

THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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

Austin Arbelaez goes by the beat of a different drummer — himself

Behind the drums or in front of the camera

By John English
The Community News

On the surface, Austin Arbelaez seems like a typical 12-year old boy.

His favorite place to eat is the Ice House, where he always orders the same thing— the salmon.

His favorite genre of music is heavy metal, and his three favorite drummers are the late Joey Jordison (of Slipknot), Ray Luzier (Korn) and David Silveria (formerly of Korn, now with Breaking in a Sequence).

Candlebox, Korn, Lamb of God, Breaking Benjamin, Shinedown, Five Finger Death Punch and Alice in Chains are among a few of his favorite groups — and when it comes to drummers, for many of them, he is one of theirs.

Austin picked up his first set of drumsticks at the age of 1 and has rarely put them down since. Although he also plays the piano and keyboard, the drums are where his heart is — so much so that his parents, David and Mindy Arbelaez, had to sound-proof his bedroom walls because he practices so much and they were concerned about complaints from their neighbors.

"I don't know, I just found them when I was little, and I just started playing them," Austin said about the drums. "It was just like— it became my thing."

And it seems that the public agrees.

Austin has become an Instagram sensation, with more



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

TOP: Austin Arbelaez in his favorite place — behind the drums. | BOTTOM: Austin shows off his Megadeth drumsticks.

than 86,000 followers, a devoted legion of fans, and the respect of world-famous musicians.

When visiting Austin's Instagram page, multiple videos of the Aledo tween can be seen drumming along with such classics as Metallica's "One," Limp Bizkit's "Counterfeit," and "Stupify," by Disturbed.

But Austin's father, David, said his son also has his own material.

"A lot of people don't realize that he's really full-throttle in making and creating his own music," David said. "He makes his own tracks, so I can see him mixing.

He's actually been working a little bit to mix together, like a remix of a Korn song maybe, where he can do the drumming on it but it's his own song. So he's well along in creating that."

While Austin has played the drums since his pre-toddler years, he only started recording his sessions during the COVID pandemic.

That's when his notoriety began growing exponentially and when he started rubbing elbows with the music industry's elite.

Turn to **DRUMMER**, page 5



ALEDO ISD

Growth Committee meets for last time

Final recommendations go to board next week

By Ryan Wade
The Community News

For the 50 volunteers of the Aledo Growth Committee, it's been a long road filled with volumes of information and countless hours of deliberation. But, alas, this journey they embarked on together those many months ago is winding to its inevitable conclusion.

Members of the AGC met for their final time on Monday, Feb. 6, before making their final recommendations for the upcoming bond election to the Board of Trustees next Monday, Feb. 13.

The meetings started off with a visit from the principals of the Aledo High School and Daniel Ninth Grade. Both principals had an opportunity to speak to the group regarding the best use of the funds the AGC set aside in their proposal for both existing campuses.

Existing programs at both campuses currently struggle to facilitate practices due to a lack of allotted space for all the available programs. The principals shared how they believe the funds in the bond package could be used to create space that would allow for less competition between the existing programs as they jockey for opportunities to practice their craft.

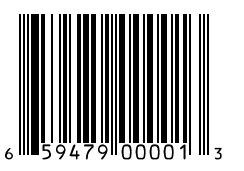
During the meeting the AGC got their first look at the recommendations proposed by the broader community by way of the feedback forms that were placed online, as well. Community member proposals ranged from instructing the AGC not to do anything that would potentially raise property taxes to the complete opposite end of the spectrum, wishing the AGC would maximize the bond capacity in order to get as many new schools on the ground as quickly as possible.

Unfortunately, a significant amount of the comments from the community were indicative of residents sounding off on items that were not even part of the proposal put forth by the AGC.

"You do your best to communicate, but when you hear feedback about 'they're adding or they're not adding a high school,' there's no high school or career academy presented in this bond," said AGC co-chair Dan Reilley. "And yet, some of the feedback was directed towards that."

"It's definitely an opportunity to dial in our messaging to tell people what's included [in the proposal] and what's not," Reilley expounded. "And more importantly why. Why are we doing what we are doing, and why are we not doing a second high school at this point. I think the process has been done well. I think the end product is

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WILLOW PARK

New city hall ribbon cutting, tours Tuesday

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Rose Hoffman, communications director for the City of Willow Park, was almost giddy as she proclaimed with a laugh, "I have a door!"

Hoffman and the rest of the city staff all now have that and much more as they are settled into the new city hall at 120 El Chico Tr., just off Interstate 20. The city signed a 30-month lease on the approximately 8,700 square feet of space — almost triple the 3,189 they vacated on Jan. 1, their home for many years.

"It has been a struggle for many years at the old facility to do business and effectively serve our community," Hoffman continued. "This new space gives us the tools we need to be at our best. We're grateful to Mayor Doyle Moss and the city council for it to happen for us."

And though they've actually been doing business in their new



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Willow Park City Manager Bryan Grimes shows off his new office at Willow Park City Hall. Tours of the building will be on Feb. 14.

digs, which was formerly the home of T.G. Mercer Consulting Services, since Jan. 17, an official ribbon cutting with the East Parker Chamber of Commerce is set for 11 a.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 14. After that, tours will be conducted for those who want an up-close look.

Then, later in the day before the council meeting, tours will be

conducted from 4:30-6 p.m., with council meeting at 6.

"Everybody's moved in and happy," Moss said, reiterating what Hoffman said, "Everybody has an office with a door. It was way overdue."

In the old facility, things were crowded and space was at a premium. Spaces had to be shared and

even holding a private conversation often required stepping outside.

"Inadequate office space, lack of privacy for meetings and phone calls and an antiquated building were just some of the challenges," Hoffman said.

"Our hope is our new facilities will be a source of pride to the community as we strive to continue to serve this community in a professional manner," City Manager Bryan Grimes said. "You don't have people sharing offices anymore. You can focus on your job function. It's better when you're not sharing space."

"I'm very thankful and grateful to the City of Willow Park, mayor and council for providing us with a first-class professional work environment."



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Two Aledo FFA students win stock show calf scramble

Samuel Hardwick and Phoenix Lanford, two members of Aledo FFA, each caught a calf during the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo's Calf Scramble on Jan. 18, earning a \$500 purchase certificate for a show heifer and the chance for up to \$16,000 in scholarship awards. Hardwick's parents are Christin and Aaron Hardwick of Aledo. His award was sponsored by River Ranch. Lanford's parents are Michelle and Darrell Lanford of Aledo. His award was sponsored by Therrell Family.

One of the Stock Show's most iconic and popular events, the Calf Scramble gives 20 students an opportunity to catch 10 calves during one of 23 performances of the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo held Jan. 13 through Feb. 4. Those not catching calves receive a pair of Justin Boots courtesy of the western footwear maker. Justin Boots and Texas Mutual Insurance Company are overall underwriters for the Calf Scramble Program.

Since the Fort Worth Calf Scramble began in 1987, the program has distributed almost \$4 million to nearly 8,000 Texas students providing funds for the purchase of their beef or dairy heifer and more than \$3.6 million in scholarships has been awarded to more than 1,600 students in recognition of their hard work and completion of the program. Samuel Hardwick will use the purchase certificate toward the cost of a heifer that he will raise and exhibit at next year's Stock Show. Exhibitors that submit monthly reports and a final essay may be eligible for scholarship awards that can range between \$500 and \$16,000.



