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OUNTY REPORTER

AZLE, SPRINGTOWN, AND SURROUNDING AREAS

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Hopping in Springtown



Springtown celebrates Easter with annual Hop and Shop

MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER
With lightning speed, children race onto the field at Springtown Park to collect plastic eggs during the city's March 23 Easter egg hunt.

SEE MORE PHOTOS | A12

The FeedLot: Open for business

City of Azle unveils new food truck park

ZACH FREEMAN
azlereporter@tricityreporter.com

AZLE — Since spring of 2023, the City of Azle has been planning a major undertaking. On March 29, the city will open its long-anticipated food truck park at 225 Church St. Dubbed, "The FeedLot," the park will serve as a space for people to eat and socialize in a casual outdoor setting. The FeedLot will host different food trucks from around the D-FW area on Fridays and Saturdays. The park will debut with



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

The wooden sign hanging from the stage.

six food trucks on opening night including Wicked 3D Craft BBQ, Gordo's Mexican Cocina, Angi's Louisiana Kitchen, WTF — What to Fry (Thai food), Sally's Sweets Ice Cream Truck and DonutNV. Sally's Sweets Ice Cream

Truck will return the following day, along with R&N Smokin Sweet Savour BBQ, Grub Truck Y'all, and Carnival Food Truck - Boardwalk Bites. The FeedLot

PLEASE SEE **PARK** | A7

Wanted by the FBI? Azle PD's Rogers returns from Quantico

Training academy is 'by invitation only'

CARLA NOAH STUTSMAN
Special to the Tri-County Reporter

Lt. Kevin Rogers, the first Azle Police Department officer to attend the prestigious FBI National Academy, now knows almost 200 law enforcement officials from around the country and world who he can call on for advice.

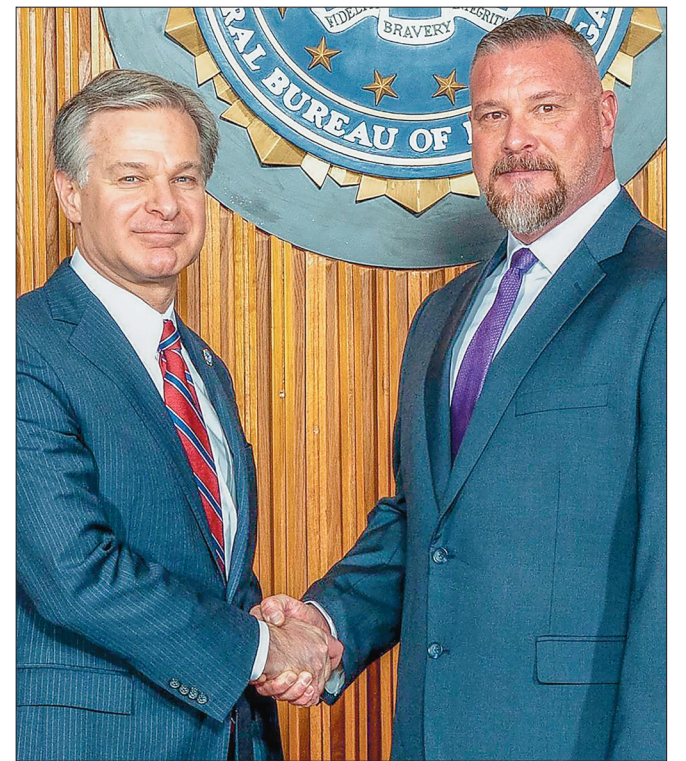
Rogers graduated March 15 from the FBI National Academy's Session 289. The academy — dedicated to being the world's premier law enforcement learning and research center as well as an advocate for law enforcement's best practices worldwide — is operated by the FBI's Training Division on a sprawling, 547-acre campus in Quantico, Virginia.

Because of a brief closure of the academy in 2020 due to COVID-19 and the resulting backlog of applicants, Rogers' acceptance was delayed almost four years, but he was in Quantico to begin the training Jan. 7.

"Less than 1% of law enforcement executives are accepted into the academy, so it was truly an honor to be accepted and attend the FBINA," Rogers said.

DEEP AZLE, LAW ENFORCEMENT ROOTS

An Azle native, Rogers is



COURTESY PHOTOS

Lt. Kevin Rogers of the Azle Police Department is congratulated by FBI Director Christopher A. Wray upon Rogers' graduation from the FBI National Academy March 15 in Quantico, Virginia.

the fourth great-grandson of the colorful, early Azle settler and Texas Ranger John Jeremiah "Coho" Smith, whose 1850s-era homestead is now the site of the 18th hole at Cross Timbers Golf Course.

Rogers grew up in Azle and graduated from Azle High School. His father worked for the Santa Fe Railroad, while his mother "was a stay-at-home mom who worked hard and was the rock of the fam-

ily," Rogers said.

He joined the Azle PD in June 2000 and worked as a patrol officer until 2002 when he transferred to the criminal investigations unit as a detective. A year later, in 2003, he was promoted to the rank of corporal and returned to the patrol division before being elevated to sergeant in 2004. Rogers returned to the criminal in-

PLEASE SEE **ROGERS** | A7

Springtown man accused of murder in Bridgeport

MADELYN EDWARDS
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AZLE — Police recently arrested a Springtown man in connection with a murder in Bridgeport.

Texas Rangers and Bridgeport police officers detained Nathaniel Dominguez, 23, March 12 at the McDonald's in Azle at 597 Northwest Parkway, according to Bridgeport Police Department's arrest report. Officers took Dominguez to the Wise County Jail, but he

Dominguez arrested in connection with February shooting near Bridgeport Medical Lodge

was released the next day. His bond was set at \$30,000.

The Messenger newspaper in Wise County reported that James Brown III, 39, of Bridgeport, died of a gunshot wound Feb. 18 outside of Bridgeport Medical Lodge, where Brown was reportedly employed. Police officers

were initially called to the scene to address a fight that had occurred between two men. Once they arrived, they found that Brown was hurt but still breathing. He later died at Medical City Decatur.

Witnesses told officers the

PLEASE SEE **MURDER** | A6



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VOLUME 1, NUMBER 43
Local, zone(s) 3 sections, 30 pages

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EASTER 2024
Special Section

Bubbles everywhere

Springtown Family Resource Center celebrates second birthday with bubble party



MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER
Thaddeus Woods, 8, smiles while he gets a bubble hairdo at the Springtown FRC's March 21 birthday party.

The Family Resource Center celebrated its second anniversary in Springtown with an all-day birthday bash, including a show by Next Level Bubble Parties. Pictured are children racing to pop a bubble at the March 21 party. The Springtown FRC was established in 2022 at 314 E. Fifth Terrace and provides various kinds of assistance to parents, caregivers and children in Parker and surrounding counties.



Desiree Garvin smiles with glee as Leonardo the Bubbler places her in a bubble tunnel at the Springtown FRC's birthday party March 21.

Ella McDonald, 5, holds a smoky bubble in her hand during the Next Level Bubble Parties show at the Springtown FRC's birthday bash last week.

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The differences between men and women

It has taken me a long time to finally come out and admit it, but I will never really understand women. From the first time I noticed a young girl in my first-grade class until today, I have found my assumptions about females were usually incorrect. When I make such a statement it is not out of anger or any form of hostility toward woman, nor does it reflect indifference. It is simply a recognition of my own failings and a simple acknowledgment that the sexes have two completely different ways of walking through life. It seems to me the sooner a man acknowledges that he has no idea of what makes a woman's mind "tick," the sooner he will find peace.

After all, look at the



FROM MY FRONT PORCH

By Sam Houston

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

differences.

When packing for a vacation, a woman will start a month early. She will make a ton of lists, remember all the random items she needs to bring, manage to squeeze mounds of clothes and shoes in a bag so tight it defies all physical law, and then she will worry about what she forgot. A man will only think about what to bring on a trip in the period it takes to walk from the sofa to the location of his suitcase. To pack, they will throw a few items in the

bag, and this usually happens the night before the trip though it can happen up to the very morning of departure. He will never consider what others will wear, what clothes to wear for a special event taking place during the trip, or what he will do if he forgets something. He believes that if something is missing, he will replace it at the destination's nearest Walmart.

Then there are bathroom items. Men basically have the following items in their

bathroom: toothpaste, toothbrush, razor, soap and shampoo. Women will have 178 different items in their bathroom and all but 10 of those items, a man has no idea of their purpose. What the heck does rejuvenating skin toner do anyway?

Women wash dishes after a meal, or they finish the dishes from the night before when they get up in the morning. Men wash dishes after a meal, or when there is not a single clean dish left to use. Men also use the same "all out so I guess I better take action" mentality when it comes to doing laundry.

When four men go to lunch and the bill comes, either one guy grabs the check and pays it, or each one of them toss a \$20 bill on the table to

pay for their \$7 hamburgers, leaving the change for the server. When women go to lunch and the check arrives, absolutely no one reaches to grab it. Eventually a forensic accounting is conducted by the group to determine who had the watercress salad and exactly what each person's indebtedness is, determined down to the penny. If a tip is left, it is exactly 18% of the total bill.

Women are very color oriented. They seek out colors like sea foam, cayenne, eggplant and teal, while men stick to the basics of red, blue, brown and black.

A woman's shoes outnumber the number of shirts she owns. A man has more shirts than he does shoes. A lot more.

Men go to the moon and take a half dozen photos. Women go to the park and take 31 photos, one video, and occasionally sign on for Facebook Live. If kids or grandchildren are with the woman, the numbers increase exponentially.

I guess the world would be a very boring place if men and women thought the same and acted the same. Acceptance is the key, and understanding what we don't know and will never figure out. God bless the differences.

Thought for the day: Being a woman is a tremendously difficult task, since it consists principally with dealing with men.

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

The Importance of Different Perspectives

"Hope Matters," the column title I chose when I began writing for the Tri-County Reporter in 2021, can be rightly understood two ways. The first reflects my goal to honestly engage culture, pointing out matters of hope I find in that endeavor. The second is a statement making the point that hope truly matters in our lives. Without it, we may find it hard to keep trying; but with genuine, realistic hope, we not only put forth effort, but we are also mindful of spreading the hope that we have.

As we all process local, regional, national and international news, it is understandable that the real, harrowing events that take place each week can make us despondent. From the wars and threats of wars around the world to local violence, horrific events can overwhelm us. As adults, we certainly don't want to ignore what is happening.



HOPE MATTERS

By David Shaffer

Dr. David Shaffer and his wife, Daniele, are Azle-area residents. David is the director of Son Shine Ministries (equipfamilies.org) and serves on the Azle Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors and is a Chamber Ambassador (azlechamber.com). david@equipfamilies.org | 817-444-3777

We also don't want to apply a cheap, thin veneer of hope that will quickly disappoint any who trust in it. Where can we find real hope in an often dark world?

Before I attempt to answer that, let's explore how we gather information. Dr. Mark Travers, writing for "Psychology Today," identifies a common medium that is severely flawed and something that is frequently discussed in today's culture. He defines an "echo chamber" as "a social environment or platform where individuals are exposed to information, opinions and viewpoints that align with their preexist-

ing beliefs and perspectives exclusively."

While such chambers may provide initial encouragement and even a sense of hope, they are places where other opinions are either absent or are muffled and where biases are merely confirmed rather than challenged. This regularly leads to quick and rampant misinformation.

Counselors have long used a helpful technique called reframing (or cognitive reframing). Simply put, it is a method where people can shift their mindset to look at a situation, person or relationship from a different

angle. This is something that can be learned and practiced by everyone.

In my marriage, for example, my wife, Daniele, and I don't always agree. Hearing her reasoning as to why she feels the way she does is a vital part of moving forward. Likewise, sharing my perspective with her allows us to consider a wider range of options. This normally leads to a consensus based often on who it impacts the most and common ground we have identified. We are better together.

Daniele is from Germany, and when I met her in my 20s, her allure included the unique point of view she had. Our differences sometimes pulled us into conflict, and we had to work through combining our lives with our contrasting viewpoints. We both had to learn to accept each other's outlooks and recognize, of course, that we had a limited perspective at that

stage of our lives.

Rather than being misinformed in an echo chamber, it is valuable to seek a variety of viewpoints. This is not meant to change your position on matters (although it might), but it will certainly help you understand issues better and infuse your empathy with respect for others who have other views.

This week we celebrate Easter. To get to Resurrection Sunday, Jesus Christ first had to suffer and die. We call this day Good Friday because what was meant for bad turned out incredibly good. The question remains, "Where can we find real hope?"

Purposely seeking out other perspectives on significant issues will help a lot. Ultimately, I believe hope that lasts forever is found in Christ. (I have written another article specifically telling my faith story in the Easter section of this week's paper.)

The Apostle Peter excitedly proclaimed, "... In his [God's] great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3, NIV).

Interestingly, the Bible includes four narratives of Jesus Christ's time on earth called Gospels. While I believe the entire Bible is inspired by God, human authors with varied personalities and backgrounds participated in writing the books of the Bible. The Gospel authors each had a distinct purpose to their narratives, emphasizing different aspects of the person and ministry of Christ. This helps us better understand Jesus and his mission on Earth.

Various perspectives provide valuable depth to understanding, and though sometimes challenging, are well worth seeking. Let's invest in getting to know others in our community, including those with differing points of view.

2024 Student Heroes Award nominations now open

STAFF REPORTS

Nominations are now open for the 2024 Student Heroes Award.

Approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE) in 2015, this award highlights Texas public school students participating in impactful volunteer service in their communities.

Since the award's inception, nearly 120 Texas public school students with a heart

for service have been named Student Heroes. Fifteen students, one per state board district, receive the award each year, with contributions ranging from initiating inclusive programs for seniors and students with disabilities to facilitating fundraisers for kids receiving medical treatment.

The SBOE encourages students, teachers, administrators and community mem-

bers to nominate any Texas public school students who exemplify the core value of selfless service.

To be nominated for the award, the volunteer service project performed by a public or charter school student must not be associated with any curriculum requirement, a school service project or community program.

The nomination period begins Monday, Feb. 19, and will

end Saturday, May 4, at 5 p.m. Central Daylight Time.

When completing the Student Heroes nomination form, be sure to include all required information, such as the nominee's permission to be nominated, and to have his or her information shared publicly. The nomination form must include an essay submitted by the nominator describing the nominee's outstanding volunteerism

and how it benefited others.

A parent or guardian signature is required for nominees under the age of 18 years old.

The student who earns this award will receive a plaque and a medal from their SBOE district member.

The award presentation typically occurs at a local school assembly, an organization meeting, or in a classroom. The exact date, time and location of the presenta-

tion will be determined by the local school district or campus in coordination with the SBOE member. Up to 15 students, one from each SBOE member, may be recognized.

For further details or to fill out a nomination form, visit tea.texas.gov, and type Student Heroes Award in the search bar at the top of the webpage.

Donate blood April 1, no foolin'

ZACH FREEMAN

azlereporter@tricityreporter.com

AZLE — Carter BloodCare says maintaining blood supplies is no joke this April Fool's Day. With a dip in donations over spring break and a relative increase in traffic accidents occurring around April 20, springtime sees its own set of challenges for the organization. This makes the need for the life-saving resource even greater.

If the blood supply drops, patients that require transfusions can face challenging

Carter BloodCare and Azle Area Ministerial Alliance host blood drive April 1

delays. This includes local patients needing major surgeries, cancer treatments or medical aid following vehicle collisions or severe trauma. From 2014 through 2022, at least 1,630 people have been injured in Texas from weather events, according to the National Safety Council. Over the last several years, Texas has led the nation in weather-

related deaths. Keeping local blood supplies well stocked is critical in saving lives after weather-related accidents and injuries.

On April 1, from 3:30-6:30 p.m., the Azle Area Ministerial Alliance will host its second blood drive of the year at the First Methodist Church of Azle at 200 Church St. in Azle, in partnership

with Carter BloodCare.

Residents as young as 17 years old — or 16 with parental consent — can safely donate blood with Carter BloodCare. There is no upper age limit for donors. In addition, eligible donors must weigh at least 110 pounds and feel well on the day of donation.

Carter BloodCare always

has high hopes for our city's blood drives. Past turnout for Azle donors have been some of the highest in D-FW, according to the organization.

Mobile blood drives will also be held at Lake Worth High School April 6 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and in Springtown April 12 at 200 North Main St. from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. In April, all presenting donors will receive an umbrella while supplies last. Additional incentives may be posted on CarterBloodCare.org or through social media outlets.

For faster donations and less paperwork, donors-to-be can sign up on Carter BloodCare's Donor Portal by going to ww3.greatpartners.org. Click "Donate Now," type "Azle" into the page's city search and schedule an appointment at an available mobile drive location. Readers can also schedule at following the link https://ww3.greatpartners.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/145185. More details can be found on the nonprofit blood center's website at CarterBloodCare.org.

Azle company instrumental in national security

ZACH FREEMAN
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AZLE — Azle residents might be surprised at what's being built in their own backyard.

Located at 1500 Northwest Parkway, a stone's throw from Main Street, Integrated Machinery Solutions specializes in cranes, hoists and other lifting mechanisms and is the only registered company of its kind in the state of Texas. The company began work at its Azle facility in 2015 and today is one of the city's largest employers. IMS clients range from NASA, Tesla, Lockheed-Martin and the U.S. Navy.

On March 8, the company shipped off one of its most ambitious and unique constructions to date. Two 120-ton, custom-built, overhead hoists left the facility for Explosive Handling Wharf One or EHW-1 at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay on the Georgia-Florida border. EHW-1 is a large facil-

Integrated Machinery Solutions finishes work on Kings Bay project

ity that rises 166 feet to its apex above the water. The facility is used to house U.S. Navy Trident ballistic missile submarines during unloading and loading of various weapons systems, including the thermonuclear Trident D-5 intercontinental ballistic missile. These are the primary weapons systems of the current Ohio Class SSBN submarines and will continue with the follow-on Columbia Class SSBNs, which are expected to enter service in 2031. The SS denotes submarine, the B denotes ballistic missile, and the N denotes that the submarine is nuclear powered.

