

# TARRANT COUNTY REPORTER

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THURSDAY, November 14, 2024 • \$1.00

## Election results

### STAFF REPORT

The presidential election Nov. 5 provided the impetus for near record voter turnout in both Tarrant and Parker Counties.

In Tarrant County, voter turnout was 63.59% with 826,039 ballots cast of 1,299,023 registered voters.

Voter turnout was 70.65% with 91,206 ballots cast of the 129,092 registered voters in Parker County.

Former President and Republican Donald J. Trump defeated Vice President and Democrat candidate Kamala Harris in what is being hailed as a landslide. Now President-elect Trump received 312 electoral votes compared to Harris' 226; Trump also won the popular vote by about 3.5 million votes.

### IN TEXAS:

Republican incumbent Ted Cruz handily defeated Democrat Colin Allred for one of two U.S. Senate seats in the state. Cruz garnered 5.97 million votes (53.13%) to Allred's 5.0 million votes (44.5%). John Cornyn is Texas' other U.S. Senator; his office was not up for election.

Republican Craig Goldman won United States Representative District 12 over Democrat Trey Hunt. Goldman won 58.23% of the electorate with 158,187 votes against Hunt's



**JOLEE SKINNER** | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER  
"Vote here" sign outside the Springtown Senior Center.

113,456. This district covers parts of Tarrant and Parker Counties. The seat has been held by Republican Kay Granger since 1997. Granger declined to run again for the Nov. 5 election.

Republican Brandon Hall won the District 11 seat on the State Board of Education, defeating Democrat Rayna Glasser. Hall won 56.96% of the electorate with 364,196 votes against Glasser's 257,802. This district covers

parts of Tarrant and Parker Counties. Hall unseated incumbent Patricia Hardy during a March 5 Republican primary. Hardy had held District 11 since 2003.

### IN TARRANT COUNTY:

Republican incumbent Bill Waybourn retained the Tarrant County Sheriff's seat against Democratic challenger Patrick Moses. Waybourn

PLEASE SEE **RESULTS** | A5

## Springtown honors veterans with parade, ceremony

### JOLEE SKINNER

jolee@tricityreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN — On Nov. 9, Springtown held its second Veteran's Day parade to honor those who have served all branches of the military in the United States. Last year was the first year the city decided to host a parade.

This year, the parade featured groups of prominent figures in the community like the Parker County Young

Marines, Sunset Church who featured veterans on their trailer and some local Army veterans.

Springtown Assistant City Manager Christina Derr says that the staff of the city takes pride in honoring veterans and bringing the community together.

"Our nation's veterans are one of our most valued treasures," Derr said. "Without them and their sacrifice we would not have many of

things that are most important to us as Americans, Texans and Springtownians. The staff takes great pride in being able to honor them and providing an opportunity for the community to do the same. This year's turnout was the largest we have seen yet and it was wonderful to see so many come together to honor our local veterans. We look forward to next

PLEASE SEE **PARADE** | A12



**JOLEE SKINNER** | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER  
Sunset Church veterans participate in Springtown Veteran's Day parade.



## Second annual Lincoln the Brave car show draws loud crowds and classic cars

*Fundraiser features vintage cars and the band Nightlife*

### JOLEE SKINNER

jolee@tricityreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN — Lincoln the Brave and the Silver Dollar

Classics Car Club drew Springtown citizens to step back in time at the second annual car show.

With more than 100 classic cars on display, the fundrais-

ing event is put together in support of children with cancer. The Lincoln the Brave foundation is a non-

PLEASE SEE **BRAVE** | A11

## Parents, school district discuss transparency amid shooter threat fears

### ZACH FREEMAN

azlereporter@tricityreporter.com

AZLE — At least two parents of children attending Azle schools have taken to Facebook with concerns over a lack of transparency in a recent arrest by the Parker County Sheriff's Office.

According to public records and screenshots of Azle ISD communications, Alan Thompson was arrested and placed into psychiatric care for homicidal ideations after he admitted to hearing voices telling him to commit violence at Azle schools.

Kelsey Massey, an Azle ISD parent and former candidate for the board of trustees, contacted the Tri-County Reporter to share her concerns and screenshots Thursday night.

According to screenshots of an Oct. 28 email sent from Azle ISD Police Chief Darren Brockway, Thompson came in contact with PCSO deputies during a disturbance call. During the incident, deputies discovered Thompson



**Alan Thompson**

was having mental issues. Thompson stated his hearing aids told him to commit violence at a school in Azle. He admitted to hearing voices telling him to bring a firearm and shoot people at a school. The email states he mentioned Silver Creek Elementary and Azle Christian School.

Thompson, age 41, is an Azle resident and alleged owner of the now-closed Alan Thompson Automotive

PLEASE SEE **THREAT** | A5

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# Special needs ministry hosts Thanksgiving meal

**ZACH FREEMAN**  
azlereporter@  
tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — The Edge Church, located at 1313 Southeast Parkway, held a Thanksgiving celebration and meal for its special needs ministry along with the Tim Tebow Foundation Saturday, Nov. 9. The special needs outreach group meets the second Saturday of each month from 4-6 p.m. for worship, dinner and fellowship. The group also plans the Tim Tebow Foundation Night to Shine event in Azle each year.



Volunteers and ministry members prepare food at the Edge Church.



Participants break bread and have a good time at the dinner.



Coordinator Elisa Henkel stands for a photo at the Nov. 9 event.

JIM STEVENS | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

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## Dos Hermanos Mexican Kitchen



Dos Hermanos Mexican Kitchen celebrated a ribbon cutting ceremony hosted by the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce Thursday, Nov. 7. Dos Hermanos is located on the outskirts of Springtown near Poolville at 8535 W. Highway 199. It's a local spot where authentic Mexican food and Tex Mex meet. When you stop in, one of the "two brothers" will most likely be cooking your meal, which is where the name Dos Hermanos comes from! This family-run establishment is very excited to be a part of the community and is ready to serve you! Check them out in person or order your meals for delivery through The Food Kab!

**COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING MEAL**

BE THANKFUL  
BE GRATEFUL  
BE BLESSED

**THANKSGIVING DAY**  
11 a.m.-2 p.m.  
Thursday, November 28, 2024  
First Methodist Church of Azle  
200 Church St. in Azle  
Park in south parking lot and enter only through the covered area.

"I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving."  
- Psalm 69:30

The First Methodist Church of Azle invites those unable to spend the holiday with family to enjoy a free traditional Thanksgiving dinner on Thursday, November 28, 2024. The meal will include turkey, ham, dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, rolls, dessert, and a drink.

Meals can also be ordered for home delivery to those who are homebound. Orders must be placed by November 21 by calling the church office at 817-444-3323, Monday through Thursday, between 8:30 a.m. and noon.



FIRST METHODIST CHURCH of AZLE





# 'Baskets of Love' spreading holiday cheer once again

JOLEE SKINNER

jolee@tricountyreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN — With the holidays coming up, families and friends will soon gather and exchange gifts with one another. But let's not forget that many families have lost loved ones and will spend the holiday season without those individuals.

We Are Our Brother's Keeper founder Jessica Castro wants everyone who has lost a loved one to addiction or who is currently struggling with addiction to know that they are not alone. This organization is a nonprofit group that spreads awareness and gives support for drug addiction, overdose prevention and connections for those who have lost loved

ones from overdose or are struggling with their own addiction. Castro lost her oldest son, Joseph, to addiction in 2019.

"When Joseph died, I felt very isolated and alone and ashamed of what had happened to him and his death," Castro said. "After months and months and months of feeling that isolation, I finally felt a need to tell other people. I know my family is not the only one struggling with this."

Castro for the past three years has put together "Baskets of Love," which is a food drive for families who are struggling to afford holiday meals. She recalls back to her childhood and prominently remembers the meals her family had together and

not much else.

"When I was a little, I remembered the food, I couldn't tell you what I got," Castro said. "And I thought, how many families can't even afford that? So, that's where the baskets came in."

Castro makes sure every basket has everything needed to create a perfect holiday meal.

"What we put in the baskets is really cool," Castro said. "If you were to go to the store and buy stuff to make Thanksgiving dinner, that's exactly what has to go in these baskets. Rolls, cornbread, vegetables, ham, turkeys, cranberry sauce, pie filling, all that good, yummy stuff that we love goes in this basket."

In a sweet gesture, the own-

er of Frosty's Snow Cones in Springtown is smoking turkeys and is also donating some to the Baskets of Love.

"He's smoking turkeys this year," Castro said. "For every three turkeys that he gets to smoke, he's donating one to our Baskets of Love. So, I've been trying to push, 'Everybody go get your turkey.'"

Like many individuals with nonprofit organizations, there are days where burn-out and exhaustion are present. But for Castro, helping and giving back to others has never been difficult.

"It's never been hard," Castro said. "I always feel like Joseph has led me to do these things. No matter what he was going through, he would take care of someone else. So,



PHOTO COURTESY JESSICA CASTRO

A "We Are Our Brother's Keeper" sign placed outside spreads overdose awareness.

it's never been hard for me to do this. It is the best and most rewarding thing. I love the Baskets of Love. It makes my whole heart happy."

We Are Our Brother's Keeper is accepting food

donations for the baskets and asks for the donations to be dropped off at 300 W. Fourth St. in Springtown. For more information, contact [wearourbrotherskeeper19@gmail.com](mailto:wearourbrotherskeeper19@gmail.com).

# Popcorn Players premiere "The Butler Did It"

STAFF REPORT

AZLE — This week the Azle Arts Association will introduce its final show of the 2024 season Friday, Nov. 15. Written in 1981 by Walter and Peter Marks, "The Butler Did It" is a meta murder mystery and comedy thriller. Lisha Nurmela is the production's director.

The scene is the set where Anthony J. Lefcourt, writer and director, is rehearsing his new play, a classic "whodunit" in which all the characters are named Butler, with which he hopes to regain the success that has eluded him in recent seasons. Desperately eager to stimulate his cast to their best efforts, he has delib-

erately withheld the final scene of the play from them, but his patience is worn thin by the petty jealousies and romantic rivalries that detract from their concentration.

This play is rated a soft PG-13 for adult situations. Popcorn Players Theater is located at 1012 Southeast Parkway in Azle, and tickets will be available in person, online at [www.azlearts.org](http://www.azlearts.org), or by phone at 817-238-PLAY. Tickets are \$15 for adults, \$12 for seniors and students, and \$10 for the Sunday matinee.

In a recent newsletter, the association also unveiled its planned list of shows for 2025 which include:

"Anybody Out There," "Cocktails with Mimi," "Laughter on the 23rd Floor," "Peril on the High Seas," "The Sunshine Boys," and "Monday Always Leads to Murder."

PRODUCTION DATES

- Friday, Nov. 15, 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 16, 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Nov. 17, 2:30 p.m.
- Friday, Nov. 22, 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Nov. 23, 7:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Nov. 24, 2:30 p.m.

The theater's resident improv troupe, the Corney Kernels, will hold its final performance of the year Saturday, Dec. 7.



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

(L-R): Student Council sponsor Ryder Renfro, Stuco Vice President Finley Dean, Secretary Kayla Anderson, President Addalee Haddock (all sixth graders), sponsors Kallie Roy, Kayla Mendoza and fifth grade representative Lyla Mayes with the school's new tree Nov. 4. Not pictured is Stuco sponsor Leo Resurreccion.

# Azle Elementary plants tree for Arbor Day

ZACH FREEMAN

azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — In celebration of Texas Arbor Day, Azle Mayor Alan Brundrett visited Azle Elementary School Monday Nov. 4 to gift the students with a new tree on campus and to speak on the importance of green spaces in the community.

The city declared Nov. 2 Arbor Day in Azle in a ceremony several days prior but participated in activities around the community to advocate for the benefit of trees in the days that followed. According to a proclamation read by the mayor, trees are vital in reducing erosion, moderating temperature, cleaning air and providing

habitat for native animals. The mayor also compared the planting and care of new trees to the nurturing and growth of Azle students.

Azle Elementary School student council members were heavily involved in the ceremony and planted the newly delivered tree by the school's back entrance.

## LEGAL PUBLIC NOTICES

### INVITATION TO BID NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the City of Azle, Texas (OWNER) will receive sealed Bids at Azle City Hall until 2:00 p.m. local time on Tuesday, November 26, 2024 for Cross Timbers Driving Range #2024-001. A non-mandatory Pre-Bid conference will be held at 10:00 a.m. on November 19, 2024, located at Cross Timbers Golf Course Pro Shop, 1181 S. Stewart Street, Azle, Texas 76020 Bids will be opened and read aloud publicly following the close of the Bid Period. Bidding Documents: Plans and specifications may be obtained from the office of Kemp Golf Course Design, Email [trey@kempgolf.com](mailto:trey@kempgolf.com) or call (214)405-3483 for more information.

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that on November 6, 2024, JARED PARTON qualified as Independent Administrator without bond and Letters of Independent Administration were issued to JARED PARTON on November 6, 2024 for the Estate of BOBBY GENE PARTON, Deceased, in Cause No. 2024-PR00693-2, pending in Tarrant County Probate Court No. 2 County, Texas. All persons having claims against this Estate, which is currently being administered, are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law to the representative's attorney as follows: c/o Tyler A. Harden, Attorney, P.C. 415 W. Main Street Azle, TX 76020 DATED: November 7, 2024

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Vern Smith, also known as Vernon Leroy Smith, Deceased, were issued on November 7, 2024, in Cause No. 24P392, pending in the County Court of Parker County, Texas, to: Juanita C. Smith, Independent Executor. Claims may be mailed in care of the Estate as follows: Juanita C. Smith, Independent Executor c/o Jennifer S. Ruelas, Attorney Ruelas Andino Law, PLLC 1020 Fort Worth Hwy, Ste. 500 Weatherford, Texas 76086 All persons having claims against said Estate, which is currently being administered, are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. Dated November 7, 2024. Respectfully submitted, Ruelas Andino Law, PLLC 1020 Fort Worth Highway, Suite 500 Weatherford, Texas 76086 Telephone: 817-609-8935 Fax: 817-550-6020 /s/ Jennifer S. Ruelas Jennifer S. Ruelas State Bar No. 24106374 [jennifer@ruelasandinolaw.com](mailto:jennifer@ruelasandinolaw.com) Attorney for Juanita C. Smith

### NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING- PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION OF CITY OF PELICAN BAY, TEXAS

PROPOSED VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION OF TERRITORY  
Notice is hereby given that City of Pelican Bay, Texas proposes to institute annexation proceedings to enlarge and extend the boundary limits of said city to include the following described territory, to-wit: APPROXIMATELY 5.0 ACRES IN THE JACOB WILCOX SURVEY #54, ABSTRACT 1713, TRACT 1C3 AND 1F, LOCATED AT 149 RICHARD LANE AND LIBERTY SCHOOL ROAD A public hearing will be held by and before the Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Pelican Bay, Texas on the 20th day of November 2024 at 7 o'clock in the City Council Chamber of the City Hall of the City of Pelican Bay, Texas, located at 1300 Pelican Circle, Pelican Bay, Texas. The purpose of the public hearing is to provide all interested persons the opportunity to be heard on the proposed annexation. The annexation will extend the City's boundaries to include the described territory, providing municipal services and regulations to the area. Maps and detailed information concerning the proposed annexation are available for public inspection at the City Hall, located at 1300 Pelican Circle, Pelican Bay, Texas 76020, during regular business hours. Written comments regarding the proposed annexation may be submitted to the City Secretary at 1300 Pelican Circle, Pelican Bay, Texas, prior to the hearing.

