makes (252) and 15th in points.

Jones was twice named All-Conference, including First Team All-LSC honors in 2009-10 and Second Team All-LSC in 2008-09. That season she led the team in both scoring (13.6 PPG) and rebounding (7.1 RPG). She also led the Texans in rebounding in 2006-07 at 6.0 RPG, the same season she became one of three players in Tarleton's NCAA era to secure 20-plus rebounds in a game, recording 18 points and 21 rebounds in the Texans' 58-46 win at Midwestern State on Jan. 2, 2007. The Arlington native helped the Texans to a 23-7 overall record in 2009-10, where they won their first Lone Star Conference tournament game and advanced to the NCAA Division

II Tournament.

The final inductee of the Tarleton Athletics Hall of Fame Class of 2024 is the 1992 Texan Track and Field Women's 2-Mile Relay Team. This will be the seventh team of student-athletes and the third Tarleton Track and Field team to be inducted, serving as the 184th member. The other six teams include the 1959 Track and Field Sprint Relay team, the 1977 Football team, the 1978 Football team, the 1991 Track and Field Mile Relay team and the 1992 Women's Basketball team.

This team of women consisting of Bierman, Colon, Garcia and Musgrave became All-Americans in the 2-Mile Relay. They were the only Tarleton State All-American Indoor Women's Track and Field members for a 23-year period until 2015.

They competed in the NAIA Indoor Track and Field Championships in March 1992 in Kansas City, where they took fifth place with a time of 9:37, then a school record.

For more information on the Tarleton Athletics Hall of Fame, visit TarletonSports.com/HallOfFame.

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Romans 8:28

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Jeremiah 29:11

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Isaiah 41:13

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Proverbs 3:5-6

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When I thought, "My foot slips," Your steadfast love, O LORD, helped me up. When the cares of my heart are many, Your consolations cheer my soul.

Psalms 138:1-6

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

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PECAN PLANTATION BITS

Auxiliary pleased to report record breaking year of fundraising

BY DIANE LONG



A Mississippi native who has been a Texas transplant for 29 years, Diane Long is a wife, mother, and former English teacher who has written Pecan Plantation Bits for 16 years cumulatively. She spends her time both gathering neighborhood news and collecting new books to read.

At the Pecan Plantation Volunteer Fire Department/Emergency Medical Service Auxiliary's Christmas party last month, it presented a check topping \$60,500 to the Volunteer Fire Department and Emergency Medical Service of our community. This total represented the fundraising efforts for 2023, and thanks to the Auxiliary's superior officers (led by co-presidents Donna Bullis and Jeanie Curry), outstanding volunteer members and generous patrons at fundraising events throughout the year, the 2023 sum surpasses all previous years' amounts. Every penny raised supports the emergency personnel of our neighborhood.

The Auxiliary meets the first Monday evening of each month and welcomes ladies and gentlemen interested in supporting Pecan's first responders.

WELCOME HOME

Pecan's next new member orientation comes Tuesday, Jan. 16 at 10 a.m. in the Terrace Room of the clubhouse. New residents (or long-time ones who would like an update on our community's amenities and opportunities) are welcome to join. Secure a spot by contacting Sarah Lord: sarahlord@ppoaweb.com

LIBRARY DAY

The Hood County Library's bookmobile will visit the

PAC Wednesday, Jan. 17 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. Patrons may both check out and return library materials at the bookmobile.

WOMAN'S CLUB

The Pecan Plantation Woman's Club will gather again Thursday, Jan. 18 with social time beginning at 9:30 a.m. and President Sandy Hoelting calling the meeting to order at 10 a.m. This day is a special occasion as it marks the 45th birthday of the PPWC, and "Celebrating Friendship" is the club's theme for the year. Following the business meeting, ladies will enjoy an "anniversary extravaganza" consisting of fashions, headlines, music and more from 1978 through today. The day will truly be a "blast from the past," and attendees are requested to wear blue in honor of the club's "sapphire" anniversary. Lunch prepared by the clubhouse staff will follow the program, and the tabletop charity for the day is Bikers Against Child Abuse.

NET NEWS

The Pecan Plantation Tennis Association enjoyed a Christmas dinner party with more than 80 folks in attendance, and a good and festive time was had by all. Another event is on the tennis calendar for Friday, Jan. 19 when an Australian Open tennis mixer will happen at

5 p.m. The evening promises social mixed doubles and food from the grill. Sign up in the tennis pro shop: 817-579-9412.

TOWN HALL

A town hall meeting hosted by Pecan's Infrastructure Committee will happen immediately following the regular Board of Directors meeting Tuesday, Jan. 25 in the clubhouse ballroom where the main topic will center around a road assessment placed on Pecan's spring election ballot. The proposed assessment is not an increase but instead an extension of the current assessment.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Pecan is seeking volunteers to assist with balloting at our community's annual meeting in March. Folks who are interested in serving as an election clerk or judge may sign up via a link mailed to membership last week or by contacting Marilyn Amos: marilynamos@ppoaweb.com.

GIVE LIFE

Pecaners will want to save the date: the American Red Cross will be in our community for a blood drive Wednesday, Feb. 14. The PAC gym will find the Red Cross set up for the day accepting donors from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Folks may visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter "Pecanplantation" to schedule an appointment. Walkins will also be welcome.

COURSE WORK

The first major water line for Pecan's golf course is currently being installed



COURTESY PHOTO

The Pecan Plantation Volunteer Fire Department/Emergency Medical Service Auxiliary recently presented a check to emergency personnel that culminated in 2023's fundraising efforts. Pictured (left to right) are: PPVFD Fire Chief Dave Paxton; PPVFD/EMS Board President Ray Taylor; Auxiliary Secretary Julie Logan; Auxiliary Co-President Jeanie Curry; EMS Chief Brandy Stephenson; and Auxiliary Volunteer Coordinator Seleta Webster. Photo credit goes to Lana Robinson.

with work beginning at hole number 10 and progressing through hole 12. Golfers will notice work crews on the course during golf play and may consult with the pro shop prior to teeing off for updates on any hole closures.