The Azle-built machines will be used to load or unload nuclear ordnance into submarines waiting in the drydock's water below. Kings Bay is a critical location for America's nuclear arsenal and military infrastructure

on the East Coast. The base's previous equipment was built around 1970 during the height of the Cold War. The machine built by IMS is expected to not need replacing for another 50 years.

IMS co-founders Rick Reeves, who moved from Indiana 40 years ago, and Steve Bond, a Texas native, consider themselves proud Azleites and are optimistic about the impact their company has on the community.

"We're Hornets through and through," Reeves said. The pair met while working at another engineering firm, but eventually set off together in 2009. They worked out of a home garage for the first six months, then leased a facility in Blue Mound until they broke ground in Azle in 2014.

"My ex-partner wanted to go a different direction,"



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

IMS partners with Azle CTE classes like welding to help give students a head start in the workforce.

Reeves said. "With Steve being available, I knew we could definitely build a better company, a better situation where we're creating an environment for our employees to grow and build a (successful) product."

Many IMS employees are Azle High School graduates. As part of its business model, the company opts to hire largely young workers straight out of high school or college. IMS currently employs 135 people and is looking to hire about 20 more. The company works with local high schools and engages with future engineers, machinists, welders, millwrights and electricians through a Department of Labor-recognized internship program. Under the five-year program, students can work toward their journeyman license starting in their junior year of high school. The company also works with UTA, Texas A&M and the University of North Texas to hire new workers out of their engineering programs.

"Most of the kids that come in here, all of them are home-grown," Reeves said while pointing out former AHS and Boswell High School students during a tour of the factory. "The majority, the only thing they knew when they came here was paper or plastic.

These kids were working at Subway."

The company also has its own unique flair. IMS paints the vast majority of its machines bright yellow. The company's motto "Realis Viri Ferro," or "Real Men of Steel" in Latin, can be found throughout the facility and on employee merchandise. Leadership also hopes to promote a culture of excellence by utilizing "Six Sigma" methodologies and a core value of I.C.A.R.E. — integrity, continuous improvement, associate involvement, reduction in waste, exceeding customer expectation. Reeves said there are few companies that could have pulled the project off and that their success is a testament to IMS employees.

"We're very proud of our people," Reeves said. "Without them, we would not be where we're at."

From lifting the stop logs at Lake Buchanan's hydroelectric dam, painting the recently unveiled B-21 Raider stealth bomber, suspending Marine One for inspection, and placing t-beams at Dallas's High Five Interchange, IMS machines have been almost everywhere and done almost everything. The founders say their journey has only just started. They soon hope to build a 200-300-foot expansion on

the front of the facility and dream of one day turning the 58-acre lot into an industrial park. The "multi-multi-million dollar" Kings Bay project took IMS three years to complete. Next year, the company expects to begin work on a 250-ton machine for the Bezos-owned rocket company Blue Origin. With the nature of their products, Reeves stressed that safety is always the top priority.

"Everything we do is high liability," Reeves said. "If we make a mistake, we can either kill somebody, actually damage a lot of the material, or if you drop a nuclear warhead, you could wipe out the entire East Coast... I'm just real proud that we can help defend our country. This piece of equipment is made to where if anything were to happen and you had to load ordnance into the submarines to defend our country if something went wrong it's completely redundant. They are able to keep the piece of equipment running just so it can defend our country, our families and our grandchildren for the rest of our lives."

IMS employees expect to also replace the loading mechanisms at Naval Submarine Base Bangor on the West Coast when the time comes.



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

About 115 of IMS' staff in front of the mechanism now at Kings Bay.

Keep Azle Beautiful

Azle City Council establishes beautification board

ZACH FREEMAN
azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — During a March 4 Azle City Council meeting, council members voted to create an Azle Beautification Board. The board will comprise seven voting members appointed by the city council. The council decided board members could be some combination of up to three members from the Azle City Council, one Azle High School student who resides within the Azle city limits, up to two nonresident owners or employees of businesses operating within the Azle city limits and up to three resident citizens who are qualified voters. Each appointed board member will serve two-year terms.

The board's purpose will be to help make the city a clean and attractive place to live, maintain a healthy environment and educate or advocate these efforts to its residents. The board will

make recommendations to the council regarding landscaping, maintenance, trash cleanup and public advocacy, among other subjects. The council passed ordinance number 2024-03. The board's motto of "Keep Azle Beautiful" is reminiscent of similar initiatives in Fort Worth, White Settlement and around the country.

Mayor Pro Tem Randa Goode first brought up the idea of establishing a beautification committee, as well as the possibility of erecting "no littering" signs during an Oct. 17, 2023, Azle City Council meeting. Goode was disappointed with the amount of trash she saw on certain Azle roadways and was excited to explore solutions after learning about the beautification committees in other nearby cities. The council revisited the subject in February and has resolved to appoint this new advisory board in the near future.

Extra! Extra!

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Walnut Creek SUD considers options for alternative water sources

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springtownreporter@tricityreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN — Walnut Creek Special Utility District is researching how to get more water, possibly from Eagle Mountain Lake.

“At this time, Walnut Creek is still searching for a viable way to cover the cost of buying land and building a plant on Eagle Mountain Lake,” SUD general manager James Blackwood said. “This endeavor at the present time would incur a cost of around \$85 million.”

Walnut Creek SUD currently gets its water from Lake Bridgeport, but Blackwood said all that water is allocated to Tarrant Regional Water District’s customers. If the SUD is able to build a plant on Eagle Mountain Lake, it would work concurrently with the Lake Bridgeport plant.

Going to Eagle Mountain Lake might mean the district will have more acre feet as well since the lake is supposed to stay 70% full, Blackwood said at the February SUD board of directors meeting.

Zach Huff, water resources engineering director at the regional water district, confirmed that there is no more

water that can be given from Lake Bridgeport.

“Our permit with the state allows us to hold up to 27,000 acre-feet per year at (Lake) Bridgeport and reserves 66,000 acre-feet to be released to Eagle Mountain (Lake),” Huff said. “If you add up all of our contract maximums of customers who currently get water from Lake Bridgeport, it equals the 27,000 AFY that we can hold at Bridgeport. We can’t increase our contract maximums because we would be guaranteeing something that we could not legally provide.”

In addition to Walnut Creek SUD, Lake Bridgeport supplies water to the city of Bridgeport, city of Runaway Bay, West Wise Special Utility District, Wise County Water Supply District (City of Decatur), Jack County Power, Vistra Energy/Wise County Power as well as five irrigation and mining contracts.

Huff said Tarrant Regional Water District is looking into changing the permits so that so much water wouldn’t be sent to Eagle Mountain Lake, which would allow allotments to increase.

“It is important to note that any additional water held at Bridgeport would

have to be replaced at Eagle Mountain by water pumped from Richland-Chambers and Cedar Creek,” he said.

Walnut Creek customer Jane Galvin has spoken at multiple board of directors’ meetings about her concerns that Lake Bridgeport’s levels are not sufficient, especially in the summer when drought conditions tend to worsen. At the March 18 meeting, she pointed out that Lake Bridgeport is about 15 feet (above mean sea level) below the set conservation level. According to TRWD’s website, the conservation level is the permitted amount of water that is allowed to be held in a lake, and if the amount of water surpasses the conservation level, it is released downstream.

“Lake Bridgeport lake level and the serious need for a secondary reliable clean water source is still on the agenda,” Galvin said during the meeting. “The lake level as of today is at 820.70 (feet above mean sea level), 15.30 feet below conservation pool, putting us squarely in drought restrictions. This continuation will be a Stage 3 (under the Water Conservation and Drought Contingency Plan) by June.”

Galvin stressed that the board needs to put in place a plan to ensure that customers have reliable access to water.

Walnut Creek SUD board member Jim Cox said during the March meeting that the district is looking into alternative water sources, but if the board pursues an \$85 million bond issue, water rates will likely increase.

“Those that are familiar with municipalities and water rates, when you put a bond issue out, what’s going to happen? That bond issue has got to be paid for in increases in water rates,” Cox said. “Keep that in mind. We’re doing our best to do what we can do to not raise your water rates.”

The district’s engineer Bill Lohrke pointed out some drawbacks about Eagle Mountain Lake. He said it doesn’t have as much capacity as Lake Bridgeport, the water quality isn’t as good as Bridgeport and water from Eagle Mountain Lake would be travelling uphill to the district so more pump stations would be needed to push the water uphill.

Regarding quality, Blackwood said Eagle Mountain Lake water is cloudier but not untreatable.



MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER
Walnut Creek Special Utility District customer Jane Galvin has spoken at multiple board of directors’ meetings about her concerns that Lake Bridgeport’s levels are not sufficient, especially in the summer when drought conditions tend to worsen.

Lohrke said TRWD should build another pipeline to supply water to Lake Bridgeport, which he said was proposed years ago but never came to fruition.

“That would be the best economic situation for

Walnut Creek, Runaway Bay, the town of Bridgeport, West Wise (SUD) and Decatur,” Lohrke said. “If we have to go to Eagle Mountain and build it, someone’s got to come up with a lot of money.”

Spotlight on BUSINESS



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OBITUARIES

Sharon Arledge 1943-2024

Sharon Mozelle Arledge, 80, passed away Friday, March 15, 2024.

A private graveside ceremony was held March 20, 2024 for family and friends at Azleland Memorial Park and Mausoleum.

Sharon was born May 9, 1943, in Bowie, and was a hairdresser for over 35 years. She is preceded in death

by her parents, K.W. Arledge and Carmen Margaueretta Arledge; and brother Monte Kenneth Arledge.

She is survived by her son Chad Summers and wife Cheryl; and grandchildren Chase and Caden Summers.

The Tri-County Reporter, Thursday March 28, 2024

Dorothy Daulong 1934-2024

Dorothy Jean Daulong, 89, of Springtown, Texas passed away Friday, March 22, 2024, at home, surrounded by loved ones.

A graveside service will be at 2 p.m. Friday, March 29, at Springtown Cemetery in Springtown.

Dorothy was born to Raymond and Veda McGee Nov. 8, 1934, in Colorado City. She was a loving wife, mother and grandmother who had unconditional love for her family and cherished her time with them.

Dorothy is preceded in death by her husband, Don Daulong; stepson, Craig

Daulong; parents, Raymond and Veda McGee; brother, Darrell McGee; sister, Pat Sparks; grandson, Sammy Jack Weir; great-granddaughter, Crystal Lynn Pokryskier; and many other loved ones.

She is survived by her children, Teresa and husband, Jesse Cross, Charles Hemphill, Dee Dee and husband, Rick King, Gary Daulong, Renee Daulong; along with many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren.

The Tri-County Reporter, Thursday March 28, 2024

Cheryl Scott 1949-2024

Cheryl Sue (Cypert) Scott, 74, passed away, Monday, March 18, 2024 at home in Springtown.

A memorial service for Cheryl will be held Saturday, April 13, at 11 a.m. in Alexander's Midway Chapel, 3607 E. State Highway 199 in Springtown.

Cheryl was born, August 5, 1949, in Abilene to Oscar and Elinor (Keen) Cypert. Cheryl grew up in San Angelo and graduated from San Angelo High School. She attended San Angelo State University where she received a bachelor's degree in teaching. Cheryl was a kindergarten teacher for the Fort Worth ISD, retiring in 2014. She loved children and helped to shape generations of youth during her career. She had a special love for children.

Cheryl enjoyed an annual reunion with her high school friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, James Richard Scott; and sister, Cynthia Redfield.



She is survived by her son, SFC Ralph Beard, retired from the U.S. Army; daughters, Stephanie Scott, Stacey Spraggins and husband Terry; grandchildren, Courtney, Elizabeth, Brooke, Jamie, Grayson, Keegan, Jay and Patrick; great-grandchild, Harper; and nieces, Katherine Wood and Tamara Hitt. She was a loving wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

The Tri-County Reporter, Thursday March 28, 2024

To place an obituary

Call 817-270-3340

or email us at:

info@tricountyreporter.com

Azle ISD earns state awards

STAFF REPORTS

AZLE — Azle ISD Communications Director Amanda Moore was honored with four state awards during the 2024 Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) conference. The awards were announced at TSPRA's annual Star Awards Celebration Feb. 21, in Sugar Land during the association's annual conference.

Azle ISD competed among professionals from districts across the state with enrollments of up to 15,000 students to earn its four distinguished achievement awards — three Gold Star Awards and one Bronze Star Award.

Each year, TSPRA recognizes communicators in school districts, education foundations, education associations and organizations for their work in print and electronic media categories. There are 47 main categories covering various media

Communications Director Amanda Moore receives four awards

such as newsletters, programs, posters, reports, writing, image/identity packages, photography, graphics, video, electronic presentations, campaigns, events and websites. Larger, more comprehensive projects and special programs are entered in one of nine Crystal Commendation categories or in the Platinum Award category. The Platinum Award honors a year-long project that exhibits the highest standards of excellence in all facets according to research, analysis, communication and evaluation.

This year, a record-setting 1,850 entries were received. For the first 47 categories, the entries are divided into three divisions based on the

number of students the district, foundation or organization serves — under 15,000 students; 15,000 to 40,000 students; and over 40,000 students. Independent judges evaluate and score each entry based on its own merit. Bronze, Silver, and Gold Stars are awarded based on set criteria. Finally, the judges review their highest-scoring Gold Star winners and select a Best of Category for each division in each of the 47 categories.

The Texas School Public Relations Association (TSPRA) is a nonprofit, professional organization dedicated to promoting public schools through effective communications. TSPRA, an award-winning chapter of the National School

Public Relations Association (NSPRA), was chartered in 1962 and incorporated in 1977. With more than 1,150 members, TSPRA is comprised primarily of public information and communications professionals who serve the public school districts and education organizations of Texas. The membership also includes superintendents, administrators, principals, web/technology/electronic media and graphic professionals, education foundation executive directors and their boards, association executive directors, school consultants, vendors and others who support public education in the state. TSPRA provides professional development, resources, and networking opportunities for members and others in the education community.

How to dispose of unused and expired medication

STAFF REPORT

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's National Prescription Drug Take Back day is April 27 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The goal of this day is to provide a safe, convenient and responsible means of disposing of prescription drugs, while also educating the public about the potential for abuse of medications.

There are many ways to dispose of medications. The best option is to find a "drug take-back" location in your

area. This could be a local pharmacy or a police station. The take-back location may offer on-site medicine drop off boxes, mail-back programs or in-home disposal products.

To find a proper disposal location in your area, visit the Drug Enforcement Administration's Collection Site Locator at <https://www.dea.gov/takebackday#collection-locator> and enter your zip code. If there is not a col-

lection site near you, check the FDA's "Flush List" at <https://www.fda.gov/drugs/disposal-unused-medicines-what-you-should-know/drug-disposal-fdas-flush-list-certain-medicines> to see which medications can be flushed to help get rid of the unused medication.

Medication on the flush list may be especially dangerous with just one dose if it's taken by children, pets or others in the household. Flushing medicine that is not on the

flush list may be harmful to the environment.

If the medication is not on the flush list, disposing of it with the garbage may be an option if you cannot flush the medication or there is not a take-back location nearby. For medicines that are thrown away in the trash, FDA recommends mixing them with an unappealing substance such as dirt, cat litter, or used coffee grounds. Don't crush pills.

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MURDER

FROM PAGE A1

suspect had fled the scene, according to The Messenger. Police initially arrested Dominguez, who they found near the medical lodge's back door, in connection with

stealing a firearm, possession of a controlled substance and unlawful carrying a weapon. He posted a \$35,000 bond related to those charges and was released in late February.

The Tri-County Reporter was unable to reach Dominguez for an interview.

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Brandon Hall
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Sunday Worship 10:45 AM
Evening Worship 6:30 PM
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 PM

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Pastor: Paul Brownback 10400 Jacksboro Hwy 817-238-1404 www.TheAbbeyChurch.com Morning Worship.....10:30 AM Community Groups.....Various Times	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	Pastor: Timothy McKeown 817-221-5683 gracepointesbc.org Sunday School.....9:45 am Sunday Service.....11:00 AM Wednesday Bible Study.....6:00 PM	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 All Services.....7:00 PM	9396 FM 1886 Fort Worth, TX 76135 817-237-5500 thewordatlakeside.com Pastors: Brandon and Kelly Bohannon Worship Pastor: Kristen 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
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 Traditional Worship.....10:45 AM Evening Worship/Youth Refuge.....6:00 PM Wednesday Evening.....6:15 PM	CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH 2233 Hwy 199 E., Springtown 817-221-LIFE (5433) Sunday Worship Service.....10:00 AM Wednesday.....7:00 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	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	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 Adult Bible Class.....7:00 PM The WORD Students (6th-12th grades).....6:30 PM Awana Kids at the WORD.....6:30 PM Life at the WORD Life Groups Various Times
AZLE FIRST ASSEMBLY OF GOD 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	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	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	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	
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 Wednesday Evening.....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	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 Morning Worship.....10:30 AM Children's Church After Music Service Wed. Prayer Meeting.....6:30 PM Wed. Bible Study.....7:00 PM	SILVER CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH Pastor: Jay Ditty Minister of Music: David Musick Corner FM 730 S. & Veal Station Rd. Church 817-444-2325 www.silvercreekbc.org Sunday School.....9:45 AM Morning Worship.....10:50 AM Evening Worship.....6:00 PM Wed. Prayer Service.....7:00 PM	

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

ROGERS

FROM PAGE A1

vestigations unit in 2011, this time as detective sergeant, where he remained until he attained the rank of lieutenant in 2018.

"I have grown up in the Azle community, and I love to give back and serve in the community I grew up in. It's honestly not a job — it is a passion to serve this community and to provide the best service we can," Rogers said. "Having long family ties to this community makes it more personal to help. Under the command of Chief (Ben) Hall, I believe that (the Azle Police Department) will be able to provide the best service to the Azle community."

