

THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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Change in Trajectory

Emma Vidal relishes new opportunities

By Aleshia Howe
The Community News

Some events change the trajectory of life as we know it.

And some events change who we are.

For Aledo's 11-year-old Emma Vidal, both are true.

It's been 22 months since Emma, then 9, lost consciousness at Vandagriff Elementary School and was rushed to Cook Children's Hospital where she would eventually be diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia.

Emma and her family have spent the last two years fighting – and beating – leukemia. They've been in the trenches and they've celebrated the wins with the support of family, friends, and the Aledo community.

Emma admits she's not the same person she was two years ago: following many rounds of chemo, her hair has come back curly, like when she "was little," she says. She's also traded a love of gymnastics for



COOK CHILDREN'S MEDICAL CENTER
Emma Vidal is shown with Neely a therapy dog at Cook Children's Medical Center.

an intense love of showing horses – something that's easier for her to do on the days when she's still weak from treatment.

And most recently, Emma has stepped out of her shell by accepting Cook Children's invitation to serve as a 2020/2021 Patient Ambassador, sharing her story with the Dallas/Fort Worth community and beyond in hopes of spreading awareness about signs of leukemia and the work that happens inside the walls of Cook Children's Hospital.

"I never thought I would be doing any of this," says Emma, shrugging and smiling. "But I feel really happy right now. I'm getting to do a lot of stuff I never thought I would so that's great."

Before she got sick, Emma competed in gymnastics. During her treatment, Emma learned through a family friend about a local nonprofit agency called the Sonny James Equine Ministries, based in Cresson. Through that organization, Emma has found a renewed sense of competition. She is a

Turn to EMMA, page 2

A special gift called 'Barney'

Thoughtful present given 55 years ago becomes a tradition

By Randy Keck

The Community News

Special gifts stand the test of time, and local residents can see the proof of that when they pass New Faith Baptist Church in Annetta.

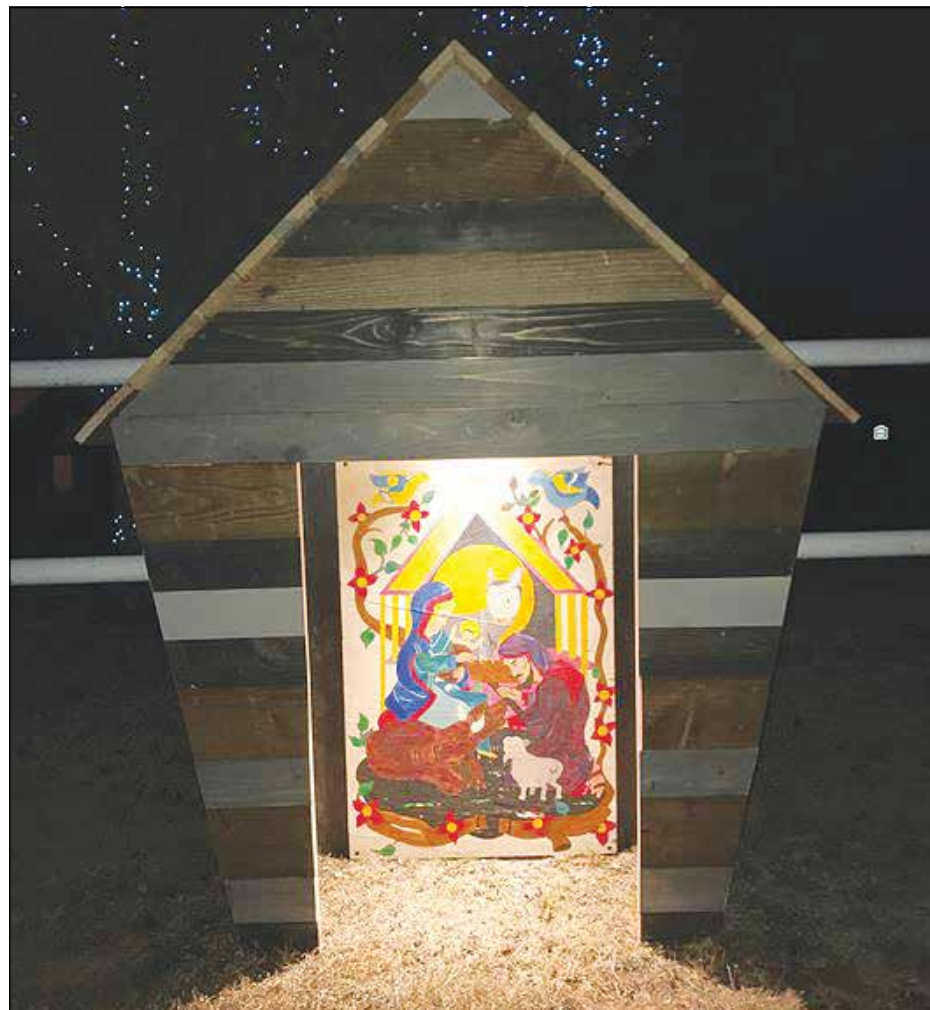
The story begins 55 years ago in Nebraska where Darrell Shultz, who now lives in Annetta, lived with his parents.

His father was a pastor of a congregation, but due to the health of Shultz' sister, the family planned a move to a warmer Oklahoma climate.

Ruth Stubbendick, a member of the congregation, wanted to give the pastor a going-away gift.

"Working from a Christmas card, she hand-painted a reproduction of the design onto a piece of plywood and gave it to my dad," Shultz said. "Until his death on Father's Day, 1997, dad displayed that painting outside our home during the Christmas season."

His dad would display the scene outside the parsonage in Oklahoma through the Advent



DARRELL SHULTZ/SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS
The latest rendition of "Barney" can be seen at New Faith Baptist Church in Annetta.

season up until Epiphany, Jan. 6.

