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NEWS OF AZLE, SPRINGTOWN, AND SURROUNDING AREAS

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# 'Strongly opposed'

#### **MADELYN EDWARDS**

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FORT WORTH, Texas — The auditorium at Brewer High School filled up last week as dozens of Silver Creek-area residents came out to oppose a municipal solid waste recycling facility being built in their neighborhood.

Officials from Texas Commission on **Environmental Quality** hosted the meeting on Dec. 5 to collect public comments regarding the facility, which would be located at 3411 Silver Creek Road on what is currently a sand and gravel quarry. As of the meeting date, TCEQ was still reviewing the facility's registration application.

Residents feared the recy-

Silver Creek-area residents speak out against proposed recycling facility

cling facility would bring in several unfavorable outcomes, such as impact the water quality, increase traffic, contaminate the air quality and decrease property values among other effects on residents' quality of life.

Earlier this year, architectural and engineering design firm Parkhill submitted a registration application to TCEQ on behalf of BAP Kennor Landfill, LLC regarding the solid waste recycling facility. If built, the facility would accept recyclable materials like construction and demolition materials that are not decayable, hazardous, liquid or

household wastes, consulting engineer Frank Pugsley said during the meeting and detailed in the application. The recyclable processed materials would be sold, and nonrecyclable residue would be disposed of offsite at an authorized facility. The application noted the facility isn't expected to produce objectionable odors or contaminated water. The application also states that any liquids from the facility would be disposed of without causing surface water or groundwater pollution and any wastewater

would be treated. "No rainfall or runoff will

be directly discharged to any receiving stream without proper stormwater treatment controls," Pugsley said during the meeting.

Water quality was a major concern during the meeting. Tarrant Regional Water District general manager Dan Buhman said district officials have concerns about how contaminated water will be managed onsite. Buhman added that BAP Kennor's application is lacking on details about how the facility will handle precipitation coming onto waste and secondary materials stored outdoors.

"We support the request



MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

At a meeting last week at Brewer High School, Tarrant County Commissioner Manny Ramirez objected to the use of a decades-old permit being used to justify a proposed recycling facility.

for more information regarding potential impacts from stormwater runoff to downstream waters and want to ensure they provide adequate monitoring so they don't take any contaminated waste, which would certainly

threaten our water quality," Buhman said during the public meeting.

The effect on groundwater is particularly relevant to Silver Creek area residents

PLEASE SEE FACILITY | A3

# 'Tis the season

Springtown hosts fifth annual Old-Fashioned Christmas event



SEE MORE **PHOTOS** | A16

Springtown High School choir students sing carols at Springtown's Old-Fashioned Christmas.



**ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER** 

During a flight outside Azle High School, Azle students recounted how they watched other teams crash spectacularly, have parts fly off and start battery fires. "It was wonderful," one team member said "Some of those kids, you wonder if how like if anyone taught them about safety or flying the drones. One team burnt through all four of their motors twice."

### **ZACH FREEMAN**

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AZLE — For the golf ball citizens living in a miniature Bell City, Azle High School students' piloting skills meant the difference between life and a simulated fiery death.

Azle High School drone team places fourth at national Bell contest

Azle High School's Hornet Drones team participated in the Bell Advanced Vertical Robotics (AVR) championship qualifier Nov. 12, winning third place for the day

and ranking fifth out of over 75 teams from across the U.S. and Canada. The team had the second highest score in

PLEASE SEE **DRONE** | A5



MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Connie Ellis, longtime Neighbor to Neighbors volunteer, plans to retire from the food pantry's board this year. She is pictured with a plaque commemorating her service at Neighbor to Neighbors and her favorite picture of the food pantry's volunteers.

### Neighbor to Neighbors board member, longtime volunteer to retire

Ellis: 'I feel like God has His foot on my back and pushes me all the time.'

### **MADELYN EDWARDS**

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SPRINGTOWN — Connie Ellis' favorite picture is one taken years ago that includes several of her fellow Neighbor to Neighbors food pantry volunteers.

"It's got people that I love," Ellis said about why she likes the photo. "It's got people

that I understand what the sadness in their life is, and I also understand the glorious part of their life."

After more than 20 years of service, 78-year-old Ellis is retiring from the Neighbor to Neighbors board at the end of the year.

Ellis' roots in Springtown date back to 1884 when her family arrived in town on

wagons. After high school, Ellis married a man she met when she was a senior in high school on a blind date.

"When I was in high school, there were 40 dairies in Springtown, and everybody was a dairyman," Ellis said. "I had already decided that I could not live on a dairy, so I had to find somebody who wasn't a dairyman, and Jerry

Ellis came along as a blind date, and he was a college man."

The Ellises eventually settled in Hobbs, New Mexico, and stayed there for over 30 years. During the 1990s, Jerry Ellis became sick with cancer, and the couple decided to move back to Springtown

PLEASE SEE ELLIS | A4





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# **Greater Metro West Association of Realtors** installs new president, gives awards

### **MADELYN EDWARDS**

springtownreporter@tricountyreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN — The Greater Metro West Association of Realtors welcomed its 2024 President Lisa Elkins at the annual installation and awards banquet Dec. 7 at the Covered Bridge Venue in Springtown.

Parker County resident

banquet Dec. 7.

Elkins has worked in the real estate industry starting at 18 years old as a multifamily leasing agent. For the past 27 years, she has listed and sold real estate, become a broker, managed an office, mentored new agents, taught classes and volunteered with the association, she said during her speech at the banquet. In 2010, she graduated from the

MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Greater Metro West Association of Realtors' 2024 President Lisa

commemorating her leadership in 2023. Mitchell also won the

Realtor of the Year award at the annual installation and awards

Elkins, right, presents Past President Karen Mitchell with a plaque

Texas Realtors Leadership Program, where she was introduced to Greater Metro West Association of Realtors. She has served on various association committees.

"There are many people in this room that I have served with over the years, and we have supported each other in many different ways — volunteering, serving on committees, being on the other side of a transaction or masterminding with each other," Elkins said. "Iron sharpens iron, and let me just say, there is a lot of iron in this room tonight."

She continued, "I am very proud that I get to serve this association. Our past presidents have left great examples of achievements and blueprints on how to tackle some of the issues that we face today."

Elkins laid out her goals for 2024, including completing the technology and communications conversion, continuing to have a variety of relevant classes for members via the education committee and maintaining relationships with the counties represented by the association to promote realtor participation and involvement.

Elkins thanked Past President Karen Mitchell "for leading us through the beginnings of our season of change."

"Not only are you a colleague but you have become one of my dearest friends," Elkins said of Mitchell.

Mitchell herself shared a few words during the banquet.

"It has been a great honor to serve as the board president for Greater Metro West this past year," Mitchell said. "Having the privilege of rep-



 $Greater\,Metro\,West\,Association\,of\,Realtors\,charter\,member\,Jim\,Duncan\,installs\,Lisa\,Elkins\,as\,the\,2024$ president Dec. 7.

an experience I will always remember, and I appreciate each and every one of you that have worked hard and supported me this year."

Mitchell recapped the association's year, including how the association's new executive, Malyn Powers, was hired. Mitchell credited Powers with getting the associations financial information online, which created a more userfriendly payment process.

"I definitely want to thank our staff, Malyn Powers, Christine Rogers and Shawn Campbell for their tireless support of our association," Mitchell said.

The association now has a communications and technology committee, which hopes to get the association's website updated and improve member communication, Mitchell said. The education committee created new classes for members on topics such as water wells and landscaping. The association is also looking forward to hosting a Farm and Ranch Summit in February.

Of Elkins, Mitchell said she met her in a committee meeting and thought she was interesting because she spoke her mind. Mitchell later found out her father was Elkins' junior high school band director.

"We have traveled and worked together for a couple of years now, and I can assure you that there is not a more dedicated servant of the greater good than Lisa Elkins," Mitchell said.

In addition to Elkins, the following 2024 officers and directors were installed: President Elect Amanda Howard, Secretary/Treasurer Raquel Harbin, Immediate Past President Mitchell, David Bourquin, Dana Bryant, Terri Stokes, Kimberly Hernandez, Mike Withaeger, Nancy Foust, Louisa Davis, Tammy Cheatham, Shelly Allred and Matthew Walker.

#### **AWARDS**

The Greater Metro West Association of Realtors issued several awards at the banquet, starting with the

new C.T. Duncan Legacy Award. C.T. Duncan was a charter member of the association, an original "house flipper" before it was popular and was very involved in the Weatherford and Parker County community. Duncan's son Jim, also an association charter member, won the legacy award on Dec. 7.

Jim Duncan graduated from Texas Tech University and joined his father's real estate company in 1968. Today, he serves on a number of boards and committees, including being an active member of the association.

In addition, the new President's Award was given to Terin Realty broker Terri Stokes, Affiliate of the Year went to Jennifer Morris of All Western Mortgage, Realtor Spirit Award went to Kimberly Hernandez of Parker Douglas Realty, Rookie of the Year was awarded to Cassie Mueller of Parker Douglas Realty and Karen Mitchell was named Realtor of the Year.



**METHODIST** 

CHURCH of AZLE

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# Aim small, miss small

The fall and early wintertime bring back wonderful memories of years gone by. Times spent walking through a field with a good quail dog, wing-shooting ducks from a blind, and being camouflaged sitting against a tree waiting for a Tom turkey were hours spent in the great outdoors enjoying the thrill of the hunt.

Seems like I learned to shoot at an early age, with most of my instruction coming from my grandfather. I remember well the first time we were bird hunting and a large covey of quail rose, beating their wings in rapid ascent, scattering in a thousand directions. The sound of the birds breaking from the brush overwhelmed my heart with excitement. The gun rose to my shoulder while my eyes took in the cha-



FROM MY FRONT PORCH

By Sam Houston

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

otic scene. The trigger was pulled, and then pulled again and again and no birds fell from the sky. Turning to my grandfather I could mutter nothing other than, "how did I miss?" There had been as many as 15 to 20 birds in the covey, and when they rose the sky seemed to be literally full of quail. How could I miss all those birds? We had practiced with a clay target thrower and been proud of the progress I had made. My taste buds were salivating thinking of fried quail in the skillet, and yet I had

not dropped a single bird. Granddad had dropped two.

Granddad's face did not change expression. He simply said, "aim small, miss small." The blank look on my face revealed confusion as I tried to interpret what the heck his statement meant. Speaking rhetorically, he elaborated. "Did you look at the covey or did you aim at a particular bird? If you do not focus on one bird at a time, you will miss all of them. Try to focus your eye to aim at a specific part of the bird. Imagine your target is the bird's eye. If you

focus on that specifically, you will hit your target, then you can move to the next bird and do the same thing. You will find you will get a lot of "doubles" when you aim small."

It took me a bit to let Granddad's wise words settle into my brain. As we walked, I had a pep talk with myself, and the next time the dog stopped on point alerting us a covey was near, I was ready. When the covey rose, I focused on a single quail in the group, dropped the bird, and then swung to aim at another. I missed the second shot, but the results proved the coaching I had received was meaningful. I had focused on the smallest part of the bird and got a positive result.

Texas politics got me to thinking about "aim small, miss small." One of the reasons why our government

keeps getting bigger and bigger is because our politicians do not "aim small, miss small." They focus on grandiose accomplishments, rather than simply doing the job for which they were elected. It seems like most politicians feel like they must do more than their predecessor so they have accomplishments they can recite when they run for reelection, or more often, when they seek a higher office. This "ambition" leads officeholders to expand their office into even more and bigger government.

I am not sure how much I care if a county commissioner, or justice of the peace has an opinion on abortion. on school vouchers or the border. Understand these are all issues that need to be discussed and debated among the electorate, but none of

these issues fall under the duties of those officeholders. If our officeholders would simply invest their time into performing the job for which they were elected, and doing it as well as they can, we would all be better off. Our government would be more effective also. A man or woman officeholder who takes care of the business at hand instead of spending much of their time wooing voters for their next campaign will get my vote. They should get yours, too.

Thought for the day: Politicians are the only people in the world who create problems, and then campaign against them.

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

### Let's Talk Azle - Just Makes Sense

A little over two years ago, Jamie Westbrook, Azle ISD social worker, and I were asked to take part in focus group meetings with other community members. The discussions centered on research related to behavioral pathways that lead toward extreme behaviors. actions and even targeted violence. Following the focus groups, additional meetings with community leaders were held, which eventually led to the creation of our Community Resilience Steering Committee, who branded this initiative as "Let's Talk Azle."

Let's Talk Azle focuses on improving communication. Because of this, it only made sense for us to be a



**LET'S TALK AZLE** By Todd Smith, M.Ed., Superintendent

Mr. Smith started his career in education in July of 1994 right here in Azle ISD. He taught agricultural science at Azle High School, served as a high school assistant principal, principal

of Walnut Creek Elementary, director of district operations, assistant superintendent, and interim superintendent from March 7, 2020, until becoming Superintendent in June of 2020. He is thankful for the passion and dedication exhibited by Azle ISD faculty and staff and is extremely proud of the work Azle ISD has accomplished and the impact they will continue to make on the lives of our students.

partner. As a school district, we routinely have conversations regarding the skills our students need. In the education setting, buzz words such as college, career or military readiness are routine. Top of the list for personal-type skills include being able to communicate, collaborate and work with others, often referenced as "soft skills."

In Azle ISD, our conversations focus on creating experiences for our students that get them LIFE ready, not just on a college, career or military pathway. This involves taking behaviors referenced as "soft skills" and shifting them to a mindset of HUMAN skills. These complement jobspecific skills and help our students become productive

141.7-acre tract of land —

was permitted decades ago

for a municipal solid waste

During the Dec. 5 meet-

Megan Henson said the pro-

on the same property as an

inactive landfill, but unlike a

landfill, none of the waste ac-

cepted by the facility would

Ramirez objected to the use

be buried onsite.

**Tarrant County** 

Commissioner Manny

posed recycling facility is

ing, Municipal Solid Waste

Permits Section manager

facility.

members of society.

The seven key principles identified in Let's Talk Azle align with our values, mission, vision and beliefs, especially our vision statement of "Every child will be futureready, not by chance but by design." Let's Talk Azle provides key strategies related to improving one's communication skills. Additionally, Let's Talk principles involve intentionality, providing strategies for communicating about tough topics and how to do so peacefully. This not only improves relationships within our classrooms and educational environments but also in our households and community.

Two other Let's Talk Azle principles which align directly with our work in Azle ISD

Part 3 of 4

include strategies for how to deal with social media and news consumption. In our ever-developing technological world, it is critical that our students understand digital citizenship. Most of our bullying-related cases or threats of violence are connected to social media. We are teaching our students the importance of digital leadership in what has become a digitalized world. Regarding news consump-

tion, we continue to work with students on identifying reliable and credible news media sources. This is often challenging, with many sources being various social media platforms or social media influencers.

I have focused most of this article on how Let's Talk Azle strategies provide opportunities for the 7,200 students and more than 1,000 employees within our buildings. It is important, however, to circle back to the where this all started — providing those with behavioral pathways leading toward targeted violence an off-ramp. Sadly, in today's society these type behaviors often feed into the school environment in behaviors toward staff, behaviors at sporting events and — hopefully never experienced in Azle ISD - acts of violence.

We are proud of our Let's Talk Azle partnership and remain committed to making our Azle ISD community a resilient one.

who use water wells, resident and community organizer Katheryn Moore said.

Capacity for disposing of solid waste in the western North Texas area is running out. Pugsley referenced a study by the North Central Texas Council of Governments that was completed in 2021 and aimed to examine long-term solid waste needs in the western region, including Tarrant and Parker counties. The final needs assessment shows Tarrant County's population alone is expected to grow by 49% between 2020 and 2050. The council of governments' study states that landfill capacity will be filled by 2036 if there aren't any changes to disposal capacity.