Rogers earned a master's degree in criminology and criminal justice from Texas Christian University in 2022 and also received a certificate in leadership, executive and administrative development.

"Dr. Kendra Bowen and Dr. Johnny Nhan were instrumental in these two programs, and I am thankful to have been accepted and completed my coursework through TCU, which was a building block for my success in completing the National Academy," Rogers said.

THE ACADEMY EXPERIENCE

According to its website, the FBI National Academy is a professional course of study for U.S. and international law enforcement managers nominated by their agency heads because of demonstrated leadership qualities.

The 10-week program provides coursework in intelligence theory, terrorism and terrorist mindsets, management science, law, behavioral science, law enforcement communication and forensic science. It serves to improve the administration of justice in police departments and agencies at home and abroad as well as to raise law enforcement standards, knowledge and cooperation worldwide.

Before attending the academy, Rogers applied to be a

partner for the academy's international program and was selected to be a coordinator. He earned an additional certificate for taking all graduate courses. There were 198 students in the 289th Session of the FBINA, and 24 of them came from other counties, Rogers explained.

Although Rogers is the first law enforcement officer from the Azle PD to attend the academy, Hall — who nominated Rogers — graduated from FBINA Session 261 when he worked for a different agency.

"Kevin distinguished himself by taking an advanced curriculum and acting as the class' liaison to the international students," Hall said. "This experience will arm Kevin with the latest trends in crime fighting and investigative methods. The courses are, in part, designed to offer local police departments an understanding of federal resources available in managing criminal investigations."

Rogers particularly enjoyed the athletic aspects of the FBI National Academy.

"The physical fitness program was the best fitness instruction I have ever received. They covered every aspect of physical wellness, and we were provided with fitness instruction several times a week," he said. "We had to complete each weekly challenge and run a mile in less than 10 minutes to be able to complete the Yellow Brick Road challenge — a 6.1-mile obstacle course, trail and road run that includes running up Heartbreak Hill. (That name should speak for itself.) After completing the challenge, we were awarded the famous yellow brick with our session number on it."

Rogers said the 10-week course brought friendships with many of his classmates as they worked through the academy together.

"You sweat, cry, share experiences and laugh together while being comfortable with being uncomfortable with the daily challenges," he said. "The biggest takeaway from the academy is that I now have 198 individuals who I

can call upon at any time to help with any situation that may come up. I also have new contacts within the FBI who can assist with cases or provide resources as needed."

Rogers called the experience of attending FBINA Session 289 a true honor. He was humbled to meet the international students and to learn of the challenges they face.

"I am extremely thankful to City Manager Tom Muir and Chief Hall for allowing me the opportunity to attend the 10-week program. I am also thankful to the men and women of the Azle Police Department who stepped up in my absence so that I could attend the academy," Rogers said.

BACK AT HOME

Just days after graduating in Quantico, Rogers is temporarily at the helm of the Azle PD this week while Hall undergoes additional training. But he's happy to be back at home with his family — blood and blue.

"I am blessed with an amazing wife and kids who supported my adventures of attaining my master's degree and attending the FBINA," Rogers said. "It takes a special person to be a first responder, but it takes a lot more to be the spouse of a first responder. So 'thank you' to all the first responder spouses for your support."

Being back home not only means enjoying more time with his wife, DaLania, but also with the latest additions to the Rogers family — twin grandsons Rhett and Ryder, who just turned 1 year old.

"Their laughs, giggles and smiles have brought a new level of happiness and joy to all of our lives, Rogers said. With a nod to his faith, he added, "God continues to provide calmness in the chaos and gives me knowledge and strength to achieve the daily tasks I'm given."

Rogers learned something from a classmate at the FBINA he wanted to pass on to readers. It is simply to "be where your feet are," which means to enjoy today and don't worry about tomorrow.

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION AND INTENT TO OBTAIN WATER QUALITY PERMIT RENEWAL

PERMIT NO. WQ0015566001

APPLICATION. Town of Lakeside, 9830 Confederate Park Road, Lakeside, Texas 76108, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to renew Texas Land Application Permit (TLAP) No. WQ0015566001 to authorize the disposal of treated wastewater at a volume not to exceed a daily average flow of 30,000 gallons per day via surface irrigation of 12.46 acres of land. The domestic wastewater treatment facility and disposal area are located in the southwest portion of the Town of Lakeside approximately 700 feet south of the intersection of Aquilla Drive and Crest Ridge Drive, in Tarrant County, Texas 76108. TCEQ received this application on January 29, 2024. The permit application will be available for viewing and copying at Lakeside Town Hall, 9830 Confederate Park Road, Lakeside, Texas prior to the date this notice is published in the newspaper. This link to an electronic map of the site or facility's general location is provided as a public courtesy and not part of the application or notice. For the exact location, refer to the application. <https://gisweb.tceq.texas.gov/LocationMapper/?marker=-97.499722,32.816944&level=18>

ADDITIONAL NOTICE. TCEQ's Executive Director has determined the application is administratively complete and will conduct a technical review of the application. After technical review of the application is complete, the Executive Director may prepare a draft permit and will issue a preliminary decision on the application. **Notice of the Application and Preliminary Decision will be published and mailed to those who are on the county-wide mailing list and to those who are on the mailing list for this application. That notice will contain the deadline for submitting public comments.**

PUBLIC COMMENT / PUBLIC MEETING. You may submit public comments or request a public meeting on this application. The purpose of a public meeting is to provide the opportunity to submit comments or to ask questions about the application. TCEQ will hold a public meeting if the Executive Director determines that there is a significant degree of public interest in the application or if requested by a local legislator. A public meeting is not a contested case hearing.

OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONTESTED CASE HEARING. After the deadline for submitting public comments, the Executive Director will consider all timely comments and prepare a response to all relevant and material, or significant public comments. **Unless the application is directly referred for a contested case hearing, the response to comments, and the Executive Director's decision on the application, will be mailed to everyone who submitted public comments and to those persons who are on the mailing list for this application. If comments are received, the mailing will also provide instructions for requesting reconsideration of the Executive Director's decision and for requesting a contested case hearing.** A contested case hearing is a legal proceeding similar to a civil trial in state district court.

TO REQUEST A CONTESTED CASE HEARING, YOU MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS IN YOUR REQUEST: your name, address, phone number; applicant's name and proposed permit number; the location and distance of your property/activities relative to the proposed facility; a specific description of how you would be adversely affected by the facility in a way not common to the general public; a list of all disputed issues of fact that you submit during the comment period and, the statement "[I/we] request a contested case hearing." If the request for contested case hearing is filed on behalf of a group or association, the request must designate the group's representative for receiving future correspondence; identify by name and physical address an individual member of the group who would be adversely affected by the proposed facility or activity; provide the information discussed above regarding the affected member's location and distance from the facility or activity; explain how and why the member would be affected; and explain how the interests the group seeks to protect are relevant to the group's purpose.

Following the close of all applicable comment and request periods, the Executive Director will forward the application and any requests for reconsideration or for a contested case hearing to the TCEQ Commissioners for their consideration at a scheduled Commission meeting.

The Commission may only grant a request for a contested case hearing on issues the requestor submitted in their timely comments that were not subsequently withdrawn. **If a hearing is granted, the subject of a hearing will be limited to disputed issues of fact or mixed questions of fact and law relating to relevant and material water quality concerns submitted during the comment period. TCEQ may act on an application to renew a permit without providing an opportunity for a contested case hearing if certain criteria are met.**

MAILING LIST. If you submit public comments, a request for a contested case hearing or a reconsideration of the Executive Director's decision, you will be added to the mailing list for this specific application to receive future public notices mailed by the Office of the Chief Clerk. In addition, you may request to be placed on: (1) the permanent mailing list for a specific applicant name and permit number; and/or (2) the mailing list for a specific county. If you wish to be placed on the permanent and/or the county mailing list, clearly specify which list(s) and send your request to TCEQ Office of the Chief Clerk at the address below.

INFORMATION AVAILABLE ONLINE. For details about the status of the application, visit the Commissioners' Integrated Database at www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/cid. Search the database using the permit number for this application, which is provided at the top of this notice.

AGENCY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION. Public comments and requests must be submitted either electronically at <https://www14.tceq.texas.gov/epic/eComment/>, or in writing to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Office of the Chief Clerk, MC-105, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087. Please be aware that any contact information you provide, including your name, phone number, email address, and physical address will become part of the agency's public record. For more information about this permit application or the permitting process, please call the TCEQ Public Education Program, Toll Free, at 1-800-687-4040 or visit their website at www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/pep. Si desea información en Español, puede llamar al 1-800-687-4040.

Further information may also be obtained from Town of Lakeside at the address stated above or by calling Mrs. Robin Butcko, BBA, Permitting Services, LLC, at 713-458-8612.

Issuance Date: March 19, 2024

PARK

FROM PAGE A1

will be open Fridays from 5-9 p.m. and Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Saturday evening from 5-9 p.m.

Along with food trucks, the park will have fun and festivities on display with local musical act Jesus and Jimmy Hill on Friday and DJ Kip Kruger and Medicine Song on Saturday. The Easter Bunny will also make a special appearance from 5-7 p.m. Friday at Sally's Sweets Ice Cream Truck and from 1-3 p.m. Saturday and has a special gift for the first 50 visitors. While a few permanent tables are available, the FeedLot urges visitors to bring their own camping chairs to ensure they have a place to sit. The city recommends keeping cash handy

for the ease of visitors and vendors. Yard games are also encouraged. Since the FeedLot is located on city-owned property, alcohol is prohibited.

The city has ambitious plans for the site including a farmers market and weekly

food truck events during the aforementioned times. The number of food trucks at the FeedLot during its debut will be double the expected number on any normal weekend. A stage has also been built for local acts and will be the site of future open mic nights.



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

The stage of the City of Azle's new food truck park, set to open at 5 p.m. Friday, March 29.

LEGAL PUBLIC NOTICES

Notice of Public Sale

Public boat sale to satisfy storage lien. Up for bids LEGALLY BELONGING TO: Sharon Hoppe & Brian Everett TX #3491BY 1970 49' Burns Houseboat SER# B202104234323 The Sale Will Be Held on April 13th 2024 1:00 PM, West Bay Marina, 6925 Liberty School Tap Rd. Azle, Tx 76020 (817)444-1622. Terms are cash/cashier's check at time of sale. Public boat sale to satisfy storage lien. Up for bids LEGALLY BELONGING TO: Thomas Fauver & Randy Ausbern TX #2863EB 2006 18' Ebbtide Ser# ETC00376K505 the Sale Will Be Held on April 13th 2024 1:00 PM, West Bay Marina, 6925 Liberty School Tap Rd. Azle, Tx 76020 (817)444-1622. Terms are cash/cashier's check at time of sale. Public boat sale to satisfy storage lien. Up for bids LEGALLY BELONGING TO: Chisty Hussain & Robert Self TX # 3471AU 1960 36' Chris Craft SER #CXA360189H The Sale Will Be Held on April 13th 2024 1:00 PM, West Bay Marina, 6925 Liberty School Tap Rd. Azle, Tx 76020 (817)444-1622. Terms are cash/cashier's check at time of sale.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE VARIANCE REQUEST

The City of Pelican Bay Board of Adjustment will conduct a public hearing at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 23, 2024 at City Hall, 1300 Pelican Circle to consider the following variance request: The property owner, Factory Showcase Homes, LLC, has requested a variance to the side yard setback for an existing lot 46 in block twenty-four (24), of Pelican Bay Addition, generally located at 1800 Long Avenue. The property is zoned SF-3 (Single-Family 3), which requires a minimum side yard setback of 25 feet. A porch must be built so an occupant can access the front door which would be to a side yard. Without a variance, the porch would set over the build line. A variance is needed for entry to the home. Written comments on the variance request are welcomed and must be returned to the following address before the meeting. Members of the public are invited to attend and speak at the hearing. City of Pelican Bay 1300 Pelican Circle Pelican Bay, Texas 76020 Attn: Cynthia Daniels, City Secretary

CITY OF AZLE, TEXAS REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS DEPOSITORY SERVICES

The City of Azle, Texas, is soliciting sealed applications from qualified financial institutions, with a physical location within the City's municipal boundaries, to provide primary Depository Services (RFA 2024-006). Applications will be accepted until 2:00 P.M. on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, delivered to the City of Azle, Attention: Jennifer Walls, Purchasing Agent, 505 W. Main Street, Azle, Texas 76020. The award of the depository services contract is scheduled for consideration during the City of Azle City Council meeting on July 16, 2024, at 6:00 P.M. at 505 W. Main Street, Azle, Texas 76020.

City-wide cleanup looking for volunteers

Organizers host day to clean-up Azle roadways April 6

ZACH FREEMAN

azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — On Saturday, April 6 volunteers will meet at 7:30 a.m. in front of Azle City Hall for a community Cleanup Day. The event is expected to last no later than 11 a.m. The event's organizers are looking for individuals and businesses to donate their time to cleaning up sections along Northwest Parkway, Southwest Parkway, East Main Street, Kerry Lane, Commerce Street and Boyd Road. If interest is found, organizers would also like to clean areas near Azle's Central Park, Ash Creek Park, Shady Grove, the Feed Lot at 225 Church Street, Azle High School, Azle Junior High, Forte Junior High and Azle's elementary schools. Volunteers may apply by contacting Randa Goode at randa.goode@pinnbank.com.

"CWD is supplying all the vests, bags, and trash grabbers so all we need now are volunteers," says organizer and mayor pro-tem Randa Goode. "I think it is important for a city to take pride in its appearance. I drive the streets every day and see

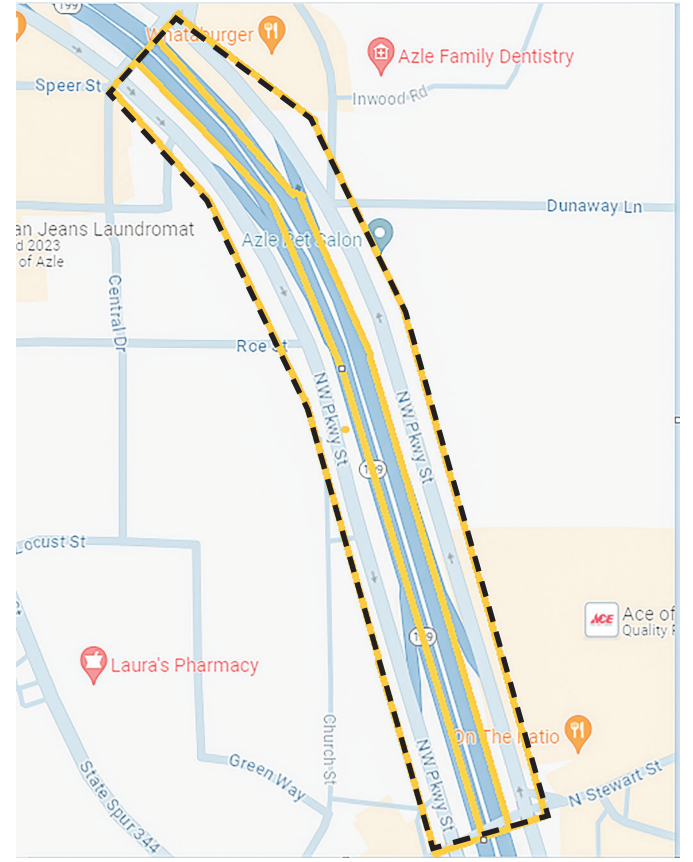
trash along the side all the time. This is not how I want other people to see our city, and I don't think citizens of the city want to see this either. Azle is a great place to live and work, and we must take care of our city. But getting a handle on the trash situation can be overwhelming for just one person, so if we can get the community to help, we can start making a positive difference."

The event started last year after Goode began speaking with other Azle residents about the problem of trash along Azle's roadways. After speaking, community members like Jennifer Herrington at the Azle Area Chamber of Commerce and Robert Medigovich with CWD, helped make the Earth Day event a reality. This year the cleanup day is being held a little earlier, but the message behind the movement remains the same.

"It's truly a community event with the community coming together to make a difference," Goode said. "I have been wonderfully surprised with the response I have already received from people wanting to volunteer."



Areas in the double line will be cleaned by Azle soccer teams.



Areas in the dashed line will be cleaned up by Pinnacle Bank employees.

While the City of Azle hosts biannual cleanup days where residents can clean up their properties and take trash to dumpsters located off Denver Trail, this is among the first events focused on picking up trash around the

roadways in Azle. Goode hopes to continue pushing events like these as a regular Azle tradition and is open to the possibility of holding more throughout the year.

The event will have volunteers walking through

tall grass, so long pants and reliable footwear are recommended. Organizers also urge that volunteers always pay attention to their surroundings. Most of the locations are along major roads and traffic remains a possible

danger. "Do not put yourself in danger," Goode said in an email to volunteers. "No piece of trash is worth risking your life."

COURTESY RANDA GOODE

AHS theater advances to bidistrict competition for One-Act Play

COURTESY PHOTO

The Azle High School One-Act Play company will advance to the bidistrict tournament for the first time in five years. The group performed "The Yellow Boat" by David Saar for the UIL competition March 23 at Aledo High School. In addition to advancing, the company earned numerous awards, including All Star cast: Ben Derting; Honorable Mention All Star cast: Ali O'Neil; Honorable Mention All Star cast: Julian Vilchiz; All Star crew: Paul Leonard; and Overall Best Tech Crew. The bidistrict tournament will take place April 3 in Terrell.



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ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER
Adult Activities Director Rebecca Buchanan and library assistant Mia Muhnny greeted visitors at the celebration.



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER
Library volunteers pass out freebies to families and attendees.

