

THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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Looking Back The Year In Review



Merry **TEXAS SIZED** Christmas!

and have a **TEXAS SIZED** New Year!

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2020.

What is there to say about this year? It was a superlative year, and not in the good way. We all learned the limits of our ability to deal with stress, terrible loss, and a way of life that left so many feeling isolated and alone. Flexibility became key. Woman saved a lot of money on lipstick. And we all started waving when leaving Zoom meetings, like a weird game show.

More than anything this year taught us how resilient and capable we are when we need to be. And how important it is to care about one another. And to take care of each other.

Without further ado, here is the year in review.

JANUARY 10

Parker County Sheriff Larry Fowler issued instruction on how to handle an active shooting after a tragedy at a Fort Worth church leaves many in the community shaken;

Parker County commissioners called a town hall meeting on transportation to discuss roads and growth.

JANUARY 17

The city of Aledo approved a Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone, which allows for local businesses to get a tax benefit and encourages economic development;

The city of Willow Park demolished their former police and fire station building, which also formerly housed the city council meetings, community center, and the East Parker County Historical and Genealogical Society;



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Removal of bricks when the old Willow Park Public Safety building was demolished revealed an older building underneath made of cinder blocks.

The Jenkins Road community in Annetta North moved forward with their plans to gate Jenkins Road and privatize their neighborhood.

JANUARY 24

The Aledo ISD Board of Trustees approved the sale of the 2019 bonds, which will fund a second middle school, a sixth elementary school, and improvement and changes to several other campuses.

Shelby Kimball was honored by the Annetta City Council for being named the 2020 president of the Greater Fort Worth Association of Realtors. Kimball, who served on the Zoning Board of Adjustments, Crime Control and Planning District, and Planning and Zoning Commission, resigned from the P&Z commission to focus on his responsibilities in his new position.

Aledo High School hosted its first-ever robotics competition, which helped expand such contests to the western side of the DFW metroplex.

JANUARY 31

The Aledo City Council approved a 741-unit assisted living facility on Bailey Ranch Road.

The Willow Park City Council reviewed plans for Cross Timbers Park, which will replace the playground that was removed to make way for the new public safety building.

The Willow Park Police and Fire Departments hosted members of the community for the ribbon cutting on the city's new Public Safety Building, which was built using bond funds approved by voters in 2016.

FEBRUARY 7

"Dancing With The Stars," hosted by Randy Galloway, raised funds for Aledo Class of 2021 Project Celebration. The event brought more than 400 supporters out to watch local celebrities dance the night away.

The Shops at Willow Park hosted "Celebrating Greatness," an event commemorating the Bearcat football team's ninth state



CHRISTOPHER AMOS/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

William Reynolds and Ryan Zarate examine the Circuit Breakers robot while the team awaits a warm-up round during Aledo High School's first hosted robotics competition.

The Center is proud to welcome,
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Dr. Riaz is excited to be in North Texas where he will be close to his family and looks forward to helping and providing its community members with exceptional care. Dr. Riaz and his wife Dr. Bismah Siddiqui are parents to one daughter and are thrilled to be starting their new chapter in life here. In his spare time, Dr. Riaz loves to travel with family and friends, enjoys music, and is also a huge soccer fan (Fan of Liverpool FC).



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RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Kajuan and Disa Billings danced a swank routine at the second Dancing with the Aldedo Stars on Saturday, Feb 1.

championship. The Bearcat cheerleaders and dance team performed and local dignitaries came to speak on the Bearcats' behalf.

FEBRUARY 14

Fourteen students graduated from the Aldedo Learning Center with principal Cheryl Jones presiding.

The Aldedo Art Collective, founded by Aldedo ISD art teacher Arlene Shelton, prepared to open on Jearl Street in Aldedo. Shelton said the collective was started to "broaden our sense of culture by establishing a community of like-minded artists and creatives."

The Aldedo High School Band Boosters hosted their annual "Bid The Sound" dinner to raise money for the Bearcat band programs.



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

LEFT: Artists have their works on display at the Aldedo Art Collective, founded by Aldedo ISD art teacher Arlene Shelton. | RIGHT: Ainsley Henze, Everett Rose, Eric Jack, and Oliver Wight came to school as Henry Ford when members of the Fort Worth Model A Club visited Stuard Elementary School to give students a lesson in automotive history.