When Shultz was in high school, the family was living with his grandmother in Dubuque, Iowa. Darrell decided to get the decorations out when Advent come along.

"Worried about the deteriorating condition of the wooden panel, I surreptitiously built an entire stable around the painting using scrap wood dad had stored under our mobile home," Shultz said. My family came home to this surprise, loved it, and named the creche scene "Barney."

"It was about six feet tall, about three feet deep or so and I put a flood lamp in it, to highlight the picture like dad did, except it's inside the stable mount," he said.

Shultz said the "Barney" designation came from his brother, who was about six-years-old at the time.

Shultz went off to college in Oklahoma, but returned home when he was 20 to introduce his fiancé to his parents.

Turn to BARNEY, page 2



Welcome to the 26th annual Good News

edition of The Community News.

Twenty-five years ago, we made a decision that one issue of the paper each year ought to be devoted to good news. News about pandemics, train wrecks, and political corruption can take a week off while we celebrate the end of one year and the beginning of a new one.

We invite you to check community-news.com for breaking news during the holidays.

We hope you enjoy this issue - and we hope you and all who are dear to you have a wonderful 2021!



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EMMA

from page one

member of the Junior Ranch Show team and just this month, she got her very own horse – a trained therapy horse that was donated by a stranger in another state.

“Horse showing is everything I thought it would be and way more,” Emma said. “At first I really missed gymnastics and I just wanted to do something, and my dad kept saying, ‘hold on, you’ll find the right thing’ and then horse showing came along. It’s something I can do on my own and it makes me so happy. I’m just glad I tried something new.”

It’s that spirit that also led to Emma accepting the role of Patient Ambassador at Cook Children’s Hospital.

The Patient Ambassador program began in 2017 as a general awareness and fundraising program for the hospital system. Patients are nominated and agree to tell their stories with the community at large. The role is a 12-month commitment, running August to August.

“Our patients have some of the most amazing stories,” said Erin McDonald, CMN Hospitals Specialist. “They are able to share their hope and inspiration with the community so we can help people understand the healing that happens inside the walls of Cook Children’s.”

Patients are typically nominated to be a part of the Patient Ambassador program. In Emma’s case, her Child Life Specialist nominated her for the role.

“Emma has personality for days,” McDonald said. “She has the kindest spirit and even after everything she’s been through, she has never lost that joy.”

To date, Emma has participated in a radiothon and been featured on several local radio stations, she’s been interviewed by DJs and made a showing at the TCU Dance



Emma Vidal shows a “radiothon” poster with her photo as a Cook Children’s 2020/2021 Patient Ambassador.

Marathon. But through it all, nerves “never bugged me,” she said.

“I guess I just like telling my story,” Emma said. “If I can help someone out there and I can help Cook Children’s too, that’s a great feeling ... The doctors and nurses saved my life. If Cook Children’s wasn’t here, I wouldn’t be here.”

These days Emma only goes in for chemo treatments once a month and every three months for a lumbar puncture, which she calls a back pinch. She will be finished with her chemo in June, 2021.

Before she got sick, Emma says she hasn’t really thought about what she wanted to be when she grew up. But now she’s quick to answer that she wants to be a Child Life Specialist, like the ones who helped her at the hospital.

“They just helped me so much and I think helping kids like that sounds like a really neat job,” Emma says, grinning ear to ear. “Who doesn’t like to make people feel better?”

SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

BARNEY

from page one

“She came from a family that didn’t celebrate Christmas quite like we did,” Shultz said. “She fell in love with all the Advent devotions.”

And she fell in love with Barney. “So,” Shultz continued, “I hand-painted my own version of the original painting, built a second ‘Barney,’ and she and I began displaying that rendition.”

Shultz’s wife passed away on Dec. 17, 2019, but the tradition has been built on and has continued.

“Knowing it would be hard on our son to face that — with all the other things he faced in New York City during the pandemic — I sought out to add to the tradition. I hired a carpenter who provided me his expertise and tools for us to build six, miniature ‘Barneys’ and I then sent them to my loved ones to adorn their houses during the Advent Season of 2020,” Shultz said.

Each Barney was about 18” tall and has an 8”x10” photo of the original painting.

Recently, Shultz stumbled across a photo that his mother had even him. (His mother is still alive and is 86).

“I looked at the back of the photo and it said this is the woman whose mother painted to Christmas scene. So I’ve kept looking on the internet and I found her daughter.”

The daughter, Sherry Ross, still lives in Nebraska.

“Sherry was just tickled pink to hear back from me because her mother died when she was only 49, only seven years after she painted that picture for my dad,” Shultz said. “Sherry remembered watching her mother paint that, so she was really grateful I contacted her.”

The same carpenter who helped build the miniature Barneys helped Shultz build a larger, 6’ version, on Dec. 9, and it was placed at New



DARRELL SHULTZ/SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Shultz had miniature Barneys made for family members. They stand about 18” tall.

“The beauty of Christmas is finding the gift that just keeps going”

- Darrell Shultz

Faith Baptist Church (3303 W FM 5 in Annetta).

“The beauty of Christmas is finding the gift that just keeps going,” Shultz said. “That’s always nice when you give a gift that becomes a family heirloom that gets passed down as this painting has, but it’s been more than that. I mean, so many people have enjoyed it down through the years.”

“Now, during a time when so many people are feeling blue, they can drive by night or day and see this ‘Barney 2020,’ a gift to our community (unwittingly) by a parishioner back in the mid 1960s whose gift just keeps getting passed along.”

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Merry Christmas!

Aledo ISD administration surprises four Circle of Greatness special honorees

The Aledo ISD administration team made four surprise stops Tuesday morning, Dec. 9, to celebrate the district's fall Circle of Greatness Special Honorees.