AIR TRAFFIC

In Pecan's airpark as well as the Landings, taxiing aircraft have the right of way in traffic. Auto drivers will want to be alert and use caution where taxiways and roads intersect and be mindful of yielding to aircraft.

GOOD EATS

Pecan's executive chef Jordan Ray has updated the Brazos Room menu for 2024 with a number of new additions. Duck eggrolls, ahi tuna stuffed avocado, chicken-fried pork chop and blackened redfish are all included

on the new menu. Diners may make reservations at the clubhouse front desk at 817-573-2641, on the app or online.

ART TIME

The next "Pecan Paint Along" with instructor Kathy Yoders comes Sunday afternoon, Jan. 14, at the PAC when participants will be painting winter trees. Step by step instruction will come during the class, and no prior painting experience is necessary. Register now by calling the PAC: 817-573-7952.

REMODEL WORK

The PAC gymnasium is receiving a new and much-needed floor for all the activities that room hosts, and the work began last week. If everything stays on schedule, the gym will reopen Monday, Jan. 22. Pecaners will receive email updates

as the work progresses as members look forward to the completion of the new floor.

HOLA BONJOUR

The new year is bringing a fresh opportunity to the PAC; Pecaners now have the occasion for both Spanish and French conversation. Each Thursday, Spanish speakers will gather from 2 to 3 p.m. followed by French speakers from 3 to 4 p.m. These gatherings are not instructional but instead conversational. Contact James Mayles for more information: 512-965-8836.

SYMPATHY

Our deepest sympathy goes to the family of Janet Helton, who passed away Dec. 25, and also to the family of John Shawen, who passed away Dec. 27. dianedlong@yahoo.com | 817-579-9360

HCN Junior

NATIONAL RUBBER DUCK DAY
January 13, 2024

Did you know that the very first rubber duckies were invented in the 1800s? Back then, they weren't made of rubber at all but were crafted from solid rubber-like substance

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icons of joy and playfulness. Did you know that the very first rubber duckies were invented in the 1800s? Back then, they weren't made of rubber at all but were crafted from solid rubber-like substances.

On National Rubber Duck Day, kids can indulge in rubber duck-themed activities. From creating rubber duck drawings to organizing a rubber duck race in the tub, the possibilities

for quacky fun are endless! Parents and teachers can also share the story of the rubber duck's journey through time, from its invention to becoming a beloved toy around the world.

So, on January 13th, grab your favorite rubber duck, give it a squeeze, and let the quacking celebrations begin! It's a day to appreciate the simple joys and timeless charm of these yellow bath buddies.

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GAME ON

New year, new games

The Enjenir, Touch Your Eyes and Chants of Sennaar

THE ENJENIR

The Enjenir, from developer PeatyTurf, was released Dec. 18, 2023. It's a physics-based sandbox-building game with 'ragdoll' third-person controls.

The character movement is very similar to Human Fall Flat, another physics game.

The developers behind The Enjenir are actually civil engineers, both still working full-time 9-5 jobs while creating this game. It's currently offered as an Early Access game to help with playtesting, so they can spend their time adding features and mechanics.

Building in this game is called 'gridless,' meaning there is no 'snap' when you place a building element. You have the freedom to place it as accurately (or inaccurately) as you like. You'll build intricate structures and vehicles, and then have to operate them with your

clumsy ragdoll character.

I've played the demo, and the building part is fun. You're putting down various construction elements to complete the tasks, like building a fence, a water tower and a cart.

There're also tasks you need to perform by manipulating your Enjenir character. The game mechanics for moving the Enjenir around are really strange, but once you get the hang of the keyboard shortcuts, they give you quite a bit of flexibility. You can make him climb a tree, for example, which is something I never could do in Human Fall Flat. But so far it's not a simple system to learn.

The really interesting part of the game is the actual building of the structures. You're placing beams together and nailing them to each other, and making sure there's lots of bracing.

You're graded by your efficient building skills, your speed, and how strong the structure is. You're free to create whatever you like (including a roller coaster), limited only by your own incompetence.

The game is in Early Access for at least 12 months while development continues to add a bit of narrative and story to the game. To be honest, I don't care about the story, I just want a fun game. Let's hope they spend more time on the gameplay, not the story.

For a free playable demo, check out the Steam page. https://store.steampowered.com/app/1800940/The_Enjenir/

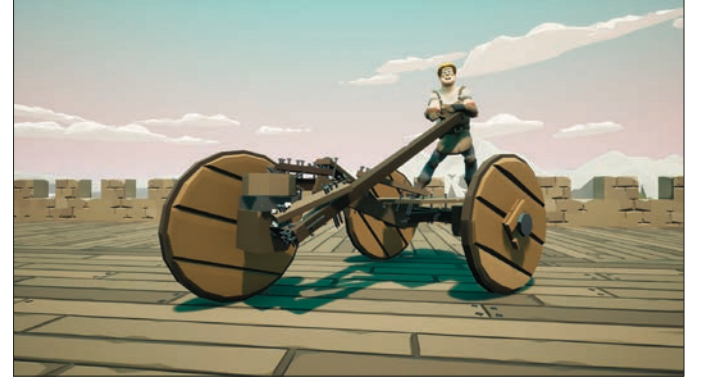
TOUCH YOUR EYES

It's hard to come up with new puzzle ideas, but Touch Your Eyes from WoW_Studio manages to find something nobody else has tried.

Touch Your Eyes is a simple 2-D puzzle made of circles. The goal is to cover the gray dots with the white circles and one black circle. Each circle can be made to be inside or outside the other circles, and they can be rotated along the inside or outside of the circle.

From the Steam page for the game: "Touch Your Eyes is a game born in the 2023 CiGA Game Jam. It is primarily a puzzle game with a gameplay style similar to pushing boxes, featuring multiple levels with special mechanics." CiGA Game Jam is an annual development convention in China. Every year people get together and brainstorm new game ideas, and then develop them in three days.

The game is not yet available for purchase. Download the free demo on SteamOS and try it out for yourself at https://store.steampowered.com/app/2681740/Touch_Your_Eyes/.



SCREENSHOT COURTESY PEATYTURF

The Enjenir: cross-eyed and clumsy, but determined to help.