Azle Memorial Library celebrates 15 years

ZACH FREEMAN
 azlereporter@tricityreporter.com

City officials, staff, community gather for quinquennial

AZLE — Throughout the week, Azle's library celebrated the 15th anniversary of its current building, opened March 30, 2009. The name "Azle Memorial Library" was chosen to memorialize the donors who made the library's construction possible. The library promoted the anniversary with a week of scavenger hunts and prizes. On Saturday, March 23, the library gave out free gifts and goodies to mark the occasion and hosted announce-

ments from Mayor Pro Tem Randa Goode and Library Director Curren McLane. The library also held several craft activities and a community meal. The 11 staff members mingled with city officials, past staff and community members during the celebration. McLane detailed the history of libraries in Azle and commemorated the 2.8

million items checked out in its 1.5 million visits from community members in the last 15 years. "We want to be here for this community," McLane said. "This is your library. Thank you so much for coming here, letting us know what you need, and we hope to provide those needs long into the future."



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER
Tommy Standefer and Tony Haas manned the Azle Library Trust table. "It's great for the community and it adds a lot of cultural stuff to Azle," the pair said. "A lot of communities our size or even big cities don't have the kind of library we do. Azle has always supported the library even back when we were kids."

Kim Ware selected as Springtown Chamber president

MADELYN EDWARDS
 springtownreporter@tricityreporter.com

Ware succeeds former leader Jennifer Conway

SPRINGTOWN — Tri-County Reporter publisher Kim Ware is the new president of the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce's board of directors. Ware was assigned to this role at the board meeting March 21. Former President Jennifer Conway announced she would step down from the position at the chamber's Annual Awards Gala earlier this month. "I'm excited," Ware said about her new position. "I've been president before. It's been many years ago, but I'm super excited about working with the staff that's here. It'll be a great year." Ware previously served as the board's president from 2006 to 2008. She was also named the Chamber Member of the Year in 2008 and recognized for over a decade of service in 2016. Conway served as chamber president for three years, and she is confident Ware

will do great and be successful in the role. She said part of the reason she stepped down is because she works in Weatherford, and her schedule doesn't always allow her to help the chamber. "I don't have a bunch of free time to be available when they need somebody, and I think Kim will be very good for that because she's around this area," Conway said. The chamber president is tasked with presiding over the board meetings and various committees. Chamber Executive Director Terri Toone described the board president as a "backbone" for staff, someone who provides support. "I'm very excited about the change in leadership," Toone said. "Jennifer did an excellent job, but I am also very excited to have Kim on board. We're going to make a great team — me, Kim and (cham-

ber administrative assistant) Dene (Berry) and our ambassadors and our volunteers." Ware intends to work toward the goals set by the board and said she is excited for the chamber's upcoming events. "I always look forward to Wild West (Festival)," Ware said. "Wild West is a lot of fun. The most recent thing we're going to do will be the clay shoot (April 12). Clay shoot is a blast, so I'm looking forward to doing the clay shoot this year." Toone expects Ware will bring "fresh new ideas" to the table. "We're already getting stuff ready to put on the calendar," Toone said. "I think increasing our membership numbers is going to be a big thing. We will, in the near future, do a membership drive to try to get our numbers built and the community more involved."

Conway agreed that Ware will be good at coming up with new thoughts and plans. "Kim is full of ideas. That's Kim's forte is ideas, so she'll do very well with that," she said. Despite leaving the lead role, Conway was still planning Wild West Festival activities after the March 21 board meeting. "I still do Wild West. I don't think any of us are allowed to go anywhere," Conway said jokingly. "When you get suckered in, you are stuck." During her presidency, Conway enjoyed getting to know the chamber's staff and building up her friendships with them. She also credited the role with pushing her to address large groups of people. "I stepped out of my comfort zone a little because I don't like public speaking," Conway said. "It kind of forced me to do that, so that was a lot to learn." By the end of this year's chamber gala, Conway delivered three speeches.



MADELYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER
Tri-County Reporter publisher Kim Ware is the new president of the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce. Ware is pictured to the right of Chamber Executive Director Terri Toone.

"Oh, I'm still afraid of it," she said. "Don't get me wrong. It's not my thing, but I've succeeded with it, I guess." Conway will stay on the chamber board and plans on still being involved. She described the chamber as a "moving target" that's always changing. With more people and businesses coming to Springtown, she expects to see the chamber expand its membership. "I think that's the goal is to continue to grow the chamber as best we can," Conway said.

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<p>AZLE AREA MINISTERIAL ALLIANCE UNITED IN CHRIST</p> <p>Christian Leaders partnering together with one voice to impact our culture for Christ. We celebrate unity amidst diversity as we pastor our community.</p> <p>Luncheon meetings 11:45 a.m. - 1 p.m. 2nd Tues of each month; location varies.</p> <p>See www.azlema.com or email director@azlema.com for additional information. 817-200-4611</p>	<p>Let's build community together.</p> <p>SERVOLUTION NETWORK</p> <p>LET'S START A COMMUNITY WIDE REVOLUTION THROUGH SERVING.</p> <p>Love God. Love People. Love Your City. Dream Center open 9-3 M-F 11698 FM730 S. Azle FOR QUESTIONS CALL: 833-4WE-SERV servolutionnetwork.com</p>	<p>CLUB or ORGANIZATION meeting?</p> <p>Only \$125 for 52 weeks of advertising</p> <p>Call for details: 817-270-3340</p>	<p>Optimist Club of Azle</p> <p>Meets every FRIDAY at 6:45 AM Moe's Country Kitchen 316 W. Main, Azle</p>	<p>Azle Lodge No. 601</p> <p>Floor School or Work 7:30 PM THURSDAY NIGHT</p> <p>Kenny Patrick - Worshipful Master Chris Akers - Secretary Clint Hall - Treasurer</p>	<p>EAGLE MOUNTAIN PREGNANCY HELP CENTER</p> <p>10328 Jacksboro Hwy Fort Worth TX 76135 817-237-1819 www.emphc.org Tues 9 - 3 PM • Thurs 12-6 PM SE HABLA ESPAÑOL</p>



Steak round A winners Jack Foster and Pat McDevitt.

COURTESY PHOTO



Steak Round B winner Chuck White.

COURTESY PHOTO

Rotary honors students of the month

ZACH FREEMAN
azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — The Rotary Club of Azle recognized five Azle High School students for their personal and academic achievements during their senior year. Gillian Brentz, Reese Wethington, Mathew Estrada, Madeline Thompson, and Brookelyn Nowakowski were each commended by the club during its Feb. 29 luncheon.

Gillian Brentz is the daughter of Eric and Andrea Brentz. Her GPA is 101.22 and her class rank is 32. She hopes to attend the University of North Texas, the University of Texas at Arlington or the University of Texas to major in foreign languages, Japanese studies, or Asian language studies to possibly be a business translator one day. Brentz is proud of maintaining her position in the academic top 10% of her class, overcoming her anxieties about driving, and winning second place at the World-Class level with the AHS indoor winds group. She considers her time management skills, determination and perfectionism to be some of her greatest strengths.

Brentz describes herself as hard-working, empathetic and creative. Some of her favorite teachers are Ms. Reasoner, Ms. Paden and Ms. Bradshaw. Brentz enjoys theater, music and dance along with reading. She is proud of her work as section leader in the band and for receiving the highest possible score at the UIL Texas Solo and Ensemble Contest. In addition to band, Brentz was house and publicity manager and leader for the school's production of Alice and Wonderland. She has participated in student council, National Junior Honor Society and culture club.

Reese Wethington is the daughter of Christie Wethington. She has a GPA of 100.79 and is ranked 36th in her class. Wethington hopes to attend Texas

5 AHS seniors recognized during luncheon

Tech University to major in chemistry and then medical school to study behavioral neurology. She is proud of being in the academic top 10% and being a band section leader for three years.

Wethington describes herself as charismatic, smart and perseverant. She's also proud of her work ethic. Mr. Strange and Ms. Reasoner are some of her favorite teachers. She is in National Honor Society, Interact Club and HOSA along with band. Wethington is proud of the volunteer work she's done at food pantries, nursing homes, and the Night to Shine special needs prom.

Mathew Estrada is the son of Michelle Johnston. He has a GPA of 98.5 and is ranked 58th in his class. Estrada is interested in joining the U.S. Navy and pursuing a future in nuclear science. His academic strengths are math and science, and his weaknesses are reading and studying.

Estrada's personal strengths are his intelligence and his headstrong attitude. His weakness is his talkativeness. He describes himself as ambitious, honest and organized. Coach Jones and Ms. Marlet are some of his favorite teachers. He is proud of his work volunteering in the Trinity Trash Bash. Madeline Thompson is the daughter of Stephen and Jennifer Thompson. She is interested in attending Texas Christian University, Texas Tech or Texas State for a pre-dental or orthodontic education. She is proud of her academic accomplishments. Her greatest academic strengths are her knack for completing assignments early and going above and beyond in expressing herself creatively. Thompson's greatest academic weakness is that she often underestimates herself. Her greatest personal strengths are

her empathy, kindness and compassion. Her personal weakness is that she is shy sometimes.

Thompson describes herself as compassionate, motivated and adaptable. Some of her favorite teachers are Mr. Cooke and coach Prather. Thompson has been on the varsity cheer team for three years, was cheer captain in seventh and eighth grades, and is currently varsity cheer captain at AHS. She also serves as student council vice president. She is the youngest of three siblings, and often volunteers at Ash Creek Baptist Church.

Brookelyn Nowakowski is the daughter of Jay and Gina Nowakowski. She has a GPA of 100.56 and is ranked 38th in her class. She hopes to attend the University of Arkansas, Oklahoma University, Tarleton State University or TCU to pursue sports management, horticulture or environmental science. Nowakowski sees her good memory as her greatest academic strength. Chemistry and math are some of her best subjects. Her greatest personal strengths are that she is self-disciplined, which she attributes to having to get up for morning swim team practices since the third grade. She is also good at including others. One of her greatest weaknesses is her difficulty expressing her feelings.

Nowakowski describes herself as determined, inclusive and charismatic. Her favorite teachers are coach Estes and Ms. Reasoner. Nowakowski says she strives for perfection. She has attended swim meets for the past two years. She was part of student council last year, is currently an NHS member, and is one of the swim captains for this season. She works as a lifeguard for Bearfoot Lifeguard Training and Pool Management.

Raising the steaks

Azle Rotary raised over \$10k at steak cookoff, winners named

ZACH FREEMAN
azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — Lakeside-based Steak Cookoff Association held its first annual Azle Steak Cookoff March 9, in collaboration with the Rotary Club of Azle. The event brought dozens of chefs — pros and amateurs alike — to face off in cooking for two steak rounds and a round of appetizers. Participants who placed first place in steak rounds won as much as \$1,000 while 10th place winners earned \$25. Through donations, entry fees and raf-

fles, the event raised \$10,848 for the Azle Rotary Club.

ROUND A STEAK WINNERS

- 1st: Jack Foster
- 1st: Pat McDevitt
- 3rd: Jay Kassera
- 4th: Chuck White
- 5th: Gene Skillin
- 6th: Melissa McDevitt
- 7th: Doug Homann
- 8th: Naomi Roskell
- 9th: Andras Taciany
- 10th: Andy Bowen

ROUND B STEAK WINNERS

- 1st: Chuck White
- 2nd: Henry Stevens
- 2nd: Doug Homann

- 4th: Randy McKnight
- 5th: Naomi Roskell
- 6th: Pat McDevitt
- 7th: Melissa McDevitt
- 8th: Curt Cuthbertson
- 9th: Jay Kassera
- 10th: Jack Foster

APPETIZER WINNERS

- 1st: Pat McDevitt
- 2nd: Heath Bletzacker
- 3rd: Norma Maune
- 4th: Randy McKnight
- 5th: Susan Handy
- 6th: Michael Jordak
- 7th: Azle Optimist
- 8th: Naomi Roskell
- 9th: Carey Foster
- 10th: Stephen Gentzler



COURTESY PHOTO

(L-R) Alan Hard (recognized at the previous luncheon), Reese Wethington, Gillian Brentz, Brookelyn Nowakowski and Maddie Thompson were recognized for their academic achievements at the Feb. 29 Rotary Club luncheon, along with Matthew Estrada who is not pictured.

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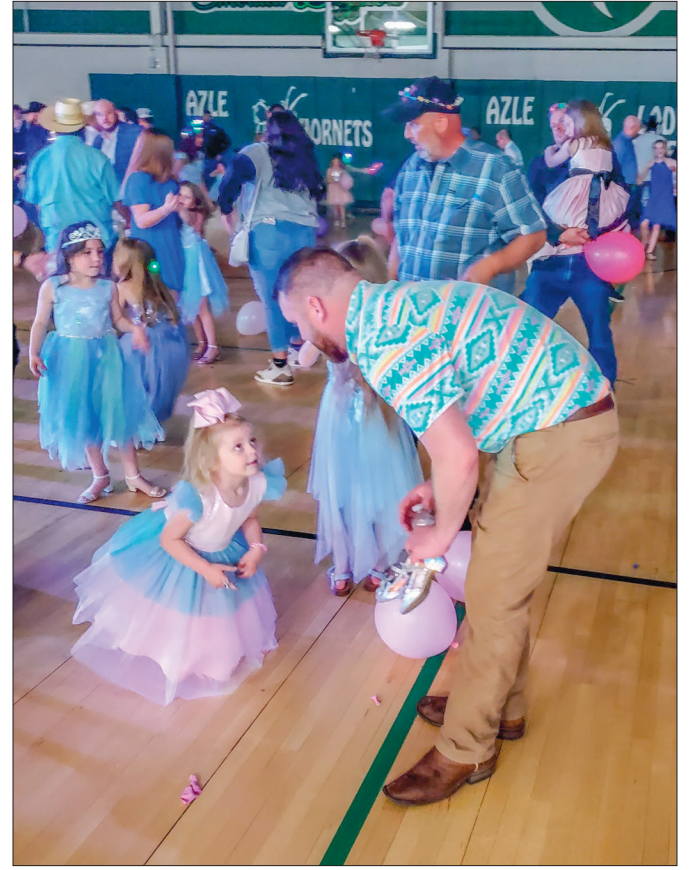
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Ties and Tiaras

PHOTOS COURTESY OF AZLE MGP BAND BOOSTERS

Azle Marching Green Pride hosted a Daddy-Daughter dance March 23 at Azle High School. The event brought out hundreds of well-dressed daddy-daughter duos to eat, drink and dance the night away. The money raised at the event goes toward MGP's Indoor Drumline and Winter Guard trip to the Winter Guard International competition in April in Dayton, Ohio.



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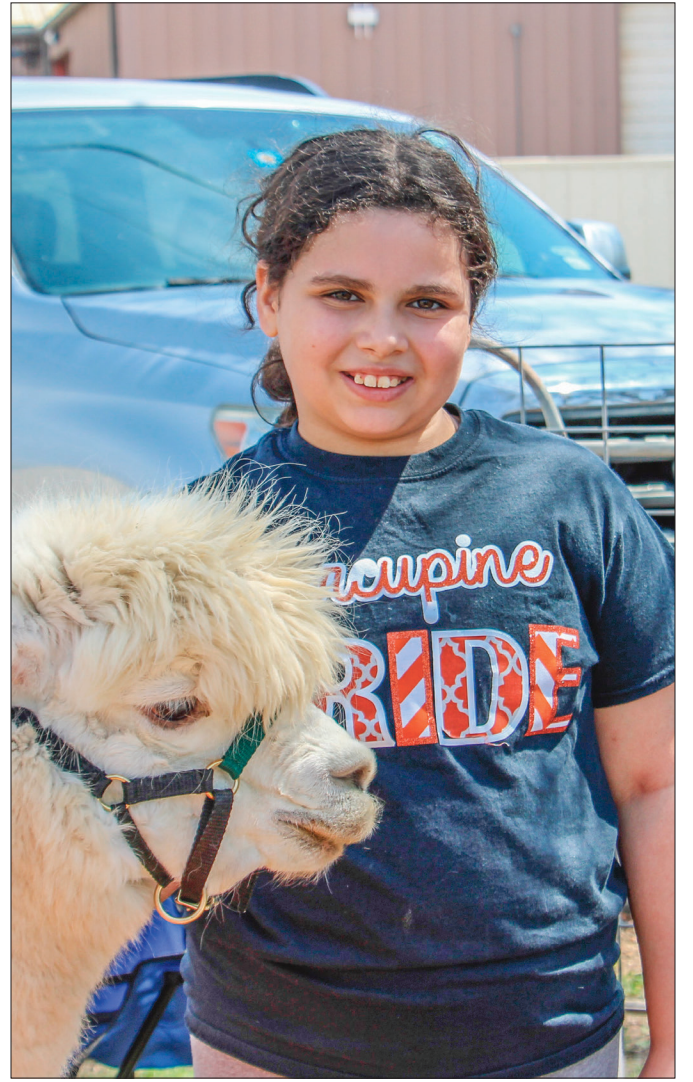
Hopping in Springtown

Springtown celebrates Easter with annual Hop and Shop



MADLYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER
Aida Ramos, 7, scoops up plastic eggs with prizes inside at Springtown Park during the city's Hop and Shop event.

Four-year-old Will Spencer, left, and 6-year-old Mamie Spencer, right, take a picture with their cousin Chloe Stafford, 12, amid the city of Springtown's Easter egg hunt last weekend.



Aniah Alcorta and her little sister Bella Marquez take a picture with the Easter bunny in the Springtown Tabernacle last weekend.

Lauren Richardson, 9, visits the alpacas (provided by Wise Alpaca Farm) during the Hop and Shop on the Springtown Square.



Three-year-old twins Layla and Penelope Espinosa collect eggs with their dad Jimmy at the city of Springtown's March 23 Easter egg hunt.

Sisters Jaci and Klair Bailey assess their Easter egg hunt loot with their mom Kristi at the city of Springtown's Easter event last weekend.

THE TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

DIVERSIONS

B

THURSDAY, March 28, 2024



KIM WARE | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER
4U Bubba Ball Coach Kevin Osmar, left, with Bowen Young. This year, over 500 boys and girls, ranging in age from 3 to 14, registered to play for ABSA.