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of JOHN FRANCIS DECKER, Deceased, were issued on November 11, 2024 in Cause No. 2024- PR02856-1, pending in the Probate Court No: 1, Tarrant County, Texas, to: Kathryn E. Decker. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: Kathryn E. Decker 8828 Random Road Fort Worth, Texas 76086. Dated the 11th day of November, 2024. Michele Audet, Attorney for Kathryn E. Decker State Bar No.: 00792338 3600 Hulen B4 Ft Worth, TX 76107 Telephone: (817) 292-2000 Facsimile: (817) 294-3770 Email: [micheleaudet@sbcglobal.net](mailto:micheleaudet@sbcglobal.net)

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of CARROLL BURDETTE HOLLEY, Deceased, were issued on November 7th, in Cause No. 24P336 pending in the County Court of Parker County, Texas, to: Scott Burdette Holley. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: Scott Burdette Holley 1602 E. Bankhead Dr. Weatherford, Texas 76086. DATED the 11th day of November, 2024. Michele Audet Attorney for Scott Burdette Holley State Bar No.: 00792338 918 S. Main St. Weatherford, TX 76086 Telephone: (817) 341-0088 Facsimile: (817) 341-0090 Email: [micheleaudet@sbcglobal.net](mailto:micheleaudet@sbcglobal.net)

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# Real success

## Azle graduate speaks about CTE real estate licensing course

**ZACH FREEMAN**

azlereporter@tricityreporter.com

**AZLE** — Less than six months after graduating, one former Azle High Schooler is closing deals and making a name for himself in the local real estate scene.

The Azle Independent School District administration building was abuzz with activity Tuesday, Oct. 22, during its annual real estate luncheon. During the luncheon, school administrators addressed local agents and presented them with different facts, figures and arguments they can use to convince more people to buy property in the school district.

Key points included a 99% graduation rate and 52% of students pursuing secondary education. The district emphasized academic excellence, talent development and integrated support systems. Advanced academics, including dual credit and advanced placement courses, were highlighted as possible draws for parents. According to the presentation, 48 AHS students are enrolled in classes at Weatherford college, 280 students are in AP courses and 345 students utilize OnRamps. Enrollment through OnRamps alone is expected to save current Azle ISD families almost \$1 million in combined higher education costs.

Fine arts participation is growing, with a total of 1,714 students involved across the high school and both junior high schools. Athletics and facilities improvements, such

as new tennis courts and a new eight-lane track at Azle High School were noted. The district's robust Career and Technical Education program was also put on display. Azle ISD CTE offers 85 courses in 13 career clusters which resulted in 894 certifications last year.

Of those nearly 900 certifications, at least three were unique in that they were a district first. During the 2023-2024 academic year, AHS offered students a chance to learn about real estate through the online platform Aceable and even paid for the students' Texas Real Estate Sales Agent Examination to earn a genuine Texas Real Estate License. Of the 16 students in the program's inaugural class, three ultimately passed the test.

Kaleb Braswell, a class of 2024 graduate, was one of those first three. He attended the luncheon as a bona fide real estate agent just five months after leaving high school.

Through mentorship from fellows Annie Sovereign, Jackie South and others at Worth Clark Realty and Sovereign Elite Group, Braswell was on the verge of closing his first lease at the time of the luncheon and was looking forward to a fruitful career that lies ahead of him.

South, an Azle alumna, and Sovereign are highly involved with the school's real estate program themselves. The pair tries to visit the class at least once per month to offer real world insights and advice to those looking to cut their



**Real estate agents: Molly Christiansen, Annie Sovereign, Kaleb Braswell, Jackie South and Nikole Davis.**

ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

teeth in property sales.

"He's up for the challenge," Sovereign said of Braswell. "He's been taking every opportunity to meet people and work on his sphere of influence, and he's a go getter, so I have no doubt that he'll do great things."

Sovereign said she hopes current and future students enrolled in the course can appreciate the school district offering the program at no cost to them and seize the highly valuable opportunity. She said her and South's involvement comes from a passion to give back to the community and help the next generation of young agents get their footing in an industry that can be difficult to break into.

"It's an expensive thing to get and navigate," Sovereign said. "Though they've got the curriculums in their hands, it's up to them to take those steps to get through the program, but we're here to support them while they're in the program, and then even after the fact that they have questions. We're always available to answer those for them ... The coursework is challenging — last year, only a small number of students passed. The students use online software to complete their studies, which can be tough to navigate, especially given their lack of real-world real estate experience. It requires a great deal of commitment for them to stay on track, and many are working at

their own pace outside of the classroom."

South agreed, adding that it has been rewarding seeing Braswell's progress over the last year, going from student to real estate agent.

This year, 31 students are in the AHS real estate certification program and admins hope to see a lot more earn their real estate licenses. The course is structured as a double-block class which instructor Tracey Knoll says allows students to utilize the time effectively for a variety of activities. By studying vocabulary and the curriculum laid out by Aceable and hearing the real-world experiences of professionals like Sovereign and South, Knoll hopes that by the end of the course all

her students are prepared to ace their licensing exam upon graduation.

"I'm super thankful of the ISD for offering that course, because now I can have a full career," Braswell said in an interview with the Tri-County Reporter. "I didn't even have to pay for the course or anything. And I'm super grateful for all of the teachers and real estate agents that came in and talked to us, and like, all the lenders and like, actually, like, informed us on how everything works, and it shaped me really good. So now I'm like, in the field, I'm informed on all the things in real estate ... Shout out Annie, shout out Jackie, shout out Ms. Knoll!"

## THREAT

FROM PAGE A1

at 1200 Northwest Parkway. Thompson's listed home address is less than one mile from Silver Creek Elementary.

Thompson was apprehended after multiple weapons were seized from his home and he was arrested for unlawful possession of a firearm by a felon after being released from a JPS psychiatric ward. Parker County jail records show the initial incident took place Oct. 24 and Thompson was booked into the jail Nov. 5. According to Parker and Tarrant County records, Thompson was arrested numerous times for driving while intoxicated between 2007 and 2018. Texas law considers an individual's

third DWI a felony.

Through her communications with school officials, Massey claims Silver Creek Elementary staff was not notified about the incident until Nov. 6 and that the board of trustees was unaware of the potential threat.

"This information should have been shared with staff as early as October 28th," Massey said in an email to the newspaper. "His picture should have been distributed and parents should have been given a heads-up about the situation, along with reassurance that it was being handled."

Azle ISD Superintendent Todd Smith responded to these claims in an email to the Tri-County Reporter.

"On Monday, Oct. 28, Chief Brockway shared the inter-

nal report (shared on social media) with all Azle ISD School Resource Officers and all campus principals. Mrs. Deheck shared the information with her office staff, including those who are ones checking visitors in, such as campus attendance clerk and campus secretary," Smith said. "This was an internal Azle ISD Police Department document that was not intended for public release due (to) personal information. At no time was there any intent on our part to hide anything or withhold information from our staff, parents, and community. I am unsure as to what we would have reported to parents or staff with no additional information or details, without creating more questions or concerns. Typically

in reporting a subject matter such as this, (it) includes additional details or action steps being taken, which we do not have. Outside of our daily routine safety protocols of locked doors, actively checking doors, SRO patrolling the campus, staff being observant, etc. no additional actions are being taken. Additional information may be shared with parents about added protocols if or when the suspect is released from law enforcement custody, pending what law enforcement determines, and what we can legally share."

According to additional screenshots, Hilltop Elementary School officer Nathan Stringer emailed Hilltop staff about the incident Oct. 30. Stringer reported that he had met with the

head of Azle Christian School several weeks earlier after Thompson had tried to gain access to the building and was issued a criminal trespass warning.

The Tri-County Reporter reached out to ACS Head of School April Geeslin who said that while Thompson did visit the school parking lot Sept. 26, he did not attempt to gain entry.

"He did not try to gain entrance through a back door," Geeslin said. "He parked in front of the church and walked up to our gym door. He was immediately approached by myself. He said he was looking for someone named Tom and when told no one was here by that name, he left immediately. The safety of our students and staff is our top priority. We are

thankful to have an armed security officer on campus every day. The Brooks Security Team, who is contracted by ACS, works closely with the Azle ISD Police Department and Parker County Sheriff's Office."

The school district issued a press release Friday morning, Nov. 8 in response to the situation. The document is accessible through a link on the Tri-County Reporter website. The Parker County Sheriff's Office did not respond to requests for comment by press deadline. District Attorney Jeff Swain confirmed, if bonded out, a GPS electronic monitor will be installed on Mr. Thompson's ankle prior to his release from jail.

## RESULTS

FROM PAGE A1

won 53.72% of the electorate with 423,698 votes against Moses' 365,193. This is Waybourn's third time winning the position since 2016.

Republican Rick Barnes was elected Tarrant County Tax Assessor in a race against

Democrat K.C. Chowdhury. Barnes won 55.54% of the electorate with 437,289 votes versus Chowdhury, who garnered 350,114 votes. Barnes unseated incumbent Wendy Burgess during a March 5 Republican primary.

Republican William Knight won the Tarrant County Criminal District Judge No. 2 position against Democrat

MarQuetta Clayton. Knight won 54.53% of the electorate with 428,498 votes against Clayton's 357,326.

Republican Douglas Allen won the Tarrant County Criminal District Judge No. 3 position against Democrat John T. Brender. Allen won 54.17% of the electorate with 425,274 votes over Brender, who got 359,808 votes.

Republican Chris Wolfe was elected to the 213th Judicial District judge position against Democrat Cindy Stormer. Wolfe won 53.59% of the electorate with 420,645 votes; Stormer received 364,349 votes.

**IN PARKER COUNTY:** Republican Brent Hagenbuch won the State

Senator, District 30 race against Democrat Dale Frey. Hagenbuch won 83.05% of the electorate with 43,083 votes against Frey's 8,795.

Sharon Hayes defeated David Milhollon in the race for Parker County Hospital District Precinct 3. Hayes won 78.67% of the electorate with 12,650 votes against Milhollon's 3,430.

Justin Lisle was elected to the Parker County Hospital District Precinct 4 against Gloria Gilbert Barron. Lisle won 61.47% of the electorate with 10,351 votes versus Barron's 6,489.

Uncontested races are not listed. Terms begin in January.

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# OBITUARIES

## Gerry O'Brien 1941-2024

Gerry (Tootie) O'Brien, 83, passed away Wednesday, Oct. 30, 2024, at his home in Springtown.

A memorial service will be at 2 p.m. Friday, Nov. 15, at Alexander's Midway Funeral Home in Springtown.

Gerry was a Navy veteran who retired after 22 years with many honors, as an E-7, chief petty officer.

Born June 19, 1941, in Vandalia, Illinois to Herschel and Elise O'Brien, Gerry was preceded in death by his parents; son, Perry O'Brien; and siblings.

He is survived by his wife, Carol "Candy" O'Brien; daughter, Karry and husband Jerry Lamb; grandchildren, Dustin and wife Shavonne, Brittany and



husband Ryan, Brandi and husband Joey, Jackie and husband Ronnie, Catherine and bonus son, Bobby; 15 grandchildren; and many loved four-legged brats.

*The Tri-County Reporter,  
Thursday October 10, 2024*

## Cynthia Ann Newby 1945-2024

Cynthia Ann (Powell) Earp Newby, of Springtown, passed away Saturday Nov. 9, 2024.

A celebration of life is at 10 a.m., Thursday, Nov. 14 at White's Funeral Home in Springtown.

Cynthia was born Feb. 7, 1945, the second child of Hazel and Wayne Powell.

Cynthia was many things to many people. She was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, daughter, sister, aunt and friend. She was a longtime member of Springtown Church of Christ. Cynthia was generous, loving and giving. She loved unconditionally without judgment or reservation. She was loved deeply by her family and friends. Her compassion and deep love will be greatly missed by those who knew her.

Cynthia was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Worthy Earp, with whom she had three children; husband, Arvill Newby, with whom she had two adopted children; daughter, Deborah Earp;



grandson, Charles Wiggins; and brother, George Powell. She is survived by her sons, Jason Earp and wife, Sherri, Jarrod Earp, Bryan Newby, Terry Newby and wife, Valerie; grandchildren, Jacee Cox and husband, Raleigh, Chance Earp and wife Leah and Jaron Raney; sister, Mary Jane Mangrum and husband Bobby; many great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and beloved friends.

*The Tri-County Reporter,  
Thursday October 10, 2024*

# Good N.E.W.S. for Azle seniors this Christmas

ZACH FREEMAN

azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — The Good N.E.W.S. Living at Home Block Nursing Program is looking to fulfill Christmas wishes for seniors in the Azle area once again.

Good N.E.W.S. is a non-profit that provides transportation, socialization, volunteers for household chores and other services for senior citizens living in the Azle-Springtown area.

For more than 20 years, Good N.E.W.S. has given a special blessing to seniors over the Christmas season with its Adopt-a-Senior initiative. At a Nov. 5 Azle Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon, longtime director Terri Bartlett asked chamber members to pick up a senior wish list and to buy items that they want and need this holiday season. Bartlett presented a video reading of a letter that Good N.E.W.S. received from a senior about the impact of the program.

"It's like you made up for all those years as a child, during the Great Depression, when I received very little, if anything, for Christmas," the letter read. "You renewed my belief in Santa Claus. This labor of love refreshed my faith in humanity. May God bless you all."

Along with including Christmas wishes, these lists include personalized information about each senior's likes and living situation in



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Terri Bartlett speaks about the Good N.E.W.S. Adopt-a-Senior initiative at the Nov. 5 chamber luncheon.

order to help better guide the program's adopters. Those wishing to buy items for a senior this Christmas can contact Bartlett by phone at 817-444-2300 or by email [terri@goodnews4seniors.org](mailto:terri@goodnews4seniors.org). All items must be brought to the One Azle building at 412 Commerce St. on or before Dec. 2. The lists also ask for donations of everyday items which are usually in high demand for Good N.E.W.S. beneficiaries including Kleenex, toilet paper, paper towels, laundry detergent, dish soap, shampoo, deodorant, body

wash and body lotion.

Bartlett said the program makes a big difference in the lives of seniors who might be spending this holiday season alone. With more seniors involved in the program than ever, Bartlett said she is nervous but has faith that the community will come together to support the program.

"It's important that, for us, that they get those things," Bartlett said at the luncheon. "The only way that we can get those things to them is if y'all adopt them. I know that the economy is bad, and

money is tight and I know all of those things. And so if you want to get a friend and go in together, or get an office, if you have businesses, I know Haley Carter State Farm last year adopted some and they used it as a team building experience for their office. Their office got to go shopping together, and they wrapped the gifts together and then they brought them to us together. So, the sky's the limit."

For more information about Good N.E.W.S., visit [goodnews4seniors.org](http://goodnews4seniors.org).

# Leadership coach asks big questions

ZACH FREEMAN

azlereporter@tricountyreporter.com

AZLE — T.D. Smyers grew up near Azle in Boyd. He returned to the area to speak on the importance of questions at a Nov. 5 Azle Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon. Smyers is a coach who trains executives in leadership and communication. He has a long history in the United States Navy.

Smyers told his story about wanting to join the U.S. Naval Academy as a junior at Boyd High School. After applying, he received a letter saying he was not qualified for automatic acceptance. When he brought the issues up to his school counselor, the counselor asked him a question

that would change his approach to problem solving for the rest of his life.

"Are you unqualified?"

Smyers believed he was qualified, so he wrote a letter bringing the issue back up with the academy. By following up, he took the necessary steps to ensure he was admitted and he ultimately served in the military for 31 years.

After leaving the service, he worked for nonprofits for a number of years and then took a pause to stay in the Caribbean where he thought about his life's trajectory. He decided he would use his experience to coach executives and company leaders. In coaching one of his first clients, he asked a soon-to-be chief executive officer if



ZACH FREEMAN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

TD Smyers speaks at the recent chamber luncheon, Nov. 5.

he might be overthinking his worries. Smyers said that by phrasing it as a question, he was able to get the man to reflect on the issue and avoid any conflict that telling him outright might have caused.

"That set the tone for our entire relationship and his ultimate succession to be the chief executive of that company," Smyers said. "Questions are superpowers, not only in a coaching relationship but in relationships too. Why? Because questions, they tend to emphasize the other person you're talking to and not you."

Smyers said that by being genuinely curious, bosses and leaders can completely change relationship dynam-

ics between them and their employees. He recounted another experience as a mission commander of an aircraft where he smelled alcohol on his radar operator's breath. Instead of telling him what he did wrong, he instead asked him what he thought was the right thing to do. The radar operator admitted to his behavior and Smyers said they were able to preserve their relationship.

Lastly, Smyers tied the recent Nov. 5 election into his talk. Smyers said that by asking your friends, relatives and colleagues questions about their candidates and choices you could preserve relationships and have more productive conversations.