CHANTS OF SENNAAR

From the Steam page: "Legend says that one day, a traveler will reunite the Peoples of the Tower who are unable to communicate with each other. Observe, listen and decipher ancient languages in a fascinating universe inspired by the myth of Babel."

You're a mysterious traveler who has arrived in a city full of enormous buildings with a minimalist color palette. During your exploration, you encounter carvings, inscriptions and writings

that you won't understand. But as you continue to explore and get more information, you'll eventually be able to interpret what the beings are saying to you, and what the inscriptions say.

I really like the graphics in this game. The buildings and simple line art remind me of illustrations by Moebius (Jean Giraud), a French illustrator and cartoonist.

Chants of Sennaar is the latest from Rundisc. It's available on SteamOS for \$15.99, but you can check it out for free with their demo at https://store.steampowered.com/app/1931770/Chants_of_Sennaar/.

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SATURDAY, January 13, 2024

'Work does not have to be a four-letter word'

How James Hodges 'hit the jackpot' with a FNB career

BY ASHLEY TERRY
Staff Writer
ashley@hcnews.com

For almost 53 years, President and CEO of First National Bank of Granbury James Hodges never lost any "interest" in his career — not until it was finally time for him to retire.

Originally from Gorman, Hodges and his family moved to Granbury when he was only 6 years old. He was active in all sports and received All-State recognition

in football in 1966 as a member of the Granbury High School Pirates. Following his graduation from GHS in 1967, he attended Texas Christian University (TCU) on an athletic scholarship, where he lettered in football twice and received his bachelor's degree in business administration in 1971.

In a previous article with the HCN, Hodges revealed that he didn't know what he wanted to do as a career, adding that he thought about pursuing a math major, but quickly realized it wasn't the job for him.

"I was pretty good at math and then I ran into linear algebra. I didn't even understand that. I had to beg for a D, honestly. My mother was a math teacher and

then, you know, she couldn't even help me," Hodges said, chuckling. "I got out of that major."

It wasn't until he was about to graduate from college when he was approached by the father of current FNB Board Chairman John Henry Luton, as John S. Luton was the First National Bank of Granbury president at the time.

"He said, 'You want to go to work?' I said, 'Well I guess so, I don't have anything else to do. I don't wanna haul hay the rest of my life,'" Hodges said, with a grin.

He started working for the First National Bank of Granbury as a teller on July 1, 1971. In 1975, he was promoted to vice president cashier before being promoted to executive vice president cashier nine years later in 1984.

In 2015, he became the bank's president and CEO, the position he officially retired from on Jan. 2.

Hodges said one of the biggest things he's learned from his long stint at FNB is that "work does not have to be a four-letter word."

"To me, if you can't have fun, and enjoy working, and enjoy your job, you need to find something else to do," he said. "Because there's something out there that you like to do, that you will enjoy doing, and you will excel at it because it's not a job. I've always tried to make this place a fun place to work, within reason. There's bounds to everything. You have to establish the bounds, but we have parties, we have fun Fridays, we have all kinds of stuff going on, and it's always good morale and it's good for our people to have fun together."

Throughout his career,

Hodges said he also learned that telling the truth is always the right move — even when it hurts.

"Don't be fudging, don't be cutting corners," he said. "Tell it like it is, name it, and then own it."

As he reflected back on his earlier career, Hodges remembers the times he used to play at Star Hollow, a private golf course in Tolar, with Mr. Luton.

"Mr. Luton used to have a membership and he always wanted to go play golf," he said, reminiscing. "We had some good times over there — and wild times."

He added that some of the deepest talks he ever had took place at Mr. Luton's kitchen table, who resided right where H-E-B is now.

"That big tree that stands out there was in his front or back yard, so he'd say, 'You boys, come by after work, we need to talk about something,' and we always wound up drinking," he said.

What sets FNB apart from other banks in the area is that employees aren't restricted to an 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. workday.

"You don't have to stay till five," Hodges said. "Do your work, get it right, and you go home — and I think that's one thing that's totally different about us. I think it makes for happier employees. They know that they don't have to stick around once their job is done."

Hodges said he was able to continue the bank's success because he had good mentors: John S. Luton and Bennie Swenson, who was the cashier before Hodges. He described the pair as being "tight," adding that they could "squeeze a nickel and they could get change back."

"It's changed, this bank," Hodges added. "People say, 'Well how

could you work for a bank or any company for that length of time?' Well, it hasn't been the same company. Just as we've grown and expanded Granbury, Hood County and North Texas has grown or we grew and expanded with it."

He explained that technology is one avenue that the staff is currently struggling with, as they attempt to keep up with the growing changes.

"That's one reason why I'm getting out," he said. "I can't stay up with it anymore. It's passed me by."

Although technology can be confusing, it wasn't the main reason he decided to leave his long-standing career. After losing his wife, Su Lin, a year and three months ago, Hodges explained that his life changed in a flash, as things that were important to him before suddenly weren't a priority.

"I decided that it was time for me to check out and do something different," he said.

Although he doesn't know what that "something different" is, his first priority is to spend more time with his three children, Jason, Justin, and Jodi, along with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

"Su Lin and I've been real fortunate. We've been able to raise our kids here, send them to school here, and get them all through college. It's just been a hell of a run, but I'm ready to sit back and kind of see what this guy can do," Hodges said, referring to his replacement, Mark Webb. "I think Mark's going to be 10 times better than I was. He's so much smarter than me, and I'm just excited for him."

about it now," John Henry said. "You have to realize you can't do (things) like you used to."

John Henry is married to his wife, Marilyn, and they have five children — one who has passed — and 10 grandchildren. As for retirement plans, he revealed he doesn't have anything big in the works, but said he hopes he can start traveling more.

"It's just been a lot of fun helping people over the years and watching them succeed," John Henry added. "We all started at the bottom and endeavored to persevere."



John Henry Luton bids farewell to First National Bank after 50 years

BY ASHLEY TERRY
Staff Writer
ashley@hcnews.com

After 50 years of dedicating his time and effort to First National Bank, John Henry Luton is now ready to close this chapter of his life and embrace retirement.

