

THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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ALEDO

Council approves assistance

\$3.5 million from TWDB

By Ryan Wade
The Community News

When the Aledo City Council had its regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, Dec. 7, a big announcement several months in the making was on the docket. City Manager Noah Simon confirmed the city is receiving \$3.5 million in financial assistance from the Texas Water Development Board that will be used to fund construction of the wastewater collection project.

Aledo's population growth over the past few decades has meant necessary upgrades to the infrastructure across the city. Two pieces of infrastructure sorely needing an upgrade are the Old Tunnel Lift Station and the Clear Fork Interceptor.

With the cost of construction continuing to rise since the pandemic of 2020, coupled with the growing demand on the wastewater system, the city could not hold off on these projects any longer.

In January of 2023, Aledo began the multi-million-dollar project to increase the capacity of the wastewater collection system at the Old Tunnel Lift Station and complete the Clear Fork Interceptor Sewer project.

That project was completed in August of 2023. What hung in the balance was whether or not the city would qualify for funding from the TWDB.

With the TWDB scheduled to meet last week, Simon picked up the phone to find out if the application from Aledo would be on the schedule for the meeting. When the answer he got wasn't the one he wanted, or the one the city of Aledo needed, he spent the next several hours on the phone pleading his case to get the application added to the board's to-do list.

His determination proved worthwhile, as the board added Aledo's application to the agenda for the meeting. Shortly after the city was notified the funding was approved.

The \$3.5 million will come from the TWDB's Clean Water Revolving Fund. Getting approval for the financial assistance will save the City of Aledo approximately \$567,000 in interest payments over the life of the loan initially used to fund the project, according to a press release by the TWDB.



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Magic Moment



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Hollis and Wyatt Minnich can't wait for Santa's appearance at the Willow Park Christmas tree lighting on Dec. 5. For more photos turn to page 5.

WILLOW PARK

Council approves city hall beautification

Old city hall to be torn down

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

In an effort to beautify the frontage of city hall with landscaping and increase the parking area, the Willow Park City Council, at its meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 12, approved the hiring of Dorothy Witmeyer of Westwood Professional Services, Inc. (previously Pacheco Koch).

"That's the company that did our Cross Timbers Park, so we're very familiar with her work," Willow Park Planning and Development Director Toni Fisher told the council.

Council voted to hire Witmeyer and her company for \$88,600. This includes \$72,600 for civil engineering and architectural services, along with \$16,000 for the optional services of a utility plan, electrical engineering and structuring.

Funds for the project are available within those appropriated for the improvements to city hall upon its purchase earlier this year.

Fisher said the work will include projects such as landscaping, parking and a monument sign.

So long old hall

Council voted to authorize city staff to accept bids to demolish the building at 516 Ranch House Road. It was the longtime home of city hall and city offices for decades before the move was made to the new location, 120 El Chico Tr., in January of 2023.

There had been some discussion as to what to do with the old building, but it has been declared unsuitable to be repaired without significant costs. There are numerous code violations, most notably fire and electrical.

"This is going to come as a shock to no one, but the building is in complete disrepair," City Manager Bryan Grimes said. "By and large the building needs to be demolished."

Grimes stressed, however, that the property on which the building sits will not be sold. Also, the parking lot connected to it is used for the park next door.

Planning and Development report

Fisher presented the council with a Planning and Development department report. Highlights included: **Projects completed within this quarter:**

- Canvas of Willow Park town home community with 110 residential rental units.
- The Village of Willow Park apartment community with 58 residential rental units. Ownership of the complex has also recently changed.
- Sally Watkins Realty.

Turn to **COUNCIL**, page 3

WEATHERFORD ISD

Board approves new HVAC equipment for Ninth Grade Center

Tours GRIT before meeting

By Melissa Winn
The Community News

Prior to the start of the last Weatherford ISD school board meeting of the year on Monday, Dec. 11, trustees got the chance to see progress on the new Grizzard Regional Institute of Technology (GRIT) building and also bid a fond farewell to administrative assistant Lisa Wulfjen.

Wulfjen, who also serves as the board's secretary, is retiring after being with the district for 19 years.

During the tour of GRIT, board members learned that more than 250 students have already signed up for classes next fall. Construction on the building is expected to be completed on time and within budget.

New chiller

Due to an unexpected issue with the chiller tower over the Thanksgiving break at the Ninth Grade Center, board members approved the purchase of a new chiller at a cost of \$143,450.

Superintendent Beau Rees said that the old unit rusted out after 26 years and that while maintenance has been keeping it together, it is

leaking "badly" and can no longer be repaired for long-term use.

No timeline is known for when a new unit might be installed, but depending on lead times for the equipment, Rees said it is possible work could be done during the summer if received early enough.

He added that maintenance can keep the existing unit limping along until then.

Crockett whiteboards

Also in bad shape are the whiteboards at Crockett Elementary School. Rees said the boards are in "awful"

Turn to **BOARD**, page 3

WEATHERFORD COLLEGE

Board discusses management of Canyon West

By Crystal Woerly
Weatherford College

The Weatherford College Board of Trustees discussed management service options for Canyon West Golf Course at their December meeting Thursday afternoon.

Four companies submitted proposals that meet the college's specifications to manage the golf course. The lowest-priced proposal came from Touchstone Golf, the only Texas-owned company in the group, and is the recommendation of the selection committee.

Dr. Andra Cantrell, executive vice president for financial and administrative services, said the committee selected Touchstone based on their 18 years of experience managing 39 golf courses and their references, which include the municipal golf course in Fredericksburg that has seen significant growth since working with the company.

Following an executive session, the board authorized President Tod Allen Farmer or his designee to enter contract negotiations with Touchstone Golf.

"As Jesse [Speirs, WC's golf coach,] said, it's hard to get a tee time anywhere in Fort Worth when you want it, so they're going to come this direction," Cantrell said. "That course is going to grow, and we want it to grow in the right direction."

In other business, the board:

- Approved the minutes of the Nov. 9 meeting.
- Approved the financial reports ending Nov. 30.
- Approved the quarterly investment report.

Turn to **CANYON**, page 3

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Content Submission Policy

We're always on the lookout for story ideas. To share one, call Randy Keck at 817-386-1469 or email news@community-news.com. Please provide the basic story information as well as contact information.

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 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

Legal challenges to amendments appear quashed



Gary Borders

gborders@texaspress.com

A half-dozen lawsuits challenging the 13 approved Texas constitutional amendments appear to be dead in the water, *The Dallas Morning News* reported. The secretary of state's office last week declared the propositions approved and now a part of the Texas Constitution, while Gov. Greg Abbott canvassed the election and certified the results. One proposition that would have raised the retirement age of judges was rejected by voters.