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<p><b>THE ABBEY CHURCH</b> Pastor: Paul Brownback 10400 Jacksboro Hwy 817-238-1404 <a href="http://www.TheAbbeyChurch.com">www.TheAbbeyChurch.com</a> Morning Worship..... 10:30 AM Community Groups ..... Various Times</p> <p><b>ASH CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH</b> Pastor: Dr. G. Wesley Shotwell 300 South Stewart St. 817-444-3219 <a href="http://www.ashcreekbc.org">www.ashcreekbc.org</a> 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</p> <p><b>AZLE FIRST ASSEMBLY of GOD</b> 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</p> <p><b>COMMUNITY BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH</b> Pastor - Alton Davis 817-521-4510 <a href="http://cbfazle.org">cbfazle.org</a> 1405 Reynolds Rd., Azle Directions: 730 N. to 1542 .5 mi. right on Cardinal, left on Reynolds Sunday Service..... 11:00 AM Wednesday Evening..... 6:30 PM</p>	<p><b>AZLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH</b> 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</p> <p><b>CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY CHURCH</b> 2233 Hwy 199 E., Springtown 817-221-LIFE (5433) Sunday Worship Service ..... 10:00 AM Wednesday ..... 7:00 PM</p> <p><b>CROSSROADS BAPTIST CHURCH</b> Pastor - Jon Baker Corner FM 730S &amp; FM 1886 817-755-0279 Transportation Available Worship Service..... 10:30 AM Wed. Prayer Service..... 7:00 PM</p> <p><b>THE EDGE CHURCH - AZLE</b> 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</p> <p><b>FIRST METHODIST CHURCH OF AZLE</b> Pastor: Rev. Raymond Gilman 200 Church St., Azle 817-444-3323 Morn. Worship ..... 8:30 &amp; 10:45 AM Sunday School..... 9:45 AM Youth ..... 5:00 PM Sun &amp; 6:30 PM Wed</p>	<p><b>GRACEPOINTE CHURCH</b> 4110 E. Hwy 199, Springtown Pastor: Timothy McKeown 817-221-5683 <a href="http://gracepointesbc.org">gracepointesbc.org</a> Sunday School..... 9:45 am Sunday Service..... 11:00 am Wednesday Bible Study ..... 6:00 PM</p> <p><b>HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC CHURCH</b> 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</p> <p><b>HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCA</b> 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</p> <p><b>SOLID ROCK BIBLE CHURCH</b> 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</p>	<p><b>LEGACY CHURCH</b> Assembly of God Church Pastor: Gary D. Veazey Hwy. 199 &amp; Jaybird Lane 817-221-2983 Morning Worship..... 9:15 &amp; 11:00 AM Kidz Zone..... 9:15 &amp; 11:00 AM Weds Evening Legacy Group Legacy Youth, Kids All Services..... 7:00 PM</p> <p><b>THE RANCH CHRISTIAN COWBOY CHURCH</b> Pastor: Greg Slankard 7955 Reed Rd., Azle 682-327-7082 <a href="http://www.TheRanchCCC.org">www.TheRanchCCC.org</a> Sunday School 9:30 AM • Worship 10:00 AM Weds 7:00 pm • Thurs Potluck 6:30 pm</p> <p><b>SILVER CREEK METHODIST CHURCH</b> Pastor: Bill Killough 2200 Church Rd., Azle 817-444-1382 <a href="http://www.silvercreekmcc.org">www.silvercreekmcc.org</a> Sunday School 9:30 AM • Worship 10:30 AM</p> <p><b>SILVER CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH</b> Pastor: Jay Ditty Minister of Music: David Musick Corner FM 730 S. &amp; Veal Station Rd. Church 817-444-2325 <a href="http://www.silvercreekbc.org">www.silvercreekbc.org</a> Sunday School..... 9:45 AM Morning Worship..... 10:50 AM Evening Worship ..... 7:00 PM Wed. Prayer Service..... 6:00 PM</p>	<p><b>THE WORD@LAKESIDE CHURCH OF GOD</b> 9396 FM 1886 Fort Worth, TX 76135 817-237-5500 <a href="http://thewordatlakeside.com">thewordatlakeside.com</a> Pastors: Brandon and Kelly Bohannon Worship Pastor: Christen Moody Family Life and Young Adult Pastors: Jodie and Mark James, Kids Pastor: Katie Pearson, Student Pastors: Taylor and Sheridan Tomlin, Creative Directors: Logan and Carrie Edwards, Connections Coordinators: Preston and Ashley Larrew Equip Sunday School at the WORD ..... 9:30 AM Empower Worship at the WORD ..... 10:45 AM Kids at the WORD..... 10:45 AM PreK at the WORD ..... 10:45 AM Emanate at the WORD (Special Needs Ministry) ..... 10:45 AM Nursery at the WORD ..... 10:45 AM Young Adults at the WORD ..... 6:00 PM Wednesdays 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</p>
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# Lane named Parker County emergency management coordinator

**ZACH FREEMAN**

azlereporter@tricityreporter.com

**PARKER COUNTY** — During the last week of October, public relations officers introduced 51-year-old Jason Lane as Parker County's new emergency management coordinator. Lane will be responsible for the development, implementation, coordination and maintenance of emergency preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation plans as well as the overall management of the county and Department of Homeland Security emergency and security programs.

Lane previously served as the deputy emergency management coordinator for the city of Frisco. Lane managed Frisco's emergency operation center, dealt with homeland security grants and handled reimbursement following disasters among other duties.

Lane served as the assistant emergency management coordinator for Collin County and was the county's bioterrorism coordinator. Prior to working for Collin County, Lane was an environmental investigator for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. In this role, he was responsible

for providing technical information, assistance, expertise, guidance and direction to local and state agencies regarding federal environmental regulations.

Lane holds a Master of Science in justice administration and leadership from the University of Texas at Dallas and two Bachelor of Science degrees — one in bioenvironmental science from Texas A&M University and another in emergency administration and planning from the University of North Texas. He has completed training in hazardous materials safety, environmental remediation, critical infrastructure protection, biological and chemical warfare and terrorism, sports and special event management and radiological emergency preparedness.

Lane grew up in Collin County in the small city of Farmersville. He currently lives in Palo Pinto County with his family but says he's looking forward to moving to Parker once he sells his house. In a phone interview with the Tri-County Reporter, Lane said his first goal is getting to know the people and organizations of the county.

"I think the big thing for me is to, at least initially, is to

try to meet all the folks that are involved when we have emergencies and disasters, because you can't fix a disaster by yourself," Lane said. "It takes a partnership. A big part of that is networking and getting to know all the players, the usual suspects, like first responders, law enforcement, public works, those are the ones we kind of think about the most. There's also a lot of other folks that help out in disasters. Here in Parker County, we have a community emergency response team, which is a group of volunteers from the community that we train on how to take care of themselves and then help others in a disaster. They're an active group. We want to try to build that program and make it stronger."

Lane said volunteers like these are vital in activities like storm spotting. Volunteers with ham radios are trained by the National Weather Service and Parker County in order to carry out these duties.

"It's a broad range of players that are involved when we have disaster," Lane said. "It's not ideal to be in the middle of a disaster, and you're having to work with somebody

that's the first time you've ever met them."

Lane said his experiences working in rapidly growing fringe communities in the D-FW metroplex will be highly applicable in his new role. In his extensive career he has also already made relationships with key players in the region, like some of the individuals heading the upcoming University of Texas at Arlington West development in Walsh Ranch.

"I've kind of always worked in emergency management in areas that are growing rapidly and Parker County is headed that same direction," Lane said. "There's some nuances to how things operate in the Parker County, so I'm trying to figure that out but so far, everybody I've met has been really nice and supportive and I'm looking forward to digging in and trying to do what I can."

With good systems already in place, Lane hopes to work on continuous improvement in the county's emergency preparedness. Lane explained that in Texas counties, the county judge is in charge during disasters. As communities grow, he said judges will typically appoint an emergency management



Jason Lane

COURTESY PHOTO

coordinator. In many Texas counties the position is held by the fire marshal. In Parker County, the position was only recently split with Kurt

Harris remaining interim fire marshal and Lane now acting as emergency management coordinator.

# AHS drone squad qualifies for national competition

**STAFF REPORT**

**AZLE** — The Azle High School Hornet drone squad placed second at a Bell Advanced Vertical Robotics Regional in Arlington Saturday, Nov. 9. In its final round of the day, the team reported beating the standing single round score record of 106 with a score of 107 points. The Hornets' finish qualified them for the 2024 National AVR Championship Event in Dallas Dec. 7.

The Hornet drone squad has been a strong contender since first entering the scene, placing fourth at the 2023 championship event.



COURTESY PHOTO

The AHS Hornet drone squad poses for a photo with its second place banner.

# Azle man dies after car accident

*Medical condition may have caused crash*

**STAFF REPORT**

**AZLE** — Jedediah Perkins, a 38-year-old Azle man, died after a one-vehicle accident at 1400 Southeast Parkway near Waldrop's Furniture the evening of Wednesday, Nov. 6. Azle Police Chief Ben Hall said he believes Perkins experienced a medical episode that caused him to crash his vehicle. Hall said he also believes Perkins died either en route to or in the emergency room of Texas

Health Harris Methodist Hospital Azle. The Tarrant County Medical Examiner's website listed Perkins' place of death as 108 Denver Trail — the hospital's address — but had not revealed a cause of death by press time. Emergency services radio traffic at the time of the incident suggest Perkins' health status went from minor injuries to critical while being assessed by first responders.

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# Looking into the classroom

**NOVA WANG**

*Special to the Tri-County Reporter*

With the Azle High School year starting just a few months ago, teacher Lou Ann Burnham reflects on her teaching from the past and what led her toward the profession.

"(Counseling) was my first thought and then I kind of got into that path and realized that it was more difficult than I thought," Burnham said. "I still wanted to be in a profession where I could help and encourage, whether it be for young people or adults and I was told I would make a pretty good teacher, so I went that path."

As the years increased, Burnham's teaching style has slightly shifted.

"I'm probably a little more easygoing than I used to be which might surprise some students but, my goal is always to teach the skills," Burnham said. "It's not the quantity of material but it's the quality, as well the quality of the teaching because you can do a lot and still not learn anything."

A common student struggle Burnham notices when reflecting on her past teaching is the use of phones.

"Especially since COVID-19 the phones have been a distraction," Burnham said. "For a majority of my teaching career, we didn't have that distraction in the classroom. (The work ethic) has changed quite a bit because of the phones, computers, all of that, which is great on one side, but it really has affected students and it's just a distraction and I think a lot

## Two Azle educators reflect on their teaching experiences so far

of students will tell you it's a distraction for them."

Burnham believes the reason she continues her career in education is for the students.

"I see that I can help students whether they're going to college, or they're going into the workforce," Burnham said. "I like high school students; they frustrate me but I just want to help. I love it when I see a student grow."

Newer teacher Amanda Seymour reflects on the year in terms of teaching and her struggles thus far.

"There's some apathy of just not fully applying themselves," Seymour said. "I think, because I teach at the sophomore level, (the students) are not able to see that in five years, this might impact them or it doesn't feel like it's important right now, but in the future, it might be. I think that they struggle with that, they see the present, and they're not able to see the whole picture yet, just because of the age that they're at."

In terms of the Azle ISD phone policy, Seymour mentions how successful it has been despite the rocky beginning.

"It's hard for anybody, not just teenagers to put our phones away to sit and focus especially when you're not interested in what is happening, which is hard because we try to make the classrooms as engaging as possible, but

there's only so much we can do," Seymour said. "But for the most part, I've kind of just been very firm with it and they understand my expectations. At the beginning of the year, I had a little bit more write-ups because they were getting into the rhythm and pushing those boundar-

ies, but once they figured out that I was going to take it seriously, they started taking it seriously as well."

Compared to Burnham's style, Seymour's way of teaching first focuses on the students in a different aspect.

"I think that my first priority is building those relationships with kids and really getting to know them so that they feel comfortable around me and feel comfortable taking my input and my advice

and my criticism," Seymour said. "Once you have that foundation of a relationship, those kids will do what you ask them to."

Similar to Burnham, Seymour also believes the reason she continues to teach is because of the students.

"I want kids to feel valued. There's kids I think that's specifically why I like public school teaching, is because there's so many kids that we interact with every day that

don't have somebody that loves and cares about them," Seymour said. "And I think that a lot of times school is a safe place for a lot of students, and I want to be a person that can be there for those kids that they might not have those family members at home or they might not have that role model at home and to me it's those kids who stick out to me and that's one of the reasons why I stick with it."



Lou Ann Burnham poses for a yearbook photo in her early years of teaching.



Amanda Seymour poses for a photo

# Ballots to brunch

*Memorable moments from Nov. 5 Azle Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon*



Attorney Tyler Harden, alongside chamber director Jennifer Herrington and assistant Jessica McKinney, dressed to impress on Election Day with a "Napoleon Dynamite" wig and "Vote for Pedro" T-shirt.



Jayden Tanner of Caitlyn's Catering was introduced by Parker County Precinct 1 Commissioner George Conley to deliver the Pledge of Allegiance at a Nov. 5 Azle Area Chamber of Commerce luncheon.

**SPRINGTOWN ELEMENTARY PTA HOSTS: FOOD DRIVE**

**NOV 4-21**

We are partnering with neighbors to Neighbors Food Pantry to help them stock up for the holiday season. Grades are competing against each other to win a grade wide stuffy sleepover and pajama day!

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# Azle beautification board meets, sets guidelines

**ZACH FREEMAN**

**AZLE** — After being codified by city ordinance in March, Azle's beautification board met for the first time last Thursday, Nov. 7, with a goal of making the "dark spaces lighter and the drab things prettier."

Five of the board's seven members were able to meet in order to lay the groundwork for the body's direction going forward, establish the beautification board's vision and workshop initial projects. Key points included the importance of native plants, volunteer engagement and maintaining city property. Specific projects discussed

were creating flower beds, painting murals and improving natural landscaping. The board emphasized prioritizing tasks and starting with small, impactful projects. They also discussed the prospect of applying for potential future grants.

The board elected Azle Mayor Alan Brundrett as chair and member Shadi Sutton as vice chair. Meetings will be held at City Hall the second Thursday of each month with the next starting Jan. 9, 2025, at 6 p.m. The board members agreed to focus on practical, visible improvements to enhance the city's aesthetic appeal.



Tom Muir, city manager and board liaison, addresses beautification board members during their first meeting.



Beautification board member Tiffany Nelson takes an oath and is sworn in by city secretary Yael Hoffman Nov. 7.

"I envision creating volunteer groups to do cleanups or projects," Brundrett said.

The mayor proposed that one of the group's first projects could focus on creating nature-inspired flowerbeds at the intersection of Boyd and Northwest Parkway.

Mayor Pro Tem Randa Goode suggested fixing the uneven bricks on the "pork chop island" just past the bridge on Stewart Street.

"It's just these little things that drive me nuts every single day," Goode said. "They look out of place and they look messy, but then when you fix it, people aren't really going to focus on it. They're just going to see the other things the city has to offer."

Members also suggested the board facilitate and motivate local businesses to improve and clean up storefronts and their parking lots with help from volunteers. The board's liaison, Tom Muir, will advise members on a case-by-case basis. One of biggest obstacles members may face is the issue of doing work on TxDOT-owned roads, rights-of-way and medians.

The board's youngest member, Azle High School senior Aspen Castaneda, suggested using volunteers from the school's art and career and technical education departments, like welding, in order to complete future projects. Castaneda is the board's

one required AHS member. Castaneda plays a role in environmental groups at the school and is responsible for the school's nature trail where she has made advocating for native plants a priority.

"I was a little nervous, but I think it's going to be a lot of fun, and I think I can do a lot of good work," Castaneda. "I think having a younger perspective will definitely help the board cater to everybody in the community, not necessarily just an older age group, but maybe even the younger age group will be impacted in a positive way by this board. We want to get more people in the community involved and I think having younger

people involved will be really nice, and I'm a good way to outreach to them."

Board members decided to skip a December meeting due to the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season and will return to discuss the implementation of their first projects in January.

**BEAUTIFICATION BOARD MEMBERS INCLUDE:**

- Place 1 — Shadi Sutton
- Place 2 — Amy Estes
- Place 3 — Tiffany Nelson
- Place 4 — Randa Goode
- Place 5 — Aspen Castaneda
- Place 6 — Alan Brundrett
- Place 7 — Ryan Nelson

# Waterfowl hunters can prevent invasive species spread

**STAFF REPORT**

In a press release, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department urged hunters to take responsible action in protecting waterfowl habitats and local lakes from the spread of aquatic invasive species like giant salvinia and zebra mussels.