John Henry followed in the footsteps of both his grandfather, Henry Zweifel, and his father, John S. Luton, as both spent more than 40 years employed at FNB.

Zweifel was born in Hood County and had served as the Granbury postmaster. He practiced law in Fort Worth, served as a U.S. attorney with only an eighth-grade education, and was also a cattle rancher. He was elected as chairman of the board and FNB president in 1948. He had also served on the FNB Board of Directors since 1929. In 1969, Zweifel resigned as president and John S. Luton replaced him. Zweifel remained chairman of the board until his death in 1970.

In 1953, John S. Luton, Zweifel's son-in-law, replaced Ted Sears when he resigned from the Board of Directors. John S. Luton had left an oil business in Graham to come to Granbury.

"My dad didn't come here to get into the banking business," John Henry told the HCN. "He told me he was looking around for something else to do. He was actually working on the two farms or ranches that my granddad had. He was kind of running the hands and keeping things operating and the story he told me I guess the president that Lipe died and a fellow that was here, went up there to help them out until

they got somebody else. He said 'I came to work down there, and I was just waiting for Ted to come back. He never came back. I'm still here.'"

John S. Luton began working at First National in 1957 as assistant vice president. He worked his way up to become president in 1969 and chairman of the board in 1970. He was associated with First National for 47 years. He was very active in the Granbury community and was involved in all sorts of organizations in town. Johnny, as the FNB staff called him, remained with the bank until his death in 2000.

John Henry Luton joined First National in 1974 as a loan officer after graduating from Texas A&M University in College Station, and then worked for a bank in Bishop to gain outside experience.

"I figured sooner or later I'd end up back here (in Granbury) but I wanted to go somewhere else and see if I liked it or not, so I found a job in South Texas down between Kingsville and Corpus, a little town called Bishop and went to work in a bank there for a year and a half. Then I got a chance to come back home and go to work here," he said.

John Henry then worked his way up at First National, starting as assistant vice president in 1974. He was elected to the board shortly after that.

When John Henry's dad, John S. Luton, decided to step back from his duties, John Henry was elected president and vice chairman of the board in 1984. When John S. Luton died, John Henry became chairman of the board and presi-

dent.

"I had worked off and on odd times down here working in the storeroom or being a teller or different things, so I've kind of been around it," John Henry said. "If I wasn't working somewhere else, I'd help out down here, so it's always been around."

John Henry explained that in the past, employees knew how to do every job at FNB because "some days you had to."

"You knew everybody that came in the door," he said. "You knew everybody, good, bad or indifferent. We all knew each other. It was very small and slow. The lake flooded in the fall of '69, I believe, while I was at A&M, and that's when things started to change."

John Henry revealed that back in the day, there wasn't a lot of opportunity for people to make a living in Granbury, adding that life was almost idyllic.

"It was fun and there wasn't anything fancy about it — but it's different now," he said. "It's a happening place."

One major life skill that John Henry learned from his dad while working at the bank is to always "treat people the way you want to be treated," — a phrase that now serves as FNB's golden rule.

"It was drilled into us from the start by my dad," John Henry said. "He told a story to me. When he was in the oil and drilling businesses, his banker told him, 'You have to remember that your richest customer today can be your poorest tomorrow and the other way around.' He said,

'You just have to treat people right. It doesn't cost you anything to be nice.'"

Although John Henry is looking forward to retirement, he expressed that it felt "scary" to leave a place he has been a part of for so many years.

"My wife was talking to my mama years ago and Marilyn (my wife) said, 'Doris, how does it feel to be 85?' and she thought a minute and she said, 'Well, you know, I feel like I still think about things the way I did when I was 35. I just know there's nothing I can do



Growing up with a banker dad

BY RICK MAUCH

Special to the Hood County News

Growing up in a town where her dad was a prominent figure meant Jodi Stewart couldn't go anywhere where someone didn't know her.

Such is the life of the daughter of one of the area's most famous legends. From his days of leading the Granbury Pirates to the best football season in their history to helping folks fulfill their dreams in his career in the banking industry, James Hodges is almost larger than life to many throughout the area.

"I can remember when Deputy Sheriff Jerry East pulled me over one night and said, 'Well you're James and SuLin's daughter! Do they know you're out here?'" Jodi recalled with a smile.

They would soon know. News travels fast in a small town, particularly when it involves a celebrity and their family.

"Mom and dad would know everything even before I got home. Even now, going to lunch with my dad means that we'll stop a few times to talk to acquaintances on our way to our table," she said.

But then, James also knew what it was like growing up with popular parents. Betty and Glen Hodges were likewise loved throughout the community.

"My grandmother was a math teacher in Granbury for years and they were staples at the high school basketball gym. They knew everyone too," Jodi said.

FOOTBALL GREAT

Before he became a great in the banking industry, Hodges made himself a historic figure to Granbury

Pirates faithful by helping guide the team to its greatest season ever. The 1966 Pirates are one of only two public school teams in Hood County to play for a state championship - a record that they owned solely until the Tolar Rattlers reached the 2A state final last month.

James was a first-team all-state selection at running back that season as the Pirates finished 13-1 and state runners-up. To this day it's the most victories ever in a season by a Granbury High football team.

"I have grown up hearing of every game, every score, even specific plays and their outcomes. He remembers all of that so vividly," Jodi said. "I've watched the highlight video several times too. You can see my mom jumping up and down, along the sidelines in her knee-length cheerleading skirt."

"As the games go deeper into the playoffs, the stadium lighting gets brighter, signifying the importance and the eventual mark the team will leave in Granbury history."

This history has now come full circle as Jodi's sons Samuel and Eli, played for the Rattlers this season.

"My father-in-law, Larry Stewart, was my dad's teammate on the 1966 team, and he and my dad are arguably the Rattlers' number one fans, always leading cheers in the stands or ready to sponsor the next team dinner," she said.

James' football career didn't end in Granbury. An athletic scholarship took him to TCU, where he was named Academic All-Southwest Conference, and his education provided a path to his banking success as he earned his bachelors in business administration degree in 1969.