FEBRUARY 21

Trinity Christian Academy shared their "Serve and Grow" program with The Community News. It places students in service roles with the Fort Worth Pregnancy Center, Riverside Academy in Como, and Birchman Baptist Church's homeless ministry, among other locations.

Aldedo City Secretary Deanna McMullin was awarded her professional designation for recertifying with the Texas Municipal Clerks Association.

FEBRUARY 28

The Willow Park City Council approved a three-story First National Bank headquarters along the I-20 corridor next to Brookshire's.

TxDOT spokesperson Bethany Kurtz clarified the design modifications at the FM 5/ Mikus/I-20 intersection that caused delays in the reconstruction project.

Ben Oaks, a senior at Aldedo High School, received his Eagle Scout designation in a ceremony at Oakridge Church of Christ.

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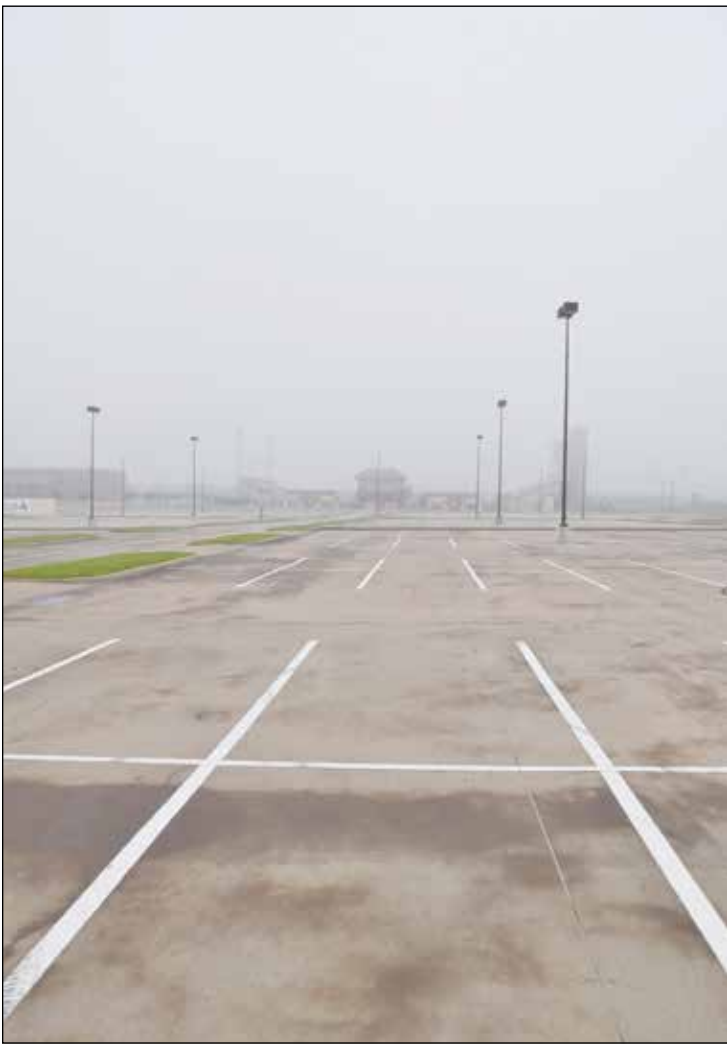
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RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

LEFT: Tuesday morning's (March 17) fog gave a sort of "ghost town" feel at Aledo High School, serving as a metaphor for the state of life in the midst of the Covid 19 crisis. | **RIGHT:** Vee, Marshall, and Wales Perry (triplets) examine nature in a creek at the Parks of Aledo (From March 27 issue).

MARCH 6

Incumbent Parker County Sheriff Larry Fowler handily won the Republican primary against three challengers.

The Aledo City Council delayed a vote on whether to rezone a property along Old Annetta Road from residential to commercial.

Members of the Fort Worth Model A Club visited Stuart Elementary School to give students a lesson in automotive history.

Friends and supporters of the East Parker County Library were treated to an exposition on local history at the "Leap into History" event at Faith Presbyterian Church in Aledo.

MARCH 13

The Willow Park City Council denied a Special Use Permit Request to install a helipad in the northern part of the city. The East Parker County Chamber of Commerce held its annual

awards ceremony, naming Aledo ISD its Large Business of the Year. The Aledo High School Treble Choir and Honor Winds Ensemble held a preview concert before a invitational trip to the National Choir Festival and National Concert Band Festival.

