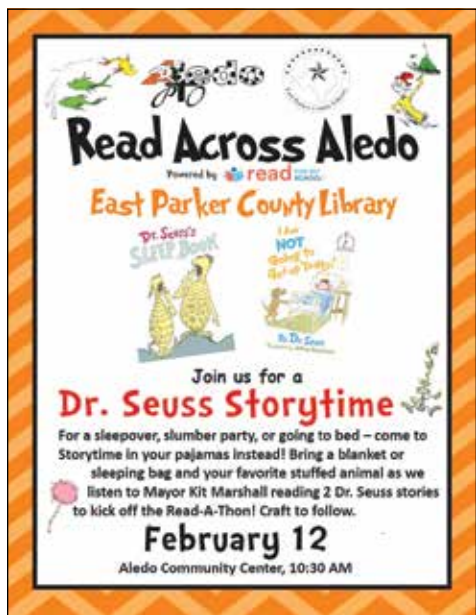


THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Serving Aledo • the Annettas • Hudson Oaks • Willow Park, Texas



Read Across Aledo kicks off

Staff Reports
The Community News

The Aledo PTO is partnering with the East Parker County Library to provide a family engagement school fundraiser that shares love of reading while teaching children the importance of giving back to the community.

Read Across Aledo, powered by Read for my School, runs from Feb. 11 to March 2.

Aledo area families are invited to help their children track their progress using Read for My School's digital platform and share your child's donation page with friends and family to raise money for the fundraiser.

Reading and fundraising goals include:

- a reading goal to reach 1,000,000 minutes read; and
- a fundraising goal of \$100,000 to support various Aledo PTO programs initiatives, Aledo ISO schools, and the East Parker County Library.

To register your student, scan the QR Code shown here using your mobile device or visit www.readformyschool.com. You can also download and register on



Turn to **READING**, page 2

DR. SEUSS STORYTIME

The East Parker County Library will kick off Read Across Aledo with story time at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 12. Aledo Mayor Kit Marshall will read two books: *Dr. Seuss' Sleep Book* and *I Am NOT Going to Get up Today*.

Children are encouraged to go to the library in pajamas and to bring blankets or sleeping bags and their favorite stuffed animals.

For more information, call the library at 817-441-6545.

BUSINESS

Funding Farmers

Aledo man creates company to match small investors with farmers and ranchers

By Randy Keck
The Community News

In the process of buying food, we rarely think about the farms and ranches that produced the meat, vegetables, and fruits we consume. Behind almost every grocery purchase is a farmer, rancher, or other agricultural producer — and a small or large business behind the operation.

Funding for farms and ranches, especially smaller ones, does not always come easy, and that's where Harvest Returns has stepped in.

The inspiration of Aledoan Chris Rawley, Harvest Returns matches up food producers and investors.

"We moved to Parker County, in 2013, and I've been an investor for a long time. This is the first time I've ever lived out in a place where there's a lot of farms and ranches, and every day, taking the girls to school or driving to work, I drive by Beggs Ranch and Walsh and I see all the cows and the sheep and the goats and llama and everything else that people grow out in Parker County,"



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Chris Rawley created Harvest Returns in 2016. Since then, the company has raised more than \$10 million in capital for farmers and ranchers.

Rawley said. "At the same time, I spent a lot of time traveling with the Navy. And I was working at a real estate development company at the time. And I thought, 'maybe I should look into investing in a farm.'"

Rawley said it didn't turn out to be as simple a proposition as he thought.

"It turns out that unless you have a whole lot of money and buy a large enough piece of land and know what you're doing, it's

pretty hard to just get started from square one with a farm," he said. "At the same time, there were real estate investment platforms that were coming online around 2014, 2015 that allowed you to invest in commercial real estate deals by just pressing a few buttons, just kind of like investing in stocks. So I had an idea in 2016 to combine those two ideas, which would be investing in farming, and investing in an online platform."

Rawley reached out to one of his Texas A&M buddies, fellow Parker County resident Austin Maness, and together they started the company, which has been growing ever since.

Right off the bat, Harvest Returns was a top-100 finalist for Startup of the Year, a global competition and network established to elevate and support startup founders. It has also been named one of the best tech startups

Turn to **HARVEST**, page 3

WILLOW PARK

Water line construction expected to begin in March

Potential monthly fees for storm water drainage

By Brandi Addison
The Community News

Willow Park city officials are hopeful this summer will be the first in many that the city doesn't face a near water supply shortage.

With more than five years of negotiating and planning behind them, Willow Park city officials expect the Fort Worth water project to begin in just a matter of days.

The city first partnered with Hudson Oaks in 2016 to fund the water transmission project, which will bring water from Fort Worth to Willow Park.

The near \$20 million project — divided into a 52-48 cost split between Willow Park and Hudson Oaks, respectively — will include a 24-inch approach water main, wholesale water meter station, storage tank, and pump station



Workers are busy building the new Willow Park playground on the site of the old public safety building. The city expects the park to be ready around spring break time.

RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

that would further help transport some water to Hudson Oaks.

Willow Park's water is currently produced from 26 wells around the city, which are supplied by the Trinity and Paluxy aquifers. While the wells can produce up

to 1.6 million gallons of water per day, the city water usage averages to 1.2 million gallons daily in the summer, leaving little for emergencies.

City officials said the extension would bring in an additional 3.5

million gallons per day, on average, totaling about 5 million gallons per day.

The initial work will begin at the beginning of March near

Turn to **WATER**, page 4



Volume 31, Number 7
Published Weekly

Commentary

Richard Henderson shares an unforgettable memory from his dad in honor of Black History Month.