A group portrait of First National Bank employees around 1971. James Hodges is at far right on the bottom row.

COURTESY PHOTO

JAMES THE BANKER

James began his banking career at First National Bank on July 1, 1971 as a teller. From 1975-84 he was vice president and cashier, in 1984 he was promoted to executive vice president and cashier, and in 2015 he assumed the position of president and CEO until his retirement on Jan. 1.

He has served on the board of directors since 1980 and will continue to do so.

In the community, James has been past president of Optimist Club, Chamber of Commerce, Granbury Sports Association, Pirate Booster Club and a charter member of GISD Education

Foundation, as well as various church events at Acton Baptist Church.

"The owners of the bank didn't second guess what I was doing. They allowed me to lead as I saw fit," James said. "This meant a lot to me. It was a hands-off philosophy that I continued until my retirement."

"The relationships I've made with people at the bank have been a driving force. Many of them are like family and have meant so much to SuLin and me through the years."

Jodi remembered being a teller at the bank herself, something that became a sort of family tradition.

"We all worked as tellers at the bank at some point

or another. We learned how to count money properly, balance a drawer and deal with customers," she said. "Many of the relationships we made through these jobs have stuck with us even today."

As far as what made her dad so well respected in the community, Jodi believes it simply came down to him just being a regular guy.

"He had a humble beginning and worked hard to get where he was. Dad was in a leadership role in an organization filled with people just like him," she said. "He was relatable. He was active in the community - he and mom both coached all of us kids through the years in baseball, basketball

and softball. He connected through relationships he made in these organizations."

COMING TO GRANBURY

James was born in 1948 in Gorman. His family moved to Granbury in 1954 when Glen took a job there with the Santa Fe Railroad.

"As a perspective to the times, when my granddad was arranging for a rent house, he wasn't given a key to the new place. He questioned the landlord about it but was told that nobody ever locked their doors, and so they never needed a key," Jodi said.

SuLin's family moved PLEASE SEE DAUGHTER | C7

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MISSION GRANBURY: #HERE TO HELP

Life as the town banker's wife

BY RICK MAUCH

Special to the Hood County News

John Henry Luton might have been known as Granbury's "small town banker" but there is nothing small about the greatness he and his wife Marilyn brought to the community.

Now they head into the next step of retirement together, albeit remaining busy in community involvement.

John will remain chairman of the board of directors of First National Bank of Granbury (FNB). However, he is backing off of day-to-day duties. Together, they will continue their work to make life better for their fellow citizens.

And they will forever be linked to FNB, something they both take great pride in.

"First of all, being the wife of John Henry Luton is never dull," she said with a chuckle. "He is known to be kindhearted, knowledgeable, and has quite a sense of humor."

"He grew up with many of the employees and many had worked for his granddad, Henry Zwiefel, and his dad, John S. Luton, so they were like his extended family."

COMING TO GRANBURY - TWICE

John was born in Graham in 1949, where his father was in the oil field industry. His family moved to Granbury when he was 2. His mother and grandfather were born in Hood County, so there were deep ties.

When the Lutons moved to Granbury John's mother, Doris, was a teacher. After leaving the classroom she taught homebound stu-

dents. You could also see her perform at the Granbury Opera House. She was also a vital part of the Hood County Library and the Woman's Wednesday Club and the Shanley House.

John S. Luton would leave the oil industry and begin working at FNB, becoming president in 1969 and chairman of the board in 1970, positions he later passed on to his son in 1984. Like his son, John S. created strong ties to the community and could be depended on to help anytime it was needed.

John, of course, strengthened those ties even more with his work in the community, most notably after his return in 1974 following graduation from Texas A&M, a short stint in the Air Force, and working at a small bank in Bishop, Texas for a year and a half.

Following in the footsteps of his grandfather (Zwiefel), a former U.S. Attorney, and father (John S.), John climbed the proverbial ladder at FNB, becoming president upon the retirement of his dad. He held that position, along with being chairman of the board for more than three decades before retiring as president but remaining board chairman in 2016.

John's legacy includes seeing a small town bank grow into a seven-branch financial institution worth over 800 million dollars, yet still keeping the personal small town feel.

MEETING AND MARRYING

In 1975 Marilyn moved to Granbury. She and John met, have been married 38 years and raised five children together in a blended family.

"We met through two of our daughters when they were in the third grade. They were and still are best



Marilyn and John Henry Luton on a wine train in Napa

COURTESY PHOTO

friends," Marilyn said. "Our children are very close, having spent so much time together when they were growing up."

Two daughters, Jennifer (Luton) Moore and Elizabeth (Luton) Fuller graduated from Tarleton State University. Monica (Potter) Paradis graduated from North Texas State University (now University of North Texas) and followed John into the financial industry. Jennifer is the mother of two sons that are very active in sports and Elizabeth is the mother of two boys and teaches in the Prosper ISD.

Their daughter Courtney (Henderson) Glenn lives in Oklahoma where she and her husband, Matt, have raised two sons and own

several restaurants and other properties. Their late son, Matthew Henderson, who passed away after a battle with cancer in 2011 at the age of 34, has a son and was in the oil and gas business.

MARILYN'S COMMUNITY WORK

While she takes great pride in being a banker's wife, Marilyn is much more, as evidenced by the way she works to support Granbury and the surrounding community. She is the president of Mission Granbury and volunteers with the Hood County Committee on Aging and has served on many boards, including being a current member of the Tarrant Area Food Bank ad-

sory board.

"The Lutons have always supported the community and nonprofit organizations. It is a privilege to be able to continue that legacy," she said. "There are so many people in this community in need and we want to be part of the solution for sustainability."

Also, Marilyn helped raise over a quarter million dollars to help victims of the 2013 tornado in Granbury. The tornado, the most powerful in North Texas in a couple decades, destroyed or damaged over 100 homes, along with killing a half dozen people and injuring many more.

"I was chairperson of the Disaster Committee that built seven homes for peo-

ple who lost their homes and multiple homes that were damaged in the tornado of 2013. We worked closely with many state and national governmental offices, Red Cross and the financial support of individuals and businesses of Granbury," she said. "It was an incredible story and demonstration of how Granbury takes care of their own."