MARCH 20

COVID-19 began shutting down schools, businesses, and government offices, as new directives are released – sometimes hourly – from health departments. Events and travel are canceled indefinitely in many cases.

The Westgate neighborhood in Aledo is the location of a rash of vehicle burglaries, with multiple items stolen, including a handgun.

MARCH 27

Local businesses, impacted by the COVID-19 shutdown, began innovating ways to stay afloat and serve the community. Local municipalities looked for ways to support businesses and conduct essential business during the crisis.

Aledo ISD began planning during emergency meetings to serve students using remote learning.

APRIL 3

Via web meeting, the Aledo ISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved the schematic for Elementary School No. 6, to be located off FM 5 in the far western part of the district.

Shawn Chick took as over the new owner of Pets West, a long time fixture for pet owners in east Parker County.

APRIL 10

First responders from Parker County Emergency Services District 1 shared the extra precautions they are taking during the pandemic to respond to emergencies, including monitoring COVID data and finding new supply chains. Chief Stephen Watson urged citizens to seek reliable information.

The Community News launched the "What's Open" platform to help local residents find service providers during the shutdown.

APRIL 17

Aledo High School seniors faced a new reality during the pandemic: time-honored events such as the top ten percent ban-

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STEPHEN WATSON/SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Firefighter/EMTs Nathan Pool and Tyler Graves display the equipment they wear on medical calls during the COVID-19 crisis. (April 10 issue)

quiet, prom, and even graduation could be altered dramatically, if they get to happen at all. "It's breaking my heart," retiring AHS principal Dan Peterson said. "I hate it for them. You know, they worked a long time. But I totally get that it's for the safety of everyone involved."

Via Zoom meeting, the Willow Park City Council discussed the environmental impact of a water line project connecting Fort Worth's water supply to Willow Park and Hudson Oaks. City engineer Derek Turner told the council that no significant environmental impacts were expected. The council also approved a plat for a 117,000 sf senior living complex.

Via YouTube meeting, the Aledo ISD Board of Trustees received an update on distance learning and waived employee evaluations in light of the shut down.



TONY EIERDAM/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

At exactly 8:20 p.m. and 2020 military time on April 17, the lights at Bearcat Stadium were turned on for 20 minutes to honor the Aledo High School Class of 2020. That afternoon, Gov. Greg Abbott announced school closings for the entire state for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.

APRIL 24

The Texas Education Association officially shut down schools through the end of the school year, and the University Interscholastic League shuts down sports through the end of the school year as well. Aledo ISD trustees and administrators begin working through the logistics of the unexpected change and look to measures to try for in-person learning in the fall.

The mayors of Parker County sent Texas Governor Greg Abbott a letter asking him to return local control to cities amid pandemic shutdowns. "Our citizens have obeyed the governor's orders and have done what was necessary to prevent the rapid spread of this virus in our community," the letter read. "Our citizens and business owners are eager to begin the process of restarting our lives and livelihoods and trust us, their local elected officials, to navigate the proper course."

ACROSS

1 military NCO (var.)
5 drug addict
6 poet's inspiration
7 TXism: "pure as the driven ___"
8 Houston's Ben ___ Hospital
10 "Monk's" cable network
13 Alamo's Travis (init.)
20 TXism: "quit spittin' ___ the handle" (get to work)
21 TXism: "gone to ___" (deteriorated)
23 TX Johnny Horton's "North to ___"
25 TX Johnny Rodriguez's ___ "By" (1973)
30 stroll, saunter
31 TXism: "spoiled ___" (brat)
32 Abilene Cooper UJL class
33 TX Larry Hagman film: "Getting ___ From ___ All" (1971)
35 definitely needed in TX houses and cars (abbr.)
36 distinguished TX poet, Wilson Baker (honoric + first name)
38 toppers for Astros and Rangers
39 what some Texans do in Taos, NM
40 the last NFL team of this receiver "Rocket" was the Dallas Cowboys

DOWN

1 math calculations
2 South Padre Island acquisition (2 wds.)
3 lather again
4 TXism for "short" (3 wds.)
9 TX Gary Morris hit: "Baby ___"
10 prepare a bloody steak
11 dir. from Abilene to Austin
12 smoking gun? (3 wds.)