The district recognized Stuard Elementary functional academics teacher Katie Nicely (professional), Child Nutrition secretary Renee Goodenough (paraprofessional), Coder Elementary Police Officer Carlos Lopez (auxiliary) and, in a new category for Guest Teachers and substitutes, Dawn Axness (guest teacher).

"Being recognized for Circle of Greatness is an incredibly special honor for our employees because they are nominated by parents, supervisors and their peers," Superintendent Dr. Susan Bohn said. "We added a Guest Teacher category because they are critical to our success, especially this year. Congratulations to these outstanding Circle of Greatness honorees and all of the 140 Bearcat staff members who received nominations for the exceptional experiences they provide for our students."

Anyone can nominate an employee for Circle of Greatness via the Aledo ISD website, and the district recognizes three Special Honorees in each category (professional, paraprofessional, auxiliary and guest teacher) in December, March and June. Overall winners chosen from the Special Honorees are revealed during Aledo ISD Convocation in August.

Circle of Greatness honorees bring Aledo ISD Growing Greatness to life, positively impacting the community and helping the district grow every student. Nominations for Circle of Greatness are open at aledoisd.org/circleofgreatness.



Carlos Lopez



Dawn Axness



Katie Nicely



Renee Goodenough

Weddings



Gloor-Kennedy Wedding

Sydney Paige Gloor of Willow Park and Riley Forrest Kennedy of Lubbock were wed on Sunday, December 6, 2020, at Park Manor in Weatherford.

The Maid of Honor was Courtney Walker. Bridesmaids were Kaitlyn Swingle and Maddie Baker.

The Best Man was Austin Ratke. Groomsmen were Lee Brooks and Carter Gloor.

Pastor Eric Hines officiated.

Sydney is the daughter of Jeff and Laura Gloor of Willow Park. Riley is the son of Ken and Janie Kennedy of Lubbock.

Sydney is a student at Texas Tech majoring in accounting. Riley graduated from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University and is a commercial pilot.

The couple will reside in Lubbock.

The CommunityNews
December 25, 2020

QUOTABLE

"Love is like a beautiful flower which I may not touch, but whose fragrance makes the garden a place of delight just the same."

- Helen Keller

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ALEDO ISD

Accentuating the Positive — District had a good year

By Mercedes Mayer
Special to The Community News

Here's a Good News Top 10 for the Aledo ISD for 2020 (in no particular order):

The Aledo ISD had so many reasons this year to focus on the good. The district not only saw the community come together to support its students and staff like never before, but it was also able to provide exceptional experiences for students in a time of such uncertainty.

And — not surprisingly — Aledo ISD students and staff continued to excel in spite of the most challenging circumstances.

"This is a year we will never forget in education, but there's nowhere I'd rather be," Aledo ISD Superintendent Dr. Susan Bohn said. "Because of the support shown by our teachers, staff, administrators, and community, we were able to focus on our students and teach both in person and remotely for the entire fall semester, which was a major accomplishment.

"Our Bearcats learned important life lessons this year, growing greatness in so many different ways," Bohn said. "I am proud of our teachers and staff for their commitment to our students and of our students for persevering and accomplishing so many great things."



• The Class of 2020 missed out on so many senior class events, but the Aledo ISD and AHS administration made sure an in-person graduation happened. On May 29 at Bearcat Stadium — with health screenings complete and social distancing ensured — more than 450 seniors graduated from Aledo High School in an exciting, emotional and memorable graduation ceremony.



• There's no road map for how to navigate a pandemic, but Aledo ISD's child nutrition, transportation, technology, and police departments were superb at ensuring the district's students and families were cared for. With 98,000 meals served, 30,000 miles driven, 3,500 devices distributed, and hundreds of hours logged helping with traffic control and safety — and add to that Aledo Children's AdvoCats donating 1,000 packs of school supplies for at-home learners — Aledo ISD families certainly felt loved.



• Titledtown extended to swimming in 2020, as senior Elijah Sohn won the 200 freestyle gold medal at the Class 5A UIL State Swimming and Diving Championships in February, setting a new Class 5A state record with a time of 1:37:02. Sohn was the back-to-back state champ in the 200 meters, and he also won a bronze medal in the 100 freestyle later in the day.



The district's first-ever Circle of Greatness overall winners were announced in August, with Deanne Torres, McAnally Intermediate teacher, winning in the professional category, Karen Kirkland, child nutrition supervisor, winning the para-professional category, and Nicole Comet, bus driver, winning the auxiliary category. Torres, Kirkland and Comet were chosen for bringing Aledo ISD Growing Greatness to life, positively impacting the community and helping the district grow each and every Aledo ISD student.

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GOOD YEAR

from previous page



• In a two-week period in March, Aledo ISD teachers shifted everything they knew about classroom teaching and moved to supporting students with learning at home. Much of what they did wasn't about math, science, history or reading but about ensuring their students felt supported and had resources to make it through such an unprecedented time. And there to support Aledo ISD teachers and staff was the Aledo PTO, which took teacher appreciation to a whole new level in 2020.

ALEDO EDUCATION FOUNDATION

• Aledo ISD was selected as one of 12 districts statewide for the Texas School Business magazine's 14th Annual Bragging Rights special issue for the district's Employee Crisis Fund that supports financial emergencies faced by Aledo ISD employees and is funded by the Aledo Education Foundation. This special issue recognizes school districts that have implemented programs that are bettering the lives of Texas' students, schools and communities. In 2020, AEF's support of Aledo ISD employees grew to include sponsoring the Employee Assistance Program that is a part of the district's Elevating Greatness Employee Wellness initiative.