Opening day at Stinger Field

Azle Baseball and Softball Association host opening ceremony

EMMA VANBECELAERE
sports@tricityreporter.com

Azle Baseball and Softball Association hosted its opening weekend ceremony Friday, March 22, with Mayor Alan Brundrett throwing out the ceremonial first pitch. Over the opening weekend, ABSA hosted 60 games in just two days. More than 20 vendors were on hand, selling products like food, drinks and other merchandise.

“Games started Saturday morning and let me say, there is no experience quite like opening day at the ballfields,” ABSA Vice President Daniel Chapman said.

With an exciting season approaching, all teams will play between 10 and 12 games, mostly at Stinger Field in Azle with limited travel. Teams and coaches participated in a parade through the clover

PLEASE SEE **OPENING** | B3

Springtown's Crain will compete at Augusta National Golf Tournament

EMMA VANBECELAERE
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Springtown's Dixie Mae Crain won first place at the Drive, Chip and Putt tournament in Houston, where she competed for the subregional title at Champions Golf Club. Crain will compete at the DCP National Finals at Augusta National Golf Course April 7.

The 13-year-old has played in a lot of tournaments. After winning the Houston DCP, Crain was feeling all the emotions, coming off a great win to secure her spot.

“It hasn't set in that I am going to DCP National Finals; I have received the box that they sent me, (but) I don't think it will fully set in until I am on the flight there,” Crain

said.

Although she's barely into her teen years, Crain has already beaten many expectations of what she is capable of. Crain will travel to Augusta with her father, little brother and two of her former coaches, coach Michelle and coach Dan.

“I felt so excited, just knowing that I'll be able to go there just made me so happy,” Crain said, “I wasn't really expecting to win it because there's a lot of great people, so just knowing that I could go there was really great.”

Crain is preparing for the tournament by playing at different golf courses and practicing as much as possible. She has a determination that could help set her apart

from the other competitors at Nationals.

“I am not really changing how I am going to approach Augusta, it's all about if you get consistent,” Crain said, “I've been working on my swing with my driver throughout the past tournaments that I've been doing.”

Augusta National Golf Course is known for having fast greens, which mean harder chips, tougher putts and bigger misses. Crain has been going to multiple golf courses around the area to prepare for the challenges she will face.

“There's no fast greens like Augusta; if I get a chance to play in a tournament with

PLEASE SEE **CRAIN** | B4



Thirteen-year-old Dixie Mae Crain is set to travel to Augusta, Georgia, where she will compete in the Drive, Chip and Putt Augusta National Finals.

COURTESY OF NTPGA MEDIA TEAM



EMMA VANBECELAERE | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

The Azle High School boys' golf team competed in a tournament at Sugar Tree Golf Course in Lipan.

Lady Hornets advance in soccer playoffs; area boys lifters compete at state

RICK MAUCH
Special to the Tri-County Reporter

Displaying the defense that has been their strongest asset all season, the Azle Lady Hornets (14-8-1) kept their most successful soccer season since 2018 going with a 1-0 victory against Fort Worth South Hills in their Class 5A bidistrict match at Aledo's Bearcat Stadium March 25.

Sarae Perez had the lone goal, unassisted. Goalkeeper Emma Nelson posted another shutout, the ninth of the season for the Lady Hornets.

Along with the nine shutouts, Azle has held seven other opponents to a single goal. The team is outscoring its opponents by an average of 1.8-1.3 this season and this was its fifth straight game to hold an opponent to a goal or less.

The Lady Hornets were playing the winner between Midlothian Heritage (14-8-2) and Colleyville Heritage (18-0-2), ranked No. 5 in the state by the Texas Girls Coaches Association, at press time in

SPORTS Roundup

the second round.

This was the second 1-0 victory by the Lady Hornets against South Hills (17-6-2) this season. They also defeated the Lady Scorpions Jan. 19 in a tournament at Chisholm Trail.

Azle finished third in District 5-5A with a 6-5-1 league mark after a shoot-out loss at Brewer March 19. The teams ended regulation tied at 1-1. Sophie McIntyre scored for Azle and Rachel Harder had an assist.

This is the Lady Hornets' first postseason appearance since 2019.

SPRINGTOWN GIRLS SOCCER

The Lady Pines (15-4-1), runners-up in District 8-4A, were playing Fort Worth Carter-Riverside (2-10-2),

third in 7-4A, in bidistrict at Fort Worth Western Hills High School at press time. This is Springtown's fourth consecutive season in the playoffs and they were hoping to advance for a second straight season.

Entering bidistrict, the Lady Pines had outscored their past five opponents 9-3.

AZLE/SPRINGTOWN BOYS POWERLIFTING

Six boys powerlifters competed at their respective state meets for Springtown and Azle this past weekend. Three finished in the top 20 in their weight classes.

Alan Hard of Azle had the highest placement, taking 12th in the Class 5A

PLEASE SEE **ROUNDUP** | B2

Lifelong Porcupine hangs up whistle

Beloved SHS volleyball head coach steps down, pursues teaching full time

MADelyn EDWARDS

springtownreporter@tricityreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN — As a high school student, Leighann Strickland vowed that she would return to Springtown after graduation to work with volleyball players alongside her coach.

Strickland went on to play volleyball at Texas Wesleyan University. Once she finished school, she checked in with her former coach at Springtown High School to see if there were any open positions. Sure enough, a spot was available for her, and in August 2003, Strickland made good on her goal.

“My dream came true, and I am thankful for the blessing it has been to be home all these years,” she said. “I grew up here in Springtown and played under coach Cari Lowery. She helped teach and guide me through learning the skills to be a successful player, instilling the love for the game in seventh grade. Throughout our successes in high school, I had a deep passion for the game and never looked back.”

In Strickland's 21 years at SHS, she spent 17 years in the head coach position. Now, she has decided to retire.

Strickland isn't leaving Springtown; she will stay on as a full-time teacher, but her intuition is telling her to step off the court and into the bleachers.



COURTESY PHOTO

Springtown head volleyball coach Leighann Strickland gives direction from the sidelines during a game. When she retires from coaching, Strickland plans to cheer on the players from the bleachers.

“It is time for me to focus back on my family and be there for them more than I have been able to,” Strickland said. “Coaching takes you away a whole lot; you have something going on every night of the week, and when you leave the gym, it doesn't stop. We tend to take it home and go back over the things of the day, what could we have done differently; our phone is still getting messages from kids or parents, and it just doesn't stop. I'm overly ex-

cited to be a wife and a mom and watch my kids do their thing on the court without mom being on the sideline.” SHS Principal Melissa Hutchison said it will be odd seeing Strickland in the stands instead of the volleyball court, but Hutchison is wishing her good luck moving forward.

“Coach Strickland is an incredible coach, and I have always been in awe of the love she has not only for her

PLEASE SEE **WHISTLE** | B2

Azle High school boys and girls powerlifting team have a successful season

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Azle High School's boys and girls powerlifting programs had successful seasons, with both qualifying multiple athletes to compete at the state championship meet.

During the season, Hornet powerlifters broke multiple school records, eventually sending four team members to the state powerlifting meet in Abilene March 23. Four Lady Hornet powerlifters competed the previous week in Frisco March 16.

The coaches for both the boys and girls programs have been in Azle for many years and have accomplished a lot during their time here.

MAINES: A GENUINE COACH

Bo Maines is boys head powerlifting coach at AHS. He coached for Springtown for 11 years before heading east 10 miles into Azle, where he has been for 10 years.

Maines has coached many sports, although he has not coached soccer or volleyball. He said he became a coach so he could share his knowledge with the athletes.

"I became a coach because I was a rather average athlete, but intelligent about the game and had more to give years later," Maines said, "I loved to compete, and love to be around sports and others that strive to be the best in all they do. In my later years, my motivation to coach has been more centered around trying to be the kind of coach that I would want to mentor my two boys."

With most athletes playing multiple sports during the offseason, Maines makes sure to help the boys who want to come get extra lifting time before or after school to help them get stronger.

Multiple athletes qualified for state, and several school records broken

Maines started a record board in the weight room to help the athletes see a goal and hopefully the athletes would work hard to beat that record for themselves. The record board pushed the kids to get to a point where they knew they could do it.

"The motivation for the record board has to be intrinsic. I'm pushing them to win meets and to continue to break their own records each week," Maines said, "I honestly don't even know about the kids breaking records unless they tell me or it's the end of the season and time to update the board."

For Maines, this year was special because he was able to see the kids grow and become better as he saw them supporting each other during a meet or even just in after-school practice.

Finding athletes who enjoy being in the weight room and want to participate in powerlifting helps Maines to prepare for the next season. He has a different style than many coaches, taking a genuine approach and coaching them as if they were his own kids.

"I feel like (I'm) a genuine coach, I am openly honest, I tell the kids often 'don't ask me a question if you are going to be sensitive about the answer,'" Maines said, "Athletes need to be treated as you would your own kids. I would do anything for these kids, and they know I genuinely love and care for them. But they also know that I am going to let them hear about it when they are not doing the right thing or performing the way they are capable of."

Aside from that, (I'm) just being present for them as often as I can, and being interested in their lives outside of athletics, with their schoolwork."

STREET: FUN AND SUCCESS ARE CONTAGIOUS

Azle girl's powerlifting coach Tanner Street started his career as a football coach and powerlifting coach right out of college.

"Coaches believing in me and having an impact on my life — I became a coach because of the coaches I had growing up," Street said.

Every coach has a different way of coaching their athletes and Street is no different. He wants to show up for his athletes by being there and showing his support for them when they are going through a hard time.

"Every athlete is different, but the same type of adversity hits every year, sickness, wanting to maintain the weight they need to compete in the correct weight class," Street said, "We tell the ladies all the time, 'control what you can control.' There is no sense dwelling on the past. Smile, focus and keep moving forward."

Coaches and athletes alike go through challenges; how they are handled is what sets Street and his athletes apart from other teams. Having a record board to see which records the athletes can break over the season grows the confidence of the kids, according to Street.

"(We're going to) continue doing what we're doing. Having fun and success are contagious. We had 40 girls lift this year, and I am hoping

for more of the same for next year," Street said.

Looking at next year, the team will only lose two senior girls to graduation, which helps grow the team even more.

"(We're) going to evaluate our program and what we can tweak and improve on to be even better next year," Street said.

For Street and the AHS girls powerlifting team, having a

successful season, continuing to grow the program and putting in the hard work and dedication are the goals for the upcoming year.



COURTESY PHOTO

The Azle Lady Hornets soccer team advanced to the second round of the playoffs with a 1-0 victory against Fort Worth South Hills, continuing their best season in several years.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BO MAINES

The Azle Hornets powerlifting program was represented at state by (from left) coach Bo Maines, Case Moore, Tyler Ulrich, Alan Hard, Cash Moore and coach Chad Jones.

WHISTLE

FROM PAGE B1

program but for her athletes," Hutchison said. "She truly loves them like her own! My absolute favorite moments with coach Strickland, in addition to all of the fun adventures on the court, have been at college signing days in which she has shared firsthand her love and support for her athletes as they continue their athletic adventures after graduation. I have never seen a coach speak more heartfelt words, and I can tell you this: anyone who has been lucky enough to be part of her incredible coaching journey is a better person (and Porcupine) because of it."

Strickland's coaching skills didn't exactly arrive over-

night. In her first season as the varsity assistant coach, Strickland recalled being overwhelmed and surprised by what her new job entailed.

"That's one of the things no one tells you about this job. There is so much more to coaching than just coaching," she said. "Thankfully I had some amazing fellow coaches, teachers, and friends, that helped teach me the ins and outs and how to figure it out."

One of the skills Strickland has brought to the job is individualized coaching. Her leadership is based on each player's skills and instincts, and she has tried to create an environment where every athlete can excel.

"I really push confidence, resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity, pushing each player to be successful," Strickland said. "I have always aimed to inspire and

motivate my team, and each player to achieve their full potential and work together towards shared goals."

Like many educators, Strickland talked about working with the students on the volleyball team as the highlights of her career. She said she has "thoroughly enjoyed" all the team's athletes throughout the years, and building those relationships is the main reason for her longevity in coaching.

"I pray that each player has taken something positive from their experience with me," Strickland said. "Anything from simply remembering to make good choices to learning to continue to push through in a difficult situation knowing that something positive is bound to come from it."

Strickland has seen her students thrive in a variety of

ways post-graduation, such as by playing college volleyball or becoming successful in other areas. She especially enjoys when former players go on to coach alongside her or lead teams of their own. Strickland said the past year has been even more momentous because she had the opportunity to coach her oldest daughter on the team.

"Every year has its special moments, way too many to be able to share," Strickland said.

Springtown Athletic Director Brian Hulett characterized Strickland's long coaching career as "an extended period of success" for the volleyball program and said she "set a high standard to follow."

"Although we support her in what's next, we sure didn't want to see her go!" Hulett said. "She has been such a

great role model for our girls, on and off the court, and has taught them as a coach, teacher, mother and leader. We are very appreciative of her time here and are truly better because of it."

Strickland, taking an humble approach, couldn't name anything she had done as a great achievement. Instead, she put all the praise on her players.

"The young ladies that are in this program achieve all of the accomplishments because they have worked hard, put in the countless hours, and done all of the extra things to be good," Strickland said. "Springtown High School volleyball is successful because of these players, and I am proud that I have been able to stand on the sidelines along the way watching them succeed."

Strickland always planned

to retire in Springtown. She recalled telling that to a school board member around the time of her first season coaching at SHS and saying, "how awesome that would be to be a Porcupine for that long." Again, Strickland reached her goal.

While she doesn't exactly have advice for the next head volleyball coach, Strickland indicated that leading SHS' volleyball program is a good job to have.

"I would certainly tell them how our parents, students, fans and community are top notch," she said. "We support each other; our parents go out of their way to make sure we, as a program, have everything we need. These athletes are ready for the next level and for our new coach to bring them there. I can't wait to cheer them all on next season!"

ROUNDUP

FROM PAGE B1

132-pound division. He lifted 1,125 total pounds (squat, bench press, deadlift).

For Springtown, Parker Bening placed 15th in Class 4A in the 132-pound division, lifting 1,000 pounds. Azle's Case Moore placed 16th in the Class 5A 220 division, lifting 1,510 pounds.

Also for Azle, Tyler Ulrich was 33rd in the 181 division, lifting 1,415, and Cash Moore was 40th with 1,390.

For Springtown, Hayden Nichols qualified in the 220 division but did not place.

AZLE BASEBALL

The Hornets (12-5, 2-2 in District 5-5A) played a couple of pitchers' duels against Saginaw, falling 1-0 in 9 innings on the road on March 19 and winning 2-1 in eight innings at home March 22.

In the loss, Christian Shepherd pitched six scoreless innings of 1-hit ball, striking out 9. Garrison Graves got the hard-luck going, going 2.2 innings.

Offensively, Graves had a pair of hits and Ty Bonnett doubled.

In the win, Cole Webb was lights out on the mound, go-

ing seven innings and giving up a single unearned run. Sam Lindahl picked up the win in an inning of relief.

The Hornets won on Ryland Liptow's walk-off double. Ethan Hadaway had two doubles and Jacob McGee had a double.

Azle was hosting Northwest at press time. They are at Northwest March 28, 6:30 p.m.; at Stephenville April 5, 6:30 p.m.; and at Glen Rose April 6 at 1:30 p.m. The latter two are nondistrict games.

SPRINGTOWN BASEBALL

The Porcupines (11-4, 2-0 in District 8-4A) ran their winning streak to eight games with a pair of 1-hit victories over Lake Worth, 15-1 on the road March 19 and 11-1 at home March 22.

Caleb Elmore pitched six innings in the first win with no earned runs, 11 strikeouts and three walks. Nate McDaniel pitched the final inning with a strikeout and walk.

In the second victory, Brayden Fox pitched a complete-game 5-inning contest with no earned runs, 11 strikeouts and four walks.

Springtown broke open a 3-1 game with six runs in the sixth and seventh innings in the win at Lake Worth. Fox hit

a pair of home runs for the Porcupines, driving in four runs. Other leading hitters were Trent Solis, three hits, double; Ryan Kirk, two hits, walk, RBI; Drake Doggett, two hits, double, RBI, stolen base; and Layton Murrell, double, two RBIs.

Winning at home, Cox had two of Springtown's five hits, along with a walk, two RBIs and a pair of stolen bases. Kirk reached base in a trio of ways, with a base hit, walk and hit by pitch. He also drove in two runs and stole three bases.

The Porcupines were playing at Krum at press time. Upcoming games are March 28 at Krum, April 2 at Castleberry, April 5 hosting Castleberry, all at 7:30 p.m.

AZLE SOFTBALL

The Lady Hornets (14-9-1, 4-1 in District 5-5A) won 12-2 at home against Saginaw March 19 and fell 10-0 in a no-hitter at Aledo March 22.

Against Saginaw, Corynne Barone pitched four innings of 3-hit ball with two earned runs, four strikeouts and three walks for the win. Morgan Terrell pitched the final inning with a strikeout. Barone was one of a trio with three hits. She had a double and drove in three

runs. Bella Tipton had three hits with a home run and four RBIs, and Torrie Johnson's three hits included a double and RBI. Ema Lehr had two hits with an RBI.

Azle was hosting Brewer at press time. They host Granbury April 2 and travel to Wichita Falls Rider April 5, both games at 6:30 p.m.

SPRINGTOWN SOFTBALL

The Lady Pines (9-9-1, 1-1 in District 8-4A) fell 10-0 at Decatur March 19 and bounced back to win 18-1 at Castleberry March 22. Only four of Decatur's runs were earned as Springtown committed a half dozen errors.

Kelsey Brandt had a double against Decatur.

Against Castleberry, Haylee Sanborn pitched a 4-hitter over five innings, giving up an earned run with 12 strikeouts and a pair of walks. She also had two hits, including a double, and an RBI.