Samuel Hardwick won a \$500 purchase certificate toward a beef or dairy heifer for a 4-H or FFA project for exhibition at next year's Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo. The certificate, presented by Stock Show Calf Scramble Committee member, Paxton Motheral, was sponsored by River Ranch.



Phoenix Lanford won a \$500 purchase certificate toward a beef or dairy heifer for a 4-H or FFA project for exhibition at next year's Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo. The certificate, presented by Stock Show Calf Scramble Committee member, Paxton Motheral, was sponsored by Therrell Family.



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GROWTH

from page one

the right start. I hope the community understands this is phase one of a multi-phased project.

We're doing the right thing for right now. We've set good benchmarks to look at over the next few years to ensure we move forward in the best, possible way."



Read this story online

The special meeting of the Aledo ISD Board of Trustees is slated for 6 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 13. The meeting will take place in the boardroom of the administration building.

For those unable to attend the meeting in person, video of the meeting will be uploaded to the website within 24 hours. To access that video visit aledoisd.org.

In the drop-down menu, click on 'School Board', then click on 'board meeting videos' to locate the video dated Feb. 13.

Once finalized by the board, the bond will be presented as part of a special election coming up in May of this year.

For more information related to the proposal and the data the AGC has been working from since August, visit aledoisd.org/AGC.

TRINITY CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

Dan Palmer named new Director of Development

The Trinity Christian Academy School Board announced on Feb. 8 that Dan Palmer will be school's new Director of Development.

"As TCA experiences record growth, Mr. Palmer is excited to assist in paving the way for increased excellence in academic programs, new and updated facilities, and donor and alumni relationships," according to a release from TCA. "As a pastor for over 30 years, Mr. Palmer loves people and believes in the power of relationships to bring personal transformation and impact through shared mission and vision."

For the last six years, Palmer led Youth for Christ Sacramento, a large non-profit that ministers to underserved students through feeding their bodies, inspiring their minds, and introducing their spirits to the power and transformation of God.

"There is nothing more inspiring for donors than to participate in a life-changing work of God in the lives of young people. I am excited



Dan Palmer

to invite our community to invest in raising up the next generation of leaders in the Parker and Tarrant County regions," Palmer said.

Palmer holds a B.A. in English Literature from UCLA and a Master of Divinity from Talbot School of Theology. He has been married for 22 years to his wife Shanen and has three sons. Caleb (19) is a sophomore at TCU, Tyler (18) is a Senior at TCA, and Shane (14) is an eighth grader at TCA. They attend Watermark Church in Fort Worth.

TCA Head of School Dr. Steve Newby said, "Dan Palmer provides the energy and expertise to our Development Department at TCA that will help our school move to the next level. More importantly, he does so with a passion for Christ that is contagious and encouraging. We are delighted to welcome him to the TCA Family!"

Trinity Christian Academy is a PK3-12th grade college-preparatory Christian school located in Willow Park. For more information, visit tcaeagles.org.

For information on about the TCA Grounded & Growing Capital Campaign, visit the website at tcaeagles.org or email danpalmer@tcaeagles.org.



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

A pickup knocked down a power line on the eastern end of Bankhead Highway on Wednesday morning, Feb. 8, causing loss of power to Aledo High School and the Bailey Ranch area. School had to be postponed by about two hours. The condition of the driver could not be determined by press time.

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ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Pianist Evan Mitchell to perform “Reflections”

Pianist Evan Mitchell will perform “Reflections,” a recital of solo piano works by Florence Price, Johannes Brahms, Missy Mazzoli, Claude Debussy, and Franz Schubert

at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 17, in the Alkek Fine Arts Center at Weatherford College.



Read this story online

“The concert features music that explores this theme both literally – the evening begins with Price’s ‘Lake Mirror’ – and figuratively, with several works reflecting the music of another composer, both implicitly and explicitly,” said Dr. Hyeyoung Song, WC’s artist in residence.

“With selections dating from the 1820s through the 2010s, ranging from canonical masterpieces to underplayed gems, ‘Reflections’ is sure to captivate.”

Mitchell’s recent highlights include solo performances on the prestigious Dame Myra Hess Memorial Concerts series in Chicago, at the Merkin Concert Hall in New York City and several major venues in Shanghai.

He also performed with the Fort Worth and Dallas symphony orchestras and alongside such significant figures as double bassist Gary Karr, flutists Leone Buyse and Jim Walker, and clarinetist Corrado Giuffredi.

From 2014 to 2022, he was a featured artist on the TCA Texas Touring Roster, and over the past

10 years he has given more than 350 performances for Cliburn in the Classroom. Mitchell has performed recitals and conducted masterclasses at Radford University, Southwestern University, Texas Woman’s University, the University of Memphis, Virginia Tech, and many others.

He serves as an assistant professor of piano at the University of Florida School of Music. He has served on the faculty of Tarrant County College, as president of the Fort Worth Music Teachers Association, and in 2021 was inducted into the Steinway & Sons Teacher Hall of Fame. For more information, visit www.evansmitchell.net

The concert is free to the public, and doors open at 7 p.m.



JEN BERTRAND

Evan Mitchell will perform Friday, Feb. 17, at Weatherford College.

Aledo Band Boosters mulch sale under way

The Aledo band Boosters are taking orders for their annual mulch sale fundraiser.

Available mulches include:

- Texas Native® Hardwood Mulch: an all-natural, double-ground hardwood mulch that has been aged 9-15 months to create a long-lasting and vibrantly dark color that stays consistent year in and year out. This hardwood mulch doesn’t wash away and it aids and improves soil conditions by adding natural hummus and nutrients to soil as it decomposes.

- Texas Native® Black Label Mulch: this Black Label is an all-natural blend of double-ground hardwood mulches that have been colored to create a deep, rich, dark- black mulch. It is safe to use around pets and children because only non-toxic, biodegradable dyes that have been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency are used.
- Texas Native® Cedar Mulch: this all-natural, reddish-brown, double-ground cedar mulch is not only wonderfully aromatic, it’s also a natural insect

repellent. It is great for all your bedding, garden, and tree landscaping needs.

- Texas Native® Rojo Red Mulch: this is an all-natural blend of double-ground hardwood mulches that have been colored to create a striking, yet tasteful deep red mulch. It is safe to use around pets and children because only non-toxic, biodegradable dyes that have been approved by the Environmental Protection Agency are used.

The mulch is priced at \$5 per two cubic-foot bag with a five-bag minimum order. Pallets of 65 bags are \$325.

Free delivery is available within the Aledo ISD with a 25-bag minimum order; there is a \$20 charge for all other deliveries, or mulch can be picked up between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Saturday, March 4, at the Aledo High School parking lot.

To order mulch, visit bit.ly/3Y7wSsx or aledobandboosters.org.

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Events

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THE COMMUNITY NEWS
www.community-news.com

More events can be found at www.community-news.com/calendar

FEBRUARY 14

Willow Park City Hall opening

The public is invited to a ribbon cutting at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 14, at Willow Park's new City Hall: 120 El Chico Suite A in Willow Park. The city will also host an open house with tours beginning at 4:30 p.m. that day prior to the city council meeting at 6 p.m.