• The Aledo ISD has continued a focus on the well-being of its students — both mentally and physically — and part of that has been the introduction of Mind Above Matter and the Bearcat Care Clinics to AISD campuses. The Mind Above Matter partnership allows Aledo ISD to provide mental health services in an Aledo ISD facility, making connecting to mental health services more convenient for families and providing an option so that a student does not have to receive services elsewhere. In Bearcat Care Clinics at each campus, students and staff have access to telemedicine medical care onsite at each campus.



• The 2019 Bond program passed overwhelmingly in November 2019, and the work on the first of five major projects got started right away. When COVID-19 closures started, work didn't slow too much, it just changed with the new normal of WebEx meetings and health and safety protocols. Before the end of 2020, the district's newest elementary school — Annetta Elementary — had slabs poured and steel going vertical for framing in preparation for an August 2021 opening.



• Senior trombone player Will Moeller became the second AHS student ever to be named to the TMEA All-State Jazz Band in November after a record 18 Jazz 1 band students were honored as All-Region Jazz Band Members. Later in the semester, 56 AHS band members were selected for All-Region Band with 17 students advancing to the area round.



• Aledo's FFA program was honored as a National Three Star Ranked Chapter by the Texas FFA Association, a designation awarded to FFA chapters that actively implement the FFA mission and strategies by using a Program of Activities (POA). Aledo FFA's POA focused on activities in three areas: growing leaders, building communities and strengthening agriculture. Activities were developed and implemented by student leaders and chapter advisors.

Turn to **EIGHT MORE**, page 6

The Center is proud to welcome, Talha Riaz, MD

He is seeing patients at our Weatherford and Mineral Wells locations



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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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EIGHT MORE

from page one



TOP LEFT: The Aleo High School Treble Choir was honored as one of eight national winners – and one of four from the high school division – in the 2020 Mark of Excellence National Choral Honors competition sponsored by The Foundation for Music Education. | **LEFT:** Aleo High School seniors Luke Beall and Kevin Taylor were named Commended Students in the 2021 National Merit Scholarship Program, being placed among 34,000 Commended Students nationwide who were recognized for their exceptional academic promise. | **Eighth-grader Ethan Hodo** was one of just 525 middle-school students statewide to earn Grand Recognition in the Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) for outstanding achievement and exceptional scores on the SAT or ACT. Eleven additional Aleo Middle School students earned Duke TIP State Recognition.



Eight more good news items from Aleo ISD are worth mentioning...

Walsh Elementary student Claire Wack won not only her school's spelling bee but also the area spelling bee in February, earning a spot

in the regional bee held each year at TCU.

Aleo ISD earned the highest FIRST rating of A-Superior for 2019-2020. Schools FIRST holds school districts accountable for the quality of their financial management practices.

The Aleo High School Volleyball team was not only successful on the court

this season, being crowned Co-District Champs, but they also focused on their classwork in this up-and-down COVID-19 year, as evidenced by the entire team making the Academic All-District team.

Aleo High School CTE students earned an amazing 422 career certifications last school year even with the uncertainties of the

coronavirus and the inability to test for all certifications offered.

Aleo ISD was chosen by the East Parker County Chamber of Commerce as the Large Business of the Year during the 23rd Annual Awards Banquet in March.



AMY COBBLE/SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Dean Erickson, the East Parker County Library's Story-Time Santa, visited the library's nativity scene on Tuesday. His visit was a reenactment of a Christmas ornament (below).



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The annual Weatherford Christmas Parade was held at night this year (Dec. 5) giving the opportunity to show off lights. Photos by Randy Keck.