In addition, the Texas attorney general's office said the lawsuits had improper "citation and return of service." The plaintiffs are unable to correction those citations because the election results have been certified.

The six nearly identical lawsuits claimed the state used uncertified polling machines that exposed the election to voter fraud, and the plaintiffs called for the courts to throw out the Nov. 7 results and hold a new election using paper ballots only, *The News* reported.

The suits threatened to delay voter-approved property tax cuts and a raise in retired teachers' pensions.

Abbott enters primary battle fray, mum on fifth special session

The Texas Legislature's fourth special session ended last week with the House and Senate still at loggerheads over Abbott's push to allow the use of taxpayer money to pay for private

school costs, commonly known as school vouchers. Last month, 21 House Republicans joined with Democrats to remove the voucher provision from a broad education bill that did not pass both chambers.

Abbott is sticking to his promise to endorse primary challengers to House Republicans who voted against the voucher plan, the *Texas Tribune* reported. With the holiday season underway, it appears unlikely there will be another special session this year, but Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick said he believed the best day to come back for another session "would be Feb. 5, 30 days before the election."

The impasse means legislation to increase public school funding, provide teacher bonuses and hike funding for school safety measures also died on the vine.

State halts efforts to take Fairfield Lake property

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department has ceased its efforts to seize a 5,000-acre tract of private land that once included a state park and adjoins Fairfield Lake, *The News* reported. A private developer purchased the property from a utility company for about \$103 million last June and plans to close Fairfield Lake State Park were announced. The land for the park had been leased from Vistra Corp., the utility company for 50 years.

Todd Interests, the developer, plans to build luxury homes with a golf course, restaurants and shops, as well as access to a private air strip. Less than two weeks after the developer bought the property, the state

voted to condemn the land using eminent domain.

A judge-appointed commission of three Freestone County residents put the fair market value of the property at \$418.3 million - more than four times what the developer paid for it. Fairfield Lake is considered the largest privately owned lake in the state and possibly the nation, *The News* reported.

State seeks public input on broadband internet plan

The Texas Broadband Development Office is soliciting input from the public on the proposed Texas Digital Opportunity Plan, which seeks to improve and expand broadband access across the state. Almost 7 million Texans lack access to high-speed internet, or nearly 25% of residents.

"Access to reliable, high-speed internet as a means of advancing education, training, employment opportunities, healthcare, and delivery of essential services is critical to the future of our state," said Glenn Hegar, comptroller.

Through Jan. 5 of next year, Texans can give their opinions on the plan by visiting broadbandfortexas.com/tdop.

The newly created broadband office is partnering with chambers of commerce, the Texas Workforce Commission, industry associations and elected officials to highlight the importance of access to high-speed internet in today's digital world.

Workers' comp costs drop in state

A report issued by the Texas Department of Insurance indicates that the cost of treating

Turn to LEGAL, page 3

Idle American

And thanks for sharing



Dr. Don Newbury

newbury@speakerdoc.com

Two long-time friends--Sue Gressett and Gary Dyer--regularly post items that are informative, encouraging, clarifying and amusing on Facebook. When I see their items, I read them carefully, knowing I will be the better for it.

In recent days, Sue provided an account that invited "been there, done that" smiles. In this post, her "high road choice" shone through. Gary's piece, however, revealed his delight in taking the high seas that have beckoned him and wife Teena dozens of times.

The accounts are unrelated, but taken together, allow me to reference high roads and high seas in the same column.

To further identify, Sue, long-time elementary school teacher, was a friend during our five years in the presidency of Western Texas College in Snyder. Later, during 14 years at Howard Payne University in Brownwood, it was my privilege to bedeck Gary with honorary doctoral trappings during commencement exercises. Dr. Dyer was then pastor of Midland's First Baptist Church.

Sue, remembered for her deep compassion, has long been known for her observations made "from the corner of Awesome and Bombdiggity." Facebook provides a convenient outlet for her remarkable creativity and upbeat life views. Gary, longtime Baptist leader, provides enlightening and challenging biblical insights.

Let's review their recent posts. Lady first....

Sue's high road experiences include a traffic violation of five years ago. Never had she seen red lights and sirens employed to bring her to a stop, but one did outside of Abilene. The "do right" guy was courteous and respectful, admitting that speed limit signs had recently changed. But, in the "here and now," she was driving slightly above the posted speed limit.

She made sure he understood that she was a "law-abiding citizen" who had never received a traffic citation and praised him for doing his job. This was perhaps his undoing. He gave her a warning ticket instead of a citation for payment or a court appearance. The officer observed, "You can now cross another thing from your bucket list and brag to your friends that you beat the system!" Sue was greatly relieved, hoping that sons Tommy and Randy would never hear of her brush with the law.

Now at the age identical with the number of notes on a piano keyboard, she says, "My mind still thinks I'm 29, my humor suggests I'm 12, and my body mostly keeps asking if I'm sure I'm not dead yet. I don't have a loose screw; it just fell out!" I look forward to her future posts from "the corner of Awesome and Bombdiggity."

Now, to Dr. Dyer's high seas adventures on cruises taken over the years. They greatly prefer cruises to Alaska, having boarded vessels headed there 17 times. He has seen the upside, downside

Turn to THANKS, page 3

Thistles&Roses

It's football pet peeves time



Richard Henderson

richard@rahenderson.com

It's that time of year again to write about some of my football pet peeves. I have high school, college, and professional football pet peeves.

Maybe someday I will write a book about the care and feeding of my pet peeves, but it would fill a book the size of War and Peace.

For my high school pet peeve, I mention one, shared by many.

Why do we have two state high school football champions with two different divisions for each classification? I think former Star-Telegram columnist Randy Galloway once wrote on this subject. We really don't have a true state champion.

The real answer is money. There is the argument about inclusion, but now we have more than one school qualifying for the playoffs in each school district. It used to be the district winner only. If we went back to that system, we could subtract one less week of playoffs and have one champion.

But there is a lot of TV money being made on these state championship games at AT&T Stadium.

FYI, band has a state champion only every other year. I never have understood that. Mr. Galloway, who lives in Aledo, has agreed with my quip that band is a contact sport in Aledo.

The last time Aledo lost a playoff game was to South Oak Cliff three years ago when South Oak Cliff went on to win the state title in that 5A division. Last year, South Oak Cliff won a state title in their 5A Division and Aledo won a State title in its 5A division. Aledo and South Oak Cliff were in different 5A divisions and there was no chance of a rematch. This year the same may happen as South Oak Cliff and Aledo are in the state finals in two different 5A divisions, again.