"The purpose of the study was that there was a realization that there is dwindling disposal capacity in the western part of our region and something needs to be done about it due to future population growth," Pugsley said, adding that construction waste from housing an in-

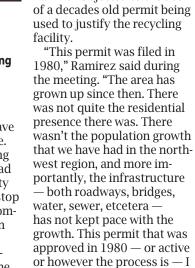


State Rep. Charlie Geren addresses the crowd at a meeting Dec. 5 regarding a proposed solid waste recycling facility planned in the Silver Creek area.

creased population will have to be disposed somewhere.

Pugsley said the recycling facility on Silver Creek Road will allow for more capacity at existing landfills, help stop illegal dumping and aid commercial recycling efforts in the region.

In BAP Kennor's application, Pugsley referenced the space planned for the facility — about 6.6 acres on about



think that it's exposed a pretty fatal flaw in the permitting system; where a permit can be approved in perpetuity, not acted upon for 40 years and then activated is a significant concern, not just for this project but I'm certain for projects across Texas." At the beginning of the

meeting, State Rep. Charlie Geren told the audience that only environmental issues would be considered, not the separate issue of traffic. However, traffic was a big concern of multiple residents, including Randy Limbaugh who lives within five miles of the proposed

facility. "We're here to lend our support against the permit and trying to prevent extra congestion and traffic (on) roads

we travel daily and deterioration of those roads because that seems to be somewhat of an issue these days in the Fort Worth area," Limbaugh said.

In addition to traffic, Moore said the community is also worried about the impact large trucks would have on local bridges and how often the road would need to be

ciosea for repairs. "Whenever there's construction, it's taxing on the local community," Moore said. "If we have to find an alternate route, that is really far out of our way and adds 10-15 minutes both ways. There's that and then there's all the neighborhoods and the only way they can get into their neighborhood is off of Silver Creek (Road) and so once again, if there's construction, that's tough on

them, too." Texas Department of Transportation wrote Pugsley in a letter from October that the facility is not expected to substantially increase traffic in the area.

"The facility as it stands today is only projected to add less than 3% to the background traffic on Silver Creek Road," Pugsley said during the meeting, which was met with audience members laughing and groaning in disbelief.

Several government and elected officials expressed concerns during the public comment period, including representatives from Tarrant Regional Water District, the city of Fort Worth, the city of Lake Worth and the Tarrant **County Commissioners** Court.

"I am strongly opposed, for the 1,000 people that you see sitting behind me and for myself and my family, strongly opposed to this permit," Ramirez said as people behind him cheered. The commissioner clarified that he is



Fort Worth Assistant City Manager Valerie Washington makes a public comment at the meeting regarding a proposed recycling



Silver Creek-area resident and community organizer Katheryn Moore speaks to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality staffers during a meeting Dec. 5.

not against a business being at that location, just not a recycling facility.

Moore also said about 1,000 neighbors have voiced their opposition to the facility. Seeing that support and neighbors work together has been the silver lining to this experience, she said.

"We don't all have to agree, but at least we've made each other aware of the situation so nobody feels like they were left out and didn't know," Moore said.



Silver Creek-area residents Kelli and Randy Limbaugh protest the recycling facility on Silver Creek Road with matching T-shirts.

Publisher KIM WARE

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Parker, Wise and Tarrant Outside of Parker, Wise and Tarrant | Outside of Texas

### Azle council tweaks donation bin ordinance

### **ZACH FREEMAN**

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#### **CITY APPROVES UPDATE TO DONATION BIN ORDINANCE**

AZLE —During a November Azle City Council meeting, councilmembers made revisions to an ordinance regulating donation bins that was originally passed on Sept. 17 of this year. After putting the ordinance into practice, the council determined there were some issues that needed to be addressed with an updated Donation Bin Ordinance. According to the city manager, these changes were seen as necessary after the council received feedback about bins on the properties of the Community Caring Center, Good N.E.W.S. and other organizations. The updated ordinance (2023-22) removes fees for on-premises bins, limits permit authentication to just notarized signatures, changes the proration to monthly, adds an appeals and revocation section, and cleans up language.

Under the language of the current ordinance, a donation bin is any bin, container, building, trailer, or other receptacle equal to or larger than 45 cubic feet that is intended for use as a collection point for donated clothing or other household materials. There is no grandfather

clause for this ordinance, and it is intended to regulate all applicable bins regardless of when they were placed. The ordinance requires bin owners to apply for an annual permit and affix a city-provided decal to the bins or risk impoundment.

The ordinance has already taken effect and will be enforced by the community development department. This ordinance does not apply to the many "blessing boxes" scattered throughout Azle and instead came about to address the issue of furniture and other large items being left at bigger bins within Azle's city limits. The annual permit fee for a bin that falls under the ordinance's definition is \$200. The impound fee for a violating bin is \$200 and the daily storage fee for an impounded bin is \$20 per day. The discussion surrounding a donation bin ordinance first started during the May 16 Azle City Council

#### **CITY APPROVES CHANGES IN RETIREMENT BENEFITS**

In lieu of participation in Social Security, through the Texas Municipal Retirement System, the City of Azle has provided retirement benefits to its employees since 1979. In order for these benefits to not be watered down by inflation over time the city has Retiree benefits change, new health insurance provider for the city, and atypical façade improvement request granted

utilized Retirement Cost of Living Adjustments or COLAs to recalibrate these retirement payments in accordance with the changing expenses in living. Recently enacted Texas House Bill 2464 has given municipalities the option to readjust how they compute their COLAs. Under recommendations from city staff, the council has agreed on a revised plan that's expected to save the city money with only a negligible decrease in employee benefits.

"The retires from January of 1990, their current monthly benefit is \$317.38," Assistant City Manager Bryant Lawrence said. "If you do nothing, their monthly benefit in January is going to go to \$334.55. if you adopt this new method, it will be \$331.78. Here's one from 2018: their current monthly benefit is \$3,667.56. On Jan. 1, under the current method, it will be \$3,839.23. Under this new method it will be \$3,833.26. So, a difference of

six dollars a month." The new plan, passed under Ordinance 2023-21, is expected to save the city about \$40,000 per year through at least 2031. The savings largely do not come

from the slight decrease in employee benefits. Instead of putting budget money away for a retroactive calculation, it uses a simple calculation looking at the most recent year of inflation. The prior method accounted for future calculations that set aside money from the city's funds. The new method no longer advances funding for future COLAs. Some of the real savings are in future retirees, city management said. The new plan also reduces unfunded liabilities by \$400,000 over 20 years. The city is Azle's fifth largest employer.

### **CITY CHANGES INSURANCE POLICIES**

In response to rising insurance rates, the City of Azle held a special meeting on Oct. 30 to discuss the issue and made a subsequent decision in its November meeting. Currently, city employees utilize the TX Health Benefits Pool through the Texas Municipal League for health insurance.

Mitchell Rose, an insurance broker with Clark Adamson LLC, and Cat Schlueter, human resources manager for the city, briefly presented on the issue during November's

meeting and provided their recommendations. City staff recommended transitioning to a United Healthcare benefits plan for employee health insurance, Mutual of Omaha for all other ancillary benefits, including enhanced dental and vision, and adding the First Stop Health virtual benefit to the city's employee insurance package. The new package was de-

scribed as "richer" and represents only a 4.85% increase from current costs, instead of the projected 16% increase the city anticipated from staying with TML. The new rate is well under the threshold the city anticipated for this year's increase in healthcare costs, Schlueter said. The new plan will also eliminate the Health Maintenance Organization option which only three employees have taken advantage of and includes new benefits like telemedicine service, First Stop Health.

#### **CITY APPROVES FAÇADE AND** SIGNAGE IMPROVEMENT REQUEST

Heather Grayson of Eagle Mountain Healthcare at 807 Southeast Parkway spoke to council during November's

meeting to request assistance in trimming a large oak tree growing too closely to her building. The tree is estimated to be over 200 years old, and Grayson wishes to preserve the tree, but also prevent its branches from doing any damage to the roof.

"When we came up with the program, tree trimming was not exactly what we envisioned, but it does fit the requirement," City Manager Tom Muir said.

Grayson had already done much of the landscaping and repairs on the leased property herself until she realized it might be covered under a city program. Grayson is a nurse practitioner for adult and geriatric patients.

The Façade and Signage Improvement Program was enacted by the city in 2020 to provide assistance to property owners or business tenants seeking to renovate or restore their exterior signage, lighting or commercial building façades in order to prolong the life of a commercial property. During the meeting, the council voted to approve Grayson's request and grant her the resources needed to trim the tree.

### FROM PAGE A1

to be closer to their children, who had grown up and moved to the Springtown area. Jerry Ellis eventually died in 1999.

In 2000, Connie Ellis started volunteering at the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce, and she was part of the chamber's Cares and Shares organization that raised money for Neighbor to Neighbors.

"The vision wasn't such that we could get money in that we needed for food," Ellis said. "Cares and Shares was actually put together by community leaders. The fellow that started it was the superintendent of schools, and he could see that it would be something that the schoolteachers and the other businesses that had employees could contribute to, in the manner same as United Way, and that's the way it was put together. And one time a year, we would have a fund drive. Everything would go into Cares and Shares, and then Cares and Shares at that time was funding 80% of the food that was bought for

Neighbors." Neighbor to Neighbors is known first and foremost as a food pantry, but Ellis said the pantry can help people with other needs, such as clothes, direction on health services and care for older adults and children, across

the community beyond food insecurity.

"There are just folks that need things," she said. "The way we are now, we're struggling to meet the needs of our clients. You look at the fact that 800 people came in in a month (to Neighbor to Neighbors), and people come in for everything. It's not just a food bag. It's clothing. It's help with elderly."

She added, "If you come to Neighbor to Neighbors and you say you're hungry, we're going to help you. We're going to do something for you. We're going to see that whatever you need, you get. If you come in and you're out of medicine, or you don't know what doctor to go to, or you're afraid that if you go to a doctor nobody will help you pay for it, or your Medicare is going to flip out on you or whatever, we will find somebody. We will be one of those services that will help you. It may not be something we can do personally, but we can find that person who will."

As an individual, Ellis has aimed to help people whether that's by finding them a place to stay, either at a motel or with Ellis herself, or by getting them the things they need to maintain a job. She has learned that it's important for her to maintain passion in her work at Neighbor to Neighbors.

"Every situation pulls you differently, and so it keeps your enthusiasm level high, and if you lose your enthusiasm, you're not worth a dime," Ellis said. "I feel like God has His foot on my back and pushes me all the time."

Toward the end of her service on the Neighbor to Neighbors board, Ellis said she was focused on providing help to people who are completely homebound during the Christmas and winter season.

"It's really, really hard for those people, and they're living on a defined income," she said. "They get afraid to turn on the air conditioner, and they get afraid you turn on the heater, and they don't know who to call on. They don't know who to get for help, and they'll sit until it's 55 degrees in their house because they don't want to have a big gas bill or a big electricity bill."

After retiring from the board, Ellis still plans to be involved with Neighbor to Neighbors as well as take up a position on her church's outreach board.

Ellis recalled earning two honors while volunteering for Neighbor to Neighbors, and one of those was the Citizen of the Year award she won in 2008. She had been working with the food pantry for eight years at the time of the award and described those years as difficult because legendary chamber of commerce director Judy Smerud had died during that time.

"I didn't need this," Ellis said of the award. "I didn't feel like I

earned it, but I got it." In contrast, regarding the plaque the chamber of commerce presented to her in September honoring her 22 years of service at Neighbor to Neighbors, Ellis said, "I earned this sucker."

"I didn't know I was going to get it," she said. "I was real surprised. I surely didn't know they were going to present to me at a chamber of commerce meeting, and it wasn't something that I ever thought would happen. I'm very proud of it.'

Instead of hanging the plaque on her wall at home, Ellis intends to keep it at Neighbor to Neighbors.

"It belongs at Neighbors," she said. "It's a Neighbors plaque. It's not a Connie Ellis plaque. It's got my name on it, but it's for Neighbors."

Neighbor to Neighbors Board President James Heil described Ellis as "an amaztime, her talent, never asks for anything and is always giving back." Heil has known Ellis for about four years and met her when he started volunteering for Neighbor to

Neighbors. "She had a heart to serve at Neighbors," he said, recalling his first impression of Ellis. "She is very active, very willing to get in there and get her hands dirty and get things done."

Particularly, Heil said Ellis was instrumental in helping the food pantry to expand its service hours to four days a

"She was up there every



PHOTO COURTESY OF SPRINGTOWN AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VIA FACEBOOK At the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce's September luncheon, Tootie Hall honored Connie Ellis for 22 years of service at the food pantry Neighbor to Neighbors.

day to make sure that things were moving along," he said. "She was on the board, but then she also made sure to be there in person. A lot of us ing volunteer that gives of her board members can't be there in person because we have daytime jobs, but Connie, when I got there, was not only the president but was at the center every day to make sure that things got done and the different ideas that we were coming up with actually got put into action. She was a huge catalyst in opening up those hours so that more people could come get food."

Heil succeeded Ellis as president of the board a few years ago, and Ellis spoke highly of him.

"I have enjoyed knowing him because he has more suave and debonair than I do," she said. "He's just a nice

Having Ellis be so involved at Neighbor to Neighbors has made Heil's role as president easier, he said, because he knows he can lean on Ellis' knowledge of the food pantry whenever needed. As for Ellis' retirement, Heil thinks the change will be good for her, but he doesn't expect her to stop volunteering completely.

"There's times in life where we need to take a break, and so I'm excited for her to be able to have some more time to just relax or do other things," he said. "She said, 'Even though I'm stepping away from this, I'm not stepping away from volunteering,' so she's going to be involved in other activities. I'm not exactly sure what all those are, but she'll stay busy. I have no doubt.'



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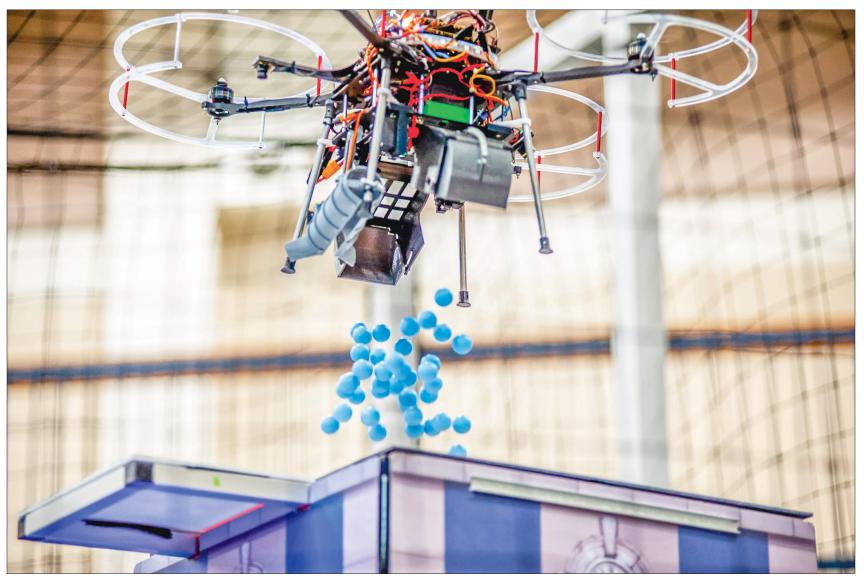
### **DRONE** FROM PAGE A1

a single match. For the first time, the group also won the Exemplary Team Award and qualified for the championship contest on the Dec. 1 weekend. The Exemplary Team Award was given to the team that "best demonstrates professionalism, passion and respect to both fellow competitors and event staff."

This is the second year in a row the AHS team has made it to the championship. The team went on to place fourth place — just three points shy of third — at the championship which was held at the Bell Innovation Barn in Hurst, Texas.

Azle's drone team ranked alongside such highfalutin institutions as the Gene Burton College and Career Academy in Rockwall, Texas and the Ideaventions Academy for Mathematics and Science in Reston, Virginia at both the championship and qualifying events. The championship event consisted of the top 14 teams in the nation.