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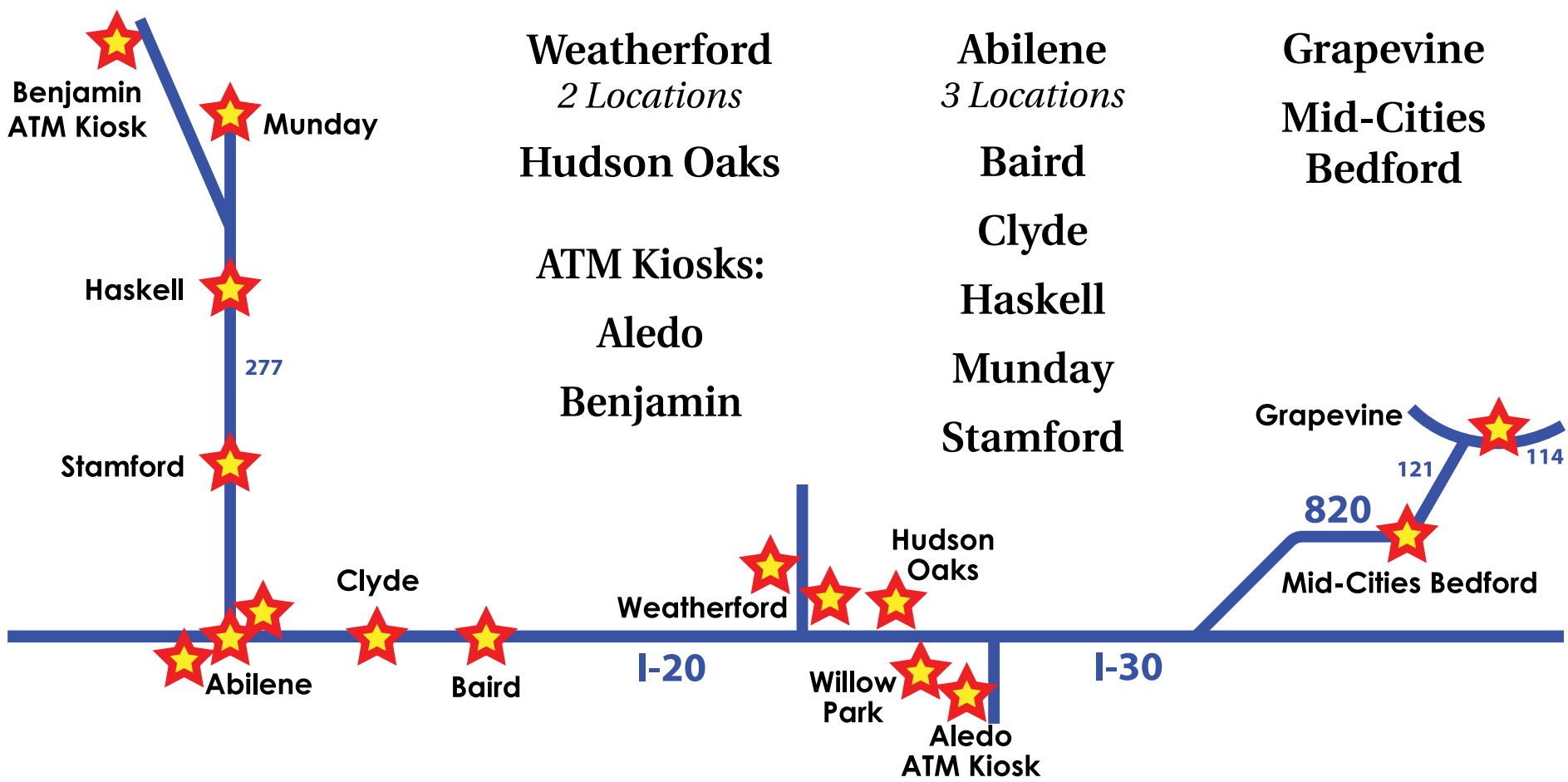
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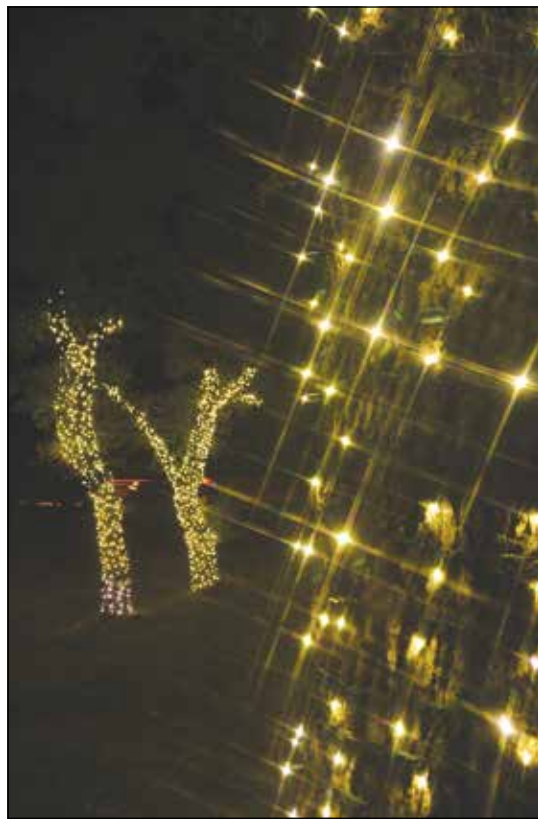
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Christmas lights are bright around Parker County. Can you guess these locations? Photos by Christopher Amos



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POLITICS

Peden serves as elector representing District 12

Rare honor goes to east Parker County resident

By Randy Keck
The Community News

East Parker County Republican Party activist Rena Peden received the rare honor of serving as one of the electors in the 2020 presidential election. Peden represented Texas Congressional District 12 — one elector is selected from each of the 36 congressional districts in the state of Texas and two are elected at large.

Peden was elected to the honor at the Texas Republican Convention in July.

“To become an elector, you have to campaign and run for it,” Peden said. “There were five of us in the race, and I was able to come out of that.”

Congressional District 12 contains parts of Tarrant and Wise Counties, and all of Parker County. Peden said she won on the second ballot, and was pleased she did.

“It’s one of the things I’ve always wanted to do, and feel very privileged getting to do it, because obviously, not that many people have that opportunity,” she said.

Peden said many people don’t understand that it’s actually the electors who elect the president.

“That is where it happens,” she said. “If there is a movement to try to turn electors, it could impact who ends up being your President. And, again, I don’t think everybody understands that.”

Peden was also elected to be an at-large delegate to the Republican National Convention, but the convention was not held.

When she went to join the other Texas electors to cast their votes on Dec. 14, the experience was a bit different than what had been described to her.

Peden said she had spoken to a state representative who was a friend of hers.

“She indicated ‘oh, you’re going to have so much fun, you know, they take you out and feed you and do this and do that,’” Peden said.

“Well, that’s if if we take the presidency. When you don’t, it’s a very different experience,” she added.

However, the difference between 2016 and 2020 is that Donald Trump won in 2016.

She drove to Austin for the 2 p.m. meeting, which took about two hours. The group elected a chair and a secretary, then began balloting, first for Donald Trump for president, then for Mike Pence for vice president.

“This time everyone, all 38 electors, voted for President Trump and Vice President Pence,” Peden said. “That was not the case in 2016 — we had two people that were called faithless electors because they did not vote like they had [committed]. You sign a piece of paper when you’re elected that says you will vote for the party’s nominee and those didn’t.”

“It was mostly business as usual, except that one elector brought a

resolution that took the Supreme Court to task for not accepting the suit filed by the Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton against the four states and the way they conducted their elections.”

Peden became active in Republican politics about 1979, and has served as the Precinct 4 Commissioner in Parker County as well as serving on the State Executive Committee. She has also been active on the Candidate Resource Committee, which helps down-ballot Republicans get elected.