I think a whole lot of people would like to see a rematch but it isn't going to happen

There are a lot of college pet peeves but I will pick one - the transfer portal. Players commit (a true oxymoron) to a college, but they can choose to transfer to another the next year. Some are now transferring many times. They may win a national title for one school by defeating an arch rival one year, bu, the

next year they could defeat their current team if they transferred and played for the arch rival.

When Sonny Dykes left SMU to coach TCU, the player who played center for SMU and played against TCU the year before, was playing for TCU the next year against his old team, SMU. So much for the almaters and loyalties. They move around now like professional baseball players move around from team to team.

There are a lot of professional football peeves but, the one I choose for now is the Ring of Honor of the Dallas Cowboys. The peeve is how people are chosen. The original Ring members were chosen by one man, the general manager, Tex Schramm. Now they are chosen by one man, owner Jerry Jones.

Other prestigious sports honors such as the various hall of fames are chosen by a variety of voters. For the Ring of Honor, one guy, Jerry Jones, gets to choose. He has the only vote. It is just his whim whenever, to choose someone. I think the honorees that have been selected are deserving, but, when just one guy who owns the team, gets to choose, it doesn't seem right.

I should probably let my pet peeves die, but they make life so interesting!

LEGAL

from page 2

injured employees in the state's workers' compensation system dropped considerably from 2012 through 2022. Total health care costs dropped 30%, from \$1.15 billion in 2012 to \$812 million last year, while the total number of claims dropped 20% during the same period, from 319,000 to 256,000.

Hospital costs also dropped 20% in that decade, while the costs for professional services – such as physicians – was down 26%, from \$657 million to \$483 million.

The report used administrative data reported by insurance carriers for the 10-year period. The costs were not adjusted for inflation, which would have made the decrease in costs even greater.

PUC approves new price protections during power emergencies

The Public Utility Commission has implemented a new Emergency Pricing Program that limits consumer exposure to high wholesale electricity prices during power emergencies, as occurred during Winter Storm Uri in February 2021.

"Implementing the Emergency Pricing Program provides another layer of financial protection for Texas consumers and will ensure their electricity bills remain affordable even when conditions are tight in the ERCOT system," Thomas Gleeson, PUC executive director, said.

The new program comes after passage of Senate Bill 3 during the last regular legislative session.

"This is a key part of our ongoing work to ensure electric reliability for Texans at a reasonable cost," Gleeson added.

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, Lufkin and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com.

COUNCIL

from page one

- Willow Park Medical Offices No. 3 and No. 4, now occupied and operated by Medical City.

Ongoing projects:

- Glamper Camper is finishing its office building at the entrance. The RV bays are open for rental.
- The District is still under construction; estimated Spring 2024 completion. Site development plan permit has been received and reviewed, but building plans have not yet been received.
- Medical Professional Plazas No. 1 and No. 2 are awaiting required tenant commitment for financing before proceeding.
- Commercial Park is awaiting full approval from Magellan for the pipelines running through the site.
- Reserves at Trinity, Phase II is on hold until Meadow Place alignment is resolved.

Projects advancing:

- Country Hollow single-family home subdivision is to be developed by History
- Maker Homes, with an anticipated start in January 2024.
- Willow Park Baptist Church is building a bus barn, currently under production.
- District Butcher's tenant finish-out is currently under review and awaiting The District's completion.
- Standard Service restaurant has submitted building plans for review and is to begin construction.
- Tommy's Boats dealership and service has submitted building plans for review and is to begin construction.
- Taco Bueno restaurant and secondary shell has submitted building plans and is to begin construction.
- National Bank of Texas (NBT) is under construction.

Next meeting

The Dec. 26 meeting was canceled. The council will meet again on Jan. 9.



CANYON

from page one

- Approved the 2024-25 academic calendar.
- Approved quotes for diagnosis medical ultrasound systems for the cardiovascular sonography and sonography programs.
- Approved the 2022-23 financial audit completed by Snow Garrett Williams.
- Received written reports from the Wise County campus, academics and student services.
- Received a verbal report from volleyball coach Kailee May on the team's regional and national success and the program's future.

In his President's Report, Farmer:

- Recognized the board members for their service as part of Trustee Appreciation Month.
- Publicized the Phi Theta Kappa honor society's pet supply donation drive in partnership with the WC Vet Tech Club to benefit the Weatherford/Parker County Animal Shelter.
- Highlighted the recent American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout event promoted by WC respiratory care students.
- Announced Selanny Puente as WC's first-ever NJCAA All-American volleyball player.
- Reminded the board of the upcoming Turkey Drive Luncheon on Thursday, Dec. 14 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in the Emerging Technologies and Workforce Building.
- Announced the resignation of Eddie White, substance abuse/human service program director.
- Reported that all WC trustees are fully trained, with the exception of trustee G.B. Bailey, who is in the process of completing the orientation training.
- Provided a spring semester enrollment report. As of Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2,713 students were registered, compared to a year-to-date enrollment of 2,584 students last year, a 4.99 percent enrollment increase.

July 2024				August 2024				September 2024				October 2024															
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March 2025				April 2025				May 2025				June 2025															
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IMPORTANT DATES: FALL SEMESTER				IMPORTANT DATES: SPRING SEMESTER			
July 4 - Holiday	July 31 - New Professional Orientation	August 1-13 Staff Professional Development/Work Days	August 14 - First Day of School	September 2 - Holiday	September 20 - Professional Development Day - Student Holiday	September 23 - Work Day for Staff - Student Holiday	October 10 - Parent/Teacher Conference Day - Student Holiday
October 11 & 14 - Holidays	November 1 - Professional Development Day - Student Holiday	November 4 - Work Day for Staff - Student Holiday	November 25-29 - Thanksgiving Break	December 19 - Early Release Day for Students	December 20 - Work Day for Staff - Student Holiday		

IMPORTANT DATES: SPRING SEMESTER			
January 6 - Work Day for Staff - Student Holiday	January 7 - Professional Development Day - Student Holiday	January 20 - Holiday	February 14 - Professional Development Day - Student Holiday
February 17 - Work Day for Staff - Student Holiday	March 17-21 - Spring Break	March 24 - Professional Development Day - Student Holiday	March 25 - Work Day for Staff - Student Holiday
April 18 - Holiday	May 22 - Last Day of School/Early Release for All Students	May 23 - Work Day for Staff	May 26 - Holiday

Weatherford ISD board members approved the 2024-2025 School Calendar at their meeting Dec. 11. The calendar meets all criteria and includes 75,600 minutes of instruction time, the 187 work days for staff that is required by the state and is similar to this year's calendar.