PAGE 6

Bringing Hardware

AHS tennis team has successful South Hills Tournament.

PAGE 9



Playoff Time

Both hoops teams in playoffs. One scheduled, one not yet.

PAGE 7

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READING

from page one

Read for My School apps on Apple App and Google Play stores using the fundraiser name "Read Across Aledo" and the invitation code 42405.

When completing your child's reader profile, you must choose a team:

If you are student in grades Pre-K through 8th who is enrolled with Aledo ISD, choose your grade level and campus.

If you are a student who is not enrolled with Aledo ISD (for example, homeschool families or families with children younger than Pre-K), choose the East Parker County Library Team.

Once teams are formed, participants are ready to start reading and fundraising for the Aledo PTO and the East Parker County Library. For more information, email fundraising@aledopto.org.



Anyone who does not have a child in the program but would like to make a donation can visit <https://app.readformyschool.com/event/9ea467/read-across-aledo> to make a donation on behalf of Mr. Bearcat.



After many months of dirt work, utility installation, and road construction, the new Willow Park Baptist Church has started to take shape at Crown Pointe. The construction of the sanctuary and additional facilities should be ready in early 2022.

RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

BAND IN THE STANDS



The Aledo High School Jazz Band had an opportunity to perform recently at the Aledo-Rider boys basketball game. Shown are Marco Lozzi and Ben Cannell.

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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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HARVEST

from page one

by *Tech Tribune*. To date, 22 farms and ranches have been funded, more than \$10.4 million has been raised, and \$1.7 million has been distributed to investors.

Investments are as diverse as cocoa farms in Ghana; greenhouse produce in New Hampshire; microalgae in New Jersey; hydroponic produce in Alabama, Texas, and Kentucky; a bamboo farm in Florida; organic hemp in Colorado; and cattle operations in Kansas, Georgia, California, and Kansas.

“With our investments, you’re having an ownership stake in a farm,” Rawley said. “But it’s not like you own a rental property or something where you’re having to make decisions on how often I’m going to feed the cows and what kind of seeds am I going to plant this year; you’re not making those decisions — the farmer’s doing all that — all you’re doing is taking a stake in the farm and keeping updated from the farmer who’s doing all the work and you collect your returns from that farm as it grows crops.”

Harvest Returns is not subject to the volatility of the stock market because the investments are all investments with private farmers.

Investments can range from six months up to seven or eight years for “people who are okay with having their money work for them and kind of a slower manner. Our investments start at \$5,000, so it’s more

than buying a handful of stocks, but it’s also a lot less than some of the real estate investment trusts and things like that, that it might take \$15,000 to get into.”

Harvest Returns’ website speaks of “democratizing agriculture.” Rawley explained that term:

“Agriculture has been an investment that a lot of very wealthy people have invested in over the years. Bill Gates is the largest farmland owner in the United States, Warren Buffett’s a big farmland owner — obviously, you have some large landowners all over Texas that have owned the land for multiple generations. At the same time, you have University endowments and pension funds that will invest in hundreds of millions or billions of dollars worth of farmland or agriculture, but for smaller investors or the average individual investor, there’s really not a way to get into that particular asset class. So that’s the main reason we started this company was to get more people connections to farming via their investments.”

On the other side of the coin are the farmers.

“We have all kinds of farmers we work with, from multi-generational farmers that have been doing it for four decades to 20-something-year-olds that are trying to do innovative things like indoor agriculture or regenerative ranching,” Rawley said. “We like to work with farmers who either have a team or they’ve got some good ranching, farming people, agronomy people, but also some finance people on

“Agriculture has been an investment that a lot of very wealthy people have invested in over the years. Bill Gates is the largest farmland owner in the United States...but for smaller investors or the average individual investor, there’s really not a way to get into that particular asset class.”

- Chris Rawley

their team are really business-savvy people. Occasionally we’ll work with individuals who have both of those, but a lot of times, it turns out that there are two people or two or more people that have a team put together that can produce the returns while growing the crops or livestock.”

The investments can also take different forms.

“We’ve done loans with cattle ranchers, grass-fed cattle ranchers in particular, but we have also done equity investments where our investors will take a piece of their company, and then at some point, they’ll pay us back, they’ll refinance our investors out at a targeted rate of return, or they will sell their company to a larger company. And that’s

how our investors will get their money back.

“The first part of the process is we do due diligence on those farms and make sure that they’re a good investment. But then as we’ve raised money for the farmer, we help them understand their business. For the most part, we want to work with experienced farmers, so we don’t tell them how to run their farms. We’re not farm managers. But we are asset managers. So we help them make sure that they’ve had their tax documents prepared, things like that for the investors to ensure that they’re producing updates to our investors, the investors want to see how their farm is performing.”

According to his biography on the company website, Rawley “as

held corporate management roles in Jones Lang LaSalle, Electronic Data Systems, L-3 Communications, and served as a defense consultant at Special Operations Command with Blackbird Technologies. He has invested in real estate and income-producing agriculture for nearly two decades. Rawley is an angel investor in early-stage agriculture and food companies, including the Indian agriculture FinTech company Jai Kisan. He serves on the advisory board of the AgTech start-up AgroFides.

“As a Captain in the United States Navy Reserve, Rawley is Chief of Staff for the Naval Reserve Surface Forces, helping to oversee 3,800 sailors supporting fleet units around the world. During his 28-year military career, Rawley has filled a variety of leadership positions in naval, expeditionary, and joint special operations units afloat and ashore. He has deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, Africa, the Middle East, and Western Pacific. Rawley has a degree from Texas A&M University, earned an MBA at George Washington University, and is a graduate of the U.S. Naval War College.”

