



GRANBURY ★ TEXAS

# Hood County NEWS

MORE THAN A NEWSPAPER | A HOOD COUNTY LEGEND SINCE 1886

**MAKE SURE YOUR VOTE IS ON TARGET**

**RE-ELECT JACK WILSON**

**HOOD COUNTY COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 3**

Pd. Pol. Adv. by Jack Wilson, Treasurer Jack Wilson Campaign

[ SATURDAY, February 3, 2024 ]

Published Saturday

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## KEEP ON 'TRUCKIN'

COURTESY PHOTO

Staff members of Expert Automotive Solutions are doing their best to recover from the fire that took place on Monday, Jan. 15.

### Expert Automotive Solutions fuels adversity with opportunity following fire damage

BY ASHLEY TERRY  
Staff Writer  
ashley@hcnews.com

It's been almost three weeks since Expert Automotive Solutions sustained extensive damage to its building at 106 Pirate Dr. following an accidental fire Monday, Jan 15.

But although the situation is dire, employees have not given up — choosing instead to operate the business out of a back shop located at

2000 Supply Ln.

"We had expanded in August and added the building at 2000 Supply Lane and that's where we're do-

ing most of our heavy line," Josiah Nebhut, store manager, told the HCN. "We've got a full list of everything to operate in as a shop, so when we lost (our main shop), we were closed Monday and Tuesday, of course, and then we opened up Wednesday, (Jan. 17), and we've been running and gunning ever since."

At approximately 11 a.m. Jan. 15, Granbury Volunteer Fire Department, Tolar Volunteer Fire Department,

North Hood County Fire Department and Hood County Station 70 were dispatched to Expert Automotive Solutions for reports of a structure fire.

Upon arrival, first responders encountered heavy fire and smoke. According to the GFVD, multiple explosions occurred due to flammable materials stored inside the shop.

According to a news

PLEASE SEE **FIRE** | A8

### SPECIAL SECTION INSIDE

The Granbury Chamber of Commerce's annual Best of Business Awards Banquet is a time for reflections on the accomplishments of the past year, but also an opportunity to gaze ahead into the new year.



## Republican Women to host second candidate forum Feb. 21

From Staff Reports

Hood County Republican Women will hold a second candidate forum for the 2024 election during its next meeting at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 21, at the Wiley Center, 420 E. U.S. Highway 377.

The candidate forum will allow Hood County candidates running in the 2024 Republican primary to speak about why they are running. This will be a great opportunity to meet and hear from the candidates running on the Republican ticket to represent Hood County.

Election Day is Tuesday, March 5. Primary early voting will begin Tuesday, Feb. 20, and will continue through Friday, March 5 at the Annex 1 Meeting Room, 1410 W. Pearl St. Individuals must be registered to vote by Feb. 5. The early voting schedule is listed below:

- Tuesday, Feb. 20 through Friday, Feb. 23: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Saturday, Feb. 24: 7 a.m.-7 p.m.
- Sunday, Feb. 25: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Monday, Feb. 26 through Friday, March 1: 7 a.m.-7 p.m.

Each political party holds its own primary, and the winners of these primary elections will be on the ballot for the Nov. 8 general election. Voters may vote in either party primary, as Texas is an "open primary" state.

## Community airs Bitcoin noise grievances during town hall

BY ASHLEY TERRY  
Staff Writer  
ashley@hcnews.com

Hood County residents filled the Twin Canyons Ranch venue Monday night to ask questions and voice their concerns regarding the constant fan noise emanating from the Bitcoin mining data center — a problem that has been ongoing for the past year.

The center, located near the Wolf Hollow Power Plant, has been the subject of many complaints and criticisms among many residents who live nearby — and even some who live several miles away.

"After taking office last January, probably the very first phone call I got was, 'What is this noise that I'm hearing in my backyard?'" Precinct 2 Commissioner Nannette Samuelson ex-



ASHLEY TERRY | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

Jackie Sawicky, member of the Texas Coalition Against Cryptomining, speaks out against Bitcoin during the town hall meeting last week.

PLEASE SEE **BITCOIN** | A5

## Tax lien mail scam resurfacing across Texas

From Staff Reports

Some taxpayers have received fraudulent letters claiming the state of Texas will seize their assets and property for unpaid taxes unless payment is made within seven days. These illegitimate letters did not originate from the Texas Comptroller's office.

For years, criminals have used aggressive and threatening scam faxes, letters and phone calls impersonating state agencies. The criminals demand immediate payment, often via a specific payment method, and threaten to seize assets and property or significantly increase the liability if you fail to pay or provide sensitive personal information.

Be incredibly wary whenever you receive unexpected messages like these, as they can be a trap. The criminals' threats are designed to get you to react by calling the

PLEASE SEE **SCAM** | A3



138TH YEAR, NO. 5

Local, zone(s): 4 sections, 40 pages, plus supplements | State: 4 sections, 40 pages

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# Clint HEAD

**LEADERSHIP ★ COMMITMENT**

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POL. ADV. PD. DANNY SHANE FLIPPIN TREASURER FOR THE HEAD CAMPAIGN

**A SERVANT'S HEART**

# COMMUNITY BUSINESS

## 2024 Calendar of Events

### FEBRUARY

5th | 6 pm | Candidate Forum  
8th | 9 am | Coffee & Connections  
9th | 11:30 am | Leaders In Government Luncheon  
14th | 9 am | Leadercast Spark  
21st | 9 am | Business Development  
28th | 5 pm | Wind Down Wednesday

### MARCH

7th | 9 am | Coffee & Connections  
19th | 9 am | Maximize Your Membership  
20th | 9 am | Business Development  
26th | 5:30 pm | WIB/RLG After Hours

### APRIL

5th | 11:30 am | Leaders in Government Luncheon  
11th | 9 am | Coffee & Connections  
13th | 11 am | RLG Service Day  
17th | 9 am | Business Development  
19th | All Day | Annual Golf Classic  
24th | 5 pm | Wind Down Wednesday

### MAY

8th | 8 am | Leadercast G.H.O.A.T  
9th | 9 am | Coffee & Connections  
14th | 11:30 am | WIB Luncheon  
15th | 9 am | Business Development  
18th | 10 am | Lemonade Day  
29th | 5 pm | Wind Down Wednesday

### JUNE

3rd | TBD | Granbury Night At The Ballpark  
13th | 9 am | Coffee & Connections  
19th | 9 am | Business Development  
26th | 5 pm | Wind Down Wednesday

### JULY

4th | All Day | July 4th  
5th | All Day | July 4th  
6th | All Day | July 4th  
7th | All Day | July 4th  
23rd | 5:30 pm | WIB After Hours  
26th | 11:30 am | Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

31st | 5 pm | Wind Down Wednesday

### AUGUST

3rd | TBA | RLG Service Day  
8th | 9 am | Coffee & Connections  
9th | 11:30 am | Leaders In Government Luncheon  
21st | 9 am | Business Development  
28th | 5 pm | Wind Down Wednesday

### SEPTEMBER

5th | 9 am | Maximize Your Membership  
12th | 9 am | Coffee & Connections  
18th | 9 am | Business Development  
24th | 8 am | 3rd Annual WIB Summit  
25th | 15 pm | Wind Down Wednesday

### OCTOBER

7th | 6 pm | Candidate Forum  
10th | 9 am | Coffee & Connections  
14th | 6 pm | Candidate Forum  
16th | 9 am | Business Development

18th | 11:30 am | Leaders In Government Luncheon  
23rd | 9 am | Leadercast Teams  
29th | 9 am | Rising Leaders Conference  
30th | 5 pm | Wind Down Wednesday

### NOVEMBER

12th | 5:30 pm | WIB Fashion Show  
14th | 9 am | Coffee & Connections  
20th | 9 am | Business Development  
20th | 5 pm | Wind Down Wednesday

### DECEMBER

12th | 9 am | Coffee & Connections  
13th | 11:30 am | Volunteer Appreciation Lunch  
18th | 5 pm | Wind Down Wednesday



## New Chamber Members & Renewals

Welcome to our New Chamber Members who joined in December & January!

- Pinnacle Health & Wealth, LLC
- Velvet & Verde
- Bin There Dump That
- Century 21 Judge Fite Company
- 7-Eleven
- Whataburger LLC
- Tru-Tex Painting & Construction
- Tell It Like It Is with J Loren Norris
- The Grape Lady
- Kathy Cheek Century 21 Judge Fite

### Mosquito Squad & Pest Control of Fort Worth

Thank You to the following members who renewed their Chamber Membership in December!  
We appreciate your continued support!

- Glenn Aire Company
- Ideals Design – Louis Speyer
- Hallmark Real Estate Professionals
- Open Hearts Sanctuary, LLC
- Academy Mortgage – Lisa Burkes Team
- Tri Lakes Tackle Town
- Scale LLP

- Harris Aerobic
- Lake Pointe Resource Center
- Grace Classical Christian Academy
- Air Evac Lifeteam
- Blushes Salon and Spa
- Best Value Ron's Pharmacy
- Traci Odom, Realtor – 321 Real Estate Group
- Granbury Citizens Police Academy Alumni
- Willow Mark Therapy PLLC
- Cheerful Hearts Gifts
- State Senator Brian Birdwell
- Kiwanis Club
- Hood County News, Inc

- Willsher & Assoc.
- City of Cresson, TX
- St. Clair Dental
- Alliance Tech Medical
- United Cooperative Services
- State Farm Insurance – John Mark Davis
- The UPS Store
- The Transit System
- Luminant, Comanche Peak Nuclear Power Plant
- Wiley Funeral Home
- Martin's Funeral Home
- Pastafina

### MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

**Member Spotlight**

**Eagle Rose Property Management**

*"Our in-depth understanding of our clients needs allows us to provide a quality house for you to call home."*

COURTESY GRAPHIC  
Member Spotlight: Eagle Rose Property Management. "We understand that every property and every client is unique. That's why we take a personalized approach to property management, tailoring our services to meet the specific needs of your property and your goals." Thank you for joining the Granbury Chamber of Commerce!

**Member Spotlight**

**Michelle McGhee Life & Health Insurance**

*"Protecting families is my goal! I am passionate about helping others find the right life and health coverage that will fit in your budget."*

COURTESY GRAPHIC  
Member Spotlight: Michelle McGhee Life & Health Insurance. "Protecting families is my goal! I am passionate about helping others find the right life and health coverage that will fit in your budget. The biggest mistake you can make is leaving your family with financial struggles. Let me take that worry away, and help put you in the best position possible." Thank you for joining the Granbury Chamber of Commerce!

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FROM MY FRONT PORCH

# Which side of the coin does your candidate fall on?



**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.  
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As time has passed, the leaders in education have adjusted and altered curriculums to align with the perceived needs of contemporary society. Two generations ago, a traditional education included a healthy dose of the sciences, civics, mathematics and traditional languages like Latin. As a young man, Latin was available to me as a course in junior high and high school, but even then, the number of students interested in the subject was limited. Not sure if any of our public schools still offer Latin as a class. Is this a good thing or a bad thing?

I am not advocating that teaching Latin is necessary to produce a qualified and well-trained workforce. I am not suggesting studying a variety of science and math courses is essential to hold a job or to succeed in today's world. But it seems schooling should be about education and that involves more than simply creating job skills for a specific trade or task. Education should be about more than knowledge of how to do a job, it should also be about the ability to think and reason about how to make decisions in your life. At least a portion of our formal education should be about learning to discern truth and fact from allegations and untruths. We should embrace free thinking and celebrate growth and change, which new discoveries and information can create. Perhaps the most important discernment is the difference between truth and political spin.

Learning to question and interpret what one hears, reads and is exposed to is essential to having a free and independent society. Occasionally, we must be willing to consider evidence that contradicts our beliefs

and admit the possibility that preconceived notions may be wrong. To be intelligent, one should understand what they do not know and then determine how to inform themselves and become knowledgeable.

As a young boy of the early '60s, in a time prior to the Civil Rights Act and integration, there were ideas I was exposed to which were contradictory to the "knowledge" and information I heard on the street or saw from the behavior of my neighbors. As I grew older, I had to make decisions about what was "right" and what was best. There was discernment, doubt, questioning and a desire to find the truth. I found knowledge was constantly evolving. What may have been accepted 20 years ago was not necessarily right considering knowledge and the changes that came with time. While segregation may have been a "truth" in the 1930s, I would hope few would believe it is appropriate or "right" in today's world. It was something I learned, rather than simply accepting what the world around told me was true.

As the election cycle spins on there are a lot of state-

ments being made by politicians. It would seem no matter what is said — whether it be a misrepresentation or a downright lie — much of the electorate seems to accept assertions at face value. There seems to be a desire to support party rather than hold politicians to standards and make them accountable for their actions and their words. I refer to both major political parties when I say, show me how your political positions will make my life better. Show me how it will improve the future of the world around me, how it will make me safe from foreign aggression, how it will protect the rights granted in a free society. Earn my vote. Stop basing your policy on positions on the requests of your biggest donors. Have a vision!

What a political "party" stands for is even in doubt. Members of the same party cannot agree on their core beliefs. There is infighting, name calling and political posturing, but little discussion about a specific and measured plan. Rather, there is only discussion about the past, its failures and who is to blame.

There appear to be no

consequences for politicians who seek to divide and blame, rather than have a vision for the future. Whoever is elected to political office must lead and govern. Leadership requires leading all the people, not just the ones who donate to you or follow you blindly. How can this be accomplished if when there is a disagreement, those who disagree are the "enemy?"

As the candidates go forward, listen to those who have a plan, who can explain their vision of the future, and are seeking to represent all the electorate. Those are men and woman who are statesmen, and statesmen are what will keep us safe and prosperous. For those who seek only power and control and to divide us, let them be cast aside. The question for all of us is which side of that coin a candidate falls on. That is why we vote.

Thought for the day: Being smart is not knowing everything, it is knowing what you don't know and seeking the truth.

Until next time...I will keep ridin' the storm out.

## Folks around town



MARY VINSON | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

Reagan Meek

### Say hello to our neighbor, Reagan Meek!

Reagan Meek is a proud 2023 graduate of Tolar High School, where she thrived as a Tolar Rattler cheerleader. From the time she was a Clover Kid, Reagan represented Tolar with her latest livestock project every year at the Hood County Junior Livestock Show. Reagan was raised by her mother Ashley, alongside her grandparents, Glenda and Danny (or Mimi and Pops!). "I have lived in Tolar for my whole life, 18 years!" Reagan has always loved and continues to treasure our small-town atmosphere and the family-friendly lifestyle we enjoy throughout Hood County. Reagan enjoys spending her free time teaching showmanship lessons to young kids in the FFA and 4-H programs.

Reagan is hitting the ground running with her future plans. "I am attending phlebotomy school at Hill College, and I plan to attend Tarleton State University in the fall to further my nursing career in cardiology." Whether cheering for the mighty Rattlers or exhibiting at the stock show, Reagan has appreciated the Hood County News. "They have always been there to support me and capture great memories that will last a lifetime!"

## Chisholm Trail 100 Club to add Hood County and Somervell County committees

### Group honors fallen Somervell County officer Sgt. Stephen Gibson with benevolence fund of 80k

Staff Reports

The Chisholm Trail 100 Club is a 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to standing in the gap when tragedy strikes within the first responder community. The group is in the process of forming committees in both Hood and Somervell counties. On Monday, Jan. 29, the Chisholm Trail 100 Club presented \$80,000 in benevolence funds to the beneficiary of fallen Somervell County Sheriff's Office Sgt. Stephen Gibson in Glen Rose.

Gibson was born and raised in Somervell County, married his high school sweetheart, Stephanie, and served with the SCSO for 26 years. He died in an on-duty vehicle crash on Texas State Highway 144 on Dec. 13 in Somervell County. Gibson's death is the first line of duty death ever for the department.

The benevolence funds presented to Gibson's widow support the Chisholm Trail 100 Club's mission of honoring the lives of heroes within the organization's

first responder community. The Chisholm Trail 100 Club provides accidental death and serious bodily injury benefits to each of the 1,985 first responders — which includes law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical personnel, correctional officers and emergency call-takers/dispatchers — in the club's service area of Johnson County, Somervell County, Hood County and the city of Mansfield. The Chisholm Trail 100 Club realizes these funds can never make up for the loss or disability of a loved one, but it can be helpful in covering the unexpected expenses incurred with a catastrophic event. These benefits are provided at no cost to the first responders and are made possible by the club's membership, annual fundraisers, and small business and corporate donations.

Chisholm Trail 100 Club President Bob Alford said, "On behalf of the Chisholm Trail 100 Club, our board of directors, members and our entire first responder family

we are so sorry for the loss of Sgt. Gibson and are honored to be able to present this benevolence in remembrance of his service and sacrifice for his community. We know this check cannot take the place of Sgt. Gibson, but we hope it can help with the financial burdens associated with your tragic loss. We want you to know that the Chisholm Trail 100 Club is so very thankful for Sgt. Gibson's service to Somervell and Johnson counties for the past 27+ years; and we will continue to honor and remember Sgt. Gibson's legacy in all of our Club's endeavors."

Chisholm Trail 100 Club's Vice President and Disbursement Committee Chairman Mike Erinakes said, "We are proud to now provide \$80,000 in benefits to our first responders. We worked diligently during the fall of 2022 to increase the benefits from \$50,000 to \$80,000 per first responder. This new AD&D policy (which went into effect Jan. 1, 2023) allows the

club to support the 2,000 first responders who serve our community. If a first responder is seriously injured or killed on-duty, 'we've got your six.' We want all of our hometown heroes to know that the entire Chisholm Trail 100 Club's membership is backing each and every one of them."

Both Alford and Erinakes are former first responders and are dedicated to the Chisholm Trail 100 Club's mission to "Stand in the gap for our first responders and their families in times of tragedy". The club's benefits cover all active first responders in the club's service area. In addition to the on-duty death benefits, the club also provides a \$5,000 benevolence disbursement to the family of any fallen off-duty (active) first responders who serve within the club's service area. In addition to these benefits, the club also provides various scholarship opportunities for the dependents of active first responders within the club's service

PLEASE SEE 100 | A10

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## SCAM

FROM PAGE A1

criminals' phone number or clicking on a fake link to solve the problem. The consequences can be catastrophic. Not only can you

lose your money, but if you click on links in scam emails or texts, you also could become a victim of identity theft or have malware installed on your phone or computer.

If you receive an unexpected message of this

type, do not call the phone number or use the website or link provided in the letter, email or text. Most importantly, do not give the sender personal information or money. Instead, please email stop.spoofing@cpa.texas.gov or call

the Comptroller's Collection Team at 800-252-8880.

For more information about how to remain protected from tax fraud, visit comptroller.texas.gov/fraud-alert/online.

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## BITCOIN

FROM PAGE A1

plained during the town hall. "I asked the gentleman to give me some more information and if he had access to a decibel meter, if he could take some readings and send it to me. In the meantime, I reached out to Constable (John) Shirley to find out what could be done."

She explained that by March 29, Shirley had conducted extensive research on the noise levels and had purchased an "industrial strength" decibel meter so he could take several readings all throughout Precinct 2.

Shirley and Samuelson also reached out and met with then-owners of the Bitcoin center, US Bitcoin, on May 4, 2023, to inform the company there had been several complaints about the noise.

Matt Prusak, chief commercial officer for US Bitcoin, attended a Precinct 2 Town Hall meeting June 1, 2023, and explained to the public that a sound barrier wall was in the process of being built around the center. In October 2023, the 24-foot high and almost 2,000-foot-long soundproofing wall was finally completed, with many residents feeling at ease that the issue had been resolved.

Unfortunately, that was not the case.

"End of October, the wall was substantially complete. But the complaints continued," Samuelson said. "I got phone calls, emails, pretty much on a daily basis, plus social media complaints, so we continued our discussion with US Bitcoin, and they were very interested in solving the problem for us, and for the community. We asked them to come out and go around with us to some of these locations where we had been getting complaints, so we did that on December the sixth, and they committed to doing another sound study."

Samuelson said she had asked Prusak if US Bitcoin had been provided with any performance guarantees on the soundproofing wall as it hadn't seemed to mitigate the problem.

However, before US Bitcoin could perform another sound study, Samuelson was made aware that the site was under acquisition by Florida-based miner Marathon Digital, and the company officially took the reins Jan. 12.

Jason Browder, vice president of policy at Marathon Digital and Kevin Rash, mining systems engineer, were both present during the town hall meeting. According to Rash, who spoke during the meeting, Marathon was not aware of the noise issue and had chosen to attend the town hall to solve the problem.

