

THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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

ALEDO

City to absorb EPC Library

By Ryan Wade
The Community News

During the July 27 Aledo City Council meeting, updated renderings for the new city hall featured a new home for the East Parker County Library just inside the main entrance across the hall from the council chambers. The City of Aledo has already begun talks of acquiring the EPC Library in preparation for that transition.

"The library's been struggling for several years now," Mayor Nick Stanley said. "They have looked to the City of Aledo for assistance, and we've been contributing financially to the library for many years. The discussion happened as we're building a new city hall, trying to activate that space and empower the library to have more opportunities for kids, families, and adults in this community to come to an amazing space that's been refreshed and revitalized and can serve the community well."

Transitioning the library from a 501(c)(3) nonprofit entity to the Aledo Public Library will provide the library with long-term financial viability, while also creating the runway for the institution to enhance programming offered to the community.

The transition is far from complete. According to Stanley, no firm timetable has been set. The earliest expected dates for the transition to begin are during the latter part of the city's fiscal year in April or May of 2024.

Once the transition is complete, the city hopes to retain the current library staff as they become city employees.

Citizens speak on zoning change

The meeting was abnormally busy. Residents of Aledo filled the usually empty seats ready to make their voices heard regarding a proposed zoning change.

The property in question, located at 819 Old Annetta Rd., currently exists as a single-family residential property. The proposed change to zoning would allow 2.66 acres of the unplatted property to become a planned development area with a commercial base.

Several residents took to the podium to address the council during the public hearing portion of the meeting. Conversation became heated as the public hearing ran to its conclusion.

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Plenty to Do



ASHLYN POOLE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Pct. 4 Constable Scott Jones is shown on patrol.

Scott Jones explains the role of Constable

By Ashlyn Poole
The Community News

Constable Scott Jones has a tagline, and it can be seen in proud silver letters on the back of two of his three constable vehicles for Precinct 4.

"Proudly Serving Our Courts and Community."

He says that's what a constable does, in a nutshell. But not everyone knows that. Among the earliest recorded police officers in the world and the first law enforcement officers in Texas, constables still struggle to be differentiated from the like.

"When I first got the job, there were many times when people would ask, 'Well, what

does a constable do?'" Jones said. "Can y'all arrest people? Can you write people tickets for speeding?"

Yes, they can. The primary job of the constable is to serve the justice of the peace, both by serving civil process papers and acting as bailiffs for the court. However, they also have the same law enforcement authority as any other police officer.

"We're not being dispatched to calls unless somebody needs assistance of some type, so we have a lot of flexibility when it comes to serving our civil process papers," Jones said. "About the only thing where we don't have a lot of flexibility is the court. When court's in session, me or one of my two deputies have got to be in the courtroom."

Jones took office in January of 2013 after retiring from his position of more than 22 years

as a Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission agent. Before that, he worked as a deputy sheriff for Bexar County in San Antonio for more than four years.

"I think the constable's office is an extremely good fit for my background and I do like the uniqueness of the non-traditional law enforcement role," Jones said. "Having said that, I think it's absolutely essential before pursuing a role like the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission or the constable's office to have a good, solid foundation in law enforcement."

Jones' staff meets his criteria. He has two full-time deputies who work in the office as well as three reserve deputies who volunteer when needed. All six of them hold the highest credentials they can have in the profession.

Turn to **JONES**, page 3

WEATHERFORD ISD

Board closes in on budget

Legislative special session SB2 adoption guides process

By Melissa Winn
The Community News

With the 2023-24 school year merely days away from starting, the Weatherford ISD Board of Trustees is now one step closer to finalizing and voting on the annual budget.

After a budget workshop in June where Lori Boswell, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Operations, was only able to give hypothetical numbers due to the Texas Legislature still being in session debating property taxes, Monday's regular board meeting (Aug. 1) provided a clearer picture.

Though not finalized, it's likely the tax rate per \$100,000 valuation will decrease to \$1.0365 from the 2022 rate of \$1.2219. The Maintenance & Operation (M&O) side yields the lower rate of .7575 cents (down from .8538 in 2022) and the Interest and Sinking (I&S) remains the same at .2790 cents.

The M&O tax rate provides funds strictly for the maintenance and operations of the district while the I&S tax rate provides funds for payment on any debt that finances a district's facilities and can only be used for those expenditures.

Boswell told trustees that once the property tax question was settled and SB2 was adopted, the district received certified values from the Parker County Appraisal District and revenue projections could then be formulated.

"When we met in June, I had a lot of 'might be' and 'could be' scenarios," she said. "Tonight, I have a better idea."

SB2 limits the capability of a local government entity to generate revenue and provide services by lowering the tax a county can adopt without a rollback election. The bill also makes changes to the process on how a county chooses to adopt a tax rate, the way a county calculates that rate, and the overall appraisal process.

The Homestead Exemption was also increased to \$100,000.

Conservatively, at the June meeting, Boswell had estimated a 25-percent increase in certified values but those numbers came in closer to 30 percent, allowing the district to project an 18-cent decrease in the tax rate.

Even with the lower rate, if approved in late August by trustees, WISD's overall revenue will increase to an approximate \$94.7 million from the previous conservative estimate of \$92.9 million.

Despite that, WISD will likely still need to dip into its \$40.5 million fund balance as expenditures are estimated at \$99.6 million for the year.

Turn to **WISD**, page 3

PARKER COUNTY

Clear the Shelters



COURTESY OF WEATHER ANIMAL SHELTER

The Annual Clear the Shelter event is this Saturday, August 5, at Weatherford Parker County Animal Shelter. Turn to page 3 for more information.

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WEATHER

Water well owners: Don't get left high and dry during drought

What Texans who rely on groundwater need to know now

By Susan Himes
Texas A&M Agricultural Service

The heat wave that has swept across the state has taken a toll on many water wells in Texas, which were already affected by extended drought conditions.

With a lack of moisture and record-setting temperatures, people who rely on well water need to be aware of the signs that their well may run out and take steps to prevent that from happening.