For more information, call the city at 817-441-5770 or visit www.annettatx.org.

Bearcat Mardi Gras Ball

The Aledo High School Class of 2024 Celebration Committee has planned a festive February evening to benefit Aledo High School Class of 2024 Project Celebration. The Bearcat Mardi Gras Ball will run from 6-10 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 25, at The Social Space, 205 S. Calhoun St. in Fort Worth. The Ball will feature the Celebrity Bartending event featuring TCU football players and Aledo alumni, Colt Ellison and Wyatt Harris, a buffet dinner, drinks, and additional activities. For more information, visit aledopc2024.com.



or Crawl Glow Run will be held Saturday, March 25, at Bearcat Stadium.

The Glow Run is a night-time fun run in the heart of Aledo that raises money for the programs of the AdvoCats.

Participants in the Glow Run can choose to participate in a 1K or a 5K race that begins and ends at the Aledo High School track. Additional event information will be provided as available. For more information, visit <https://aledo-advocats.com/index.php/advocats-rwc/>.

FEBRUARY 25

Annetta Clean-up Day

The Town of Annetta will hold its annual Clean-Up Day from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Feb. 25. Lunch will be provided to volunteers.

MARCH 25

AdvoCats Run, Walk, or Crawl

The Aledo Children's AdvoCats have announced that the annual Run, Walk,

MARCH 31

Bearcats 'n Boots

The Aledo Education Foundation will present its annual Bearcats 'n Boots gala fundraiser from 6-10 p.m. on Friday, March 31, at the Hilton Downtown in Fort Worth.

Live entertainment will be provided by Lonestar. The event will feature live and silent auctions, a three-course meal, an open bar,

TEXAS CROSSWORD
by Charley & Guy Orbison
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ACROSS

- TXism: "___ pill to swallow"
- Valley medicinal plant
- TX Welchel of "Facts of Life"
- Harris of Texas-based "Alamo Bay"
- network of "Austin City Limits"
- this magazine has called Luby's "the best little hash house in Texas"
- Brenham's ___ Bell ice cream
- inlet just north of the Yellow Sea (2 wds.)
- Texas pests (2 wds.)
- Robert Lee is the seat of this county
- TX Jerry "Count Jackson" of "Boogie Kings"
- TXism: "commits matrimony"
- Texas recipes blog: "___ to Bake"
- this Davis was 14th governor of Texas
- window shelters
- Andrews is named for this Texas Revolution hero (init.)
- TXism: "loose ___"
- TXism: "takes a big ___ to rope him" (obese)
- Gov. Richards
- Davy advice: "Be sure you're right, ___ ahead"
- said of Rudolph's nose (2 wds.)
- sleep in? (2 wds.)
- in Red River County on U.S. 82
- TXism: "he could strut sitting down" (big ___)
- this Diane was "Lorena" in "Lonesome Dove"
- cowboy's bath night (abbr.)
- Jewish language
- TXism: "give your ___ rest" (be quiet)
- polite Texas address to a woman
- ___ Mott, TX
- Dallas univer.
- wall protection behind stove or countertop
- fancy word for "black"
- "for Pete's ___"
- uncompleted span: "___ nowhere"
- was a Palestine FM
- one who desires
- Boerne had the "Kid ___ Fiber Fair"
- TX A.J. Foyt won at ___ Mans in 1967
- TXism: "got knocked down a peg ___ two"
- this Texan was NBC "Tarzan" (init.)
- female eggs
- TX Smith who won gold in vault with bamboo pole (init.)
- TXism: "does ___ dog stink?" (yes)
- "Bum" Phillips
- instant stops for cars? (2 wds.)
- this Taniguchi built the Oriental Garden in Austin's Zilker Park
- Texans Houston or Rayburn

and complimentary valet parking. Tickets range from \$3,000 for a table of 10 \$15,500 for platinum investor.

To purchase tickets, make a donation, or browse auction items, visit <https://one.bidpal.net/bnb2023/welcome>.

APRIL 15

Weatherford College Flute Festival

Weatherford College will

host its second annual Flute Festival from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, April 15 in the Alike Fine Arts Center at Weatherford College.

Guest artists are Stephen Clark and Greg Patillo.

Registration is free. To register, visit <https://bit.ly/3Clikx4>. For a Spotify playlist, visit <https://bit.ly/3IP7piy>.

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Austin Arbelaez at a performance.

SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

DRUMMER

from page one

Austin recently had the opportunity to spend some time with Silveria's band in California where he enjoyed one of the greatest experiences of his young life.

"He was on vacation for part of that trip," David said. "He asked if Austin wanted to step in and do some acoustic drumming and the guy from Train was there. Train's 'Drops of Jupiter' was playing and one of the guys from Korn was there and Austin jumped in and did the whole set. It was going to be one song, but he did the whole set and killed it."

Austin said his favorite experience so far was getting to perform in front of friends.

"I got to play on stage in front of a bunch of people," Austin said. "I was playing with Candlebox and some of my friends were there too in the VIP section. It was great."

Mindy said that her son's love of music goes beyond heavy metal and added that he seems to have a natural aptitude for picking up musical instruments.

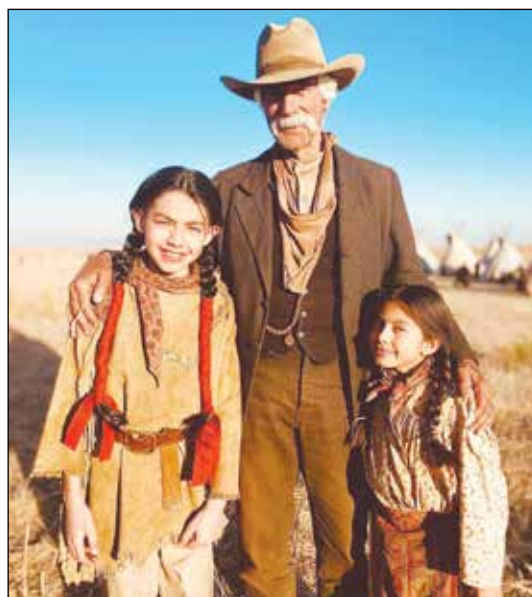
"He's definitely stepping out to different types of music and different ways to learn it,"

Mindy Arbelaez

"He's definitely stepping out to different types of music and different ways to learn it," Mindy said. "I mean, he's never had a piano lesson in his life, and he called me in one day and was playing a classical song. I mean it's like 'where do you learn this?'"

"He just looks it up and he learns it. He researches all these bands and their background and who they are. He's just really about the music and the artist and it's very impressive."

If Austin looks familiar it may be because he is also a background actor on the show 1883, where he



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Austin Arbelaez and his sister, Audrey, with actor Sam Elliott on the set of 1883.



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Austin Arbelaez with drummers Art Cruz of Lamb of God and Megadeth drummer Dirk Verbeuren.



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Austin is shown with friends at the Candlebox show.

met and worked with Sam Elliot, Faith Hill, and Tim McGraw.