The TPWD encourages hunters to make a difference by simply taking a few minutes to clean, drain and dry their boats and equipment, including decoys and other hunting gear, before traveling from lake to lake. These steps help keep these species from establishing new homes.

Aquatic invasive plants can easily become entangled or trapped on boats and boat trailers and moved to other lakes. Hunters should also make sure they aren't inadvertently carrying invasive species on other equipment like waders, decoys, decoy

bags and marsh sleds by cleaning, draining and drying this equipment as well. A video to help hunters learn how to properly clean, drain and dry their gear can be found on the TPWD YouTube Channel.

Giant salvinia, one of the most problematic aquatic invasive plants in Texas, can double in size and acreage in less than a week, quickly becoming a problem and impeding access for boats. Just a small fragment of giant salvinia or other aquatic invasive plants can cause an infestation in a new lake, making it critical for all boaters to clean, drain and dry their boats and gear.

"Giant salvinia is often thought of as a plant that blocks recreational access for anglers and boaters, but it can cause serious problems for waterfowl hunters too," said John Findeisen, TPWD

aquatic habitat enhancement team lead. "Not only does it form thick mats that block hunters' access to prime waterfowl hunting areas, but it can also outgrow and replace the native plants that waterfowl rely on for food and habitat."

Giant salvinia is currently present on 25 East Texas lakes and numerous rivers, creeks and marshes between Houston and Beaumont.

Other major invasive species threats in Texas include zebra and quagga mussels. Currently, zebra mussels are found in 37 Texas lakes across seven river basins as well as in river reaches downstream of infested lakes.

These invaders can harm aquatic life, litter shorelines with sharp shells, damage boats, clog water intakes and cause costly damage to water supply and control infrastructure. Invasive mus-

sels attached to plants or boats can travel to new lakes, and boats, decoys and other equipment can transport the microscopic larvae of invasive mussels in residual water.

"Waterfowl hunters can help keep invasive mussels and aquatic plants from being moved and harming more lakes by taking a few minutes to remove plants and debris from boats, along with draining water before leaving the lake and allowing everything to dry completely afterward before traveling to a new location," TPWD Senior Scientist for Aquatic Invasive Species Monica McGarrity said. "Taking just a few minutes for these simple steps can help prevent impacts on ecosystems, infrastructure and recreation, and make a huge difference in our efforts to protect and preserve Texas lakes for current and future

generations."

During a presentation at a recent Azle City Council meeting, Rick White, public services director, said that concerning numbers of zebra mussels have not been detected in Eagle Mountain Lake in a long time. Knocking on wood, White emphasized that close monitoring and responsible stewardship of the lake are critical in preventing this problem from re-occurring.

On top of the harm invasive species cause for the ecosystem, water infrastructure and recreational experience at lakes, the transport of these organisms can result in legal trouble for boaters.

Transporting prohibited aquatic invasive species in Texas is illegal and punishable with a fine of up to \$500 per violation. It's also the law that boaters must drain all water from their boat and onboard receptacles, includ-

ing bait buckets, before leaving or approaching a body of fresh water. They must also remove all invasive plants from the boat, trailer and tow vehicle before leaving a lake.

TPWD and partners monitor for invasive species in Texas lakes, but anyone who finds them in lakes where they haven't been reported before — or who spots them on boats, trailers or equipment being moved — can help identify and prevent new introductions by reporting the sighting to TPWD immediately at 512-389-4848 or by emailing photos and location information for new invasions to aquaticinvasives@tpwd.texas.gov.

To learn more about giant salvinia, zebra mussels and other invasive species in Texas, visit [tpwd.texas.gov/StopInvasives](http://tpwd.texas.gov/StopInvasives).

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# Springtown disabled vet gifted vehicle

**JOLEE SKINNER**  
jolee@tricountyreporter.com

SPRINGTOWN — On Nov. 11, disabled Marine Corps veteran Adam Mayo was given keys to a donated vehicle in Denton from the all-veteran group parachute jump team.

The vehicle was donated to Mayo and his family through the Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowland Freedom Mobility Foundation, Caliber Collision and Mobility Works. The 2021 Chevrolet Tahoe was given to the Freedom Mobility Foundation by donors Matt and Jean Tuggey. Technicians from Caliber Collision's location in Colleyville decided to volunteer their time to refurbish the vehicle. Mobility Works, with funding from the Freedom Mobility Foundation, provided necessary modifications for Mayo to transfer from his wheelchair into an articulating driver's seat.

The vehicle presentation to Mayo kicked off the Lockheed Martin Armed Forces Bowland Freedom Mobility Foundation Golf Tournament. Caliber Collision and its partners have donated almost 600 vehicles to individuals in need of transportation, primarily to active-duty military, veterans and their families for the past 12 years.

Reliable transportation is crucial for disabled veterans.

## Veteran talks challenges and hopes for the future

Mayo's current vehicle has spent three months in the shop this year alone. Mayo said this donation is crucial in getting to places.

"It means I won't be stuck at home and going crazy anymore," Mayo said. "It really is a wonderful thing, and I'm very appreciative."

Mayo joined the Marine Corps in 2005 driven by a mixture of patriotism and limited options.

"I'm from Springtown, that's where I grew up and lived my whole life," Mayo said. "And college wasn't an opportunity for me at the time. I had several jobs after high school, but they weren't getting me anywhere. I just needed to do something."

Then Mayo went to San Diego, California for three months of basic training which he admitted was not for the faint of heart.

"It was tough," Mayo said. "It was really the first time being away from home but then also just the physical aspect of it that I wasn't used to."

But Mayo embraced the challenge and acknowledged that the Marine Corps breaks you down and builds you back up.

During his service, Mayo

went to Iraq in 2007 and Afghanistan in 2009. Though he prefers to keep the details private, he describes his overseas experience as both life-changing and difficult. In 2012, during a training deployment in Thailand, Mayo suffered a spinal cord injury which left him paralyzed.

Returning home, he faced not only his recovery but also the challenge of supporting a family.

"My wife took care of everything," Mayo said. "When I got out of the hospital, it was the same weekend my second kid was born. My wife had a 1-year-old, a newborn and a freshly paralyzed husband to take care of. It was tough. I can't imagine how tough it was on her."

With support from his family and his small-town community, he found strength and stability. Seven years after his injury, he eventually went to college and earned his degree from Texas Christian University in 2019. He is now considering a career in law, hoping to become an adoption lawyer after experiencing the adoption of his youngest daughter.

Reflecting on the support from organizations like the Freedom Mobility



PHOTO COURTESY RICK IRVING

Marine Corps veteran Adam Mayo pictured next to his wife, Jasmine Mayo, and their three children along with the parachute team after receiving the keys to his new car.

Foundation, Mayo shares the impact of this donation.

"Sometimes you get faced with situations and it feels like nobody's out there to help," Mayo said. "But then you find good people and good companies. It makes

you feel a little hopeful and not so alone."

In his down time, Mayo also volunteers his time to organizations like BrothersKeeper. His advice to veterans out there is to not be afraid to take the next step of asking

for help. "There's always somebody out there that's willing to help and wants to help," Mayo said. "Sometimes you just have to take the first step and ask."

## Staging the show

# AHS students prepare for 'Mary Poppins'

**LUKE PETERSEN**  
Special to the Tri-County Reporter

Behind the bright stage lights, lighting-fast quick changes and impressive dance numbers, every musical cast and crew puts months and months into its creation, and Azle High School Theatre's production of "Mary Poppins" is no exception.

Premiering Nov. 21 and

closing Nov. 24, the week-day shows start at 7 p.m. and the weekend shows start at 2 p.m., where students will be able to finally show off the production they've been working on since August.

"We work with such brilliant people who care so much and give so much of themselves to create something special and beautiful for others," senior Lyla Castro said. "I couldn't be

more grateful to be part of something much bigger than me."

Castro was cast as the beloved nanny Mary Poppins and will star alongside junior T.J. Bradford, who is playing her friend Bert.

"It's been really interesting to put myself into his shoes," Bradford said. "There's so many different emotions that Bert is going through between his interest in Mary and his own personal dilemmas."

Directed by theater teacher Rebecca Crabtree, who graduated from Azle in 2018 and was involved with the theater program, the show follows last year's production of "Alice in Wonderland."

"After going to Wonderland last year, I knew I wanted to do a show set in reality," Crabtree said. "Set in our world, but I still wanted to have some sort of magical element."

Crabtree said anyone who liked the movie adaptation will hopefully find some nostalgia in the musical.

"This version is slightly different, but I hope they will still find all their favorite memories," Crabtree said. "All the parts that they're expecting will still be there, but there will also be some new elements and some new plot lines that they aren't familiar with."

And while the actors and actresses deliver a story for all to see, behind the curtains several crews and sophomore stage manager Nick Allen will be orchestrating the technical aspects of the show such as the props, set, costumes, hair, sound and makeup.

"I'm very excited for how it's going to look when it's all done," Allen said. "The audience should definitely expect to see a good show because I know all of the kids and Crabtree have put in a ton of effort and work for this and we're all very proud of it."

With the show opening Thursday, the cast and crew are about to enter "Tech Week" where they will work extra hard to finalize every little detail before the curtain



LUKE PETERSEN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Nick Allen lines up set pieces.

opens. "I hope that they can have the confidence and trust in each other that they will get the job done," Crabtree said. "They just need to believe in themselves and trust that they're going to do it." Tickets for all performanc-

es of "Mary Poppins" are \$10 for students and senior citizens and \$12 for general admission. Follow the QR code or go to <https://azle-high-school-drama-boosters.square.site/current-event> to purchase your tickets today.



LUKE PETERSEN | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

Lyla Castro sings a number with Choral Director Brent McCartney on piano.

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# BRAVE

FROM PAGE A1

profit which supports families who have children with cancer.

The event was held at Hilltop Family Church in Springtown. Silver Dollar Classics Car Club President Gary Demming says the event makes the club feel proud to be supporting a good cause.

"It makes it all feel great," Demming said. "We are so proud of it. Lots and lots of work for a very good cause."

Vehicles from the 1920s through the 1990s were on full display to be judged for the class awards. One of the

cars on display was a 1967 Chevrolet Chevelle SS 396 owned by Will Cicalla. Cicalla won the '60s class award for his 67' Chevelle. Cicalla has had the car for eight years and has wanted it since his childhood.

"This was something I wanted as a child," Cicalla said. "I had an opportunity to buy this almost eight years ago and it'll be one that I never get rid of."

Cicalla also said he only comes to car shows that are a fundraising opportunity and loves to see others' vintage cars.

"It's the only car shows I go to, anything for the kids," Cicalla said. "This is what

we live for. You know, sharing the stories, how they got there and where they're going, hearing things like that just resonate with the American dream."

The car show also honored Jonas Badillo who tragically passed away of cancer. Badillo's mother, Jessica Gutierrez, said it was an honor for everyone to come out and support this cause.

"It's an honor that people would come together to support a cause like this," Gutierrez said. "And it just feels good to know that people come out to support and it gets us all together."



**JOLEE SKINNER** | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

A 1967 Chevrolet Chevelle SS 396 owned by Will Cicalla won the '60s class award.



Two boys pick out toy cars that model the actual vintage cars featured at the show.



A 1955 Ford Crown Victoria featured at the car show.



Other vintage cars featured at the second annual Lincoln the Brave car show.



Other vintage cars featured at the second annual Lincoln the Brave car show.



The band Nightlife performs at the car show.



A tray of food placed outside the 1955 Ford Crown Victoria set back in the '60s.

**JIM STEVENS**  
PHOTOGRAPHY

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# PARADE

FROM PAGE A1

year's event and hope it will only continue to grow."

After the parade concluded, citizens gathered under the tabernacle in the square. Springtown citizens and veterans heard from Mayor Greg Hood and First Baptist Church associate pastor John Miller.

Pastor Miller gave a speech as to the history of Veteran's Day and the significance.

"The United States Congress officially recognized the end of World War I when it passed the concurrent resolution on June 4, 1926," Miller said. "The resolution states, whereas the 11 of November 1918 marked the cessation of the most destructive, sanguinary and far-reaching war in human history and the resumption of the people of the United States of peaceful relations with other nations, which we hope may never again be severed. Later that year, President Eisenhower issued the first Veterans Day proclamation. Veterans Day National cem-

etry is held each year on November 11 at Arlington National Cemetery."

Miller explained how Memorial Day is to honor those who died in the service, but Veteran's Day honors all veterans.

"Veterans Day is a day for the rest of us," Miller said. "Those who lived through the wars, those who served, those who gave their time, that we all might have life and liberty. That our children and grandchildren might know what we knew when we were their age. That we can be free and the grand old flag still flies, representing freedom and liberty around the world. And because it does, untold millions want to come here to live each and every day."

Miller went on to thank the veterans in the audience and to those not present.

"Thank you to those who have joined us in this ceremony today," Miller said. "And to the men and women who have served and are serving, and those who will serve in the future, we remain grateful for your sacrifice and may God bless you."



Second and fourth grade choir members from Reno Elementary sing the national anthem at the parade.

JOLEE SKINNER | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER



Cowboys and cowgirls rode their horses in the parade and dressed them in red, white and blue.



The Parker County Young Marines performed the color guard in the tabernacle.



First Baptist Church associate pastor John Miller gives a speech about the significance of Veteran's Day.



A local Springtown citizen decked out his car for the Veteran's Day parade.

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SPORTS  
**Roundup**

## Lady Hornets enjoy best season in more than quarter century

*Lady Pines ousted by nemesis*

**RICK MAUCH**  
*Special to the Tri-County Reporter*

No member of the Azle Lady Hornets volleyball team (28-14) was even born the last time the program won an Area (second round) playoff match. In fact, this century wasn't even born.

That can no longer be said, however. The Lady Hornets (28-14) defeated Mansfield Timberview (12-24) 3-1 in their area match of the Class 3A Division II playoffs Thursday, Nov. 7 at Birdville's W.G. Thomas Coliseum.

It came on the heels of their 3-1 bidistrict victory against Grapevine (12-24) Nov. 5 at Keller Timber Creek High School.

The Lady Hornets continued their turnaround under coach Kenley Buckholt. They were 18-28 last season, though they did advance to the second round of the playoffs.

"I am so very proud of my girls. We are playing some of the best volleyball at the right time," Buckholt said. "They have so much fight and heart in them. It's been really

special to see them shine and get this recognition that they have worked so hard for."

This is Azle's fifth straight season to reach the playoffs. They were playing Lubbock Cooper (30-13) in the regional semifinals at press time in Wichita Falls. The winner will face the survivor between Argyle (37-5, No. 2 in the state) and Abilene Wylie (22-15).

**Leaders vs. Grapevine**

- Kills: Jacqui McClain 23, Elizabeth Kate Lund 12
- Aces: Heather Lockridge 2
- Blocks: Kami Swain 3, Lund 3, McClain 2, Destiny Brune 2
- Digs: Lockridge 25, McClain 14, Paisley Jeter 10
- Assists: Miley Massey 39
- Receptions: Lockridge 22, McClain 20, Jeter 12, Lund 11

**Leaders vs. Timberview**

- Kills: McClain 17, Brune 10, Lund 9
- Aces: Lund 3, Massey 2, Macie Baker 2
- Digs: Lockridge 34, McClain 24, Massey 17, Jeter 12

PLEASE SEE **ROUNDUP** | B2

## ACS volleyball wins Area championship



**CHASITY VURICH**  
*sports@tricityreporter.com*

In an electrifying season that has captured the hearts of its community, Azle Christian School's volleyball team has emerged as Area champions, a title earned through hard work, dedication and the leadership of coach Khloe Wilson. Since stepping into her role, Wilson has brought not only skill but a focus on character, faith and unity to the team. Her approach has transformed a group of high school athletes into a tightly knit family whose values off the court

*Faith, team unity, coach's leadership contribute to winning season*

mirror their achievements on it.

For Wilson, the key to the team's success goes beyond training drills or play strategies; it lies in building strong relationships. "Building relationships is key," she says, reflecting on the importance of camaraderie within the team. Drawing from her own experiences as a player, Wilson prioritizes cultivating an environment where her athletes feel supported both

as individuals and as part of a greater whole.