Shirley took the time to explain to the public how decibels are measured and about the current sound ordinances in the state of Texas.

"First of all, I am not a sound expert. I'm a police officer," he said. "So, when Nannette called me, I knew there were such things as industrial sound meters, because I knew from my time with Houston Police Department that if you were going to enforce the law in Texas with regard to sound, you'd better get yourself a certified sound meter. And of course, when I saw some of the readings that were coming off some of y'all's cell-phones, it's very disturbing and upsetting."

He added that he cannot comment on whether the Bitcoin mining data center is "in violation" of any laws or ordinances, as he is not able to discuss that at this time.

"This is an open investigation right now. It is not over," he said. "There's been no determination of whether someone is absolutely in violation or not. There's been no charges. We're at the center of this investigation. We will



PHOTOS BY ASHLEY TERRY | HOOD COUNTY NEWS  
Precinct 2 Constable John Shirley educates the public about current state and federal sound ordinances during the Precinct 2 Community Town Hall on Monday, Jan. 29.



Precinct 2 Commissioner Nannette Samuelson speaks to the crowd during a town hall meeting on Monday, Jan. 29, regarding the Bitcoin data center.

not be discussing evidence in detail at this meeting. It's a complex issue involving three industrial plants on one site and a sound issue."

Shirley also explained that when it comes to Texas laws, there are not many protections when it comes to sound violations.

Under the penal code, Title 9, Chapter 42, "a noise is presumed to be unreasonable if the noise exceeds a decibel level of 85 after the person making the noise receives notice from a magistrate or peace officer that the noise is a public nuisance." An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor with a punishable fine of up to \$500.

He said although the Texas law is mainly for "garage bands" and "house parties," federal laws like the Noise Control Act of '72 and the Quiet Communities Act of '78 still exist. However, even though these laws establish a level of 80 decibels as the legal limit, the laws have "not been funded since 1982."

A common misconception is that a decibel is a measurement of loudness, but Shirley explains that it's more complicated than that.

"The actual definition of a decibel is a unit used to measure the intensity of a sound

or the power level of an electrical signal by comparing it with a given level on a logarithmic scale," he said. "We can't just report a decibel as a decibel because when you start looking at how decibels are perceived by humans and other animals, different parts of the frequency spectrum affect people and things differently."

Upon investigating his sound meter, Shirley said he realized his meter has two settings: A and C.

According to nti-audio.com, what humans are physically capable of hearing is represented by the A-Weighting curve, while the C-Weighting curve represents what humans hear when the sound is turned up; we become more sensitive to the lower frequencies.

Shirley explained that when he was testing the two power plants, the difference between the "A" signal and the "C" signal was miniscule. However, when he measured noise from the Bitcoin plant itself, he noticed as much as 10 decibel differences between the "A" and "C" rating.

"I can tell you that the A rating does not count low frequency noise," he said. "It doesn't exist, but it does exist. The thing is you can't hear

it, but you can feel it, and animals can feel it so your body is perceiving it even when you can't hear it."

He went on to explain that low frequency waves can penetrate barriers and buildings. Many residents, he said, had also complained that the noise from the Bitcoin plant is worse on some days and not others.

"The fans on those boxes in that Bitcoin farm, they run the exact same speed 24/7, 365," he said. "In order to cut them off, they'd have to go to each individual bank and shut them off, because they're like the final line of security for them to keep their computers from melting, so the differences in sound from day to day are not differences in the amount of noise coming from that plant, and that's hard to swallow. I have property about a mile from that plant, and I'll tell you some days I can hear it and some days I can't."

Through his explanation, Shirley revealed to the public that it's not so much that the residents are hearing the noise; rather they are feeling the vibrations. He also added that low frequency sound waves can cause heart problems, anxiety and nausea. "Don't ignore it," he con-

cluded. "We're not going to give up."

Shirley and Samuelson then opened the town hall meeting to allow public comments from residents.

Hood County resident Cheryl Shadden explained that she lives across the street from the Bitcoin plant and said the noise "permeates her home" and her ears ring constantly.

"I have sleep disturbances, it upsets my livestock, I'm nauseated," she said. "This wall isn't helping. If you go to the other side of the wall, those poor folks, I don't know how they live. But this can't go on. I'm miserable. I'm absolutely miserable."

One resident commented that Marathon should be worried about bodily injury liability due to auditory damage from the low sound frequency.

Another resident argued that in West Texas, there's another Bitcoin plant, but it's enclosed in a soundproof building and is located in the "middle of nowhere."

Many community members also offered their own solutions to the issue.

One resident brought up the idea of "fighting noise with noise" by using white noise as a solution. However, Shirley explained that noise cancellation is "extremely hard to combat," especially low frequency sounds.

Another resident suggested Marathon shut down its computers around a certain time every night.

Someone asked if anyone had been in contact with other communities who have successfully solved a similar issue. The question spurred another resident to comment that she had spoken with a few other communities that currently have active lawsuits. She said their decibel readings are "well lower than ours."

A multitude of residents also voiced concerns regarding migraines, hearing loss, ringing in their ears, vertigo, nausea and behavioral issues in children. One community member also spoke up and commented that he gives his chihuahua tranquilizers because of the noise.

Tim Harris, who lives in Pecan Plantation, said he has to sleep with a sound machine by the head of his bed to offset the issue and added

that he is concerned about his property value.

"It's gonna be hard to sell a home," he said. "I've only been here three years. What the hell did I walk into?"

One resident said she appreciates that representatives from Marathon were present at the meeting, but she has expectations from the company to have a sense of urgency to fix the issue.

Paula McDonald, former Granbury ISD school board member, said that in her research, there was supposedly a paper that was signed by the Hood County Commissioners Court stating that if there was an issue with the power grid, the Bitcoin mining corporation would have to shut down. She asked Samuelson if that paper existed.

"Everything the county has is public information," Samuelson said. "You can go back to the minutes. You might need to know exactly when the meeting was. I think it was in 2021. That was before I was on the court. There was a specific request that said we need to know that (they) will shut down when there's peak usage."

Another resident then found out that the meeting in question took place in November 2021.

Jackie Sawicky, member of the Texas Coalition Against Cryptomining, then spoke up and said that in September 2021, China kicked Bitcoin miners out of the country, but then Gov. Greg Abbott said, "Come to Texas. We have a deregulated energy market and cheap energy."

"Boy did they ever," she said. "We are now number one in crypto mining. This is, number one, not mining. They are not running anything. The very simplest way to understand what those computers are doing and all that noise every second, they are guessing and throwing away trillions of numbers hoping to hit the magic lottery number. They're not a plant because they don't produce anything. They are not doing anything but squandering, swallowing, wasting your resources, your energy. They are driving up every single Texan's electricity bill by 5% or \$1.8 billion in 2022. It's even more now, because that was over a year ago. These fa-

PLEASE SEE **BITCOIN** | A14

## GROWTH

FROM PAGE A4

school as well as more buses. The board has accumulated land out in the Cresson area and plans to eventually build in that area to better serve those students in that area. The board plans to continue to further develop the bond

and make it something that the entire community can be behind. President of the board, Barbara Townsend added that the board is open to suggestions for creating the new bond.

The Christmas lights around the square were also brought up as there were many complaints from the

community regarding the lights from the courthouse not being put up. Coffman noted that this was done after he learned the dangers of what it takes for these lights to come up. City council members and commissioner court members discussed a potential interlocal agreement to provide funding to

bring in professionals to put these lights up. No action was taken but further discussion is expected to be had.

Sheriff Roger Deeds also talked about the jail system during the meeting and noted that they are running low on space as there has been a continual increase of inmates. The commissioners court

noted that this is something they need to look further into and discuss further. The potential hospital district board tax was also mentioned as this goes hand in hand with jail inmate care. Hood County Hospital District Board CHD President Christy Massey noted that a tax is going to be necessary to keep the board

running as well as indigent and inmate care. The board is continuing to look into the potential tax and do what is best for the board as well as taxpayers.

"I think the main thing we can get from this meeting is to talk. Let's keep talking with each other," Mayor Jim Jarratt said.

# Becoming aware and informed on heart health this National Heart Month



COURTESY PHOTOS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. The CDC also found that in 2021, about 695,000 people died from heart disease — meaning one of every five deaths. By becoming more educated, one can reduce the risk of heart disease while also improving their overall well-being.

BY EMILY NAVA  
Staff Writer  
emily@hcnews.com

Many associate the month of February as a month of love, but February is also National Heart Month. This is a great time to educate oneself on the many different aspects of heart health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. The CDC also found that in 2021, about 695,000 people died from heart disease — meaning one of every five deaths. By becoming more educated, one can reduce the risk of heart disease while also improving their overall well-being.

## HEART DISEASES

There are many different types and forms of heart diseases. One of the most common heart diseases is known as coronary artery disease (CAD), where the major blood vessels that supply the heart struggle to send blood, oxygen and nutrients to the heart muscle. This disease typically is a result of cholesterol deposits in the heart arteries along with inflammation. Men are more at risk of CAD but after a woman experiences menopause, her risk increases. The first symptom of CAD is a heart attack. CAD can also cause chest pain and shortness of breath. CAD can weaken the heart muscle, which can lead to heart failure.

Another form of heart disease is known as heart arrhythmias. This is when

your heart has an irregular beating pattern. The beating pattern can either be too fast or too slow. Serious arrhythmias often develop from other heart problems but can happen on their own. Arrhythmias can lead to stroke, heart failure or cardiac arrest. Luckily, they can be treated with either medicine or procedures to control these irregularities.

There is also a heart disease known as cardiomyopathy. This causes the heart muscle to make it harder for the heart to pump blood to the rest of the body. The main types of cardiomyopathies include dilated, hypertrophic and restrictive cardiomyopathy. Treatment can include medications, surgically implanted devices, heart surgery and, in severe cases, a heart transplant. According to the Mayo Clinic, there may be no signs or symptoms in the early stages. As the condition advances some symptoms can include breathlessness with activity or even at rest, swelling of legs, ankles and feet, bloating of the abdomen, coughing while lying down, heartbeats that feel rapid, pounding or fluttering, chest discomfort or pressure, and dizziness.

Valvular heart disease is



According to the CDC, the leading risk factors for heart disease are those with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, those who smoke or are exposed to smoke, those who are obese and have an unhealthy diet, and those who are physically inactive. The CDC also notes that having a family health history of heart disease makes it more likely a person will develop heart disease. If you are a woman over 55 or a man over 45, you are also more at risk for potential heart diseases.

also something to watch out for. The heart has four valves that open and close to direct blood flow between the lungs and blood vessels. This disease occurs when any valve in the heart has damage to it. The other common type of heart valve condition is called stenosis. This is when the opening of the valve is narrowed and stiff, keeping the valve from opening fully when blood is trying to pass through. Though

medicine will not cure stenosis, it can often relieve symptoms such as chest pain, palpitations, fatigue and more.

## WHO IS AT RISK

According to the CDC, the leading risk factors for heart disease are those with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, those who smoke or are exposed to smoke, those who are obese and have an unhealthy diet, and those who are physically inactive. The CDC also notes that having a family health history of heart disease makes it more likely a person will develop heart disease. If you are a woman over 55 or a man over 45, you are also more at risk for potential heart diseases.

## HOW TO LIVE A HEART HEALTHY LIFE

The National Heart and Blood Institute has many tips for keeping your heart healthy to reduce the risk of heart disease. First, it is important to get enough quality sleep. The NHBI recommends aiming for seven to

nine hours of sleep at night. It also is good to wake up and go to bed at the same times every day and to avoid caffeine and nicotine before bed.

It is also important to have a flexible and balanced eating plan. This will not only help you feel better overall but will lower high blood pressure and improve cholesterol. When watching what you eat, look for foods that are low in fat, sodium and added sugars. It is also helpful to mix lean meat, eat fish once or twice a week, and eat one or two meatless meals throughout the week. Whole and dry fruits, unsalted rice cakes, raw vegetables, fat-free and low-fat yogurt all work well as healthy snacks. Staying hydrated with water as the primary beverage will also help maintain a balanced diet.

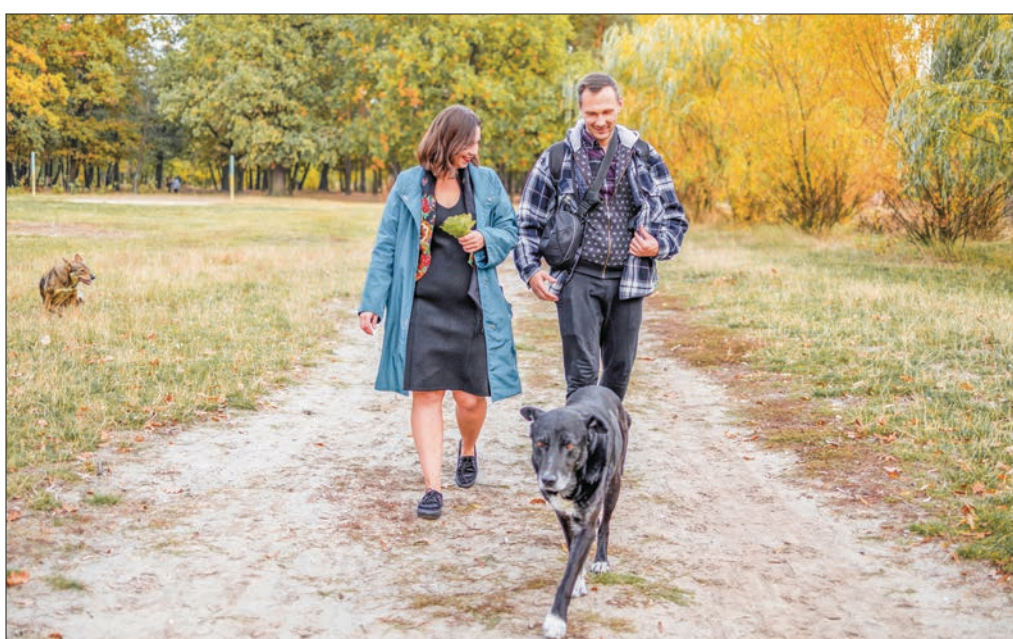
To keep your heart healthy, the NHBI recommends adults spend at least 150 minutes a week doing physical activity — something just as simple as walking. If you are short on time

for activity throughout the day, do what you can to get that heart beating faster.

One of the best things you can do for your heart is to not smoke. Even if you are not a smoker, it is important to stay away from second-hand smoke. The risk of heart disease starts to drop in just as little as a day after someone quits smoking, according to the Mayo Clinic.

It is also important to regularly see your doctor for health screening tests to check blood pressure, cholesterol levels and to perform diabetes screenings. Certain infections also can lead to heart problems, including gum disease. Other illnesses can make existing heart problems worse, so it is important to maintain yearly vaccines.

This month, take the time to educate loved ones about heart disease as well as how to maintain a healthy heart. To learn more about heart disease, visit the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or speak with your local healthcare provider.



To keep your heart healthy, the NHBI recommends adults spend at least 150 minutes a week doing physical activity — something just as simple as walking. If you are short on time for activity throughout the day, do what you can to get that heart beating faster.



# TOXIC TIES

## Cutting the cord for good

COURTESY PHOTOS

Understanding how to navigate turbulent relationships is crucial for our mental and emotional well-being.

**BY MICKY SHEARON**  
Special to the Hood County News

In our journey through life, we inevitably encounter individuals whose behavior can be draining, negative, and oftentimes downright toxic. These interactions can leave us feeling exhausted, stressed and emotionally depleted. However, understanding how to navigate these turbulent relationships is crucial for our mental and emotional well-being. Here are seven key strategies I am learning to deal with toxic people effectively.

**RECOGNIZING AND MOVING BEYOND TOXICITY**

The first step in dealing with toxic individuals is recognizing their harmful impact on our lives. Toxic people often manipulate emotions, spread negativity and create drama. It's essential to assess whether their presence contributes positively or negatively to your life. If their influence is predominantly harmful, it might be time to consider distancing yourself. This doesn't mean you harbor ill will; it's an act of self-care.

right to a peaceful and positive environment.

**THE POWER OF YOUR VOICE**

Silence can be interpreted as acceptance. Speaking up against toxicity is not just about confrontation; it's about your inner self-respect and asserting your dignity. It's crucial to express how a toxic individual's behavior affects you. This doesn't have to be confrontational but can be a calm and firm expression of your feelings. Your voice is a powerful tool in defining the dynamics of your relationships.

**THE ILLUSION OF NORMALCY IN TOXIC BEHAVIOR**

Often, we normalize toxic behavior to avoid confrontation. However, this only leads to a cycle of negativity. It's important to acknowledge that toxic behavior is not acceptable. Setting clear boundaries and communicating them assertively can help prevent being drawn into their negative spiral. Remember, you have the

**STANDING FIRM IN YOUR SELF-RESPECT**

Toxic people often test your boundaries. It's vital to stand firm and protect your self-respect. This might mean ending conversations, walking away or even ending relationships. Remember, you are not responsible for their behavior, but you are responsible for how you respond to it.



The first step in dealing with toxic individuals is recognizing their harmful impact on our lives. Toxic people often manipulate emotions, spread negativity and create drama.

**PERSONALIZING TOXIC BEHAVIOR: A MISGUIDED APPROACH**

It's easy to internalize the negativity of toxic people and believe it's a reflection of your worth. However, their behavior says more about them than it does about you. Recognizing this can be liberating and can help you detach emotionally from their actions.

**COMPASSION WITH BOUNDARIES**

While some toxic individuals may be going through tough times, it's important to balance compassion with boundaries. You can offer support and understanding, but not at the expense of your emotional well-being. It's okay to step back if their behavior becomes overwhelming.

**SELF-CARE IN THE FACE OF TOXICITY**

Dealing with toxic people can be draining. Prioritizing self-care is essential. This means taking time for yourself, engaging in activities that rejuvenate you, and seeking support from positive relationships. Self-care is not selfish; it's necessary for maintaining your emotional health.

Dealing with toxic people requires a balance of assertiveness, compassion and self-care. By implementing these strategies, you can protect your emotional well-being and navigate these challenging relationships more effectively.

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PROPERTIES

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# FIRE

FROM PAGE A1

release from the city of Granbury, the fire destroyed the building along with three cars inside. Additionally, the quick response and coordinated efforts of the local fire departments — along with city of Granbury electric crews — resulted in the containment of the blaze about an hour after it began.

"This was a well-advanced and technical structure fire. I appreciate the fast response by all departments and their solid work on scene," Granbury Volunteer Fire Department Chief Matt Hohon previously told the HCN.

Nebhut said according to investigators, there was no known cause of the fire and that a "fluke" is what set it off.

"It was me and one other coworker in the building and we made it out all right and everything, but we're trying to get our guys' tools recovered," he said. "We had three techs who lost tools and three customers who lost vehicles, so we're trying to get that stuff recovered, and we're hungry for work."

As the "face" of the shop is gone, Nebhut said he is worried that many customers believe that they're closed for good.

"I've noticed a huge difference in my walk-in customers because of that building burning down and I'm just trying to get the word out there because we're trying to recover," he said. "We do have insurance, but it takes a while for insurance to recover (everything). We want the work, we want to get our customers taken care of, and we want to let them know we're still here."

Expert Automotive Solutions first opened in August 2022 by owners Dale Prince, Samuel Canes and Justin Knoll, who all previously worked for mobile companies like Aztec Mobile Mechanic and Mobile Elite Auto.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Expert Automotive Solutions has now moved its operation to 2000 Supply Lane following an accidental fire last month.



They originally started their own mobile automobile business in the Dallas/Fort

Worth area before moving their ground zero operation to Granbury.

"They're looking to open up stores all over the state of Texas, but we kind of took a

**Expert Automotive Solutions is open 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday at its secondary back shop, located at 2000 Supply Ln. Services include everything from electrical diagnostics to maintenance.**

hit and right now we're just trying to recover," Nebhut said.

A GoFundMe account has been set up to help the customers recover their vehicles and the technicians recover their tools.

"This is the techs' livelihood," he said. "I mean, some of these guys are out \$20,000 to \$30,000."

The GoFundMe link can be found on the Expert Automotive Solutions Facebook page. The fund-raising goal is currently set at \$250,000.

Nebhut added that the

owners and employees are just looking for the opportunity to serve the people in the community and stressed that they are not looking for a handout.

"The more work we get, the happier we are," he said.

Expert Automotive Solutions is open 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Friday at its secondary back shop, located at 2000 Supply Ln. Services include everything from electrical diagnostics to maintenance.