The contest is organized by the Robotics Education & Competition Foundation and is made possible by the sponsorship of Bell Flight. This is the sixth time the REC has held this competition. This year's competition consisted of an autonomous recon, rescue and firefighting simulation. At least seven students per team designed, built and eventually operated a large AVR drone, telopilot with smoke jumper, Sphero first responders and a firetruck rover to complete tasks for this timed contest. The



COURTESY HORNET DRONES

Tri-County Reporter A5

The team's AVR drone used simulated water droplets and a laser pointer representing a fire hose to put out fake fires in the qualifying and championship contests.

challenge is intended to replicate the steps needed to save lives during a firefighting operation. The students then presented their engineering notebook and gave a presentation on their design to the judges.

This is AHS teacher Tyler Harrison's third year supervising the team and only the fourth year the program has been offered at the high school.

"It's been really fun watching them develop over the last three years," Harrison said. "The first year it was all brand new. I just watched them mature and get closer

together and get more focused every year. Last year they qualified for the championship event for the first time, and it really put a fire under them this year to really spend a lot of time and effort working on their design and setting themselves up for success. I'm very proud of them. A lot of these guys are seniors and have developed a lot of aviation skills because of this and now several of them are interested in pursuing a career in aviation or drones. The competition has had an impact not only on them in high school, but also their career path. Bell has done a really awesome job giving the kids an opportunity pursuing something super challenging. We're really thankful for the opportunity to participate."

Among the group are prospective future air force drone pilots, biomedical engineers and those who plan on incorporating engineering and drones in jobs like construction mapping, for

example. While the team didn't have to start entirely from scratch, making modifications from last year's AVR drone, they spent countless hours troubleshooting, testing, building and sacrificing their Saturdays for competitions. Their season started at the beginning of the school year and the months of hard work and labor the team have gone through is all worth it, they said.

"This year has been nothing but improvements," senior Kyler Akers said. "It's wild, especially since most of us are seniors, this is our last year. This is very awesome... It's a massive amount of teamwork. Everybody helps out in their own way.'

Team members say they believe drone technology will



Kyler Akers, Logan Louquet, Brendon Devillier and Omarie Welsh during the qualifying competition. "Everyone here is friends, to the point of brotherhood — we're all brothers because of this competition."

have massive implications for firefighting, delivery and countless other industries before we know it and that Bell's AVR challenge was a great opportunity to demonstrate some applications of this advancing technology.

"We put a lot of thought into this," senior Logan Loquet said. "We've gone through several iterations of the smoke jumper drop and we've gone through several telos. There's been a lot of fires in California, Colorado, Canada, and that may have been why this competition popped up in the way that it has, but we definitely try to

mimic modern technology as much as we can and modern practices as much as we can."

Along with developing skills for their futures, team members say they've developed a brotherhood and lifelong friendships.

The team also thanked parent volunteer, Damon Akers for his guidance and many contributions to the season. While Bell's competition season is over, the team hopes to participate in another drone competition in the spring. To keep up with Azle High School's drone team follow Hornet Drones on Facebook.



COURTESY HORNET DRONES

The team alongside Mr. Harrison (in white) at its qualifying contest.



COURTESY HORNET DRONES

Hornet Drone team: junior Lucas Maschmeier, senior Brendon Devillier, senior Kyler Akers, senior Omarie Welsh, senior Logan Louquet, junior Matthew Frank, junior Logan Leach, senior Logan Harrison and senior John Bonilla demonstrate their drone outside AHS.



# Church contributes to community charities

Azle community service organizations awarded \$14k-plus by First Methodist Church committee

#### **ZACH FREEMAN**

azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — It's the season for giving. On Nov. 30, First Methodist Church in Azle donated \$14,934.16 to be split between four Azle community service organizations. Eagle Mountain Pregnancy Help Center, Good N.E.W.S. Living At Home/ Block Nurse Program, the **Community Caring Center** and Safe Harbor Counseling Center were each selected by committee to receive the sum which was largely raised during this year's Lord's Acre Festival.

Lord's Acre is a vearly tradition among some Christian denominations where congregants are urged to set aside one acre of their harvest for the church. Starting in 1922 in Georgia, the tradition has spread and evolved to be a staple among many Southern churches. This year's Lord's Acre at the First Methodist Church Oct. 5-7 included a book sale, sweet shop, auctions and more.

"They've been doing the Lord's Acre here for 54 years, I think since '69," Pastor Ray Gilman said. "They use it for fostering congregational unity and also funding these community outreaches.

Recently they turned it more to community and local, so a lot of the giving is spent locally whereas 20 years ago it was all over the place."

Pastor Gilman, along with church committee members B.J. Collins and Jeff Mahlman, presented the full check to the organizations' respective directors: Joanne Stull, director of the Eagle Mountain Pregnancy Help Center, Terri Bartlett, executive director of Good N.E.W.S., Kristie Cooper executive director of the **Community Caring Center** and Fran Simpson, program manager at Safe Harbor Counseling Center.

Last year's \$11,737.38 donation from First Methodist Church was awarded to the same four organizations.

"We did much better than last year, so the check's bigger this year," Pastor Gilman said. "We want to do everything we can in this community. I'm new, following suit. so the church has done this without my direction at all. This is their ministry; their community and they're inviting me in to be a part of that so I'm happy to be here today. Moving forward, they are the body of Christ, I'm the replaceable one. Two things you don't need to serve Christ are a pastor and a

church, but we're happy to do this for you and we hope to improve this moving forward. Thank you for what you do."

Pastor Gilman joined the First Methodist Church from Liverpool, New York on Aug. 18 of this year. He described the tradition as new to him but somewhat analogous to northeastern traditions like 'Old Home Days." This yearly donation has had a major impact on the different charitable organizations since their founding.

"The church has been helping Good N.E.W.S. for as long as I've been at Good N.E.W.S., Bartlett said. "At one time Good N.E.W.S. was going to have to close, and the church called me and gave me \$1,500 and it was exactly enough to keep Good N.E.W.S. up. In March, I'll have been at Good N.E.W.S. for 24 years. We couldn't do it without y'all."

Bartlett, who joined Good N.E.W.S. in 2000, three years after its founding, said there were seven Living At Home/ Block Nurse Programs in the state of Texas at one time and now her organization is all that's left.

"That's really a testament to the community," she said. As a result of recent demand and requests, Good N.E.W.S. has begun to provide

(Back row L-R) Jeff Mahlman, Pastor Ray Gilman, B.J. Collins. (Middle row) CCC Assistant Director Bonnie Monninger. (Front row L-R) CCC Executive Director Kristie Cooper, Good N.E.W.S. Executive Director Terri Bartlett, Safe Harbor Counseling Center Program Manager Fran Simpson and Eagle Mountain Pregnancy Help Center Director Joanne Stull.

meals to some seniors with no other means of assistance. This was previously not a service they offered or saw a large enough need for.

The Community Caring Center has had a particularly close relationship with the congregation at 200 Church Street over the last 20 years. One of the present committee members, B.J. Collins and former pastor Dean Posey acquired the land for the current CCC building via a dona-

tion from B.J. Clark, an instrumental figure in the growth of Azle. Several church members have also served as CCC directors over the years, according to Collins.

The CCC saw its highest demand for meals on record last month with 1,500 families served. Cooper says the number of people coming to the center has tripled compared to prior years. Stull said her organization has seen a massive and persistent residents.

influx of crisis pregnancies to the center since the overturning of Roe. V. Wade.

Simpson said Safe Harbor always has a lot of people needing counseling services but right now the waitlist is longer than ever. Safe Harbor and the other organizations hope to apply the check to their growing expenses in order to continue providing years more of quality service and help to Azle area

# Spotlight on BUSINESS

# DECEMBER



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Azle High School students from PALs, NHS, and FFA were a huge help when they volunteered at our food pantry on Thursday, 11/30! Shelves were stocked, boxes were decorated and filled, and bags were assembled. It was a pleasure to have these young adults help those in need in our community.

# Community Caring Center

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The Community Caring Center food pantry in Azle has been serving families for over 30 years. Each year, the number of clients seeking assistance has continued to grow, with an average of 1,300 families receiving food assistance each month in 2023.

The increasing number of clients means that Community Caring Center's budget is being stretched further than ever before. But with the help of the community, they can continue their mission to fight food insecurity for the community.

"Keeping our pantry shelves fully stocked is more challenging than ever before," said Kristie Cooper, executive director of CCC. "Our partnerships with local food banks and grocers give CCC the ability to purchase large quantities of food for as little as \$0.14 per pound, so your dollar goes a long way."

The Community Caring Center is able to provide food, hygiene products, home goods and clothing to clients at no charge thanks in large part to the community's help with donations.

Community Caring Center also provides holiday meal boxes to families in December and this year they are able to provide 1,000 boxes thanks in large part to the generosity of community members.

They also provide food to Azle ISD students through the Weekend Backpack Program, giving students who are chronically hungry ready-to-eat meals and snacks each Friday. During the 2022-2023 school year, they were able to provide over 4.500 backpacks. A \$25 donation helps to purchase six of those backpacks for students.

Another way the community can support the mission of Community Caring Center is by shopping at The Porch Resale Shoppe at 313 Commerce St., next door to CCC. All net proceeds at the shop go directly to funding the food pantry.

For more information about how you can donate, call 817-270-2962, or visit their website www.communitycaringcenter.com.



### **PANTRY** Donate Today!



We rely on support from the community to keep going!

CCC & The Porch Resale Shoppe will close for the year Dec 15 & 16 and reopen in the New Year!



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• deodorant

• lotion

- trash bags
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pods

- sheets
- laundry
- ziploc baggies
- light bulbs detergent
  - body soap

### Good N.E.W.S.

412 Commerce St., Azle 817-444-2300

### **OBITUARIES**

# Gwendolyn Hutson

Gwen Hutson passed away on Saturday, December 2, 2023, in Fort Worth, Texas. Funeral services will be conducted at 10 a.m. on Saturday, December 16, 2023, in the Crosier-Pearson Cleburne Funeral Home Chapel. Interment will follow in the Rosehill Cemetery. There will be a time of visitation at the funeral home from 6-8 p.m. on Friday, December 15, 2023.

Gwen was born on February 17, 1961, in Dallas. On May 23, 1987, she married Randall "Randy" Cook in Azle. She was known for her giving spirit and heart. She volunteered countless hours at a variety of organizations throughout her lifetime and passed this passion of hers on to her sons and other family members. Gwen was the "go to" person for family caregiving needs. Her feisty and "take control" nature helped her navigate countless obstacles for those she advo-

To say she was generous or giving does not do her justice. She was truly selfless in her generosity and giving of her time, talents and resources. Gwen was family oriented and known for her cooking and baking. She often expressed her love for those closest to her through her food. Gwen touched the lives of all who came into contact



with her and will be missed greatly.

Survivors include her husband of 36 years, Randy Cook, Sr.; two sons, Randall "Randy" Cook, Jr., and his wife, Alex, and Robert Jay Cook; two grandchildren, Theodore Rex Cook and Kaylee Harper Cook; parents, Floyd Edgar and Joyce Nell Hutson; two brothers, Montgomery Floyd Hutson and Tracy Don Hutson; numerous nieces and nephews. and a host of other relatives and friends, including her special nieces, Cathy Beck, Logan Swinney, and Morgan Woods.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to The Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at www.thecentertx.com in honor of Gwen's memory.

> The Tri-County Reporter, *Thursday Dec 14, 2023*

### Wilma Thomas 1924-2023

Wilma Thomas, age 99, left this world on December 6, 2023 surrounded by loved

Family and friends are invited to attend visiting hours on Sunday, December 17 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. at Biggers Funeral Home, 6100 Azle Ave., Lake Worth, Texas 76135. A graveside service will be held on Wednesday, December 20 at 10 a.m. at Azleland Cemetery, 850 N. Cardinal Rd., Azle, Texas, 76020.

Wilma was born on November 17, 1924, in Frogville, Oklahoma to John and Minnie Hughes. She married her longtime love, Edward Thomas, in April of 1943. The two of them lived most of their lives in Azle, Texas and raised four children

Wilma enjoyed cooking, fishing, and spending time with her children and grandchildren. She loved to laugh and was a spitfire fueled by lots of chocolate and sass.

She was preceded in death

Edward Thomas; beloved daughter, Martha Geary; daughter-in-law Delma Thomas; and brothers and sisters. Wilma is survived by her

by her husband of 73 years,

son, Charles Thomas; daughter, Carolyn Ritchmond and husband Billy; son, Johnny Thomas and wife Gail; and many grandchildren, greatgrandchildren, and greatgreat grandchildren.

> The Tri-County Reporter, Thursday Dec 14, 2023

# Beloved Azle Spanish teacher laid to rest

#### **ZACH FREEMAN**

azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — On Monday, Nov. 20 Azle High School Spanish teacher Michael Garcia passed away. His funeral was held in his hometown of Falfurrias Nov. 29. Garcia is survived by his sister, a niece, great nieces and nephews.

"His presence and dedication to Azle High School have (left) an incredible mark on each of us," Principal Nate Driver said in an address to students and faculty. "Mr. Garcia was not merely an educator; he was a mentor and guide. His passion for teaching extended far be-

### Garcia remembered by Azle ISD staff and students

yond the classroom, shaping the minds and hearts of countless individuals. Many stories have been shared reflecting on the amazing impact he had on the lives of students and staff. His legacy of kindness, wisdom and unwavering commitment to education will continue to resonate here at AHS.

Garcia taught at Azle ISD for eight years and had been a teacher for a total of 16. Before Azle, Garcia worked in Castleberry, Cleburne, Crowley and Kennedale ISDs.

He is remembered fondly by the many Azle teachers and students who knew him.

"I worked with Michael for many years at Azle High School," Lou Ann Burnham, an AHS English teacher, said in a comment on his Legacy. com obituary. "Although his classroom was in another hallway from mine, we saw each other regularly. He always spoke to me and if we had time, we had a great conversation. Michael was committed to his students and AHS — always want-

ing the best for the students in his classroom. He teaches Spanish and I teach English, and I always used Michael to help reach my Spanish-speaking parents and/or students. He was always ready to help when I needed it! On the day we left for Thanksgiving break, I saw him and as we passed each other, we said 'we made it' and 'Have a great Thanksgiving'. Michael, you will be missed at AHS! Thank you for your friendship, dedication to students, and for being a great colleague. For the family, I pray for God's comfort and peace in your

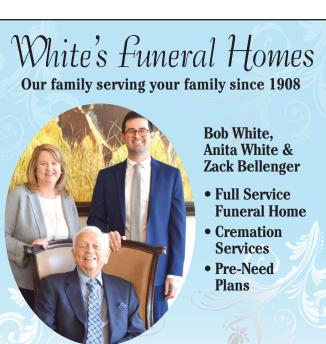
loss of Michael."