She recalls the “old days” when each party did its own primary. Harold Johnson was the chair of the Parker County Republican Party in those days, and his wife Elvera and Peden became lifelong friends.

“That’s when it used to take all night. We’d be there till three or four in the morning. And it was a fun thing, quite frankly. You know, Elvera was there, Harold was there. It was just a fun thing,” Peden said.

Peden said while honored to be an elector, she said it was “kind of an ‘on my way out’ kind of activity. It’s something I’ve wanted to do, it’s like I really had an impact. This is more than just my vote at the ballot box. This is this is where it really counts,” she said. “I’m getting old enough to where, you know, politics will probably take a backseat to some other things.”

To her knowledge, the only other Parker County resident to ever be an elector was Harold Lockwood many years ago.



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS
Rena Peden is shown at a desk in the Texas Capitol where she met with other electors to cast their votes on Dec. 14.

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Mach 1 Runners win three national titles

AAU Cross Country National Championships held at Florida State University

The Mach 1 Track Club in Weatherford, won its first-ever team national championship title for the girls 11-12-year-old division and two individual national titles, as well as five All-American performances and nine top 25 finishes at the AAU Cross Country Nationals meet at Florida State University on Dec. 5.

Mach 1 had 22 runners who competed in the meet, and 14 earned medals.

National Champions - 11-12-year-old Girls

Madison Larsen, Micah Neal, Mykel Murry, Mayden Mitchell, Sofia Brandenburg, Elizabeth Griffin and Emerita Strathmeyer won the 11-12-year-old girls division 3K national champion team title. They competed against 16 teams and 240 runners for this division alone. Their team average was 10:51, for top 5 runners. All seven runners received gold medals for their performances, as well as a team trophy.

National Champion - 11-year-old Girls

Micah Neal won the 11-year-old girls division 3K run, with a female venue record time for 11-year-old girls of 10:28.93. This was her 5th individual national title at four different distances.



National Champions 3K - 11-12-Year-Old Girls Division are (from left) Elizabeth Griffin, Mayden Mitchell, Sofia Brandenburg, Micah Neal, Mykel Murry, Madison Larsen, Emerita Strathmeyer, and Coach Matthew Mitchell.

SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

National Racewalk Champion - 10-year-old Boys

Josh Fink, had an explosive start in the 10-year-old boys division 1K Racewalk, with a time of 5:36.10, earning him a national gold medal.

All-American Runners

Three other runners earned All-American Status.

Madison Larsen took 7th place in the 12-year-old girls division 3K race, with a time of 10:46.52. Madison was also the Team Captain for the 11-12-year-old girls division team. The team strategy was built around her consistent running abilities. She helped the team get the lowest score of the day out of all teams and age groups, boys and girls, which was 38 points. Additionally, the team had the tightest time spread of 33 seconds.

Mayden Mitchell took 5th in the 11-year-old girls division 3K run with a time of 11:01.38. The one-two punch of Mayden and Micah is the best 11-year-old girls combo nationwide. They have pushed each other for years and their times continue to drop as they train together.

Myles Murry took 3rd in the 7-year-old boys division 2K, with a time of 8:06.50. This was Myles' first national race. He ran an amazing race with minimal training due to football obligations. He has huge potential going forward.

Turn to MACH 1, page B4



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FOOTBALL

Bearcats roll past North Forney



CYNTHIA LLEWELLYN/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Jojo Earle celebrates following a touchdown against North Forney.

By Nolan Ruth
The Community News

The Aledo Bearcats went into Globe Life Park in Arlington on Friday afternoon to take on the North Forney Falcons in the area round. While the matchup was expected to be a barn burner, the Bearcats had no trouble jumping on the Falcons and cruising to a 49-24 victory.

"I'm really proud of our kids," coach Tim Buchanan said after the game. "Our kids played really well. For the first time this year, and I know we played some really

good people, we played like we were playing in a playoff game and I was so proud."

North Forney took the opening drive all the way down the field and scored on a one-yard keeper to take an early lead. It would be the only time Aledo trailed all day. Less than two minutes later, Jo Jo Earle (7 carries, 28 yards, 2 TDs, 3 receptions, 25 yards) took the direct snap and strolled in from four yards out. On the ensuing drive, BJ Allen came up with a deflected interception that gave the Bearcats the ball back. Earle did the rest,

scoring his second touchdown of the day to give Aledo a 14-7 lead at the end of the first quarter.

In the second quarter, Demarco Roberts (27 carries, 224 yards, 4 TDs) took over as he went 56 yards on the first drive to extend the Bearcat lead. The Aledo defense was able to make a goal-line stand on the next drive, but had the ball on the one yard line. Two plays later, Earle went down in the end zone for a safety. He made up for it after the next defensive stop by taking the punt off the hop and going 82 yards to the house. North

Forney added one more score before halftime to bring the score to 28-17.

"I was not expecting that, I was just expecting the usual game plan," Roberts commented on his amount of carries. "It was a little workload on me, but the workouts that we do and the practice we put in really showed today."

Roberts added the only score in the third quarter on

a 27-yard run around the left side. In the fourth quarter, he added two more scores from 3 and 15 respectively. The Aledo defense really stepped up in the second half, not allowing a single point until garbage time. Linebacker Sam Forman recorded the most tackles in the second half and helped hold the line for the Bearcat defense. Once the starters had been pulled, the Falcons

added one more score to bring the final to 49-24.

"Our biggest mentality as a defense was that we just have to go play," Forman said postgame. "Once that ball gets rolling it doesn't stop. That's always the mentality."

The Bearcats move on to play the winner of Frisco and South Oak on Dec. 24 for the regional championship.