BOARD

from page one

condition due to age and that teachers are having to cover the boards with regular paper and write on that instead.

After receiving quotes on replacing, resurfacing or refurbishing, the most cost-effective solution is to resurface the existing boards with new magnetic panels at a cost of \$59,122. Trustees unanimously approved the purchase.

Calendar approved

Additionally, the board approved the 2024-2025 District Calendar. Stakeholders were previously presented several options and the first option was recommended by 60 percent of those who reviewed it.

Rees said the calendar meets all criteria and includes 75,600 minutes of instruction time, the 187 work days for staff that is required by the state and is similar to this year's calendar with a full week off for Thanksgiving.

Additionally, board members:

- Approved the purchase of 300 new Blue Belles uniforms at a cost of \$96,900. Black has been removed from all the uniforms, new hats and winter jackets are silver and most pieces can be used interchangeably. The last time uniforms were purchased was approximately 11 years ago.
 - Approved the 2024-2025 Budget Development Calendar. Unlike in years past, Rees noted that there will be only one meeting in June, none in July and three in August.
 - Agreed to remain part of the Region 10 Education Service Center Multi-Region Purchasing Cooperative Interlocal Agreement for Child Nutrition Services. The agreement allows WISD better pricing on food items and the like.
- The WISD board meets again on Jan. 22.

THANKS

from page 2

and sideways views of the Inside Passage, and compiled numerous helpful observations that not only help to economize, but also allows one to take full advantage of the cruise experience.

Interestingly--and most sentences beginning with this word aren't--he has written a guide he claims to be for "cheapskates." That's my kind of guide. On his Facebook post, he offered to provide the guide via email to all folks requesting it, so if you're planning a trip soon to Alaska, why not do so?

Brenda and I have taken Alaskan cruises twice, and agree with Gary that these are our favorites. I read his guide with interest, taking special note of the dumb questions asked, particularly by first-time cruisers. Dr. Dyer posted more than a dozen; limited space allows me to list a few.



Dr. Gary Dyer

"Has this ship ever sunk? How do I know which pictures in the photo gallery are mine? What time does the midnight buffet start? Does the crew sleep on board? Is this island completely surrounded by water? Do the stairs go up or down?"

In all seriousness: Sue's late husband, Don Gressett, was beloved by our daughter Jana in his sixth grade class. The Gressetts' late son,



Sue Gressett

Randy, was a favorite youth minister of our daughters....

Gary, a powerful minister now serving parttime at Rockwall First Baptist Church, is as respected as any cleric I've ever known.

Dr. Newbury, longtime university president, writes weekly and speaks throughout Texas. Contact: 817-447-3872. Email: newbury@speakerdoc.com.

Obituaries

Bob Farnham

Robert "Bob" Farnham passed away on Wednesday, November 29, 2023, at age 83.

Bob was born July 17, 1940, in Aberdeen, South Dakota to Maurice Farnham and Esther (Luyms) Farnham. He worked for the Burlington Northern Railroad for 34 years, which eventually brought him to Texas where he lived for 39 years. He enjoyed hunting, the outdoors, horseback riding, legend race car driving, and his service in the Willow Park Fire Department where he served as Chief for 18 years. He was predeceased by his parents and eldest grandson, Jason Lyons Stone.



Bob Farnham

Bob is survived by his beloved wife of 58 years, Janice "Jan" Farnham; and their three children, Barbara Stone (and husband, Don Stone), Michael Farnham (and wife, Trena Farnham), and Michelle White (and husband, Derek White); as well as six grandchildren and four great grandchildren, all of whom he was very proud.

Visitation will be held from 10-11 a.m. on Saturday, December 9, at Faith Presbyterian Church, 301 Bailey Ranch Road in Aledo. The funeral will follow visitation at 11am. Burial at Annetta Cemetery, 2667 W FM5, Annetta, Texas, will follow the funeral.

The Community News
December 8, 2023

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Hudson Oaks Christmas tree lighting

The City of Hudson Oaks hosted its annual Christmas Tree lighting on Dec. 1 to kick off its annual CoHoHo festivities throughout the season. Click or snap the QR code for video highlights.

PHOTOS BY RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

CHRISTMAS TREE TREE LIGHTING VIDEO



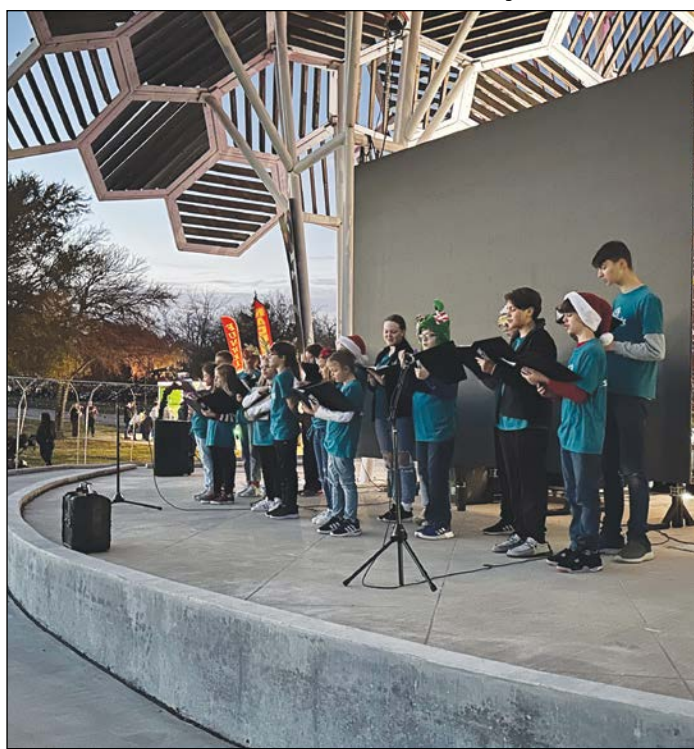
A giant walk-through snowman is one of the experiences on a walk through Gene Voyles Park during the Christmas season.



Santa Claus and his two helpers, Tosya Kidd and Holly Elrod, provided photos and candy courtesy of 6th Ave. Homes.



Cameron and Graham Noyes visit with Santa.



Second Star Youth Choir entertained before the tree lighting.



Eric and Shelby Moore and their dog Luna pose for a photo with Santa.



Light show corridors encircle Gene Voyles Park during Christmas.



Patrons took advantage of food trucks at Hudson Oaks' tree lighting.