Rawley’s daughter Emma, a 2020 graduate of Aledo High School, is in her first year at Texas A&M and plans to help restore damaged farms and ranches when she graduates with a degree in ecological restoration.

For more information, visit harvestreturns.com.



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WATER

from page one

Farm-to-Market 3325, El Chico Trail, and Ranch Oak Drive.

The cost was originally estimated at about \$13.4 million in 2019, but late last year, the city was informed it would need to be increased to \$19.9 million — a change that stemmed from the cost of the storage tank and pump station.

Council members authorized the sale of revenue bonds in January, and on Tuesday, unanimously voted to submit a project information form to the Texas Water Development Board which requested a refund for the debt.

If approved, the city would receive lower interest rates for the debt. However, City Engineer Derek Turner said at the meeting it could take about four months to be approved.

"There's no guarantee that they'll do it, but this being an expansion on an existing project puts you pretty high in the rankings," Turner said. "I don't really see a scenario where they don't."

Public hearing for storm water drainage fees

During the upcoming council meeting on Feb. 23, council will hold two public hearings regarding storm water drainage and the imposition of fees for storm water drainage.

For a single-family residential lot, the storm water drainage would be set at \$5.50 per month per 1,500 square feet.

If approved by council, Willow Park residents and businesses will see the charge on their utility bill in the coming months.

Obituaries

Tom Siler

Thomas A. Siler, 78, of Willow Park, passed away on Monday, February 1, 2021, at his home in Willow Park surrounded by his family.

Tom grew up the oldest of four brothers in west Tennessee. After attending the University of Tennessee for a year, he joined the Navy in 1961. Tom served as a sonar technician aboard the nuclear submarine USS Halibut, stationed out of Pearl Harbor.

After his discharge in 1966, he moved to Odessa. There he worked as an electrician and married his wife, Kathy. They moved to Lubbock where he managed apartment complexes while they both completed their degrees at Texas Tech University. They moved to Fort Worth in 1978 after Tom accepted an electrical engineering position at General Dynamics. In 1981, he was assigned as a Tech Rep for the F-16 program. He moved his family to Europe where he worked with the Danish Air Force and later, the Dutch Air Force.

Tom and his family returned to Fort Worth in 1986, moving to Willow Park in 1991. He retired from Lockheed in 2002 after starting a business, Willow Park Air. Tom was active in his community. He volunteered for many years with youth sports in Fort Worth and Aledo, Brazos Valley Boy Scouts, and his church.

For the past ten years, Tom and Kathy enjoyed traveling in their RV. Tom loved exploring the countryside and talking with people he met along the way. He was known for his sense of humor and sharing stories from life experiences. Tom was always ready to help anyone in any way he could.

He was preceded in death by his father, Manley E. Siler, Sr.; mother, Sara L. Siler; and two brothers, Manley E. Siler, Jr. and Joe M. Siler.

Tom is survived by his wife of 50 years, Kathy F. Siler; daughter, Jennifer L. Siler (Ray Banfield, Jr.) of Granbury; son, Jeffrey F. Siler (Amy L. Leslie) of Fort Worth; brother, Richard E. Siler (Carolyn T. Siler) of Odessa; sister-in-law, Bendy Siler Sobol of Arizona; three step-grandsons; eight nieces and nephews; and numerous cousins.

A memorial service is scheduled for 11 a.m. Saturday, February 13, 2021, at Aledo United Methodist Church. Private interment will be held at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery later.

Memorials may be made to Aledo United Methodist Church. To watch the service live online, visit the Facebook page of Aledo United Methodist Church at the time of the service: [facebook.com/aledoumc](https://www.facebook.com/aledoumc).

The Community News
February 12, 2021



Tom Siler

ACROSS

- 1 TXism: "he rides rough— over everybody"
- 5 this Thomas was the first TX woman in the U.S. House
- 6 former Oilers coach "Bum" Phillips
- 7 TX-based carrier: "hound Lines"
- 8 this Richards was 45th TX governor
- 9 TX Audie Murphy 1964 film: "Bullet for —"
- 16 Gulf shrimp catchers
- 18 small unincorporated town in Donley County (2 wds.)
- 21 Austin band: "Asleep the Wheel"
- 22 TXism: "take a — at it" (try)
- 23 golf tee, e.g.
- 24 — bacon
- 30 TXism: " — empty egg shell"
- 34 365 days (abbr.)
- 35 female empowering song by TX-born Ciara (2 wds.)
- 36 this TX Lisa had a number 1 song with "Stay (I Missed You)"
- 37 TXism: "nary a soul" (2 wds.)
- 39 TX Lee Brown was Director of " — Control Policy" office (1993-96)
- 43 metric base units
- 44 making sleep noise
- 45 —yo (toy)

DOWN

- 1 "Drive Friendly" or "Don't Mess with Texas," e.g.
- 2 in Robertson County on U.S. 79
- 3 — rugs
- 4 this Tim was in "Wings" with TX Crystal Bernard
- 9 leap, for Astros and Rangers
- 10 items with biggest discounts (2 wds.)
- 11 Claudia — "Lady Bird" Johnson
- 12 TXism: "buenas —" (good day)
- 13 in Kaufman County on U.S. 175
- 14 Astro pitcher, Osuna (1990-93)
- 15 "siesta" in Mexico
- 17 TXism: "he's — some snap in his garters" (able)
- 19 8-across gave this address to DNC in 1988
- 20 fancy word for "exit"
- 24 this Guttenberg is a U.S. Supreme Court justice in upcoming "Roe v. Wade" (init.)
- 25 Texas historian and author, Tinkle
- 26 Exxon or Valero can be — station
- 27 TXism: "two— —" (bad horse)