Joel Pigg, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service specialist and coordinator for the Texas Well Owner Network, or TWON, Bryan-College Station, doesn't want Texans in rural areas to be left high and dry. He shares some useful tips for anyone who depends on groundwater for their everyday needs.

How to identify a problem

If your well starts to sputter, loses pressure, or if your water looks anything less than clear, it's a problem. If your pump is rapidly cycling on and off, turn it off, Pigg said. If your pump sounds like it is sucking air, let it rest.

Low or slow-recovering water levels will make your pump cycle rapidly and can burn out the motor, he said. Low water levels also can cause submersible pumps to overheat and damage PVC pipes. If the water level doesn't rise, you may need to reduce your pumping rate or lower the pump. If the water level drops below the point of your pump intake, the pump could burn up.

There are warnings for well owners that their water level is dropping and may go dry. The well may begin to produce sand and air bubbles. Watch for sand in the



TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE PHOTO BY SAM CRAFT

Many Texas water well owners have been impacted by drought and the ongoing heatwave.

toilet tank and cloudy-looking tap water that clears up after a while.

than is replenished by rain or other water sources, it becomes depleted.

Understand where your water comes from

Most people take for granted that if they turn on a faucet in their home, water comes out, Pigg said. But people may not always think beyond that until that tap dries up or water starts coming out with a funny taste, smell, or cloudiness.

People, especially new home or landowners, need to make sure they know if they have a water well, a city water supply, or are on a water system.

"A lot of people who are buying properties in more rural areas don't know that and don't think to ask that question," Pigg said. "Folks with a piece of property that they may not have owned for very long, or if it is their secondary vacation property, may not consider what being on well water entails and requires."

During droughts, people rely more heavily on groundwater, which is the water held underground in aquifers. When more water is pumped out of the aquifer

Be conscious of your usage and conserve

Low pressure from a well may leave you needing to space out things that require water, such as showering or washing dishes or clothes.

"Essentially that aquifer needs time to fill back up," Pigg said. "You do not want to run it down so low that you are sucking air or sediments into your pump."

A pump without water can burn up and lead to costly repairs, he said. You may also want to consult with your neighbors on a schedule to distribute heavy water use over the week to help individual wells recover and to maintain the water supply for everyone in your area.

During drought, it is also important to prioritize what you'll use water for and when. You may also want to add a pumped-water storage tank. This type of tank can help meet peak demand when you need more water than your pump can produce.

To continue reading please visit <http://www.community-news.com/stories/water-well-owners-dont-get-left-high-and-dry-during-drought,43498>

Obituaries

Robert Wilson Probes

Robert Wilson Probes, 78, passed away on Sunday, July 23, 2023.

Robert was born in Weatherford on February 22, 1945, to Morris and Helen Probes. He married the Love of his Life, Vicki Saylor Probes, on December 4, 1999.

Robert's heritage in Parker County runs deep; his family settled in this area in 1890. The Probes are a true Fort Worth and Benbrook Family. Robert is the fourth generation who has been serving the Fort Worth area since 1927 in the Excavating and Concrete Business. He was the proud owner of Robert W. Probes Concrete, Inc. for 53 years.

Robert was a member of Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo Committee, proudly serving for 39 years. He served in the Armed Forces of the United States Army National Guard from 1965-1971.

Robert was a very caring and generous man who touched many lives with his big smile, booming voice, and loving heart. He never met a stranger and his intro line was always the same "Where you from and what do you do?"



Robert Probes

Robert loved his family dearly and was very proud of them, showing their pictures to everyone, even strangers. His favorite thing was spending time with his family, cooking, and sharing food with family and friends. When he shopped for food, he would buy special items that each person in the family liked, and he

loved to eat as well. He loved taking his grand-children and great grand-children fishing and hunting. Other than family, his hobbies included fishing, hunting and golf.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Bill Probes; sister, Marie Lopez; and son, Aaron Probes.

Robert is survived by his wife of 34 years, Vicki Probes; children, Tobie Probes Barrett and spouse, Donny, Mitzi Freeman and spouse, Rob; three grandchildren, Breelan, Garrett, and Kara; three great-grandchildren, Mia, Shorty, and Jaxon; sister, Sammie Vance; and numerous extended family and friends.

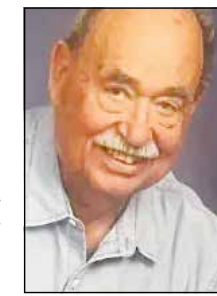
The Funeral Service was held at Parker County Cowboy Church on Friday, July 28. Interment was at Aledo Brown Cemetery.

The Community News
August 4, 2023

Roy Earl Ray

Roy Earl Ray, 81, passed away on Wednesday, July 26, 2023.

Roy was born March 22, 1942, in Aledo, to Hubert Ray and Elva (Mitchell) Ray. Among his many accomplishments, Roy graduated with a Bachelor's degree from TCU, proudly served his country in the United States Army in the 82nd Airborne, and owned Roy E. Ray Insurance Agency. In addition to his professional achievements, Roy was a member of Parker County Cowboy Church, a cattleman, and a sports enthusiast, specifically enjoying golf and football. He was a loving husband and father and



Roy Ray

will be deeply missed by his family, friends, and local community.

Roy is survived by his beloved wife, Carol Ray of Aledo, Texas; children, Desiree Taylor (Dennis), Kathy Bone (Lewis), Hubert M. Ray, and Michelle Ray; grandchildren, Jacob Taylor, Brittany Taylor, Benjamin Taylor, Julius Bone, and Lou Bone; great-grandson, Sonny Malicki; and sister, Mona Fields.

A funeral ceremony was held on Tuesday, August 1, at the Parker County Cowboy Church.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the Parker County Cowboy Church.

The Community News
August 5, 2023

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Obituaries

Rebecca Michelle Mason

Rebecca Michelle Mason, 32, beloved daughter of John and Jana Mason, passed away on Sunday, July 30, 2023.