Marilyn is proud of her diversified work career from a radiology secretary to marketing and advertising, banking and owning a business and now she says she has the greatest job of her life - wife, mother, grandmother and, as John refers to it, a professional volun-

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WIFE
FROM PAGE C3



Marilyn and John Henry Luton at Kyle Field in 2021 following Texas A&M's defeat of Alabama.

COURTESY PHOTO

teer. "So much of my life would be different if I had not been the banker's wife. It is not a job I take lightly," she said. Together, she and John were the recipients of the Howard Clemmons' Award in 2021 for their dedication and continued support of Granbury.

JOHN'S COMMUNITY WORK
Like his late father, John follows a simple credo. "Treat everyone as you would want to be treated." That philosophy, Marilyn said, is a large part of what made him the popular figure he continues to be in the community.

"It's easy to see why John is well respected. He listens, he's honest and he genuinely cares about the bank and Granbury," she said. "He was involved in the community through many organizations, but he is proud of the support he's been able to give the Junior Livestock Show, helping the young people who worked hard to show their animals and their commitment to train them and learn the financial responsibility of raising animals."

John, who has a bachelor of science degree from Texas A&M University, is a member of Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association. He is also in his second term on the Brazos River Authority Board, appointed by Governor Greg Abbott and recommended by Senator Brian Birdwell.

He is also a member of the Bridge Street History Center and has supported many organizations in Granbury and Hood County.

"I guess carrying on the family tradition of helping folks and the community prosper and grow is what I am most proud," John said. "Marilyn has taken over the majority of our charitable community involvement. She really shines at that."

"After 70-plus years here it certainly feels like home."

SO MANY STORIES
Marilyn smiles when she thinks about the memories from the many years John spent in daily business with the bank. Though they never talked business at home, there was plenty for them to get involved in outside of the

financial side. "He loves the Fourth of July in Granbury," she said. "The bank has been involved with the celebration since the beginning."

The Candlelight Tour is another favorite.

"After putting out the candles around the houses on tour, the officers would gather behind the bank, build a fire, eat ribs and tell tall tales," Marilyn recalled. "He loves the small-town feel."

The family has a ranch just south of Granbury where they run some cattle. She remembers one time when it was actually John who did some running.

"One particular weekend we were working the cows (branding, vaccinating and sorting) when one rather large bull decided he wasn't having a great time so headed right at John," she said, smiling. "That is the only time that I have seen John run and jump over a fence! No one got hurt but we've had many a good laugh."

LOOKING AHEAD
"We have raised five children in the Granbury ISD system and are very proud of their accomplishments and

the adults they have become. We have been blessed with 10 grandchildren and their parents are very involved in their lives," Marilyn said.

And, she said, though they are scattered from Granbury to Prosper to Edmond, Oklahoma the whole family still looks forward to gathering in Granbury as often as possible. "Christmas is always fun!" she said excitedly.

As for future plans, she said they are pretty simple. They are season football and basketball ticket holders at Texas A&M and spend as much time as possible in College Station.

"We've done some traveling, but looking forward to river cruises and any opportunity we can get to travel to Napa and Sonoma," she said. "You might say we are wine enthusiasts and love to experience new food so we're always looking for new adventures."

"I've always been supportive and maybe even sometimes pushy because he doesn't like attention and accolades, but there is no doubt that our lives are richer because of the dedication to the bank and this community and trying to preserve its history for the future."



Marilyn and John Henry Luton at their wedding 38 years ago

COURTESY PHOTO

Congratulations

John Henry Luton and James Hodges on your outstanding careers.



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Gestures of Gratitude

It's an honor to celebrate the careers of two native Granbury stalwarts, John Henry Luton and James Hodges. After decades of serving the banking needs of Hood County and beyond, these men are retiring from First National Bank, but not from their continuing service to the community. John Henry Luton continues to impact all our lives through his service as a board member on the Brazos River Authority, bringing local perspective to basin decisions of statewide impact, while James serves in a variety of charitable capacities, most notably the Granbury Education Foundation. Their lifelong commitment to improving our community is evidenced by their ongoing support of many local non-profit organizations. We thank and congratulate them for all they have done to make Hood County great

and for all they will continue to give to the citizens of Hood County. God bless you gentlemen!



Brian Birdwell
Texas State Senator
District 22

Gentlemen,

And I could stop right there and enough will have been said.

However, as each of you near retirement, our community will celebrate each of you and the 50+ years of service you have provided to the collective community. A collective community (State, County, City, School and University, etc.) and the countless charitable, civic, educational, and professional boards and commissions, which have benefited from your experience, expertise and leadership.

The example you have set is called "Granbury Spirit" and each of you are the poster child. As a relative newcomer (18 years) I am jealous of the "natives" for the lessons shared and the examples set that has enriched their individual lives and the community in total.

But from experience, experience as the City of Granbury Mayor and the city's working relationship with the First National Bank of Granbury, the partnership could not have been better. Both of your willingness to provide counsel and serve as subject matter educators and instructors, enhanced the City and the overall community. For these, and the many other gifts you have bestowed on the City of Granbury, there are thousands who join me as we say, "Thank you and God Bless you."

Enjoy your retirement, resist the many offers you will have to serve on Boards, Commissions and Committees and rejoice in the company of friends and relatives (especially grandchildren).

Sincerely and best wishes,



Jim Jarratt
City of Granbury
Mayor

To James Hodges and John Henry Luton,

I wish to express my sincere congratulations to you both on your retirement!

With over 100 years of combined work experience, you have established the First National Bank as a financial rock within our community. The growth and prosperity Hood County has experienced reflects your community involvement, sound banking practices, and dedication to service of others. There is no way to imagine the number of individuals and businesses which have been positively affected by your life's work. Gentlemen, you have created a legacy which will be long remembered.

Thank you from a grateful community and may God bless both of you and your families.



Judge Ron Massingill

We want to congratulate John Henry Luton and James Hodges upon their official retirement - job well done friends!

Your careers and community work with FNB, have really made a difference in the lives of many here in Granbury.