Every day before practice, Wilson and her players gather for devotional time, sharing stories, struggles and hopes. "Devotional is a great way to build closer relationships on the team," Wilson explains. This practice fosters an atmosphere of trust and unity, helping the players understand each other on a person-

PLEASE SEE **ACS** | B4



## Azle Lady Hornets win against Abilene Cooper

**CHASITY VURICH** | TRI-COUNTY REPORTER

The Azle Lady Hornets varsity basketball team defeated Abilene Cooper 37-25 in a nonconference game at home Friday, Nov. 8. Abbey Natusch makes a free throw for her team for an extra point.

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# Azle Hornets vs. Saginaw



Azle, the fourth-place finisher in district, will play at District 4-5A Division I champion Saginaw (10-0) at 7 p.m. Friday, Nov. 15.

# Football Contest

## WEEK 11

In the final week of the Football Contest, The Tri-County Reporter congratulates Wade Daniels for taking first place and \$20 by predicting the outcome of 12 of 16 games. A tie for second place resulted between David Shaffer and Bobby Boyd, who both guessed 11 of 16 games. The tiebreaker game was Philadelphia at Dallas, a game that produced 40 points, making Shaffer, who guessed 45 points, the second-place winner of \$10. Third place and \$5 went to Boyd, who guessed 48 points for the tiebreaker game.

The Tri-County Reporter incorrectly identified contestant Anna Boyd as Bobby Boyd's wife; she is actually his daughter-in-law. The Reporter regrets the error.

Thank you all for playing and making it so much fun!

# Azle vs. Saginaw



DATE	TIME	LOCATION	OPPONENT	SCORE
Aug 22	7:00 PM	Frisco Wakeland	Hornet Stadium	
Aug 30	7:00 PM	Abilene Cooper	Shotwell Stadium	W 41-34
Sep 6	7:00 PM	Weatherford	Hornet Stadium	W 51-28
Sep 20	7:00 PM	Denton High	Hornet Stadium	W 52-14
Sep 27	7:00 PM	Brewer	Brewer HS	W 42-21
Oct 4	7:00 PM	Birdville	Hornet Stadium	W 48-43
Oct 11	7:00 PM	Keller Fossil Ridge	Keller HS	W 54-43
Oct 18	7:00 PM	Denton Ryan	Hornet Stadium	L 62-26
Oct 25	7:00 PM	Granbury	Granbury HS	W 28-14
Nov 1	7:00 PM	Aledo	Hornet Stadium	L 77-14
Nov 8	7:00 PM	Birdville Ath. Complex	Richland	L 58-28

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# Coach Clayton Sanders

## A devoted mentor with a winning vision for Azle Christian School's football program

**CHASITY VURICH**  
sports@tricountyreporter.com

For four years, Coach Clayton Sanders has led Azle Christian School's football program with a unique blend of competitive spirit, faith and dedication. Beginning his tenure as the defensive coordinator, he soon transitioned to the role of athletic director and head football coach, a position he's held for the past three years. Under his guidance, the program has flourished, building a reputation for excellence on and off the field. But for Sanders, coaching goes far beyond wins and losses — it's a calling.

Growing up in Texas, where football is a revered sport, Sanders developed an early passion for the game. His older brother, Brandon, introduced him to football in their front yard, sparking a lifelong interest that would shape his career. As he attended his brother's high school games, Sanders fell in love with the atmosphere and competitive spirit of football. By the time he reached high school, he



COURTESY PHOTO

**For Coach Clayton Sanders, coaching goes far beyond wins and losses — it's a calling.**

knew he wanted to be a football coach.

One of the most significant influences on Sanders' coaching journey was his high school offensive coach, Gary Rushing. Rushing's unwavering support during a challenging period in Sanders' life left a lasting impact. Rushing's ability to motivate and believe in Sanders even when others had given up on him inspired Sanders to pur-

sue coaching as a way to give back. "I wanted to be like that and give back, like he has, and continues to do," Sanders reflects.

Sanders' coaching philosophy has evolved significantly over the years. Initially, he focused solely on winning, believing success on the scoreboard was all that mattered. But through experience and personal growth, he realized that true success in coaching comes from a deeper purpose. "Without God placed as the priority and in the center, failure and the fall is inevitable," he explains. Now, his primary mission is to help his players grow into strong, God-centered young men. "Our goals are what we want to accomplish, and our purpose is what we are meant to accomplish," he says, emphasizing the difference between the two paths.

One of the biggest challenges Sanders faces at Azle Christian School is the small size of the student body. With only about 20 male athletes, many players must learn multiple positions, a

necessity when injuries arise. But Sanders views this as an opportunity for his players to develop resilience and adaptability. On the other hand, he counts the ability to openly worship as one of the greatest rewards of working at Azle Christian. Witnessing his players support each other spiritually in chapel is a source of pride and joy for Sanders, underscoring the school's commitment to integrating faith with academics and athletics.

A particularly memorable moment for Sanders came when he helped a former student from another school turn his life around. The young man, whose family faced significant challenges, had dropped out of public school and seemed destined for a troubled future. But after reaching out to Sanders, he expressed a deep desire to graduate. Moved by the conversation, Sanders turned to the school's Head of School April Geeslin, and Lead Pastor Chad Geeslin, who offered the student a second chance at ACS. With support from the school community, the young man not only graduated but also thrived, becoming an All-District athlete and finding faith along the way. "It was just an amazing witness to redemption and all his hard work," Sanders recalls.

Teamwork and discipline are cornerstones of Sanders' approach to coaching. Early-morning weightlifting sessions, team gatherings, and shared consequences foster a strong sense of unity among his players. When the going gets tough, Sanders draws on his faith to keep the team motivated. He reminds them to separate their goals from their purpose, a message he hopes resonates beyond the field.

Sanders believes one of the most important qualities a student-athlete can develop is a relentless desire to compete, combined with a "never give up" attitude. At ACS, these traits are encouraged through the program's motto, "G.U.T.S.," which stands for God first, unity, trustworthiness and strength. Sanders describes how the motto reflects the courage needed not only to play football but also to stand as a "soldier for Jesus Christ." In a school where faith is integral to daily life, ACS's football program offers an experience distinct from the large public schools in the area.

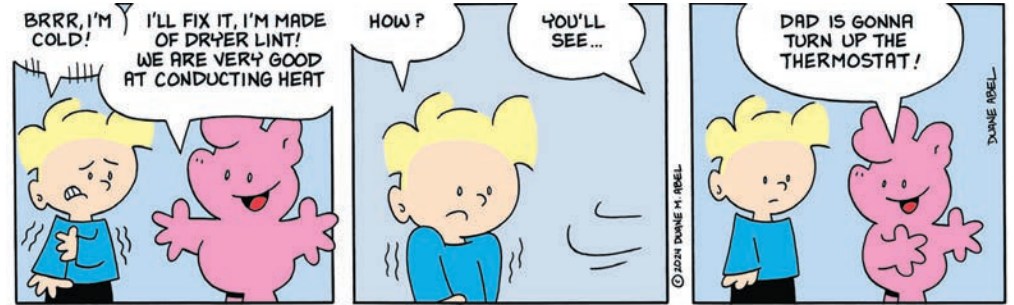
Balancing his roles as a mentor, coach and family man has been challenging for Sanders, especially when his children were young. Now that his children are grown, he finds it a bit easier to manage his responsibili-

ties. However, his success in maintaining this balance is largely due to the support of his wife, Stacy. "She does a fantastic job at keeping me centered," he says, grateful for her steady presence. Stacy's encouragement, particularly after difficult games or practices, is invaluable to him. "God certainly blessed me with the perfect woman for me," he adds.

Looking ahead, Sanders has ambitious goals for the ACS football program. Winning a TAPPS State Championship is at the top of the list, but he also hopes to see the school's athletic program grow. With improved facilities and a top-notch weight room, Sanders believes the school is poised for further development, and he is eager to see more male students get involved in athletics. Yet, even as he sets these goals, he remains focused on his purpose — to mold young men who embody faith and integrity, both on and off the field.

For coach Clayton Sanders, football is a means to make a lasting difference in his players' lives, instilling values that will serve them long after the final whistle. With unwavering dedication to his players' growth and a clear sense of purpose, Sanders is building a legacy of faith, resilience and community at Azle Christian School.

### ZED by Duane Abel



## Sudoku

NOVEMBER 14, 2024

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

Level: Advanced

### ACS

FROM PAGE B1

al level. Team members have grown closer by centering themselves around faith, offering a support system that reaches beyond the court.

One of Wilson's hallmarks as a coach is her ability to balance fun with focus. Known for her lively, positive energy, she ensures that practices remain engaging and enjoyable. "We know when it's time to get serious," Wilson says. "There's a fine balance between having both fun and seriousness on the court." She's worked hard to build a culture that allows her players to experience joy in the game while also emphasizing that there's a time to shift gears and focus on the task at hand.

This balance has paid off. Wilson has crafted a team that knows how to stay motivated, even in challenging moments, by focusing on both its goals and players' gratitude for being able to play the sport they love.

For Wilson, volleyball is as much a mental game as it is a physical one. She consistently emphasizes the importance of mindset, reminding players that "if your head isn't in the right mindset, then there's really no point in even stepping out on that court." Her belief in mental preparation led her to establish daily rituals of prayer and reflection before both practices and games, centering the team and helping each player approach the game with a clear mind and determined heart.

Confidence is another essential component of Wilson's philosophy. "If someone goes in with the thought of the chance that they will lose, then the probability of losing that game is so much greater," she states. Wilson often draws on a verse from Romans 12: "We all have certain jobs to form one body in Christ." She uses this passage to remind players that each one of them has a unique and essential role on the court. This sense of shared purpose reinforces the team's confidence, as each player understands

their specific contribution to the whole.

On a tactical level, Wilson places particular emphasis on serving, a fundamental skill that can make or break a game. "If you step up to the line and miss your serve, the other team literally had to do absolutely nothing to gain a point," she says. Azle Christian School boasts a 93% serving rate this season, a statistic Wilson is immensely proud of and one that reflects the attention and precision the team brings to this critical element of the game.

In practices, Wilson makes sure every player understands the importance of serving as both a personal responsibility and a team advantage. Her dedication to this skill has paid dividends, with players serving with accuracy and consistency that has helped them clinch tight matches and earn the championship title.

As the volleyball team advanced through the season, its success brought an unexpected challenge: finding enough seats for all its fans. The surge in support required the school to add standing chairs to their gym to accommodate the growing number of community members eager to cheer on the team. "I think the girls seeing that happening really motivates them more," Wilson says. For the players, seeing their families, friends and fellow students fill the stands has been an inspiring experience, creating a thrilling home-court atmosphere and underscoring the pride the community feels in their achievements.

This level of support is something Wilson deeply values. "They see how many people come to watch them play and support them, and they get very excited about it," she says, adding that the excitement fuels the team's drive to succeed. For Wilson and the players, each victory feels shared, with the community standing behind them as they strive for greatness.

While the team has achieved tremendous success this season, Wilson says she is no stranger to the lessons of defeat. Her approach to

setbacks is pragmatic and focused on effort. "I don't mind losing," Wilson says, surprising some who might expect a coach to demand perfection. "To me, it's all about how you lose. If you go out there and just lay down and let the other team sweep you off the court without any effort, that's when I'm upset." Her players know as long as they give their all, their coach will be proud, regardless of the scoreboard.

This attitude has instilled resilience in the team, teaching players the value of perseverance and grit. The players understand that while wins are the ultimate goal, the journey and the effort put forth in each game are just as important. This balanced approach not only fosters growth on the court but prepares these young athletes for challenges they may face in life.

Reflecting on her own days as an ACS athlete, Wilson dreams of expanding the school's athletic program to new heights. "When I was a player here, the athletic program wasn't at the stature it is now," she recalls. Since joining the program as a coach in 2018, Wilson has steadily worked toward making the ACS sports teams a force to be reckoned with.

In the future, Wilson hopes the school's athletic program will continue to grow, attracting students who want both an excellent education and the opportunity to be part of an outstanding sports program. "I want people to think, 'Yes, I'd love to go to Azle Christian School — and their athletic program is amazing too!'" Wilson says.

For now, though, she's savoring the incredible season her team has had and the relationships they've built along the way. Azle Christian School's volleyball team may have won the Area championship, but for Wilson and her players, the true victory lies in the unity, faith and resilience they've discovered together. The season's triumphs are just the beginning, a foundation for a legacy of excellence, faith and teamwork that will surely continue to grow in the years to come.

## Solution to last week's puzzle

NOVEMBER 7, 2024

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

### WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to Valentine's Day.

S L O E V

Five empty boxes for the word.

Answer: Loves

### CRYPTO FUN

- Solve the code to discover words related to hot breakfast. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 26 = E)
- A. 1 7 26 6 26 22  
Clue: Egg dish
  - B. 21 5 22 3 24 26 12  
Clue: Cooking room
  - C. 2 14 26 13 21 15 13 8 22  
Clue: Morning meal
  - D. 16 20 26 8 22 8  
Clue: Visitors

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# Lady Hornets are area champions

The Lady Hornets volleyball team (28-14) defeated Mansfield Timberview (12-24) 3-1 to clinch the area championship in the Class 3A Division II playoffs Thursday, Nov. 7 at Birdville's W.G. Thomas Coliseum. It's the first time the program has won an area (second round) playoff match in this century. The ladies were playing Lubbock Cooper (30-13) in the regional semifinals at press time in Wichita Falls. The winner will face the survivor between Argyle (37-5, No. 2 in the state) and Abilene Wylie (22-15). Congratulations, Lady Hornets!



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# Porcupines are district champs!

**Congratulations to the Springtown Porcupines varsity football team — 5-4A Division I District champions!** This is the first district championship for the Porcupines since 1998, making it an historical feat. They will face Castleberry, the fourth-place team from District 6-4A Division I in a bidistrict showdown Thursday, Nov. 14 at 7 p.m. at Bear Stadium at White Settlement Brewer High School. Go, Pines!



# Lady Pines: Bidistrict champs!

**Congratulations to the Springtown Lady Pines volleyball team for an outstanding season in which they won 29 matches, culminating in the bidistrict championship.** Although the ladies fell to Stephenville in the bid for area championship, they remain one of the top teams in Springtown history.