TEXAS CROSSWORD
by Charley & Guy Orbison
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41 rare African bird at the Dallas Zoo: ___ bustard
42 "null and ___"
46 a big fuss
47 sharp, twisting pinch
49 TX Katherine Helmond "Soap" role, Jessica ___
50 former Gov. Richards
51 TXism for "dice"
52 Rick Perry was ___ Gov. when George W. was the governor

53 popcorn seasoning ___ "By" (1973)
54 TX-born pro wrestler, "Sweet Daddy"
56 evergreen
57 album by TX Willie and Merle: "Pancho ___ Lefty" (1983)

13 this Earp met "Doc" Holliday in Texas
14 TXism: "___ I ever wrapped a lip around"
15 Shelby County has the annual "___ Fishing Bream Tournament"
16 TXism: "tough row to ___"
19 rank odor or taste
22 Santa's helper
24 TX actress Chiles of "Moonraker"
25 Gov. "___" Ferguson
26 Marlin H.S. class
27 Mr. Houston

41 call letters of a Emmitt Smith radio station?
42 go to the polls
44 Gov. O.M. Roberts spent 35 ___ on campaign in 1879
45 TXism: "I ___ it so bad I could spit"
48 ___-Mart
51 seat of Callahan County
53 TXism: "___ and bones" (very thin)
55 TXism: "___ hog had wings he'd be an eagle"



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Firefighters from Parker County Emergency Services District 1 "rescue" a 130-pound mannequin during a live fire training in Aledo on May 6.

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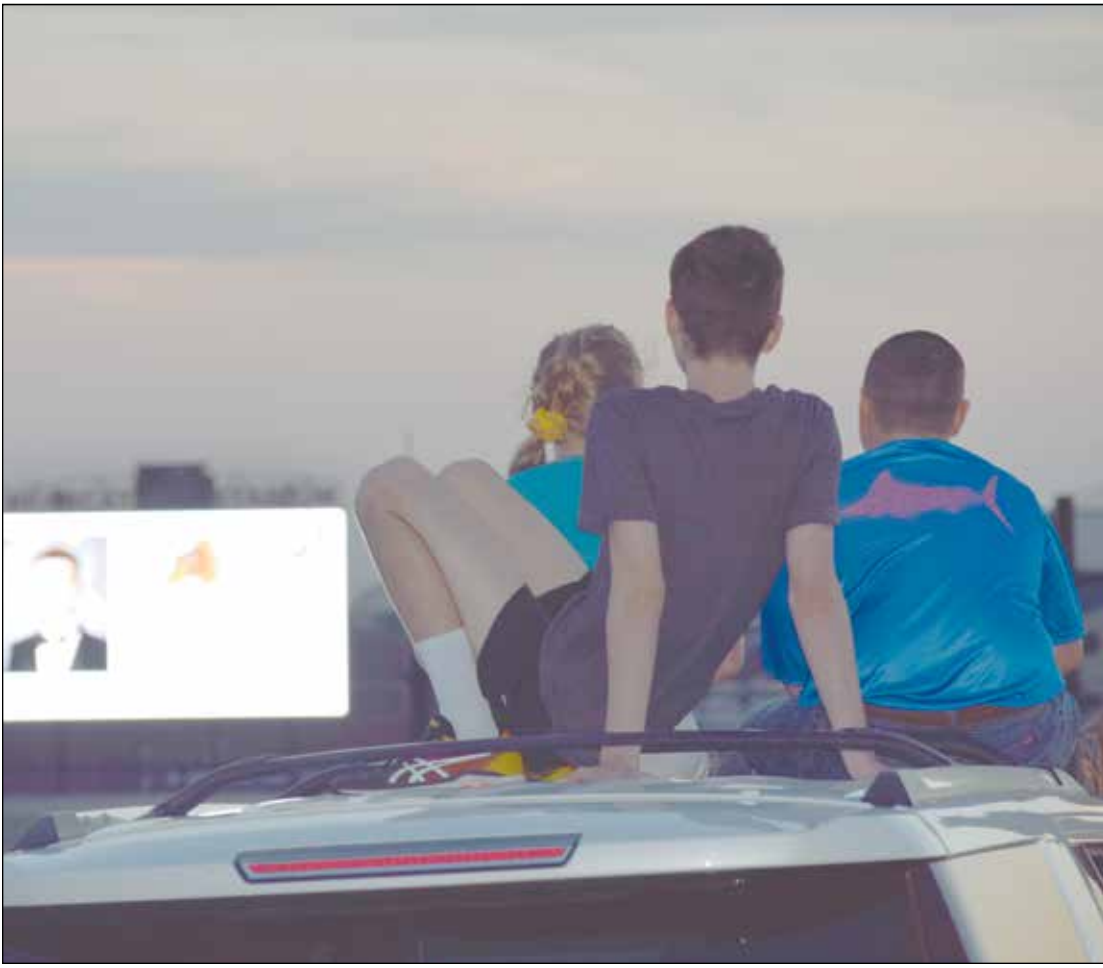
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RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Barrett, Amber, and Michael Birdwell watch the Aledo Top Ten Percent slide show at Bearcat Stadium on Tuesday, May 19.