Also for the Lady Pines, Ryleigh Morris had a 4-hit night with a double, home run, four RBIs and two stolen bases. Brandt had three hits, a double and two RBIs; Kylee Spray, two hits, RBI; Addyson Fyffe and Addyson Norris each had a double and RBI, with Fyffe stealing a base; and Cheyenne Atchley hit a

home run with a walk and RBI.

Springtown was hosting Lake Worth at press time. They travel to Krum March 28, then have back-to-back home games against Bridgeport and Decatur April 2 and 5, all at 7 p.m.

SPRINGTOWN TRACK POJO RELAYS MARCH 23

Springtown results
Running distances in meters, field events in feet and inches
Girls varsity
Team score: 68, third place (Krum 152.5, Weatherford 94)

Top individual finishes
· 4x100 relay: 3rd. 50.63
· 4x200 relay: 2nd. 1:46.81
· 4x400 relay: 3rd. 4:14.21
· Long jump: 3. Mackenzie Flaughter, 16-6.5
· Triple jump: 1. Flaughter, 37-10.5

Boys varsity

Team score: 117, second place (Brock 165)
Top individual finishes
· 200: 1. Brayden Fox, 22.49
· 1600: 2. Wesley Payne, 4:45.72
· 4x100 relay: 2nd. 42.38
· 4x200 relay: 1st. 1:28.94
· 4x400 relay: 1st. 3:29.18
· Pole vault: 2. Devan Hair, 12-0
· Long jump: 2. Riley Jackson, 20-10.25

· Triple jump: 2. Daishune Elam, 42-1.5

· Discus: 3. Kelby Castro, 138-11
· 300 hurdles: 2. Kamryn Cleveland, 40.69

Next up, Springtown will host the 8-4A Meet on April 3-4

AZLE BOYS GOLF

The Hornets Green and White teams competed in the District 5-5A Preview at Sugar Tree Golf Course in Dennis March 20. The Green team shot 399 and finished eighth and the White team shot 411 to place 11th.

Ethan Bartlett posted an 84 for the Green to lead all Azle golfers and Tyler Diffie was next with a 96. Azle White was led by Jacob Williams and Lucas Maschmeier, each shooting a 96.

The Hornets were playing in the Burleson Elks Invitational at Southern Oaks Golf Course in Burleson at press time. They will then compete in the 5-5A Tournament April 1-2, back at Sugar Tree.

The Lady Hornets were playing in the girls district preview at Sugar Tree at press time. Their district tournament, at the same site, is April 4-5.



Trumpet player Addison Horner played the national anthem for the opening day ceremonies. Coach Daniel Chapman and the 14U Baseball team stands in the back.



Left to right, Easton Early and Brody Dutcher.

KIM WARE | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER



Coach Parker Pittman with the 4U Bubba Ball team.



Coach Brad Estes with Assistant Coach Amy Estes and the 6U Softball team.



Coach Corey Delagrange and the 4U Bubba Ball team.



Coach Jonathan Schwartz and the 14U Softball Team

OPENING

FROM PAGE B1

and onto field four. Multiple players and their family members attended the event to show their support.

This year, over 500 boys and girls, ranging in age from 3 to 14, registered to play. ABSA has 34 baseball and 10 softball teams.

The ABSA is making certain changes to ensure that players and families have a great experience at the ball field this season.

“This season we made a change in umpire crews to bring in more experienced officials. This decision was made as a direct result of the feedback we have received in past seasons,” Chapman said.

In the future, ABSA plans to make changes that include upgrading the field lights to LED and adding light to fields six, seven and eight.

“I am really eager to see what this season brings with the changes we have made within the league — everything from new menu items at concessions to improvements that have been made

to the fields,” Chapman said. “The most exciting things, as always, are the memories and friendships that our players will develop throughout the year.”

Because of the changes that ABSA has set up for the future, a local company graciously donated the labor to get the work done as well as the necessary equipment.

ABSA is currently looking for ways to raise the funds to purchase materials to help upgrade the fields at Stinger Field.

Azle School Menu April 1-5, 2024

<p>BREAKFAST: PreK-4th Grade, 7-12th Grade \$1.55 5-6th Grade FREE 2nd Meal \$2.00 Visitors/Employees \$2.75</p>	<p>LUNCH: PreK-4th Grade \$2.55 5-6th Grade \$2.75 7-12th Grade \$2.55 2nd Meal \$3.20 Visitors & Employees \$3.75</p>
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PreK - 4th

BREAKFAST: Everyday - Assorted Fruits and Cereal, Juice, White or Chocolate Milk, Graham Crackers, Toast

Mon No school **Tues** Breakfast Pizza & Orange Craisins **Weds** Sausage w/ Cheese on a Bun & Apples
Thurs Waffles & Bananas **Fri** Cheerios & Strawberry Craisins

LUNCH: Everyday - Variety of milk. Your choice of 1 entree & 1 fruit or juice

Mon NO SCHOOL, **Tues** Chicken Alfredo, Turkey & Cheese Sandwich **Weds** Chef Salad, Grilled Cheese Sandwich, **Thurs** Breaded Chicken Sandwich, Chicken Pizza Quesadilla, **Fri** Pizza, Fish Sticks

GRADES 5TH - 8TH

BREAKFAST: Everyday - Assorted Fruits and Cereal, Juice, White or Chocolate Milk, Yogurt w/Granola

Mon NO SCHOOL, **Tues** Egg & Cheese on a Bun **Weds** Glazed Donut
Thurs Breakfast Pizza **Fri** Egg & Cheese Taco

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

Mon NO SCHOOL **Tues** Buffalo Chicken Sandwich, Maxstix, Turkey & Cheese Sandwich
Weds Chef Salad Hot Ham & Cheese Sandwich, Corn Dog **Thurs** BBQ Chicken Sandwich, Chicken Pizza Quesadilla, Breaded Chicken Sandwich **Fri** Pizza, Fish Sticks, Spicy Chicken Sandwich, Breaded Chicken Sandwich

HIGH SCHOOL

BREAKFAST: Everyday - Assorted Fruits and Cereal, Juice, White or Chocolate Milk, Yogurt w/Granola

Mon NO SCHOOL **Tues** Egg & Cheese on a Bun **Weds** Glazed Donut
Thurs Breakfast Pizza **Fri** Egg & Cheese Taco

LUNCH: • Everyday: 1% unflavored or non fat chocolate milk & juice • Salad Bar

Mon NO SCHOOL **Tues** Hamburger, Spicy Chicken Sandwich, Tater Tot Casserole, Cheese Pizza, Ham Wrap, Hamburger Pizza, Pepperoni Pizza, Cheesy Nachos **Weds** Breaded Chicken Sandwich, Cheeseburger, Grilled Ham & Cheese w/ Tomato Soup, Pizza: Cheese, Pepperoni, or Veggie, Chicken Crispito **Thurs** Hamburger, Spicy Chicken Sandwich, Meatball Sub, Pizza: Cheese, Pepperoni, Sausage, Garden Salad w/ Breadsticks, Beef & Cheese Nachos **Fri** Breaded Chicken Sandwich, Cheeseburger, Chicken Nuggets
Pizza: Cheese, Pepperoni, Supreme, Crunchy Tacos

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Springtown School Menu

<p>BREAKFAST PRICES</p> <p>EC-12th Grade \$1.75 EC-12th Reduced \$0.30 Adult \$2.25</p> <p>LUNCH PRICES</p> <p>PK-4th Grade \$3.00 5th-8th Grade \$3.25 High School \$3.00 Reduced \$0.40 Adult \$4.25</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">Students may prepay for their meals.</p>	<p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: large;">April 1-5, 2024</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; font-size: large;">PK through 12th Grade</p> <p style="font-size: x-small;">*Menus are subject to change.</p>
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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 No School, **Tues** Breakfast Stick, Blueberries, **Weds** Bacon Scramble Pizza, Apple, **Thurs** , Cinnamon Roll, Strawberry Applesauce, **Fri** Strawberry or Vanilla Yogurt, Banana, Juice

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 No School, **Tues** Corn Dog or Spaghetti, Roll, Green Beans, Fresh Veggies, Applesauce or Orange, **Weds** Cheeseburger or Hamburger French Fries, Fresh Veggies, (Cucumber & Tomato, Celery, Carrots), Apple or Sliced Peaches, **Thurs** Beef or Chicken Tacos, Refried Beans, Corn, Apple Slices or Watermelon Craisins, **Fri**, Cheese Pizza, Chicken Nuggets, or Baked Potato W/Pulled Pork, Roll, Mixed Vegetables, Fresh Veggies, Blueberries or Banana

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 No School, **Tues** Chicken Fried Rice w/ Eggroll or Crispy Chicken Sandwich, Glazed Carrots, Fresh Veggies Applesauce, Strawberry Applesauce, **Weds** Chicken & Waffles (Reg. or Spicy), Tator Tots, Fresh Veggies Blueberries, Orange, **Thurs** Beef or Chicken Tacos or Nachos, Refried Beans, Corn, Apple Slices, Sliced Peaches, **Fri**, Cheese Pizza, Corn Dog or Baked Potato Basket w/ Pulled Pork, Mixed Vegetables, Fresh Veggies Banana, Sliced Pears

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CRAIN

FROM PAGE B1

fast greens, I'll usually work on my putting a lot more," Crain said.

Having setbacks is a part of golf, but the way one handles it is what will set them apart. Crain has been participating in the DCP for seven years but has not made it past sub-regional until this year.

"I get in my head and think 'there's great people here, how am I going to beat them?' But it's all about you and knowing your limit," Crain said "I get nervous, but I have

learned not to let the little things get to me and know what I am capable of."

Crain's excitement for going to the Augusta National Finals is something she was not ready for. The Augusta golf course has hosted many Masters tournaments featuring many legendary golfers.

"Just being at Augusta, and getting to drive down Magnolia Lane, and being able to walk the course on the Monday before the tournament (is exciting)," Crain said "The course has hosted some of the greats, like Tiger Woods and Jack Nicklaus, so just being able to be there

where they have been is exciting."

Crain's only goal is to do well at the Augusta tournament, while also taking in the experience of being able to compete at such a prestigious course.

"After Augusta my goal is to play in the Augusta National Women's Amateur Tournament and to play with great women golfers," Crain said.

Crain has the support of her family, coaches and community as she sets her mind on doing well at the Augusta National Finals.

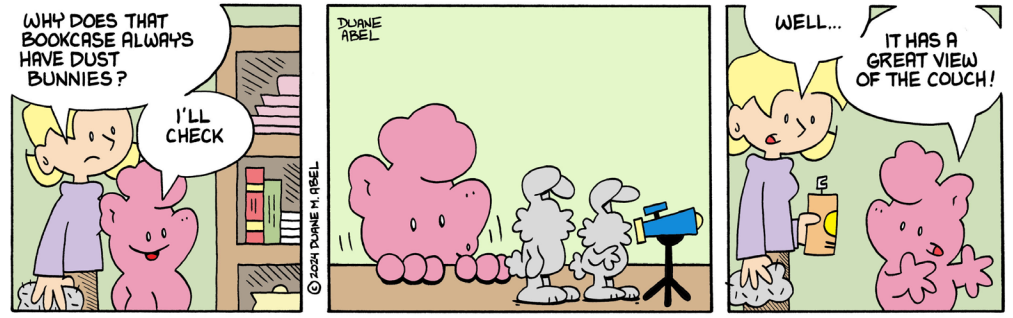


Crain shows off her ticket to the regional qualifier, as well as medals that she earned during 2023's USGA Drive, Chip and Putt.



Thirteen-year-old Dixie Mae Crain is set to travel to Augusta, Georgia, where she will compete in the Drive, Chip and Putt Augusta National Finals.

ZED by Duane Abel



HOMETOWN Happenings

MARCH

- **CLAY SHOOT:** Azle Area Chamber of Commerce will host its annual clay shoot 11:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday, March 29 at Fossil Pointe Sporting Grounds, 7282 Farm-to-Market Road 51 in Decatur.
- **EASTER EGG HUNT:** March 31 at First Baptist Lakeside, 8801 Jacksboro Highway. Hunts will be staggered and broken down by age group in the preschool and children's areas at the church. Arrive 15 minutes early. Only one hunt per child. Preschool area: 9:15 a.m. — PreK-K; 9:45 a.m. —age 2-3; 10:15 a.m. —babies and toddlers; Children's area: 9:15 a.m. — fifth-sixth grade; 9:45 a.m. — third-fourth grade; 10:15 a.m. — first-second grade.

APRIL

- **BLOOD DRIVE:** Azle Area Ministerial Alliance will partner with Carter Blood-Care to host a blood drive from 3:30-6:30 p.m. Monday, April 1 at First Methodist Church of Azle, 200 Church St. Sign up at the following link: https://ww3.greatpartners.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/145185.
- **GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP:** Lighthouse Harbor Church, 1960 Long Circle, Azle, will host a Grief Support Group from 4:30-5:30 p.m. Mondays from April 1 through May 6. There is no cost to attend but registration is required. Contact Kaitlin Tollison for more information at kaitlin.tollison@psalm46counseling.com.
- **TEEN MOVIE AFTERNOONS:** 2 p.m. Saturday, April 6, at Springtown Public Library, 626 N. Main St. The library hosts Teen Movie Afternoons the first Friday of the month. Movies will be rated up to PG-13. Call 817-523-5862 to find out the monthly movie. Snacks will be provided, so bring a drink!
- **MAIN STREET BOOK CLUB:** 6 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month at Azle Memorial Library. The book club will meet April 23 to discuss "Where the Forest Meets the Stars" by Glendy Vanderah. Refreshments will be provided.
- **MINI ROOMS CRAFT:** 6 p.m. Thursday, April 25 at Azle Memorial Library, 333 W. Main St. Teens 12-18 are invited to build miniature rooms, complete with furniture, at this fun craft event. All supplies and instructions will be provided. Reservations are required. Call 817-752-2682 to save a spot!
- **GARDENING FOR BUTTERFLIES:** 6:30 p.m. Tuesday, April 30 at Azle Memorial Library. Learn how to create your own butterfly garden with tips from a Tarrant County Master Gardener at this free event. Brought to you by Tarrant Regional Water District and the City of Azle.
- **AZLE CHAMBER EVENTS:** The Azle Area Chamber of Commerce's April luncheon will begin at 11:30 a.m. April 2 at 404 Main Place in Azle. Business After Hours is slated for 4:30-6:30 p.m. April 25 at NBT Financial, 405 Commerce St., Azle.
- **SPRINGTOWN CHAMBER EVENTS:** Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce Events: SACoC will host its annual Clay Shoot at 11 a.m. Friday, April 12 at Fossil Pointe Sporting Grounds. The April chamber luncheon will be 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. April 25 at the Springtown Senior Center, 1070 N. Main St., Springtown.

MAY

- **SPRING BOOK SALE:** 10 a.m. Saturday, May 4 at the Springtown Courthouse Annex, 101 E. 2nd St. The Springtown Public Library is hosting its Spring Book Sale, including a \$5 fill-a-bag sale. All proceeds benefit children's programs at the library.
- **SHINE LIKE STARS BANQUET:** 6 p.m. Thursday, May 16 at The Church at Azle. The banquet benefits the Adult & Teen Challenge of Texas Azle Men's Campus. The evening includes dinner, silent auction and program. Tickets and sponsorship opportunities are available. Call 817-406-4441 for more information.
- **MAIN STREET BOOK CLUB:** 6 p.m. the third Tuesday of the month at Azle Memorial Library. The book club will meet May 21 to discuss "Hello Beautiful" by Ann Napolitano. Refreshments will be provided.
- **NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER:** Azle Area Ministerial Alliance will host a free event from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. May 2 at The Orchard Event Venue and Retreat, 1421 Northeast Parkway, Azle. Hilltop Family Church, 1227 Old Cottondale Road, Springtown, will host a breakfast for National Day of Prayer at 7 a.m.

Sudoku

MARCH 28, 2024

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

Level: Advanced

Solution to last week's puzzle

MARCH 21, 2024

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

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to employees.

Y S A L R A

--	--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Salary

CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to winter. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 13 = B)

A. 7 12 13 22 22 11 5 9
Clue: Big snow storm

B. 21 16 13 12 12 18
Clue: A bit cold

C. 9 5 13 24 6
Clue: Pile of snow

D. 25 3 10 14
Clue: Frozen precipitation

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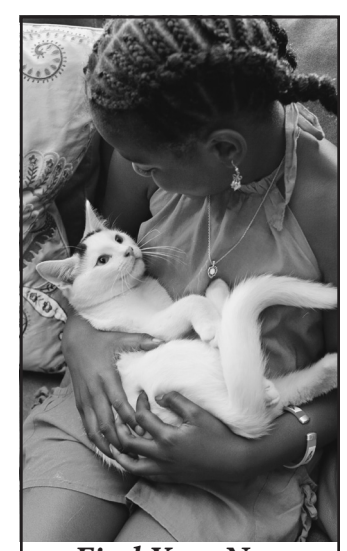
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Easter

THURSDAY March 28, 2024



Hop on these tips for a great Easter egg hunt



STAFF REPORTS

Egg hunts are a traditional component of many people's Easter celebrations. Children often delight in searching for eggs around the house or in the backyard. Egg hunts are so popular that they have become a component of many town-sponsored festivities. In fact, the White House hosts its annual Easter Egg Roll each year.

There are many ways to make Easter egg hunts more enjoyable and productive for participants of all ages. Try these 'eggcellent' ideas.

- Designate a clear hunting area. Young children can grow frustrated searching for eggs in large areas. Set parameters for the search area that are manageable depending on the ages of the children participating. If you'll be in a large yard or field, tape off the search area perimeter.

- Vary the prizes. Candy, candy and more candy seems to be the name of the game on Easter. But too many sweets can lead to stom-

MADelyn EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

In 2023 Springtown's Hop & Shop event marked the return of the city's Easter egg hunt. Aided by their families, children rushed around to grab as many eggs as possible.