Austin practices at least two hours a day and hopes to eventually have a band of his own.

David said it has been quite the journey with his son and said he wants it to continue, while also allowing Austin to make his own way, as he did a few years back when the two of them had an important conversation.

"I'm extremely proud of him," David said. "I mean, I coached him in football and baseball since he was a little guy, and around 9 or 10 I said to him, it's your choice now. You've done everything — it's your choice now. You've done everything you can think of. You've done soccer, football,



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Austin Arbelaez is shown with Alice in Chains drummer Sean Kinney.

baseball, swimming, whatever, everything you can think of, it's your choice now, what do you want to do? And he said 'music, Dad.'"

Visit <https://www.instagram.com/austin-arbelaez/> to see Austin Arbelaez in action. Additional photos and video clips can also be found at <https://www.community-news.com/stories/2102023,22768>.



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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.

Photos submitted should include names of the people in the photograph.

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.

Capital Highlights

Ice storm wreaks havoc in much of state



Gary Borders
gborders@texaspress.com

Residents in Central and Northeast Texas are still cleaning up after a winter storm last week snapped power lines and tree limbs, causing widespread power outages, canceled flights, and damage to homes and vehicles.

At its peak, nearly 400,000 Texas households were without power, according to poweroutage.us. As of Sunday, that number had dropped to 62,456.

The outages were due to downed power lines, not by problems with the state's power grid. The Texas Railroad Commission said the state's natural gas supply also held steady, with natural gas utilities reporting no service issues during the storm.

Airports in the state's metropolitan areas reported several hundred flight cancellations because of icy conditions. Many schools in the Dallas area and around Austin were closed for the entire week.

The Texas Department of Insurance offered some advice to homeowners dealing with damage caused by fallen tree branches landing on vehicles and homes. That includes taking photos of the damage before moving the tree; making temporary repairs, and contacting your insurance agent as soon as possible; and saving all receipts for labor and repair materials to be reimbursed.

While the danger from last week's storm has largely passed, the Texas Department of State Health Services provided advice for future winter events, urging people to use extreme caution with electric generators and heaters that produce carbon monoxide.

Generators should only be used outdoors, at least 10 feet away from buildings. Outdoor grills, camp stoves, and other heaters that produced carbon monoxide should only be used outside. Carbon monoxide is an odorless and colorless gas that can cause death.

Fentanyl test strips backed by lawmakers

Test strips that would determine whether pills, powders, or other forms of drugs are laced with deadly fentanyl might be legalized, if a bipartisan group of lawmakers have their way.

The percentage of overdose deaths tied to fentanyl has risen to 97%, according to a report in the Austin American-Statesman. Gov. Gregg Abbott has ended his

opposition to legalizing the strips, and several nearly identical bills have been filed in both the House and Senate as a result.

"They deserve action, action that will save other innocent families from the devastation they have suffered," Abbott said in January. "And they will get that action this session."

Legislators are also considering measures to increase the penalty for manufacturing or delivering fentanyl even in small amounts to a third-degree felony. Right now, it is a state jail felony.

Meanwhile, the state comptroller's office is being pushed to speed up distribution of more than \$1 billion in funds from the Opioid Abatement Settlement Fund, intended to mitigate the fentanyl crisis. The money comes from settlements with opioid manufacturers and distributors.

"We've somewhat sacrificed expediency in getting dollars out the door," Hegar said. "We have to create a system that treats everybody fairly and everybody understands the process."

DSHS data indicates 1,569 Texans died of a fentanyl-related overdose last year, according to the Statesman report.

State parks continue centennial celebration

Texas state parks turn 100 years old in 2023 and are celebrating with a host of events. This month includes several celebrations in North Texas, East Texas, Huntsville, and San Antonio, including a variety of events marking Black History Month.

Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation is partnering with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and H-E-B for the celebrations, with the grocery chain donating \$1 million to help the parks system engage Texans to discover and enjoy their state parks.

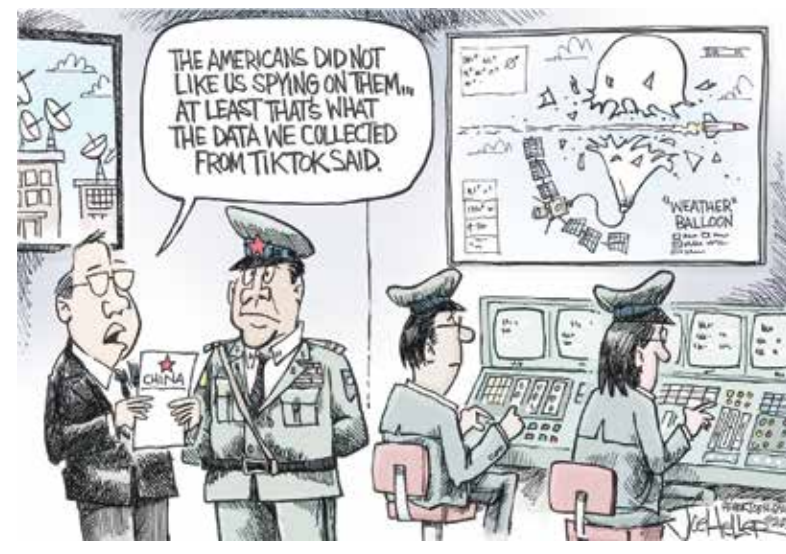
For more information on the celebration, including community events, the history of Texas State Parks and how to make a day visit or overnight reservation, visit the Texas State Parks 100 Years website at TexasStateParks.org/100years.

Housing cost burden examined

The Texas Demographic Center has used census data to examine housing cost burdens in the state. That is when a household spends more than 30% of its monthly income on housing costs, including rent or mortgage payments, utilities, and other costs.

The center concludes that counties with the highest percent of households dealing with housing cost burdens are in the so-called Texas Triangle along the

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State Representative Update

The Texans' House



Dr. Glenn Rogers
glenn.rogers@house.texas.gov

Did you know that our legislature only meets every other year, for less than five months, to enact legislative solutions for the ninth largest economy in the world?

After Reconstruction in the late 1860s and early 1870s, most Texans loathed government and sought as little government intrusion in their lives as possible. An old rumor was that the delegates to the 1875 Constitutional Convention were so fed up with governmental overreach, they wanted the Legislature to only meet for two days every 140 years...instead they settled for 140 days every two years.

The State of Texas is governed under our seventh constitution, the Texas Constitution of 1876. The previous six constitutions (the 1827 Constitution of the State of Coahuila and Tejas; the 1836 Constitution of the Republic of Texas; and Texas State Constitutions of 1845, 1861, 1866, and 1869) and the United States Constitution, each influenced the document we abide by today. The Constitutions of 1866 and 1869, Reconstruction era documents, affected the delegates' crafting the Constitution of 1876.

When Reconstruction ceased, Texans never forgot what a one-party government could do with unlimited power. They sought to write a constitution that limited the power of the central state government, ensured elected officials were responsible to the people, and protected the state from any type of authoritarian regime. The delegates at the 1875 Constitutional Convention had little faith in government and their new document clearly exhibited this concern.

As a legislator, it is clear what the Texas Constitution expects of me. Two political ideals stand out: religious freedom and limitations on the centralized state.