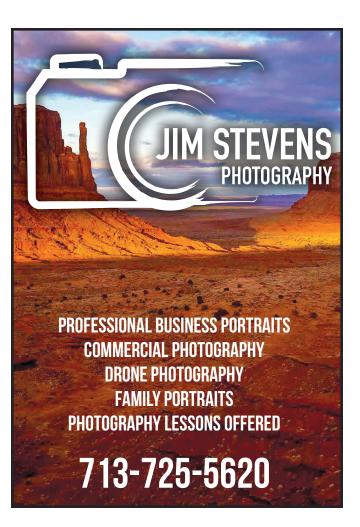
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### ... ATTEND THE CHURCH OF YOUR CHOICE THIS SUNDAY

### **THE ABBEY CHURCH** Pastor: Paul Brownback 10400 Jacksboro Hwy 817-238-1404 www.TheAbbeyChurch.com Morning Worship......10:30 AM Community Groups ...... Various Times **ASH CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH** Pastor: Dr. G. Wesley Shotwell 300 South Stewart St. 817-444-3219 www.ashcreekbc.org Sunday School......9:30 AM Contemporary Worship-TMP ...... 10:45 AM **AZLE FIRST ASSEMBLY of GOD**

Traditional Worship ......10:45 AM Evening Worship/Youth Refuge ...... 6:00 PM Wednesday Evening......6:15 PM Rev. Joshua Lowrance 1020 S.E. Parkway, Azle **817-237-4903** Sunday School......9:30 AM Morning Worship......10:30 AM Wednesday Evening......7:00 PM **COMMUNITY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH** 

Pastor - Alton Davis 817-521-4510 1405 Reynolds Rd., Azle 817-444-7117 Directions: 730 N. to 1542 .5 mi. right on Cardinal, left on Reynolds Sunday School......9:45 AM

Morning Worship......11:00 AM Sunday Evening ......6:00 PM

**AZLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH DISCIPLES OF CHRIST** Interim Minister Rev. Russell Clark,

Family Life Minister Emerson Braun 117 Church St. • 817-444-3527 Sunday School......10:00 AM Morning Worship......11:00 AM

**CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH** 2233 Hwy 199 E., Springtown 817-221-LIFE (5433) Sunday Worship Service ......10:00 AM

Wednesday......7:00 PM **CROSSROADS BAPTIST CHURCH** Pastor - Jon Baker

Corner FM 730S & FM 1886 817-755-0279 Transportation Available Worship Service......10:30 AM Wed. Prayer Service......7:00 PM THE EDGE CHURCH - AZLE

1313 S.E. Pkwy, Azle **817-237-4822** Missouri Synod "Love God - Serve Others - Share Jesus" Traditional Worship ......9:30 AM Contemporary Worship......11:00 AM

FIRST METHODIST CHURCH OF AZLE Pastor: Rev. Raymond Gilman 200 Church St., Azle **817-444-3323** Morn. Worship ......8:30, 9:45 & 11 AM Sunday School......9:45 & 11 AM Wednesday Evening........7:00 PM Youth (UMYF) ....5:00 PM Sun & 6:30 PM Wed Wed. Bible Study.......7:00 PM

**GRACEPOINTE CHURCH** 4110 E. Hwy 199, Springtown Pastor: Timothy McKeown

817-221-5683 gracepointesbc.org Sunday School.....9:45 am Sunday Service......11:00 AM Wednesday Bible Study ......6:00 PM

**HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH** 800 Highcrest Dr. - Azle **817-444-3063** Saturday ...... 5:00 PM Sunday ......9:00 AM Sunday ......11 AM (Spanish) Daily Mass (M, T, Th, F) ......8:00 AM Wednesday Mass Religious ED ...... 6:30 PM Confessions ......Sat 4 PM

**HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA** 4795 E. Hwy 199 - Reno 817-221-HOPE Follow us on Facebook for streaming services Sunday School......9:00 AM

Traditional Service ......10:00 AM **SOLID ROCK BIBLE CHURCH** 591 S. Reno Rd, , Springtown, Texas 76082 Pastor - Bill Gay - 817-304-7443 Coffee and Donuts ......9:00 AM Sunday School......9:30 AM

**LEGACY CHURCH** Assembly of God Church Pastor: Gary D. Veazey Hwy. 199 & Jaybird Lane **817-221-2983** Morning Worship......9:15 & 11:00 AM Kidz Zone.....9:15 & 11:00 AM Weds Evening Legacy Group Legacy Youth, Kids

THE RANCH CHRISTIAN COWBOY CHURCH Pastor: Greg Slankard 7955 Reed Rd., Azle 682-327-7082

www.TheRanchCCC.org Sunday School 9:30 AM • Worship 10:00 AM Weds 7:00 pm • Thurs Potluck 6:30 pm **SILVER CREEK METHODIST CHURCH** 

Pastor: Bill Killough 2200 Church Rd., Azle 817-444-1382 www.silvercreekmc.org Sunday School 9:30 AM • Worship 10:30 AM

SILVER CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH Pastor: Jay Ditty Minister of Music: David Musick

Church 817-444-2325 www.silvercreekbc.org

Corner FM 730 S. & Veal Station Rd. Sunday School......9:45 AM THE WORD@LAKESIDE CHURCH OF GOD 9396 FM 1886 Fort Worth, TX 76135

817-237-5500 thewordatlakeside.com **Pastors**: Brandon and Kelly Bohannon

Worship Pastor: Christen Moody Family Life and Young Adult Pastors: Jodie and Mark James, Kids Pastor: Katie Pearson, **Student Pastors**: Taylor and Sheridan Tomlin, Creative Directors: Logan and Carrie

Edwards, **Connections Coordinators**: Preston and Ashley Larrew

Equip Sunday School at the WORD ...... 9:30 AM Empower Worship at the WORD ...... 10:45 AM Kids at the WORD...... 10:45 AM PreK at the WORD...... 10:45 AM Emanate at the WORD (Special Needs Ministry) ...... 10:45 AM Nursery at the WORD ...... 10:45 AM Young Adults at the WORD ...... 6:00 PM Wednesdays The WORD Students (6th-12th grades)...... 6:30 PM

Morning Worship......10:50 AM Wed. Prayer Meeting......6:30 PM Wed. Prayer Service......7:00 PM Life at the WORD Life Groups Various Times

A church alive is worth the drive! For more information or rates on listing your church, call Jessica at 817-270-3340

Morning Worship......10:30 AM

Children's Church After Music Service

B.J. Clark

bic@clarksmachine.com

## TRI+COUNTY REPORTER DEVOTIONAL PAGE

# Tri\*County

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**NORTHWEST CHURCH of CHRIST** 6059 Azle Ave., Fort Worth 817-237-1205

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817-444-3323 LIGHTHOUSE FELLOWSHIP 7200 Robertson Rd., Fort Worth

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817-444-3547 THE LIVING WORD COUNTRY **CHURCH OF TEXAS** 1240 E. HWY 199. SPRINGTOWN

817-913-2717 **NEW LIGHTED WAY** 624 Harbor Dr. Circle, Azle

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### Santa Claus is coming to Reno for Dec. 16 event

Meet Santa to take place 3-5 p.m. at City Hall

#### **MADELYN EDWARDS**

springtownreporter@tricountyreporter.com

RENO — In preparation for Christmas, Santa Claus plans to stop by Reno City Hall this weekend to see for himself if the local children have been naughty or nice.

From 3-5 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 16, Reno kids will be able to meet Santa and give him their Christmas wish list while their parents or guardians snag a picture of them with Old Saint Nick. Families are invited to enjoy cocoa and cookies at the event, and a children's coloring contest is also on the agenda.

Reno Events Committee Chairperson Courtney Trevino said one of the goals of this free event is to give local families and children the opportunity to see Santa without too much hassle.

"I know as a parent or a young parent, nobody wants to stay in line for hours in Cabela's waiting for a ticket or doing this, always jumping through hoops, running

through city traffic," Trevino said. "It's like here we have the one stop shop in the middle of both Springtown and Azle."

Trevino hopes families will come out to be a part of the community and enjoy the Christmas season.

"We just want to be able to accommodate everybody and make sure everybody gets something special during the holiday season," she said.

People are also encouraged to donate new and unwrapped toys for kids in need at the event.

At least two little boys are looking forward to the event - Trevino's sons.

"They're very excited," she said. "They were like, 'Do you know Santa?' and I was like, 'I do.'

Reno Events Committee is led by Trevino, Jody Bas and Lynda Stokes, and it is supported by community donations.

"We're all just working together, and it's nice," Trevino said. "I feel like we have a lot



MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Santa Claus is pictured with Izzy Wining and Charlie Jenkins at Reno's Pancakes with Santa event last year.

of different mindsets which helps regulate everything and keeps us on track."

The committee is accepting donations of cocoa,

candy canes or cookies as well as cash to fund events. Volunteers for events are also needed. For more information about how to donate or

volunteer, email reno.events@ renotx.gov.

Those who are interested in supporting the community toy drive can contact Interim

City Secretary Rebekah Roberts at rebekka.roberts@ renotx.gov.







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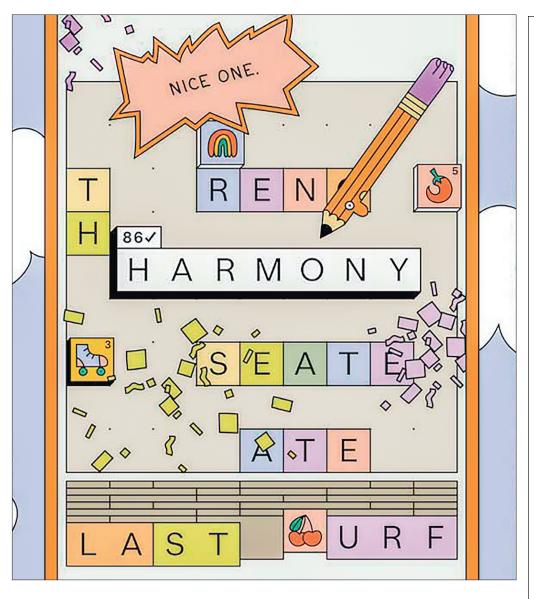




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SCREENSHOT COURTESY STUDIO FOLLY

A screenshot of some typical Gubbins gameplay.

# Gubbins

I've followed Hank Green on YouTube for years, so when he recommended a word game the other day, I got my phone out and installed it immediately.

Gubbins is a word game that could be called 'Scrabble-adjacent." Words can be built vertically or horizontally with a random selection of letter tiles. Unlike Scrabble, when a word is found, it can be selected and removed. In Britain, a "gubbin" is a miscellaneous item. Gubbins are "weird little pals" who either help you or hinder your puzzle solving. Rainbows with six eyes, mushrooms with eyes and legs, lightning bolts with muscular arms, trumpets with four legs and arms – all done in a retro style that looks like a combination of Peter Max posters and cartoon characters from the Beatles' Yellow Submarine. When your game is over, you can make postcards with the words you've used that day in the puzzles, plus cute little stickers and backgrounds.

Created by Studio Folly,
Gubbins began as a small
game Darcy Smith and his
partner, Jess Shipard created
together. In a post on Reddit,
Smith says he was working
with game developers back in
2020, but when the pandemic
hit, opportunities dried up.
Shipard suggested "why don't
we try and make something

small?"
Shipard is a graphic designer, so she already had that design sensibility, and Smith had the digital skills, so after

1,166

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### It's a word game!



**GAME ON**By Jennifer Harrison

My opinions on computer gaming and some of my favorite games. I've been playing games on the home computer since the days of the Trash 80.1 love indie, open-world, unique, puzzle, and resource games. The cake is a lie.

the success of Scrabble and Words with Friends, they decided a word game would be a good project to collaborate on.

Their focus was simple — create a game that's fun for non-gamers, with no timesensitive dexterity inputs, and a concentration on quality rather than making a large game. At that time there was very little innovation in word games, so it seemed like the perfect project.

In 2021 Wordle came out and was very popular, and its success confirmed there was still plenty of appetite for a word game. But designing and developing a game can be highly stressful, and they ran out of money several times. Much of their funding came from games production and development grants from Vicscreen, the primary games funding body in the state of Victoria, Australia, More was made available from Screen Australia, the country-wide games funding body.

But money was still tight and it was difficult to convince game publishers to take risks on new games, espe-

**NOVEMBER 2023 ACTIVITY** 

AZLE POLICE DEPARTMENT

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cially ones without a lot of funding.

Then Hank Green came

along. After Smith posted a TikTok video about Gubbins (mainly to test out his new microphone) Hank Green contacted him and wanted to know more about the game. He offered to purchase 10% of Gubbins, and in exchange, 10% of the profits would go toward reducing child and maternal death in Sierra Leone via Partners in Health. Smith and Shipard were thrilled with the offer and took him up on it immediately. It gave them the funds to get the game up on the App

Store.
Gubbins is super simple to play and addictive. Players can play one free game a day. There are in-game purchases, but no advertising. For only \$5.99, you can play as many times as you want, without

If you like Wordle and other online word games, you'll love Gubbins. Download "Gubbins — A Word Game" on your phone's App store today.

### **News from Azle City Hall**

We welcome your comments or suggestions on information you would like to see reported on this page. Please call Azle City Hall, 817-444-2541, or email Assistant to the City Manager Susie Hiles at shiles@cityofazle.org. Until next month........

### **CWD Christmas Tree Collection and Recycling**

CWD will collect used Christmas Trees on your second collection day or your Wednesday brush day. Residents may also drop off their trees to be recycled December 25 - January 8, 2024 at Azle City Hall, 505 W. Main St. A roll off container will be located on the very last row of the parking lot for residents to use at any time. In order for trees to be recyclable, please remove all ornaments, tinsel, bags and plastic.

### **Recycle Your Non-working Holiday Lights**

After the Christmas season is over, many people toss non-working Christmas lights in the garbage. Christmas lights, like most electronics, are not biodegradable and will not decompose into the earth's soil. If you want to keep your lights from going to a landfill and do your part to look after the earth, recycling your lights is a great way to do it. However, DO NOT put them in the recycle bin as they tangle up recycling machinery.

The City of Azle will provide a drop off location at City Hall, 505 W. Main St from December 25 - January 8, 2024. A roll off container will be located on the very last row of the parking lot for residents to use at any time.

### **CWD Holiday Collection Schedule**

Residential trash and recycling collection schedules will slide one day. For more information, call CWD at (972) 392-9300 or visit the CWD website at www.communitywastesdisposal.com

### **Holiday Gifts for Golfers**

Cross Timbers Golf Course has several gift options sure to bring a smile to that special golfer on your Christmas list. Shop today!





Cross Timbers Golf Course Pro Shop (817) 444-4940 1181 S. Stewart St Azle, Texas

### New rates in effect January 1, 2024 for Cross Timbers Golf Course

Beginning January 1, 2024, new course rates and annual pass rates will take effect at Cross Timbers Golf Course. A new addition to the rate structure is an "Azle resident" rate. (Azle Residents will be required to provide a water bill matching their driver's license.) This increase is due to improved course conditions and costs associated with maintaining Cross Timbers at this level.

New Course Rates N	Ion –Thurs	Friday	Saturdays/Sundays/Holidays
Open until 12 pm	\$47	\$52	\$59
12 pm until 3 pm	\$39	\$45	\$53
After 3 pm	\$32	\$35	\$38
Senior/Military/Student	\$40	\$45	\$53
City of Azle Resident	\$40	\$45	\$53
**All prices include cart	rental.		

### New Annual Pass Rates

Unlimited: \$3,150 per year

Weekday (excludes weekends & holidays): \$2,650 per year Additional Family Member(s) (within rules): \$1,000 per person/year

Visit Cross Timbers Golf Course website, www.crosstimbersgc.com, for complete information on course rates and annual passes.



### Azle Memorial Library News and Free Events 333 W Main St, Azle, TX 76020

817-752-2682 - www.azlelibrary.org - facebook.com/azlelibrary

### Wonka Celebration Event! December 21 6:00 - 7:30 PM

Join us for a scrumdiddlyumptious night at the Azle Library! Families with children ages 0-12 can enjoy making chocolate dipped treats, competing in golden egg races, creating a luminous lollie craft, and more! FREE! No sign up required.

### **Book Sale-Save the Date!**

Gently used books for kids and adults will be on sale in the Azle Library Community Room on Friday, January 12, from 12 - 6 PM and Saturday, January 13, from 10 AM - 4 PM. Everything \$1 or less! Cash only.

### FREE In-Person Programs

The Library offers a variety of **free** entertaining and educational programs for kids, teens and adults. For information on programs, visit our website and Facebook page. All events take place in the Library Community Room.

### **Library Holiday Closures:**

The Library will be closed December 23 - 26 and January 1, 2024. The outside return drops will remain accessible 24/7.