"I just want to get us out there and just try to get (the news) spread to as many people as I can," Nebhut added. "These owners are good, God-fearing people and they deserve the success. These techs work hard every day, and they deserve success. I just don't want to see that take a step back. It kills my soul."

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**OBITS**  
FROM PAGE A10

**Jimmie Boyd Goza Dockray Edwards Hughes**

December 17, 1928 - January 25, 2024

Jimmie Boyd Goza Edwards Dockray Hughes passed from this life into eternal rest on Jan. 25, 2024. She was born Dec. 17, 1928 in Carpenters Gap, Texas to James and Irma Boyd Goza. She moved to Abilene and attended Abilene High School. She married Paul Edwards in 1945 in Anson, Texas.

Jimmie is survived by four children, Jimmy Edwards and wife Susan, Rod Edwards and wife Wendy, Dan Edwards and Brigitte Edwards Eichler and husband Jerry and one sister JoCarol Grizzle of Elfrida, Arizona.

She has 12 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren, numerous nephews, nieces, and cousins.

She was preceded in death by her beloved husband Paul in 1994. She married Herbert Dockray and moved to Mayhill, New Mexico until his death in 2002. She then moved to Clyde, Texas to be close to her mother and sister and married Bill Hughes.

Also, preceded by three brothers, Gerald, Ronny and Terry Goza and one sister Cherry Cochran.

She later moved to Granbury to be close to her daughter.

Jimmie had a beauty shop in Abilene and had a faithful following of weekly shampoo and set friends. Her backcombing



could last for years. She was very active in the Fireman's Wives Auxiliary and was a faithful member of the Church of Christ wherever she lived.

Jimmie was a wonderful mother who loved her children unconditionally, but they didn't hold a candle to her grandchildren. She was very proud of and loved her family very much. She was always ready and willing to help whenever anyone needed her.

Jimmie had a multitude of friends whom she loved and who loved her dearly. She loved country music, playing cards and dominoes and she spent many fun winters at Citrus Valley RV Park in McAllen as a snowbird.

Memorial service was held at Elliot-Hamil Funeral Home at 5701 Hwy 277 S in Abilene, Texas on Wednesday, Jan. 31 at 2 p.m. followed by graveside service at Elmwood Cemetery.

LAKE GRANBURY MEDICAL CENTER

**Eating healthy for your heart**

BY LAKE GRANBURY MEDICAL CENTER

"I'm a believer in eating healthy for your heart," mentions Casey Dean, D.O., family medicine physician at Lakeside Physicians. "Focusing on healthy foods daily is key to maintaining good health, including your heart. Below is a great article from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute that provides some excellent advice on what to include in your diet for a healthier heart."

Heart-healthy eating involves choosing certain foods, such as fruits and vegetables, while limiting others, such as saturated fats and added sugars.

Your doctor may recommend the heart-healthy Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension (DASH) eating plan because it has been proven to lower high blood pressure and "bad" LDL cholesterol in the blood. See Delicious Heart-Healthy Eating for recipes, cooking tips and more information.

**FOODS TO EAT**

These foods are the foundation of a heart-healthy eating plan.

- Vegetables such as leafy greens (spinach, collard greens, kale, cabbage), broccoli and carrots
- Fruits such as apples, bananas, oranges, pears, grapes and prunes
- Whole grains such as plain oatmeal, brown rice and whole-grain bread or tortillas
- Fat-free or low-fat dairy foods such as milk, cheese or yogurt
- Protein-rich foods:
- Fish high in omega-3 fatty acids (salmon, tuna and trout)
- Lean meats such as 95% lean ground beef or pork tenderloin or skinless chicken or turkey
- Eggs

- Nuts, seeds and soy products (tofu)
- Legumes such as kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas, black-eyed peas and lima beans

Oils and foods high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats:

- Canola, corn, olive, safflower, sesame, sunflower and soybean oils (not coconut or palm oil)
- Nuts such as walnuts, almonds and pine nuts
- Nut and seed butter
- Salmon and trout
- Seeds (sesame, sunflower, pumpkin or flax)
- Avocados
- Tofu

**FOODS TO LIMIT**

A heart-healthy eating plan limits sodium (salt), saturated fat, added sugars and alcohol. Understanding nutrition labels can help you choose healthier foods.

**Limit sodium**

Adults and children over age 14 should eat less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day. Children younger than age 14 may need to eat even less sodium each day based on their sex and age. If you have high blood pressure, you may need to limit sodium even more. Talk to your healthcare provider about the amount of sodium that is right for you or your child.

Try these shopping and cooking tips to help you choose and prepare foods that are lower in sodium:

- Read food labels and choose products that have less sodium for the same serving size.
- Choose low-sodium, reduced-sodium or no-salt-added products.
- Choose fresh, frozen or no-salt-added foods instead of pre-seasoned, sauce-marinated, brined or processed meats, poultry and vegetables.
- Eat at home more often so you can cook food from

scratch, which will allow you to control the amount of sodium in your meals.

- Flavor foods with herbs and spices instead of salt.
- When cooking, limit your use of premade sauces, mixes and instant products such as rice, noodles and ready-made pasta.

**Limit saturated fats**

Saturated or "bad" fats come from animal sources such as butter, cheese and fatty meats. They should make up less than 10% of your daily calories. Unsaturated fats are also known as "good" fats and are found in vegetable oils and nuts.

Read food labels and choose foods that are lower in saturated fats and higher in unsaturated fats.

- Eat leaner, lower-fat and skinless meats instead of fatty cuts of meat and chicken with skin.
- Consume lower-fat dairy products instead of whole milk.
- Use certain vegetable oils (such as olive and canola oil) instead of butter, lard and coconut and palm oils.

**Limit added sugars**

You should limit the amount of calories you get each day from added sugars. This will help you choose nutrient-rich foods and stay within your daily calorie limit. Some foods, such as fruit, contain natural sugars. Added sugars do not occur naturally in foods but instead are used to sweeten foods and drinks. They include brown sugar, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, raw sugar and sucrose.

In the United States, sweetened drinks, snacks and sweets are the major sources of added sugars.

- Sweetened drinks include soft drinks or sodas, fruit drinks, sweetened coffee and tea, energy drinks, alcoholic

drinks and favored waters. Sweetened drinks account for about half of all added sugars consumed.

- Snacks and sweets include grain-based desserts such as cakes, pies, cookies, brownies, doughnuts; dairy desserts such as ice cream, frozen desserts, pudding, candies, sugars, jams, syrups and sweet toppings.

Lower how much sugar you eat or drink

- Choose drinks without added sugar such as water, low-fat or fat-free milk or 100% vegetable juice.
- Choose unsweetened foods for snacks or dessert.
- Eat sweetened drinks, snacks and desserts less often and in smaller amounts.

**Limit alcohol**

Talk to your healthcare provider about how much alcohol you drink. They may recommend that you reduce the amount of alcohol you drink or that you stop drinking alcohol.

Alcohol can:

- Add calories to your daily diet and possibly cause you to gain weight
- Raise your blood pressure and levels of triglyceride fats in your blood
- Contribute to or worsen heart failure in some people, such as some people who have cardiomyopathy
- Raise your risk of other diseases such as cancer

If you do not drink, you should not start. You should not drink if you are pregnant, are under the age of 21, take certain medicines, or if you have certain medical conditions, including heart failure.

To schedule an appointment with Dr. Dean or any Lakeside Physicians provider, call (817) 573-3627 or visit <https://www.lakesidephysicians.com>.

February is American Heart Month. Sign up to receive Lake Granbury Medical Center's Leap Into Heart Health fact-packed email series.





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Lower mortgage rates prompt home buyers back into the market

BY JACQUE GORDON



Jacquie and her husband David moved to Granbury in 2007. They have five children and fifteen grandchildren. A Realtor since 2017, she has been with Keller Williams her entire career and in Gary Keller's top 200 agents in the company for the past year. She was a Granbury Association of Realtors board member for three years and is now president of the board. jacquiegordon@kw.com | 817-243-4324



COURTESY PHOTO

The Housing market is "looking up" as we begin the 2024 year. Mortgage rates have settled in the 6% range giving potential homebuyers more confidence to shop for real estate.

The Housing market is "looking up" as we begin the 2024 year. Mortgage rates have settled in the 6% range giving potential homebuyers more confidence to shop for real estate. Despite inventory challenges, Freddie Mac anticipates a busier spring homebuying season than in 2023, with home prices continuing to increase at a steady pace.

Buyers are reemerging in the market. Mortgage appli-

cations to purchase a home, a gauge of future homebuy-

ing activity, are up nearly 8% according to the Mortgage Bankers Association. Sales of newly-built

homes also are on the rise, surging 8% month-over-month and 4.4% year-over-year in December. The

construction increases coincided with drops in mortgage rates at the end of last year.

2023 was a rough year in the housing market, but there are plenty of reasons to be optimistic in 2024. Realtor.com forecasts that mortgage rates will average about 6.8% during 2024 and end the year closer to 6.5%. Lawrence Yun, chief economist at the National Association of REALTORS®, said he expects the 30-year fixed mortgage rate to average lower, at 6.3% in 2024, and that the Fed will cut rates four times.

The National Association of Realtors predicts that when August 2024 rolls

around, existing home prices will be 2.6% higher than the year before.

Real estate experts predict a continued inventory shortage, and because they expect high buyer demand to keep pushing home prices up, 2024 may be an ideal time to sell.

If you are ready to enter the housing market and need assistance selling or buying a home, Granbury has a number of experienced and knowledgeable REALTORS® ready to work with you. For a full list of real estate agents, visit the Granbury Association of Realtors® website at www.Granburyrealtors.com.

BITCOIN

FROM PAGE A5

ilities get paid to shut down by ERCOT and then they take their deeply discounted energy, and they turn around and they sell it back to the grid at a spot price meaning they are gouging us, and they are driving up our energy costs."

Sawicky said on Sept. 6, Riot Platforms announced they made \$31.7 million from power credits during the August heat wave — the same day that we were 15 minutes away from another Winter Storm Uri incident.

"They will tell you they saved the grid. I will tell you that it is proof positive that they are destabilizing it," she said. "But they're putting such a massive burden

on our grid that we know it has not been fixed since Uri, that they're actually causing the problem they get paid to solve."

Another resident then turned the tables back on Shirley and Samuelson and asked what they were willing to do as elected officials to mitigate the issue.

"What I'm telling you is we're not going to walk away and make excuses for why we're not continuing to fight," Shirley said. "The state law is inadequate and I'm working with the county attorney, and when it's determined they're in violation, we will take an enforcement action and we'll keep enforcing. But as law enforcement, all I can do, because of the way the law is written, I can write a ticket.

And I'm telling you right now, to a Bitcoin plant, who's making millions of dollars, a \$500 ticket, even if it's every day, is not a big enough dissuasion from doing their business. So that's why I'm saying this is a community problem. The time to stop this or to say something or influence people to have a real impact was before it came in, and we missed that. But what we can do now is lobby as hard as we can with our commissioners where we can come together as a community. We're not going to turn our backs on you."

Samuelson then posed another question to Marathon, asking the company if they plan to go from a 300-megawatt facility to a 600-megawatt facility, as that is another concern posed by the

public.

"We've had the site for two weeks," Browder said. "We were not expecting this, but I will say that something that differentiates ourselves from our predecessors is generic capitalism. So obviously, they bought to make a profit and we're operating, so for us it's a long-term investment into the community; that's why we're here now."

He also added that Marathon has owned the site for two weeks but that it's still operated by US Bitcoin. He said they are in conversation now to take over that contract soon.

A resident then brought up the question of how the Bitcoin operation benefits the community, which Samuelson also posed to Marathon.

"This isn't the place," Rash said. "People's lives are hurting. This isn't the place to talk about any good we've done."

Samuelson thanked the community for being civil during the town hall as she said she understands how it's impacting everyone's lives. She added she will do everything within the law to help improve the situation.

"We're gonna fight this battle with you," Shirley said. "We're not going away. Again, I own property close to this plant; it affects my life, too."

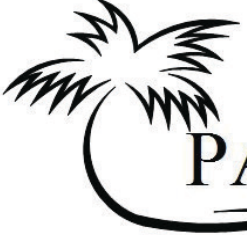
Samuelson said if anyone still wishes to voice any complaints or concerns, they are welcome to call Rep. Shelby Slawson, Sen. Brian Birdwell, Shirley or herself.

"I hope you're all ears because there were some

very passionate issues," Samuelson said, addressing Marathon. "It's impacting their lives. They can't live like this. Even if the state law's 85, and let's say it's 83, but it's constant, that doesn't help. There has to be restoration as a quality of life for all of us that live near here. I'm hoping that you're listening, and we'll hear from you really soon on what your plans are, because I need to communicate with all of these people."

Samuelson added she will be posting Bitcoin updates on her Facebook page Nannette Samuelson for Hood County Commissioner.

For more information or to voice a concern, email Shirley at JShirley@co.hood.tx.us or Samuelson at nsamuelson@co.hood.tx.us.



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## Like older sister, Garner left her mark

BY RICK MAUCH  
Special to the  
Hood County News

Ella Garner watched her older sister Gentry as they played alongside each other on the Granbury Lady Pirates varsity basketball in the 2020-21 season, Ella a freshman and Gentry a senior.

Ella knew her time was coming to lead the program, just as Gentry was doing that season. Now that time is here, as Ella is a senior solidifying her own place in the annals of Lady Pirate lore, having recently passed the 1,000-point scoring mark in her career.

And, just like Gentry, she is on the verge of leading the Lady Pirates to the post-season — a fourth consecutive year for Ella, in fact.

"I always looked up to her. She was a great role model," Ella said. "We're very competitive.

"We'd talk on the court, and we just knew (each other's moves). We had the sister brain."



Ella Garner plays some defense at the Pirates vs Bulldogs game Dec. 8 2023.

PHOTO BY LAYTH TAYLOR | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

### STAUNCH DEFENSE

Ella watched Gentry closely in practice and during games, though they had different styles. Gentry was

more of a shooter while Ella was — and still is — a tenacious defender.

But this year Ella has been

called upon by Lady Pirates Alan Thorpe to take on the bulk of the scoring. She has responded in a fashion her

old sister would be proud of — all the while remaining one of the top defensive forces in District 5-5A.

"She's pretty much a gnat in front of that press," Thorpe said of Ella. "She's very physical, she gets peo-

ple riled up."

PLEASE SEE **SISTER** | B2

## Granbury ISD School Board approves new GPA calculation

BY EMILY NAVA  
Staff Writer  
emily@hcnews.com

During a regularly scheduled Granbury ISD board of trustees meeting, the board voted to adopt a new grade point average calculation that will go into effect for current eighth graders who will soon begin their freshman year.

A presentation was made by Granbury High School Principal Jamie Robinson during the meeting, who put together a team to look further into GHS' current GPA system.

"After careful analysis of our current GPA policy, it was determined that our current policy is outdated and limits opportunities for students to participate in CCMR, CTE, dual credit, and advanced placement courses that may affect rank-

ing," Robinson read from the presentation. "We evaluated the policies of 10 similar districts and created this draft to fulfill goals of our district and campus strategic planning and TEA's A-F accountability system to produce a more appropriate and aligned GPA policy."

The team looked at different GPA policies from around the region to determine what would be the best fit for GHS students. Instead of the previous 6.0 scale, the new GPA system will work based on a tier system with a 5.0 scale. The four tiers are broken down by difficulty of class, meaning more difficult classes will carry more weight.

"This will allow for those students who are wanting to take those AP and dual credit classes to be rewarded for their hard work," Robinson said during the meeting.

With the new system, level

three and four courses will be non-calculated for athletics and fine arts to encourage continued participation, more focus will be put on SAT/ACT preparedness, the school will be more aligned to other districts in state, and transfer students will have an easier transition.

"One of the things that was happening is that if a student moved in (to the district) they were kind of penalized (academically) for just moving in," Robinson said during the meeting. "Now with this new system when a student transfers and if they had the same course we did, we will be able to give them credit."

Transfer grades for Tier 1 courses will receive Tier 1 weight. When a student transfers semester grades for courses that are not offered by the district, students will receive Tier 1 weight and the district will



PHOTO BY EMILY NAVA | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

Granbury High School Principal Jamie Robinson presents a new propped GPA system during a school board meeting on Jan. 29.

include the grades in the calculation of class rank.

GISD Superintendent Jeremy Glenn spoke on behalf of his son and the difficulties of being a transfer student with the old GPA system.

"One of the huge advan-

tages of this new system is that it puts everybody at a level playing field. It helps with honor classes in the area, too, from school to school," Glenn said during the meeting.

An email was sent out to parents Jan. 29 discuss-

ing the new system, and Robinson will present the new system during different CTE and middle school nights.

The board adopted the new system in a 6-0 vote; Board Secretary Billy Wimberly was absent.



COURTESY PHOTO

Granbury High School's UIL spelling and vocabulary team placed first at Joshua High School's UIL Academic Invitational Meet on Saturday, Jan. 20. Team members include Mann Vagashia, Preston Kirkland, Kensington Loving, and Jocelyn Berry.

## GHS UIL Academics places second at invitational meet

BY ASHLEY TERRY  
Staff Writer  
ashley@hcnews.com

Granbury High School students showed off their scholarly abilities, placing second at Joshua High School's UIL Academic Invitational Meet Saturday, Jan. 20.

The University Interscholastic League was created by The University of Texas at Austin to provide leadership and guidance to public school debate and athletic teachers. Since 1910, the UIL has grown into the largest interschool organization of its kind in the world, according to uiltexas.org.

"UIL, of course, governs sports and fine arts, and they have multiple competitions," Cindy Leatherman, GHS UIL academics coordinator and social studies coach said. "UIL also created the field of academics, so it's separated into different types of contests."

Sixty-one GHS students competed as both teams and individuals in a variety of different academic events during the invitational meet including: accounting, calculator, computer applications, computer science, copy editing, current events, journalism, literary criticism, mathematics, number sense, ready writing, science, spelling and vocabulary, and social studies.

### THE FOLLOWING STUDENTS PLACED IN THEIR EVENTS:

- SPELLING — 1st Place Team: Mann Vagashia, Preston Kirkland, Kensington Loving and Jocelyn Berry; 2nd Place Individual: Mann Vagashia
- COMPUTER APPLICATIONS — 4th Place Individual: Collin Yarbrough
- ACCOUNTING — 4th Place Individual: Taylor Dawley
- SOCIAL STUDIES — 1st Place Team: Quinn

King, Cameron Ward and Pete O'Carroll; 1st place Individual: Mann Vagashia; 5th place Individual: Cameron Ward.

• SCIENCE — 3rd Place Team: Konner Babiash, Lucas Hyde and Riley Morris. Top Score Chemistry and 6th Place Individual: Konner Babiash.

All students did well in their categories, resulting in Granbury High School placing second overall behind 6A Highland Park High School. "When we compete, each placement gets a certain amount of points," Tammy Bodine, UIL co-coordinator and accounting coach said. "In social studies, we had a first and a fifth and they got points there, and then as a team, if you're a first-place team or second-place team, you get points. Each

PLEASE SEE **UIL** | B3

 **SAME PAPER**  
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# GHS debate students qualify for UIL state

BY ASHLEY TERRY  
Staff Writer  
ashley@hcnews.com

There's no "debate" that Granbury High School students are talented — and that's especially true for sophomore Maddie Neal and freshman Carmen Wright.

After placing second in the University Interscholastic League (UIL) Cross-Examination (CX) district meet Friday, Jan. 19, the pair officially qualified for the UIL state meet set for March 11-16 at the University of Texas at Austin.

"It wasn't expected," Wright said. "I 100% thought we were going to crash and burn and make up for it next year."

"I knew going in that this was going to be a practice year and that as our first year, it was going to be a learning experience and something new, so when we made state, my jaw dropped," Neal said.

UIL Academic Speech and Debate coach Shyller Byrom told the HCN that although their success suggests otherwise, both Neal and Wright are new to the team.

"They're both what I still would consider novices," Byrom said. "But they obviously have some talent."

Not only did the duo succeed in the UIL CX district meet, they also finished second place in Joshua High School's UIL Academic Invitational meet the following day, Saturday, Jan. 20.

"They got state qualified and the very next day, we went to just a practice tournament, and so they're like, 'We got this' and then they just went in there and kicked booty all day long," Byrom said.

"Yeah, we were a lot more confident walking into that one, like, 'Well, we already have state under our belt so we can't really do that bad,'" Wright said, chuckling.