Dress up the Holidays with Succulent Plants

by Melinda Myers
Special to The Community News

Many people are opting for more natural elements in their holiday displays and those that easily blend with their home décor. Popular succulent plants fit this trend whether decorating your home, setting a festive table, or giving as a gift. You and your guests will enjoy the easy care of succulents and the beauty they provide beyond the holidays.

Small-scale cacti and succulents provide a multitude of opportunities for use in holiday celebrations. Just select containers that complement, but don't overpower their charm.

Use them to dress up the table by making them into place cards for your guests. Plant individual succulents in a small clay pot and set one by each place setting. Include the guest's name or holiday wish on a plant tag set in the pot or written on the container. Send them home with your guests to enjoy for months to come.

Repurpose holiday mugs, champagne glasses, bottles and other items into succulent planters. Fill whatever container you choose with a well-drained cacti and succulent

mix and display it on beverage or serving tables and trays. Just be careful not to overwater since the container you choose may lack drainage holes.

Empty wine bottles also make fun planters to display any time of the year. You will need to cut a large opening or several smaller holes into the side of the wine bottle or you may opt to buy one that is pre-cut. Fill the bottle with a cacti and succulent mix. The wine bottle planter can be displayed on its side but needs support to prevent it from rolling off the table. One simple method uses two corks and strong wire to create a cradle for your bottle garden. You can also plant just the bottom of the wine bottle and stand it up for a different look. Or consider drilling several holes in the side of the bottle. Plant small succulents in the holes. Secure the plants in place with a bit of sphagnum moss or glue if needed to hold the plants in place once the bottle is set upright.

Create a centerpiece for gatherings by planting them in a shallow container. Their unique shapes and colors blend nicely with any décor. Or display individual potted

specimens in the container to enjoy throughout the evening. When the party is over, each guest can pick a plant to take home.

You won't need much space to enjoy the subtle colors and dramatic forms of these drought-tolerant plants. Skip the seasonal greenery and use succulents to dress up candle displays. Create a terrarium of succulents using any clear glass container with an open top or lid set ajar. Succulents do not thrive in the humid conditions of closed containers.

Take it one step further and create a succulent tree. Fill a cone-shaped wire frame with moist sphagnum moss. Use cuttings or small plants to cover the frame. You may need to expand the opening to fit the roots through the wires and into the moss.

Include the name and care directions when sending plants home with guests. This makes it easier for the recipient to keep their gift thriving once it arrives home. Suggest they keep it near a sunny window where temperatures are a bit cooler and free of hot and cold air drafts.

Water succulents thoroughly and only when the soil is dry. Pour



MELINDAMYERS.COM

A succulent wreath placed around a candle makes a festive holiday centerpiece.

off any excess water that collects in the saucer. Avoid overwatering plants growing in containers that lack drainage holes. As the days lengthen and the light intensity increases, the plants will need more frequent watering. Fertilize once or twice during the time the plants are actively growing.

Be sure to keep a few succulents for yourself. A succulent centerpiece is a great addition to any gathering at any time of the year.

Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the recently released *Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition* and *Small Space Gardening*. She hosts *The Great Courses "How to Grow Anything"* instant video and DVD series and the nationally syndicated *Melinda's Garden Moment* TV & radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine. Myers' website is www.MelindaMyers.com.

Willow Park Christmas tree lighting

The City of Willow Park celebrated its Christmas tree lighting for the first time at its new city hall location on Tuesday, Dec. 5. Santa Claus made an appearance to the delight of youngsters, and the tree was an immediate hit for family photos once lit.

Click or snap the QR code for video highlights.

PHOTOS BY RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS



Willow Park Mayor Doyle Moss read the Christmas story before Santa's arrival.



The Willow Park Christmas tree stands out with I-20 as a backdrop.



Hollis Minnich can't wait for Santa's appearance.



The new Willow Park Christmas tree immediately became a spot for family photos.

CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING VIDEO



Food trucks made snacks and hot beverages available.



Rhett Hill warily approaches Santa for a candy cane.

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REALIGNMENT

Bearcats staying in 5A

It was close, by 8 students

By Rick Mauch
 The Community News

The Aledo Bearcats and Ladycats narrowly avoided moving up in classification when the University Interscholastic League announced its enrollment cutoff numbers Friday morning, Dec. 8.

For the next two years, at least, Aledo will remain in Class 5A. The cutoff for Class 6A is a minimum of 2,275 students and Aledo High School reported 2,267 to the UIL.

The Bearcats will also continue to compete in Class 5A Division I in football. They won the championship at that level in 2022 and are in the semifinals this season.

Brock moving up to 4A

The Eagles and Lady Eagles will be moving up come the fall of 2024. Brock turned in an enrollment of 624 and the cutoff for 4A is a minimum of 545 and a maximum of 1,314.

The Eagles football team, coached by former Aledo assistant Billy Mathis, will be playing in 4A Division II.

Elsewhere in Parker County

- Weatherford: Enrollment 2,493, will remain in 6A.
- Azle: Enrollment 2,174, will remain in 5A, DI for football.
- Springtown: Enrollment 1,134, will remain in 4A, DI for football.
- Peaster: Enrollment 512, will remain in 3A, DI for football.
- Millsap: Enrollment 322, will remain in 3A, DII for football.
- Poolville: Enrollment 177, will remain in 2A, no football.

More to come

The 2024-26 alignments will be released February 1, 2024 for football, basketball, and volleyball. District alignments for other activities will be released at a later date. More information about UIL alignments can be found at <http://www.uiltexas.org/alignments>.

FOOTBALL

Bearcats going for 12th state title

Outrun Jackrabbits for 29th straight win

By Rick Mauch
 The Community News

In any sport a simple rule is: it's impossible to make up a deficit if you don't have the ball.

So it was in the third quarter Friday at Midlothian Multi-Purpose Stadium as the Aledo Bearcats controlled the ball for almost 11 and a half minutes of the 12-minute period. Already holding a 15-point lead at the intermission, they simply wore down Forney en route to a 43-7 victory in their Class 5A Division I state semifinal football contest.

The victory, the Bearcats' (15-0) 29th consecutive dating to the third game of the 2022 season, sends them into their 12th state final since 2009. They will face Comal Smithson Valley (14-1) at 7 p.m. Friday night, Dec. 15, at AT&T Stadium in Arlington.