the country.

The Aledo City Council canceled its "Summer Blast" and approved the plats for the Parks at Aledo Bluffs housing subdivision via web meeting.

The Aledo Childrens Advocats announced their annual "Glow Run" will be a virtual event in 2020.

MAY 8

The mayors of Parker County banded together for a food drive to benefit the Parker County Commission on Aging and Meals on Wheels.

Weatherford College announced an uptick in enrollment for the summer session. Salons and gyms, left behind in the first wave of reopening, are finally allowed to open their doors with special precautions.

MAY 15

Aledo High School graduate Lexi Barton shared her tale of nursing in New York during the pandemic. "Be mindful of what you're doing," she advised. "Protect yourself and be mindful of those who can't protect themselves."

The Willow Park City Council approved site plans for a new building at Trinity Christian Academy, the THRIVE Learning Center, and a plat for The Village at Willow Park Phase 2. Nathan Crummel stepped into the city council seat vacated by Gary McKaughan after Crummel ran unopposed for the seat.

Local dignitaries, including US Representative Kay Granger, turned out to Squaw Creek Golf Course in Willow Park for the groundbreaking of the new Ben Hogan Learning Center.

Tri-County Electric prepared for its long-awaited move into their new headquarters on Bailey Ranch Road in Aledo.

MAY 21

Jamie Rinehart, an English teacher at Aledo High School, is presented with the Marva Collins Teacher of the Year Award for Aledo ISD. The in-person ceremony was canceled due to COVID-19 so the awards were presented in abstentia.

Instead of a traditional Top 10 percent banquet for the graduating Class of 2020, students were invited (in sections) to watch a commemorative video played on the big screen at Bearcat Stadium.

MAY 29

Aledo High School principal Dan Peterson oversaw some of his last days at the campus as he prepared to retire during an unusual year. Peterson capped a 35-year career in education with 12 years at Aledo ISD. "Dan is truly a lifelong learner, modeling for all of us that each new day brings the opportunity to learn and grow and get better at your job," said Aledo ISD Deputy Superintendent Lynn McKinney. "He has incredible patience and is calm, no matter what the situation. Most of all he has such an incredible heart, the love he shares with others through his many acts of kindness models for all of us the way we should behave every day."

Carolyn Ansley, an assistant principal at Aledo High School, was named the new principal of the Don Daniel Ninth Grade Center Campus.



ALEDO FOOTBALL UPDATES

Because of early holiday press schedules, please refer to our website at community-news.com for updates on the Aledo Bearcats football playoffs.

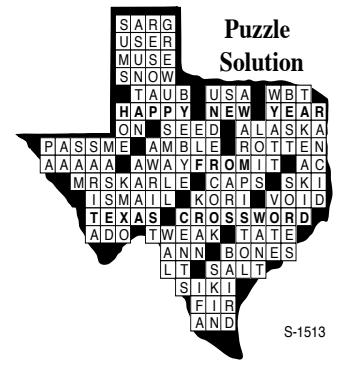
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Happy New Year from The Community News!

Sports year in review 2020

It would seem quite remiss to The Community News family to not begin the sports review without a mention of the elephant in the room – stalwart sports editor and Aledo sports superfan Tony Eierdam. Tony had a way of filling a space with his presence and personality, but it was always filled with his passion for his profession and his love for the student athletes he covered. Tony was a force of nature, exactly what was required to cover the force that is Aledo sports. He lived, breathed, and bled Bearcat orange. And right before we lost him, we learned his passion earned him a National Newspaper Association recognition for Best Sports Section.