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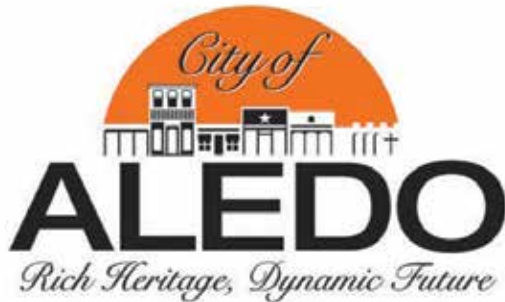
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Notice of Public Hearings

Notice is hereby given that the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council of the City of Aledo, Parker County, Texas will conduct public hearings in the Aledo Community Center, 104 Robinson Court, Aledo, Texas.

First Public Hearing Planning and Zoning Commission
Location: Aledo Community Center
104 Robinson Court
Aledo, Texas 76008
Date: Tuesday, February 23, 2021
Time: 6:00 P.M.

Second Public Hearing City Council Meeting
Location: Aledo Community Center
104 Robinson Court
Aledo, Texas 76008
Date: Thursday, February 25, 2021
Time: 6:00 P.M.

- 1) The purpose of the hearing is to receive input regarding consideration of a request for a Zoning Change from (A) Agricultural District to (PD R-2) Planned Development Single Family Residential District – 87.67 acres of land situated in the E. Oxer Survey, Abstract Number 1031, and the J. Wray Survey, Abstract Number 1639, Parker County, Texas.
- 2) The purpose of the hearing is to receive input regarding consideration of a petition for annexation into the City of Aledo 87.67 acres of land situated in the E. Oxer Survey, Abstract Number 1031, and the J. Wray Survey, Abstract Number 1639, Parker County Texas.

Published in *The Community News*, February 12, 2021 and posted at Aledo City Hall February 9, 2021.

Deana McMullen, City Secretary

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TCA sweeps 19th annual Coyote Area Math Championship

Trinity Christian Academy dominated the 19th annual Coyote Area Math Championship on the Weatherford College campus on Friday, Feb. 5.

Students from area high schools converged to compete in pre-calculus and calculus competitions via written tests.

TCA placed first as a team in both events, and took the top three spots in individual calculus and the top two spots in individual pre-calculus.

Normally attended by more than a dozen schools, this year's event was smaller due to COVID-19 restriction facings many schools. Weatherford, Peaster, Mineral Wells, and Alvord high schools participated along with Trinity Christian Academy.

"In the 19 years of hosting the competition, the contest has never been cancelled," said Shirley Brown, WC math department chair. "It was delayed two weeks one year because of icy roads. We have had to deal with rainstorms, flooded parking lots, falling snow, a gas leak on campus, freezing temperatures and other disruptions over the 19 years. Now we can add COVID to the list."

Event organizers plan to rename the contest next year in honor of Pat Cook, retired math department chair who began the contest and recently passed away.



LEFT: TCA's first-place calculus team was composed of Emma Bayles, Colton Bevering, Jack Sims, and Reese Carlson. | RIGHT: TCA's first-place pre-calculus team was composed of Paige Bull, Charlotte Floyd, Stephen Lipsky, and Katherine White.

SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Team Results

Calculus

- 1st Place: Trinity Christian Academy
- 2nd Place: Weatherford High School
- 3rd Place: Mineral Wells High School

Pre-Calculus

- 1st Place: Trinity Christian Academy
- 2nd Place: Weatherford High School
- 3rd Place: Mineral Wells High School

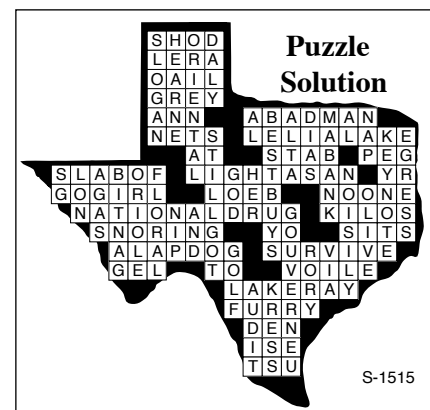
Individual Results

Calculus

- 1st Place: Emma Bayles - Trinity Christian Academy
- 2nd Place: Reexe Carlson - Trinity Christian Academy
- 3rd Place: Colton Bevering - Trinity Christian Academy
- 4th Place: Jack Sims - Trinity Christian Academy
- 5th Place: Caleb Clark - Mineral Wells High School

Pre-Calculus

- 1st Place: Katherine White - Trinity Christian Academy
- 2nd Place: Charlotte Floyd - Trinity Christian Academy
- 3rd Place: Timothy Carzine - Mineral Wells High School
- 4th Place: Carson Huseman - Mineral Wells High School
- 5th Place: Tucker Abbott - Alvord High School



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Thistles & Roses

Unforgettable Lesson from Dad



Richard Henderson
richard@rahenderson.com

February is Black History Month.

When I was growing up in the 1950s and 1960s, my folks taught my brothers and me to respect all people of all races. The “N” word was never spoken in our house. We watched the racial strife in other parts of the south and really had no understanding of what was going on. Since we were taught better by my parents, we could not grasp what the problems were in other parts of the country. My parents were not politically active nor did they participate in any civil rights demonstrations. They just set a better example.