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**CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
**AZLE CHURCH of CHRIST**  
 336 NW Parkway  
 817-444-3268  
**BRIAR CHURCH of CHRIST**  
 109 W.N. Woody Rd.  
 (½ block west of FM 730 N. in Briar)  
 817-444-7102  
**MIDWAY CHURCH of CHRIST**  
 6400 Midway Rd. 817-221-2107  
**NEWSOME MOUND ROAD  
 CHURCH of CHRIST**  
 1460 Newsome Mound Rd.  
 817-677-3290  
**NORTHWEST  
 CHURCH of CHRIST**  
 6059 Azle Ave., Fort Worth  
 817-237-1205  
**POOLVILLE CHURCH of CHRIST**  
 West of FM 920 in Poolville  
 817-594-4182  
**SOUTHSIDE  
 CHURCH of CHRIST**  
 130 W. Bradshaw Lane, Springtown  
 817-221-2799  
**SPRINGTOWN  
 CHURCH of CHRIST**  
 Just west of Hwy. 51 North  
 817-523-4419  
**TRI-COUNTY  
 CHURCH of CHRIST**  
 525 Hwy. 199 W., Springtown  
 817-980-8156  
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**ABUNDANT LIFE  
 CHURCH of GOD**  
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 Springtown, 817-677-3208  
**LAKESIDE CHURCH of GOD  
 THE WORD@LAKESIDE**  
 9396 Confederate Park Rd.  
 (FM 1886) 817-237-5500  
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**AZLE CHRISTIAN**  
 117 Church St., Azle  
 817-444-3527  
**CENTRAL CHRISTIAN**  
 1602 S. Main St., Weatherford  
 817-594-3043  
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- PROVIDENCE REFORMED EPISCOPAL**  
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 817-596-7476  
**ST. ELISABETH EPISCOPAL**  
 5910 Black Oak Lane, River Oaks  
 817-739-0504  
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**CENTRAL FULL GOSPEL  
 FELLOWSHIP**  
 3009 Delaware Tr., Lake Worth  
 817-237-7919  
**GOSPEL GATHERING  
 FELLOWSHIP**  
 7315 Silver Creek Rd.,  
 Azle, TX 76020  
 832-289-8720  
**JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES**  
**KINGDOM HALL OF  
 JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES**  
 212 Pearson Lane, Azle  
 817-221-2242  
**LUTHERAN**  
**THE EDGE CHURCH - AZLE**  
 1313 SE Parkway, Azle  
 817-237-4822  
**HOPE LUTHERAN (ELCA)**  
 4795 Hwy. 199, Reno  
 817-221-HOPE  
**METHODIST**  
**BOYD UNITED METHODIST**  
 FM 730 North in Boyd  
 940-433-5334  
**FIRST METHODIST  
 CHURCH OF AZLE**  
 200 Church St., Azle  
 817-444-3323  
**LIGHTHOUSE FELLOWSHIP**  
 7200 Robertson Rd., Fort Worth  
 817-237-2758  
**SILVER CREEK  
 METHODIST CHURCH**  
 2200 Church Rd., Azle  
 817-444-1382  
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 (behind Poolville Post Office)  
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 JESUS CHRIST OF  
 LATTER-DAY SAINTS**  
**THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST  
 OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS**  
 1010 Timberoaks, Azle  
 817-237-5075  
**PENTECOSTAL**  
**GRACE CHAPEL UNITED PENTECOSTAL  
 CHURCH**  
 3508 Shawnee Trail, Lake Worth  
 817- 237-4844  
**PRESBYTERIAN**  
**GRACE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN**  
 606 Mockingbird Lane, Weatherford  
 817-594-2744  
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 CHURCH OF FORT WORTH**  
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 5315 Boat Club Road, Fort Worth  
 817-989-9800  
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**ARCHANGEL GABRIEL  
 ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH**  
 1157 S. E. Parkway (Jacksboro Highway), Azle  
 817-752-8255
- OTHER**  
**ALIENTO DE DIOS**  
 2233 E. Hwy 199, Springtown  
 817-521-4694  
**THE CHURCH IN PEASTER**  
 www.thechurchinpeaster.org  
 817-596-8805  
**CORNERSTONE  
 COMMUNITY CHURCH**  
 2233 Hwy 199 East, Springtown  
 817-221-LIFE (5433)  
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 817-599-7655  
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 2964 W. Hwy 114, Paradise  
 940-969-2427  
**HILLTOP FAMILY CHURCH**  
 1227 Old Cottondale Road,  
 Springtown, 817-220-7177  
**THE FELLOWSHIP  
 AT PLEASANT GROVE**  
 1064 CR4679, Boyd  
 940-999-8210  
**THE HOUSE OF PRAYER**  
 1356 Reno Rd., Springtown  
 817-221-2551  
**POWERHOUSE  
 OF PRAISE CHURCH**  
 1649 S.E. Parkway, Azle  
 817-319-7364  
**BRANDED CROSS  
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 3282 FM 2048, Boyd 76023  
 817-755-7021  
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 289-8720  
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 6409 FM 730 S., Azle  
 817-444-4311  
**LIGHTHOUSE HARBOR CHURCH**  
 1960 Long Circle, Pelican Bay  
 817-444-3547  
**THE LIVING WORD COUNTRY  
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 1240 E. Hwy 199, Springtown  
 817-913-2717  
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 817-444-1577  
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THE NEWS OF AZLE, SPRINGTOWN, AND SURROUNDING AREAS  
 www.tricityreporter.com





# THE TRI-COUNTY REPORTER CLASSIFIEDS

THURSDAY, November 14, 2024

## AD CLASSIFICATIONS

1 Air Condition/Heating	24 Electrician	46 Looking to Buy	69 Sand/Gravel
2 Antiques	25 Equipment & Tool Rental	47 Lost & Found	70 Septic Tanks
3 Appliances	26 Excavating	48 Maintenance/Repairs	71 Sewing/Alterations
4 Appliance Repair	27 Exterminating	49 Masonry/Stonework	72 Sewer Service
5 Arts/Crafts	28 Farm Equipment	50 Mobile Home Service	73 TV/Radio
6 Asphalt Paving	29 Fencing	51 Motorcycles	74 Tractor Service
7 Auctions	30 Firewood	52 Movers	75 Upholstery
8 Autos, Trucks	31 Free	53 Musical Instruments	76 Vacuum Cleaners
9 Auto Repair Service	32 For Sale	54 Music Lessons	77 Wanted
10 Backhoe Service	33 Furniture	55 Miscellaneous	78 Well Drilling
11 Boats, Motors	34 Garage & Estate Sales	56 Party Planning/Events	79 Welding
12 Bookkeeping	35 Garden/Mowing Svc	57 Pets/Livestock	80 Lots/Acreage
13 Business Opportunity	36 Hauling	58 Piano Service	81 Business & Commercial Property
14 Campers/Trailers	37 Hay	59 Pool Service	82 RV's for Rent
15 Carports/Patios	38 Health/Fitness	60 Professional Services	83 Houses for Sale
16 Equipment Repair	39 Help Wanted	61 Personal	84 Mobile Homes for Rent
17 Carpet Service	40 Home Improvement	62 Plumbing	85 Mobile Homes for Sale
18 Catering	41 House Leveling	63 Public Notice	86 Mobile Home/RV Lots
19 Cement Work	42 House Cleaning	64 Photography	87 Rent Furnished
20 Demolition	43 Hunting	65 Printing	88 Rent Unfurnished
21 Child Care	44 Janitorial Service	66 Roofing	89 Wanted to Rent
22 Cosmetics	45 Job Wanted	67 Recycling	
23 Computers/Services		68 Storage	

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### 068 Storage

INNERSPACE STORAGE. Hwy 199, Springtown. Now renting all unit sizes, 24-hour access. 682-842-1414.

### 009 Auto Repair Service

**The Transmission Shop**  
We do our own transmission rebuilding here in house, saving you money. Most others don't! Others buy from suppliers and auto part stores.  
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### 039 Help Wanted

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

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2 Mechanics needed and 2 Body Technicians Experience a must and tools a plus! Mechanics We work on all types of vehicles; we specialize in classics. From full restorations, modifications, rebuilds and upgrades, maintenance, and repairs but not limited to. Hours: Monday - Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm Occasional Saturday Body Shop Technicians Metal work, fabrications, welding, body working, sanding, grinding, and sand blasting. Hours: Monday - Friday 6:00am to 2:30pm Occasional Saturday Pay Negotiable Contact: Valarie @ 817-752-2165 or Come by: 408 Commerce St Azle, Tx 76020

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- Tile
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Allen Chesney Concrete  
All Types of Concrete Work  
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### 034 Garage & Estate Sales

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Estate Sale  
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Sunday 8am-1pm  
Something for everyone!!!

Garage-Yard Sale  
Friday-Saturday 15th-16th 8am-2pm  
4993 Veal Station Rd, Weatherford  
Tools-Tools-Tools  
Scrap metal, misc. household items.

Garage Sale  
4 Kona Dr., Azle - Nov. 15 & 16 - 9am-4pm, please no early birds.  
Double recliner sofa, dresser, Total Gym-Weights-Workout equipment, crafts, knick-knack's, Nerf guns, bicycle's, toys, tools, kitchen stuff, too much to list.

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### 020 Demolition

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We Create Vacancy

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- Removal
- Haul Off
- Mobile Homes
- Garages
- Barns
- Houses
- Bobcat Service
- Dirt/Gravel Spreading

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### 039 Help Wanted

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# CLASSIFIEDS

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# CLASSIFIEDS

**817-270-3340**  
SEE PAGE B6 for Deadlines

## TEXAS CROSSWORD

by Charley & Guy Orbison  
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**ACROSS**

1 in Lubbock: Texas \_\_\_\_\_ University

5 "March Madness" is a \_\_\_\_\_ tournament

6 TX Jim Reeves hit: "Welcome \_\_\_\_\_ World" (1964)

7 Harris of 2008 film "Appaloosa" with TX Renee Zellweger

8 \_\_\_\_\_ City, Texas

9 what hurricanes produce on the Texas coast

15 "it weighs \_\_\_\_\_" (heavy)

16 most fleecy

19 in Wood County on U.S. 69

21 Cowboys fly their \_\_\_\_\_ away games

22 Nicaragan rebels (1979-90)

27 worst cattle drive position

28 Bellville's county noisy sleeper

30 TX Jodey Arrington House committee: "\_\_\_\_\_ Means"

32 gym class abbr.

33 excitable

36 TX Zellweger has been dressed by \_\_\_\_\_ Cassini

37 miles \_\_\_\_\_ hour

38 every state except Alaska is \_\_\_\_\_ than Texas by area

39 those who served in the military

41 heap of something

**DOWN**

1 explosive material

2 \_\_\_\_\_friendly (not harmful to the environment)

3 Milam County seat

4 this man led the "Fredonian Rebellion," first attempt by Texans at independence (2 wds.)

8 this Thorpe helped the Rockets win a NBA title in 1994

9 big amusement park: "Six \_\_\_\_\_"

10 Beaumont univer.

11 TXism: "out \_\_\_\_\_ kilter" (broken)

42 titled women in the UK

45 rip apart

46 Texas creek: "Yo \_\_\_\_\_ Digo"

47 TX JoBeth Williams 1980 film: "\_\_\_\_\_ Crazy"

48 horse morsel

49 "humble" is this regarding Texans

52 high maintenance person

53 tree chopper

54 Texas singer Stuckey who sang "Sweet Thang"

12 1972 film about a Texas magistrate: "The Life and Times \_\_\_\_\_ Bean"

13 TXism: "gives up the ghost"

14 badger's den

15 TX George Strait 1982 hit: "\_\_\_\_\_ by Morning"

16 peel the skin off

17 payment for a graduate teaching assistant, e.g.

18 cartridges with a black powder for printing

20 not written

26 not wholesale

28 Gulf shrimp catcher (2 wds.)

31 bitter beers

34 Grand \_\_\_\_\_ Opry

35 dir. from Mineola to Pittsburg, TX

37 breathe hard

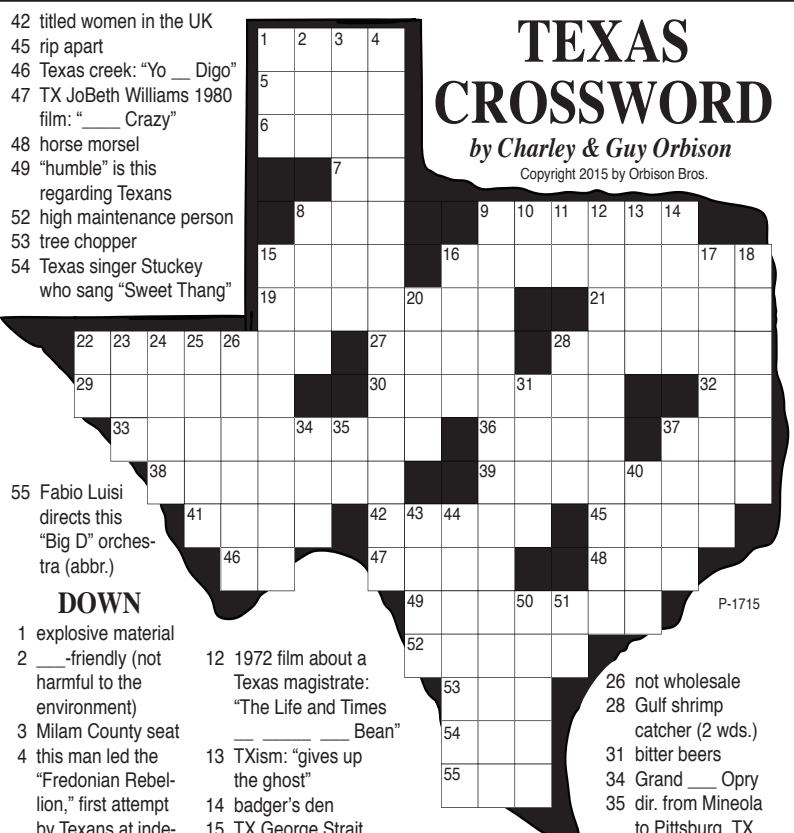
40 500 sheets of paper

43 South Padre Island acquisition (2 wds.)

44 TX Dennis Quaid 2005 film: "Yours, \_\_\_\_\_ Ours"

50 TX-born Robby film "\_\_\_\_\_ Billy Joe"


51 Yankee state (abbr.)



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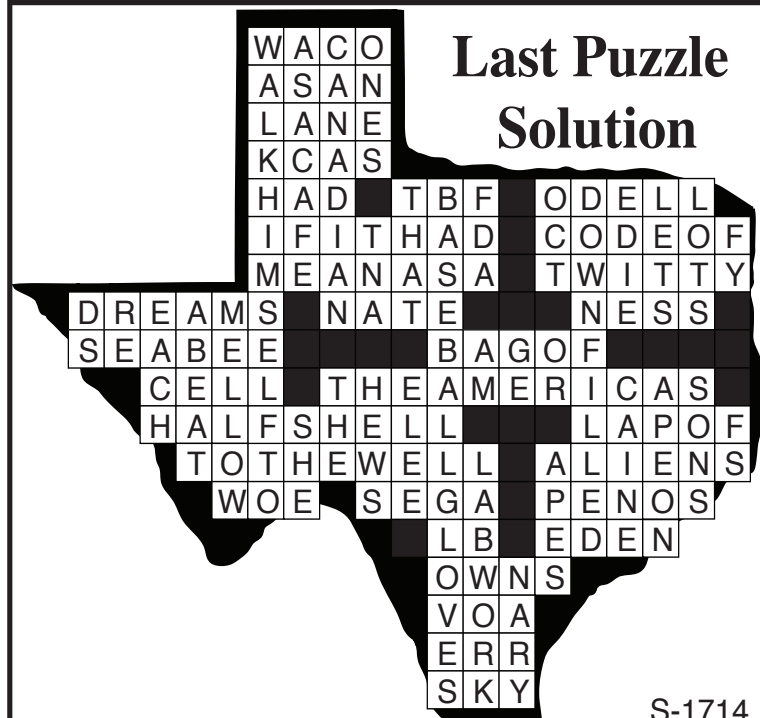
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# *Holiday* **GIFT GUIDE** *2024*

# Great gifts for film fans

## METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Individuals' hobbies can provide inspiration for gifts, particularly during the holiday season when shoppers have a lot of names on their lists.

Shoppers are bound to have a movie buff in their midst. These gift ideas can be fitting whether the recipient is a budding director, cinematographer, actor, or simply enjoys the magic of the movies.

## PERSONALIZED MOVIE MARQUIS POSTER

Who doesn't want to see their name in lights? While it may not be possible to have the local theater change their marquis, shoppers can simulate it with a customizable poster that puts their loved one's name front and center as part of the cast of a favorite film.

## GOURMET POPCORN COLLECTION

Film fans know that having the right food while watching a movie makes the experience that much better. Elevate the viewing experience with an array of specially curated gourmet popcorn flavors.

Don't forget to include reusable popcorn tubs or cups so the snacks can keep coming.

## COUCH (OR CHAIR) ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEM

These products help keep everything necessary for a movie-watching experience within reach. There are spots for remote controls, cupholders, places to stash a box of candy, and other dividers.

## RETRO MOVIE TAPE PHOTO

Search Etsy for sellers like TheOrigamiFox, who create personalized prints. Like the movie marquis, this print can include a stack of now defunct VHS tapes featuring the recipient's favorite movie titles.

## SUBSCRIPTION TO A STREAMING SERVICE

Movies have gone beyond the big screen. Some studios release their films for home viewing shortly after they've left theaters. An array of streaming service subscriptions means viewers never miss out on seeing their favorite films. Shoppers can pay for a one-year subscription to a streaming service or upgrade an existing subscription to a no-ads model.

## TICKET STUB SCRAPBOOK

Give movie buffs a place to store their much-loved movie stubs and additional memorabilia all in one place with the gift of a scrapbook.

## PORTABLE PROJECTOR

An easy-to-use and portable projector can plug into phones, laptops, tablets, or even traditional cable boxes to offer a big screen boost to at-home movie viewing.



An easy-to-use and portable projector can plug into phones, laptops, tablets, or even traditional cable boxes to offer a big screen boost to at-home movie viewing.