Rebecca Mason

She is preceded in death by her grandparents, John and Helen Johnson, long term members of Aledo United Methodist Church, and Jack Mason, member of First United Methodist Church of Richardson.

She is survived by her parents and triplet sisters, Nicole and Rachel Mason.

She will be forever missed by her family and friends.

Her celebration of life will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, August 5, at Richland Hills Baptist Church. Visitation will be at 1 p.m.

The Community News
August 4, 2023



The Weatherford Parker County Animal Shelter will offer free adoptions at the annual Clear the Shelter event from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. this Saturday (Aug. 5).

In addition to adoptions, there will be raffle prizes, food trucks, and a vendor fair (including a face painter and a Doggy Kissing Booth).

Even if you don't adopt, the event promises a fun family

activity, and the opportunity to support the shelter and interact with local businesses.

If you do plan to adopt, you are welcome to line up early at the gate to make sure you get the dog or cat you've had your eye on, as adoptions are first come first serve.

The animal shelter is located at 403 Hickory Lane in Weatherford.

JONES

from page one

"There's a lot of talent in the office, it's something I'm extremely proud of," Jones said. "I regularly remind myself of a quote from the late president Ronald Reagan, 'Surround yourself with great people; delegate authority; get out of the way.'"

Experience matters

In Texas, there are four levels to a peace officer's license through Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, or TCOLE: basic, intermediate, advanced, and master. Jones and all five of his deputies hold the master level.

"It's essential for the constable and deputies to be long tenured, well experienced, with a proven track record and at a minimum, an intermediate level license from the TCOLE before considering such a position," Jones said. "The constable's office, whether it be the constable's position or that of the deputy constable, is not a position for the inexperienced."

The constable's office moved from Willow Park to the new sub-courthouse on Old Weatherford Road in mid-February of this year when it opened. The office works closely with Justice of the Peace Timothy Mendolia, who took the bench in January.

"The constables are there for the protection of the court and myself, so they provide their bailiff in that regard, meaning they're always in the courtroom when I have proceedings going on," Mendolia said. "And then they also serve papers for me. So, any papers that get filed in my court, they are responsible for serving those papers."

Both Mendolia and Jones have theories as to why the public has such little knowledge of their professions. Mendolia feels presence in the courthouse is vital to community understanding.

"If you don't get a traffic ticket and have to come to court, then you really don't know what goes on," Mendolia said. "And you can do a lot of that stuff through telephone calls and take care of it, so a lot of times people don't come to our courthouse to see what actually goes on."



COURTESY OF SCOTT JONES

Jones is shown during his service in the military.

Jones looks at it from a different perspective. He believes it has to do with constables losing their jobs in the north.

"In Texas, we still have our constables, and most of the other states do, but some don't have the constable anymore," Jones said. "So people from the north move down into the area, it's something they're not familiar with and I think that's why you get the question regularly about, 'What does a constable do?' and 'What kind of authority do they have?'"

However, they hope it won't always be this way. In fact, the sub-courthouse will have its first jury trial in a few weeks, according to Mendolia. This way, people can see what goes on inside the courthouse.

"I encourage anyone to come by and talk to myself or Constable Jones about what we do here and we're always open to talking to people," Mendolia said. "They don't have to be forced to come here because of a traffic ticket or otherwise. We're always here to talk to people and let them know what we do and help them out in any way we can."



Read this story online

WISD

from page one

Board member Jeff Ford asked if there was any leeway for the board to be able to move the tax rate and minimize using the fund balance. Boswell cited that now that SB2 has been adopted, passage of a tax ratification election would allow the rate to be increased.

Board president Mike Guest said the district has made some savvy fiscal moves over the past few years and praised the efforts of staff and trustees.

"We are very blessed in this community," he said. "We've done a lot of work on our own to have less bond debt and one of the lowest - if not the lowest - tax rates in the state."

Boswell cautioned that what was presented relies on the fact that the Legislature will keep the current school financing structure in place.

There will be another budget work session in mid-August before the budget is adopted on Aug. 28.

Also at the meeting:

- Trustees heard about changes to the 2023-24 student handbook, the main being changing

personnel names to reflect current roles and a requirement that Narcan be on-hand if needed. Narcan is used in suspected or known opioid overdoses in an emergency.

- The 2023-24 Code of Conduct changes were highlighted for the board that included the passage of HB114, which mandates that any student caught with an e-cigarette is required to go to the Bridge Academy, unless it is full. HB1427 was expanded to cover disposable phones in cases of harassment and SB37 provided options on better reporting of hazing.

COUNCIL

from page one

Moments later during the council discussion of the matter, a resident attempted to address the council from the podium out-of-turn, resulting in a stern exchange between the individual and Stanley about the rules for the meeting.

Ultimately, the disgruntled resident returned to her seat, allowing the meeting to move forward.



Read this story online

Rowls elected mayor pro tem

Another significant order of business during the meeting was in regard to electing a mayor pro tem to act as mayor in the event the sitting mayor should be absent for a period of time. Within moments after the discussion began, Place 4 Councilman Nelson Rowls was nominated for the position.

The motion was quickly seconded to bring the council to vote on the measure. With a unanimous vote, the ayes

carried, making Rowls the new mayor pro tem.

Meetings to be twice monthly

After deliberating on the matter during the June session, the council voted to move to a twice-a-month schedule starting in August. Going forward, meetings will be the first and fourth Thursday of each month. The first August meeting was being held at press time on Aug. 3 and the second will be on Aug 24 at 6 p.m.

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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

Wildfire chances increasing across state



Gary Borders

gborders@texaspress.com

The risk for wildfires across the state has risen along with the hot and dry conditions, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service.

"With the recent uptick in wildfire activity, Texas A&M Forest Service has mobilized additional personnel and equipment to assist with response," said Wes Moorehead, Texas A&M Forest Service fire chief. "State and local firefighters are prepared to respond quickly but we need Texans to be careful and prevent wildfire ignitions while conditions remain hot and dry."

Nine out of 10 wildfires cross the state are both human-caused and preventable. The most common causes of wildfires during summer are debris burning and equipment use. That includes parking in dry grass and dragging trailer chains.