When school desegregation was discussed in the news, my young self wanted desegregation to happen before I graduated so I could go to school with African American students. The Fort Worth Independent School District decided to integrate a year at a time starting with first grade around 1960. I think I was in fifth grade so it looked like I would not ever have integrated classes. Then, when I was in seventh

grade at Forest Oak Junior High, all grades were integrated and I went to school and played sports with kids of all races.

My father taught me another life lesson one weekend at the Texas and Pacific Railroad station in Fort Worth. Dad worked in the offices of the passenger department of the Fort Worth and Denver Railroad in downtown Fort Worth. The company was part of Burlington Route Railroad, later to become what is now known as Burlington Northern.

The passenger department employees had to take turns staffing the passenger office at the T and P railroad station south of downtown Fort Worth on weekends to serve passengers. My brother Dennis and I would go with him on his assigned weekends.

The depot was and still is a magical place to me. I remember the announcements for trains and destinations that would boom and echo throughout the station. A couple of times, I made train trips to Colorado and back with Dad when he accompanied large groups of passengers.

One Saturday afternoon in the late 1950s or early 1960s, Dad, my brother, and I were sitting in the passenger office in the depot when two upset African American ladies walked in. They told Dad that they were passengers on one of his trains and that they had just been refused service at the depot coffee shop. My Dad told them to go back to the restaurant and tell them that he was with the railroad

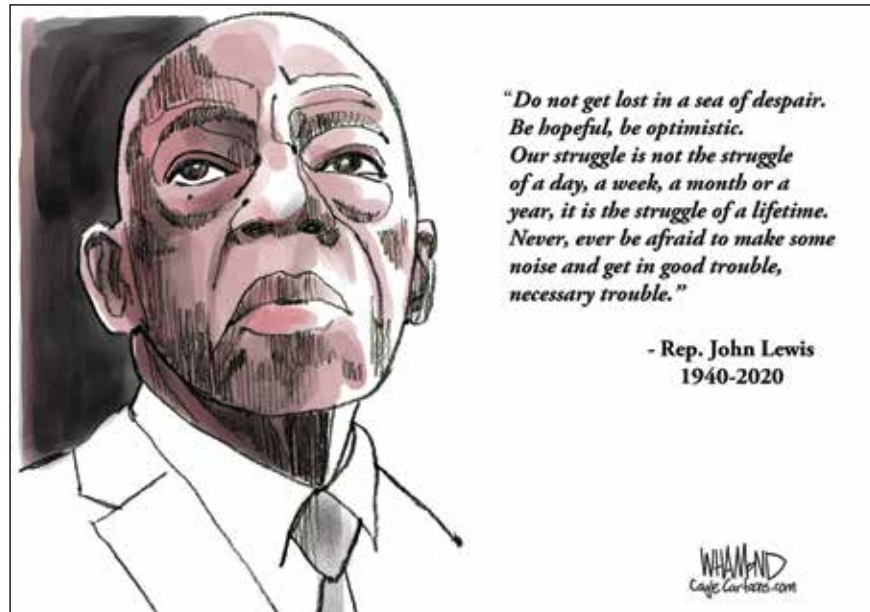


SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Walter and Mary Henderson

and to serve them. After they left my brother and I were wide eyed and full of questions. My Dad tried to explain because we boys could not understand why they would be refused.

A few minutes later, they returned and said that they had been refused again. Dad was the lone employee and he had a duty to have the office open and he had us two boys, about 8 and 9 years of age to deal with, but he made a decision.



“Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful, be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month or a year, it is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble.”

- Rep. John Lewis
1940-2020

He said, “come on boys,” and locked up the office and told the ladies to follow him. We trailed along behind

I still wonder what that looked like. He was a young man in a suit and tie, two black ladies, and we two young wide-eyed kids walking across the massive depot to the coffee shop. I have to tell you, I was really excited and wondered what I was about to witness.

He confronted the manager and a waitress and told them that he was with the railroad and told them in no uncertain terms to serve the ladies. I seem to remember he asked for menus for them and if they wanted a piece of the magnificent pies that were displayed in a case on the counter. He informed the

personnel that they would serve all of the railroad’s passengers in the future. The ladies were served without further ado.

Later, the ladies came back by and thanked my Dad and went on their way.

Looking back on it, I realize I witnessed a piece of Black History that no one ever knew about. Dad never talked about it nor made a big deal of it.

But looking back on it, I realize that if there were more people like my Dad who taught his kids better than most, maybe we wouldn’t have the racial strife and divisions we have seen and still see today.

And, I am very proud of my Dad. May he rest in peace.

Capital Highlights

COVID-19 vaccine pace rises while hospitalizations drop



Gary Borders
gborders@texaspress.com

The number of people in Texas hospitalized with COVID-19 has declined more than 28 percent in the past month, according to the Texas Department of Health Services. As of Feb. 7, Texas hospitals were treating 9,957 COVID-19 patients, down from nearly 14,000 a month ago. The number of new cases in the past week was 123,239 — a 22 percent drop from the record high of 158,922 the week of Jan. 10, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University.

At the same time new cases and hospitalizations were decreasing, the number of Texans getting their first dose of vaccine crossed the 2.3 million mark as of Sunday, according to TDHS. That’s 700,000 more initial shots in a week. Those who are now fully vaccinated reached 733,287 as of Sunday.