John Henry, in my years as Mayor, your historic knowledge about Granbury and Hood County was invaluable to me - you answered the who, what, and why anytime I asked and sometimes even when I didn't...

James, you are an expert on a lot of subjects, but you are my go-to guy on high school football and Hood County stories. Your read on things was always on target.



We value both of you as friends and integral parts of Granbury.

Nin Hulett
Mayor of Granbury
2011-2021

Communities grow and thrive because of the work and commitment of their leadership. The growth of Hood County has in no small way been influenced by the lives of James Hodges and John Henry Luton. Their leadership, their commitment to our charities, community organizations, and clubs, as well as the business acumen they have exhibited in making First National Bank the measure of a true "community bank", is unmatched.

Congratulations on your retirement and many thanks from a grateful and respectful community.

The Hood County News wishes you the best in your future and extends its most sincere thank you for a job well done!



Sam Houston
Publisher/COO
Hood County News

Thank You and Best Wishes!



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~Gari Wise,
President, Granbury Opera Guild

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Opera Guild of Granbury

Congratulations
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'Opportunity abounds'

Mark Webb aims to continue FNB's success as president/CEO

BY ASHLEY TERRY
Staff Writer

With James Hodges' departure, Mark Webb is preparing to take over as president and CEO of First National Bank of Granbury — eager to continue the bank's history of success and prosperity.

Webb, who currently serves as FNB's executive vice president and chief lending officer, was born and raised in Saginaw, where he attended Boswell High School and met his future wife, Launi. After marrying in 1986, Launi's dad convinced Webb to attend college and pursue a banking career.

"He had it in his mind that he wanted me to be a banker, and so that was kind of the reason why I decided to go to college to begin with," Webb told the HCN. "Prior to that time, I'd never thought about it. I was working for the city of Saginaw and was studying to take my test to work in the water department — that was my plan just to stay there and be a Saginaw boy."

Launi's father eventually convinced him to attend Texas Tech University in Lubbock, where he obtained a BBA degree in corporate finance.

Unfortunately, as soon as Webb graduated, the oil market crashed, followed by the banking market and later, the real estate economy.

"It was a dark time, and banks were failing left and right, so here I have a wife and a degree, and at that point, it's just a piece of paper; it didn't really give me an opportunity to work," he said.

Webb then met with the president of MBank in Fort Worth, Bob Sample, who told him he could place him in a management program if he desired, but he advised him to instead apply for the Office of

the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC).

"He said, 'Just put your name in the hat and see if you can get on with them. It's the best way to learn banking,' and I did that, and I got the job, and worked there for nine years, and was commissioned to be a national bank examiner after about six years," Webb said.

During the three-and-a-half years that he served as a commissioned examiner, Webb had the privilege of examining FNB a couple of times and immediately hit it off with the staff.

"We're kind of all sort of laid back," he said. "I don't want to say this in a disrespectful way towards ourselves, but we don't take ourselves too seriously. If I mess up, I fess up, and everybody else around here is the same way. I think that's some of the magic around here."

In 1995, Webb had the chance to join FNB as a loan officer, which he happily accepted. He was then promoted to senior vice president a few years later and was appointed to the board of directors in 2005.

"I've been here for 28 years, and it's gone by really fast," he said. "They've been great to me, they've been patient with me, I've made many big mistakes, but I take that with me. I benefit from it and know how to watch the balance sheet a little better than I did as an examiner, and that's half of our game, really. Our business is really about putting risk on our books, so we have to have good sense about how much we can bear, risks that you should and should not take, and that changes all the time."

Because of Webb's extensive experience at FNB, he was recommended for the position of president and CEO.

"When we hire people to work here, the first place we look when we have a position to fill is internally. We tell the employees that. We encourage them when we hire them that opportunity abounds because it does," he explained. "As we grow, there's new positions,

and as people have to move on, there's new positions, so we're always advancing and always promoting, so I think I fell into that same mentality."

The other reason Webb said he was hired for this position is because of familiarity and an element of trust.

"It's not an accident that (Hodges) has worked here 50 years. I've been here 28 years," he said. "It's because we like to come here to work, and I think if you were to pull aside employees and ask them, they would say the same types of things in 100 different ways."

Webb explained that even though FNB is 137 years old, it's like a new bank every day, with the minute and imperceptible changes that consistently occur.

"I researched it before a company meeting about 10 years ago about how long it took this bank to make its first \$10 million," he said. "A hundred and 10 years — that's how long it took, but the reason it took so long for this bank to get to where we're solid, is because Granbury was not solid for a long time, and the lake was really, I think, a key. Now Granbury is prospering, and guess what? So is the bank."

Webb credits the bank's continued growing success on the community because they are "both sides of the same coin."

"If we work hard in our community and take care of our community, our community takes care of us and vice versa, so we're just members in the community in that sense, and that's how we look at ourselves," he explained. "We're just players on a team."

As Webb takes over as president and CEO of FNB, he said he won't be implementing any huge changes moving forward, but said there will be some minor, imperceptible changes.

"The necessity of being a banker in a growing community requires us to change some things, and one of those things is the way that we look at, the way we talk about, and the way we think about technology," he explained. "We could easily invest enough

money in technology to sink this bank, but in 15 minutes that technology would get replaced by the latest and greatest 'new' technology. Technology is always changing. We have a chief technology officer, he's fairly fresh, and he's going to invest a little more time in learning our business and in understanding our needs."

Another change, Webb explained, is to create a more "concerted effort in the mortgage business."

"This is the key to continuing to grow with our community," he explained. "People come here, they buy a house, we'll finance the house. Want to build a house? We'll build that house. And oh, by the way, we have a full slate of banking services and people you already know so we can put your paperwork together for your accounts, in your closing package with your mortgage, and we would be happy to do that. We're gonna continue to develop skills there, and we're gonna have to deploy more technology there. It's the same bank, same people, doing the same thing — just this is going to become a bigger platform."

Webb said he is excited to see young people come to the bank and work, grow, and learn. He added that there are some employees who make six-figure salaries and don't have college degrees.

"They came in and applied themselves and they were good at what they do — as good as anybody we could hire if we went through a process; that's why they're in the chair," he said.