The Bill of Rights identifies man's natural rights, including religious freedoms. Not only can the State not step on these rights, but it also "shall be the duty of the Legislature to pass such laws as may be necessary to protect equally every religious denomination in the peaceable enjoyment of its own mode of public worship," (Article 1, Section 6). Furthermore, "No money shall be appropriated, or drawn from the Treasury for the benefit of any sect, or religious society, theological or religious seminary; nor shall property belonging to the State be appropriated for any such purposes," (Article 1, Section 7).

Early Texans lived during the times when Mexico required settlers in the colonies to pledge loyalty to a single religion, a rule largely ignored by Texans, but nonetheless a restriction imposed. Consequently, the writers of the Texas Constitution intended for religious sects or institutions to function without the meddling of the state. These sections will be important to remember when the school voucher discussion ultimately comes up this Legislative session. The Constitution is clear, we cannot give state funds to private religious schools. And we should not use state monies to fund private schools or home schools, because mandates from the state would likely follow, like STAAR testing. That situation would make our forefathers turn over in their graves.

Our constitution limits the power of government more so than most other states. Voters ratified the 1876 Constitution because it ensured the right of local self-government and a Constitutional Republic form of government. Just this past January, when an unsuccessful Speaker of the House candidate proposed a rule stating, "The speaker shall not designate as chair of the committee

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Thistles & Roses

Celebrating TCU's 150th birthday



Richard Henderson
richard@rahenderson.com

"Hail all hail, TCU. Memories sweet, comrades true.

Light of faith, follow through. Praise to thee, TCU!" --- TCU Alma Mater by Glenn Canfield 1928

Texas Christian University (TCU) celebrates its 150th anniversary this year. Hard to believe

that I was a student at TCU in 1973 when the 100th anniversary was observed. It seems like a long time ago. I graduated in 1974.

TCU once existed in both Thorp Spring and Waco, Texas at different times. The histories are difficult and complex and I have done background research and I have found inconsistencies. I have tried to rely on the most consistent.

I think many current students and faculty and citizens of Fort Worth do not know that TCU was founded in 1873 at Thorp Spring, Texas, just a couple of miles north of Granbury. The founders were Addison and Randolph Clark. It was known as Add-Ran Male and Female College. According to



some reports, there was a conflict among members of what would become the Christian Church,

now known as the Disciples of Christ, and another faction that Turn to **TCU**, page 7

CAPITAL

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Austin-San Antonio corridor, as well as some border counties.

The study found that nearly half of Texas renters – 1.7 million – spent more than 30% of their income on housing costs from 2017-2021, with a median monthly housing cost of \$1,146. Among homeowners, 21% experienced housing costs burden during the same period, with median monthly housing costs of \$1,747.

Texas ranked 10th in median gross rent from 2017-2021. Hawaii was the most expensive state, followed by California.

Texas company hopes to bring back dodo bird

A Texas company is hoping to bring back the long-extinct dodo bird,



Read this story online

along with the woolly mammoth and the Tasmanian tiger, according to a Statesman story.

Colossal Biosciences, with offices in Austin, Dallas, and Boston, is using gene-editing technologies to restore extinct animals.

The dodo bird, closely related to the pigeon, went extinct in 1662 in its native Mauritius, an island nation located in the Indian Ocean. It was wiped out due to human settlement and ecosystem competition.

The company was founded in 2021 to work in the field of de-extinction and combatting climate change. It recently announced an additional \$150 million in new funding.

“Being able to recreate something that is functionally similar to an extinct species that’s as prevalent in people’s minds as the dodo is hopefully going to create

a little bit of enthusiasm for thinking about consequences of human cost extinctions,” Beth Shapiro, a paleogeneticist with the company, said.

New COVID-19 cases, deaths rise

The number of new cases of COVID-19 in Texas during the past week rose to 38,947, more than 15,000 from the previous week, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University.

The center reported 400 deaths in the state, also a marked increase. Officials reported 2,142 lab-confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations, down a few hundred from the previous week.

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.

HOUSE

from page 6

a member who resides in a county with a population greater than two million according to the most recent decennial census,” this seemed to be a complete disregard for our sacred constitution. Imagine if a member from an urban area imposed a similar restriction on members from rural or suburban areas. The proposed rule reeked of anti-republicanism. As a conservative, there is an expectation to uphold the Constitution, not trample on it. Thankfully, 144 of my colleagues voted this amendment down, standing up for the Republic our founders fought so hard to establish.

Throughout the 88th Legislative session, I will always strive to stand by the Texas Constitution. My oath of office demands I support both the

United States and Texas Constitutions. There is a faction of my own party that wants to use our majority membership as an excuse to oust other legislators from the discussion table. They want to make the Capitol their own partisan headquarters, but that is not consistent with Constitutional Conservatism. Article 1 Section 2 states, “All political power is inherent in the people, and all free governments are founded on their authority, and instituted for their benefit.”

In the last (87th) legislative session, I was proud to serve in the Texas House under the leadership of Speaker Dade Phelan when we had the most conservative session in Texas history. The 88th session should follow suit, including delivering the largest tax cut in Texas history. The framers of the Texas Constitution of 1876 would be proud.

Glenn Rogers represents Texas House District 60, which includes Parker County.



Read this story online

TCU

from page 6

became the Church of Christ. This was the beginning of what would cause a permanent separation. These churches were both parts of the original Campbellite movement which is too complicated to discuss here.

The Clark brothers were given an offer from people in Waco, including the local Disciples of Christ church there, to move to Waco, which they did in 1895. Some remained behind at Thorp Spring and a college existed at Thorp Spring for several years. Some entity of that school eventually became Abilene Christian University (ACU). Today, TCU is identified with the Disciples of Christ and ACU is identified with the Church of Christ.

Some of the old ruins and a tabernacle still exist at Thorp Spring, along with a commemorative stone monument to TCU. It is an easy drive from the metroplex. Our family has visited several times. It is worth a a leisurely drive there.

In Waco, the name was changed to AddRan Christian College under control of the Disciples of Christ. In 1902, the name was changed to Texas Christian University.

In 1910 a fire destroyed the Waco campus. A competition developed among several cities to rebuild TCU. These included Waco, Dallas, and Fort Worth. Fort Worth won the competition with an offer of \$200,000 and land for a campus. TCU moved to Fort Worth in 1911. There is a historical monument at Mitchell Avenue and North 19th Street in Waco commemorating TCU’s existence in Waco.

TCU provided me with an excellent education. I lived at home and had a tuition scholarship. It cost \$1,600 per year when I was there. Today it is \$51,660 per year. Even adjusting for inflation, I am not sure a student who came from my lower socio-economic background when I was growing up could afford to go there today. But I hope those who want to go there can find a way.

I certainly doubt that the Clark Brothers could have envisioned that TCU would become the prestigious university it is today.

TCU is a much more sophisticated institution than it was when I was there in the early 1970s. TCU has brought in forward-thinking administrators and formed a competitive athletic program. While I think academics should be more emphasized than athletics, I can’t argue with progress. Universities can thrive and do well without a successful athletic program, but a winning football team becomes a publicity relations juggernaut for the rest of the university.