The state received 401,750 first doses from the federal government this week, which are going out to 358 providers in 135 counties. That includes 85 hub providers, according to TDHS.

Not everyone is on board to receive the COVID-19 vaccine

About one-third of Texans polled in a recent statewide survey by the University of Houston Hobby School of Public Affairs say they are unlikely to get the COVID-19 vaccine when it becomes available. More than one out of five respondents were adamant they will not receive the vaccine.

Kirk P. Watson, founding dean of the Hobby School, said he hopes the survey will help public health officials address concerns of those unwilling to be vaccinated.

“More than 60 percent of people who are hesitant to be immunized had concerns about potential side effects and worried that the vaccine is too new,” Watson said in a news release. “Understanding why people resist immunization is an important step in reaching herd immunity.”

Most of those polled who say they are certain or likely to refuse vaccination asserted they don’t trust the government or pharmaceutical companies to ensure the vaccine

is safe. Health experts say that between 70 percent and 90 percent of the population must be vaccinated to achieve herd immunity, according to the press release.

On the flip side, more than 40 percent of Texans say they will get the vaccine when available, or they have already gotten at least one dose, while 18 percent said they would probably get it.

Abbott gets behind rural broadband expansion

Gov. Greg Abbott made expanded broadband service an emergency item during the current legislative session, saying it is necessary for providing telemedicine care to patients regardless of where they live, and for improving educational access.

“From medicine to education to business, broadband access is not a luxury — it is an essential tool that must be available for all Texans,” Abbott said in his State of the State address last week.

As previously reported, a pair of lawmakers intend to file legislation aimed at expanding critical broadband services throughout the state. Sen. Robert Nichols, R-Jacksonville, and Rep. Trent Ashby, R-Lufkin, are calling for creation of a statewide

broadband plan no later than a year after enabling legislation is passed. Texas is one of only six states that does not have such a plan.

One *Capital Highlights* reader, a Houston resident who owns a second home on Lake Murvaul in Panola County, recently wrote to bemoan the lack of connectivity in rural East Texas: “It’s a no-internet/no cell bars jungle over there. At Lake Murvaul, I have installed a cell phone booster on a 20-foot antenna so that my phone has enough signal strength to be a hot spot. Then I had to upgrade my “unlimited” plan, only to find out that after 30GB of being a passable hot spot, it meters down to a trickle that won’t even let me view the latest Bernie Sanders meme.” He added, “I have parked in the lot at the library just to download Kindle books and Prime Video. Primitive!”

State rep seeks to clarify deadline for TPIA requests

Rep. Giovanni Capriglione, R-Southlake, has filed an open government bill designed to more clearly explain “business days” for governmental entities responding to the Texas Public Information Act. According to Kelley Shannon,

executive director of the Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas, during the COVID-19 pandemic some governments refused to respond to TPIA requests if their physical offices were closed, even if the staff was working remotely. This legislation would give clearer guidelines for response days. It’s House Bill 1416.

Emergency SNAP food benefits extended through February

Emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits have been extended through February, with \$300 million in benefits provided. The move came after the Texas Health and Human Services Commission received approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which funds the program. Recipients will also continue to receive a 15 percent increase in their total benefits, at least until June.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com.

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SUBMIT STORIES, PHOTOS OR IDEAS

We’re always on the lookout for story ideas. To share one, call Randy Keck at 817-441-7661, ext. 207 or email news@community-news.com. Please provide the basic story information as well as contact information in case we have questions.

We welcome letters, articles and guest opinions from our readers. Opinions expressed in this newspaper will be labeled as opinions, editorials or letters, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ownership. Letters should be signed, and limited to approximately 300 words. All submissions to the newspaper should

include a telephone number in case we have questions. Letters are due by Monday at noon for that week’s paper. Community announcements, achievements and obituaries are due by noon Friday for the following week’s paper. Send submissions to news@community-news.com.

Photos submitted should include names of the people in the photograph. For ease in submitting photographs electronically, visit our contact form at community-news.com/contacts.

The Community News does not charge for timely wedding, engagement and birth announcements provided they are of reasonable length. Lengthy announcements will either be edited to a reasonable length or, at the discretion of the person submitting the announcement, be charged a fee. The deadline for submitting announcements is noon Friday for the following week’s paper.

Sports

FEBRUARY 12, 2021
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ON THE SIDE

Spring Sports

FEBRUARY 12

Boys' Soccer vs. Brewer, Home, VAR - 7 p.m., JV - 5:30 p.m.

Girls' Soccer vs. Brewer, Away, VAR - 7 p.m., JV - 5:30 p.m.

Varsity Tennis vs. S Hills Tournament, Away

Softball scrimmage vs. Mansfield, Home, VAR - 12:45, 2:30 p.m., JV - 4:30, 7:30 p.m.

FEBRUARY 13

Softball scrimmage vs. Mansfield, Away

FEBRUARY 15

Var Boys' Golf at Max Memorial, Away, VAR - 9 AM

FEBRUARY 16

Softball vs. Centennial, Home, VAR - 7 p.m., JV - 5 p.m.

FEBRUARY 17

JV Girls' Golf at Burleson Centennial Tournament, Away, JV - 8 AM

Track & Field vs. Weatherford JV, Home

FEBRUARY 18

JV Tennis at Timbercreek Tournament, Away

Track & Field at Weatherford Var, Away

Softball at Var Mid-Cities Tournament

FEBRUARY 19

Boys' Soccer vs. Granbury, Away, VAR - 7 p.m., JV - 5:30 p.m.