The forest service reported seven active wildfires as of Friday, most of which were 90% contained. However, the Blum Fire covering an estimated 300 acres was only 40% contained, while the Classic Canyon Fire in Coryell County, covering 150 acres, was 20% contained.

There are 150 counties in Texas with burn bans.

Abbott signs tax relief bill; now goes to voters

With Gov. Gregg Abbott's signature on an \$18 billion property tax relief package, now it's up to the voters in November to approve a proposed constitutional amendment that would put it into effect.

The *Austin American-Statesman* reported that, if passed in November, homeowners would be eligible for a \$100,000 homestead exemption, with those 65 and older getting an additional \$40,000

exemption. The omnibus measure also exempts many smaller businesses from paying franchise taxes and implements a pilot program to limit annual property tax appraisal value increases.

Voters also will decide the fate of 13 other proposed constitutional amendments on the November ballot. Besides the property tax measure, the propositions include creating a broadband infrastructure fund; creation of a Texas energy fund to build new electric generating plants; and creation of a water fund to finance water projects in Texas.

Bookstores sue over law rating books in schools

Texas bookstores have joined with national organizations to sue in federal court over a new Texas law that requires a rating system for books in schools and seeks to ban sexually explicit books from public school libraries.

The American Booksellers Association and other national groups were joined by BookPeople in Austin, Blue Willow Bookshop in Houston and others in filing the suit, saying the law, due to take effect on Sept. 1, "is unrealistic, limits students' reading options and narrows libraries' book selections," according to the *Statesman*.

Named as defendants in the suit are several state agencies, including the Texas Education Agency, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission and the State Board of Education, all of which will be responsible for implementing the law.

"This law is bad for small businesses, like independent bookstores," Charley Rejsek, CEO of BookPeople, said. "The workload, and the monetary aspect that goes along with the workload, is just impossible to meet."

In a tweet responding to the lawsuit, Rep. Jared Patterson, R-Frisco, who authored HB 900, said "bring it."



MARCUS WENNRICH

Aerial picture of a grass fire in Texas with heavy smoke

One in five Texans live in flood plain

About 20% of the state's population — nearly 6 million Texans — live in an area susceptible to flooding, according to new data gathered by the Texas Water Development Board and reported by the *Texas Tribune*.

The analysis by TWDB is part of its first statewide flood plan, required by a law passed in 2019 in response to Hurricane Harvey. Flood risks in Texas are increasing as the result of heavier precipitation due to climate change, stronger hurricanes and a rise in sea levels — even as the state's population continues to increase.

In a presentation in mid-July, TWDB staff said one-fifth of the state's land — about 56,000 square miles — falls within an area classified as being in a 100-year floodplain.

The state is likely to spend tens of billions of dollars in flood protection. One of the first projects is the "Ike Dike," a massive gate system planned for the mouth of Galveston Bay, the *Tribune* reported.

"Getting this program up and running is a really big deal," TWDB Chair Brooke Paup said before the board approved the 15 regional plans, a major step in creating the statewide flood plan.

Each region is built around one of the state's major watersheds.

"I know it'll truly go so far to save lives and people's homes," Paup said.

Border concertina razor wire made by inmates

The miles of concertina razor wire strewn along the banks of the Rio Grande by Texas authorities — and the subject of a suit by the Department of Justice — is manufactured by inmates in an East Texas minimum-security prison unit, the *Corpus Christi Caller Times* reported.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice was authorized to purchase nearly \$1.1 million worth of equipment to make the wire, according to the Legislative Budget Board's contract database, the *Caller Times* reported. While the prison system has been making such wire for the state's 100-plus prison units for some time, the new machines are allowing expanded production for use on the Texas border.

The new unit was shipped to the Powledge Unit near Palestine in East Texas. That prison also has a metal manufacturing unit.

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.

Thistles&Roses

Bringing August Monday back home



Richard Henderson

richard@rahenderson.com

The first Monday in August is known as August Monday in Road Town, Tortola, British Virgin Islands. It is also known as Emancipation Monday, marking the day the British Empire freed all of its slaves. I learned an important life lesson there several years ago. It is an experience I have never forgotten.

Our family arrived on the Sunday before August Monday. We had rented a 44-foot sailboat. We were "bare boaters," meaning we rented the bare boat, sailing it ourselves around the islands. We had developed sailing skills on area lakes and were competent sailors.

We had never heard of August Monday. But we were about to learn.

We had a plan to sail to another location that Sunday and spend our first night. We had a planned agenda sailing to Virgin Gorda,

Jost van Dyke, and Cane Garden Bay among our destinations.

We were fully provisioned and we sailed out of Road Town heading to our first night's anchor.

As we cleared the harbor, we attempted to raise the main sail and, trying as hard as we could, it would go up only half way. We radioed the harbor that we were motoring back. Then on the way back the engine sputtered and died. We could not start it. We again radioed the harbor and we sensed their skepticism of weekend sailors. "How could both the sail and the engine break down a mile from the harbor after all? Amateurs," I am sure they were thinking.

We managed to limp back with the main sail half hoisted. Upon inspection, the charter company agreed that the sail was jammed and could not be fixed and needed repair. They looked at the engine and discovered a major crack in the block with a major oil leak. It would require pulling the engine and a major repair. To make matters worse, these problems had been reported by the previous sailors who chartered the boat and the boat had not been repaired or inspected before renting it to us.

Then they said there would not be a substitute boat until the

next day but, they explained that there was this big parade and festival on the next day known as August Monday. They were mortified themselves and very apologetic. This is a well-known large charter boat company with a stellar reputation.

You can imagine my American fury and anger at them. It was righteous indignation on steroids. I was fuming because of all the things that they failed to do. The hotels were full for the festival and we had to spend the night on the boat in the harbor, hot and humid with no breeze.