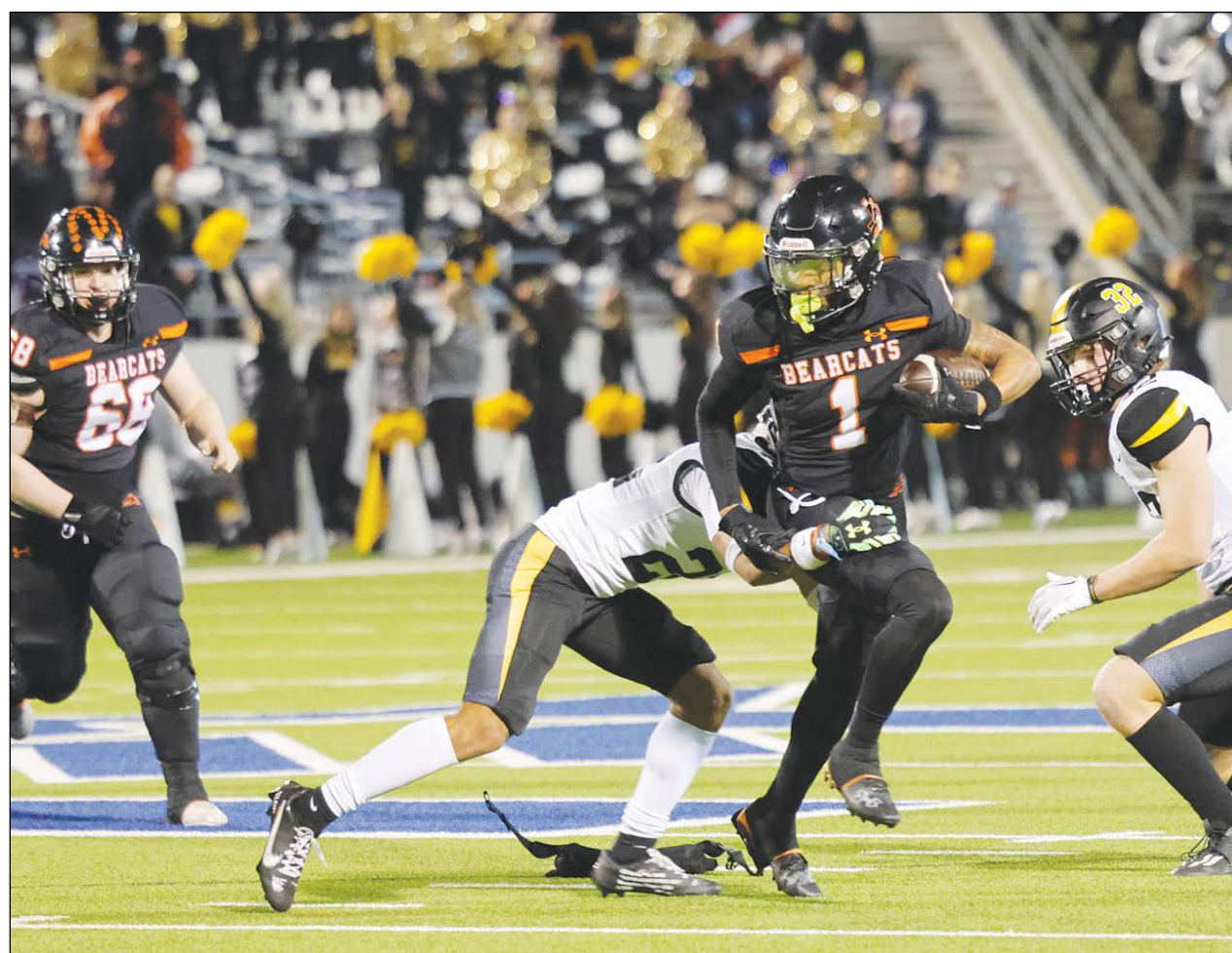
The Rangers defeated Brownsville Veterans Memorial (12-3) 49-21 to reach their first state final since 2004 and are looking for their first state championship. Aledo is seeking its 12th overall and 11th since 2009, the most of any high school in Texas.

"We ate up the clock going into the wind and that was big," Aledo head coach Robby Jones said. "We did it with the ground game. We talked to the receivers and told them the game called for us to run the ball. They're team players. They understood and want to do whatever it takes to win."

The Bearcats ran 21 offensive plays in the third quarter compared to four for the Jackrabbits (13-2). Quarterback Hauss Hejny threw twice, completing a 45-yard pass to Tyson Timms that set up the third of Davhon Keys' four rushing touchdowns, a 1-yard run.

Jumping out early - again

Of course, it wasn't as if the Bearcats were in jeopardy as they had controlled most of the first half, leading 22-7 at halftime. After forcing a punt they went 46 yards in just four plays, capped by Hawk Patrick-Daniels' 13-yard scoring run, his first of two TD on the night.



BREILEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Hawk Patrick-Daniels had 27 carries for 185 yards and two touchdowns against Forney.

The Bearcats went for two points after the first touchdown, with Hejny running the ball in for an 8-0 lead.

"When they lined up the way they did it was a gimme, especially with a runner like Hauss," Jones said, explaining that doing so can have a psychological effect on an opponent.

"At some point they were going to have to make that up if they had kept scoring with us," he said.

Of course, that was a moot point. Keys made the score 15-0 on a 1-yard touchdown and added a 6-yard score in the second quarter.

Another giant showing by Keys

Keys reached the end zone from 16 yards out in the fourth quarter to cap the night's scoring. Running out of what is called the Raider formation, a form of Wildcat package in which he is in the backfield, he now has 16 rushing touchdowns this season, 11 of which have come in the postseason.

But Keys, who has signed to play linebacker - his usual stand-out position - at LSU next season, also had a standout special teams moment. He blocked Forney's second punt of the night, giving Aledo the ball at the Jackrabbits' 22-yard line, ultimately setting up his own touchdown two plays later.

Big night for special teams

Along with blocking a punt, for a second straight week the Bearcats recovered a fumbled squib kickoff that bounced off an opponent. This happened Friday after their first TD of the third quarter when the ball ricocheted off a Forney player only to be recovered by Jake Gillespie at the Jackrabbits' 29. Five plays later Patrick-Daniels scored from a yard out to make the score 36-7.

Jones said the squib kick is regularly worked on in practice because, well, "You never know what's going to happen. You've got to be ready to jump on a loose ball and we were!"

Hawk and Hauss lead running game

In last season's run to state Patrick-Daniels and Hejny led the Aledo running attack. They did so again Friday as Patrick-Daniels accounted for 185 yards on 27 carries and Hejny gained 125 on 15 totes.

Regular starting running back Ray Guillory was sidelined with a knee injury he aggravated early in a 56-21 Region I final win over Abilene. He has now missed four games and remains questionable for the state championship game.

However, Patrick-Daniels, who moved to wide receiver at the start of this season, has done a more than admirable job returning to running back. After this game he is approaching 800 yards with a dozen TD rushing (and three receiving).