### **City of Azle Holiday Schedule**

Azle city facilities will close December 25 & 26 for the Christmas holidays and January 1, 2024 for New Year's.

Police and Fire services will be available by calling 817-444-3221, or 911 in case of an emergency. For water or sewer emergencies, please call 817-444-3221

Residential trash and recycling collection schedules will all slide over one day.



The City of Azle wishes you and your family a blessed Holiday Season

| Scan for more information on | what's happening in the City | of Azle or visit us at | www.cityofazle.org



BY DISPATCH





# Winter well and conservation tips

#### **STAFF REPORTS**

Release submitted by Jill Garcia of UTGCD

As North Texas finally transitions towards cooler temperatures, community water needs change as well. Preparing your home for freezing temperatures can save time and money, especially with meteorologists expecting El Niño to bring wintry weather to the Southwest United States. Use these tips from the Upper Trinity to winterize your house and well, all while saving a few gallons.

Now is the time to check fixtures in your home for leaks or moisture loss. To identify leaks in your system, consider a non-toxic dye tablet which changes appliance water from clear to blue or

### Upper Trinity Groundwater Conservation District staff give tips and tricks for prepping your home for winter

green revealing issues before mulch, while providing esthey cause damage. For individuals with hard water (water with elevated dissolved solids) faucets and fixtures can be soaked in a vinegar or mild acid solution to break down commonly occurring calcium carbonate build-up.

For those with a yard, hold off on raking up those pesky leaves. If left on soil and grass, the detritus forms a protective layer over the soil. minimizing moisture loss. The leaves act as a natural

sential nutrients back to your tree via decomposition.

Many ornamental plants and turf grasses require significantly less watering during winter months. This reduces costs on water utility bills or uses less electricity from water well production. Avoiding excessive watering in the evenings ensures plants don't become too damp during cooler weather and develop fungal issues.

"We just want to encour-

age residents to be mindful of their groundwater use and maybe consider native plants on their property." Iill Garcia of UTGCD said. "We get that Bermuda and St. Augustine are beautiful grasses, they're lovely carpet grasses, but a lot of them were developed in places that receive twice our annual precipitation."

Protect your trees this winter by placing mulch around the trunk bases — a good rule of thumb is a 2- to 4-inch-thick layer, approximately the diameter of the tree's crown. Regulating the temperature and moisture of your tree's root system while reducing weed growth at the base ensures there is no competition with other vegetation.

Exposed pipes should be properly insulated for expected weather conditions to prevent deleterious effects. Damaged pipes disrupt water supplies and can be expensive and time intensive to repair. Maintaining well shed insulation while ensuring proper ventilation (as groundwater sometimes includes gaseous byproducts) will keep your wellhead working properly. If you're looking to provide a heat source in your shed, make sure your wellhead materials won't be

negatively impacted by the temperatures, such as PVC casing.

Winter weather means holiday dishes and cooking, and large volumes of vegetables frequently require preparation. Consider diverting food scraps from your table this holiday season and contributing toward a compost pile. Composting reduces water consumption from garbage disposals and cultivates healthy soils for the spring planting season.

For more information or water conservation resources, reach out to staff at the **Upper Trinity Groundwater** District at 817-523-5200, or visit the district's website at uppertrinitygcd.com.

# Add safety to holiday prep list this year

### **STAFF REPORTS**

Release submitted by Texas Health

The winter holidays are filled with celebratory traditions such as turkey, pumpkin pie and backyard football. Adding safety to preparations can keep the holiday enjoyable and accident-free.

Raw turkey or ham can contain salmonella, Clostridium perfringens, campylobacter and other forms of bacteria. To prevent possible food born illness, remember to wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling raw meats.

"I tell my patients to sing the 'Happy Birthday' song to themselves twice," Carlos Galindo, M.D., family medi-

### Texas Health doctors urge caution while making meals this winter

staff at Texas Health Plano and with the Texas Health Physicians Group said. "This equates to about 20 seconds, which is the current time recommendation for thoroughly washing one's hands."

According to the CDC, Clostridium perfringens outbreaks occur most often in November and December. Outbreak is often linked to holiday foods such as turkey and roast beef.

"When it comes to Thanksgiving safety, preven-

cine physician on the medical tion is the key," Galindo said, adding that proper handling of food and adequate cooking can help you avoid a visit to the doctor's office for gastroenteritis, an inflammation of the stomach and intestines.

It's not just the turkey that could get you. Being careful is critical to many aspects of holiday prep.

"One wrong move or slice can result in a visit to the ER with a cut or burn," Andrew Morris, D.O., emergency physician and chair of emergency medicine at Texas Health



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES



METRO CREATIVE SERVICES

Keep your vegetables and meats on separate cutting boards to reduce the risk of bacterial contamination

### Never defrost a turkey on a kitchen counter.

Presbyterian Hospital Plano said. "Simply slowing down can greatly reduce the chances of an accident."

Several types of burns can occur in the kitchen. These can come from hot water, direct fire from gas stoves, placing hands on a hot burner, or grease splashes, Morris

"We also see people around the holiday times using double boilers," Morris said. "These can cause steam injuries, and I have even seen injuries from exploding sugar."

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission reports there have been hundreds of turkey-fryer related fires. A house fire prevention video

from the commission urges caution

The National Safety Council discourages the use of turkey fryers at home and urges those who prefer fried turkey to purchase it from professional establishments or consider using an oil-less turkey fryer. Experts warn that the use of fryers in an enclosed space can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

"A little bit of awareness can help make the difference between spending time at home with family and friends or at an emergency department," Morris said.

### OTHER PREPARATION AND

**STORAGE TIPS** · Use separate cutting boards for raw turkey, vegetables and cooked items,

· Have fewer people in the kitchen to prevent crosscontamination.

· Practice U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines when it comes to defrosting the turkey. Never thaw a turkey on a counter. When a turkey stays out at room temperature for more than two hours, it becomes unsafe, the CDC states.

· Refrigerate leftovers at 40°F or colder within two hours of cooking to prevent foodborne illnesses.

# **December 18-22, 2023 PK through 12th Grade**

\*Menus are subject to change

**BREAKFAST PRICES** EC-12th Reduced LUNCH PRICES PK-4th Grade. 5th-8th Grade High School Reduced...

PK - 12th Breakfast

BREAKFAST: Everyday - Various Juices & Cereals, Toast, Milk Variety, Fruit, Jelly Assortment, Buttermilk Biscuit, Variety of milk is offered every day for breakfast and lunch.

Mon Mini Maple Pancakes Applesauce cup Tues Chicken Biscuit Sliced Peaches Weds Eggstravaganza Blueberries Thurs Breakfast Pizza Apple Slices Fri No school

K - 4th Lunch

**Lunch: Everyday** - Choice of one meat, two vegetables, and one grain/bread with milk. Variety of milk is offered every day for breakfast and lunch.

Mon Bosco Sticks or Salisbury Steak, Roll, Mashed Potato, Fresh Veggies Apple Slices or Blueberries Tues Lasagna or Chicken Nuggets, Garlic Roll, Green Beans, Fresh Veggies (Cucumber & Tomato, Celery, Carrots), Applesauce cup or Orange Weds Cheeseburger or Hamburger French Fries, Fresh Veggies (Cucumber & Tomato, Celery, Carrots) Sliced Peaches or Apple Thurs Cheese Pizza Glazed Carrots Steamed Broccoli Strawberry Applesauce Fri Winter Break

5th - 12th Lunch

**Lunch: Everyday** - Choice of one meat, two vegetables, and one grain/bread with milk. Variety of milk is offered every day for breakfast and lunch.

Mon Pulled Pork Sandwich or Hot Dog, French Fries, Coleslaw, Fresh Veggies (Cucumber& Tomato, Fiesta Sticks, Broccoli) **Tues** Chicken Parm or Spaghetti, Mixed Vegetables, Fresh Veggies (Cucumber & Tomatoes, Fiesta Sticks, Broccoli), **Weds** Chicken & Waffles (Reg Or Spicy), Tator Tots, Fresh Veggies (Cucumber& Tomatoes, Fiesta Sticks, Broccoli), Variety of Fruit **Thurs** Cheese Pizza, Glazed Carrots Green Beans Fri No school

This menu is sponsored by ...



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BREAKFAST:



#### PreK-4th Grade, 7-12th Grade \$1.55 5-6th Grade FREE 2nd Meal \$2.00 PreK-4th Grade \$2.55 5-6th Grade \$2.75 7-12th Grade \$2.55 2nd Meal \$3.20

Visitors/Employees \$2.75

Visitors & Employees \$3.75



BREAKFAST: Everyday - Assorted Fruits and Cereal, Juice, White or Chocolate Milk, Graham Crackers, Toast Mon Soft Filled Cinnamon Toast Crunch, Fresh Apples Tues Golden Graham Cereal Bowl w/ Graham Cracker, Applesauce Weds Sausage w/ Cheese on a Bun, Fresh Apples **Thurs** Apple Jacks Cereal Bowl w/ Graham Cracker, Strawberry Craisins **Fri** No school LUNCH: Everyday - Variety of milk, Your choice of 1 entree & 1 fruit or juice

Mon Chicken Nuggets w/ roll Mac n Cheese w/ Breadstick Green beans Pears, Fresh Oranges Tues Tater tot Casserole w/ Biscuit Turkey

& Cheese Sub Mixed Veggies Peaches, Strawberry Slices **Weds** Hot Ham & Cheese Sandwich w/ Tomato Soup Chef Salad w/ breadsticks Steamed Carrots Steamed Peas Pineapple, Fresh Oranges Thurs Chicken Quesadilla Spicy Chicken Sandwich Mexican Black Beans Steamed Corn Applesauce, Fresh Banana Fri No school

### GRADES 5TH - 8TH

BREAKFAST: Everyday - Assorted Fruits and Cereal, Juice, White or Chocolate Milk, Yogurt w/Granola Mon Breakfast on a stick w/ Syrup, Pears Tues Egg & Cheese Biscuit, Pineapples Weds Cinnamon Roll, Fresh Oranges Thurs Breakfast Pizza, Fresh Apples Fri No school

LUNCH: Everyday: Variety of milk. Your choice of 1 entree & 1 fruit or juice, rolls, crackers • Salad bar offered daily

Mon Chicken Nuggets w/ roll Mac n Cheese w/ Breadstick Green beans Pears, Fresh Oranges Tues Tater tot Casserole w/ Biscuit Turkey & Cheese Sub Mixed Veggies Peaches, Strawberry Slices Weds Hot Ham & Cheese Sandwich w/ Tomato Soup Chef Salad w/ breadsticks Steamed Carrots Steamed Peas Pineapple. Fresh Oranges **Thurs** Chicken Quesadilla Breaded Chicken Sandwich Mexican Black Beans Steamed Corn Applesauce, Fresh Banana Fri No school

### **HIGH SCHOOL**

BREAKFAST: Everyday - Assorted Fruits and Cereal, Juice, White or Chocolate Milk, Yogurt w/Granola Mon Breakfast on a stick w/ Syrup Pears Tues Egg & Cheese Biscuit Pineapples

Weds Cinnamon Roll Fresh Oranges Thurs Breakfast Pizza Assorted Cereals Fresh Apples Fri No School

LUNCH: • Everyday: 1% unflavored or non fat chocolate milk & juice • Salad Bar Mon Mac n Cheese w/ Breadstick Cheeseburger Breaded Chicken Sandwich Cheese/Pepperoni/Meat lovers Pizza Chicken Quesadillas

Orange Chicken & Rice Crinkle Cut Fries, Steamed Peas Pears and Fresh Oranges Tues Tater tot Casserole w/ Biscuit Hamburger Spicy Chicken Sandwich Cheese/Pepperoni/Hamburger Pizza Cheese Nachos Sweet & Sour Chicken w/ Lo Mein Ham Wrap Steamed Broccoli, Mixed Veggies Strawberry Slices and Fresh Apples Weds Hot Ham & Cheese Sandwich w/ Tomato Soup Cheeseburger Breaded Chicken Sandwich Cheese/Pepperoni/Veggie Pizza Chicken & Cheese Crispitos w/ cheese sauce Chicken Fried Rice w/ Chicken Egg roll Crinkle Cut Fries, Vegetarian Beans Pineapples, Fresh Oranges Thurs Meatball Subs Hamburger Spicy Chicken Sandwich Cheese/ Pepperoni/Sausage Pizza Beef and Cheese Nachos TSO Chicken w/Lo Mein Garden Salad w/breadsticks Green beans, Steamed Corn Applesauce, Fresh Bananas Fri No school



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# Play-Doh magic

### **ZACH FREEMAN**

azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — What child — or adult, for that matter doesn't love Play-Doh?

Kids at the Azle Memorial Library were treated to an evening of winter Play-Doh magic Dec. 6. It was the first event, apart from story times and other recurring children's activities, organized and led by Ava Bryant, the library's new children's librarian. Bryant has a big interest in childhood development and learning and hopes to continue implementing creative, fun and productive activities in the future. Bryant was thrilled to see a room packed with families for her first program.

"We had a lot of people register for it," Bryant said. "I'm pretty excited about it. The kids can either make a Christmas Tree or snowman and it's process art so they can make it their own. There's no template for how it's supposed to be. Process art lets the kids be more creative, trying to find more ways for them to express themselves through their artwork instead of telling them 'this is what you have to make.' It lets them use their imagination. Play-Doh is a

Children's librarian, Ava Bryant, hosts first program at Azle Memorial Library

sensory activity; it also helps with fine motor skills. Them putting the buttons on the snowman or them putting the ornaments on the Christmas Tree, it (shows them) how it feels in their hands, and that's very beneficial for them."

Whether rain, snow or shine, Azle's library offers a wide array of fun activities for all ages year-round. During this event, kids were excited to create and take home their own Play-Doh creations and parents were equally grateful for the outlet.

"I just really love especially having them in the evenings, parent Abigail Lennox said. "The kids that are in school or Mom's Day Out can participate and that's really nice because a lot of the events are during the day. I really like they seem to be having more of these events, so it gets them out of the house. It gets them creative, so I definitely love that."

Lennox said Bryant left a great impression and was actually the one to inform her of the event.

"I actually didn't even know about this until she said something about it because we were getting some books," Lennox said. "I think we were the last two slots, so it worked out perfectly. It's really nice just because it's a small town and having things like this really helps bring the kids together and just be creative really."

Another regular at the library, Karen Porter, who is Mimi to her 2-year-old grandson, Jack Barnes, said the library's activities make up a big part of her family's fun and free time.

"(Jack) comes every Wednesday, he never misses storytime," Porter said. "He likes the stories; he loves books and Mimi is a retired librarian. It's a great way for him to interact with kids he doesn't know, to learn how to get along with other kids, and to play in different centers. They have a wonderful children's center. Miss Ava is wonderful; this library is



**ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER** 

Two-year-old Jack Barnes was extremely proud of his snowman and stoked to show it off to Miss Ava.



Sam Davis, 6, and his grandma Nancy Davis also had fun making a Play-Doh Christmas Tree. "I love it," Nancy Davis said. "We've been to several different things, and I've been to the adult offerings and children's. I love this library."

fabulous. It's got something for everybody. It's my social life. It's great. He loves it here and they all know him, and Miss Ginger says he's their mascot."

Along with the Play-Doh activity, the library also recently held a music trivia game for adults and a De-stress December event for teens and adults. Bryant is especially looking forward to an upcoming Willy Wonka-themed event coming to the library later this month.

"We're going to be making

3-year

chocolate-covered marshmallows, we're going to be doing a chocolate fondue for cookies and we're going to have some crafts and games and it's going to be a lot of fun," Bryant said.

#### **UPCOMING WINTER LIBRARY ACTIVITIES**

· Gift Wrap Party, Dec. 14 from 6p.m. to 8p.m.