Both Neal and Wright said they chose to join the debate team after realizing



Several debate students placed in the Joshua UIL Debate Tournament held on Saturday, Jan. 20.

COURTESY PHOTO

a close family member had also been a part of the debate team when they were in high school.

Wright said she prefers to debate on political ideologies, as they're "very fact based."

"There's a lot of evidence to support or go against it, so it isn't an easy topic to debate on because you can only really have one stance," she explained.

As the duo started out on the team, Byrom said they first started learning LD — Lincoln-Douglas debate — which traditionally places a heavy emphasis on logic, ethical values and philosophy.

"LD debate is also known as gossipy debate," she explained. "The LD stands for Lincoln Douglas. As you

know, (Abraham) Lincoln and (Stephen) Douglas had a debate about civil rights and that was a very philosophical debate, so we kind of copy that. LD has different topics throughout the year; it changes every two months, but they both decided that they didn't like the gray area of LD because it's super philosophical."

Cross examination debate — the type of debate Neal and Wright excelled in last month — is also known as policy debate and typically features a political topic.

"This year, it's basically the federal government giving Americans a basic income, and there's some specific wording and that resolution stays the same all year long," Byrom explained.

"UIL debate competition motivates students and provides them with practical application for the skills they are developing," said Jana Riggins, UIL state debate director, in a news release. "This year's debate topic prompted students to research and form their own thoughts and opinions on the real-world issue our government is challenged with: Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase fiscal redistribution in the United States by adopting a federal jobs guarantee, expanding social security, and/or providing a basic income."

Next month, the girls will spend their spring break in Austin at the state tournament — even if it means cutting their New York trip

short.

Results from the Jan. 20 UIL Debate Tournament in Joshua are listed below:

Kierra Black — First place poetry interpretation, eighth place persuasive speaking  
Shanice Gibson — third place poetry interpretation  
Misty Meyes — seventh place poetry interpretation  
Taylor Liffner — fifth place prose interpretation  
Lexi Scarpello — fifth place persuasive speaking  
Maddie Neal and Carmen Wright — 3-0 undefeated CX Debate  
Katie Morrison — 3-0 undefeated LD Debate  
Scarlett Farner — 2-0 undefeated LD debate



COURTESY PHOTO

Freshman Carmen Wright, left, and sophomore Maddie Neal, right, qualified for the UIL State Cross-Examination Meet set for March 11-16 at the University of Texas at Austin.

# GISD Child Nutrition awarded highest honor in TDA's Farm Fresh Challenge

BY ASHLEY TERRY  
Staff Writer  
ashley@hcnews.com

The Granbury Independent School District's Child Nutrition department is unbeatable following its recent Best of the Bunch Award in the Texas Department of Agriculture's Farm Fresh Challenge.

Last October, GISD chose to participate in the challenge, which requires Texas school districts to put farm-fresh products on the school menu and educate students about where certain foods come from.

Director of Child Nutrition Amy Whiteley explained that last year, GISD only did the challenge for one week and received the Prime

Participant Recognition Award. This year, however, Whiteley decided to participate in the challenge for the whole month of October.

"We just wanted to see if it was something that we could do, and we were successful with it, so then we decided we're gonna go ahead and do Best of the Bunch, which is the four weeks," she said. "We do try to incorporate local grown foods as much as we can through our regular distributor depending on what's available and what the cost is."

Whiteley explained that GISD had to put one Texas-grown product on the school menu every day for those four weeks in October to be eligible for the award. Take-home flyers were also created for the students as well

as social media posts that contained information about each product.

GISD was the recipient of the Best of the Bunch Award for serving Texas grown items including milk, hydroponic lettuce, watermelon and whole grain gingerbread cookies.

"I think it's really cool what Texas Department of Agriculture is doing with Farm Fresh, because there's so many children that don't understand where their food comes from," Whiteley said. "It's important for them to learn, for instance, green beans don't come from a can; they actually come from the ground and farmers have to really work hard to get them that food. I think it's kind of just been a lost concept of where our food comes from

with these generations."

Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller recognized 107 Contracting Entities (CEs) for achievements in the 2023 Farm Fresh Challenge. Participants purchased \$13.86 million of Texas grown and produced menu items and gave 2.67 million children the opportunity to learn more about Texas agriculture, according to squaremeals.org.

**FOR ACHIEVING BEST OF THE BUNCH STATUS, GISD WILL RECEIVE:**

- A certificate of recognition signed by Commissioner Sid Miller
- A personalized letter for superintendents or equivalent positions, signed by Commissioner Sid Miller



- A personalized letter for child nutrition directors or equivalent positions, signed by Assistant Commissioner Lena Wilson
- A recognition toolkit complete with an executive level summary and marketing including social media post suggestions, a template press release and a digital

badge

- A Farm Fresh lapel pin
  - A physical award
- For more information about the Farm Fresh Challenge, visit [squaremeals.org](https://squaremeals.org).

## SISTER

FROM PAGE B1

Ella said the goal of her defensive style is to "get into a girl's head." She said they have a look that tells her when that has happened.

"They start getting physical and out of their game," she said, noting that "defense is a bunch of hustling."

**ADJUSTING GAME/REACHING MILESTONE**

With Ella Hamlin graduating last season, Thorpe realized he needed a new top scorer. He turned to Ella Garner, whom he said already was a good shooter — when she took the opportunity.

"We knew she could do it. She had a great shot last year, she just didn't use it much," he said. "It's one of those things, you know they can do it, it's just a matter

of them doing it. She's done it great this season."

So well, in fact, that she passed a milestone. She recently reached 1,000 points in her high school career.

"My dad looked at my stats one day and told me I was close," she said. "I actually didn't realize when it happened, but it was cool."

"It's a cool milestone, very unexpected," she continued with a chuckle. "After losing Ella Hamlin I had to step up."

As for how she became a "shooter," Ella Garner said, "I just started shooting more and told myself not to be afraid to shoot."

While her shooting moved to a new level, the rest of her game remained rock solid. Along with still playing strong defense, she passes well and knows how to battle in the paint for a rebound.

**COMPETITIVE FROM THE START**

Ella grew up competitive, being the youngest of four sisters — each of whom loved playing, though only she and Gentry continued playing beyond middle school. Ella began her love of basketball at age 5.

"We could pass as guys when we were young. We were Tomboys," she said.

"If we're in the weight room, she wants to be the strongest in there," Thorpe said of Ella. "She loves to compete and loves to win."

**HOBBIES**

When she's not making life hard defensively for an opponent or putting up a basket in their face — or studying, of course — Ella has several hobbies. She loves being active in church and reads.

And she referees the game she loves so much. She calls youth games.

"I like kids and I like to help them develop their skills," she said.

"She refs like she plays," Thorpe said with a laugh, noting that while she wants everyone to have fun, she doesn't let much get by her.

**COLLEGE**

Ella said she realizes her days as a Lady Pirate basketball player will come to an end soon. She will likely go on to compete in track — she was second in District 5-5A in the shot put last season and also ran on the third-place 400-meter relay.

"Being in basketball has helped me with shot put, strength-wise," she said.

She plans to follow in Gentry's footsteps and attend Texas A&M, majoring in business. She does not plan to play basketball.

However, neither did Hamlin. Then, after TCU lost several players to illness, Hamlin answered the



COURTESY OF DAWN BRADLEY

Granbury Lady Pirate senior Ella Garner (11), known more for her defense - which is still strong as ever - in the past, recently surpassed 1,000 points in her high school career.

call for an open tryout and was offered preferred walk-on status.

"After Ella walked on at TCU, my parents had a conversation with me," Ella Garner said. "I suppose if a chance came up, we'll see what happens."

Thorpe said he believes

she has the talent to make a college roster.

"I think so. At that level it's so hard, but I think she'd have a real chance," he said. "I'd like to see her give it a shot."

No pun intended, of course.



# UIL

FROM PAGE B1

school accumulates points in all the different events that they compete in, and so after all the events had been held, and we scored it all, Granbury scored the second highest points behind Highland Park.”

Although, Bodine said, GHS almost didn't place in second due to an accidental scoring issue.

“I doublecheck everything and I looked, and they had inadvertently put (Leatherman's) social studies points in Grandview instead of Granbury,” she said. “I'm sure they would have caught it, but when those points moved over, we edged out Mansfield for second place, so it felt really good.”

Leatherman added “it always feels great to beat Aledo,” as the school is a commonly-known rival of Granbury.

“Aledo has a very strong current events team and social studies, and then a few other areas too,” she said. “We have our areas where we really focus hard, so that we can compete even more, but typically, we're rivals of Aledo.”

While GHS succeeded in

UIL academics, the speech and debate team coached by Shyller Byrom also fared well in the competition, with students Carmen Wright and Maddie Neal qualifying for UIL state.

“We did really well in Joshua with our speech and debate students,” Leatherman said. “We were all there together at the same competition. Sometimes the speech and debate students also compete in forensic debate, which is governed by a different organization than UIL, so our debate coach is very busy.”

Bodine said Granbury normally excels in the UIL competitions — especially district — but its success boils down to the students' determination and having the right coaches who work hard to ensure their students perform well.

“We have a lot of coaches who specialize in their events because obviously I could not coach science; I'm a social studies teacher,” Leatherman said. “And even though I think that I could coach UIL maybe in another area if I worked really hard at it, we have a science teach-

er who is a great coach. We have a lot of different coaches who specialize in those particular areas, so that they can encourage the students.”

### GHS UIL ACADEMIC COACHES INCLUDE:

- Accounting — Tammy Bodine
- Social Studies — Cindy Leatherman
- Science — Cindy Jackson
- Spelling and Vocabulary — Melissa Knight
- Journalism — Margarite Anderson
- Speech and Debate — Shyller Byrom
- Math and Number Sense — Cody Watkins
- Calculator — Holly Parker
- Literary Criticism — Sheryl Robinson
- Current Issues and Events — Amy Hattox—Hoag
- Computer Science and Computer Apps — Bethany Smith

As students are not able to use classroom time to practice in their respective UIL areas, many wake up early and stay after school to ensure they are prepared for the next competition.



COURTESY PHOTO

Tammy Bodine, UIL co-coordinator and accounting coach, poses with her team members at the UIL invitational meet on Jan. 20. Granbury High School student Taylor Dawley placed fourth as an individual.

“The science team, I think, is up to three days a week now,” Leatherman said. “Sometimes it's just when I can grab a kid during quest period, which is kind of like our homeroom. It's a bit of a struggle because they are stretched. They have work, they have church, they have other school events, but when they come, they're competitive too, and so they work hard.”

“A lot of the kids that compete in UIL compete in everything,” Bodine explained. “On my accounting team, I have a powerlifter, I have a golfer, I have five that are in band, and one has a job, so trying to get them all together is difficult. But we stay in contact and communicate. I just encourage them to come when they can, stay in contact and work on their own.”

While some students are constantly putting in the work, Bodine said she's had to make sure they achieve some semblance of balance so they're not overworking themselves.

“I think it says a lot for our kids because in UIL academics, our competitions are on Saturdays,” Bodine said. “A lot of our kids compete dur-

ing the weekday. It takes a special kid to get up at 6 a.m. or be at school at 6 a.m. on Saturday morning — particularly when it's cold — to go and compete for us when they could be staying in bed sleeping or what have you.”

Leatherman added that with the increase in team sizes — four members to six members — GISD has started to recruit students as young as freshman to join academic UIL, which has led to an increase in student participation.

“Our numbers have grown in general, but also with the addition of adding more to compete on the district level, it has really increased our numbers,” Bodine said. “So, we have about 85 kids, but we took 61 to Joshua. On the roster, between both speech and debate and then our academics, (we have) between 80 and 85. I work in CTE and we have a volleyball coach that works there and I asked how many they take to compete. They take a little around 40, so we're taking more than some of our athletic teams — probably not football — but I think we're comparable on some of the other sports, whether it be

basketball or volleyball.”

As this was an “A” invitational meet, the next step for the district is the “B” invitational meet scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 10 in Grandview, followed by the district meet Friday, April 5 at Granbury High School.

Once students advance to the state competition, they are then eligible to apply for a Texas Interscholastic League Foundation scholarship. More information can be found at [tilfoundation.org/scholarships/list/](http://tilfoundation.org/scholarships/list/).

“UIL academics has become very competitive across the state because there's so many scholarships involved,” Leatherman said. “And it really, in our opinion, definitely prepares students to be successful in college.”

“I'm on year 29 (in education) and I'd say with the exception of probably three or four years, I've been in UIL academics, so I really believe in it,” Bodine said.

For more information on UIL academics, visit [uilutexas.org/academics](http://uilutexas.org/academics) online.



COURTESY PHOTO

Granbury High School students showed off their scholarly abilities when they placed second during Joshua High School's UIL Academic Invitational Meet on Saturday, Jan. 20.

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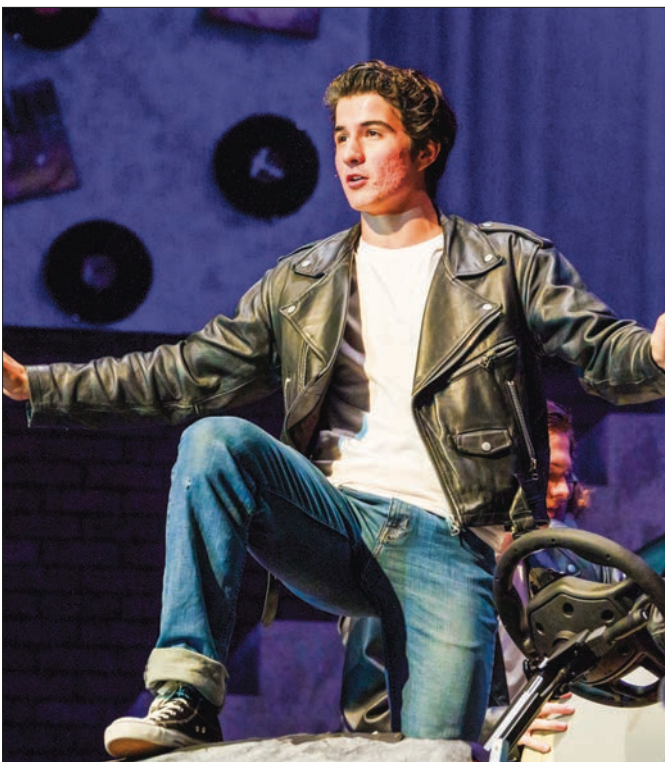
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# GHS presents Grease

PHOTOS BY EMILY NAVA | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

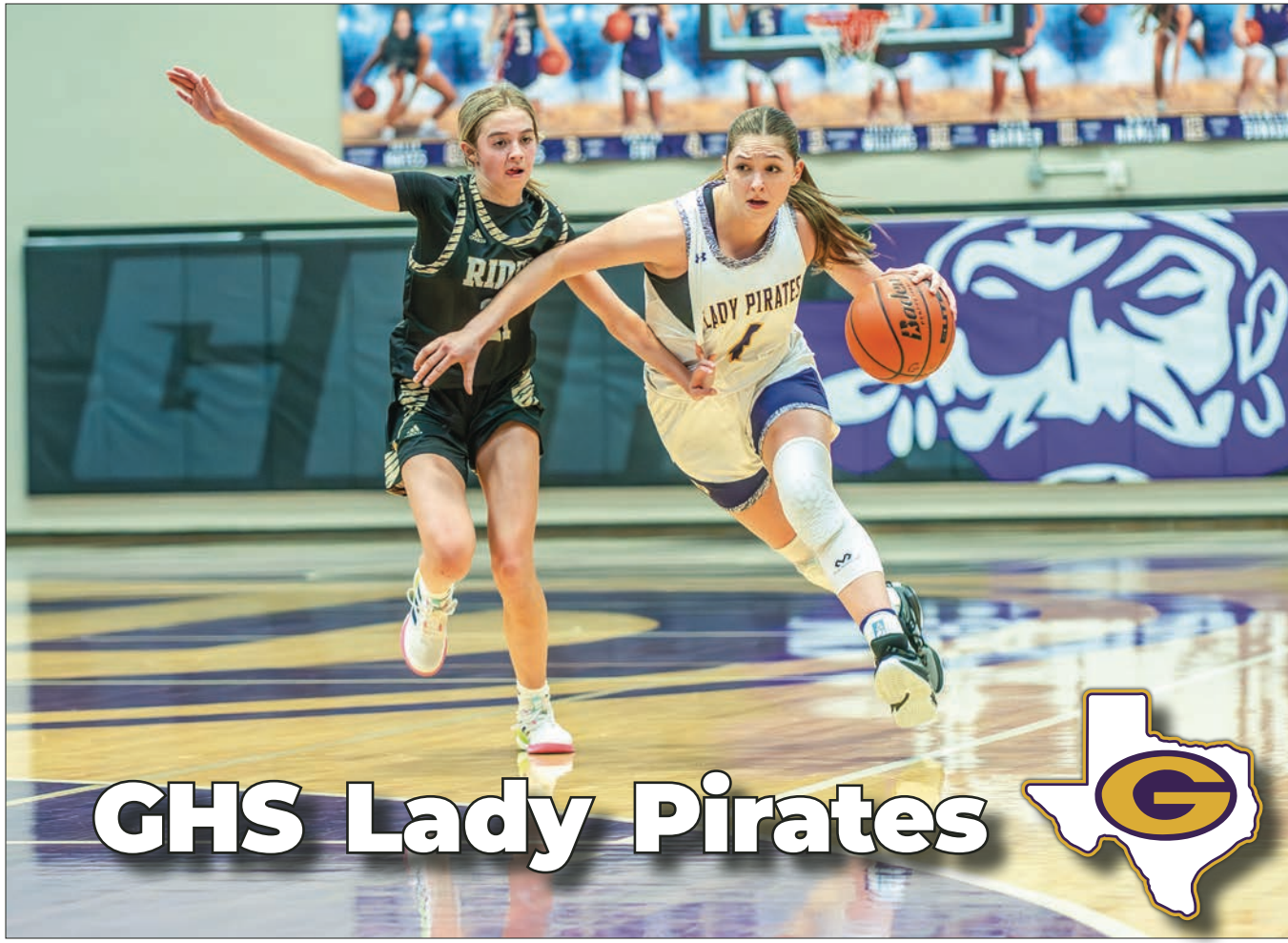
The Granbury High School Theater put on the classic story of "Grease: The Musical". The story is set at Rydell High School in the 1950s where the heart of the story focuses on the romance between hotshot Danny Zuko and a new girl in town Sandy Dumbrowski. After previously meeting in the summer, the two meet again at Rydell High. The story follows the two and their friends as they navigate the complicated worlds of cliques and outside pressure.



# Pirate Basketball

PHOTOS BY LAYTH TAYLOR | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

Both Pirates and Lady Pirates hosted the Rider Riders in Granbury Jan. 26, with the Pirates coming out on top with a score of 77-61, and the Lady Pirates coming out on top as well with a score of 50-32.





# TARLETON STATE UNIVERSITY™

## Texans roll Thunderbirds in annual “White Out Wisdom” game

Tarleton State University

STEPHENVILLE — Tarleton State Men's Basketball coasted to a 86-68 victory over the Utah Tech Trailblazers Saturday, Jan. 27 in Tarleton's annual “White Out Wisdom” game in Wisdom Gym.

The Texans (13-7 overall, 6-3 WAC) split the week with the win over the Trailblazers (7-13, 3-6). After California Baptist knocked off Stephen F. Austin earlier in the day, the Texans are tied with the Lancers for second in the WAC conference standings.

In an effort to “White Out Wisdom,” early-arriving fans

received a free white T-shirt. Fans filled the lower bowl in white in support of Texan basketball. Baseball and softball were also on hand for a pregame poster signing to highlight their upcoming season.

Jakorie Smith racked up 28 points, tying Lue Williams for the most points by a Texan in a WAC game this season. Williams found himself back in double figures for the 14th time this season posting 18. Adam Moussa helped navigate the offense, dishing out a game-high seven assists, his most as a Texan. Emmanuel Innocenti led the Texans with

seven boards with six on the defensive glass. He was the third Texan to score in double-digits with 11.

In the early minutes of the first half, the Trailblazers controlled pace, leading by as much as seven, 19-12, eight minutes into the game. The Texans started to take the momentum of the game after a fast break dunk in open court by Bubba Benjamin. Tarleton kept up the momentum with a Williams triple and seven straight points by Smith. Gaddy capped the 14-0 run with a pair of free throws, giving the Texans a 26-19 lead at the 7:42 mark.