"I'm glad to see Hawk do this," Jones said. "He was the one back there when we won it all last season."

Turn to TITLE, page 7

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BOYS BASKETBALL

Moritz Classic

Bearcats take second

By Ryan Wade
The Community News

The name of the game this early in the season is all about getting game experience so the team is peaking as district play starts in a couple of weeks. For Aledo's varsity Bearcats, a second-place finish in their own Moritz Classic over the weekend is a great indicator this young squad is on the right path.

Aledo made it through the first two rounds of the tournament with wins over Liberty Christian and Richland before making it to the championship game against the District 5-5A defending champion Brewer Bears. Returning all five starters from last season immediately makes Brewer the team to beat in the district again this year.

Despite losing to the Bears 51-40 in the championship game, Aledo head coach, JD Robinson felt good about how his young team handled their business against such a stalwart opponent.

"We did some good things," Robinson expressed. "I was telling our guys, that's a valuable experience getting to play arguably the best team in our league outside of districts. That's good experience for us. [Brewer] did what they always do. They're so well coached. They're so disciplined.

"They're tough to take the ball from and stay in front of. They're just good in every facet of the game. They get a lead, and it's hard to catch back up because they're so disciplined. It was good for our guys to get to feel that and figure out what we've got to do to get to that point."

Brewer started off the game utilizing their deliberate pace of play on the offensive end of the floor. The Bears pushed the ball into the paint before kicking it back out behind the three-point line multiple times as they melted large chunks of time off the clock before attempting a shot. Ball movement and patience prevailed as the visiting club waited for Aledo to make their defensive transitions a touch too late, creating open scoring opportunities for Brewer to take advantage of. Their strategy worked as designed early in the contest, as Brewer went up 7-0 before Aledo got on the board.



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Kaden LoBaugh works hard to get to the basket against a Liberty Christian defender during the opening round of the Moritz Classic on Thursday, Dec. 7.

Once the Bearcats finally scored their first bucket of the game with 4:49 left in the first after Kaden LoBaugh laid in a high-percentage shot from the post, Aledo worked frantically to keep the Bears within striking distance. Minutes later LoBaugh hit a three-pointer from the top of the key to cut the Brewer lead to a single possession with 1:14 left in the first with the score at 11-9.

Two points ended up being the closest Aledo would get in the remainder of the game. By the time the first quarter ended, the Bearcats trailed by four. In the second quarter the Bears managed to increase their lead to six heading into halftime as they outpaced the home team, 12-10.

Coming out of the break leading 25-19, Brewer turned up the pressure at both ends of the floor. The Bearcats struggled to get shots on goal to fall in their favor on one end

of the floor while the Bears seemed to be able to get nearly every shot they took to tickle the twine. The visiting club outscored Aledo 19-10 in the third frame as they enjoyed a comfortable 15-point lead with just a quarter of play standing between Brewer and a championship trophy.

"I thought early on we made some good runs," Robinson noted. "Defensively, we've got to make adjustments against them. We can't give up the baseline, or they'll pick us apart. We did that today. We've got to do a better job of that."

As time wound down, desperation and frustration began to take root for Aledo's young team, particularly with first-year varsity guard Joaquin Pacheco. Pacheco harnessed that frustration, turning it into points on the board as he put up all seven of his points for the contest in the final 3:17. While the Bearcats came up short of a comeback, led by Pacheco's late effort,



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Jack Sawyer gets intertwined with a Brewer defender while working down in the post during the championship game of the Moritz Classic on Saturday, Dec. 9.

Aledo had its most productive quarter of the game in the final stanza, scoring 11 points down the stretch.

"We did some good things," said Robinson. "Playing inside-out is going to be good for us. I think we have an advantage inside when we've got two bigs on the floor versus their one. We're going to have to be smarter when we throw the ball inside to try to get shots on goal. It was a positive experience, but we've got to be a lot better."

One of the bright spots for the Bearcats in the game, in spite of the loss, was the vast improvement at the free throw line. Aledo's struggled at the line most of the season so far. However, in the championship game they were a perfect 6-for-6, with Jack Sawyer knocking down all five of his opportunities from the charity stripe.

"We just gotta lock in, stand up there, and knock them down. There's no secret to it. I don't know

of any free throw coaches," Robinson joked. "You've just got to stand up there and knock shots down. We're going to get better."

Moritz Classic

Bearcats vs. Brewer - Dec. 8

Aledo	9	10	10	11-40
Brewer	13	12	19	7-51

Aledo scoring: Jack Sawyer 15, Kaden LoBaugh 9, Joaquin Pacheco 7, Owen Peterson 7, Brett Barclay 2.

Bearcats vs. Richland - Dec. 8

Aledo	16	4	14	16-50
Richland (score by quarters not available)	-	-	-	-46

Aledo scoring: Jack Sawyer 24, Owen Peterson 10, Joaquin Pacheco 7, Kaden LoBaugh 7, Cohen Christie 2.

Bearcats vs. Liberty Christian - Dec. 7

Aledo	18	12	18	8	11-67
Liberty	6	16	13	19	2-58

Aledo scoring: Joaquin Pacheco 28, Jack Sawyer 14, Kaden LoBaugh 10, Jackson Todd 7, Owen Peterson 4, Brett Barclay 2, Cohen Christie 2.



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FOOTBALL ADVANCE

Going for a dozen

Bearcats look to expand historical list of titles

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Robby Jones is certainly no stranger to records and history. And now, as a head coach, he and his Aledo Bearcats are primed to add another chapter into the record books.

Jones is poised to become the first head coach in Aledo football history to finish his first season with a 16-0 record. He would join the now retired Steve Wood as the only coaches at the school to win a state championship in his first season at the helm.

Wood accomplished the feat in 2014.

"By the way, it would be my 11th state championship," Jones said with a smile after the Bearcats (15-0) defeated Forney 43-7 to reach the championship game Friday, Dec. 15 against Smithson Valley (14-1) at 7 p.m. at AT&T Stadium in Arlington.

The Rangers defeated Brownsville Veterans Memorial 49-21 to reach the final, a game they led at one time 49-0.

Jones, of course, is referring to having 10 championships after becoming the offensive coordinator in 2009. In fact, his 2013 team holds a distinct record as the only team ever at any level to score more than 1,000 points in a season.

"We started in January preparing for this game," Jones said. "As we get deeper and deeper (in the playoffs) we put together complete games, be great in all three phases.

"I told the team 'You've got one more game to be better than last week. We've got to finish off the good year we've had.'"

As for what the Rangers bring to the table, Jones noted, "They've got a system in place and they run it to perfection. They have highly intelligent kids, lots of 4.0s and 3.8s. It's almost like going against a Katy type offense, and that play action pass game they have is very dangerous.