The Horned Frogs football team has raised TCU’s profile nationwide. Endowments are up as is enrollment. It is in the U.S. News and World Report Top 100 colleges at number 89. It is still a relatively small school with enrollment just more than 12,000 students. I read one report that a little less than 100,000 people attended since its inception. That is small.



Read this story online



Texas Christian University, Waco, Texas,

TCU bought the Worth Hills golf course in the 1960s where there are now some dormitories, tennis courts, track, and very nice baseball stadium. TCU has acquired as much surrounding property as it can. But it is landlocked and unless they wanted to expand a a satellite campus, which is not likely, there isn’t much room to grow. And my point of view is to maintain the

approximate size and maintain the quality and atmosphere it enjoys today.

It will be interesting what TCU will be like in the next 50-100 years.

I am so thankful that I was able to graduate from TCU and for the many opportunities that TCU degree has provided for my family and me.

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Rick Mauch
 sports@community-news.com

Twenty-seven years ago a young sportswriter was so excited to be covering his first "big game."

Isn't that how we refer to that annual contest that pits the supposedly two best teams in the NFL? We can't call it by its actual name, can we, per the greed of the NFL with their always watching eyes waiting to sue?

We can, however, say that we are looking forward to the Superb Owl party (fans of a certain TV comedy vampire show will understand). Whether he shows up this year remains to be seen.

And by the way, as former Dallas Cowboy Duane Thomas once asked, "If it's the ultimate game, why is it being played again next year?"

Anyway, back to that "big game." That young sportswriter was none other than the guy penning this column you've gotten this far into (thanks, by the way. If you ask me who that guy was next time we meet, I'll know where you stopped reading).

The game was in Arizona — Tempe, not Glendale, but still way too hot than any place should be this time of the year. It featured the Dallas Cowboys and the Pittsburgh Steelers, two of the sports' legendary franchises — though one has lost a bit of its luster since then.

Take a guess as to which. Here's a hint, it's not the one that doesn't have a star on its helmet.

I realize I could have said that in a less confusing manner. But then, confusing is what the Cowboys do best. As in why haven't they been back? Why do folks continue to refer to them as "America's Team?"

Shouldn't a team representing an entire nation play for at least one world championship between the time said nation celebrates its third and fourth centennials?

Back to my original thought. I had just moved to Weatherford from Tyler and went to work for the Weatherford Democrat as their sports editor. I had not been there two weeks when I was told if the Cowboys went to the, er, "big game" I would be sent to cover it. They did and I did.

Remember, I was full of all sorts of energy and thrills back then. My excitement was equal to what it would be today to wake up to the smell of bacon.

Age changes one's perspective on excitement.

The Cowboys go to the, er, "big game" all the time, was what I was thinking. After all, it was their third, er, "big game" in four seasons. Surely there would be five or six more on the near horizon.

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ALUMNI REPORT

Aledo grads 'bowl-over' NCAA Div. I audiences

Former Bearcat Filiaga wraps up college career with win

By Rick Mauch
 The Community News

Chuck Filiaga's final college football game was played in a way he'd always known, winning.

The former Aledo Bearcat, an offensive lineman on the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers, helped his team to a 28-20 Pinstripe Bowl victory over Syracuse. It wrapped up his college career and lifted the Gophers to a 9-4 record, in which he played in all 13 games.

Filiaga was also named third-team All-Big Ten by the league's coaches.

Filiaga had been at Michigan the previous five years, but thanks to redshirting and the COVID-19 pandemic, enjoyed a total of six seasons of college ball. During his time at Michigan, he appeared in 39 games and started eight, helping the Wolverines to a 12-2 record and a College Football Playoff semifinals berth in 2021 before falling to national champion Georgia in the semifinals.

In his debut at Minnesota, he started at right guard against New Mexico State, where he helped pave the way for the offense to gain 485 total yards and rush for five touchdowns. He also helped pave the way for Minnesota to gain 679 yards of offense (third most in school history) against Western Illinois. In another highlight, he did not allow a sack and protected for an offense that controlled the ball for 41 minutes and racked up 375 yards of offense against Rutgers.

Next up for Filiaga could be a career in the NFL. Aledo Athletic Director Steve Wood, who coached him in high school, believes he will get a chance.

"He has all the qualities," Wood said. "I feel like someone will give him an opportunity. Hopefully it will work out for him."

At Aledo, Filiaga helped the Bearcats to a 16-0 record and the Class 5A Division II state championship in 2016. As a senior, he led an offensive line that helped the offense produce 3,851 yards through the air and 4,656 yards on the ground, blocking for two 1,000-yard rushers. He was a member of the PrepStar Top 150 Dream Team and was named first-team All-USA Texas as a senior.



RODGER CHAMPION/UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

Former Aledo Bearcat Jase McClellan rebounded from an injury to have a solid junior season at running back for the Alabama Crimson Tide. He finished second on the team in rushing and helped them to an 11-2 record and a 45-20 Sugar Bowl victory against Kansas State. McClellan is shown in action against Ole Miss on Nov. 11, 2022.

Filiaga is just one of several athletes from Aledo and the area to help their college team in a NCAA Division I bowl game.

"I'm not surprised at all," Aledo coach Tim Buchanan said. "They learned a good work ethic while they were here and now they're taking it to the next level."

Jase McClellan, running back, junior, Aledo/Alabama

Jase McClellan rebounded well after missing most of 2021 with an injury. He was the second leading rusher on the Crimson Tide (11-2) this season with 112 carries for 655 yards and seven touchdowns, including an 81-yard TD in a 20-19 win at Texas. He also caught 14 passes for 174 yards and three scores, with a long pass of 65 yards.

In the Crimson Tide's 45-20 victory against Kansas State in the Sugar Bowl he carried seven times for 42 yards, including a 17-yard TD, along with catching a pass for 10 yards.

McClellan was also named to the watch list for the Earl Campbell Tyler Rose Award, which is presented each year to the top college football player from the state of Texas.

Despite having his sophomore season cut short, McClellan was leading the Crimson Tide in touchdowns with five at the time of his injury. He finished with 191 yards rushing and caught 10 passes for 97 yards. He also returned a blocked punt for a touchdown.

As a freshman on Alabama's 13-0 national championship



BRUCE KLUCKHOHN

Chuck Filiaga finished his college career as a starter on the offensive line for the University of Minnesota Golden Gophers, helping them to a 9-4 record and a Pinstripe Bowl victory. Now the former Aledo Bearcat awaits his chance at a possible professional career. He is shown playing against Rutgers.

Wyatt Harris, linebacker, senior, Aledo/TCU

Wyatt Harris played in six games this season and posted four tackles. As a junior he was second-team Academic All-Big 12.

In his junior season in 2021 he started the opening five games and played in eight contests overall. He totaled a career-high and team-best nine tackles to go with an interception and 47-yard return against SMU in a 42-34 loss.

Harris saw action in nine games as a sophomore. As a freshman he played in nine games and started six of the final seven.

As a Bearcat, Harris was a member of state championship teams in 2016 and 2018, while the Bearcats finished as state runners-up in 2017.

Colt Ellison, defensive end, senior, Aledo/TCU

Colt Ellison saw action in four games this season.