The next morning, I asked where and when the parade started. They said 10 a.m. and ran along the main road. We walked a couple of miles to the parade start, which was a simple spot on the road. It was just outside a bar where many natives and ex-pats were enjoying themselves. It was well past 10 so I asked what's going on? They laughed and said the 10 o'clock parade has never started before 12 and usually more like 1:30-2:00. They had a lottery where people bought chances as to when the parade would actually start.

We saw people gathering with ornate floats and colorful costumes and Moko Jumbies, who are people in costumes using extremely high stilts. It was all a sight to see.

At around 1:45, a man on a donkey wearing a nifty coat and top hat carrying an umbrella arrived and the parade began.

There were many loud drums and dancers and huge mountains of speakers for bands mounted on trailers. When the bands began playing, I felt a throbbing inside my rib cage from the vibrations.

We couldn't help but start dancing. One minute we were watching the parade, the next minute we were part of the parade. All thoughts of anger and frustration melted away. I couldn't believe we almost missed this. The music and the beat were carrying us away.

Suddenly, the parade stopped. I looked ahead and one float had lost its speakers, scattered on the pavement. There was no thought of just going around them. We waited for them to reload and go again. Floats ahead had stopped and waited for them. The parade

Turn to **MONDAY**, page 5



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Read this story online

MONDAY

from page 4

finally ended on the beach where we plunged in to cool off. Local foods were being sold from many concessions stands. It was delicious. The locals greeted us and treated us like family.

Our spirits were lifted and I thought, I really need to slow down, be patient, and relax, remember the important things of life. What was I thinking?

We eventually sailed away and had a great vacation in a different boat.

Now, every August Monday, I drink a little rum punch, sit back in a tropical shirt and shorts, and remember that day.

I usually put on my favorite Bob Marley song and sing along:

“Don’t Worry About a Thing
Cause Every Little Thing’s
Gonna be All Right!”

Richard Henderson is a local resident who practices law and helps rescue unwanted animals.

CORRECTION

In the July 27 Slings & Arrows commentary, I stated that the “Concerned Parents of Aledo” political action committee that opposed the recent bond election had not posted its contributor report with the Texas Ethics Commission. The report was due in April.

Perhaps the reason no report was filed in April is that, up to that point, there were no contributors to the committee.

The “Concerned Parents of Aledo” filed its July 15 report on July 12, showing a sole contributor, Jonathan Stickland, who donated \$3,000 in the interim.

I regret the error in last week’s column.

- Randy Keck

TRAVEL

Bahamas is a hot (and humid) spot worth every drop of sweat

Country celebrating 50 years of independence

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

If you think going to the Bahamas is going to be a break from the Texas heat, well, sorry. The temperature while the lovely Mrs. Junell and I were there only hit the low 90s, but the humidity made it feel every bit of 103 to 105.

So, before going any further with this story, let me advise you take plenty of shirts. Pack all you can in your suitcase, then squeeze in a few more. And while there, whatever other souvenirs you get, add in another couple of shirts — there’s a good chance they’ll be worn before you get back to the states.

And don’t even think about wearing anything but shorts as far as your bottom clothing goes.

In other words, you will perspire a lot. But it is worth every bit of sweat.

We were fortunate enough to spend five days in a resort, the Viva Wyndham Fortuna Beach in Freeport on the island of Grand Bahama. We spent one day going there and one day coming back to

West Palm Beach, Florida on the cruise ship Margaritaville at Sea, and being a Jimmy Buffet fan — or Parrothead — that itself was enough to make a fantastic vacation for me.

Oh, and did I mention the whole purpose of the trip was to celebrate Junell’s birthday? Nope, not going to trick me into saying how many years. Remember, a lady never reveals her age — and her husband dang sure doesn’t.

Going over

After a flight journey that took us from Love Field in Dallas to Pittsburgh to Baltimore, we eventually made our way to West Palm Beach.

Can someone please explain to me why it is cheaper to fly all over Hell’s half acre (where did that phrase come from, by the way?) to get somewhere than to take a direct flight? After all, isn’t the plane using less fuel and we’re taking up less of their time if we just hop on here and hop off there?

Anyway, after going to Canada by way of Costa Rica, we found ourselves on the part of the U.S. that I always thought looks like it’s flicking a booger on Cuba. We were only one night away from the Bahamas and the humid paradise awaiting.



RICK MAUCH

Junell at the ocean’s shore.

Before getting there, however, the ship had karaoke night. It was one of two times I brought tears to the eyes of the lovely Mrs. Junell as I sang Jim Croce’s “Time a Bottle.” She also shed a tear when I sang Elton John’s “Your Song” during karaoke at the resort.

Come to think of it, she might have cried three times. I’m not sure if it was to hide tears or simply to hide when she covered her face during my rendition of Chuck Berry’s “My Ding-a-Ling.”

Glass bottom boat and a storm

Few things can match the quiet thrill of being next to the ocean. Having lived next to one on the Texas Gulf Coast for several years in the late 1980s and early 1990s, I can attest first-hand that walking with your feet in the sand and ocean is as relaxing as any massage — with all due respect to masseuses, who don’t usually require traveling a long distance.

Our first real adventure of the week involved more than just our feet getting wet, however.

I like to say I prefer being *on* the water, not *in* the water. Well, on our first excursion we got both, sort of.

Since we are neither of us swimmers, what better way to take in the beauty of the clear Bahamian waters than on a glass bottom boat? So, we sat out on our journey, doing the aforementioned feet in the ocean thing as we walked down the beach to our destination on a beautiful sunny day.

For the moment.

Twenty minutes on the boat and a little ways out on the ocean — I don’t know nautical distance, I barely know mileage on land, I’m that guy who tells you when you reach that broken mailbox you need to double back — the skies began to darken. Then, as if we had awakened Neptune from a nap, the skies opened up like the checkbook of a pro sports team owner.

Were we scared? Heck no! It was perhaps the highlight of our trip. Anyone can go out on a boat when the sun is shining — which we did — but it takes a special (interpret as you wish) type of person to stay on one when it seems more rain is getting on you than in the ocean.