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6 former MLB pitcher from Texas, David
7 transport for Dallas-based Greyhound (2 wds.)
8 TX-born Steve Martin song: "King ____"
9 flightless Australian bird
12 TXism: "____ of" (lots)
17 puzzling things
19 "Ma," the first governor of Texas
21 "____ up" (getting ready)
22 TXism: "she could talk a wagon out of ____" (talks a lot)
23 ____ Blanca, TX
28 dork, dweeb
29 gas ____ led to a school disaster in New London (1937)
30 reveal an art work
31 WBAP's business
35 TX Janis Joplin album: "I Got ____"
"Kozmic Blues Again Mama" (1969)
36 site where Missouri City, TX slaves learned they were free in 1860 (2 wds.)
42 TXism: "mean as a ____"
44 cut into two parts
46 airport buildings

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DOWN

13 in Ellis County on U.S. 67 & 287
14 a Great Lake
15 TXism: "____ spell" (rest)
16 TXism: "tow ____" (burlap bag)
18 graduate sch. test
20 this Holley wrote first English history of Texas (init.)
23 "mi casa es ____ casa" (neighborly)
24 TX Marcus Johnson is a WR in this state
25 TXism: "beats anything I ____ saw"
26 TV controller

MACH 1

from page B3

Top 25 Finishes

Mach 1 also had several other runners achieve top 25 spots for their age groups, which is very difficult.

14-year-old boys division 4K

Dominick Barrera and Jack Fink had two amazing, PR performances in the boys 14-year-old 4K. Dominick Barrera finished 14th with a time of 12:36.68 and Jack Fink finished 25th with a time of 12:51.59.

12-year-old girls division 3K runners

Mykel Murry finished 11th with a strong performance PR of 10:57.94, finishing 3rd on the 11-12-year-old Mach 1 girls team.

Sofia Brandenburg ran the entire race with just one shoe after her shoe came off at the start of the race. She performed with extreme perseverance and finished 14th with a time of 11:02.01.

Elizabeth Griffin finished 17th, with a time of 11:07.42, which was a huge PR for her.

Emerita Strathmeyer finished 89th, with a time of 12:45.67, a nice PR. This rounded out the girls, 11-12 national championship performances.

"It was nice to see these girls stick together through these tough times and flip the switch on the two teams that beat them when they competed as 9-10-year-olds in icy conditions in the national XC meet in Reno, Nevada two years ago," said 12-under Mach 1 coach Matt Mitchell. "They competed against talented Pacific Coast Shockwaves runners from California with six locations and Kokopelli Racing Team from Colorado, a big club that trains in the altitude. This national title is an epic win. The girls deserve this level of recognition for their awesome dedication and determination through their years of training in the Mach 1 system. They always give it their all!"

12-year-old boys division 3K

Tyler Connelly set a new Mach 1, 12-year-old record with a time of 10:29.65, an outstanding PR and stellar performance.

10-year-old boys 3K division, Maddox Murray finished 14th with a time of 11:14.96, an impressive PR.

7-year-old boys 2K division, Evan Pittman, finished 21st with a



1K National Racewalk Champion - 10-Year-Old Boys Division, Josh Fink



All-American runner Mayden Mitchell

time of 9:19.09. This was his first cross country race.

Honorable Mentions

Boys 14-year-old division, 4K:

Aiden Mansell, time of 13:29.55, finished 55th.

Vance Tuin, time of 14:04.17, finished 80th.

Boys 13-year-old division, 4K:

Luke Schabel, time of 13:57.46, finished 41st.

Boys 12-year-old division, 3K:

Lincoln Tuin, time of 10:42.36, finished 26th.

Abram Loth, time of 11:20.14, 54th.

Nicholas Walden, time of 11:38.49, 67th.

Girls 10-year-old division 3K:

Jaedyn Price, with a time of 13:07.98, finishing 53rd.



National Champion 3K - 11 Year Old Girls Division - Micah Neal



All-American Runner & 11-12 Girls Team Captain, Madison Larsen



All-American runner Myles Murry



Special to The Community News

13-14 Boys Division Team is (from left) Aiden Mansell, Luke Schabel, Jack Fink, Vance Tuin, and Dominick Barrera.

Boys 10-year-old division 3K:

Caleb Connelly, time of 13:17.23, finishing 64th.

"It was a really tough and challenging season due to COVID; however, our athletes adapted and still worked out hard every workout",

said Lupe Torres, head coach for Mach 1 Track Club. "I think that's the main thing you can say about this group, they have an outstanding work ethic. Everyone ran really well and almost everyone had a PR. The competition was fierce at this race. Coach Matt Mitchell and I are really

proud of our athletes! It was a great way to end the season with multiple National Champion winners and multiple medals."

This was Mach 1's best XC National showing of all time. Several Aledo Bearcats participate in the club.

FOOTBALL

Bearcats set to take on Frisco

By Nolan Ruth
The Community News

Editor's Note: To avoid confusion, this issue of The Community News, while dated Dec. 25, 2020, actually went to press on Tuesday, Dec. 22, and was mailed Wednesday, Dec. 23 for local delivery on Thursday, Dec. 24. Thus, we feel this advance is timely.

A record will be broken for the Bearcats football team on Thursday. The regional semifinal against the Frisco Raccoons (8-1) will be the latest Aleo to have ever played in a calendar year. It will only set the record by one day. The latest the Bearcats have played is Dec. 23. That happened back in 2017 when the Bearcats lost to College Station in the state championship. The Bearcats now prepare to play on Christmas Eve at a stadium they are relatively familiar with.

The Bearcats are 3-0 when playing at The Ford Center at The Star. The last win came last season when they beat Ennis in overtime to win the Regional Title. This time they are playing to go to the regional final.