Tarleton never looked back, taking a 46-34 lead at the break. Smith led all scorers with 16 including a trio of triples. Williams added 14 with the duo combining for 30 in the first 20 minutes. The Texans were feeling it from the floor, sinking 15 of their 30 shots, a 50% rate. Tarleton was nearly perfect at the line shooting 13-for-14 (92.9%).

The Purple and White kept the hype train rolling with a pair of triples by Innocenti and Smith to open the second half pushing the lead to 18. Tanner Christensen, who entered the game as the Trailblazers' leading scorer,

picked up two quick fouls in the beginning of each half forcing him to the bench with 16 minutes on the clock in the second half.

Smith picked up his 28th point of the game off an alley-oop from Izzy Miles to put a comfortable seal on the game, giving the Texans a 72-48 lead, their biggest of the night.

The Texans' lead never dropped below 13 in the second half, as the Purple and White closed out the victory. In the final 10 minutes, Tarleton executed a half-court offense, waiting until the final few seconds on the shot

clock in every possession. The Purple and White scored 40 in the second 20 minutes and held the Trailblazers to 34 for the second straight half.

Tarleton improved to 29-0, shooting over 50% in D1 game shooting 29-for-57, 50.9%. The Texans sunk seven triples and were nearly perfect at the line, shooting 21-for-22 a 95.5% rate. The Purple and White won the turnover battle, 22-13. Utah Tech won the battle of the boards, 34-29.

## Texans break 4 school records, multiple other top-10 performances at New Mexico Team Open

Tarleton State University

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — Tarleton State once again had a record-setting weekend with four student-athletes breaking school records, this time at the New Mexico Team Open Friday, Jan. 26-Saturday, Jan. 27 in Albuquerque.

“These young men and women had a great weekend of competition,” said interim head coach Chase Rathke. “They not only competed at high level, but they pushed their teammates and supported them throughout. It was a joy to watch them compete and to take down four school records is amazing. We are just scratching the surface and I truly believe this team has a lot more room for growth.”

David Mvundura got the school record breaking started for the Texans at the New Mexico Team Open when he broke the school record for the indoor Men's 200 meter. Mvundura ran a time of 21.42 topping Justin Raines' time of 21.57 last season.

Not long after Mvundura broke the first school record of the weekend, Hanna Dudley broke another school record. Dudley broke the indoor women's 200-meter record after posting a time of 24.41, beating the previous record of Nyla Barlow (24.53) set in 2022.

Hannah Cade got things going on day two, breaking

a school record set just one week ago by teammate Sage Barmettler. Cade set the new mark to beat in the indoor women's pole vault at 3.85 meters after Barmettler set the mark at 3.75 just a week ago.

Gabriele Tosti came out hot, breaking the indoor men's triple jump school record by almost an entire meter. Tosti jumped 15.76 meters, locking himself into the top spot, previously held by Jaden Hall (2023) with a jump of 14.94.

### FIELD

Jacob Thomas moved into second all-time in school history in the indoor men's pole vault after a vault of 4.76 meters this past weekend. He now only sits behind William Carlton (2015) who posted the school record at 4.86 meters.

Rylee Hennig is now just one spot out of holding the school record for the indoor women's high jump after clearing 1.73 meters in Albuquerque. She now has her sights set to beat the school record of 1.74 meters held by teammate Jordan Rae who set the record in 2023.

Chandler Wilson posted a vault of 3.40 meters in the indoor women's pole vault, moving her into fourth all-time in school history. At the time of her vault, she secured third place in school history before moving down

to fourth place following Hannah Cades' school record.

Sofia DeGroot now sits third in school history in the indoor women's long jump after posting a jump of 5.77 meters. She is only surpassed by Jasmine McQuirter (2020, 6.00 meters) and Euphemia Eden (2015, 6.05 meters).

Ashonti Idlebird moved into fifth all-time in school history in the indoor women's triple jump after posting a jump of 11.21 meters.

Kassidy Kirkpatrick is tied for seventh all-time in the indoor women's high jump after jumping 1.65 meters. She is tied with current teammate Jourdaire Cerenil who also jumped 1.65 meters.

Jordan Flores now sits seventh all-time in school history in the men's long jump after a jump of 6.74 meters.

Max Newell moved up to eighth all-time in school history in the men's high jump with a jump of 1.97 meters.

### TRACK

After a successful weekend out west, Morgan Lamberson now sits second all-time in school history in the indoor women's 3K with a time of 10:28.31. Aly Coughlin (2016) holds the school record with a time of 09:54.1

Amandine Estival moved into second all-time in school history in the indoor women's 60-meter with a time of 7.56. Sitting ahead of her and holding the school record is cur-



COURTESY PHOTO

Tarleton State once again had a record-setting weekend with four student-athletes breaking school records, this time at the New Mexico Team Open Friday, Jan. 26-Saturday, Jan. 27 in Albuquerque.

rent teammate Dudley (2023) who set the record at 7.48 seconds.

Konnor Hoerman now sits fourth all-time in school history in the indoor men's 60-meter hurdles after turning in a time 8.03 seconds.

Angel Contreras is now fifth all-time in school history in the indoor men's mile after crossing the finish line with a time of 4:20.32.

Aaliyah Rifort-Delem turned in a time of 57.52 seconds to move herself into fifth all-time in school history in the indoor women's 400 meter.

Lamberson notched her second top-10 finish in school history over the weekend in

the indoor women's mile, moving into sixth all-time with a time of 5:17.95.

After turning in a time of 21.80, Hugo Menin has now tied for seventh all-time in school history in the indoor men's 200-meter.

Mikayla Watson moved into seventh all-time in school history in the indoor women's 60 meter hurdles with a time of 9.05.

Sage Lancaster earned her first of two top-10 finishes in school history over the weekend, turning in a time of 10:49.58 to move into eighth all-time in school history in the indoor women's 3K.

Lancaster's second top-10 finish came when she turned

in a time of 5:23.54 to move into ninth all-time in school history in the indoor women's mile.

Nathan Franco moved himself into ninth all-time in school history in the indoor men's 60-meter hurdles after posting a time of 8.27 seconds.

Omar Mahmoud tied the Egyptian National Record for the indoor men's 60-meter hurdles after posting a time of 8.09 seconds.

The Texans will travel out west again, but this time a little closer to home as they compete in the Texas Tech Javis Scoot Invitational in Lubbock Feb. 9-10.

## Texans return to Lone Star State boasting 2-0 start after sweep of C-USA teams

Tarleton State University

LAS CRUCES, N.M. - Tarleton State picked up right where they left off in El Paso beating the Aggies for the fifth straight time.

The Purple and White never ended up on the wrong side of things when facing the Aggies in WAC play going a perfect 4-0. With New Mexico State making the move to Conference USA this past July, the Texans' meetings with the Aggies will no longer be conference matchups. The move didn't faze the Texans one bit, with the Purple and White walking away with a 5-2 victory in Las Cruces on Saturday, Jan. 27.

“It was another great win for our team today against another strong Conference USA team,” said head coach Elinne Douglas-Miron. “We knew New Mexico State was going to fight until the end and I thought we kept our

calm, played smart and used momentum to our advantage. We are excited for what's to come and can't wait to play at home next Friday.”

### DOUBLES

The Texans took the doubles point for the second straight match with a 2-1 win over the Aggies.

Martha Makantasi and Maretha Burger came out hot once again cruising to a 6-2 win over Natsuki Nishimura and Anna Pinaieva of NMSU to earn the Texans' first doubles win. This is the pair's second doubles win of the season after earning a 6-1 win over UTEP.

“Maretha and Martha played a great set of doubles and really set the tone for the day,” said Douglas-Miron.

The Purple and White clinched the doubles point with a win on court three from doubles partners Emma

Persson and Clara Sobius. The pair earned the 6-3 win over Whitney Moon and Dora Kurdi putting the Texans only three singles wins away from opening their season 2-0.

Noelia Lorca and Adeliya Mukhutdinova were defeated by Valeriia Ivanovskaia and Lisa Zhu 6-1.

### SINGLES

Burger's hot streak from the doubles side of action carried over nicely to singles action with her earning the Texans' second point of the day. She earned a 6-1, 6-1 win over Kurdi on Court 6. This is Burger's first singles win in the Purple and White.

The next Texan put the team just one point away from earning their fifth straight win over the Aggies. Noelia Lorca put away Moon 6-3 in the first set but had to fight a little more in the second set, coming out vic-

torious with a 7-6(3) win on Court 5.

Persson clinched for the Texans on Court 1 winning the fourth point of the day 6-4, 6-4 over Pinaieva. She is now 2-0 on the season after earning a 3-6, 6-3, 6-0 win over Carlotta Mencaglia of UTEP.

The fifth and final point was earned by Makantasi, a senior for the Purple and White who is off to a great start for her final campaign for the Texans. Makantasi notched her second win of the season with a 6-4, 4-6, 1-0(10-7) win over Nishimura on Court 3. She started off her season with a 6-3, 6-3 win over Zuzanna Szczepanska of UTEP.

Elsa Boisson ended up on the wrong side of things falling to Zhu 6-4, 7-6(4).

Sobius ultimately fell to Ivanovskaia 7-5, 5-7, 1-0 (10-4).



COURTESY PHOTO

“It was another great win for our team today against another strong Conference USA team,” said head coach Elinne Douglas-Miron. “We knew New Mexico State was going to fight until the end and I thought we kept our calm, played smart and used momentum to our advantage. We are excited for what's to come and can't wait to play at home next Friday.”

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# Premier receives perfect score at unannounced intruder audit

BY EDEN DUNCAN

GILBREATH

Special to the Hood County News  
eden@hcnews.com

Premier High School of Granbury received a perfect score when the Texas Education Agency conducted an unannounced intruder audit at the campus Thursday, Jan. 25. This is the first time the school has been audited.

The current TEA code requires audits at least once in a three-year period, though the audit process should be ongoing and continuous.

The surprise audit requires that all four parts of a facility are audited: interior, exterior, climate and culture and operations of documents. The aim of the audit is to identify threats, hazards and weak areas that might pose a danger to persons or property. Anything that can inter-

fere with a safe, secure and healthy learning environment should be addressed.

Though the term "audit" is employed, the process was developed by the Texas School Safety Center to self-assess a district's safety and security and provide a system to record improvement.

According to the School Safety and Security Audit Toolkit produced by the TxSSC, authorization should be sought from district ad-

ministration and it is recommended that local law enforcement be notified as well. School-based security is not notified of the impending audit. The toolkit recommends developing a plausible story to access the facility without panic.

Once auditors are on-site, they inspect the facilities both indoor and out and review the day-to-day safety and security operations and policies. The campus disci-

pline data, student and staff handbooks and other documents are part of the document review portion of the safety audit. In the case of schools that need improvement, documents from past audits and the progress plan are also examined.

"We have anticipated this audit for the past year and a half. It was a relief and a happy feeling when we passed with flying colors... as we knew we would. Our

entire staff is so dedicated to our number one goal of offering a safe learning environment for our students," said Marsha Grissom, campus director.

Premier High School is a charter school, and attendance is free. Premier must abide by the same state regulations as all public schools. For information about Premier High School, see its website at premiergranbury.com or call 817-573-0435.

# Hood County high school athletes compete for scholarships in Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo

Staff Reports

Local athletes will compete Saturday, Feb. 3, in the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo Scholarship Rodeo beginning at 1 p.m. in Will Rogers Coliseum. The champion in each event will receive a \$2,000 scholarship with a total of \$24,000 awarded.

Granbury High School student Grace Burdick will compete in walk-up goat tying. Levi Johnson from Granbury High will compete in the saddle bronc riding and chute dogging events.

Lipan resident and Gordon High School student Cara Crider will compete in breakaway and team roping.

Tolar High School student Kyley Kenley will compete in breakaway and her brother, Takota Kenley, will compete in team roping. Also from Tolar High, competing in goat tying is Rylee Rickabaugh. Her brother, J.W. Rickabaugh, will compete in chute dogging.



PHOTOS BY LAYTH TAYLOR | HOOD COUNTY NEWS  
Young Granbury Rodeo Team athlete Levi Johnson in the saddle bronc event. Competed at the first annual Granbury High School Rodeo. The rodeo took place at the Granbury Reunion Grounds Nov. 3-4, 2023

## BRAZOS RIVER AUTHORITY

# Cold water recreation is great but can be deadly



BY KYLE LEWIS

Kyle Lewis is the project manager/program coordinator at Brazos River Authority's Lake Granbury.

Sure it's February, but that doesn't mean fishing has to be on hold. Or, on those warmer days, you may just decide to take your boat out for a spin on the lake.

But remember, colder weather has particular issues when it comes to being out on the water.

Specifically, if you take a spill when you're out fishing, cold water can kill you very quickly. According to the National Safe Boating

Council, a person who falls into the water experiences increased danger when water temps are below their body temperature.

"You have one minute to adjust to the cold shock of being in the water, 10 minutes of meaningful movement to get help and get out of the water, and one hour before he/she becomes unconscious from hypothermia," according to the NSBC website.

It further explain that a sudden, unexpected fall into cold water causes an involuntary gasp reflex. Since it takes less than 1/2 cup of water in the lungs to drown, you MUST wear a life jacket — to get you past that initial shock of cold water.

With this info in mind, consider what you can do to ensure you and your passengers are able to return home after a successful day

of cold-weather recreation. Here are a few suggestions from the Safe Boating Campaign:

- Before you head out, invest in a cell phone dry bag and plan to keep it on you at all times. You'll have it, even in the water, if you are in trouble. Calling 911 will get you help when needed.
- File a float plan with someone who knows when you expect to return. You can find a free form available from the US Coast Guard Auxiliary at <https://floatplancentral.cgaux.org/>.
- Check the weather conditions and dress in layers. Bring an extra set of clothing in case you get wet.
- Don't go out alone. Any recreation is more fun with a friend, but having help if an emergency occurs can save your life.
- If you do fall into the water, try to remember not



COURTESY PHOTO

Sure it's February, but that doesn't mean fishing has to be on hold. Or, on those warmer days, you may just decide to take your boat out for a spin on the lake. zBut remember, colder weather has particular issues when it comes to being out on the water.

to panic. Regain control of your breathing and stay with the boat.

- Most importantly, be

sure to wear a life jacket. Just having it in the boat won't help you if you fall onboard.

Cold weather doesn't have

to mean an end to fishing or water recreation as long as you plan ahead and make smart decisions.

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SUDOKU

Solution for the puzzle on Jan. 27 (Puzzle 67).

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

Puzzle by websudoku.com

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

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HOOD COUNTY OUTDOORS

# Swimbait — A good choice for warmer winter days



**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.

This week, the temperatures are warming and the water temperatures will be getting close to the 50 degree mark. With the warming water, it may be prudent to start imparting a little more action on your presentation. On those warmer days, the swimbait may be a good option. If a cold front moves back in and cools everything back down again, going back to the dead sticking may still be on order as well. Regardless, be prepared for either option. Swimbaiting has been around for a long time, and they have reemerged as a popular bait option. Even the black bass anglers are using them more.

With water temperatures in the 40s and the baitfish huddled in those deeper holes, a slow presentation is preferred; it's typically called "dead sticking." When

the water warms and a little more action is needed, a swimbait may be a great choice. You can "dead stick" a swimbait using the trolling motor and the tail will move back and forth as you slowly move the bait through the area you wish to fish (also called strolling). The swimbait is also a great option when the fish start surfacing. The swimbait can be tossed and retrieved through the feeding fish mimicking a fleeing shad.

Many years back Paul Elias used an Alabama rig with several swimbait on his umbrella rig to catch over 100 pounds of fish to win a major tournament in the southeast. Another example of swimbaiting used for black bass angling that comes to mind are the California anglers fishing for trophy fish using extremely large swimbait.

There are many options

when it comes to swimbait, whether you use them individually or on an umbrella rig to mimic a school of baitfish. There are pre-made baits like the Storm Wildeye that has the plastic bait molded on a weighted jig head, or you can use a soft plastic body and thread it on a jig head of your choice.

Popular colors are glow, pearl and/or chartreuse or a combination of all three. These type swimbait are good to use on a variety of species including sand bass, striped bass and large-mouth bass.

Present your bait at the depth where most of the baitfish are located and hold on. If the fish are pushing bait to the surface and you are trying to catch fish "under the birds," a good winter method is to cast into the schooling fish and let your bait fall through the feeding fish. Each day is a new adventure and you might have to experiment on how the fish want it. Some days a slow steady retrieve is desired. Other days they may want it moving fast.



COURTESY PHOTO

Swimbaiting has been around for a long time, and they have reemerged as a popular bait option. Even the black bass anglers are using them more.



COURTESY PHOTO

Crappie catches are good on small jigs worked around submerged timber mid lake (Waters Edge to Bentwater).

## HOOD COUNTY FISHING REPORT

Lake Granbury is full and the water temperatures are in the middle 40s and warming. The best action reported is the big catfish (blues and yellows) biting on cut shad on the upper ends. Crappie catches are good on small jigs worked around submerged timber mid lake (Waters Edge to Bentwater). Striped and white bass are slow to fair on the upper ends close to the river channel. Best reports continue to come from in town to the Peninsula. Largemouth bass are slow to fair to 7 pounds on soft plastics worked near main lake points and deeper docks. Some good reports continue to come from the river above Granbury.

Comanche Creek (formerly Squaw Creek) black bass continue to be good to excellent in numbers with an occasional bigger fish to 8 pounds. Drop shot or Texas-rigged soft plastics are popular. Bass anglers continue to flock to this warm water fishery this winter. Limits of eater-sized channel catfish continue to be caught on prepared baits. I do not have a Tilapia report.

# HcN Junior

## NATIONAL Take your kids to the LIBRARY DAY February 3rd 2024

National Take Your Child to the Library Day, observed on February 3rd, is a fantastic celebration that invites families to embark on literary adventures together. Libraries are magical places filled with endless stories, exciting worlds, and the promise of discovery.

On this special day, parents and caregivers can create lasting memories with their children by taking them to the library. Libraries are like treasure troves, offering a diverse collection of books that cater to every interest and imagination. Kids can ex-

plore picture books, chapter books, and even discover new friends through the characters they meet in stories.

Libraries often host special events on this day, such as storytime sessions, puppet shows, or interactive activities. It's an opportunity for kids to engage with literature in a fun and interactive way, fostering a love for reading and learning. Many libraries also provide craft stations, allowing

children to unleash their creativity and make bookmarks or crafts related to their favorite books.

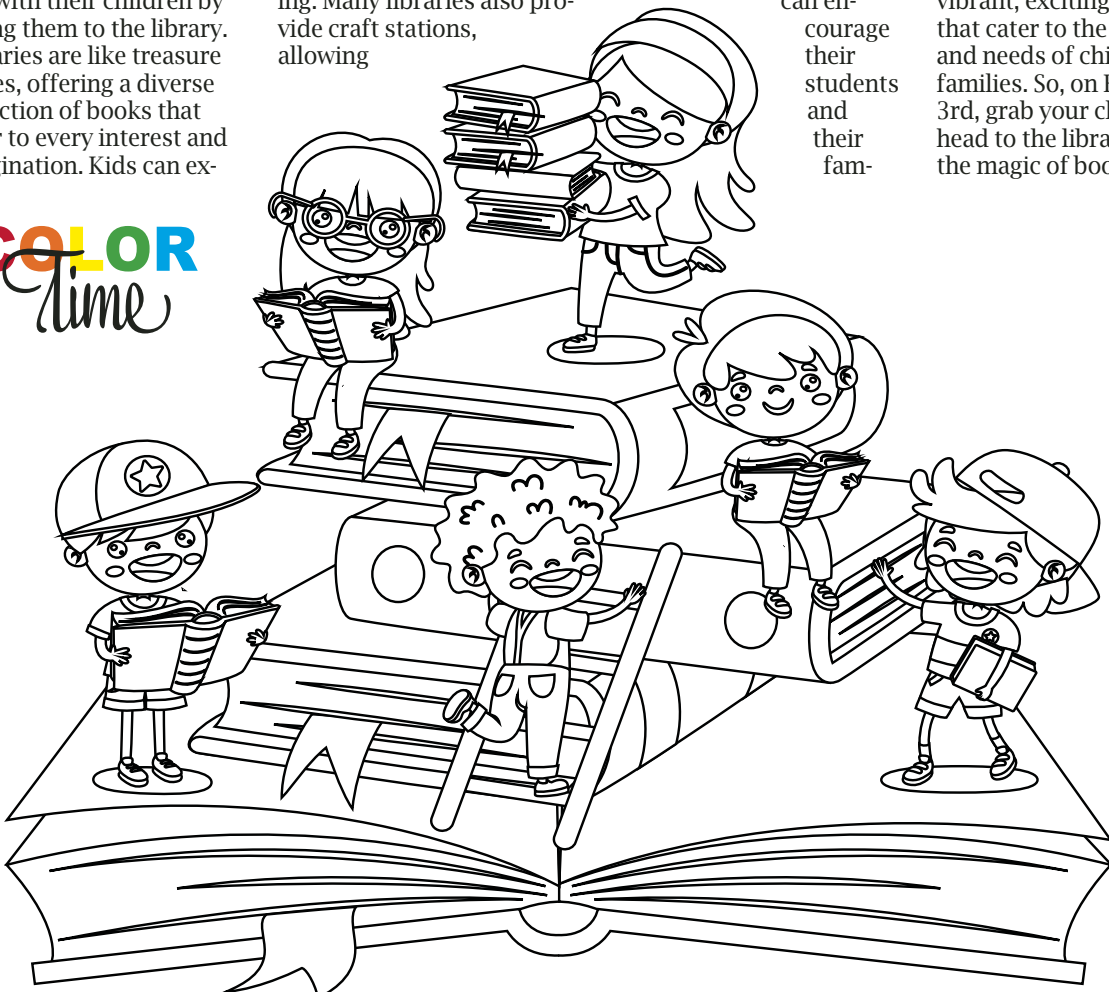
Parents can use this day to instill the habit of reading in their children. By introducing kids to the joy of reading, they not only enhance their literacy skills but also open doors to new worlds, ideas, and possibilities.