He will always be remembered as a man of the highest journalistic principles, a fan of not burying the lede, and someone deeply devoted to the things he loved. May he smile upon the Bearcats in eternity. He will be deeply, strongly missed.

JANUARY 10

The Aledo Bearcats placed 24 players on the All District 4-5A team, including four superlative awards: Most Valuable Player Jake Bishop, Co-Offensive Player of the Year JoJo Earle, Utility Player of the Year DeMarco Roberts, and Co-Defensive Newcomer of the Year B.J. Allen.

The Ladycats soccer team welcomed back several experienced starters in preparation for district play and hopes of a deep playoff run.

The Bearcat soccer team, stinging from a first-round playoff loss in 2019, looked up make a deeper run under the leadership of versatile senior Micco Little.



TONY EIERDAM/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo junior goalkeeper Ryland Yates extends for the match-and championship-save during the overtime shootout during the boys' championship game of the Moritz-Kia Tournament of Champions.

The Ladycat basketball team headed into district play with a decisive victory over Godley.

JANUARY 17

The Bearcat soccer team defeated FW South Hills in an overtime shootout to win the Moritz-Kia Tournament of Champions title. Junior goalkeeper Ryland Yates had the game-winning save.

The Trinity Christian Eagles played the Aledo Bearcats basketball team in a rare non-district matchup, with former Bearcat Dayton Sheridan at the helm for the Eagles. The Bearcats won, 60-34.

Ladycat soccer went 1-2 at the Moritz-Kia Tournament of Champions, but gained valuable experience.

The Ladycat basketball team opened district play with a 50-45 win over Abilene Cooper.



TONY EIERDAM/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo head coach Nikki Hyles pumps her first as the buzzer sounds as her Ladycats defeated Wichita Falls Rider, 41-36, Jan. 11 at Aledo to send District 4-5A in a four-way tie for first place.

JANUARY 24

The first-place Bearcat basketball team downed Abilene Wylie (53-45) and Wichita Falls High School (52-35) to open District 4-5A play.

After falling 35-31 to Abilene Wylie, the Ladycat basketball team rebounded to demolish Wichita Falls High School, 86-2.

The Bearcat soccer team goes 2-2 at the highly competitive Alvarado tournament.

The Bearcat Powerlifting team took first place at the Springtown meet, led by Noah Loth, who took first place in his class.

Ladycat soccer went 2-1 at the Birdville tournament before falling, 4-3, to host Birdville in the final. Junior defender Grace Ornelas scored all three of the Ladycat goals in the final.

The Ladycat swim team took second place at the District 7-5A swim meet, with several athletes advancing. Elijah Sohn and Hannah Farmer were named the Male and Female Swimmer of the meet, respectively.

JANUARY 31

The Bearcats basketball team falls to 2-2 in District play after falling to Wichita Falls Rider and Abilene Cooper.

The Ladycat basketball team takes a 37-30 defeat from Abilene Cooper, leaving the Ladycats in fourth place in district play.

Ladycat soccer hands 4A No. 2 Stephenville their first loss before falling to Midlothian, 5-2

The Bearcat soccer team exceeds the previous year's win total after downing Northwest and Midlothian Heritage.

FEBRUARY 7

New UIL districts are announced for Aledo High School: District 5-5A for football aligns the Bearcats with Arlington Seguin, Burleson, Cleburne, Everman, Joshua, Mansfield Timberview, and Waco University. District 5-5A (non football sports) places Aledo with Azle, Brewer, Granbury, Wichita Falls High School, and Wichita Falls Rider.

Elijah Sohn wins a pair of golds and Ava Willis places second in the girls' 100-yard butterfly to advance to the Class 5A state swimming meet.

The Ladycat basketball team defeats Abilene Wylie, 50-29, to put themselves back in the hunt for the District 4-5A race.

The Bearcat basketball team fell to Abilene Wylie, 49-41, slipping the bottom half of district standings.



TONY EIERDAM/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo's Elijah Sohn dives off the block at the Class 5A Swimming and Diving State Meet on Saturday, Feb. 15, in Austin. Sohn broke a Class 5A state record in the boys' 200-yard freestyle. For more on the state meet, see page 11.

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CHRIS D'AVINO/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo sophomore Ashlynn Laughley (9), shown getting past the Wichita Falls High School goalkeeper, scored five goals in the Ladycats' first two District 4-5A matches, both wins.