Girls' Soccer vs. Granbury, Home, VAR - 7 p.m., JV - 5:30 p.m.

Varsity Tennis at Wichita Falls Tournament, Away

Softball vs. TBD, Away, JV - TBD

FEBRUARY 23

Boys' Soccer - Covid Make-Up

JV Tennis at Grapevine Tournament, Away

Softball vs. Lakeridge, Away, VAR - 7 p.m., JV - 5 p.m.

JV Boys' Golf at Buzzy Open, Away, JV - 8 AM

FEBRUARY 24

JV Girls' Golf vs. Burleson HS Tournament, Away

FEBRUARY 25

Track & Field at 4 Teams JV & Var, Away

Softball at Var Mansfield Tournament, Home

FEBRUARY 26

Boys' Soccer vs. Azle, Home, VAR - 7 p.m., JV - 5:30 p.m.

Girls' Soccer vs. Azle, Away, VAR - 7 p.m., JV - 5:30 p.m.

Varsity Tennis at Grapevine Tournament, Away

Var Boys' Golf at Bearcat Brawl, Home, VAR - 8 AM

Var Girls' Golf at Burleson Tournament, Away, VAR - 8 AM

MARCH 2

Boys' Soccer - Covid Make-Up

Softball vs. Waxahachie, Away, VAR - 7 p.m., JV - 5 p.m.

MARCH 3

JV Tennis at Chisholm Tr Tournament, Away

MARCH 4

Track & Field at Brewer JV, Away

Softball vs. Var Coppel Tournament, Away

MARCH 5

Boys' Soccer vs. WF Rider, Home, VAR - 7 p.m., JV - 5:30 p.m.

Girls' Soccer vs. WF Rider, Home, VAR - 7 p.m., JV - 5:30 p.m.

BASKETBALL

Bearcats finish district in second place

Ladycats head to bi-district

By Randy Keck
The Community News

After defeating Wichita Falls 67-56 on Friday, Feb. 5, the Aledo Bearcats basketball team hosted Brewer with the hope of biting off a piece of the district championship.

Brewer came into the game with a 7-1 record. The Bearcats were a half game behind with a record of 7-2. A Bearcat win in their final district game would have put them up a half game over Brewer, with Brewer set to play a makeup game against Wichita Falls Rider this weekend.

It was not to be. The Bearcats, playing without the services of guard Daniel Sohn, never gave up and gave the Bears a run for their money.

Both teams struggled offensively at the beginning of the game. The first point on the board was a free throw by Cam Yielding roughly two-and-a-half minutes into the game.

Brewer scored a bucket, and another score didn't go on the board until almost five minutes into the quarter when Clark Crawford sunk a three-pointer, putting the Bearcats up 4-2. Drew Clock followed with a beautiful move to the bucket from the corner, and Landry Simmons added a bucket on a fast break.

Brewer made up part of the deficit with a bucket and free



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Cam Yielding battles to the basket against a Brewer defender.

Turn to **HOOPS**, page 8

Box Scores

Basketball

Aledo Bearcats vs Brewer

Varsity - February 9

Aledo	8	1	12	13	34
Brewer	5	11	11	12	39

Landry Simmons 15, Drew Clock 9, Cam Yielding 4, Clark Crawford 3, Jason Llewellyn 2, Trevor Darton 1.

Aledo Ladycats at Azle

Varsity - February 5

Aledo	3	5	9	11	28
Azle	15	8	19	6	48

Kylie Anderson 7, Reagan Davis 6, Sophie Smith 4, Addyson Hebel 5, Kenzie Grau 3, Claire Byars 2

Aledo Middle School

Aledo Middle School Ladycats swept Cleburne and Acton

Aledo vs Cleburne:

7A: 58-5, 7B: 31-4, 7C: 40-0
8A: 44-11, 8B: 38-6, 8C: 42-2

Aledo vs Acton:

7A: 23-18, 7B: 31-9, 7C: 35-11
8A: 33-19, 8B: 33-20, 8C: 24-22
Coaches said "The Ladycats won all of those games, showing their hard work and determination. We have one final game next week against Brewer." Seventh Grade plays on Tuesday, Feb. 16, and eighth grade plays on Thursday, Feb. 18.

Soccer

The Bearcats varsity lost to Rider on Friday, Feb. 5, 1-2. Dylan Dobransky scored unassisted.

The Bearcats fell to Wichita Falls on Tuesday, 0-2.

The Ladycats lost to Rider on Friday, 5-2. Caroline Miller and Ashlyn Laughley scored goals assisted by Ashlyn Laughley and Caroline Miller.

The Ladycats defeated Wichita Falls on Tuesday 3-0. Jenna Barouh, Jourdan Hart, and Caroline Miller scored goals for the Ladycats assisted by Grace Ornelas (2) and Jourdan Hart. The Ladycats have a record of 2-2-5 in district 5-5A and 7-4 overall.



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo junior Taylon Kessler (1) is shown in soccer action earlier this season. The Bearcats are scheduled to host Brewer on Friday, Feb. 12. JV starts at 5:30 p.m. and varsity is at 7 p.m. They travel to Granbury on Feb. 19.



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Junior Forward Ashlyn Laughley (9) heads a ball in action earlier this season. The Ladycats are scheduled to travel to Brewer on Friday, Feb. 12, for a match beginning at 5:30 p.m. They host Granbury on Feb. 19.



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HOOPS

from page seven

throw. Crawford was injured on the play, and the quarter ended with Aledo up 8-5.