Teachers can encourage their students and their families

to participate in National Take Your Child to the Library Day. It's a chance to reinforce the importance of literacy outside the classroom and inspire a lifelong love for books.

In the digital age, libraries are evolving, offering e-books, audiobooks, and online resources. National Take Your Child to the Library Day is a reminder that libraries remain vibrant, exciting places that cater to the interests and needs of children and families. So, on February 3rd, grab your child's hand, head to the library, and let the magic of books unfold!

### COLOR time



# Did You Know?

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### Library

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

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

#### Word Bank

- 1. pages
- 2. reference
- 3. librarian
- 4. desktop
- 5. quiet
- 6. read
- 7. reading
- 8. bookshelf
- 9. computer
- 10. lamptables

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# Teacher of the Month

December • January



**April Soos**  
Acton Elementary Teacher



**Hannah Stubby**  
Acton Elementary Teacher



**Mary Stennett**  
Brawner Elementary Teacher



**Reagan Johnson**  
Brawner Elementary Teacher



**Brie Viles**  
Mambrino Elementary Teacher



**Lyndi Wells**  
Mambrino Elementary Teacher







## A NIGHT OF PIANO PLAYING



COURTESY PHOTO

Pete's Dueling Piano Bar will be making a special trip to support the efforts of the nonprofit, United Way of Hood County.

### Staff Reports

United Way of Hood County is preparing for a night of piano playing March 24 at the Granbury Conference Center, 621 E. Pearl St., to raise money for the nonprofit through Pete's Dueling Piano Bar.

For the second time, United Way of Hood County will host Pete's to raise funds to support its efforts to steer Hood County residents toward a better tomorrow through empowering academic excellence, fueling financial stability, nurturing holistic well-being, building resilience and strengthening capacity.

Texas' top entertainers will take the stage and perform on two baby grand pianos in two-person rotations every hour. All four performers will join together on stage throughout the evening to bring more songs with more instruments and entertainment. The players take requests and perform the latest and greatest music to make it a performance for everyone

to enjoy.

Pete's originated as a one-man band in Austin on 6th Street back in 1992. Now, after 30 years in the business, Pete is a seasoned party-starter whose sing-along experience has grown into a national phenomenon known for getting fired up night after night.

Pete is known as an "entertainment enigma" who prefers to keep a low profile. What's most important to him is that everyone feels 100% themselves when listening to the music. Guests are en-



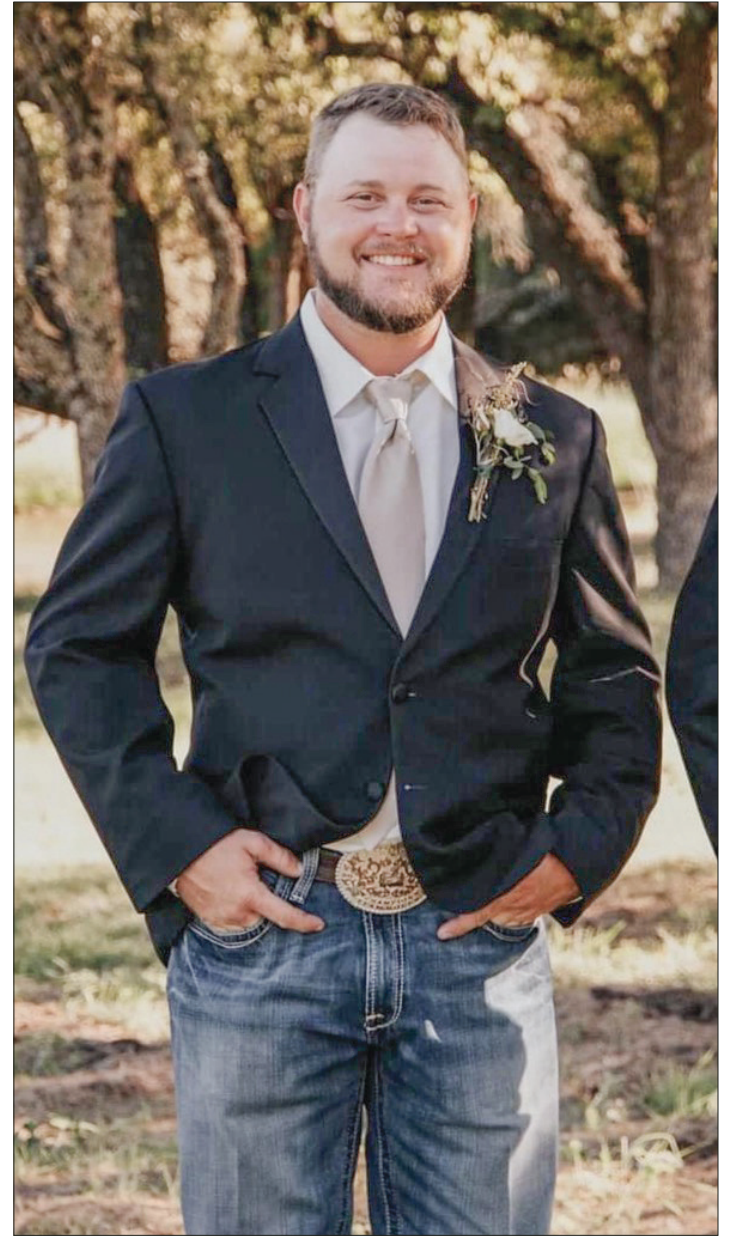
**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**MARCH 23**  
**6:00 PM**  
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couraged to sing, scream and dance their heart out.

"We are most looking forward to bringing to light what we are currently doing and encouraging our community to get involved," United Way Executive Director Crystal Moore said. "It's always good to see the community come and support our agency. We do anticipate selling

out."

The event will also feature bar-type food and a cash bar. The event will begin at 6 p.m. with piano performances happening from 7 to 10 p.m. Individual tickets will go on sale Feb. 12. Table sponsorships are available via United Way of Hood County's website at [unitedwayofhoodcounty.kinsta.cloud/petes-piano/](http://unitedwayofhoodcounty.kinsta.cloud/petes-piano/). Open seating tickets will be \$100 until sold out and can be found on the website.



COURTESY OF JARED HICKEY

Jared Hickey of Granbury, TX.

## From hay bales to Hollywood: The unlikely journey of Jared Hickey

BY MICKY SHEARON

Special to the Hood County News

In the heart of Hood County, where the fields stretch as far as the eye can see and the community ties are as strong as the Texas sun, lives Jared Hickey, a 32-year-old Granbury native whose life story reads like a script from a feel-good Hollywood movie.

Jared's roots in Granbury run deep. Born in Fort Worth but raised his entire life in Granbury, he embodies the spirit of this close-knit community. A graduate of Granbury High School in 2010, Jared's early life was marked by the familiar rhythms of small-town Texas life — playing baseball, riding horses, hunting and fishing. "Growing up in Granbury was like living in a world where everyone's your neighbor. It's a place where the days are long, but the years are short," Jared recalls.

His journey took an unexpected turn after a year playing baseball at Ranger Junior College. An injury cut short his athletic aspirations, leading him to work as an insurance adjuster and assist in his family's land surveying business. But Jared's

PLEASE SEE **HICKEY** | C3



## Texas Democratic Women of Hood County donate items to commemorate MLK Day

### Staff Reports

This year, members of the Texas Democratic Women of Hood County delivered donations to New Beginnings Resale Shop to commemorate Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, which was recognized Monday, Jan. 15. The sale of items at New Beginnings helps to fund Mission Granbury's Ada Carey Shelter for Women and Children, the only shelter of its kind in the area.

The Texas Democratic Women of Hood County continuously support the Ada Carey Shelter by bringing monthly donations of toiletries and sanitary needs for women in need. Last year they decided to bring clothing and small appliances to New Beginnings, as well. This year is the second year the TDW has visited the resale

shop with donations for the Martin Luther King Day of Service.

MLK Day honors the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who wanted to be remembered for what he had done in his lifetime to help others rather than his degrees, his honors or his speeches. In keeping with King's desire, the members of TDW decided to honor King's memory by contributing to an organization which supports other women.

"We, the members of Texas Democratic Women of Hood County, will continue to reach out and help other women by sharing resources with them. Like Dr. King, we take pride in giving our time and sharing our resources to help make our community a better place to live," said Rose Simpson, a member of the TDW Hood County.

COURTESY PHOTO

Pictured from left are Rose Simpson, Irene Smith, Ann Schuessler, Bernie Mull, Hannah Bohm and Sherry Johnson, President.



COURTESY PHOTOS

In 2020, the top five most common cancer areas in the body for adults ages 50 or older in Texas were the breast, prostate, lung and bronchus, colon and rectum, and kidney and renal pelvis, according to the TCR.

# Texas Health and Human Services highlights World Cancer Day Feb. 4

## Staff Reports

Texas Health and Human Services recognizes World Cancer Day Sunday, Feb. 4. World Cancer Day is a day to raise awareness and encourage the prevention, detection and treatment of cancer.

The Paris Charter established World Cancer Day in 2000 to promote research for cures and prevention, improve patient services and mobilize the global community against cancer. One of every five deaths in the U.S. is due to cancer, making it the second-leading cause of death, exceeded only by heart disease. According to the Texas Cancer Registry (TCR), 99,642 adults aged 50 and older were diagnosed with cancer in 2020. This is a decrease from the 108,726 adults in that age group who were diagnosed in 2019. Among those older adults diagnosed with cancer in 2020, 46,433 were female and 53,209 were male.

In 2020, the top five most common cancer areas in the body for adults ages 50 or older in Texas were the breast, prostate, lung and bronchus, colon and rectum, and kidney and renal pelvis, according to the TCR.

“Age is the most impor-

tant risk factor for cancer,” Ramona Magid, chief prevention officer with the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, said. “Healthy lifestyle choices can possibly reduce the chances of getting cancer. Higher risk lifestyle choices include smoking, alcohol consumption, physical inactivity, obesity and eating an unhealthy diet. It’s important to consult with a health care provider to determine the appropriate cancer screening tests based on individual health history and risk factors.”

The most important cancer risk factors that can be changed are body weight, diet and physical activity. At least 18% of all cancers diagnosed in the U.S. are related to preventable conditions like excess body weight, physical inactivity, excess alcohol consumption and poor nutrition.

Avoiding tobacco products, staying at a recommended weight, being active throughout life and eating



The most important cancer risk factors that can be changed are body weight, diet and physical activity.

a nutritious diet can greatly reduce the risk of developing or dying from cancer. These same behaviors are also linked with a lower risk of heart disease and diabetes.

The Texas Health and Human Services Texercise

statewide health and wellness initiative encourages people and communities to adopt healthy lifestyle habits. People are encouraged to download the “Texercise” Health Chart using the Aging Well Resources Order Form to track their health

information.

The Texas Department of State Health Services also provides cancer resources for patients, caregivers and families.

Texas Health and Human Services provides a variety of social services to millions

of people throughout the state. Once a month, Texas Health and Human Services writes and distributes articles focusing on topics about aging with the intent to prepare aging Texans for systems and issues they may encounter.

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## DAYDREAM ACHIEVER



COURTESY PHOTO

The Rhine River is a first-time river cruiser's perfect experience. Sailing through France, Germany, Netherlands and Switzerland, the Rhine River is filled with beauty and old-world locations. In Berlin, Germany The Rhine River flows past the Bode Museum which houses masterpieces such as Donatello's 'Pazzi Madonna' and Antonio Canova's 'Dancer'.

**BY ZAC WILSON**

Zac Wilson is a Certified Travel Advisor, ASTA Verified Travel Advisor, CLIA Master Cruise Counselor, and owner of Daydream Vacations Travel Agency in Granbury. [www.DaydreamVacations.com](http://www.DaydreamVacations.com)

**R**iver cruising takes you through the heart of your destination. It is truly one of the best ways to explore and experience everything your destination has to offer. You will find yourself immersed in the local culture, cuisine and natural beauty. It's a hassle-free experience from start to finish. And it's relaxing and luxurious. I can't think of a better way to travel. You unpack once, the accommodations are 5-star luxury, the sommelier pairs the wine with the chef's cuisine, the menu is locally sourced celebrating the tastes of the local culture, the tours and activities bring the region to life, and you sail through the most beautiful landscapes. The only questions you need to ask are "where do river cruises sail" and "when should I go"?

The Rhine River is a first-time river cruiser's perfect experience. Sailing through France, Germany, Netherlands and Switzerland, the Rhine River

is filled with beauty and old-world locations. There is a sense of going back in time as you stop in small towns, and awe and wonder as you sail through the Rhine River

Gorge filled with castles, old keeps and ruins.

The Danube River is perfect for lovers of history, culture and art. Sailing through Budapest, Slovakia, Vienna, and more, you will experience UNESCO Heritage sites, St. Stephens Cathedral, Vienna Opera House, the Castle District and St. Matthias Church in Budapest, an excursion to Salzburg, and incredible local wines from the famous Wachau valley.

Wine lovers will celebrate sailing through the famous regions of France. Experience Bordeaux, Champagne and vineyard tours. Explore a truffle farm, enjoy a Van Gogh walking tour, and experience a tasting tour in France's culinary capitol city of Lyon. Explore Avignon, Vienne, Lyon, Macon, Tournus, Chalon-sur-Saône and Dijon.

You can also find river cruise adventures in Portugal on the Douro, Egypt on the Nile, African safaris and wildlife cruises on the Chobe, Columbia on the Magdalena, and Cambodia Vietnam on the Mekong.

There are several river cruises in the United States as well. You will find many historical cruises on the Mississippi river and its tributaries. The river cruises on the Columbia and Snake rivers in the Pacific Northwest are filled with beauty as you follow the path of Lewis and Clark.

The river cruising season in Europe begins in late March and goes into early December. The best weather and experience overall is often between May and September.

There are two special times to experience a river cruise in Europe. The first is tulip season. Tulip sailings sell out a year or more in advance due to popularity and a limited time frame. Arrive a few days before your sailing and fully experience Amsterdam, and then enjoy an itinerary exploring the Netherlands and Belgium.

Late November through early December hosts the famous Christmas Markets Cruises. Experience the deep-rooted holiday traditions of Europe and be overwhelmed by the magic of

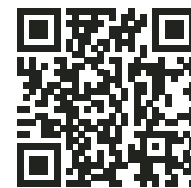
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the holidays. Find enchantment at the Capital of Noel in Strasbourg, warm up with a mug of steamy gluhwein, and see the world's largest advent calendar. Dress warmly for this special win-

ter sailing. There are many details involved in planning and booking your perfect river cruise. Be sure to use a professional travel advisor who specializes in river cruising!

## BOOK REVIEW

*Living in the underbelly of society is a struggle***BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEEYER**

It's a hand-to-mouth existence; you never know where your next meal will come from, unless it's from a warden or a trusty. You never truly know who you're sleeping against or where your next ten bucks'll come from. There's no privacy living in the underbelly. You can lose your soul there. And in "Harbor Lights," a new short-story collection by James Lee Burke, you could also lose your life.

No matter what the chore, Aaron Broussard loved doing things with his father: fishing, boating, traveling, lurching, spotting dead men in the water along the Louisiana coast. James Broussard knew why those men were floating: it was 1942, and a German submarine was nearby. He knew it. In the first story, that which gives this book its title, the FBI knew it, too, and they



COURTESY PHOTO BY FRANK VERONSKY  
Author James Lee Burke

aimed to keep Broussard quiet.

Beneath Montana's Flathead Lake lies an ancient highway that folks say you can see if you look hard. Running from the law, R.B. Ruger stood on the banks of the lake and saw the road dotted with headlights like stars in a dark Western sky. In "Going Across Jordan," he never thought anyone'd need to dive down and follow it.

Mind yourself and don't go anywhere near the Red Hat House out near Camp

A, where men suffer horribly. Lead Belly was out there once, and Arlen thinks about that, and about how he just wants to be left alone with his Gibson to serve his time. But in "Big Midnight Special," there'll be a prison boxing match soon, and Arlen will put on gloves - or else.

All Francis wanted to do was go home. Home from Vietnam, home and away from his memories, home in the middle of a storm with his son, but his truck broke down outside a two-bit bar in the middle of nowhere. He'd seen some things in battle that he'd sooner forget, but in "A Distant War," nothing compared to the fight with his past.

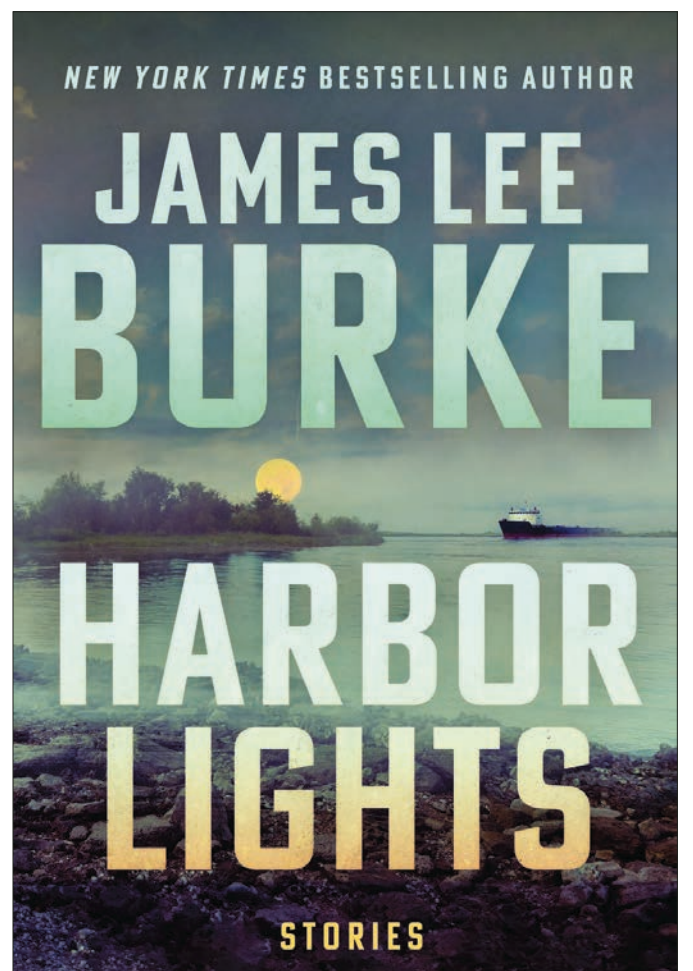
No matter what the season, it often feels like you don't have a spare minute to enjoy a book. But twenty minutes now, an hour later, and you'll finish "Harbor Lights" in no time.

You'll have no problem at all entering the tattered

world inside this book, or diving into the addicting tales. Author James Lee Burke encapsulates his storytelling prowess in smaller bites that can be taken alone or as a whole. Put them end-to-end, though, and you'll see that the tales are linked, subtly and loudly, with turns of phrase, names and places that wink at readers and keep the stories tied. You'll have fun finding those little breadcrumbs, even as you're busy turning pages and trying to keep your hair from standing on end.