· Wonka Celebration for children aged 0 to 12 and families, Dec. 21 from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

· Second Teen Gaming Night

for ages 11 to 17, Jan. 9 from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

· Smartphone 101 class, Jan. 9 from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

· Felt Cat Craft for teens and adults, Jan.18 from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

· Mini Art for Teens and adults, Jan. 23 from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

· Let's Talk Azle communication class for adults, Jan. 25 at 6 p.m.

· Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange for Adults, Jan. 27 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.







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### **Other December Events Scheduled**

Instrumental Evening Service, December 10th at 6 PM Sunday Morning Service, December 31st at 10:50 AM

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# **Sweet appreciation**

Azle hospital auxiliary treats staff to goodies during winter tradition

### **ZACH FREEMAN**

azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — In a yearly Christmastime tradition, Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital Azle's Auxiliary delighted hospital staff with an assortment of sweet treats and snacks Dec. 5. Cookies, cheeses, snacks and a special homemade punch spread out on a festively decorated table were the main point of attraction for the hard-working hospital staff. Nearby, the hospital's auxiliary members, a group of dedicated volunteers, sat and chatted.

"Some of the cookies and stuff we started (planning for) a month ago, make and freeze and everybody pitches

in and does it hard," Carol Feemster, the event's volunteer organizer said. "The auxiliary puts it on in appreciation for all the staff."

The auxiliary is a nonprofit organization supports the local hospital through events like these as well as with financial donations. The auxiliary has supported the hospital since the 1970s.

Johnny Terrazas, a radiation and CT technician, has worked at Texas Health for 20 years and says the auxiliary has hosted the Christmas event for as long as he can remember.

"It feels great (to be appreciated)," Terrazas said.
"Some of the auxiliaries are ex-employees, too, that have retired, and they come back.

It's always good to see (them), say hello and catch up."

Terrazas met his now-wife, Michele, at Texas Health and the two attended the event together.

"We actually met here; speaking of tradition and coming together, it can't get more together than that," Johhny Terrazas quipped.

"To me, this is a blessing every year," Michele Terrazas said. "It's a nice break from the busy hustle and bustle to be appreciated. We appreciate them because we know they don't get paid to do this. They just do it out of the kindness of their hearts."

Many of the dishes laid out for staff were homemade while others were store bought. Over the course of



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Auxiliary volunteers Mary Fonville and Mary Dement flanking either side of the tree they helped

the afternoon, dozens of hospital staff stopped in to enjoy the delicious goodies brought in by the auxiliary. Along with the meal, auxiliary also decorated the hospital and set up

a tree by its main entrance. For a \$10 annual member-

ship fee, anyone can become an auxiliary member. Along with events like these, the auxiliary also operates Attic Reruns Resale Shop to benefit the hospital. The resale shop, located at 714 Southeast Parkway in Azle, is open from

9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Fridays and 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Saturdays. For more information about volunteer opportunities or becoming a member, contact Jan Flavin at jan.flavin@ icloud.com.





Dena Kreutzer, Penelope B., Valeria Russell, Dee Drebek, Sarah Devin and Robin Antonucci, about to enjoy their sweet treats.



Johnny and Michele Terrazas have enjoyed the auxiliary's support throughout their careers at Texas Health.



Linda Sebik, Nikkie Saint-Louis and Arden Hudson, about to enjoy their sweet treats.

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# New e-cigarette law designed to protect youth will begin in January

#### **STAFF REPORTS**

As of Jan. 1, 2024, it will be a crime in Texas to market, advertise, sell, or cause to be sold an e-cigarette product in certain containers designed to appeal to minors, Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar reminded retailers in a press release.

"It is illegal to sell e-cigarettes to minors — these products are dangerous and most contain nicotine, heavy metals and cancercausing materials — yet these

products are intentionally designed to attract minors," Hegar said. "Texas has taken action to deal with this kind of deceptive marketing and I greatly appreciate the partnership with retailers across this state to help us protect one of our most vital resources: our children."

House Bill 4758 says a person commits a Class B misdemeanor that can lead to civil and criminal penalties if they market, advertise, sell, or cause to be sold an e-cigarette product and the product's container meets any of the following criteria:

· depicts a cartoon-like fictional character that mimics a character primarily aimed at entertaining minors;

· imitates or mimics trademarks or trade dress of products that are or have been primarily marketed to minors;

· includes a symbol that is primarily used to market products to minors;

· includes an image of a

celebrity; or

· includes an image that resembles a food product, including candy or juice.

A violation can result in a Class B misdemeanor conviction punishable by up to 180 days in jail, a fine up to \$2,000, or both. E-cigarette retailers also can face civil penalties up to \$3,000 and a permit suspension or revocation for repeat violations.

More than 2.1 million high school and middle school students who participated

in the 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey said they use e-cigarette products, which were the most popular tobacco product among youth users for the 10th year in a row.

The Comptroller's Tobacco Enforcement Program helps prevent children from obtaining cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other tobacco products. This vital public health mission requires constant vigilance and continuous effort on the part of parents,

officials and all concerned Texans. The Comptroller's office and partnering agencies perform inspections for signage and employee compliance concerning the sale, possession and use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes and tobacco products.

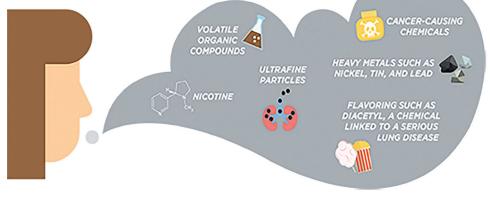
Violations of tobacco control laws can be reported anonymously by calling the Texas E-Cigarette and Tobacco Hotline at 800-345-8647 or by emailing tobacco. business owners, government enforcement@cpa.texas.gov.

### What are e-cigarettes?

- E-cigarettes come in many shapes and sizes. Most have a battery, a heating element, and a place to hold a liquid.
- E-cigarettes produce an aerosol by heating a liquid that usually contains nicotine—the addictive drug in regular cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products—flavorings, and other chemicals that help to make the aerosol. Users inhale this aerosol into their lungs. Bystanders can also breathe in this aerosol when the user exhales into the air.
- E-cigarettes are known by many different names. They are sometimes called "e-cigs,""e-hookahs,""mods,""vape pens,""vapes,""tank systems," and "electronic nicotine" delivery systems (ENDS)."
- Some e-cigarettes are made to look like regular cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. Some resemble pens, USB sticks, and other everyday items. Larger devices such as tank systems, or "mods," do not resemble other tobacco products.
- Using an e-cigarette is sometimes called "vaping."
- E-cigarettes can be used to deliver marijuana and other drugs.



INFOGRAPHIC COURTESY CDC



INFOGRAPHIC COURTESY CDC

### What is in e-cigarette aerosol?

The e-cigarette aerosol that users breathe from the device and exhale can contain harmful and potentially harmful substances, including:

- Nicotine
- Ultrafine particles that can be inhaled deep into the lungs
- Flavoring such as diacetyl, a chemical linked to a serious lung disease
- Volatile organic compounds
- Cancer-causing chemicals
- Heavy metals such as nickel, tin, and lead1

It is difficult for consumers to know what e-cigarette products contain. For example, some e-cigarettes marketed as containing zero percent nicotine have been found to contain nicotine.

### LEGAL PUBLIC NOTICES

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE

Notice is hereby given that the following will be sold to the highest bidder with bidding to take place at lockerfox.com on Friday the 22nd day of December, 2023 at 11:00 AM to satisfy a landlords lien, pursuant to Chapter 59, Texas Property Code. Payment to seller via credit/ debit card and pickup at the facility. Self-Storage unit contents of the following customers containing household and other goods will be sold. 10 Federal Self Storage, 2920 Avenue F, Arlington, TX, 76011 Sydney Linzy. Madeline Graver. Elizabeth Gustafson. Wanda Walter. bryan deane. Adriana CASTRO. Chuvon Mcgary. Kim Ridges. Jonathan M Averill. Bradley Willis. Traci James. Maribel Martinez. Waleed Wilks. Eric Salas. Cindy Hernandez

### ORDINANCE NO. 2023-20

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 6, "HEALTH AND SANITATION," OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES, CITY OF AZLE, TEXAS, BY AMENDING REGULATIONS GOVERNING PUBLIC SWIMMING POOLS AND SPAS AND FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS; AMENDING APPENDIX A, "FEES," TO AMEND FEES RELATED TO FOOD ESTABLISHMENTS AND PUBLIC SWIMMING POOLS; PROVIDING THAT THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BE CUMULATIVE OF ALL ORDINANCES; PROVIDING A SAVINGS CLAUSE; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.. ALL ORDINANCES ARE AVAILABLE TO BE READ IN FULL AT THE CITY OF AZLE , 505 W. MAIN ST. AZLE, TEXAS 76020, AND ON THE CITY'S WEBSITE YAEL FORGEY, CITY SECRETARY, CITY OF AZLE.

### **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Applications for a permit to construct and operate a commercial facility on Eagle Mountain Lake have been presented to the Tarrant Regional Water District. The applicant for the commercial facility permit is Eagle Lot Partners, LLC. The proposed commercial facility will be located Park Street and will serve residents of the future Roeser Addition. Any interested persons may inspect this application at the Fort Worth Administrative Office.

### Calendar Dec 14-21

### TO SUBMIT CALENDAR ITEMS

The community calendar is a free listing in the Tri-County Reporter to inform readers of programs, special meetings and nonprofit events. The event should be open to the public and free to attend. Information should be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event for consideration. Email the who, what, when, where and why to jessica@tricountyreporter. com, with "calendar item" in the subject line. Calendar information runs in chronological order as space is available.

### THURSDAY, DEC. 14

PRE-SCHOOL PALS STORYTIME for ages 3-6 at 10:30 a.m. every Thursday at Azle Memorial Library.

GIFT WRAP PARTY from 6-8 p.m. at Azle Memorial Library. You're invited to use the space at the library and some provided wrapping paper, tape and boxes to wrap your gifts. Snacks will be provided.

HOLIDAY STORYTIME starts at 10 a.m. at Family Resource Center, 314 E. 5th Terrace, Springtown.

### FRIDAY, DEC. 15

CARTER BLOODCARE COMMUNITY BLOOD DRIVE from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the City of Springtown Municipal Annex Building, 200 N. Main St. Give a lifesaving gift by donating blood. Donors will receive a fleece blanket, while supplies last. Sign up at https://ww3. greatpartners.org/donor/schedules/drive\_schedule/147573.

FOLLOW ME GYM for ages 0-2 years starts at 9 a.m. at Family Resource Center, 314 E. 5th Terrace, Springtown. Caregivers will help infants and toddlers to move up, under, through and over objects. This gym lasts for two hours each Friday morning.

### **SATURDAY, DEC. 16**

PELICAN BAY COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PARADE and party. Parade begins at 4 p.m. and travels through the city. The party will be at 5 p.m. at City Hall, 1300 Pelican Cir. There will be toys, snacks, prizes and photos with Santa.

### MONDAY, DEC. 19

PRE-K WARMUP at 2 p.m. at Family Resource Center, 314 E. 5th Terrace, Springtown. Kids can come and enjoy creating fun holiday crafts. Pre-K age children get to learn school readiness skills such as holding a pencil, cutting paper with scissors, using glue and more.

TUESDAY, DEC. 19  $KINDERMUSIK\ LEVEL\ 1\ for\ ages\ 10\text{-}24\ months.\ Offers\ sensory-rich,\ gentle\ environments$ where children can explore and react to new sounds, sensations, and objects. Starts at 10

a.m. at Family Resource Center, 314 E. 5th Terrace, Springtown. HOLIDAY FESTIVITIES at 3:45 p.m. at Family Resource Center, 314 E. 5th Terrace, Springtown. Kids can come and enjoy creating fun holiday crafts.

### WEDNESDAY, DEC. 20

TINY TYKES STORYTIME for ages 1-2 at 10:30 a.m. every Wednesday at Azle Memorial

KINDERMUSIK LEVEL 2 for ages 18-36 months. Offers sensory-rich, gentle environments where children can explore and react to new sounds, sensations and objects. Starts at 10 a.m. at Family Resource Center, 314 E. 5th Terrace, Springtown.

HOLIDAY SCIENCE at 3:45 p.m. at Family Resource Center, 314 E. 5th Terrace, Springtown. Come explore with Mrs. Tina and do some science experiments!

### THURSDAY, DEC. 21

HOLIDAY STORYTIME starts at 10 a.m. at Family Resource Center, 314 E. 5th Terrace,

HOLIDAY WORKSHOP starts at 3:30 p.m. at Family Resource Center, 314 E. 5th Terrace, Springtown. Kids get to enjoy making gifts for others and learn about the importance of

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# Growing a backbone

### **MADELYN EDWARDS**

springtownreporter@tricountyreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN — Wolfranked Cub Scout Frank Zamora, 8, showed his peers how brave he is by touching a live kingsnake.

This took place Nov. 28 during Springtown Cub Scouts Pack 303's animal presentation, which has become an annual pack tradition. Eric Brittingham, president and program presenter of Wildlife on the Move, showed the kids an opossum, a Savannah monitor lizard, a tenrec, an albino Burmese python and of course, the kingsnake, and

# Fearless Cub Scouts touch reptiles, opossum during Wildlife on the Move presentation

he provided facts about each animal.

The event proved to be popular as seats almost ran out for Cub Scouts and families. Scouts patiently waited through announcements for the presentation to begin, and they protested when Cubmaster Holly Lowe jokingly tried to dismiss them early. During the showing, they listened to Brittingham

and asked questions about the animals.

Brittingham spoke to the kids with the rhythm and energy of a slowed-down auctioneer, utilized animated facial expressions and cracked jokes in between giving kids factual information about the animals.

When talking about Freckles the kingsnake, Brittingham told the kids



MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Cub Scout Frank Zamora listens to Eric Brittingham, president and program presenter of Wildlife on the Move, before getting to touch a kingsnake.

Wildlife Move

 $Cub \, Scout \, Charlie \, Cole \, pets \, an \, opossum \, during \, the \, Wildlife \, on \, the \, Move \, presentation \, to \, Pack \, 303 \, Nov. \, 28.$ 

kingsnakes are not venomous, and they eat other snakes and rodents they catch with their teeth, constrict into cardiac arrest and then expand their bodies to swallow the fresh food.

"Remember I told you he has something to do with rattlesnakes? Yeah, he kills and eats them for dinner," Brittingham said in his presentation. "Everybody say 'yum!"

When Brittingham invited Frank to touch Freckles, he asked Frank to find out

whether snakes have a backbone by pressing on the kingsnake's back. Frank concluded through the brief experiment that Freckles had a hard bone on its back under its skin.

"So, Frank proved it to you
— snakes do have a backbone," Brittingham said.
"Hey, everybody, does Frank
have a backbone?"
The scouts answered,

"Yes!"

"Yeah, he's got a lot of backbone," Brittingham said. "He's holding a snake, and you're not."

After the pack meeting, Frank said he had never held a snake before and said it felt rough. He described the experience as a good one.

Frank's parents, Rachel and Frank Zamora, said their son joined Cub Scouts to explore his interest in the outdoors and so far, he really likes it.

"They could live outside if we let them," Frank Zamora said

Rachel Zamora added, "We appreciate nature, animals, all that."



Eric Brittingham, president and program presenter of Wildlife on the Move, holds a tenrec near Cub Scouts Pack 303 leader Ashleigh Ward's head as they pose for a picture.



Springtown Cub Scout Gabriel Salazar feels the skin of a Savannah monitor lizard during Pack 303's annual animal presentation meeting Nov. 28.



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# 'Tis the season

### Springtown hosts fifth annual Old-Fashioned Christmas event



Santa Claus takes a picture with 9-month-old Emberlee Davis and multiple other children during Old-Fashioned Christmas Dec. 9 in the Springtown



Julian Serrano, 7, skates over to his grandmother Rosemarie Leghorn during Springtown's Old-Fashioned Christmas event last weekend.