Turn to TRAVEL, page 9



RICK MAUCH

A storm hits during an excursion on a glass bottom boat. Not enough to be dangerous, but enough to be wet and fun.

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

AUGUST 5
Bearcat Nation 101
You're invited to Bearcat Nation 101! Connect with fellow Bearcats and learn more about AISD schools, programs and community resources!
This free annual event is a great way to meet administrators and employees from departments throughout the district as well as find ways to get plugged in to the community no matter what your child is passionate about! The event will be held in the Aledo High School Cafeteria, from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. on Saturday, August 5.

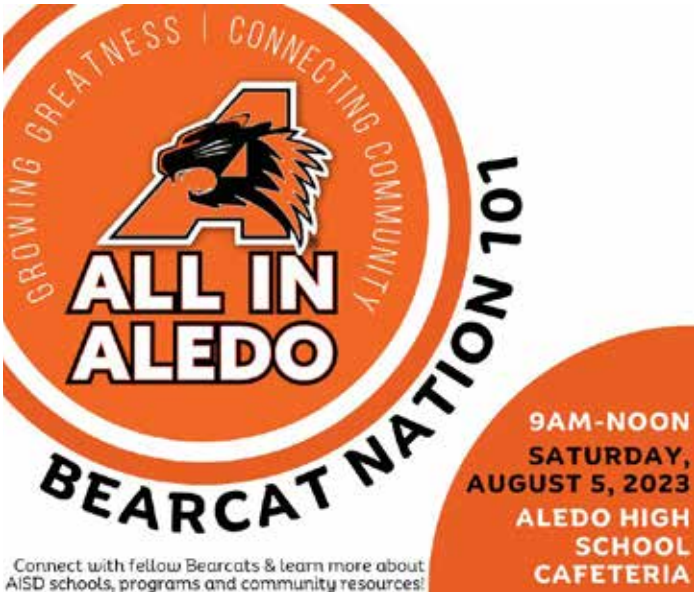
Meet the Ladycats Night
The event for Aledo High School Volleyball will be held at 5 p.m. pm Saturday, August 5 at the Aledo Volleyball Club (AVC) located at 425 FM 1187 across from Aledo Middle School. Come out to meet the 2023-2024 Varsity Volleyball team as well as the JV and Freshman teams.
All fans young and older, new and returning are Welcome to this FREE event!!
There will be Varsity Team Introductions & Team Poster signings, an Alumni v Current Players game to watch, recognition of

Sponsors and the concession stand will be open for purchase.

AUGUST 14
Aledo ISD Meet the Teacher
See your school's website or Facebook page for more information.

AUGUST 16
Aledo ISD First Day of School
School hours will remain the same for the 2023-2024 school year:
Elementary/Early Childhood Academy (PK-5):
7:30 AM first bell
7:40 AM tardy bell
3:10 PM dismissal

Secondary (6-12):
8:30 AM first bell
8:40 AM tardy bell
4:10 PM dismissal



TEXAS CROSSWORD
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ACROSS

- riding ___back (without a saddle)
- TX Janis Joplin was a drug ___
- "Texas Central" is proposing a high-speed ___ line
- TXism: "not a lick"
- TXism: "I'm at the ___ of my rope"
- highly recommended film (2 wds.)
- early band of TX Roy Orbison: "___ Kings"
- Texans, because of their country
- "___ Siecke State Forest"
- "___ Bell Creameries in Brenham cowboy's bolo
- feudal serf
- a horse with no one aboard
- Gov. James "___" Ferguson
- TX King Vidor directed 1937 film: "___ Dallas"
- retail blowout
- Houston Rockets had this Daniel for 2021 season
- TXism: "long as ___"
- TXism: "I ___" (intend)
- TXism: "he can't carry a ___ bucket" (bad singer)
- 19th governor: ___ "Sul" Ross
- blood vessel
- it was needed in World War I (2 wds.)
- honky tonk, e.g. (2 wds.)
- a four-bagger as a stat
- Marlin High class
- seat of Rains County
- before he was a Ranger, Jorge Cantu played for the Miami
- TXism: "playing with ___ deck" (unlucky)
- TX Jim Reeves hit: "___ Losing You" (1957)
- air mover
- dir. to Clyde from Greenwood
- accurate
- TXism for "nap"
- 8th governor, Clark (init.)
- "chow down"
- TXism: "___ call crying for mama"
- TXism: "___ the bud" (stop early)
- TX Gene Tierney 1951 film: "The Mating ___"
- honorary Texas Ranger: Stanley Gardner
- wife of 34-across
- rain protection
- TXism: "she could ___ ice cubes to eskimos"
- 12 accurate
- TXism for "nap"
- 8th governor, Clark (init.)
- "chow down"
- TXism: "___ call crying for mama"
- TXism: "___ the bud" (stop early)
- TX Gene Tierney 1951 film: "The Mating ___"
- honorary Texas Ranger: Stanley Gardner
- wife of 34-across
- rain protection
- TXism: "she could ___ ice cubes to eskimos"
- TX Tobolowsky was in Texas-based 1989 film "Roe ___ Wade"
- TX Tanya sang "One Love ___ Time"
- Waco's Branch Davidians, e.g.
- Daly of television show "Wings" with TX Crystal Bernard
- single strand nucleic acid
- speed trap town in Hall County on U.S. 287
- Deer Park FM, or El Paso AM
- in the middle of
- ___ Ormy, Texas
- TXism: "hot as ___ griddle"
- Ruth of 1950 western, "Dallas," with Gary Cooper

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Send event submissions to events@community-news.com.
Please include time, date, and place of the event, a short description, and phone/email for obtaining further information, with photos, graphics, or flyers.

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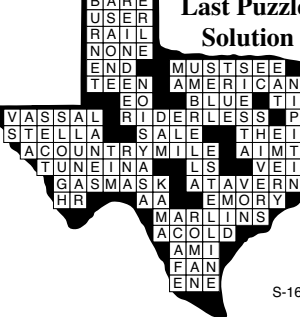
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Questions must be submitted online to the Questions and Bid submission site on or before Friday, August 18, 2023, by 2:00 PM CST.