This short-story collection is a great introduction to Burke's work, if you're new. If you're a fan already, what are you waiting for? "Harbor Lights" is waiting. Missing it is something you won't be able to stomach.

COURTESY PHOTO  
"Harbor Lights: Stories" by James Lee Burke C.2024, ATLANTIC MONTHLY PRESS, \$27.00, 358 PAGES





VETERANS VOICE



COURTESY PHOTO

# Start planning and connecting

Creating a binder of important papers such as marriage license, divorce decrees, birth certificates, military discharge, life insurance policies, passwords, bank account information, list of assets, the name and contact information for accountants, attorneys and physicians, a list of medications, a copy of the will, the name of the individual they will appoint as fiduciary if they are unable to handle their affairs, plans for burial, a copy of the most recent annual VA Tax Abatement letter if already receiving VA benefits, most recent bank statements, investment statements, and yearly social security statement will save a family a lot of time when trying to get benefits for the veteran/surviving spouse if something should happen.

BY LINDA MALLON



Linda Mallon, a retired Army master sergeant, found her niche working with veterans and their families in Granbury. She is a former claims administrator for Blue Shield of New Jersey and later senior personnel sergeant, taking care of soldiers' careers for more than 20 years. linda.mallon@co.hood.tx.us | 817-579-3292.

I've written several articles on Pension Aid and Attendance benefits and the documents we need in order to determine eligibility, but we have so many newcomers to our community, I feel the need to put some important information out there as an introduction and reminder.

When wartime veterans or surviving spouses need the assistance of a home care agent or assisted living facility, there are specific supporting documents needed in order to file a claim for Pension Aid

and Attendance benefits to help with those expenses. Children of ill or aging parents often find themselves scrambling around at the last minute trying to find information to get benefits help and are unable to gather

everything they need. If we have to request the DD 214 or equivalent discharge papers, it could take National Archives up to 90 days or more to get that information to the Veteran if they are not already enrolled in the VA Health Care System.

Creating a binder of important papers such as marriage license, divorce decrees, birth certificates, military discharge, life insurance policies, passwords, bank account information, list of assets, the name and contact information for accountants, attorneys and physicians, a list of medications, a copy of the will, the name of the individual they will appoint as fiduciary if they are unable to handle their affairs, plans for burial, a copy of the most recent annual VA Tax Abatement

letter if already receiving VA benefits, most recent bank statements, investment statements, and yearly social security statement will save a family a lot of time when trying to get benefits for the veteran/surviving spouse if something should happen. Updating this binder monthly as new information comes in will help with evaluating whether a claimant is qualified for VA Pension benefits. Safeguarding that information will ensure only the individuals who are entrusted to handle their affairs know where to find it.

Veterans should talk to their family about where they want to live if they are unable to manage their home or live alone and start looking at places and resources before they need it. If living with family members is

an option, arrange family meetings often to discuss options and challenges. Understanding that unforeseen things happen and last-minute decisions have to be made, preparing a binder is very helpful in ensuring that things happen in an expeditious manner. Those without family should start thinking about who they trust to assist them with managing their affairs if they are hospitalized or in a rehab facility, and who will handle their final arrangements. These are sometimes difficult conversations but the most significant result is often peace of mind.

January is usually a time for New Year's resolutions, so in addition to planning for the future, joining one of our local service organizations — The Veterans

of Foreign Wars VFW Post 7835, Disabled American Veterans DAV Chapter 238, American Legion Posts 278 and 491, The Marine Corp League, Blue Star Mothers or Granbury Military Officers Association of America — is a great way to stay connected with the community for support and stay up-to-date on resources and benefits available to veterans and their families. For more information on these organizations or to apply for membership, contact the Hood and Somervell County Veterans Service office here in the Hood County Courthouse on the Square in beautiful downtown Granbury. Happy New Year y'all! Let's start the year prepared and connected.

PECAN PLANTATION BITS

## New member orientation welcomes new residents to Pecan Plantation

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. dianedlong@yahoo.com | 817-579-9360

Pecan's next new member orientation happens today, Saturday, Feb. 3, at 10 a.m. in the Terrace Room

of the clubhouse. New residents, as well as long time Pecaners, who would like to learn more concerning the

amenities of our neighborhood are invited to attend.

PAINT PARTY

Today, Saturday, Feb. 3 brings a paint party for little artists ages 5 to 14 at the PAC. "Hearts, Highlanders, and Painting" will be the theme for the day when Pecan resident and artist Heidi Easily leads participants to complete their work on canvas.

ACTIVE AUXILIARY

The Pecan Plantation Volunteer Fire Department/Emergency Medical Service Auxiliary is seeking raffle prize donations for the 2024 Auxiliary Golf Tournament slated for Saturday, April 20 on Pecan's golf course.

Because of the earlier tournament date this year, Auxiliary members would like to have commitments

from raffle prize donors by Wednesday, Feb. 28 so raffle ticket sales may commence Friday, March 1. A significant part of the funds raised in connection with the golf tournament each year comes from raffle ticket sales.

For more information about the golf tournament or donating a prize, call or text Julie Logan (727-252-3702) or Seleta Webster

(806-646-0656), and to volunteer for any of these events, email Seleta at seleta.chere@gmail.com.

The Auxiliary meets collectively again Monday, Feb. 5 with a potluck dinner at 6 p.m., and the meeting begins at 7 in the Charlie Lee Memorial EMS Building on Monticello Drive. All ladies and gentlemen interested in

PLEASE SEE **PECAN** | C8

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## PECAN

FROM PAGE C7

this group that fundraises for our emergency service personnel are invited to attend.

### SING SONG

The very popular "Let's Karaoke Pecan" returns with two different group offerings. "Let's Karaoke Pecan I" begins Tuesday, Feb. 6 with meetings each following Tuesday through March 5 and graduation Saturday, March 9. This class is for beginners and will teach proper vocal techniques, warm-ups and the art of finding vocal range.

"Let's Karaoke Pecan II" is a continuation of the first class with more intense instruction, one-on-one time of training and more difficult material for singing.

Participants should complete the first class before beginning the second part, which begins Tuesday, April 9, holds its last class May 7, and graduation comes May 11.

Professional singer and vocal instructor (and Pecan resident!) Rebecca Faiola will lead both classes, and they will meet at the PAC from 7 to 8 p.m. Call Rebecca with questions (510-326-3553) or the PAC to sign up: 817-573-7952.

### HOLIDAY GAME

Valentine's Day Bingo is on the calendar for Tuesday, Feb. 6 with an Italian buffet dinner being served at 5:30 p.m. and bingo play beginning at 6:30. The reservation line is now open: 817-573-2641.

### GAME TIME

First Wednesday Bridge

looks forward to its next gathering Wednesday, Feb. 7. Annual dues for members are \$20, and guests are welcome. Contact Vicki Leggett for complete information on the group: vleggett19@gmail.com.

### SWEET OUTING

Pecan's annual "Daddy Daughter Ball" returns Saturday, Feb. 10 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the PAC. The event promises to be a special time for fathers and daughters filled with music, ballroom dance instruction, refreshments and a photo opportunity. Formal attire is welcome but not required. RSVP to secure a spot: 817-573-7952.

### BREAKFAST CLUB

Pecan's Breakfast Club will gather again Wednesday, Feb. 14 with breakfast service beginning

at 8 a.m. and the program at 9 a.m. Attendees are in for a real treat when Lance Tahmahkera, the great-grandson of Quanah Parker, the "Last Comanche Chief," will address the crowd. Reservations are necessary and are due by 12 noon Tuesday, Feb. 12: 817-573-2641.

### 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. Walkers are also welcome. Donors will receive a free round of golf at the Nutcracker (with the pur-

chase of one round) as well as a free cup of coffee at Deja Brew.

### SWEETEST DAY

Pecaners will enjoy an evening with a Jazz Age theme and Roaring 1920s ambiance for Valentine's Day Wednesday, Feb. 14. Folks who would like to attend should make reservations as attendance is limited to 75 couples: 817-573-2641.

The night promises to be one revolving around flappers, Jay Gatsby and prohibition, but partygoers need not worry: folks who know the password to "Daisy Fay's Speakeasy" will enjoy music, dancing, and of course, bathtub gin.

The entertainment committee and clubhouse staff are preparing a fabulous night of food and entertainment, and attendees are encouraged to don flapper

dresses and fedoras for the event. Festivities begin at 6 p.m. with a social hour and jazz followed by dinner at 6:30.

### TOWN HALL

Pecan's board of directors and management team will host a joint town hall gathering Thursday, Feb. 15 at 6 p.m. in the clubhouse ballroom. Topics on the agenda are ballot items for the March election.

### REMODEL WORK

The PAC gymnasium has received a new and much needed floor for all the activities that room hosts, and the gym's grand "re-opening" came last week. Pecaners are welcome to stop by and see the newly finished work.

## GOOD FOR HOOD

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# BEST OF BUSINESS AWARDS BANQUET

# granbury CHAMBER

The Granbury Chamber of Commerce's annual Best of Business Awards Banquet is a time for reflections on the accomplishments of the past year, but also an opportunity to gaze ahead into the new year. It's a chance to say 'thank you' to our previous board chair, Dr. Jeremy Glenn, Superintendent of Granbury Independent School District, as well as set the course for new leadership with incoming chair, Steven Kuban. Throughout 2023, Dr. Glenn has provided exceptional leadership and vision while guiding the chamber through new programming, annual special events and ongoing luncheons, breakfasts and business development seminars. His commitment to the chamber and community has been nothing short of amazing, and the banquet is our way of thanking him for his tireless efforts.

Steven Kuban takes the helm at a time when the chamber has worked very hard to preplan and anticipate growth opportunities. The chamber's annual 4th of July festivities will celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2024 and plans are already underway to make this year a special salute... as only Granbury can! The chamber's committee chairs from Amba-



**Brian Bondy, IOM**  
President and CEO  
Granbury Chamber of Commerce

sadors and Women in Business to Rising Leaders and Best of Business Awards Banquet are ready to provide leadership, energy, enthusiasm and direction for the coming year.

At its annual board planning session in October, the board identified and agreed to champion several goals for the coming year. These represent areas from operations to marketing and are designed to engage the board and membership of the chamber. All are set up to constantly be updated throughout the coming year. From studying the impact of providing employee benefits and creating a testimonial campaign to promote chamber membership, to studying the long-term office needs for the chamber and focusing on membership retention and growth, the board has taken a huge step to elevate the cham-

ber... not only here in Granbury and Hood County, but also across the DFW Metroplex.

The Granbury Chamber of Commerce continues to refine and improve member benefits and services. Together with several assisting vendors, the chamber's advertising opportunities for members continue to expand whether on the website, Area Guide, or annual map of Granbury and Hood County. Member businesses and organizations have a wide array of options to help their businesses grow and get better.

Finally, the chamber has an excellent, professional staff that is committed to providing the best member and 'not yet member' services. Brian, Holly, Maegan and Tisa are as much a part of the community as our board and committee members. If you've never been a member of your local chamber of commerce, now is a great time to invest in yourself and your business. If you've previously been a member, maybe now is the time to give us another opportunity. Thank you to all of our current members for your membership and support of the chamber... it's going to be a great year!

## The Granbury Chamber of Commerce Leading through serving local businesses and the community

BY EDEN DUNCAN GILBREATH  
Special to the Hood County News  
eden@hcnews.com

The chamber of commerce can trace its history back to 1599 when the first organization of businesses was recorded. Originally the idea was to join forces for businesses to protect themselves from marauders and common enemies.

Spreading across Germany and the rest of Europe, the chamber as an organized group was more fully realized in the United States.

In the United States, the oldest chamber is the New York State Chamber formed in 1768 and chartered by King George III in 1770, making the chamber on this continent older than the nation itself.

Since its birth in 1952 the Granbury Chamber of Commerce has grown to boast over 2,000 members and is one of the most robust chambers within the larger Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

The Granbury Chamber of Commerce is committed to the strength of Granbury business and healthy growth for the area. Through partnerships with the city of Granbury and various Hood County groups the Granbury Chamber of Commerce works actively to improve the economic welfare of the community.

Community pride is increased through chamber involvement in local programs, charities, and education. Granbury's Hometown 4th of July Festival is a prime example of this. The chamber-sponsored event has become one of the best known in the state of Texas for Independence Day festivities. Not only are the 4th of July festivities important to build community but they naturally benefit businesses in Hood County with added revenue.

Chamber membership aids businesses in many tangible ways. First is the network of people who have similar goals and concerns. Membership allows businesses to partner with one another to increase engagement with citizens concerning all matters of commerce.

Granbury chamber events number over 50 a year. At the most popular member event — Coffee and Connections — members fraternize with others in a relaxed atmosphere over a cup of coffee, trading tips and business cards as they visit.

The Women in Business events are well-attended functions where women leaders give presentations to local businesswomen on subjects like increased sales, developing new marketing strategies and learning new ways of personal development as they network and support other women in business.

Business development events vary in topics as both local and regional experts bring educational opportunities to business leaders in every field. The Young Professionals Program specifically endeavors to meet the needs of those under age 30, with monthly events for this purpose.

Leaders in government luncheons and candidate forums allow members time to connect with leaders and elected officials at the city, county, state and national level.

Ribbon cutting events not only celebrate membership in the chamber, but serve as an announcement to the community as well as another chance for businesses to support one another.

Often citizens — when looking for reputable companies — will trust the recommendation of the chamber. Only chamber members are included in the print and online directories; this benefits members with referrals both by the chamber and by other chamber businesses as well.

Annually, members celebrate another successful year with the Awards Gala, where awards are given for the Small Business of the Year and the Large Business of the Year, in addition to the Women in Business award, the Rising Leader award, the Ambassador of the Year award and the Howard Clemmons Distinguished Service award.

The Granbury Chamber of Commerce looks forward to continued growth both in terms of membership and involvement in the community.

"The Granbury Chamber continues to be a dynamic, member-centric organization, and our program work for 2024 approved by the board of directors will bear this out!" said Brian Bondy, president and CEO of the Granbury Chamber of Commerce.

For information on how to join the Granbury Chamber of Commerce call 817-573-1622 or email info@granburychamber.com. Or visit the chamber offices at 3408 E. U.S. Hwy. 377, Granbury.



PHOTOS BY MARY VINSON | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

Ribbon cutting events not only celebrate membership in the chamber, but serve as an announcement to the community as well as another chance for businesses to support one another. The Granbury Regional Airport (above) and Radiance Wellness Medi-Spa (below) celebrated ribbon cuttings in 2023.



## AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR

# Stan Wasielewski named Ambassador of the Year a second time

## 'It's the highest honor an ambassador can hope to achieve'

**EMILY NAVA**  
Staff Writer  
emily@hcnews.com

The Granbury Chamber of Commerce named Stan Wasielewski the Ambassador of the Year for 2023. Wasielewski has made a tremendous impact on the community and has been an integral part.

It was Wasielewski and his wife's dream to open a bed and breakfast, and in 2009 the dream came to life after the couple bought Granbury Gardens Bed and Breakfast located on Doyle Street. The couple owned the property for six years before selling it.

Wasielewski then became employed by Watterview Community as a chauffeur and is still with them today as a representative. He also served as a member of the Historic Preservation Commission for 12 years.

He later served as the vice president of the Ambassadors program through the Granbury Chamber before serving as chairman for a year.

In 2014, Wasielewski was named Ambassador of the Year, which came as a surprise to him.

"I was honored to have been chosen and I was really surprised because I wasn't highly involved in the chamber," Wasielewski said.

For ambassadors, the goal is to help local businesses and support them through their growth by holding monthly meetings, attending ribbon cuttings and being there to answer business-related questions.

"Last year I was even more honored to receive the Howard Clemmons Person of the

Year Award. That came out of nowhere," Wasielewski expressed.

He said he is passionate about small businesses and has loved the opportunity of meeting new people while serving the community. He noted that being named the Ambassador of the Year back in 2014 and now again for 2023, is "the highest honor an ambassador can receive."

"I have never been prouder to be an ambassador for the city of Granbury," he said. "When you realize our chamber is the fourth largest in North Texas, that just shows the magnitude of participation by the community, the businesses and ambassadors."

He added that his favorite aspects of the community are the people and the spirit. He added it is just plain fun to be in this town.

"We just feel so passionate about Granbury. We have lived 52 different places in our 56 years of married life," Wasielewski said. "Granbury is where home really is. When you are proud of your community and you are grateful to be able to live in it, then there is a responsibility to try and pay it back. What an honor it is to be able to be part of this community."

Wasielewski plans to continue to serve as an ambassador for as long as he can and looks forward to continuing to make an impact.

For those interested in becoming an ambassador with the Granbury Chamber of Commerce, an application is required and is available on the chamber's website at granburychamber.com.



**Stan Wasielewski**  
Ambassador of the Year  
Granbury Gardens Bed and Breakfast

EMILY NAVA | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

## SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

# Randy's restaurants named 'Small Business of the Year'



**Randy's Shrimp and Oyster Bar and Randy's Bar & Grill**  
Small Business of the Year  
Randy Crawford, owner

EMILY NAVA | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

**EMILY NAVA**  
Staff Writer  
emily@hcnews.com

Randy Crawford, owner of Randy's Bar and Grill and Randy's Shrimp and Oyster Bar, was named Small Business of the Year by the Granbury Chamber of Commerce.

Crawford previously owned Joe's Pasta and Pizza and ran the Italian restaurant for 10 years before deciding to make a change and opened Randy's Shrimp and Oyster Bar.

The remarkable strides Crawford made to reach this success did not come on a whim but started at the age of 15. Crawford started off his career in the restaurant industry working at Chili's. He worked there throughout high school and pursued restaurant and hotel management at Texas Tech University. All in all, he worked at 10 different Chili's locations over 14 years.

"Before I was able to graduate college, I was working at Chili's in Lubbock and had just gotten married and they offered me a position in management. At the time it was a lot of money, so I decided to not finish college and start my career in the restaurant world," Crawford said.

Crawford and his wife of 34 years, Elizabeth, lived in Highland Village before making the move to Granbury. He had made a down payment on a restaurant in downtown McKinney when his real estate agent urged him to look around Granbury before signing the deal. While taking a look at Joe's Pasta and Pizza, he fell in love with the town and the restaurant.

"I rolled in, had lunch, really loved the staff and the food was fantastic. I called my wife and told her I was going to stay the night to check out the town. I had lunch and dinner that next day and went around town and spent some time at a couple of businesses and restaurants in town. I called my wife and told her 'You need to come down and spend a couple of days out here.' Four days later we bought the restaurant," Crawford said.

With so many years in the restaurant industry, Crawford has been all over the country and lived in many different places, but he says nothing compares to Granbury.

"Granbury is probably the easiest town just to connect with people. They just embrace you and make you feel welcome," he said.

He shared about a time after he bought Joe's when a couple of guests — Lance Terry and Jim Ducato — called Crawford and told him they were coming to pick him up to show him around the town.

He was told about Leadership Granbury, and met with Diane Hedges, who was leading the

next class, before he signed up. He now says that was the best thing he did.

"If you are moving here or especially if you are starting a business in Granbury, you need to take the class," Crawford noted. "They will show you everything you need to know to learn how to embrace Granbury."

Crawford has loved the many interactions and relationships he has been able to build within the restaurant industry with both customers and his staff.

"I've been really fortunate. You know I kind of grew up in the golden age of restaurants," Crawford said. Crawford named many people he was able to spend a little time with including Larry Levine, Norman Brinker, Stan Fletcher, Norman Abdallah, Creed Ford and Kent Taylor — all icons in the restaurant industry.

"The blessing for me is having the ability to work not only with all these people but able to see and learn from them on how to be successful in this industry. I have made many mistakes along the way, but I have also learned a ton and these experiences are what has helped me get to where I am today," Crawford said.

The lessons he learned from those mentors are funneled into his teaching and helping his co-workers today.

"I've got a good circle of people that if any of us have a problem we can call each other whether it's an HR issue, a profitability issue, a food quality issue, I can call them and walk through my thoughts and they take the time to coach me or just plain tell me I am being stupid at times and help me stay focused," Crawford said. "(My staff) does a really good job helping me out and I'm part of their circle. Everybody helps each other."

Crawford stresses the importance of patience and being a good coach in the restaurant industry.

"You've got to take the time to coach and teach (your team) and spend the time with them. They're going to screw up. You have to give them a chance to figure out how to win."