In 2019-20 he was named to the Academic All-Big 12 Rookie Team.

As a junior in 2021, Ellison played in 11 games and had a 28-yard fumble recovery for a touchdown at Oklahoma State in a 63-17 loss.

In his sophomore season he saw action in the final eight games of the season. He played in the final six games of his freshman season, including three starts.

At Aledo, Ellison played alongside Wyatt Harris on two state championship squads.

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Wes Harris (left) and Wyatt Harris (right) with their parents, Hank and Merry Harris.



Colt Ellison (44) is shown in the TCU vs Baylor game at McLane Stadium in Waco in 2020.

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GIRLS WRESTLING

Ladycats pair qualify for regionals

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Two members of the Aledo Ladycats wrestling team qualified for this weekend's Class 5A Region I Tournament at West Texas A&M University in Canyon, Feb. 10-11.

Avery Kernan and Kyra Wright, both team captains, each finished fourth in their respective classifications of 107 and 114 pounds. Riley Blankenship placed fifth in the 138 division and is an alternate.

The top four finishers in each weight class at regionals will advance to state at the Berry Center in Cypress Feb. 17-18.

Kernan overcame a pair of losses to win her final two matches and qualify with a 3-2 overall mark in the District 4-5A Tournament at Azle this past Saturday, Feb. 4. She opened the tournament by defeating Felicity Tarango of Lubbock Estacado in a fall at 4:45.

However, that was followed by Kernan losing twice in falls to Kasi Mittal of Lubbock Cooper in 57 seconds and in 1:21 to Jairy Vazquez of Vernon. Kernan secured her



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Kyra Wright, left, earned a trip to state in wrestling.

regionals berth by dropping Jordyn Lopez of Lubbock Coronado in a fall at three minutes and defeating Tarango in a rematch in a fall at 1:40.

Wright also went 3-2, beginning the tourney with a pin of Lexi Tayfel of Brewer at 5:28, but then was pinned by Madison Pena of Lubbock in 2:48. She then defeated Keira Buggar of Azle in a 7-1 decision, fell in a fall to Isabella Cardona of Lubbock Monterrey at 2:21 and won a no-contest over Buggar.

"Overall, our girls team wrestled great and we will return ever yone of them next year, so I have high hopes for this group and what we can accomplish next year," coach Austin Stockon said.

Also wrestling for Aledo:
120 pounds: Serafina Ceron, eighth.
132: Caroline Gartner, sixth.
145: Arianne Mathias, did not place.
185: Baillie Sessom, did not place.

BOYS WRESTLING

Bearcats qualify seven for regionals

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Chad Thomas is returning to the Class 5A Region I Wrestling Tournament, and this year he's taking a few folks with him.

Thomas qualified by placing third in the 120-pound division in the District 4-5A Tournament this past Saturday, Feb. 4, in Azle. He will compete in the regional tournament Friday and Saturday, Feb. 10-11, at West Texas A&M University in Canyon.

From there the top four finishers in each weight class will move on to compete at state at The Berry Center in Cypress Feb. 17-18.

Joining Thomas, a team captain, will be Bryon Moreno-Wheeler, who placed second in the 285 division. Also competing there will be Brice Bohn, third, 106; fellow team captain Zachary Attaway, third, 144; Ty Hand, third, 157; Jacob Ellerbusch, fourth, 132; and another captain, Britton Collins, fourth, 190.

Turn to **WRESTLE**, page 11



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Bryon Moreno-Wheeler placed second in the 285 division.

NCAA

from page 8

Money Parks, wide receiver, sophomore, Aledo/Utah

Money Parks played in all 14 games for the Utes (10-4), helping them win the Pac-12 Conference and reach the Rose Bowl. He caught 26 passes for 414 yards with two touchdowns, along with rushing six times for 36 yards.

In the Pac-12 championship game, he caught four passes for 88 yards and a 57-yard touchdown in a 47-24 victory against USC.

While he played in 12 games as a redshirt freshman in 2021, he only caught one pass - but it was for a 12-yard touchdown. He played in one game in 2020 before redshirting.

Parks helped Aledo to the 2019 state championship.

Chris Wright, linebacker, redshirt freshman, Aledo/North Texas

Chris Wright played in two games and registered a tackle for the 7-7 Eagles, who lost 35-32 to Boise State in the Frisco Bowl.

Wright helped Aledo to state championships in 2019 and 2020.

Jason Llewellyn, tight end, freshman, Aledo/Oklahoma

Jason Llewellyn saw action in 10 games, primarily on special teams for the Sooners, who finished 6-7 with a 35-32 loss to Florida State in the Cheez-It Bowl.

While with the Bearcats, Llewellyn helped Aledo win a state title in 2020.



HUNTER DYKE

Money Parks lived up to his name as the former Aledo Bearcat was one of the team's top receivers in helping the Utah Utes to a 10-4 record and the championship of the Pac-12 Conference. Parks is shown in the Utah vs. USC game in October of 2022.

Other Parker County Participants

Baylor Cupp, tight end, junior, Brock/Texas Tech

Baylor Cupp played in 12 games for the 8-5 Red Raiders, who defeated Ole Miss 42-25 in the Texas Bowl. He had 12 catches for 132 yards with a pair of touchdowns.

Prior to arriving at Tech, Cupp spent three seasons at Texas A&M, where he appeared in 10 games. He redshirted his freshman season and missed the entirety of the next season with an injury. He earned the team's Academic Excellence Award in 2020.

At Brock, he helped the Eagles to the Class 3A Division I state semifinals in 2018 and to the state finals in 2017.

Cash Jones, running back, red-shirt freshman, Brock/Georgia

Cash Jones saw plenty of action as a reserve running back and on kick return coverage units in 11 of 15 games for the back-to-back national champion Bulldogs. He also had one carry for a 36-yard TD in a 55-0 win over Vanderbilt.

At Brock, Jones was a 2020 Whataburger Super Team member and Tom Landry Award Nominee. He was also Mr. Texas HS Football Player of the Year semifinalist.

WAITING

from page 8

Oh, the naivety of youth. It causes us to waste money on silliness such as Pet Rocks (Google it, young folks) and to dream the impossible dream — that the Cowboys would ever get back to that, er, "big game."

Nearly three decades later and we're still waiting. The Cowboys have gone through numerous quarterbacks, some pretty good, such as Tony Romo and Dak Prescott (yes, he's good, not great, but still good) and some who couldn't hit a wide open body of water — aka Quincy Carter.

They've had a couple of pretty decent coaches. Bill Parcells miraculously got the Cowboys to the playoffs with the aforementioned Carter, and I still think Wade Phillips was a lot better than folks gave him credit.

The current puppet, er, coach, Mike McCarthy is not bad. I wouldn't trust him with in-game decisions any more than I would trust poor Quincy to throw a spiral, but he's about as good as you're going to get with Jerry Jones running the show.

And there is the reason this sportswriter — not so young anymore, but still a long

ways from being over the hill — is still waiting, along with many Cowboys faithful. Jerry Jones knows about as much about football as Lindsey Lohan does about sobriety.

Now, I'm not saying the Cowboys won't somehow stumble into another, er, "big game" before Jerry shuffles off this mortal coil, but I'd bet your house it doesn't happen. I'd bet mine, but I don't do well sleeping in a tent and there is always that slimmest of chances it could happen.