## BEHIND-THE-SCENES INFORMATION

Many books delve into topics that are bound to pique the interest of film fans.

These may include autobiographies from actors and directors, a look at how certain movies were made, trivia books, or photography books

that provide a behind-the-scenes look at what goes on when the camera isn't rolling. Movie fans will be applauding these gifts that indulge their love of film.

# Go 'mutts' for these pet gifts

## METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Pet parents try to ensure their companion animals never want for anything. People will go to great lengths to pamper their pets with the best care, food and accessories. According to the American Pet Products Association, consumers in the United States spent \$147 billion on pets in 2023. And it's not just the essentials that have people opening up their wallets for pets. A 2022 YouGov survey found that 57 percent of owners buy holiday gifts for their pets and 40 percent host birthday celebrations.

With the holiday season on the horizon, there's a good

chance that beloved pets are on gift lists this year, particularly for Gen Z pet owners. A study of 1,000 U.S. adults conducted by Talker Research for Newsweek found that Gen Z spends an average of \$148.50 on their pets each month, the highest of all surveyed. For those shopping for gifts their pets will enjoy, these options could have tails wagging.

## TREAT DISPENSER

It isn't possible to be home with their pets all of the time. A dispenser that can be programmed to offer treats at certain intervals or connected to an app that enables a person to release one at the push of a button can be a nice gift to surprise stay-at-home pets.

## PUZZLE TOY

Pets need to keep their brains working; otherwise, they may get bored and into trouble. A puzzle toy that has treats or kibble hidden behind panels helps pets remain mentally sharp.

## PET BOOTIES

When the weather gets chilly, walking dogs outdoors on the ice and snow can be painful on their paws. A pair of booties can protect the delicate pads of pets' feet from ice melt products, snow and sharp objects.

## NEW BED

Upgrade a pet's bed to something even more lush and comfortable. A fleece blanket and a dedicated pet

pillow can help pets feel even more pampered.

## SAFETY BELT

Guarantee that trips in the car to the dog park or other excursions are safer by gifting a safety pet harness that works like a seatbelt in a

vehicle.

## GROOMING PACKAGE

Everyone wins when a pet is washed, dried and primed to perfection. Professional groomers have the skills to tame excess fur and trim nails so pets smell wonderful

and remain comfortable.

## NEW TOYS

Whether a pet is a parakeet or poodle, gifts of new toys can be engaging for animals who have grown bored with their old ones.

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# Build your gift list for DIY enthusiasts

## METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Rising prices have pushed people to look for new ways to save money. The do-it-yourself approach to home repairs has long been seen

as a potential avenue to save money, and holiday shoppers can consider DIY when shopping for loved ones this year.

A recent survey by the remodeling company Allstar Home reported that 70

percent of Americans have recently engaged in DIY home improvement projects. Similarly, a new Ipsos poll conducted on behalf of the DIY Network found that 73 percent of Canadian home-

owners have done a renovation project themselves in the past. With so many homeowners tackling projects around the home on their own, DIY-related products may be just what's needed

to hammer down the perfect gift. The following are some potential home improvement presents for DIY enthusiasts.

- **Magnetic wristband:** Keeping items close at hand takes on new meaning when one utilizes a magnetic wristband. The BinyaTools Magnetic Wristband is just one of the versions of this handy tool that's ideal for wrangling screws, nails, washers, and any other ferrous items. It's also a great option for crafters and jewelry makers.

- **Painting essentials kit:** Painting is an easy and effective way to transform a room. For those DIYers who have yet to compile all of their painting gear, local home improvement retailers often package kits that include a dropcloth, assorted roller sizes, brushes, a paint tray, and even painter's tape to get started on projects.

- **Rolling work bench:** People serious about projects will need a place to store all the tools they have collected. A rolling work bench, such as the Gladiator nine-drawer work bench, has drawers to store tools and a wooden top on which smaller tasks can be tackled. Roll it where needed.

- **Hearing protection:** Drills, sanders and other power

tools can be noisy. DIYers will want to protect their hearing, and a set of workshop earmuffs can be a thoughtful gift. Some, like the 3M WorkTunes headphones, even come with Bluetooth technology to offer both hearing protection and the ability to listen to tunes while working.

- **Headlamp:** DIYers need both hands to tackle jobs effectively, which can make holding a flashlight to illuminate the area challenging. Hands-free lighting is possible with an LED headlamp. The light is easily focused where the user is looking.

- **Laser measuring tape:** A smart measuring tape utilizes a laser to increase measuring size, calculate distances and ensure that every home improvement project lines up.

- **Sawhorse:** DIYers working on large projects can benefit from an adjustable saw horse to support materials and ensure safer cuts. The ToughBuilt C700 is an option to consider since it has support pegs that fold out of the legs to allow for greater ease of use.

The list of gifts for DIYers is endless. Tools and additional gear can help people nail holiday shopping this year.



The do-it-yourself approach to home repairs has long been seen as a potential avenue to save money, and holiday shoppers can consider DIY when shopping for loved ones this year.

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# What to get the sports fanatic on your holiday shopping list

## METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Diehard sports fans are a passionate lot. That passion is something to keep in mind come the holiday season, when shoppers typically must find the right fit for everyone on their list. Such an undertaking is no small task, as veteran shoppers know that the right gift for one person on their list rarely aligns with the perfect fit for another loved one. But when it comes to finding gifts for sports fans, the options are endless.

## GEAR

Some sports fans are spectators, while others can't wait to compete. Some new gear can be just what fans in the latter group are hoping to find under the tree this holiday season. Avid golfers may love a new driver or golf bag, while loved ones who can't wait for softball season to start each spring may consider a new bat the best gift they receive this holiday season. Whatever sport sparks your favorite athlete's passion, there's sure to be some gear that can help them take their game to the next level.

## TICKETS

Perhaps nothing sparks sports fans' passion more strongly than seeing their favorite team in person,

and that's even more true in a post-pandemic sports landscape. Popular sports like football, baseball and basketball have traditionally sold lots of tickets, but even sports like college volleyball and Major League Soccer have set attendance records since fans were allowed to return to stadiums after the removal of pandemic-related restrictions. The demand for tickets to live sporting events has spiked as a result, and Team Marketing Report noted National Football League tickets increased by nearly 9 percent in 2023 and Major League Baseball tickets increased by 3.5 percent in that same year. Such increases have priced some fans out of the market, which is why tickets can make for such a great gift this holiday season. The gift of attending a game in person is something a loved one won't soon forget.

## APPAREL

Proud sports fans want to show their true colors, and nothing makes it easier to do so than team apparel. According to Statista, the global sports apparel market generated roughly \$213 billion USD in revenue in 2023. A jersey with the name and number of a loved one's favorite player can make for



Some new gear can be just what fans in the latter group are hoping to find under the tree this holiday season.

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the ultimate apparel gift, but don't overlook T-shirts, hats, outerwear, or other options this holiday season.

## TELEVISION

The popularity of watching sports is undeniable and the proof is in the financial pudding. For example, Statista

reports the annual value of the NFL's deal with ABC/ESPN/Disney to broadcast "Monday Night Football" was approximately \$2.7 billion in 2023. That figure underscores how much fans love watching their favorite teams, and they need somewhere to do so. There may be no quicker

route to a sports fan's heart than through a new television to make the viewing experience that much better. The prices on 4K UHD televisions have dropped considerably in recent years, so a new TV can make the perfect gift for the sports fan in your life. Split the cost with fellow loved

ones and then enjoy watching your favorite sports fan react upon seeing his or her new television under the tree.

These are just a few of the many gifts to consider for the diehard sports fan on your shopping list this holiday season.

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**METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION**

Gifts exchanged during the holiday season do not have to have deep meaning. Among friends and coworkers, a type of gift exchange called a white elephant can add some more lighthearted fun to an already festive season.

A white elephant gift exchange involves participants selecting humorous, quirky, unusual, or themed gifts to swap with others. The wrapped gifts will be placed in a central location with no information indicating what's within the wrapping, nor who brought the actual gift. The rules of exchange vary depending on who you ask, but can include drawing numbers to pick the order in which participants will select their gifts. Some play where the first person opens the gift and then subsequent participants can opt for a wrapped gift or "steal" from the previously opened options.

Organizing this gift exchange is relatively easy, but involves picking a person to act as an emcee of sorts. That person will need to handle the following tasks:

- Establish a spending limit for the white elephant gifts. Some white elephant exchanges also define which gifts are appropriate and which should be avoided.

- Select an exchange date and time. This will involve having someone host at their home, a place of business for a work exchange, or even meeting at a restaurant or another establishment for a fun evening out.

- Invite participants to the exchange by explaining the rules and the expected amount of the contribution.



Among friends and coworkers, a type of gift exchange called a white elephant can add some more lighthearted fun to an already festive season.

- Calculate the number of participants who have arrived and then print or write out number sheets that will be placed in a bowl. Verify this total matches the number of gifts to ensure that there will

be no missing ones. There is no need to worry if someone commits and then drops out afterwards, because only the number of participants actually there on the day of the exchange will be factored into

how many numbers will be used for choosing gifts.

- Plan a few ice breakers so that participants who may not know each other can become more comfortable before the fun begins, par-

ticularly if the white elephant exchange will include the stealing and swapping aspect for extra laughs.

A white elephant gift exchange can be an entertaining way to let off steam dur-

ing the holidays and share small gifts with friends or coworkers.

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## Thoughtful gifts for aging parents

**METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION**

According to The Wrap Up: Snappy's 2022 Holiday Gift Report, the majority of Americans (64.2 percent) report they need help when it comes to holiday gifting. They may want to carefully consider a recipient's interests, as the report also discovered more than half of all Americans want a gift that reflects their personal interests and hobbies. When shopping for elderly parents, it may not be as simple as identifying interests, particularly if Mom and Dad are experiencing age-related health issues. Consider these gift ideas that may be ideal for the aging adults in your life.

**COZY BLANKET**

Older adults may have trouble regulating their body temperatures, which can translate to feeling cold a lot of the time. A new blanket or throw for a bed or to cuddle up with in a favorite recliner might be the perfect gift.

**FAMILY HISTORY BOOK**

Budding writers can interview their aging parents and jot down family stories. Those stories and anecdotes

can be compiled into a book and combined with photos to make a family history log, which can be gifted back to the interviewee.

**GRIPPING SLIPPERS**

Slips and falls can injure aging adults and put them out of commission for quite some time. Sturdy and secure slippers with anti-slip soles are good for getting around the house and making quick trips to take out the trash or get the mail.

**ROBOTIC VACUUM**

Keeping up with the household chores is easier with a robotic vacuum that automatically scours carpets and hard-surface floors. This eliminates having to wrestle with a cumbersome vacuum.

**KEY FINDER**

A key finder can help adults find their keys if they are misplaced. Some employ radio frequency, while others utilize Bluetooth technology and can be paired to a smartphone.

**MAGNIFYING LIGHT**

Older parents who like to do puzzles or close-up work like knitting or stitching can benefit from an LED lamp

that also has a magnifying glass built right in.

**E-READER**

Avid readers may enjoy an e-reader because they don't have to find spots to store even more books in their homes. E-readers can be customized so the print is the right size for the reader's needs. Also, the devices are lightweight and easy to stow in a bag.

**AUTOMATIC CARD SHUFFLER**

Parents who are known card sharks around the community can use an automatic card shuffler to make card play even easier.

**RESISTANCE BANDS**

Resistance bands are like large rubber bands that exert force to strengthen muscles and improve flexibility. They can help aging adults stay in shape in a low-impact way.

**DINING GIFT CARDS**

When parents do not want to spend additional time in the kitchen, they may opt to visit a favorite restaurant. A combination of a gift card to a favorite establishment as well as pre-paid taxi or ride share service ensures a good meal and a safe ride home.



Children typically want to treat their parents to something special during the holiday season. Parents do a lot for their children, and when those kids become adults, a desire to express their appreciation for Mom and Dad grows.

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# Gag gifts add humor to gatherings

## METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

The bulk of gifts exchanged during the holidays will be thoughtful items chosen based on the interests of their recipients, such as game tickets for a sports fan or an autographed movie poster for a film fanatic. Incorporating a few gag gifts can elevate celebrations by getting everyone laughing and engaging in good-natured ribbing.

Funny gag gifts can be as entertaining to give as they are to receive, as long as the person on the receiving end has a good sense of humor. However, families and friends can avoid any chances for animosity by making it a point that everyone in the gift exchange receives at least one gag gift.

## VARIOUS NOISEMAKERS

On stressful days when an office or home is quiet, the resident jokester can set off the noisemaker to break the tension. Noisemakers may be figurines that make animal sounds or buttons that yell out funny phrases or even "blue" words.

## FUNKO POP FIGURES

Funko makes figures of pop culture characters. Therefore, if a gift recipient likes a particular television show or movie, there's

a good chance you can find a figure of a character he or she likes. The company's website (Funko.com) even enables users to build a Personalized Pop! Yourself Figure in their own or a loved one's likeness.

## A GOOFY CELEBRITY PRINT

Believe it or not, there is a company called Celebs on Sandwiches (www.celebsonsandwiches.com) that produces prints featuring popular celebrities standing or sitting on various types of sandwiches. There is a category for holiday prints that includes characters from well-known holiday movies like Buddy the Elf.

## GAG BOX

Sometimes it's not the gift but the box the gift is in that can be the gag. Nestle a gift that the recipient really wanted into a box for a product that is slightly embarrassing or they do not need, like an ergonomic toilet seat. Once the box is opened, however, the true gift will be revealed.

## USELESS KNOWLEDGE

Scour the aisles of a bookstore for volumes about unusual, quirky or fun facts. There's even a series known as "Uncle John's Bathroom Reader" books that provides hours of entertainment for people while they are occupied in the bathroom.



Gag gifts can add levity to holiday celebrations when they are offered in a good-natured way.

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## FAKE LOTTERY TICKETS

One of the oldest gag gifts that still fools others, fake lottery tickets make recipients think they've scored the jackpot when they're still no richer than before they scratched the ticket.

## ANIMAL SOCKS

Animal lovers can get a good laugh when they slip on animal paw- or face-printed socks and shuffle around home in them.

## ADULT ACHIEVEMENT STICKERS

Who says young children are the only ones who can earn gold stars or good job awards? Purchase pre-printed stickers or design them to say things like, "Fixed it myself,"

or "Didn't lose my keys today." After all, adulting is an achievement, too.

Gag gifts can add levity to holiday celebrations when they are offered in a good-natured way.

# How to make shopping Black Friday/Cyber Monday pay off

## METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

The holiday shopping season is a profitable period for retailers. So it should come as no surprise to consum-

ers that many stores now begin stocking shelves with Christmas decor and other holiday-related items as early as September, reminding shoppers that the countdown

is on until the holidays arrive.

Historically, Black Friday has been the busiest day for retailers, but Cyber Monday has increasingly become a go-to holiday shopping op-

portunity. Now largely known as BFCM, Black Friday Cyber Monday is undoubtedly the busiest time of year for retailers. These days can be a make-or-break period for many merchants. According to Drip, an e-commerce customer data aggregator, Cyber Monday was the biggest shopping day in 2023, with shoppers spending \$12.4 billion - a 9.6 percent year-over-year increase. The National Retail Federation reported a record 200.4 million shoppers participated in Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales in 2023.

As people consider their BFCM shopping plans for 2024, these tips can help them make the most of these unique opportunities.

## BECOME A PRICE CONNOISSEUR

Consumers who would feel right at home calling out correct prices on "The Price is Right" will have an advantage come the holiday shopping season. By understanding the standard retail price on many items, it is easier to know just how customer-friendly BFCM

deals are. Consumers can look at the advertisements in newspapers or online and only shop the best deals to save money.

## PAY ATTENTION TO EARLY BIRD DEALS

BFCM is a great opportunity to save, and many retailers have extended this exclusive price-slashing period to offer "sneak peeks" and "early bird" opportunities that precede Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Shoppers can keep an eye out for early BFCM deals to save even more money.

## EXPLORE LOYALTY REWARDS

Shoppers who are part of stores' rewards programs, whether that entails earning loyalty points or having a store credit card, may be eligible for additional perks. Although one's email inbox may be overflowing this time of year with promotions, individuals should double-check their accounts to see if they've been given early access to sales or special coupon codes that can bring prices down even further. Some retailers also may uti-

lize digital coupons that need to be "clipped," which is basically saving them to a loyalty account.