With the success of both of his restaurants, the Granbury Chamber of Commerce announced Randy's as the Small Business of the Year.

Brian Bondy called Crawford's wife, who had previously served in the chamber, and told her the news of the award.

"She didn't realize he said we had won. She thought he just said we were nominated, so my wife is like 'Oh, that's great' and then I go 'I was kind of listening and it sounded like he said we won'," Crawford said. "We called him back and then we officially learned we won. I was very grateful. You don't expect something

like this, but it is definitely an honor and so it's nice to be recognized, but it's really for my team."

Crawford is currently in the works of opening another restaurant by the name of Vito's Italian Kitchen (remodeling the old Mi Familia building). He hopes to have the restaurant open at the beginning of April. He said the only way he would have even thought about opening up a third restaurant was if he could partner up with someone that shares his focus on developing a team while also serving "killer food."

This led to the hiring of Richard Williams, who has joined the team as a partner in all concepts as well as operating as director of operations. Crawford has worked with Wil-

liams in some capacity for over 30 years.

Crawford credited the success of both restaurants to his leadership team including, "Lauri, Brooklyn, Ben, Rodrigo, Courtney and of course our amazing staff at both locations," he said. "Once we get Vito's up and running and can prove it can make money, we'll have three proven concepts. Once that is done, then the plan is to start looking into Stephenville, Cleburne or Weatherford to see what type of venue the town needs and really find a niche in these smaller markets. It's about finding the right location and building a great team."

Randy's Bar and Grill is located at 1454 E. U.S. Highway 377 and Randy's Shrimp and Oyster Bar is located at 1300 S. Morgan St.

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LARGE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

# Henson Lumber: Providing decades of quality building materials since 1973

BY ASHLEY TERRY  
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Henson Lumber is no stranger to Hood County.

The building material enterprise located in Cresson has provided decades of service to commercial builders and do-it-yourself enthusiasts since it was established in 1973 by previous owner and founder Jerry Henson.

But after more than 50 years, Henson Lumber is officially being recognized in the most honorable way by the Granbury Chamber of Commerce as the company received the Large Business of the Year Award during the chamber banquet on Jan. 25.

Originally, the enterprise was known as Henson Lake and Ranch Supply, but later came to be known as Henson Building Materials. In the early 2000s, the company split into two divisions: Henson Metal and Henson Lumber.

"There was a single location on (U.S.) Highway 377 where Henson Building Materials is currently. We relocated to 11900 CR 917 in Cresson before Mr. Henson passed," said Casey Wallace, chief operating officer of Henson Lumber. "It was just a great situation for us and it's a bigger location with rail that comes in the yard."

Henson Enterprises — which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022 — services the counties of Hood, Johnson, Parker and Tarrant, and operates under the three divisions of lumber, metal and millwork. Henson Lumber and Henson Millwork are both located at 11900 County Road 917 while Henson Metal can be found at 9200 E. U.S. Highway 377.

"We kind of have three different departments and that's not counting the building materials on the highway," Wallace said. "Here in our location, we have a lumber division, we have a millwork — which we build door units out back — and then we have a reload.

All three of those businesses are in our location here."

The Henson brand also owns 80 acres of land at its Henson Lumber location with Wallace adding that the company doesn't utilize all 80, but that they have plenty of room to grow — which they have.

Since Wallace joined Henson Lumber almost 40 years ago, he has witnessed the company expand exponentially — starting with only 20 employees around the 1990s to now employing more than 80.

One reason the Henson brand continues to grow, Wallace said, is through its loyal employees.

"We have a lot of seasoned employees here," said Todd Garner, executive vice president of Henson Enterprises. "I remember one time I did an analysis of how much tenure our average employee had, and our average tenure is over 10 years of employment at Henson's across the board. That just speaks to how we take care of people. People want to stay here a long time and we want to be a place where people can work, have fun and retire eventually someday."

Wallace explained that the company provides a food truck every quarter for its employees and added that the benefit package is "comparable, if not better, than some bigger companies."

"Just having a family atmosphere is our thing and that's the reason we're able to have many long-tenured employees," he said. "We try to take care of our employees and our customers alike because in today's world, it's hard to get good employees, so we try our best to retain them and do good things for them."

"I think the important part is that it's like an extension of our family," Garner added. "We take care of our employees, and we take care of our customers."

Wallace said the company also hangs a plaque on the wall to recognize employees as they hit yearly milestones in working within Henson Enterprises.



**Henson Lumber**  
Large Business of the Year  
Todd Garner, Executive Vice President

MARY VINSON | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

"The names on the plaque keeps growing," he said. "We have a lot of long-tenured employees on that plaque."

Henson Lumber is still reeling from its most recent accomplishment of acquiring Decatur Lumber, a respected family-owned lumberyard based in Decatur.

"(Decatur Lumber) is a company very similar to ours, so it's fun for us to acquire a company that we're working with to expand our market inside the Fort Worth area," he said.

While the Henson brand continues to foster its own growth, the brand's employees have also immersed themselves in many community activities as they work to shape and develop Hood County.

Over the past decade, Henson's has been a steadfast supporter of numerous school-related activities, ranging from sports and arts to special events. Notable contributions include support for the Pirate Football Booster Club, basketball booster clubs, the Granbury High School swim team, GHS cheerleaders, Atlas Racing (F1 cars), FCCLA, Project Graduation, GHS Pirate color guard, GHS band and many others.

Henson's commitment also extends beyond monetary donations, as evidenced by the donation of the metal fence around the gates at Pirate Stadium and consistent support for the Hood County Junior Livestock Show.

However, the company's community involvement is not limited to educational initiatives, as Henson managers, directors and employees actively participate in a plethora of community groups, like Christmas for Children, the Lake Granbury Water Coalition, Meals on Wheels, and foot and bike races in Granbury (Granbury Road Race, Acton Nature Center 5K, and Blazin' Saddles Bike Race).

Beyond the past decade, Henson's has also consistently contributed to various community organizations, such as Granbury Seals, Granbury Soccer Association, Friends of Memorial Lane and Rotary Club.

"The breadth of our community involvement speaks to the very essence of Henson DNA — a commitment to giving back and fostering a vibrant, supportive community," Garner said.

As Henson Lumber accepts the award of Best Large Business of the Year from Granbury Chamber of Commerce, both Garner and Wallace are looking ahead to the future of the Henson brand.

"There's a lot of big companies in Hood County, and I think we're very grateful — but I think it also represents the things that our people do for the community," Garner said. "It's exciting that we've hit that 50-year milestone, but we're looking forward to quite a few more."

## HOWARD CLEMMONS DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

## James Brock — the answer is always love



**James Brock**  
*Howard Clemmons Distinguished Service Award*  
*Brock's Food and Drink*

BY EDEN DUNCAN GILBREATH  
*Special to the Hood County News*  
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COVID-19 lockdowns didn't seem the most prudent time to open a new business. At least James Brock didn't think it was — but he did so anyway.

Brock and his wife Jan are business partners who moved here from North Richland Hills in 2000 to be closer to family. When their two children were young the family went to Santa Fe, New Mexico, each summer where Brock took cooking lessons while the children played all day.

Brock spent his early working years running a furniture manufacturing company with his dad and brother. Later, he worked in the construction and pipeline industry. But his dream was always to open a restaurant.

Boredom set in during the lockdowns, and Brock decided to make this lifelong dream a reality. The restaurant bears the family name, and no one is more surprised at the level of its success than the Brock family.

The vision was of a place where Brock could share his culinary skills and

where musicians and vocalists could share their talents as well. The reality of Brock's Food and Drink is all that and more. In just a few short years Brock's has become a famous local hang-out where good tunes and good times go with good grub.

No one can claim success for the establishment more than Brock himself. His gregarious nature and quick wit enlivens the place. Employees and patrons alike sing his praises. But Brock isn't arrogant concerning his success — he's grateful.

"I have just been very, very blessed," he said.

Brock's Food and Drink gives away over 1,000 meals at Thanksgiving alone, in addition to giving away free food throughout the year. When the summer food program for school-aged children was not operating, Brock himself got up at 4 a.m. in the summer to cook eggs to provide free breakfast.

"I hate eggs," he said with a laugh.

Serving the community is a core value of Brock and his establishment, "Two things about what we do. We don't do it for recognition, we do it because it's the right thing to do. These are our friends and neighbors. We do our best to project love and kindness," he shared.

PHOTOS BY MARY VINSON | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

Brock cracks one joke after another. He insists he is the last person the chamber of commerce should give an award to.

"I think they made a horrible mistake. I don't know about me. I opened a new business during 2020. And then I give food away for free every week. That doesn't sound like a very good businessperson to me," he added.

He jests further, "If they want the award back, I won't cause a fuss, there will be no problems, no fuss at all. They made a horrendous mistake; they will want it back. I know it's coming. I won't even buy a sports coat. Rent, I will rent one."

Brock insists they sent someone out personally to tell him of his award so they could make sure he understood attending the event meant shunning his customary shorts in favor of pants.

But then Brock gets serious, "Really, do tell them that I am greatly honored that they selected me."

Brock has some words of wisdom to go with his wit, "I am getting old and sick and sometimes I forget the question," he chides with a twinge of truth, "but I always know the answer and the answer is always love."



## RISING STAR AWARD

Empire Realty Group named Rising Star  
'An agency for agents'

BY EMILY NAVA  
*Staff Writer*  
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Empire Realty Group is a real estate agency in Granbury that opened its doors in March 2022 and has already made a name for itself by earning the "Rising Star" award from the Granbury Chamber of Commerce.

Kevin Watson, owner and broker of the agency, worked as a title examiner in the title insurance industry for 23 years. Watson works alongside his wife Kara, who previously worked in the mortgage lending industry. The two are Granbury High School sweethearts and are now coming up on their 34th anniversary.

Watson, a Tarleton State University alum, decided to obtain his broker's license in 2021 after talking with Kara. Watson told the HCN the hardest part of opening the agency was coming up with the name. One day when Watson was driving, the word "empire" popped into his head. An avid Star Wars fan, he felt the connection to the Star Wars franchise seemed like a perfect fit and thus

the the Empire Realty Group was born.

The brokerage currently has seven real estate agents, including Watson and Kara, with a wide range of experience and clientele. Kara was the most recent agent to come on board after she obtained her license in June. The agency covers residential, commercial and land listings.

"What makes us different from most other brokerages in town is that they have a brick-and-mortar office. What made it easy for me was that we decided to do a virtual brokerage," Watson said. "We do all our work from home. It gives us all that freedom while saving costs on renting a space."

Watson describes his agency as "an agency for agents" because of the family-like mentality and relationships among the agents. One agent in the office, Crystal Wilson, is even a broker herself but has loved getting to work alongside Watson and being that second opinion.

"I like having someone to be able to connect with and say, 'hey this is what I'm thinking, are we going down the right path?'" Wilson said. "I think that as real estate agents, we are subject to a lot of scrutiny and it's good to have someone you can bounce feedback off of to make sure that we are on the right path."

Watson likes the tightknit group they have and wants it to remain similar in size to keep those close bonds and relationships.

"I want to be there to help agents to do their job, but at the same time I want to give



**Empire Realty Group**  
*Rising Star Award*  
*Kevin Watson, Owner/Broker*

PHOTOS BY EMILY NAVA | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

them the freedom to do their marketing how they see fit, but still not have that interoffice competition," Watson said. "We help each other out. We're a family, absolutely."

Watson notes his success comes from his knowledge of the town of Granbury. He added that the growth of the town is something the agency continues to monitor and stay on top of.

"I think from a real estate standpoint, it's exciting to be part of a town that's growing," real estate agent Erienne Higgins said.

When it comes to working with clients, the agency focuses on prioritizing each client's needs and working around what is best for them.

"Our goal is to make sure the clients are served to the best of our ability," Watson

said. "Whenever people work within our agency, I want them to leave with a good feeling."

Watson described the agency being named as "Rising Star" as an honor and thanked the Granbury Chamber of Commerce.

"We really appreciate everybody that nominated us and voted for us, and we're very excited for what is to come," Watson expressed.

To learn more about Empire Realty Group visit its website at [empirerealtytexas.com](http://empirerealtytexas.com), call 254-396-5056 or shoot them an email at [info@EmpireRealtyTexas.com](mailto:info@EmpireRealtyTexas.com).





**Henson Lumber**  
*Large Business of the Year*  
 Todd Garner, Executive Vice President

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**James Brock**  
*Howard Clemmons Distinguished Service*  
 Brock's Food and Drink



**C.J. Prater**  
*Rising Leader of Granbury*  
 Harbor Lakes Nursing and Rehabilitation



**Randy's Shrimp and Oyster Bar and Randy's Bar & Grill**  
*Small Business of the Year*  
 Randy Crawford, owner



**Empire Realty Group**  
*Rising Star Award*  
 Kevin Watson, Owner/Broker



**Tracie Harper**  
*Women in Business Award*  
 Daffan Cooling & Heating



**Stan Wasielewski**  
*Ambassador of the Year*  
 Granbury Gardens Bed and Breakfast

WOMEN IN BUSINESS

# Tracie Harper: Living a life of purpose at Daffan

BY ASHLEY TERRY  
Staff Writer  
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Never in a million years did Tracie Harper believe she would find herself in a sales career at Daffan Cooling and Heating.

In fact, she was just as surprised to learn she'd won the Granbury Chamber of Commerce's Women in Business Award Jan. 25.

But 15 years later, that one job has filled her life with purpose — allowing her to form lasting bonds and connections with many Hood County residents.

Harper, who grew up in Watauga, married her high school sweetheart, Ty, and gave birth to two sons — Nic and Dillon — before making the move to Granbury in 1995.

"We didn't know a single soul when we moved here," she said. "We just knew (Ty) needed to be close enough to commute to Fort Worth. We looked at little towns all around Fort Worth and we just said, 'We love Granbury,' and 'We love that house.' We took a leap of faith and made the move, and it was the best thing we ever did."

After residing in Granbury for a few years, Harper said she knew she needed to go back to work as she has always been "career-minded," so she decided to start volunteering at the Granbury Chamber of Commerce — a move that eventually led to a full-time job.

From there, Harper had a few jobs selling radio advertising and it was then she learned a career in sales was the right move for her future.

"I found that sales was what I was born to do and my passion," she said. "I absolutely love sales."

But it wasn't until she was approached by the owners of Daffan Cooling and Heating in 2008 when she truly found her calling.

"They told me they had gotten to the point where they really needed to find a full-time salesperson," Harper told the HCN. "I was like 'I don't know anything about air conditioning. You fix it when I tell you to come and fix it, but I don't even know where my filter goes.'"

However, after a little convincing, Harper came on board with Daffan when she was 45 years old. She said she recalls studying harder than she had in years — even harder than her son, Dillon, who was in his senior year in high school at the time.

"I just studied all the technical standpoints of, 'How does the air conditioner work?' 'What are all of the parts?' and 'What does the heater do?' I'd have books, charts and graphs all over the place," she said. "But I started as a full-time salesperson there and just fell in love with it."

She explained she doesn't like the technical parts of her job, but she likes the relationship aspect where she gets to connect with her customers.

"What I love about it is, now, this many years later, we have a very large coverage area and I deal with all kinds of people in all kinds of different stages of their life: economic situations, family situations — and I just love trying to help them find a solution that they're comfortable with for a purchase that they aren't really that excited to make," she said. "It's very rewarding when they hug

you and say, 'Thank you, Tracy.'"

An experience with one customer stands out to her vividly, during which the customer's husband was on hospice and she confided in Harper about their current situation.

"As a woman in the heating and air conditioning business, I've found that people are sometimes comforted by that," she explained. "HVAC is not a ministry, but I've had an opportunity to pray with customers, cry with customers — people that just recently become a widow and they're overcome by this idea and so afraid somebody is going to take advantage of them that they just break down crying and saying, 'I don't know what to do. He always took care of this.'"

Currently Harper is in her fifth year as sales manager at Daffan, but explained she still meets with customers as it's her favorite part of the job.

"I know it sounds like a very blue-collar technical job but to me it's not; it's a relationship job, and it's a people job," she said. "I just happen to provide heating and air conditioning (service)."

While Harper's main duty is to manage two "outstanding" sales assistants, she said she still has the freedom to work out in the field.

"I have the opportunity to try to grow the sales department for Daffan and try to leave a legacy of caring, relationship-building and integrity that we're known for," Harper said.

Not only does Harper keep busy on the sales end of things, she also serves as a speaker and coach for other individuals employed in the HVAC business.

"I love working with people and trying to add value to their life and trying to mentor them and learn," she said. "At this stage of my life, it's real fun and important to me to pour into the next generation that's behind me."

She added that her personal mission statement is to be "intentional about living a life of purpose, loving people and leaving a legacy of influence."

"I want to be purposeful; I want to love people in everything I do — whether it's work, volunteer, family friends or ministry — I would like to think I left some positive influence in someone's life," Harper said.

Although she stressed that she has no plans to leave Daffan anytime soon, her future goals involve more coaching, speaking and training, as she loves educating the younger generation.

"I just love helping people in sales or leadership because I think there's lots of opportunity in today's culture for people to step up, be exceptional and take a leadership stance," Harper said. "But I will tell you what. Whatever I do (in the future), I'm open to challenges and opportunities."

While Harper was shocked with her recent chamber award, she said she is humbled and honored to have worked with other exceptional women in the community.

"There's multiple women in this town that really inspired me to make an impact and how to be successful in doing that," she added. "So, I'm just humbled, grateful and honored (to accept the award). I love living here and I love serving the community."

*Congratulations!*

**TRACIE HARPER**  
**2024**  
**WOMEN IN**  
**BUSINESS AWARD**

We'd like to think Tracie is our secret weapon at Daffan. She strives to encourage, mentor and train our team members whether they are in her department or not.

She brought this same deeply held desire for helping others to the Granbury Chamber of Commerce's Women in Business Group. We couldn't be more proud of her for this highly deserved recognition.

Thank you for all you do for our team and our community!  
We love you!

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Tracie Harper  
Women in Business Award  
Daffan Cooling & Heating

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RISING LEADER OF GRANBURY

# C.J. Prater: Setting a precedent in community leadership

**BY ASHLEY TERRY**  
Staff Writer  
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C.J. Prater was only a nursing home administrator at Harbor Lakes Nursing and Rehabilitation for a short while, but he has already made his mark as a leader — not only as an employee, but in the community as well.

Prater was recently honored with the Rising Leader of Granbury Award from the Granbury Chamber of Commerce for being instrumental in growing leadership in Granbury, Hood County and the chamber itself.

"I was not expecting to win it," he told the HCN. "In all honesty, I can count about three or four people who were on that list that we were voting for who deserved it more than I did."

While modest, Prater has been known to attend several events around town for the chamber and he is also vice president and head of youth services for the Rotary Club of Granbury.

Originally from Grandview, Prater took a "scenic route through college," and attended three different colleges before ending up at Tarleton State University in Stephenville. He graduated in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in kinesiology.

Following graduation, Prater landed a job as an activity director at a nursing home and was later persuaded into taking more schooling to become an administrator — a role he was in from 2016 to 2023.

After he obtained his schooling, he took an open position as a starting administrator in Eastland, but his main goal was to land a job around the Hood County area to be closer to family.

"They finally came and headhunted

me for Trinity (Nursing and Rehabilitation of Granbury), which is just north of the square, so I was there for four years," Prater said. "And then this spot opened up (at Harbor Lakes) and I was like, 'You know what, if anything, I might as well move up to try to get bigger things,' and it worked out. They accepted me and I've been over here for the last year."

As a nursing home administrator, Prater was essentially the "CEO of the building." He oversaw finances and the hiring of all future job candidates.

Although Prater said he wasn't able to have many one-on-one conversations with the residents as an administrator, he loved getting any time he could spare with them.

"The people you deal with (is what I love the most)" he said. "My coworkers (were) probably some of the brightest things about the job."

While Prater said he wouldn't change anything about his experience at Harbor Lakes, his last day as a nursing home administrator was Wednesday, Jan. 24.

"I am going to go into financing through Edward Jones," he said. "It's a completely different career choice, but it's been something I've been working on since 2019. My brother has been an Edward Jones financial advisor for 10 years now and he's been slowly trying to get me into the spot. It was finally time because everything fell into place."

When he is not busy serving as a leader, Prater enjoys spending time with family and his 4-year-old daughter, Linlee.



**C.J. Prater**  
Rising Leader of Granbury  
Harbor Lakes Nursing and Rehabilitation

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