Submit bids online to the Questions and Bid submission site prior to the deadline.

Deadline for submission of proposals online is 2:00 PM CST, Tuesday, September 12, 2023, no later than 2:00 PM CST.

It is the responsibility of the submitting entity to ensure that the proposal is received in a timely manner. Proposals received after the deadline will not be considered for award, regardless of whether the delay was outside the control of the submitting firm.

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TRAVEL

from page 5

Look me up on Facebook and you can find a video of myself, Junell, and our boat captain Larry doing our version of “Singing in the Rain.” You might say Larry should maybe have been steering the boat instead, but, hey, he got us home and even offered to take us out again if we wanted. However, there were no more storms in the forecast, so we politely declined.

Heck, he even circled the boat around to get my hat after it blew off into the ocean. Now that’s service.

Garden of the Groves

Any visit to The Bahamas has to include a stop by Garden of the Groves, named after Wallace Groves, who built the city of Freeport in 1955 on 50,000 acres of swamp land that was given to him by the Bahamian government. What else were they going to do with it?

Garden of the Groves is a beautiful nature center that, surprisingly, survived well through Hurricane Dorian in 2019. At the Garden, you can explore winding trails through lush vegetation, cascading waterfalls and sparkling fountains. There’s also a picturesque chapel that is a local favorite spot for weddings, prayer, and meditation, and given the amount of rum available on the island, my guess is it gets used plenty for all of these.

And there’s even a Labyrinth. Unlike the one in Greek mythology, however, there is no Minotaur, so journey safely. Also, getting lost is an impossibility as there are no walls.

The Garden also features a large variety of indigenous and migratory birds, along with butterflies and other insects and plenty of luscious flowers and shrubs.

Since the Garden was re-opened, it has been certified as a wildlife habitat by the U.S. Wildlife Federation. One of creatures known to inhabit the Garden is an exotic lizard with a curly tail and a unique name given to it by the locals — the curly tailed lizard.

You’ll also see plenty of ducks, like the one we encountered who



LEFT: The ocean on the beach in Freeport at night. | **CENTER:** A lady chops up a fresh coconut in preparation to make Gully Washes, the unofficial drink of The Bahamas. | **RIGHT:** Rick (left) and Graham, a friend met at Goombay, who also gave as a gift a bottle of vodka from his Lucayan Distillery.



RICK MAUCH

didn’t seem to mind us being there but also had a look on his face of “I’d really prefer it if you would hurry so I can continue my nap.”

Visitors can take a walk down into the cool fern grove and admire the imposing limestone boulders that tower over both sides of the trail, complete with relaxing waterfalls. It’s a perfect place to take a photo — and yes, we did.

We took the tour that included a guide, but you can also go through on your own. Trust me, though, you’ll want the knowledge of a local to make the experience all the more memorable.

Markets

Folks running the shops in the markets in Freeport love to haggle. But do bear in mind that they are still recovering from Hurricane Dorian, so don’t try to get them to go so low that they aren’t still making a profit.

These are some of the nicest people in the world — or at least as much of the world as I’ve seen. Please don’t take advantage of their kindness, but do expect a bargain — and considering most of the products are hand-made, that makes the purchase even more special.

By the way, when bringing home souvenirs, tuck a Bahamian dollar

inside the gift. Some folks might even find that more neat than the actual gift itself. I’d be lying if I didn’t say that it makes the thought cross my mind, “Why didn’t I just make the dollar the souvenir?” But after all, a dollar is only a dollar, and, well, despite what Junell thinks, even I’m not that much of a cheapskate.

As you stroll and browse among the 80 or so specialty stores, boutiques, restaurants, outdoor and indoor bars and cafes, the choices are plenty from Bahama Mamas (a drink) to the island’s most noted beers, Sands (their answer to Corona) and the darker brew Kalik. Don’t imbibe too much, though, because even the kindest marketer will not say no to an offer of a couple hundred dollars for a T-shirt you “just have to have.”

Goombay

Each Thursday in July Goombay takes place. It is a celebration of The Bahamas, and this year they were celebrating the nation’s 50th year of independence from the United Kingdom.

It’s also where we discovered a tradition, the unofficial drink of The Bahamas called the Gully Wash. It consists of fresh coconut water from

coconuts chopped up right in front of you, sweetened condensed milk and gin. Going to Goombay and not having one (or three) is like going to the ocean in a tuxedo, it’s a cool scene but you’ll be out of place.

Goombay features music of The Bahamas, booths where you can learn about the history, savor the food (more on that in a moment), and at each stop you make new friends. In fact, it’s that way everywhere on the island, say hello and you have a new friend. It’s that simple.

As for the food. It’s always exciting to try new delicacies — and we did, certainly. I have to say, though, while the fried snapper was incredible, I could have done without the eyes staring at me all through the meal. In fact, my son asked me if we ate the eyes as he noted that is some sort of tradition. Nope. Just no!

It was also at Goombay that we met Graham. He owns the Lucayan Distillery and gave us a bottle of Bahama Beach Vodka to bring back to America.

Plus, he’s just a great guy — and not just because of the free vodka.

Rum and More Rum

Folks love their rum in The Bahamas, and with good reason. While I always equated it to pirates in the movies (and real life, I suppose), it’s pretty dang good. Not being a rum drinker before, I don’t have much of a past to compare it to, but it’s hard to imagine it being better anywhere else.

We toured a rum factory to see how it’s made. Well, I say tour, it was actually in a single room - two, if you count the room where they were giving out samples and where, yes, I admit it, I spent the most time.

Besides, I really don’t care how it’s made. I’m only concerned with how I can get it.

Ironically, we came home with three free bottles. We were given two in a promotional presentation and Junell got another after winning a game of blackout bingo.

Don’t tell me you can’t see the irony in that.

Coming Home

Another night on the cruise ship featured more Jimmy Buffet music, a cheesburger (not quite in paradise, the ship was nice, though) and a cool dueling pianos show in which one of the duelers pulled a no-show. Fortunately, the guy who did show up was funny and talented enough for the both of them — at least that’s my assumption as he kept us entertained.