The Bearcats could not buy the proverbial basket in the second quarter, being held to a single free throw by Simmons. The Bears found their range, scoring 11 points in the quarter to go up 9-16 at the half.

The Bearcats gained confidence and their shots in the third quarter. Yielding started the scoring with a free throw, and then Jason Llewellyn scored from under the basket. Yielding added another bucket to bring the Bearcats with two points of the Bears, 14-16, but Brewer responded with a bucket and a three-pointer to go up seven.

Simmons scored on a fast break, but Brewer sunk another trey. Simmons scored on a drive, but Brewer again responded with a trey as the clock ticked down.

The crowd erupted when Simons threw up a last-second three-point attempt that swished as the buzzer sounded and the Bearcats needing to make up a 21-27 deficit in the fourth.

Simmons scored on a drive after a Brewer bucket in the fourth, but the Bears smelled blood and scored another four points to go up 23-33. Clock put in a bucket at about the halfway point of the fourth quarter, but Brewer began playing "keep away" and slow-down basketball with an eight-point lead.

Simmons scored a bucket and was fouled, adding three points to Aledo's score. Another good move by Clock with about a minute and a half put the Bearcats within five at 30-35.

The Bearcats were having to resort to fouls for a chance to get the ball. Brewer added three free throws, but Clock sunk a three-pointer with about 29 seconds remaining.

Trever Darton scored Aledo's last point on a free throw.

The Bearcats won three out of the four quarters, but the disastrous second quarter was their downfall in the game.



LADYCATS BEGIN PLAYOFFS

The Ladycats basketball team ended their district play with a loss to Azle, 28-48. Finishing in fourth place, the Ladycats were scheduled to play a bi-district game against Lake Dallas on Thursday, Feb. 11, at Bridgeport.

The game was scheduled after press time but before newspapers are delivered. It will be covered in next week's issue of *The Community News*.



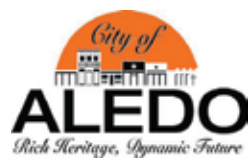
RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

LEFT: Kenzie Grau (4) drives against Brewer in recent action. Grau scored three points against Azle last week. | RIGHT: Clark Crawford scored a three-pointer to give the Bearcats an early lead against Brewer.

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NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS CITY OF ALEDO

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the City of Aledo, Texas, will receive written qualifications only, for CITY HALL NEEDS ASSESSMENT, as stated in the Request for Qualifications documents.

The City shall receive Qualifications from qualified professional architectural firms for the City of Aledo as outlined in the Request for Qualifications.

Said Qualifications must be in the office of the City Secretary, City of Aledo, P.O. Box 1, 200 Old Annetta Road, Aledo, Texas 76008, NO LATER THAN 1:00 P.M. CST on Wednesday, March 17, 2021. Qualifications that are postmarked but not received until after this deadline will not be accepted. Qualifications received after the post-ed cut-off time will not be accepted.

All Qualifications are to be marked clearly on the outside "REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS - CITY HALL NEEDS ASSESSMENT".

Qualifications may be mailed to City of Aledo, P.O. Box 1, Aledo, Texas, 76008 or delivered by courier or in person to the City Secretary's office, Aledo City Hall, 200 Old Annetta Road, Aledo, Texas, 76008.

Qualification documents may be obtained at the City of Aledo City Hall, 200 Old Annetta Road, Aledo, Texas, 76008. Qualification documents will be ready for pickup on and after February 1, 2021. Request for Qualification documents may also be downloaded at www.aledo-texas.com. Information may be requested by email to Bill Funderburk at bill.funderburk@aledo-texas.com

The City of Aledo will NOT entertain Qualifications received by any electronic means.

The right is reserved to reject any and all Qualifications or to accept the Qualification which is deemed by the City of Aledo to be in the best interest of the City of Aledo. The City of Aledo also reserves the right to waive any irregularities and/or informalities in the process.

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AHS Tennis brings home hardware at South Hills Tournament

By Andrea Garnett
Special to The Community News

The RacquetCats had another impressive tournament placing in all doubles categories on Monday, Feb. 8. The South Hills tournament was played at several different schools in the Burleson area. The tournament that was originally scheduled for Friday, Feb. 12, had to be moved up due to inclement weather forecasted for the end of the week.

In the girls' A doubles bracket the team of Georgia Posey/Maddie Farmer took second place in the finals battle while in the girls' B doubles bracket Cambell Charrier/Allie Farmer won first place easily defeating their opponents.

The Boys' A doubles team of Jax Joiner/Hogan Posey bounced back after losing a close first match and ended up winning the consolation bracket. Boys' B bracket team of Craig Mason/Ben Farmer made it to the finals and came up with second place while Zane Martin/Michael Birdwell were consolation finalists. The mixed doubles team of Ian Leslie/Katie Siddons won a first place trophy the second week in a row dominating the A bracket.

The lone boy's A singles player Scott Mason made it to the consolation semifinals, while Payton Bierle played in the quarterfinals of girl's A singles and Paige Federman in the girl's B singles quarterfinals.

The RacquetCats face some of their district opponents next week on Friday, Feb. 19, when they participate in the Wichita Falls Old High tournament.



TOP LEFT: Jax Joiner and Hogan Posey won Consolation. | TOP MIDDLE: Craig Mason and Ben Farmer placed second in Boys' B Doubles. | TOP RIGHT: Ian Leslie and Katie Siddons placed first in Mixed Doubles. | FAR LEFT: Maddie Farmer and Georgia Posey placed second in Girls' A Doubles. | LEFT: Cambell Charrier and Allie Farmer placed first in Girls B Doubles.

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