## PLAN THE SHOPPING LIST IN ADVANCE

A complete shopping list at the ready can make it easier to shop for specific items during Black Friday or Cyber Monday hours.

## AVOID IMPULSE BUYING

It may be tempting to grab many different items because the prices seem so good. However, sticking to a list and only shopping for necessary items is an effective way to avoid overspending.

## DON'T FORGET SMALL BUSINESSES

Be sure to check out the sales at local small businesses during BFCM as well as Small Business Saturday. Shoppers may find that deals at smaller retailers rival those at larger chains.

Black Friday and Cyber Monday present chances to save. Making the most of these shopping opportunities can translate to scoring holiday gifts at the lowest prices possible.



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Be sure to check out the sales at local small businesses during BFCM as well as Small Business Saturday. Shoppers may find that deals at smaller retailers rival those at larger chains.

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# A comprehensive guide to gifting fitness fans

## METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Physical activity is an important component of a healthy lifestyle. Exercise guidelines supported by the medical community indicate most adults should get at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity each week, or at least 75 minutes of vigorous aerobic activity each week.

Individuals can take several steps to be more active in their daily lives. Some become gym enthusiasts, while others congregate to yoga studios or other activities. Some still prefer to exercise at home or outdoors. When it comes time to shop for people with a fondness for fitness, gift givers can consider these ideas.

### UPGRADE A MEMBERSHIP

Do some research to learn where your fitness lover spends most time working out. If it is a traditional gym, a kick-boxing studio or a H.I.I.T establishment, speak with the staff to see if you can upgrade the member's plan to receive more perks. For example, a base gym membership may only include use of the floor machines and weights, but another may include all that as well as access to massage chairs, spa services and more.

### MASSAGER OR MASSAGE PACKAGE

Working out muscles can lead to soreness each time a new milestone is reached. Help soothe those tired muscles with the gift of a neck, back and shoulder massager. Or go a step further and purchase a few sessions at a massage therapy location near the recipient's home.



### INSULATED WATER BOTTLE OR TUMBLER

Staying hydrated is important when working out. An insulated water bottle ensures that fitness fans can enjoy cold water or a sports drink throughout their exercise sessions. There's even a water bottle that self-cleans using UV light to kill bacteria in the bottle.

### TREADMILL OR STATIONARY BIKE

If you know a loved one has had eyes on improving a home gym, a treadmill or stationary bike can bring the space to the next level. There is home equipment for every budget.

### NEW KICKS

Comfortable, supportive athletic shoes ensure workouts aren't hindered by sore feet. Since shoe fit and style is a personal choice, it might

be a safer bet to give a gift card to a popular athletic store or online retailer rather than purchasing the footwear yourself.

### FITNESS MONITOR OR SMART WATCH

It seems like everyone now has some sort of smart device, but if the person on your list still hasn't made the switch to a watch that tracks various health data, then that can make for a perfect gift. Smart watches and fit-

ness trackers monitor steps and various health markers such as pulse, elevation climbed and distance, and can even detect if a user has a burgeoning health problem. When pairing the watch with popular fitness apps, users can log daily activities and their diets to get a bigger picture of their overall health.

Those who prioritize fitness can benefit from any number of health- and fitness-minded gifts this season.

**When it comes time to shop for people with a fondness for fitness, gift givers can consider these ideas.**

# Great gifts for globetrotters

## METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

John Denver sang about 'leavin' on a jet plane,' inspiring many to take a flight to parts known and unknown. Millions of people travel to and from the country every year, with TravelPerk estimating the market size of the United States tourism sector at \$798.81 billion in July 2023. Tourism took a hit during the global pandemic, but traveling has since rebounded in a big way.

With so many people taking to the roads, rails and skies, shoppers can customize their gift lists when shopping for people who have caught the travel bug. Below are several gifts for those with wanderlust.

- Portable Bluetooth speaker: Music can make the journey more interesting and create a welcoming ambiance upon arrival. People who don't want to leave home without their favorite tunes often have curated playlists on popular music streaming services. While earbuds are a go-to for personal listening, a portable speaker can provide impressive sound to share songs with friends when relaxing by the pool or traversing trails.
- Ergonomic neck pillow: Getting some rest and being comfortable while

traveling is key. Ergonomic neck pillows keep the neck and head in a comfortable position when sitting upright during long flights or rides.

- High-quality passport cover: Consider a passport travel cover that is personalized with a graphic, name or monogram. A cover can protect the passport and keep other travel documents orderly while adding a layer of elegance to travel.

- Compression packing bags or cubes: Travelers want to ensure they can bring all their gear when getting away, but sometimes suitcase space can come at a premium. Compression products work like a vacuum sealer, removing air to reduce the space that items take up.

- Travel adapter: International travel requires contending with different power outlets. In order to use electronic equipment brought from home, travelers will require the right adapter. Look for ones with multiple ports.

- Travel pouch or money belt: Keeping valuables out of the hands of pickpockets means being savvy about safe storage. Travel pouches and money belts are designed to be discrete, and

some can be hidden in waistbands or under clothing to protect valuables.

- Travel journal: Journals allow travelers to capture memories along the way, with space to jot down experiences and add photos. It can make for a cherished keepsake in the future.

- New luggage: Every traveler needs a durable piece of luggage or two when the desire to see the world strikes. A rolling, vibrantly colored carry-on ensures the luggage is easily spotted and gives travelers the option to skip baggage check and bring it right on board.

Travel enthusiasts can appreciate gifts that cater to their desire to get away from home.



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# Gifts for holiday hosts



### METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Millions of people open their homes to relatives and friends each holiday season. Taking on the task of holiday host can be a labor of love, as it involves not only a commitment of time, but also a financial investment. Lending Tree reported that 60 percent of Americans considering hosting holiday gatherings in 2023 expected to spend an average of \$556 on their celebrations. Six-figure earners planned to spend even more, indicating they expected to spend \$764 on holiday hosting.

Guests benefitting from holiday hosts' hospitality can offer tokens of their appreciation upon arrival. The following are some great gifts to offer hosts this holiday season.

Guests benefitting from holiday hosts' hospitality can offer tokens of their appreciation upon arrival.

### BEVERAGE OF CHOICE

A bottle of wine or another spirit can be a great gift for holiday gatherings. Let hosts decide if they want to serve it with the meal or save it to enjoy at a later time.

### CURATED FOOD BASKET

A guest can put together a basket of different foods, including crackers, cheeses, jams, bread sticks, and other items that can be enjoyed as snacks or appetizers.

### HOLIDAY PLANT

A poinsettia or Christmas cactus may be fitting this time of year, and a holiday host can enjoy seeing it grow during the season.

### KITCHEN TOOLS OR SERVING ITEMS

A beautiful olive wood serving platter or cutting board might be appreciated, particularly if guests arrive with it covered in a charcuterie spread.

### SCENTED CANDLE

Hosts can set the mood and add to the ambiance of an entertaining space with

lit, scented candles, which make for a great gift. Guests can inquire as to the hosts' preferred aromas or stick with safe bets like vanilla or cinnamon.

### HOLIDAY ORNAMENT OR DECORATIVE PIECE

Guests can offer ornaments for the tree or another decorative item for hosts who are repeat entertainers. Dating the decoration or having it engraved can transform it into a memento hosts can relish through the years.

### COMFORT AND CARE ASSORTMENT

Hosting takes effort, so a box of items to pamper holiday hosts can be a great gift. Fill the box with a loofah, bath bombs, shower gel, moisturizing cream, and massage oil.

Holiday hosts invest time and money into making their homes welcoming spaces to spend the holidays. Guests can treat these hosts with gifts to show how much their efforts and hospitality are appreciated.

# Why you should shop local for the holidays and beyond

### METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

Various components come together to make the holiday season a festive time of year. There is a lot to get done in a short amount of time during the holiday season, and part of that includes shopping for all of the family members and friends on your shopping list. Shopping can be a complicated process that involves identifying which stores will be the best places to shop. Local retailers make the perfect place to shop for holiday items.

According to the American Express Business Economic Impact Study, more than two-thirds of every dollar spent with a local business stays in the community. Indeed, shopping local benefits consumer and community alike. The following are some of the many perks to shopping locally throughout the holiday season.

### PERSONALIZED ATTENTION

Small businesses are known for their personalized customer service and owners and staff are often lauded for taking the time to interact and learn about their customers, a dynamic that is impossible at larger retailers.

### MEET AND INTERACT WITH PEOPLE

Shopping in-person at local stores, you'll see faces from your community and become better known in the local area.

### SHORTER LINES

Local stores are bound to have smaller crowds and thus shorter lines. That translates to less stress and hassle when it comes to getting in and out with holiday gifts.

### SMALLER CARBON FOOTPRINT

Pollution, traffic congestion, habitat loss, and resource depletion may not occur on the same levels when shopping locally compared to patronizing big box stores. That's because local retailers tend to create or source their products locally, whereas many big box stores secure their goods overseas.

### EASIER PARKING

This goes hand-in-hand with smaller crowds, as shopping locally does not typically require driving up and down endless aisles at malls or standalone retail stores in an effort to find a parking spot. Local retailers in town may have on-street parking or closed lots that are convenient to shoppers.



Shopping can be a complicated process that involves identifying which stores will be the best places to shop. Local retailers make the perfect place to shop for holiday items.

Convenient to shoppers.

### SMALL BATCH SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Consumers can secure

items in small businesses that are not carbon copies of those found across the country at major retail chains.

When seeking a unique, thoughtful gift, shopping locally is the way to go.

Shopping locally this holi-

day season provides an array of benefits to consumers, and helps to solidify a strong Main Street in communities.



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# Holiday shopping tips you can't afford to miss

## METRO CREATIVE CONNECTION

The festive and fun nature of the holiday season can make it easy to forget the benefits of being frugal. Many people go overboard on holiday spending, making this time of year costly for consumers.

Sales between the beginning of November 2023 and Christmas Eve 2023 climbed 3.1 percent from the year earlier, according to the Mastercard SpendingPulse. The National Retail Federation reported in November 2023 that holiday spending was expected to reach between \$957 and \$966 billion. Trading Economics, a financial market indicator and forecast provider, said personal spending in the United States only rose 0.2 percent in May 2024 from the previous month, which marked the lowest increase since January 2024.

Shoppers who want to spend less and stick to a budget for holiday entertaining and gifting can keep these budgeting tips in mind.

### SET A VALUE TO GIFT RECIPIENTS

It may sound harsh, but certain people on holiday shopping lists may be assigned a higher value than others. For example, you wouldn't necessarily spend

the same amount on a gift for a child's teacher as you would for a grandmother. Putting a dollar figure next to each name on the shopping list helps you identify your expected spending and where you can cut back, if necessary.

### ESTABLISH YOUR OVERALL BUDGET

Once you have an idea of your potential holiday expenditures, set a firm budget. Avoid the temptation of impulse buys, which can make it easy to go over budget.

### BEGIN SHOPPING EARLY

Start scouring ads and looking for deals prior to Thanksgiving or Black Friday. Keep a running list of gift ideas and when the price is right, purchase those items.

### PRICE CHECK "PERFECT GIFTS."

If you've spotted the perfect gift for someone but it's beyond budget, see if you can find a better price elsewhere, says Better Money Habits. There are apps that allow users to scan barcodes and check items across various retailers. Many stores also have price-match policies that can save shoppers money.

### LOOK FOR DEALS ALL OF THE TIME

Many people get hung up on perceived deep discounts

from Black Friday and Cyber Monday offers. However, industry experts say there often isn't a huge difference in markdowns between these promotions and those during other sales. Some retailers even increase prices on goods only to mark them down for Black Friday to make it appear that there is a discount. Only by knowing the average price for items can you know if a sale is legitimate.

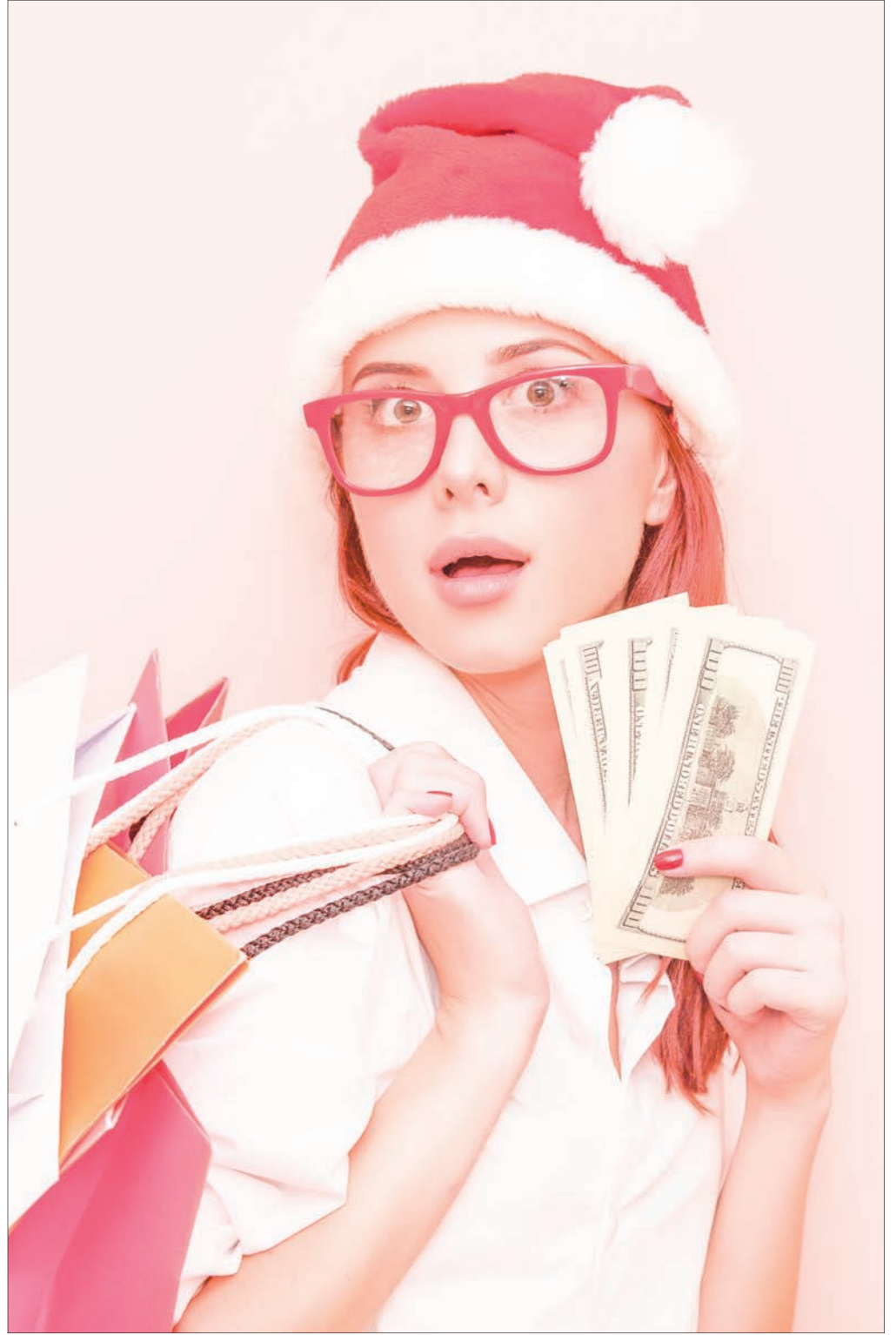
### SIGN UP FOR STORE REWARDS

If you don't want your regular email inbox inundated with offers, set up a separate email account for in-store and online shopping. Then you can sign up for the rewards programs at checkout. Utilize the coupon codes and advertisements for sales to save money without having your primary email data shared with other marketers.

### TRACK SPENDING CAREFULLY

If you don't know how much you're spending, then you cannot possibly stick to a budget. After each purchase, keep a running tally of all holiday spending to see how far you are from the finish line.

The holidays can be expensive, but with smart budgeting and dedication to savvy shopping, it's possible to stay out of financial trouble.



The holidays can be expensive, but with smart budgeting and dedication to savvy shopping, it's possible to stay out of financial trouble.

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