Saturday, as we were waiting on our plane at the Palm Beach International Airport a storm hit and we got word of a hurricane watch. You know how you never listen to those announcements? It’s funny how a single word like “hurricane” will make you start asking questions like, “What did they just say?” Fortunately, the third person we asked was listening enough to fill us in.

So, a flight home that was only supposed to be about four and a half hours ended up being closer to eight. We were also delayed a couple hours in Atlanta.

But hey, when the airline allows you to take half your home with you and gives you free soft drinks and trail mix, can you really complain about an extra couple or dozen hours added to the trip?

In Summation

What an amazing way to celebrate the lovely Mrs. Junell’s birthday. I owed her big time after she took me to Willow Creek, California in 2018, the heart of Bigfoot country.

I’d like to think she had as much fun then as I did now, but I am the only Bigfoot nerd in the family. Either way, this trip was one for the memory books and one anyone who loves the beach and ocean should take.

And nope, still not telling you how many birthdays this makes. She’s happy with me right now and I want to keep it that way.



RICK MAUCH

LEFT: The beautiful waterfall scenery at The Garden of the Groves, named after Wallace Groves, who founded Freeport in 1955. | **RIGHT:** Every Thursday in July each year The Bahamas celebrates Goombay. This year they were celebrating 50 years as an independent nation.

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BASEBALL

Mazon named all-state

THSBCA honors Bearcat, others from area

By Rick Mauch
Community News

Trace Mazon continues to add to his legacy as a member of the Aledo Bearcats baseball team. The recent graduate was recently named to the Elite Team in Class 5A as part of the Texas High School Baseball Coaches Association All-State Team.

Mazon, a member of the varsity Bearcats for two seasons, helped them to 52 wins during that span. That included a second-round playoff appearance this season and a berth in the Region I final in 2022.

Mazon was a force in a variety of ways for Coach Chad Barry's team. He posted a .467 batting average and a .583 on-base percentage with 42 hits, of which 15 went for extra bases. This included 10 doubles, three triples and a pair of home runs, along with driving in 26 runs.

In addition, Mazon drew 18 walks. And when he reached base, he was a running threat as he stole 16 bases.

"He was such a great leader and player for us over the past two seasons, especially last spring during his senior year," Barry said. "He learned from some great mentors that had led us in years past. I believe he also mentored some of our younger players last season to help prepare them to take on major leadership roles this upcoming season."

"The legacy he leaves behind her is one that has made our program better."

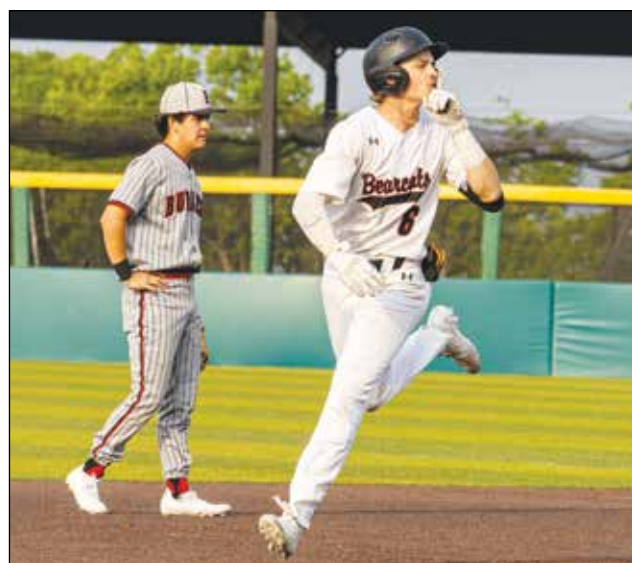
Mazon was also a participant in the THSBCA All-Star Game in June.

Mazon will be going from one perennially powerful program to another as he will join the Weatherford College roster in the fall. The Coyotes finished third in the NJCAA Division I World Series this past season.

Also honored

Mazon is joined in the THSBCA honors by several other area athletes.

The Weatherford Kangaroos are represented by senior pitcher Kannon Kemp on the Class 6A Elite Team, while senior third



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Trace Mazon silences the Burleson crowd as he trots around the bases after hitting a solo home run to tie the game during the 2023 spring season.

baseman Omar Juarez was named to the First Team. Kemp led his team with a 1.34 earned run average.

Juarez topped the Kangaroos with a .410 batting average and a .590 slugging percentage.

Weatherford finished 32-11 and advanced to the 6A Region I final before being eliminated by eventual state champion Flower Mound.

In Class 3A the Brock Eagles are represented by three honorees. Senior second baseman Tyler Moody was named

to the Elite Team, with junior outfielder Sawyer Strosnider picked for the First Team and junior second baseman Cam Harris on the Second Team.

The Eagles posted a 29-5 record and reached the 3A Region II final, their season ended by state runner-up Wall.

Academic All-State

Five senior members of the Kangaroos were honored as academic all-state by the THSBCA. They are Kemp, Bradley Cope, Tanner Mullins, Carter Norris and Trent Rogers.



PHOTO COURTESY OF WILLIE GIBSON

Willie Gibson III of Aledo, age 8, recently won gold medals in the 200 and 400-meter dashes at the Texas Amateur Athletic Federation Games of Texas in Brownsville. He posted his fastest times ever with a 30.81 seconds in the 200 and 1 minute, 09.83 seconds in the 400.

Meet the Ladycats Night

Meet the Aledo High School Volleyball at 5 p.m. Saturday, August 5, at the Aledo Volleyball Club (AVC) located at 425 FM 1187 across from Aledo Middle School. Come out to meet the 2023-2024 Varsity Volleyball team as well as the JV and Freshman teams. All fans young and older, new and

returning are Welcome to this FREE event!!

There will be Varsity Team Introductions & Team Poster signings, an Alumni v Current Players game to watch, recognition of Sponsors and the concession stand will be open for purchase.

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