PLEASE SEE **HUNT** | C2

Pondering the life of Christ

TAYLOR TOMLIN

Campus pastor at The WORD@Springtown

As we quickly approach Resurrection Sunday, my thoughts have been continuously on our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. As I prepare for my first Easter Sunday message as a pastor, I will give you a look through the scope of my lens recently. I've been thinking and reflecting often about significant events in Christ's life:

THE BIRTH

Even from birth, there was

PLEASE SEE **LIFE** | C9



Taylor Tomlin with his wife and family.

We are made alive because Jesus told the truth

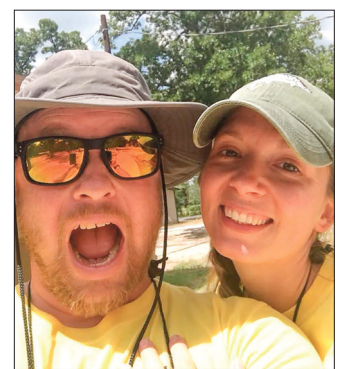
BRANDON GEARY

Pastor, Merge Community Church

I asked Jesus to be my Savior and Lord when I was a freshman in high school in 1994. I can remember the moment I knew of my need for Jesus. I had been going to church for a few months. I was invited to an AWANA event by a friend. Actually, he invited me to come swim at his house, and I asked "will there be girls there?" He said "Yes, but we have to do a little church stuff first." I responded, "Will there be girls there?" He said "Yes." I am pretty

sure I could not have said yes fast enough. That conversation was toward the end of my eighth-grade year and started an adventure with God I had not realized was going to continue to carry me through this very moment.

I started going to youth, which was a mixed bag filled with freshman boys who were promised girls would be there, only to discover it was a bunch of let-down freshman guys who were just invisible in the big pond of high school. But we started to learn about God's love and our need for Jesus. I can re-



Brandon Geary

member the moment I knew I needed him. It was just out-

PLEASE SEE **TRUTH** | C5

How Palm Sunday and Resurrection Sunday both fulfill promises and prophecies

REV. TIMOTHY MCKEOWN

GracePointe Church

The nation of Israel is certainly in the news and also in the hearts and concerns of many of us who have been to the Holy Land. Likewise, at this time of year, many pastors are preaching on the Passover and the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In some years,



Rev. Timothy McKeown

Resurrection Sunday and Passover occur on exactly the same day and even in years like 2024, the two "holy days" are always celebrated within a month of each other.

Jesus and the early Christians, notably the Apostle Paul, observed the Jewish religious feasts, including the feasts of the Unleavened Bread, the Passover, and First Fruits,

the first three feasts on the Jewish calendar. All are intricately interwoven into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

But even before these events, on Palm Sunday, we see Jesus making a "triumphal entry" into Jerusalem. It, too, has a prophetic alignment with prophecies from the Old Testament.

Palm trees have always

been linked with Israel, and were it not for the gospel of John, we would not have even called the Sunday before the Resurrection "Palm Sunday." Only in John 12:13 do we specifically see the people laying down palm branches as they proclaim, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! The King of Israel!"

Palm branches symbolize

victory, triumph and peace, as do a king riding on a colt. Both Zechariah 9:9 and 1 Kings 1:33 show that Jesus riding in on a colt symbolically showed that a king had arrived. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming

PLEASE SEE **PROMISES** | C7

Meanings behind the Easter lily

Easter symbols and traditions help make the holiday familiar and special. Eggs, hot cross buns and frilly church dresses help paint the picture, and so does a delicate and beautiful white flower.

The Easter lily plant is native to both Taiwan and the Ryukyu Islands of Japan. The plant's flowering season begins in April and ends in June. The plant produces pure white flowers on top of long stems. Easter lilies often adorn homes and church altars during this time of year.

Tradition states that the Easter lily originated in the Garden of Eden from the teardrops of Eve that spread when she and Adam were cast out of the garden. These were believed to be tears of repentance.

Historians and biblical scholars say that the lily has always been highly regarded in the Christian Church. Jesus even references the flower in Luke 12:27, stating 'Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of

these.' Legend has it that, after Jesus' death and resurrection, lilies were found growing in the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus is said to have prayed before his crucifixion. They were believed to have sprung up from a drop of sweat from his brow when his head was bent in prayer.

In Easter celebrations, the lily represents Christ's Resurrection, and thusly new birth and new life. The delicate, white blooms can be viewed as pure, innocent and untainted by the world.

The flower itself is used in various ways to tell the resurrection story. The bulb is buried in the ground as a representation of Christ's tomb. The trumpet-shaped fragrant flowers also announce life after death, since bulbed flowers often regrow year after year, according to the religious resource All About Jesus. And the trumpet shape signifies the angel Gabriel's trumpet call.

It's common for Easter lilies to decorate homes, churches, gardens, and more throughout the Easter season.



In Easter celebrations, the lily represents Christ's Resurrection, and thusly new birth and new life.



HUNT FROM PAGE C1

ach aches for young Easter celebrants. Instead, mix and match the prizes contained in the eggs. Candy can be in some, money in others, and perhaps small toys in a few eggs. Another clever idea is to mix the egg hunt with charades. Put charade prompts

Keep a master list. It can be hard to remember where each egg is hidden, so keep a running list of where they are or take photos with a phone of the hiding spots.

in some eggs so that kids have to act out what they read inside for added fun.

- Special privilege egg. Hide one egg that gives the finder the opportunity for a special honor. It may include getting the first slice of the holiday ham or being able to choose a movie that the entire family watches together after dinner.

- Label eggs for equity. When there are children across a wide range of ages, label the eggs with the children's names or utilize a color-coded system to ensure that everyone has an equal shot at finding eggs.

- Keep a master list. It can

be hard to remember where each egg is hidden, so keep a running list of where they are or take photos with a phone of the hiding spots. This way you're not left to discover a chocolate-filled egg teeming with ants come summertime.

- Make custom baskets. Children will need something to carry their eggs. Prior to the egg hunt, let them decorate bags or baskets with Easter trinkets for custom creations.

Easter egg hunts are a time-honored tradition. The opportunities for fun are endless when families plan accordingly.



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The significance of various symbols of Easter

Easter Sunday is a day when Christians across the globe celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Data from the Pew Research Center indicates there are approximately 2.4 billion Christians across the globe, which accounts for nearly one-third of the global population.

Though certain Christians groups do not celebrate Easter, many consider it the holiest day of the year. Given that significance, it's no surprise Easter is steeped in symbolism. The following are some of the many symbols of Easter and what they represent to faithful Christians across the globe.

EGGS

Eggs might now be more instantly associated with Easter egg hunts for children, but the American Bible Society notes that eggs are symbolic of more than just fun for kids. Eggs represent the new life that's symbolic of spring, which is when Easter occurs in the northern hemisphere. Christians view eggs as a reminder of the resurrection of Jesus. Interestingly, though colored eggs are often seen as a fun Easter activity for kids, the ABS notes that the tradition dates back to the early days of Christianity, when red-colored eggs were used to represent the resurrection.

CRUCIFIX

The crucifix, which is a distinct representation of a cross with Jesus Christ on it, is symbolic of the crucifixion and subsequent resurrection of Jesus. The ABS notes that the resurrection of Jesus symbolizes his victory over the power of sin and death.

THE LAMB

Jesus is referred to in the Bible as the 'Lamb of God' (Revelation 5:6-14), so the lamb is another important Easter symbol for Christians. In addition, in John (1:29), Jesus is referred to by John the Baptist as the 'Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.'

EASTER BUNNY

Another symbol, like Easter eggs, that people could be forgiven for mistaking as purely secular, the Easter Bunny is not entirely separate from the spiritual meaning of

the holiday. As noted, Easter, even though it's a moveable feast, takes place in spring in the northern hemisphere each year. Spring is symbolic of rebirth, and the hare was a symbol of fertility among the ancient pagans. The spirit of rebirth associated with rabbits, particularly in spring, also is reminiscent of the resurrection of Jesus from his tomb.

Easter is celebrated across the globe. Those celebrations feature many significant religious symbols that have withstood the test of time.



Easter bunnies and eggs symbolize new life, rebirth and fertility.



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A life-changing decision

DAVID SHAFFER

Dr. David Shaffer and his wife, Daniele, are Azle-area residents. David is director of Son Shine Ministries (equipfamilies.org) and has been a member of the Azle Area Ministerial Alliance since 1985 (azlema.com). david@equipfamilies.org | 817-444-3777

As a child, I remember observing God's creation and marveling at the diversity and complexity. I would look up at the night sky and become overwhelmed by the vastness of our universe.

Even a simple housefly would amaze me. Within hours of entering its adult phase, a fly discovers how to use its wings. It knows how to navigate its flight pattern and instinctively what its purpose is. When I looked around at the varied inhabitants of this world, I knew it was no accident; a Designer existed who is far greater than we are. I knew that God had to be real.

Since God existed, I figured the probability for life beyond death was high. The stories about heaven and hell resonated with me as legitimate. So, I began assessing how I could make it to heaven. I assumed that at the end of my life, God would somehow weigh all the good I had done along with all the bad and determine which was heaviest. If my good out-



David Shaffer

weighed the bad, I reasoned, I would make it into heaven.

With this in mind, I tried to be a good guy. Some days would go well, but I never consistently maintained a pattern of goodness. With my failures came uncertainty. How could I know for sure that I would go to heaven?

The Good News, I found out when I was in the eighth grade, is that we can know with certainty that we will go to heaven. I'll never forget the simple but profound message about salvation I heard at a conference in San Antonio. Let me share with you what hit home with me the night I became a Christian in 1976.

I was told that God loves me and has a plan for my life. Rather than man's wisdom, reasoning or guessing, the

Bible (God's word) was the standard for truth. In John 3:16 (NIV) Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

The speaker explained that sin separates us from God. This is because God is holy, and his standard is perfection. Romans 3:23 makes it clear that "all have sinned." While some seem to sin a lot more than others, the reality is that we have all fallen short. None of us meets God's standard.

I realized the big problem this caused when Romans 6:23 (NIV) was read; it says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." In other words, what I had earned (my wage or payment) for my sin was death. This verse contrasts death with eternal life, so this is an eternal separation from God. That's the ultimate bad news.

God is just, so this penalty for sin must be paid. This rendered my plan of making it to heaven based on good works ineffectual! I realized I could never be good enough to earn a spot in heaven because even one sin separates me from God.

The penalty of my sin rested solely on me unless someone else was willing to pay my penalty of death. I can't imagine anyone volunteering for that, and an obvious problem would be that no one qualifies because we are all sinners. It would take someone who was like me (a human) who never sinned and who was willing to die for me.

As I continued to listen to the speaker, he excitedly stated that Jesus Christ was willing. He paid the price for our sins with his death on the cross.

While on Earth, Jesus was confronted with various temptations but never sinned. He proclaimed, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (John 14:6, NIV).

His death was full payment for our sins, making it possible to be in relationship forever with God. No one else could have paid that price for us.

Christ's death is not the end of the story. In fact, the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:17 (NLT) that "... if Christ has not been raised, then your faith is useless and you are still guilty of your sins."

Fortunately, Christ was

raised! We celebrate Easter to commemorate the reality of the bodily resurrection of Jesus. God the Father demonstrated his power over death by raising his Son, giving hope to all who place their trust in Christ.

If you hear someone say on Easter Sunday, "He is risen," feel free to joyfully respond, "He is risen indeed!"

After listening intently to the speaker, I believed the Gospel (the message of Christ's death and resurrection), and I accepted the precious gift of salvation by trusting in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of my sins. The decision I made years ago changed my life forever.

We are each offered this ultimate gift (eternal life with God) despite what we deserve (eternal separation from God). This is grace. And the Bible says that "... it is by grace you have been saved, through faith..." (Ephesians 2:8, NIV). It also says in John 1:12 (NET), "But to all who have received him — those who believe in his name — he has given the right to become God's children."

You can know with certainty that you're a Christian! If you have never trusted Jesus as your Savior, the invitation

to do so is before you.

If you believe Jesus died for your sins and are ready to place your trust in him for your eternal salvation, you may do so right where you are.

If it helps you, here is a prayer similar to what I prayed when I accepted Christ; feel free to use it, or pray using your own words: "Dear Father, thank you for the love you have for me. I trust in Jesus as my Savior, and I believe that his death on the cross paid the penalty for my sins. Thank you for your forgiveness. I pray this gratefully in the name of Jesus. Amen."

If you have accepted God's gift of grace, you have made the most important decision of your life! If you just did this, I hope you share the great news with your family and friends! I encourage you to nourish your newfound faith by becoming involved at a local Christian church.

If you have made it to the end of this article and are left with unanswered questions, feel free to reach out to me. I would be honored to hear your thoughts and would welcome a conversation.

May God bless and keep you (with certainty) in Jesus' name!

Because of Easter, my hope is not heaven

JOSH TOLLISON

Senior Pastor, Lighthouse Harbor Church, Pelican Bay

Ask someone "What happens to people when they die?" and you may be surprised at the answer you get. "They just die," some will say. "I don't know," say others. But, most often the answer I hear is "They go to heaven."

And that is true, according to the Bible. Whether we call it "heaven," "paradise," or something else, the spirits of Christians who die on this earth go to be with the Lord. In his letter to the



Josh Tollison

Philippians, the Apostle Paul makes this claim explicit; speaking of the possibility of his martyrdom, he says, "My desire is to depart and be with Christ" (Phil. 1:23, ESV, emphasis mine). We see it again in Jesus's words to the thief on the cross, "Today you will be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43, ESV). And these are just two examples among many.

Still, just like the cross is not the end of Jesus' story, neither is heaven the end of ours. Something else happened on Easter morning, two thousand years ago, that

changed everything: Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

The ancient Church in Corinth struggled with the idea of resurrection. It confronted all its philosophical presuppositions and bucked against its understanding of the world. So, in his first letter to them, the Apostle Paul attacks their misunderstandings head on: "If there is no resurrection of the dead," he says, "then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Cor. 15:13-14, ESV). Strong words!

He continues, "But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead... But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ" (1 Cor. 15:20-21, 23, ESV). So then, Jesus is the first to rise again, but not the last. And when Christ comes again, all those who belong to him will rise again, too.

That may sound strange to you, but it is thoroughly

Biblical. God made us soul and body, and to lose one or the other is to be incomplete. But the promise of Easter is that death is not the end, and neither is heaven. Because Jesus rose again, our hope is better than that. For all who repent and believe in his name, we are promised that we will live forever — not as bodiless souls in a faraway place, but in new and perfect bodies, raised from death to eternal life, on an Earth made new by a King who defeated death on that first Easter morning.

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**Happy
Easter!**

Why is Easter Sunday such an important Christian holiday?

Christians around the world fill church pews on Easter Sunday to participate in one of the most holy and important celebrations of the liturgical year. Although every Sunday presents opportunities to share in the word of God, Easter Sunday is an especially significant date on the Christian calendar.

Each Easter, Christians celebrate the miracle of Christ's defeat over death through his resurrection and ascension to his father's side in heaven. However awe-inspiring, Easter is much more than this event and its retelling. Easter actually is the core of the Christian religion as it has come to be known, including inspiring the rituals and teachings that have been shared for nearly 2,000 years. Without the events that unfolded during Holy Week, the Christian faith would not exist as it was prophesied. Christ's selfless sacrifice on the cross for others' sins, as well as his miraculous resurrection, are the anchors upon which all of Christianity has been built.

In 1 Corinthians 15:17, St. Paul wrote, "And if Christ

has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins." Pope Benedict XVI similarly summarized St. Paul's words, indicating that if the resurrection were taken away, it may be possible to piece together ideas about God and men, but the Christian faith would be 'dead.' In his book, Jesus of Nazareth, Pope Benedict further wrote, 'Jesus would be a failed religious leader; he would then remain purely human, and his authority would extend only so far as his message is of interest to us.'

According to Christianity.com, Easter is part of the redemptive plan of mankind. It is worthy of celebration because it proved to people that Jesus is the Son of God. This gives Christians confidence that there is life after death, and they will have the same power working in them that raised Jesus from the dead.

Out of Holy Week and Easter also came the start of Christian masses. On Holy Thursday, Jesus introduced his disciples to the bread that they ate at the Last Supper as 'his body' and the wine as 'his blood.' This would



On Holy Thursday, Jesus and his disciples ate bread and wine symbolizing the flesh of Christ. This ritual would serve as the basis for the Christian celebration of Holy Communion, which remains a vital component of worship.

serve as the basis for the Christian celebration of Holy Communion, which remains a vital component of the faith

and religious services.

Easter inspires Christians across the globe to celebrate their faith.

Where will you live your everlasting life?

LARRY DAVIS

Pastor, Grace and Faith Center

Easter is defined as the most important and oldest festival of the Christian Church, celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is held in the western church between March 21 and April 25, on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the Northern spring equinox. However, the story of the Good News of Jesus Christ is not only his resurrection, but it is the who, why, what, when and where.

Jesus' birth was like mine and yours except that his mother was a virgin, and his dad was God. Jesus' life was fairly normal, and he grew as we all do, working as a carpenter.

When he was 30, he began his ministry as the Savior of the world. As he lived, his life portrayed the love that God has for you and I.

We know that because Jesus said he only does what he sees the Father do and he only says what the Father says — we can partake in the Kingdom of God (John 5:19 and John 12:49). Like this: *God so loved the world*

that He gave his only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (John 3:16). This is the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Jesus' life was an example of the love, hope, faith, grace and truth he made available to all who would believe. But not all believed, not all loved and not all followed him.

In fact, the religious leaders of that time hated him and eventually killed Jesus.

During Jesus' three-and-a-half years in the ministry, he introduced, initiated, orchestrated and fulfilled the reason for his presence on earth. That was to give to you and I a way into God's presence and the opportunity to join the Kingdom of God.

We can be transformed out of the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of Light, with the guarantee of everlasting life in heaven instead of an eternity in hell. Jesus was beaten, crucified, buried, and three days later rose again for you and I. That means Jesus won the war over the devil for control of the Earth and heaven!

Where will you live your everlasting life?