Brothers Julian, 7, and Mason Serrano, 10, ice skate together at Old-Fashioned Christmas in Springtown Park.



 $Klassy\,Kloggers\,director\,Shirley\,Anderson\,leads\,the\,Klassy\,Kloggers, including\,Jewelletta\,Stovall\,and$ Susie Cordell, in dances in the Springtown Tabernacle during Old-Fashioned Christmas last weekend.



Bowen Payne, 3, smiles at his face in the mirror after artist Emma McDonald painted a snowman and snowflakes on his face at Old-Fashioned Christmas Dec. 9 in Springtown.



Imagine a world where

but the ones who surprise

everyone with their bravery and

determination - these are the

superheroes aren't the strongest or the fastest,

expects it.

December 16 or overlook. Maybe it's the little turtle racing against speedy hares, or the shy kid in

underdogs! An underdog is like they never give up. a tiny seed that grows into a The coolest thing about mighty tree, even when no one underdogs is their hidden superpowers - not the kind In stories and real life, with capes, but the power of underdogs are the ones heart, resilience, and hard work.

class who turns out to be an

challenges and setbacks, but

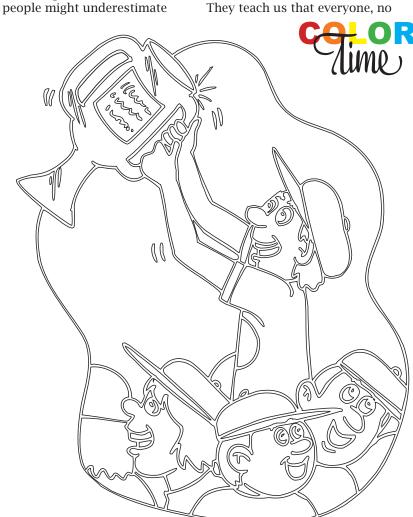
amazing artist. Underdogs face

matter how small or quiet, has something incredible inside.

So, if you ever feel like an underdog, remember you're in excellent company! You have your own unique powers waiting to shine. Embrace challenges, believe in yourself, and get ready to show the world the amazing things you can do!



One of the most famous underdog stories is the Biblical story of King David and



# *Famous* Underdogs

Here are some incredible underdogs who became heroes in their own stories:

### **CINDERELLA**

Imagine a girl with a heart full of kindness who, despite facing challenges, gets to dance at the royal ball and captures the heart of a prince. Cinderella shows us that dreams really do come true, even for those who start with humble beginnings.

### **HARRY POTTER**

Harry, a young wizard, was just an ordinary boy living with his not-so-nice relatives. Little did he know, he had magical powers and a destiny to defeat the dark wizard Voldemort. Through courage and friendship, Harry showed us that even the most unlikely heroes can change the wizarding world.

### **RUDY RUETTIGER**

In the movie "Rudy," a small guy with a big dream fights against all odds to play football for Notre Dame. His determination and heart inspire us to never give up on our dreams, no matter how impossible they may seem.

### **MATILDA**

Matilda is a clever little girl with magical abilities who triumphs over her mean headmistress and discovers her love for learning. Matilda reminds us that our uniqueness and intelligence are powerful tools to overcome challenges.

Moana, a spirited island girl, sets sail across the ocean to save her people. Even though she faces enormous challenges and a fiery lava monster, Moana's bravery teaches us that anyone, no matter how small, can make a big difference.

Remember, these underdogs became heroes because they believed in themselves, stayed true to their hearts, and faced challenges with courage. You've got your own amazing story to create, full of adventures and triumphs!

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# TRI\*COUNTY REPORTER

# DIVERSIONS

THURSDAY, December 14, 2023

### **Record-setting** weekend

Azle churns through water quickly at invitational meet

**JEFF PRINCE** 

sports@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — The Azle swim team took six athletes to the Mansfield Invitational qualifying swim meet on Dec. 8-9 and performed amazing

Relay teams broke Azle

school records in two events, and several Hornets set personal records.

"We are so proud of how these swimmers swam this past weekend," said head coach Amy Estes. "This Invitational is a very

PLEASE SEE SWIM | B4





At front, head coach Amy Estes and her Azle swim team enjoy a job well done.



JEFF PRINCE | TRI COUNTY REPORTER ing," said Jeremiah Evans, a

### Performance season

Marches on hold while Sound of Springtown focuses on music

**JEFF PRINCE** 

sports@tricountyreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN — The beginning of concert performances for the Sound of Springtown means football season and marching are in the rearview mirror.

Marching during halftime at football games has its fun moments but requires grit and stamina. Concert season provides musical enjoyment without all the synchronized stepping.

"Marching band is exhaust-

senior who plays mellophone. "It is fun, but it is exhausting. We are marching very quickly and taking huge steps, but we have to carry around giant pieces of metal with us wherever we go. We're supposed to only breathe in certain spots to make the music not sound bad."

Practicing those steps and monitoring those breaths require time and effort, much of it done early in the morning during hot summers. Then, once the steps are

PLEASE SEE **SOUND** | B5

# Cheer contest season

Azle cheer shows off skills, stunts, smiles

### **JEFF PRINCE**

sports@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — After football season ended at Azle High School, the team's cheerleaders became even busier.

Jeremiah Evans is enjoying the concert season.

Football ends about the time the cheerleading contest season begins.

On Nov. 18, the Azle varsity team won a team championship at the Universal Cheerleaders Association Regionals at Lewisville. At press time, the team was preparing to compete at the NCA state meet in Dallas.

The UIL state meet is Jan. 14 at Fort Worth Convention

On Feb. 8-12, the varsity cheer team hopes to compete at the NCA Nationals in Orlando, Florida.

Azle's team is operating under a new head coach and staff this season. Head coach Taylor Hodges oversees the squad with help from as-

PLEASE SEE CHEER | B5 with cheermate Kyndal Robbins.



JEFF PRINCE | TRI COUNTY REPORTER

At front, Emma Ortega pays homage during the national anthem



**JEFF PRINCE | TRI COUNTY REPORTER** 

Josue Martinez wins first place at a recent wrestling tournament.

# Strong start

Springtown wrestlers display mettle at first meet

**JEFF PRINCE** 

sports@tricountyreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN — The boys varsity wrestling team at

Springtown High School finished in second place out of 25 schools that competed Dec. 10 at the EMS Tournament.

Josue Martinez and Dallin Fabrizius earned first place medals. Martinez wrestled at

PLEASE SEE **START** | B5

# Playing up

### **JEFF PRINCE**

sports@tricountyreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN - Thebasketball Porcupines are playing dynamic roundball, almost knocking off powerhouse Aledo Dec. 5 before going on to win a couple of games at a tournament that weekend.

On Dec. 5, the 4APorcupines took on the always formidable 5A Aledo and fell 63-61, although

### Springtown basketball boys take on bigger schools in preseason

Springtown gave the Bearcats all they could handle.

Springtown bounced back two days later at a tournament in Glen Rose, beating Lubbock Christian 53-50 and toppling Wimberly 75-52.

The Pines would go on to lose two games to formidable 5A teams to end the tourney. Springtown senior Dayne Thompson earned a spot on the All-Tournament Team.

Next up, Springtown will play Gainesville at 6:15 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 20, at the Porcupines gymnasium.



Braylon Easter and the Springtown Porcupines will play a home game on Dec. 20.



JEFF PRINCE | TRI COUNTY REPORTER

Dayne Thompson earns All-Tournament Team at the Glen Rose basketball tournament.

# Getting close

### Azle basketball pushes opponents to limits

**JEFF PRINCE** 

sports@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — If losing close

battles is an educational experience, the Azle boys basketball team has earned the equivalent of a master's



Gunner Crow is one of five seniors who will celebrate Senior Night on



Jayden Taylor, a sophomore, drives for a layup.

degree lately.

On Dec. 9, the Hornets fell 46-43 to Connally.

On Dec. 7, they lost in overtime 70-61 to Grapeland. On Dec. 5, they lost 59-58

to Timber Creek. Three losses in four days by a combined 13 points can be heartbreaking. Head coach

James Crafton encourages his athletes to learn from their mistakes.

This year's team began the season with little varsity experience, and Crafton said the overall inexperience of his players has created inconsistencies and "growing pains."

Still, he expects the Hornets to be executing well on offense and defense by the time district competition begins in

early January. The coach is focused particularly on defense.

"We have tried to make defense be where it all starts for us," Crafton said.

the philosophy.

AHS gymnasium.

"Defense wins games," said

His players have embraced

Nazir Stevens, a senior. Azle will celebrate Stevens and several other upperclassmen on Senior Night when Azle plays Wichita Falls Rider

at 7:30 p.m. Dec. 19 at the



# Azle alone

### Rodeo team maintains iron grip on first place

### **JEFF PRINCE**

sports@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — The winter break in the rodeo season began on Dec. 4 with Azle's team sitting in first place. Comfortably.

Azle has earned 6,216 points so far this season af-

ter 11 rodeos. That's good enough for first place with plenty to spare. Second place Brock is far

behind with 3,675 points. Burkburnett (3,157), Springtown (2,835) and Joshua (2,175) round out the top 5 teams in the North Texas High School Rodeo

Association. Last year, Azle's team fin-

PHOTO COURTESY GATEMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

Wyatt Allison and the Azle rodeo team have grabbed first place by the horns.

ished in second place and made a vow to work its way into the top spot this year. The team barged out of the chute quickly, nabbing first place early in the season and building its lead a bit more with each passing week.

Team sponsor Kristi Scribner appreciates the talent and leadership of several returning members who have fought their way into the top placings each week.

"Our team is full of talent this year," she said. "I am excited to see what they

accomplish." Sitting in first place at the midway point of the season is a good feeling, she said. Currently, a dozen team

members are placing high enough to qualify for the rodeo finals in May.

"There is a lot still left in the season, but Azle rodeo team will be represented well in the finals again this year," she said.

Approaching quickly is the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo Scholarship Rodeo, set for early February. Azle has 10 team members that have secured spots in the top 10 of their events currently, which would qualify them to compete for \$2,000 scholarships

at the finals rodeo. "They are practicing hard and preparing for the rodeo during our break," Scribner



JEFF PRINCE | TRI COUNTY REPORTER

Paige Winstead rains down 3-pointers against Benbrook.

# Hoop yeah

**JEFF PRINCE** 

sports@tricountyreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN — The girls basketball team hosted the Chicken Express Porcupine Invitational tournament on Dec. 7-9 and drew many competitive teams and hordes of fans to the hometown gymnasium.

Springtown came up short in the opening game against Bell before roaring back to topple Monahans to secure a seat in the championship bracket. The Lady Porcupines lost to Bridgeport, Permian, and Aubrey in the title bracket. Springtown's Brooklyn Quintanilla was named to the All-Tournament Team for her strong performances.

In early December, the Lady

### Springtown basketball girls shine; Paige Winstead takes aim

Porcupines played several teams at a tournament in Buffalo, winning some, losing some, and becoming better in the process. Springtown battled its way through the brackets to finish in third place, winning three of five games. Paige Winstead earned All-Tournament honors after her 33-point performance in the final game of the tourney.

Springtown had entered the Buffalo tournament on a roll. On Nov. 28, the Lady Pines declawed the Benbrook Bobcats in convincing fashion behind the accurate aim of

Winstead. Springtown prevailed 75-26 and improved to 8-3 on the season. Winstead, who has been among the team's best scorers, sank an eye-opening 10 3-pointers against Benbrook. A couple of weeks earlier, the senior sharpshooter had been named to an All-Tournament team after nailing threepointers and shutting down opponents.

Springtown will play at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 15, at Brownwood.

The Pines' next home game is on Dec. 28 at the Springtown Winter Classic.

# **Pavement** warriors

### **JEFF PRINCE**

sports@tricountyreporter.com

 ${\it AZLE-Azle's\ basketball}$ girls walked over Chisholm Trail when the two teams met on Dec. 4 in a nondistrict clash in Fort Worth.

Cheryl Grubbs scored 14 points for Azle, and Kegan Stewart added another 11 to help Azle prevail 35-22

### Azle Lady Hornets remain on road

against the Lady Rangers.

The victory pushed Azle's team to 7-7 overall. The team has been traveling to play games since late November.

4-1 in road games, will play next at 6:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 15, at Granbury.

The Lady Hornets return home at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 19. to host Wichita Falls



JEFF PRINCE | TRI COUNTY REPORTER

Cheryl Grubbs leads the Lady Hornets in scoring against Chisholm Trail.

# Senior to watch

### Azle wrestler Alicen Dillard keeps winning

### **JEFF PRINCE**

sports@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — Going 2-0 on the first day of the Texas Women's Classic high school wrestling tournament on Dec. 8 was nothing new to Alicen Dillard.

She's used to winning matches.

Dillard is ranked no. 7 in the country in her

145-pound weight class. In November, she won first place and helped her team earn a championship while competing at the Warrior Invite wrestling tournament in Arlington.

She is following up splendidly her 2022 season, when she won first place at the same tournament and also won the Super 32, a national tournament held in North

Carolina that featured 100 nationally-ranked wrestlers

and more than 300 entries. Dillard won a state championship in Colorado before moving to Azle early in her high school career. Now, in her senior year, she is eying the Texas title.

After leaving high school, she plans to continue wrestling in college and pursue engineering.



JEFF PRINCE | TRI COUNTY REPORTER

CHAPA PHOTOGRAPHY

# Black shirt Azle wrestlers vie for in-house award

### **JEFF PRINCE**

sports@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — The Azle wrestling program has begun issuing a special shirt to a worthy few.

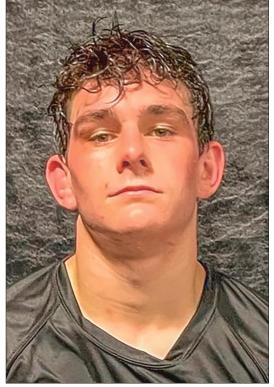
The black shirt award will go to wrestlers who stand out in attitude, effort, academics and mastery of wrestling techniques.

"The wrestlers that do this are awarded a black shirt to practice in that is different than our practice uniform," said head coach Tyler Harrison.

The boys and girls train together, and all of them are eligible to earn a black shirt. There is no set number of shirts that will be awarded.

"When our coaching staff unanimously agrees an athlete is deserving, we present it to them," Harrison said. "They have to be very consistent across the board to be considered."

On Oct. 26, the inaugural black shirt was issued to Wyatt Hicks, a sophomore. His coaches say Hicks brings great attitude and effort to the mat room every day, doesn't miss practice, and focuses on growing his wrestling IQ. He is an all-A honor roll student.



COURTESY PHOTO

Wyatt Hicks earns the inaugural black shirt award in the Azle wrestling program.



Chase Yancey earns a black shirt in November.



Noah Kovach earns a black shirt in December.

In early November, the second black shirt went to sophomore Chase Yancey, who focused on improving and learning for three months leading up to the season. Yancey doesn't miss prac-

tice, puts in extra work yearround, and has jumped levels during the past year. He, too, is an honor roll student.

"Both young men really set the standard for our expectations in the practice

room, when competing, and in the classroom," Harrison said. "They both make great grades, consistently work hard every day, and give 100%. We are proud of their leadership in our program."

Then, just as the Tri-County wavering support for team-Reporter was preparing to go to press, a third black shirt was awarded to Noah Kovach. She approaches wrestling with an open mind, is constantly coachable, shows un-

mates, has tremendous grit, and embodies the standard of a Hornet wrestler, said her coach.

### **ZED by Duane Abel**







### Sudoku **DECEMBER 14, 2023**

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### Solution to last week's puzzle

**DECEMBER 7, 2023** 

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3	7	8	9	2	4	6	5	1
9	3	2	8	4	6	5	1	7
7	8	5	2	9	1	4	3	6
1	4	6	5	7	3	2	9	8
Puzzle by websudoku.com								

# 13 22 1 8 7 14 10

13 7 1 1

### FROM PAGE B1

competitive meet, and they performed as I knew they would."