The Bearcats are coming off of a big win over North Forney that saw Demarco Roberts and Jo Jo Earle have a field day. Roberts rushed for 224 yards and 4 touchdowns, while Earle rushed for 28 yards and two scores. Earle added a 82 yard punt return TD for good measure. The defense also broke out of its shell in the second half. In total, 18 different Bearcats recorded a tackle last Friday. Both BJ and Jaden Allen



BJ Allen (7) upends a North Forney runner. Also shown are Keenan Hess (40), Eli Valencia (23), and Logan Flinta (13).

CYNTHIA LLEWELLYN/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

came away with interceptions as well.

While Frisco may not be as formidable an opponent as North Forney was, expect them to be just

as physical. The Raccoons offense operates out of the Slot-T which means one thing: they are going to run the ball up the middle...a lot. So far, the Raccoons have two

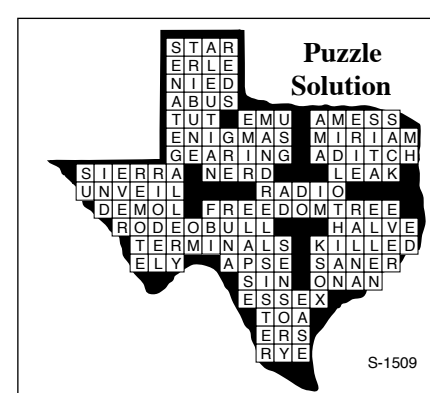
rushers with more than 400 yards, one surpassing 300 and 200, and four with more than 100. That's not to say they won't ever throw the ball, however. Quarterback Caree

Green will occasionally fake a hand off and throw to a wide open target downfield. The key for the Bearcat defense is to stuff the middle while still keeping safeties back to play the pass.

The Raccoon defense is very physical as well. It is a defense that relies on taking away your biggest weapon. This past week against South Oak Cliff, Frisco's defense keyed in on the skill players and took the speed game away from them. The good thing about that for Aleo is the multiple offensive weapons. Expect multiple players to be stepping up offensively Thursday night.

On a historical note, this will be the first meeting between the Bearcats and Raccoons since 1999 in the regional semifinal round. The Bearcats took that game by a score of 17-10 and eventually fell to Texarkana Liberty-Eylau in the semifinals

Thursday's winner will play the winner of Mansfield Timberview vs. Lucas Lovejoy.



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BASKETBALL

Bearcats blast Brownwood

Head to the holidays with 12-1 record

By Randy Keck
The Community News

The Aledo Bearcats closed out their pre-Christmas-holiday portion of the season in style, defeating Brownwood 67-42 at home on Dec. 18.

Aledo started quickly with a three-pointer by senior Landry Simmons, who was red-hot from outside the circle, hitting six treys from the left, the right, and the top of the key.

Junior Daniel Sohn followed with a put-back, and inside drive, and another tripe by Simmons quickly had Aledo up 10-4.

Clark Crawford wide open under the basket put Aledo up 12-4, prompting a Brownwood time out.

Simmons sun another trey from the side before Brownwood got serious about scoring, scoring five points before a Sohn to Simons fast break and a drive by Sohn put Aledo up 19-10 at the end of the first quarter.

Sohn ended up with 27 points, some hard-earned off offensive rebounds and inside action. Simons had 24, but the synergy of the two players turned out to be greater than the sum of their efforts.

Brownwood opened the second quarter with five points before Simmons to Sohn led to the Aledo's first second quarter basket, and Sohn on a fast break continued padding Aledo's lead, 23-15. Simons scored on a stutter-step fast-break and sunk another three when Braedyn Eicke got on the board with a jumper, Sohn added an inside move basket, and then sunk a left-handed shot to put Aledo up 35-20.

Crawford closed the second quarter with a put back and Aledo went to the locker room up 37-24.

Highlights from the second half included junior Jack Conner, who took a pass from Sohn and was fouled hard under the basket, sinking two free throws, a nice drive by sophomore Exavier Anderson, and a steal by Anderson leading to a basket by Sohn.

The Aledo JV defeated Brownwood 77-29.

December 18, 2020

Aledo	19	18	16	14	67
B'wood	10	14	13	5	42

Daniel Sohn 27, Landry Simmons 22, Braedyn Eicke 5, Clark Crawford 4, Jack Conner 4, Trever Darton 3, Xavier Anderson 2



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Landry Simmons sinks one of his six three-pointers against Brownwood.



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Exavier Anderson (11) battles under the basket.

HOPE

is eternal



May this season bring renewed hope and joy to you and yours.

THE COMMUNITY NEWS

CHRISTMAS

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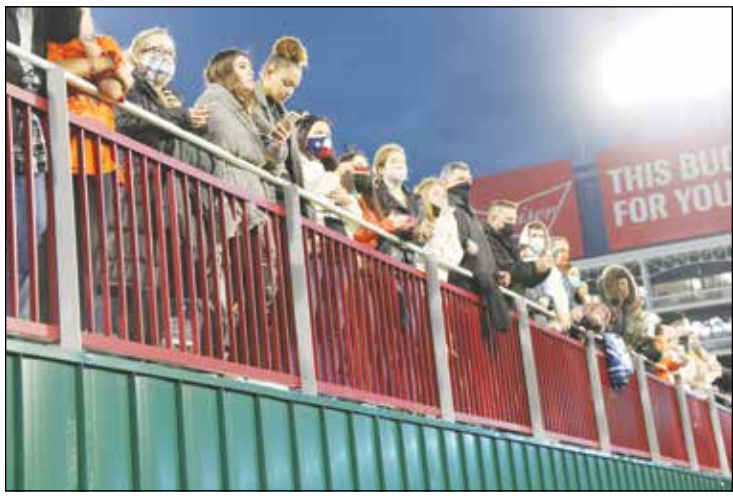
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Spirit Page



PHOTOS BY CYNTHIA LLEWELLYN

Bearcats Basketball



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