TRUTH

FROM PAGE C1

side the baseball field where you can buy tickets for the games today. That night I called the dad who was our AWANA leader; two weeks later he met me at the altar and we prayed and I went public with my faith.

One thing in those early days that struck me as strange was our relation-

ship with Easter — specifically, the Resurrection we celebrate on Easter morning. What was constantly shared with me was the death of Jesus on the cross and his willingness to die for my sins. The cross, after all, has become the iconic symbol of our faith. The Jewish people have the Star of David, Muslims have the crescent and we have the cross. As a young Christian I felt the Resurrection was simply a cherry on the top of a sundae we celebrated on a Sunday. I

had no idea how vital it was to my new identity, made possible because of Christ Jesus.

You see friend, the cross is about death and the Resurrection is about life. Both work together to help us see the heart of God the Father. As a pastor, I have a lot of favorite verses and passages and near the top of that list is Ephesians chapter 2. The whole chapter is great because it builds a case for all of us. In these verses we can see where we are, where

we were and where we are heading if we know Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord. The chapter's opening lines are "And you were dead in trespasses and sins..." This death is important to recognize and realize. My sin didn't simply break God's heart, it broke my relationship with Him. The cost of sin is death."

Just when I had no hope or ability to be brought back to life, the hero of all our stories enters. Paul will begin verse 4 with two words, "BUT

GOD..."! There is a temptation to get in the way here and commutate the rest of the verse, but I assure you if you allow it to wash over you there is no commentary necessary. "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ..."

We are made alive because Jesus told the truth about coming back from the grave. The cross is about death; the

Resurrection is about life and life abundantly! There is so much more to say about this great relationship because of the cross and the Resurrection — more than this space allows. So, I will leave you with this... we never graduate from the beauty of the cross AND the Resurrection! Both work together to reveal the heart of God's love for you. May we make this our greatest celebration, not just on Easter Sunday but every day and every minute of our lives!

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MADELYN EDWARDS
TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Members of the Tedder family take a picture with the Easter bunny at the 2023 Springtown Hop & Shop event on the Square. From left are 3-year-old Indigo Tedder, 6-month-old Lennox Tedder, and Madison Tedder.



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Kiss in the dark

DR. G. WESLEY SHOTWELL
Pastor, Ash Creek Baptist Church



Dr. G. Wesley Shotwell

I have been thinking about Judas lately. Judas betrayed his friend Jesus with a kiss in the dark. Bible scholars have debated his motive for centuries, but whatever the motive it came from a dark place.

The Gospel of Matthew says that the next morning, when it was light, Judas was "seized with remorse." He tried to undo what he had done, but there are some things that cannot be undone once they are done. "I have sinned," he confessed to the religious leaders, looking for mercy and grace. But

he found no mercy or grace from them. "What do we care?" they said. "That's your problem." All Judas could do now was throw the blood money to the mercy seat in the temple.

Remorse is hard to relieve. When you have done something that can't be undone it is hard to find mercy and grace. Often, even pastors and church people hold back mercy as if to say, "What do we care? That's your problem." No wonder sinners don't come to church for relief.

Judas' story does not end well. Matthew tells us that Judas went out and hanged himself. That is what hap-

pens when a person has no hope of mercy; they end up at the end of their rope.

There was another option open for Judas, though, if only he could have seen it. I wonder what would have happened if Judas had waited until Sunday morning; if he had waited until Easter? The morning after betrayal remorse is raging and it is hard to have any hope at all, but what if he had waited for Easter? He would have seen the risen Christ and known that God could undo what he had done. He tried to undo it himself but could not, so he lost faith and hope and ended it all. He did not believe God could set things right. He did

not know about Easter.

But we do know about Easter! We know that Christ is risen and set things right. We know that in Christ there is mercy and grace! Could Judas have found mercy from Jesus if he had but waited for the resurrection? I don't know, and we will never know, for that is not how the story works out. But we do know that Peter, who also betrayed Jesus, found the mercy he needed. We know that Paul, who persecuted the followers of Jesus, saw the risen Christ and received God's mercy. The list of the remorseful could go on. Millions of people with the remorse of having done things that cannot

be undone have found God's mercy and grace because they know the risen Christ. We know about Easter!

Perhaps you live with remorse. You regret some decision that seemed like a good idea in the dark of night, but now in the morning, when you can see, the reality of your sin has stolen all your hope for mercy and grace. You have tried to undo what you did. You tried throwing money in the plate and pleading with the preacher but found no hope.

You cannot undo what you have done.

But God can. Christ has risen from the dead and set things right.

The Message

ALTON DAVIS

Pastor, Community Bible Fellowship



Alton Davis

I recall a time when one of our daughters was being courted by a young man. To get his message across to her of his fondness for her, he arranged post-it-notes on our front door to read "will you be my GF?" The message was not handwritten, rather the little notes were neatly arranged just right to spell out his intended message. The message was received with the love with which it was sent, and a never-ending relationship began. That was 13 years ago and now

our daughter and the young man are married and have a beautiful baby girl. Simple

messages deliver a powerful impact!

I must admit my son-in-law was tactful and his message was impactful in achieving his intended purpose. As I recalled this family memory, I drew similarities to the message that our heavenly Father sent by way of the cross. God's message was not handwritten (although it is recorded in writing), rather his message was carefully arranged in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The message delivered through our Savior was an expression of his love for all humanity.

Jesus, in willing obedi-

ence to the Father, fulfilled his purpose by laying his life down as a sacrifice for all our sins; and in the Father's acceptance of the Son's sacrifice, God raised Christ from the dead to display his great power over death, hell and the grave. It was the most powerful, tactful and impactful message of love ever delivered to mankind, all communicated with great hope that the message would be received by everyone for the purpose of salvation. To insinuate that Christ's life was simple would be misleading, however, for the one who believes salvation is made

simple. A simple message delivered with a powerful impact!

Resurrection Sunday is a time for believers across the world who are being saved by the powerful message of Jesus Christ's life, death and resurrection to celebrate our risen Savior and to give thanks for the abundant life Jesus brought forth. For others, the message of love, forgiveness and salvation still speaks and is available to be received. Hope remains that many others will receive the message of the cross today and the resurrection power it brings. His message has been

displayed, written, delivered and posted for all the world to see. Will you receive it with the love, forgiveness and salvation with which it was sent? If so, your journey has begun to a life of eternal peace and joy.

1 Corinthians 1:18 (NKJV) "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NKJV) "God who at various times and various ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son . . ."

PROMISES

FROM PAGE C1

to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey," (Zechariah 9:9).

The other gospels state that garments were also laid before Christ, a custom generally reserved only for kings (see 2 Kings 9:13).

Palms also reminded people of rejoicing, worshiping and thanksgiving. Solomon's Temple was dedicated at

the Feast of Tabernacles, in remembrance of Israel's 40 years of wandering and living in tents. Part of the tabernacle celebration called for the people to take "branches of palm trees . . . and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God . . ." Leviticus 23:40.

In the same way, Jesus was ending nearly 40 years of his earthly life in which he was "tabernacled" in an earthly body (John 1:14 even used the same word for "tabernacle" when he said Jesus "dwelt" among us).

More significantly, the very

day Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem was the same day in which the priests inspected the lambs which would be used for Passover. Again, thanks to John's gospel, we know Jesus entered Jerusalem Sunday, the "next day" after the Sabbath rest.

That was the 10th day of Nisan, four days before the Passover when the Jews selected the Passover lamb, "the first month . . . on the tenth day . . . each man is to take a lamb for his family" (Exodus 12:1-3).

Provisionally, Jesus was

especially set apart that day as the Lamb of God. John's Gospel and John's revelation frequently refer to Jesus as God's Lamb, and so also does Peter's first epistle: ". . . you were redeemed . . . with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," 1 Peter 1:18-19.

A borrowed colt, a spotless lamb, the royal praise, the joyful thanksgiving, garments spread along the road, and palm branches were all divinely interwoven by God's loving and gracious hand to show that Jesus, the prom-

ised Messiah, was indeed the fulfillment of prophecy.

One day in heaven, according to Revelation 7:9-17, "a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, (will stand) before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands."

My prayer is that you will place your trust in this promised Lamb of God who took away our sins. "For God made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to become sin for us, that we might become

the righteousness of God in Him," (2 Corinthians 5:21). By the blood of the Lamb and our testimony, we can overcome the accuser, who is specifically called "the Devil and Satan," (see Revelation 12:9-11).

Rev. Timothy McKeown is the pastor of GracePointe Church, which is located halfway between Azle and Springtown on State Highway 199, where every first-time guest can receive a free copy of his devotional book, "The Gospel of John, One Day at a Time."

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Eggs are hung on outdoor tree branches and bushes or are placed on cut branches displayed inside.

Easter trees makes festive spring decorations

Easter is coming and it's time to put up the tree. For those thinking right now that trees are for an entirely different Christian holiday, you are both right and wrong. Even though trees may be more widely associated with Christmas, Easter trees are an increasingly popular and festive tradition that trace their roots to Germany.

The Easter tree is known as Ostereierbaum in Germany and is a centuries-old custom. Eggs are hung on outdoor tree branches and bushes or are placed on cut branches displayed inside. While the tradition is traced to Germany, German-influenced locales like Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and the Pennsylvania Dutch region

of the United States also are popular places for Easter trees to appear.

For 50 years, one person branched out with his own Ostereierbaum tradition. Volker Kraft decorated an apple tree on his property in the town of Saalfeld, Germany, adding more eggs each year as the tree grew larger. The tradition came to an end in 2015. At one point the tree held 10,000 eggs, all hand-crafted by Kraft and his family. However, a tree in Rostock, Germany held the Guinness World Record for tree with the most eggs - a display of 80,000.

While Easter trees are typically more modest than Kraft's tree, the displays can be as large or as small as one desires. Many Easter trees

consist of a few branches placed in a vase decorated with flowers, ribbons and Easter eggs. Pussy willow branches work well, though any branches can stand in.

When decorating Easter trees, families can use plastic eggs or even real ones. Using a sharp knife or needle, make two small holes in a raw egg. Blow out the inside of the egg until the shell is hollow. Then decorate the egg and thread a ribbon through the holes so it can be hung on the tree. If desired, place sweet Easter treats, such as chocolate eggs or pastel-colored cupcakes, under the Easter tree.

Decorating an outdoor tree also is possible and very visible. It can be a great way to share Easter blessings with others in the community.

Significant days during Holy Week

Each year in early spring, Christians across the globe celebrate their faith on Easter. Easter commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ, an event which is described in the New Testament.

One need not be Christian to recognize the significance of Easter Sunday to practicing Christians. However, non-Christians may not recognize that the week that precedes Easter Sunday is important and full of meaning as well. According to Christianity.com, the name 'Holy Week,' which is the name Christians have given to the week preceding Easter Sunday, can be traced all the way back to the fourth century. By the end of that century, Christians commemorated various events that unfolded in the week leading up to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. That's why Christians now celebrate Palm Sunday, Holy Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday over the course of the week prior to Easter Sunday. Such celebrations underscore just how significant this period is for faithful Christians across the globe.

PALM SUNDAY

Palm Sunday begins Holy Week and commemorates the entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem. Upon entering the city, Jesus was greeted by crowds waving palm branches. That is why Christians receive palm branches or palm crosses during Palm Sunday Mass.

HOLY WEDNESDAY

Holy Wednesday draws attention to the abandonment of Jesus by his disciples. Holy Wednesday services may feature Tenebrae, a religious service characterized by the extinguishing of candles. That portion of the service is meant to symbolize darkness, which is what 'Tenebrae' means in Latin.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

The Last Supper is commemorated on Maundy Thursday, which also commemorates the Washing of the Feet (Maundy). The Last Supper was Jesus's final meal with his apostles before his crucifixion. According to Christian scripture, Jesus predicted one of the apostles present at the meal would betray him. This also was when Jesus foretold that Peter will deny knowing him three times before the next

morning. According to Trinity College, Maundy Thursday reminds Christians to love others as Jesus loves them.

GOOD FRIDAY

Good Friday commemorates the trial of Jesus and his resulting death sentence, torture, crucifixion, and burial. It's hard to characterize any of those things as 'good,' which can cause a little confusion among Christians and non-Christians alike. However, Trinity College indicates that, in this context, 'good' connotes something holy or pious.

HOLY SATURDAY

Holy Saturday concludes Holy Week. Even though many faithful Christians awake early and don their Sunday best on Easter morning, Holy Saturday celebrations are not muted. On Holy Saturday, Christians may attend a late-night Easter Vigil service that includes a liturgy and the celebration of the Eucharist. The two-part celebration commemorates the Eucharist as symbolic of the emergence from darkness into the light.

Holy Week is a time for faithful Christians to celebrate their faith in advance of Easter Sunday.



Palm Sunday begins Holy Week and commemorates the entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem.

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MADLYN EDWARDS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER
 Three-year-old Dalton Palmer hunts eggs with his mother Ashley Palmer at Reno's Easter egg hunt on April 8, 2023 at Reno Elementary School.

LIFE
 FROM PAGE C1

a deeply rooted hatred for Christ. King Herod came up with a plan to kill him from day one. He assumed he could get the Magi (wise men) to give him all the information about Christ, so he could find him and end the threat he thought Christ posed to his throne. Instead, they saw the glory that Christ brought to Earth and showered Jesus with gifts and praise. So not only was there a deeply rooted hatred for Christ, there was an unexplainable admiration. Both things were important for his life to have the impact on this world that it did.

THE DEATH

Jesus was sold out by one of his closest followers, and then he was arrested. In moments leading up to the arrest, Judas told the armed guards "The one I kiss is the man." And then he proceeded to kiss Jesus. He sold his Master out with one of the greatest shows of affection we know: a kiss. After his arrest, Pilate knew there was nothing to charge Jesus with. He had done nothing wrong. He gave the crowd a chance to either save him or save the murderer, Barabbas. As we all know, they saved the murderer and chose Christ's death.

THE BURIAL

Typically, the burial is our final "goodbye." It allows for some sort of closure for friends and family members. Watching the casket close and be lowered into the ground (or a body carried into the tomb during the

Bible days) signifies the end. For Christ, it was strictly symbolic. The burial was necessary, but only because what would happen next was unprecedented. For many who loved Jesus, it felt like it was the end, but it was only the beginning.

THE RESURRECTION

This is the unprecedented part of the story. Like it is for everyone else, the burial was supposed to be the end. This is where our faith takes us from a fairy tale to a miraculous event that can only be explained supernaturally. I'm so thankful for my faith, because without it, the rest of the story doesn't make sense. Even those who saw him couldn't believe it. God used an imperfect, Mary Magdalene, to alert the rest of his followers. No one could believe it until they saw the proof; the nail scars.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16 (NKJV)

I'm so thankful there was proof then, and there is still proof now. I can't go through life without seeing God's incredible work at hand. He was born, crucified, buried and resurrected. But there is more news! He will come again for his people!

I encourage each one of you to find a place to worship Easter Sunday, March 31. If you don't have a church you call home, you are welcome to join us at 10:45 a.m. at either of our two campuses, The WORD @ Springtown or The WORD @ Lakeside. God Bless!

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Unique Easter traditions from around the globe

Easter Sunday is a significant day on the Christian calendar. Easter Sunday will be celebrated on March 31, 2024, and many of those celebrations will feature some notable traditions. Some traditions are undoubtedly familiar to practicing Christians, while others might come as a surprise. As Easter approaches, faithful Christians and others intrigued by the holiday can consider these notable traditions from around the globe.

EASTER WITCHES

Witches are typically associated with Halloween, but they play a role in celebrating Easter in Finland. According to the Finland Promotion Board, Easter traditions in the northern European nation feature a mixture of religious references with customs re-

lated to the arrival of spring. It's not unheard of for young Finnish children, particularly girls, to dress up as Easter witches the Sunday before Easter and go from door to door requesting treats in exchange for offerings designed to drive away evil spirits. The FPB notes that it's even common for children in western Finland to don their witch outfits and roam on Easter Sunday.

FIREWORKS IN FLORENCE

The folk tradition of Scoppio del Carro ('Explosion of the Cart') takes place in Florence, Italy. The Uffizi Gallery reports that this tradition can be traced to the First Crusade in 1099. During the first Easter in Jerusalem, Crusaders gave the blessed fire to the people as a symbol of purification. That custom



PHOTO COURTESY ERIK ALBERS

Guatemala's Semana Santa ('Easter Festival') features detailed carpets of colored sawdust adorning a Good Friday processional route.



The Scoppio del Carro, or the "Explosion of the Cart", dates back over 350 years. An elaborate wagon built in 1622 and standing two to three stories high is pulled by a pair of oxen decorated in garlands through the streets of Florence to the square between the Baptistery and Cathedral.

has endured in Florence, where each Easter Sunday morning around 10 a.m. a candle is lit in the church of Santi Apostoli. That same candle is then used to light an antique cart loaded with fireworks, marking the beginning of a display that lasts around 20 minutes.

THE CARPETS OF SEMANA SANTA

Carpets might not be the first thing most Easter celebrants think of when pondering the holiday, but that might be the case for anyone who's ever spent the holiday in Antigua, Guatemala. Guatemala's Semana Santa ('Easter Festival') features detailed carpets of colored sawdust adorning a Good Friday processional route. Preparation for the colorful and stunning display begins

months in advance as the intricate carpets require ample time to produce.

WHIPS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Among the more unique Easter traditions takes place each Easter Monday in the Czech Republic. In adherence to this tradition, known locally as pomlázka, boys, and sometimes men, gather willow branches and braid them together into whips. The whips are then decorated with ribbons before boys visit girls (or men visit women) who they know and lightly tap them with the whips. The tradition is believed to bring women luck, vitality and fertility.

These are just some of the unique traditions many Christians adhere to as part of their Easter celebrations.



A traditional 'pomlázka' believed to bring women luck, vitality and fertility.

HAPPY
Easter

HE HAS RISEN!
Rejoice in the Lord and
in this beautiful holiday.

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