Webb said that he would be remiss if he didn't share that everyone at First National Bank in Granbury is grateful to be in business in Hood County.

"We love this community," he added. "This is a unique community and it's a great one. I'm looking forward to finishing up my work life as president and CEO. The focus will be on serving customers while protecting the bank."



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DAUGHTER

FROM PAGE C2

to Acton in the 1950s. She and James became high school sweethearts and married in 1969, and went on to have brothers Jason and Justin and then Jodi.

Sadly, SuLin passed away in September of 2022, less than four months shy of their 53rd wedding anniversary.

BANKER'S KID

Jodi said growing up the child of a banker was not the experience you might typically think. There were no extravagant cars, clothing or trips.

"Instead, imagine mowing yards as a family on weekends, and at times, bordering on the edge of child labor when Mom and Dad decided that we could lay the rock retaining wall and pool deck one summer," she said with a chuckle. "We did it and it's still standing and beautiful today.

Jodi said her parents were very conservative, and worked hard to make and keep every penny they earned.

"My dad would say, 'I was good at making the money and mom was good at keeping it together,'" Jodi said. "Mom had various jobs and had a real estate license, and for a time she worked at Walmart. But the minute a job took her away from an important family event, she would ditch it.

She was the heartbeat of the home and was always there. On that note, I can't remember Dad missing anything of mine either. It didn't matter who was sitting in his office, he always took my calls."

Jodi remembers her parents talking about the times they spent coon hunting - or raccoon hunting, for those not from the south - during their early years of marriage.

"They lived on Mason Mayne's ranch - near present day M&M Ranch Road," Jodi said. "They would go almost every night, skin them, and sell the pelts for \$2 apiece. In the early '70s, once a week a guy set up on the square, where Farinas is now, that would buy them."

HUMBLE HOME

In the early '80s James and



COURTESY PHOTO

The Hodges immediate family (from left), Justin, Jodi, SuLin (mom) Jason and James (dad).

SuLin borrowed enough money to purchase property in southwest Hood County. Many of the family weekends were spent working on that land, making improvements and eventually the construction of a family home.

Jason said each evening, the aroma of his mother's cooking would fill the house, drawing them all to the kitchen where they'd eagerly gather around the table.

"It wasn't about elaborate dishes but about the warmth and love that went into every meal," he said. "Even on the busiest days, she managed to whip up something delicious, turning simple ingredients into comforting feasts that brought us all together."

He added living under the roof

of a banker meant imbibing a mindset of prudence and patience.

"It wasn't about deprivation, but rather making deliberate choices that aligned with our long-term goals," he said. "As I grew older, I realized the invaluable lessons learned during those formative years about financial responsibility, discipline, and the profound impact of making thoughtful financial decisions."

LESSON IN FINANCIAL WISDOM

Growing up as the child of a frugal banker was a lesson in financial wisdom and resourcefulness, Jason said.

"Our household operated on a careful budget, where spending was approached with thoughtful consideration. My parents, particularly my father, instilled in me the value of money not just through words but through actions," he noted. "While some of my friends enjoyed extravagant vacations or had the latest gadgets, our family found joy in simple pleasures and smart investments."

"Our parents emphasized the importance of saving for the future, teaching me the significance of setting aside a portion of any income for rainy days or unforeseen circumstances. While it sometimes felt restrictive

compared to the lavish lifestyles of others, it taught me resilience and a deeper understanding of the true worth of things."

Jason reminisced about the scorching summer nights when the house was cooled not by air conditioning, but by the gentle hum of window fans.

"As the evening sun dipped below the horizon, we'd strategically position the fans to draw in the cooler outside air, creating a soothing breeze that flowed through the house," he said. "It wasn't the most high-tech cooling system, but it was effective and brought a certain rustic charm to our summer nights, often lulling us to sleep with its rhythmic whirring."

FAMILY VACATIONS

Each summer the family took a week-long vacation. Most years they pulled a pop-up camper to the national forests in southwest Colorado.

Most meals were planned ahead of time and packed into ice chests ready to prepare on a propane stove once camp was made. They relaxed and did simple things like fishing and whittling sticks, hiking, and sitting around a campfire.

"Our vacations were loading up in my dad's truck, camper shell on the back with a piece of plywood laying across the bed, and camping for a week in national forests in our old pop-up tent trailer," Jodi said. "Mom would pack a ham and we'd whittle off of it all week."

BANKING MEMORIES

"Some of my earliest memories of bank events involved buffalo burgers," Jodi recalled. "I can remember on July 4, the officers would set up a big grill in the back parking lot and put on these two-tone brown aprons. People would form a line from the square through the rock arches of the drive-thru, which was on the east side of the bank, below my dad's

current office."

The old drive-thru had rock arches on both ends and provided shade for people to line up and wait for their burgers. Later on, the grilling moved to Shanley Park among the shade of the pecan trees.

Other memories involved the festivities of the Candlelight Tour. For several years the bank would be in charge of setting out the candles and keeping them lit along the houses that were on tour.

Her uncle, Jerry Don Hodges, began working at the bank in 1986, so her cousin Greg was always at these events.

"Imagine giving a couple of 10-year-olds a lighter and charging them to keep the candles lit throughout town," Jodi said, smiling. "We ran all over the place. We had official candlelight tour pins on our jackets so we could go and tour all the houses after checking the candles."

"Our dads and other bank employees hung out around a bonfire in the drive-thru parking lot, enjoying music, barbecuing, and telling stories."

RETIREMENT

James intends to enjoy his retirement by spending more time with his cattle ranching hobby at his home near Fall Creek.

Of course, he'll be at every future Rattlers football game and plans to watch some TCU road games as well.

"I recently whet his appetite for travel by organizing a New York trip last fall, and then a Grand Cayman trip at Christmas," Jodi said.

He also has 12 grandkids, and three great grandchildren with one more on the way.

"They will keep him busy for sure," Jodi said.

Congratulations!

And thank you for your years of leadership, dedication, service, and caring to grow our bank, community, and our lives! We wish you all the best in your retirement!

James Hodges

John Henry Luton



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