Hey, if Steven Seagal can make a good movie (remember "Under Siege"), then anything is truly possible. Cowboys fans can only hope that, unlike Seagal, there is more greatness ahead.

I'm not sure what kind of martial arts kicks Seagal is still able to do at age 70, but I'm betting they're better and more accurate than the current state of the Cowboys' kicking game.

Too soon?

Meanwhile, once again this year we watch as two other teams clash in the, er, "big game." A lot of folks are tired of attending and hosting Superb Owl parties waiting for their favorite bird, er, team to make another appearance.



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Attn: Earl Husfeld
1008 Bailey Ranch Road
Aledo, Texas 76008

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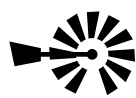
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WRESTLE

from page 9

Jason "Colonel" Douglas finished fifth in the 150 division and is an alternate.

"Our boys had a tough competition and got the tournament started really well," coach Austin Stockon said. "Many of our boys faced the 1 and 2 seeds in their semifinal matches, and a few fell to the backside of the bracket that round."

Moreno-Wheeler received a bye in the opening round before winning a 5-3 sudden victory (overtime) decision over Devin Wingfield of Azle and a 6-2 decision against Malachi Williams of Lubbock Coronado.

In the championship match, Dallin Fabrizio of Springtown escaped with a 4-3 tiebreak victory against Moreno-Wheeler in the third period of overtime.

Thomas won his opening match in a 52-second fall over Beau Pipkin of Lubbock Monterrey, then fell in a 37-second fall to Wyatt Hicks of Azle. He rebounded to defeat Daniel Diaz of Springtown in a fall at 2:30 and won a 9-8 decision of Iar Garza of Lubbock Coronado.

Bohn receive a bye in his first two matches and then fell to Rylan Luttmir of Saginaw in a 58-second fall. He came back to drop Ashton Ford of Lubbock Coronado in a 34-second fall and downed Parker Wyrick of Lubbock in a fall at 2:18.

Attaway opened with a bye before being defeated in a fall at 4:52 by Jakob Gibson of Lubbock. Then, after another bye, he topped Jon Lardizabal of Azle in a 10-2 major decision, decided Xander Lopez of Lubbock Coronado 10-3 and won the third-place over Gavin Cisneros of Lubbock Cooper 5-3.

Hand had a bye in the first round. He then won a 13-4 major decision over Charles Loving of Saginaw, fell in a fall at 46 seconds to June An of Lubbock, downed Andrew Marmolejo of Lubbock Cooper in 33 seconds and bested Loving in a rematch, again in a major decision by the score of 11-1.

Ellerbusch had bye, fell in a 2:46 pin to Colton Halstead of Springtown and a 2:35 pin to Chase Russell of Lubbock Monterrey. He came back with a 4:33 fall victory against Vernon's Sebastien Ortega, a 9-0 major decision against Adrian Flores of Lubbock Coronado and a 1:48 pin of Halstead.

Collins' qualified began with a bye, then a pin over Ismael Urista of Vernon in 2:40. After a fall at 33 seconds against Eliaz Ramirez of Azle, Collins pinned Haedn Ollis of Springtown in 19 seconds, lost a 10-1 major decision to Brian Chase of Lubbock Monterrey and ended with a no-contest victory against Ollis.

Douglas went 3-2 in his division, while Caden Atwood was 2-3 in his division to take sixth at 215. Also competing, but not placing, for Aledo were Jayden Escalera at 126, Kyle Scharlow at 138, Maxwell Toth at 165 and Samuel Belyeu at 175.



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SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Chad Thomas placed third in the 120-pound division in the District 4-5A Tournament.

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SWIMMING

Swimcats qualify eight for state

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

A year ago Aledo qualified four swimmers for the Class 5A State Swim Meet. This season the Swimcats doubled that number after competing in the 5A Region II Meet at Debbie Weems Natatorium Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 6-7.

The meet was originally scheduled for Feb. 3-4 but was moved back because of the ice storm that hit North Texas last week.

The top two finishers in each event at regionals advance to state at the Lee and Joe Jamail Swimming Center at the University of Texas in Austin Feb. 17-18. Also, the top third-place finisher in each event across all of the state's region will join them, giving each event at state 24 competitors.

Several of Aledo's qualifiers have a chance to add to their events as they also finished third in other events at regionals. The "call-ups" were still being determined at press time.

Three of those advancing to state are returners from a year ago, sophomores Haley Roberson and Victoria Crews among the girls and senior Sam Ogden among the boys. Also qualifying for the girls was sophomore Corah Satterfield and freshman Natalie Hutson,

while Ogden will be joined by senior Tanner Howse, along with juniors Porter Lane and Kyle Scharlow.

The quartet of boys set a school record in the 200-yard medley relay, clocking a time of one minute, 42.37 seconds to place second. They broke a record they set a couple weeks earlier when they had a time of 1:43.79 in the District 5-5A Meet. The record before that had stood since 2009.

In addition, Ogden finished second individually in the 100 backstroke in 54.25 seconds.

Roberson captured two individual titles in the 200 individual medley with a time of 2:09.16, and her time of 5:14.86 in the 500 freestyle also won. Crews placed second in the 100 butterfly with a 1:00.94 and Hutson was runner-up in the 100 backstroke in 1:02.22.

Satterfield joined Roberson, Crews and Hutson to qualify on two girls relays. The 200 medley posted a time of 1:54.40 to place first and the 200 freestyle's time of 1:46.13 finished second.

Overall, the Aledo girls placed third in the team standings and the boys were sixth out of 25 schools competing in their respective divisions.

"The regional competition was a great meet for not only the swimmers from [this

meet] but for the foundation of the program moving forward. It was the type of performance that gets people in the community buzzing about swimming and starts to generate an interest in the youth of Aledo," Swimcats coach Scott Abel said. "I can't thank the seniors enough for their hard work and leadership throughout the season, and as this program continues to grow we can look back to the contribution they have given over the last four years as a major factor.

"I can't say enough about this current team, they continue to exceed expectations and could write a book on goal setting, as so many of their goals this season have been able to be checked off. Overall I couldn't be more proud of this group of kids for their dedication to their sport, classroom, and each other. They truly embody what it means to be a student-athlete."

Also competing at regionals for the girls were seniors Breanna Oliveri, a state qualifier in 2022, along with Madeline Gordy, sophomores Avery Faulkner and Tila Moeller, and freshmen Alli Faulkner and Julia Gordy.

Also competing for the boys were junior Hunter Gregory, sophomores Bradyn Baughman and Alex Pomales, and freshmen Brady Ludlow and Addison Speed.



DEREK GREGORY/SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS
Sam Ogden placed second in the 100 Backstroke.



DEREK GREGORY/SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS
Haley Roberson placed first and Natalie Hutson placed third in the 500 Freestyle.



DEREK GREGORY/SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS
Aledo's team of Victoria Crews, Haley Roberson, Natalie Hutson, and Corah Satterfield placed first in the 200 Medley Relay.



DEREK GREGORY/SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS
Victoria Crews was second in the 100 Butterfly.



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