The Racquet Cats took home hardware from the Peach Bowl tournament, with Katie Siddons winning first place in Girls' A Singles.

Ladycat soccer defeats Mineral Wells 4-0 as they head into district play. The Bearcats also defeated Mineral Wells, 3-1.

FEBRUARY 14

A 41-36 win over Wichita Falls Rider puts the Ladycat basketball team in a tie for first place in district play. First place Wichita Falls Rider held off the Bearcats 42-40.

An experienced Ladycat softball team prepares for the 2020 team, hoping to deepen the previous year's playoff run, including the 2019 District 4-5A Offensive Player of the Year, Macy Graf.

FEBRUARY 21

Aledo senior Elijah Sohn broke a state record in the Class 5A boys state swimming meet, swimming the boys' 200-yard freestyle in a time of 1:37.02. Sohn also placed 3rd in the 100 freestyle.

Amarillo Palo Duro outlasts the Ladycat basketball team, 40-39, in bi-district playoffs. The Ladycats are led by Audrey Pierce with 13 points.

Bearcat basketball rolls past Abilene Cooper, 62-47, to cap district play.

Bearcat soccer shuts out Wichita Falls Rider, 2-0, to move to 2-1 in district play.

Ladycat soccer downed WF Rider, 4-1, to take the District 4-5A lead. Sophomore Ashlynn Laughley scored six goals in the Ladycats' first three district matches.

Six Bearcat football players earned TWSA all-state honors.

FEBRUARY 28

The Ladycat soccer team shut out Abilene Cooper, 4-0, to sweep the first half of district play. Ladycat goalkeepers Emma Davis and Emily Thomas split the shutout in the Cooper game.

Lubbock Monterey eliminates the Bearcat basketball team in the first round of playoffs. Cole Nitsch (12 points and Max Newell (11 points) lead the Bearcats.

The Bearcat soccer team moves to 3-1 in district play after a victory on the road over Abilene Cooper. Colton Bryan scored the first of the Bearcats' goals, shifting the momentum to the Bearcats in their come-from-behind win.

The Ladycat softball team finished 4-1 at their first tournament of the season.

Demarco Roberts, Graydon Morris, and Gracie Morris earn gold medals at the first track meet of the spring.

The Aledo varsity girls tennis team dominated their home tournament with four golf medals.

MARCH 6

Ladycat soccer continued to dominate district play with wins over Abilene Wylie and Wichita Falls. Ashlyn Laughley, Grace Ornelas, Madison Bilbia, and Cheney Huddleston are top contributors.

The state ranked No. 2 Bearcat baseball team sweeps their home tournament, with wins over Boswell, Saginaw, Nacogdoches, and Keller Timber Creek.

Wichita Falls seals a share of the district boys soccer title with a win over the short-handed Bearcats.

Aledo boys track dominates the Weatherford meet, winning by nearly 80 points. The girls team places second.

The Bearcat golf team wins second place in its home tournament.

The Ladycat softball team defeats Eaton, 14-11, with 15 hits and reaching base 29 times.

MARCH 13

The Ladycat soccer team finishes with a pair of victories to be the undefeated District 4-5A champions.

The Bearcat baseball team comes back with a pair of runs to with their district opener against Abilene Wylie.

Bearcat track wins its fourth consecutive meet, and the Ladycats also place first at the Pioneer Relays.

The playoff-bound Bearcat soccer team concludes district play with a loss to Abilene Cooper.

MARCH 20

All four Aledo High School teams won their divisions at the Bearcat Relays.

Bearcat baseball split a pair of games at the Drew Medford Classic.

The Aledo Anglers took first place at the Lake Texoma tournament.

Amid Coronavirus concerns, the UIL suspends all sports activities through at least March 29.

MARCH 27

COVID-19 closures disrupt business at local dance studios, gyms, and golf courses.


JoJo Earle is moved behind the snapper for spring practices as the Bearcats create the strategy for the 2020 season.

APRIL 3


The UIL extends its shutdown of sports through May 4, but allows remote instruction for certain sports.

Aledo graduate Elizabeth Allenach reflects on a strong freshman season at St. Louis College of pharmacy.

**MORE YEAR IN REVIEW
WILL BE IN NEXT
WEEK'S ISSUE!**

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