The girls 200-meter freestyle relay team finished its race in 1:54.12, breaking the AHS record that was established two years earlier.

Estes called the record a "great accomplishment."

The 200-meter freestyle relay team included Kayley Brekel, Laci Clark, Peighton Berry and Brooke Nowakowski.

The 400-meter freestyle relay team finished its race in 4:17.07, breaking the school record established last February at the regional meet.

The 400-meter freestyle team included Berry, Karla Rodriguez, Brekel and Nowakowski.

"Again, great accomplishment," Estes said. "Setting new records in both relays is a testament to the dedication and hard work they have put into the season starting in August with 5:45 a.m. practices. Not only two records,

but every single person set a personal record. It was a great day to be a Hornet." Berry set personal records in the 200-meter freestyle

Kalen McCullough set a personal record in the 100-meter backstroke, finishing at 1:04:15.

and 100-meter freestyle.

Nowakowski and Brekel also set personal records.

Azle's team was set to swim this week in Decatur and is preparing for the District 5-5A Championship set for Jan. 26 at the NISD Natatorium.



From left, Kayley Brekel, Peighton Berry, Karla Rodriguez and Brooke Nowakowski set a school record in the 400-meter freestyle relay.



From left, Brooke Nowakowski, Kayley Brekel, Laci Clark and Peighton Berry set a school record in the 200-meter freestyle relay.

### WORD SCRAMBLE Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to food safety. SSWEAH səysрм :ләмѕи<sub>Ұ</sub>

### CHEER FROM PAGE B1

sistants Chasity Benne and Kristen Cook. Benne spent four years as a Lady Hornet cheerleader before graduating from AHS in 2015.

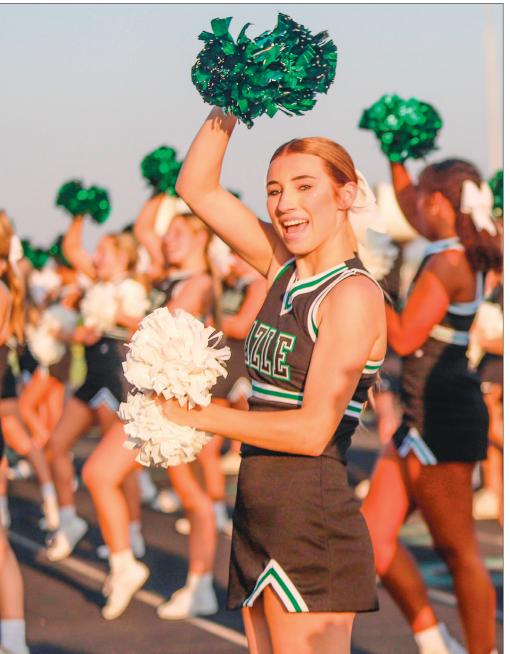
Hodges said her first year guiding the team has included highs and lows, but she has loved "every second," she said

"I'm proud of how well the kids have adapted to the new coaching staff," she said. "They have been working really hard, and we are all excited to start competition season."





JEFF PRINCE | TRI COUNTY REPORTER



JEFF PRINCE | TRI COUNTY REPORTER

Kyler Betz waves her pom poms high in the air.

### **SOUND** FROM PAGE B1

learned, the band members work on them relentlessly to become tight.

"It doesn't compare to what the football team does" but requires similar determination, Evans said.

Now, with the football season completed, "most of our time is spent playing concert music at school," he said.

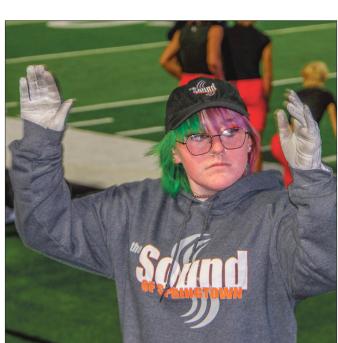
He is enjoying the change.
Tempe Wood is one of
three band members who
served as drum major during
marching season. While football games were being played,
Wood and the other two
drum majors - Kate Mitchell
and Luke Holtman — stood
high on platforms to direct
music.

Since Friday Night Lights are dimmed until next year, Wood and the others have climbed down from their platforms, picked up their instruments, and are playing alongside the other band members.

"We go back to playing our instruments and are pretty much done with conducting," she said.

That means less time spent marching, more time playing music, and a general sense of ease. Once the marching part stops, the practices dwindle down to just a couple of hours a week.

"When we're doing full-on marching band, it's every day for an hour or two, at least," Wood said. "Some days we go up to five hours of practice."



JEFF PRINCE | TRI COUNTY REPORTER
Tempe Wood will focus on playing clarinet.



Kate Mitchell conducts the band for the last time at the Nov. 24 football game.

### START

165 pounds, and Fabrizius

at 285 pounds.
Earning second place
medals were Joseph
Newman (138 pounds) and
Grant Butler (150 pounds).
Hunter Binz took third

place at 175 pounds.
Alex Rivera earned fifth

place at 190 pounds.

The Springtown wrestling program named Martinez and Fabrizius as its punishers of the week for their efforts.

On Dec. 1-2, Springtown kicked off its season by traveling to Colleyville Heritage for the Mike McCready Memorial Invitational, taking seventh place out of 38 schools who

competed.

Binz earned second place, Fabrizius took third place and Butler won fifth place.

The Porcupines got off to a quick start at the meet. On the first day, Springtown ranked second in the amount of time it took to pin its opponents, and nine of 12 Porcupine wrestlers qualified to wrestle on day 2.



JEFF PRINCE | TRI COUNTY REPORTER

Head coach Sawyer Cooper leads the wrestling teams into another season.

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t &	47 Lost & Found	70
ntal	48 Maintenance/Repairs	71
ing	49 Masonry/Stonework	72
ing	50 Mobile Home Service	73
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ing	52Movers	75
od	53Musical Instruments	76
ree	54Music Lessons	77
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ure	56 Party Planning/Events	79
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- Haul Off Bobcat Mobile
  - Service Dirt/Gravel
- Garages Spreading

Homes

**FREE ESTIMATES** 

817-996-7887 253 Eagles Way, Springtown

#### 024 Electrician

BULLDAWG ELECTRIC CO. All types of electrical services and MH hook-ups. Free Estimates. 817-675-4921 www.bulldawgelectric.com. TECL#25253.

#### 026 **Excavating**

SKID STEER WORK Land clearing, shop pad, gravel driveways, demolition, post hole drilling. 817-657-4645.

REED EXCAVATING SITE PREPARATION • GRAVEL ROADS LOT CLEARING • PARKING LOTS • DEMOLITION • STOCK TANKS • LEVELING

Dump Truck Hauling 817-919-3696

#### 029 **Fencing**

BOBBY'S FENCE. All types, Free Estimates, Over 26 years experience. 817-444-3213.

KILEY CHESNEY CONSTRUCTION All Types Fences - Tractor Work 817-846-6645

#### 030 **Firewood**

\$150 Half cord, delivered and stacked. Call 817-689-2424.

For Sale

2005 Ford F150 King Ranch Truck, good condition, one owner. Call 817-840-8269 for more info.

032



Kimball (Atist Console) Piano W/Bench \$200 **OBO** 

682-803-8377



2018 Outback Travel **Trailer Model 332** FK. 3 slide outs, 37 Ft. \$38,000 817-688-6029 or 817-221-2403.



Summer sale, 1970 18 Ft Ski Boat 135 Mercury engine, new interior. \$5,000 682-717-6181.



4X4 blynd on 10 Ft tower. 2 sets of windows, carpet, chair and heater available. \$900 call Rich 817-584-8567.

034 Garage & Estate Sales

463 Deer Butte St. Different stuff;

**035** Garden/Mowing Service

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1 or 100 - We can do it.

\$85 minimum within 5 mi.

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see, buy. Open 9am-? Closed

Needful Things

Sunday & Monday.

**We Haul: Auto, Power Sports,** 

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DoradoTransportLLC@Yahoo.com

Hay

037 **ROUND BALE** 

Corn \$95.00 Coastal \$130.00 One Bale Min. Flatrock Rd, Azle. Thanks, Alan 817-683-4793

### **Help Wanted**

Springtown ISD is accepting applications for Bus Drivers and Monitors. Training available. Contact the Transportation Dept. 817-220-1418.

MAINSTREAM group homes are hiring for FT/PT direct care staff. Weekday 3:30pm-8:30am shifts as well as 24-hour weekend shifts. Work 2 days a week, get paid to sleep, and have a fulltime job! Paid training, benefits, bonuses, and OT opportunities. Start \$9.00/hr with quick advancement possible. Call 817-270-2747, Monday-Friday, 9am-3pm

#### SILVER DOLLAR CUSTOMS HELP WANTED

2 Mechanics needed and 2 Body Technicians Experience a must and tools a plus! Mechanics We work on all types of vehicles; we specialize in classics.

From full restorations, modifications, rebuilds and upgrades, maintenance, and repairs but not limited to. Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00am to

Occasional Saturday Body Shop Technicians Metal work, fabrications, welding, body working, sanding, grinding, and sand blasting. Hours: Monday - Friday 6:00am to 2:30pm Occasional Saturday Pay Negotiable Contact: Elizabeth @ 817-752-2165 or Come by: 408 Commerce St Azle, Tx 76020

Azle ISD is currently accepting

applications for a plumber in

the Maintenance Department.

General office help needed.

Accounting, Human Resources,

Property Management would be

preferred but not a requirement.

Experience in the areas of

Call or text 817-773-5288.

Prefer a licensed plumber with a

minimum of 3+ yrs. experience. Apply online at www.azleisd.net

#### 039 **Help Wanted**



FT COOK

11 am - 7:30 pm Sat-Wed Benefits: Health, Life & Dental Insurance, 401k, PTO Please apply in person

email resume to hsimpson@ eaglecrestvilla.com

# Eagle Crest

#### 2-10 pm shift. Looking for passionate and reliable caregivers for our Senior Living. Full benefits: Health, Life, Dental, PTO and 401k

Come apply in person 113 Denver Trail, Azle. Or send resume to hsimpson@ eaglecrestvilla.com

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Tri\*County Reporter





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A New Correctional Officer Pay Increase will be as follows - Starting pay will be \$18.00 dollars per hour. After Six months' there will be a pay increase to \$19.00 per hour and at one year there will be another pay increase to \$20.00 per hour. Must have HS Diploma or equivalent, be able to pass a drug screen, have a clean background, and valid driver's license to be considered for a Correctional Officer. Apply online at www.mtctrains.com or

PLEASE CHECK THE WEBSITE FOR JOB QUALIFICATIONS.

call 940-567-2272 and ask for the HR Department.

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Healthcare Center

2-10pm RN/LVNs • 2P - 10P CNAs **Double Weekend CNAs** 

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Deadline: 1:00 PM FRIDAY

# Classifieds

039



**No Positions Available at This Time** 

### **Karl Klement Properties, Inc.**

No Positions Available at This Time

### KLEMENT DISTRIBUTION, INC.

(Hershey Ice Cream Distributor)

No Positions Available at This Time

Apply in person at:

605 N. Business 287, Ste 102, Decatur, Texas or call **Human Resources** 

940-627-6362 | hr.info@klementford.com Jodi Pettis, Executive Director

KARLIKLEMENT

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Springtown and Surrounding Areas

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**Plumbing** 

Plumbing Co. 940-233-2862

066

Roofing

- Miles Roofing
- Insurance Claim Specialists;
- Free Estimates 817-797-3420

068

Ash Creek Storage

Convenient Location Corner of Main St. & Locust • Azle

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1 bed/1 bath with bonus room, \$1025/mo all utilities paid. \$700 deposit. Contact AAA Properties, 817-598-0663

APT. - 2 bed, 1 bath, carport, lakeview, CA & heat, \$1,000 incl. bills. 817-237-7972 ask for

1904 CORAL RD 2-1-1 \$1,245.MO. \$800 DEP. 1513 CORAL CUT OFF 3-1-1 \$1,345.MO. \$1,000 DEP. 1572 REEF

3-2-1 \$1,395.MO. \$1,000 DEP. Gene Thompson & Associates 817-246-4646 gtatx.com

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• Deer Feeders 8894 W Hwy 199 • Springtown

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6351. See section 80.

### 049 Masonry/Stonework



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& CONSTRUCTION

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068 **Storage** 

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### **084** Mobile Homes for Rent

### **086 Mobile Home/RV Lots**

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### 088

**Metal Building Erectors** 

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081 Business/Commercial

### 817-713-7495.

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Pelican Bay: 1524 Partridge Ct. 1-1 \$585 MO. \$400 DEP. Owner/Broker 817-988-9954 genejr.com

**Rent Unfurnished** 

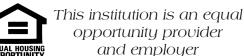
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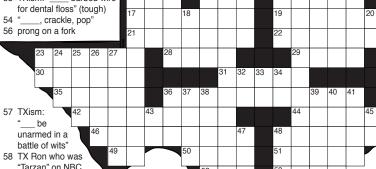
#### **ACROSS** TX Ann Sheridan

- 1949 film: "I \_ Male War Bride" \_ \_\_\_ gallon hat
- 6 pleased 7 TXism: "he grip like a snappin' turtle" 8 "Fanthorp
- Historic Site" 9 doctors' assoc 12 a kid who's not the seeker
- 17 TXism: "she has to the same place twice to cast
- a shadow" (thin) 19 TXism: "she could talk the legs off \_
- stove" 21 "Post of East Texas
- "I Fought up a little' 29 Texas-based
- "La Quinta & Suites"
- -one 31 gets dirt on jeans
- 35 Comanche Peak, a nuclear power \_ 36 assist or encourage
- 44 Texas town or Nebraska citv

- 48 TXism: "more than one way \_\_\_\_ 49 "good \_\_' boy"
- 51 high school student, e.g. (2 wds.)
- Dept. of Defense 53 TXism: "\_

- 22 Jim De an Astro starting pitcher, 1985-91 23 TX Bobby Fuller's
- 30 golf achievement:
- a criminal (3 wds.) 42 relating to the south polar region
- 46 whiners

**TEXAS** CROSSWORD 50 road around a Texas city by Charley & Guy Orbison 52 intelligence agcy. of the \_ barbed wire



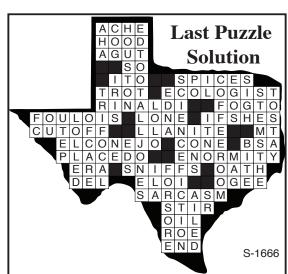
"Tarzan" on NBC **DOWN** 13 TXism: "quaking 1 TXism: "if he was a dog he wouldn't 14 Texas jewelry

- designer, Malouf (lazy) 15 a pen name of Texas 2 in Cass County on highway 43 Sandra Brown:
- 3 serpent that doesn't St. Clair go on land (2 wds.) 16 small Eurasian deer 4 TXism: "a day late 18 org. for the Spurs,
- dollar short" Rockets & Mavs 9 lemon/lime endings 20 TX Nat who sang 10 TX Gary Morris tune "Sweet Thang" (init.) 23 former Ranger
- Bedroom" (1991) "closer," Henke (init. 11 stinging Texas pest: fire 25 TX 12 moon to Houston:
  - Love You" Mae sand Salle County "Cow-Cow Boogie" 36 TX Strait's band: 26 tilts, like a Pisa towe
- 37 TXism: " your gullet" (satisfy) 38 "it's not a hill I'm willing to \_ 39 TXism: "never let 40 TXism: (resembles)
- 27 TX Phillips book 41 TXism: " 32 TX Buddy Holly (a party or dance) hit: "Rave 43 motor home (abbr.) 33 TX Charley Pride 45 TXism: "bat eyelash" (blink) tune: "\_\_ Rather
  - 47 cocker 48 gray with a tinge of brown
  - 55 "Amos 'n'

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