The Aledo defense gang-tackles a Forney runner.

"I also noticed how tall and long they looked. They have some seriously good athletes."

A cool dozen

As for the team, the Bearcats are going for a 12th state title. They already own the state record with 11 and the closest to them are Carthage, Katy, and Richland Springs with nine each.

The Bearcats won their first of eight state championships under Tim Buchanan in 1998, followed by titles in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2019, 2020 and 2022. Wood won championships in 2014, 2016 and 2018.

Another repeat at stake

The Bearcats have won consecutive championships on three previous occasions, including being the only team in Texas history to three-peat twice. They won three in a row in 2009-11 and 2018-20, along with back-to-back in 2013-14.

In fact, since 2006, no freshman class at Aledo High School has graduated without celebrating a state championship.

Sweet 16

The Bearcats have gone 16-0 four previous times, in 2010, 2013, 2016 and 2018. They are tied for third in the state and nation as the program with the most 16-0 seasons in their history, trailing only Southlake Carroll with eight and Celina with five.

Other programs that have gone 16-0 four times include Katy, Stephenville and Charlotte, N.C. Independence.

The Bearcats came close to already having a fifth perfect season in 2017 before dropping the state championship game to College Station 20-19.

Pair of legends

While Jones is new as a head coach, there's no questioning that he gained legendary status as an offensive coordinator. Six of his offenses rank among the top 62 highest scoring of all time nationally.

Smithson Valley is led by Larry Hill, a member of the Texas High School Coaches Association Hall of Honor - which also honored Buchanan this past summer. Hill has won more than 300 games in his career.

This will be Hill's fourth time to lead the Rangers to a state final, though they've yet to win a state championship. In 2001 they lost the 4A Division I final to Denton Ryan, followed by losses in the 2002 and 2004 5A Division II final to Southlake Carroll.

"Larry Hill's been here in Aledo. He talked with our coaches," Jones said. "His kids are going to be well-coached and do things the right way.

"He's in the Hall of Honor while he's still coaching. That's something special. I have lots of respect for him."

Another high-scoring season

The Bearcats are on the cusp of having yet another team move into the top 100 highest scoring offenses of all time. With 746 points through 15 games, they are averaging 50 points per game when rounded up.

If they match their season average, they will finish with 796 points, which would move them into a tie for 85th all-time. If they score 29 or more it will put them in the top 100 all-time.

The Bearcats' offensive coordinator this season is Joe Ryan Williams.

"I had all the confidence in the world Joe would do a great job running the offense," Jones said. "If I didn't, I'd be head coach and offensive coordinator. 'Joe's done a great job and I figured he would.'"

Head-to-head

For the second time in three weeks the Bearcats will be facing an opponent they have never played in their history. Two weeks ago they disposed of Abilene in a first-time matchup, 56-21, which was also the first meeting ever between two teams that combined for 18 state titles.

Offenses

The Bearcats are averaging 49.8 points per game overall this season and 46.6 in the postseason. Twice they have topped the 70-point mark, one other time they hit 60 and five other times they scored at least 50 in a game, including twice in the playoffs.

The Rangers are averaging 39.3 points overall and 33.4 in the postseason. They scored over 60 once and topped 50 points twice, but not in the playoffs.

The Bearcats are rushing for around 263 yards per game and passing for around 201. The Rangers are averaging about 158 passing yards and are capable of piling up yardage on the ground, as evidenced by picking up more than 275 in their 31-24 come-from-behind win over A&M Consolidated in the state quarterfinals.

Defenses

Aledo is surrendering 16.4 points through all 15 games and 20.0 in its five playoff games. They have posted three shutouts and held six opponents to a touchdown or less - including twice in the postseason.

The Rangers are giving up an average of 13.4 points all season, but 21.6 per game in the playoffs. They have a pair of shutouts and have held five opponents to seven points or less, though they have yet to do so in the postseason.

The Bearcats are surrendering 112 yards per game rushing and 131 through the air. No defensive yardage stats were available for Smithson Valley.

Milestones

Aledo quarterback Hauss Hejny is one passing yard and 51 rushing yards away from posting a 2,500-yard passing/1,000 rushing-yard season. It would be his second consecutive season to surpass 1,000 yards rushing as he finished with 1,276 and 15 TD in 2022, along with passing for 2,092 yards and 20 TD.

This season, Hejny has already accounted for more TD than last season with 37 total. He's rushed for a dozen and thrown for 25.

With 891 yards receiving on 46 catches, Trace Clarkson has a chance to catch 50 passes and go over 1,000 yards receiving with a big game in the state final.

Defensively, linebacker Davhon Keys is one tackle away from posting 100 once again.

Win streaks

The Bearcats have won 29 straight games dating to the third game of the 2022 season. It is tied for the second longest streak in team history, only behind the 31 straight in 2016-17.

The Rangers are a pair of points from also being undefeated this season and have won 14 straight. They lost their season opener to San Antonio Reagan, 17-16, a squad that went on to finish 11-1.

Close calls

Aledo has had anything but a close call in the playoffs, but the Bearcats did have a couple in the

Game at a glance

Aledo Bearcats (15-0)
vs. Smithson Valley
Rangers(14-1).

What: Class 5A Division I
championship.

When/where: 7 p.m. Friday,
Dec. 15, AT&T Stadium,
Arlington.

Returning starters: Aledo
7 offense/5 defense,
Smithson Valley 4
offense/6 defense.

Last week: Aledo defeated
Forney 43-7, Smithson
Valley defeated Brownsville
Veterans Memorial 49-21.

Last season: Aledo, 14-2, 5A
Division I state champions.
Smithson Valley 12-2, state
quarterfinals.

Aledo offensive leaders:
Rushing - RB Ray Guillory
(1,207 yards, 17 TD, also 4
TD receiving; questionable
for state championship),
RB/WR Hawk Patrick-
Daniels (764 yards, 12
TD), QB Hauss Hejny
(949 yards, 12 TD), Kaden
Winkfield (423 yards, 5 TD),
Davhon Keys (218 yards,
16 TD). Passing - Hejny
(65% completions, 2,499
yards, 25 TD, 7 int.), QB
Gavin Beard (80% comple-
tions, 510 yards, 2 TD, 2
int.). Receiving - WR Trace
Clarkson (46 catches, 891
yards, 7 TD), WR Kaydon
Finley (36-513, 5 TD),
Patrick-Daniels (28-390, 3
TD), TE Tyson Timms (27-
353, 3 TD), Colton McCoy
(17-341, 2 TD).

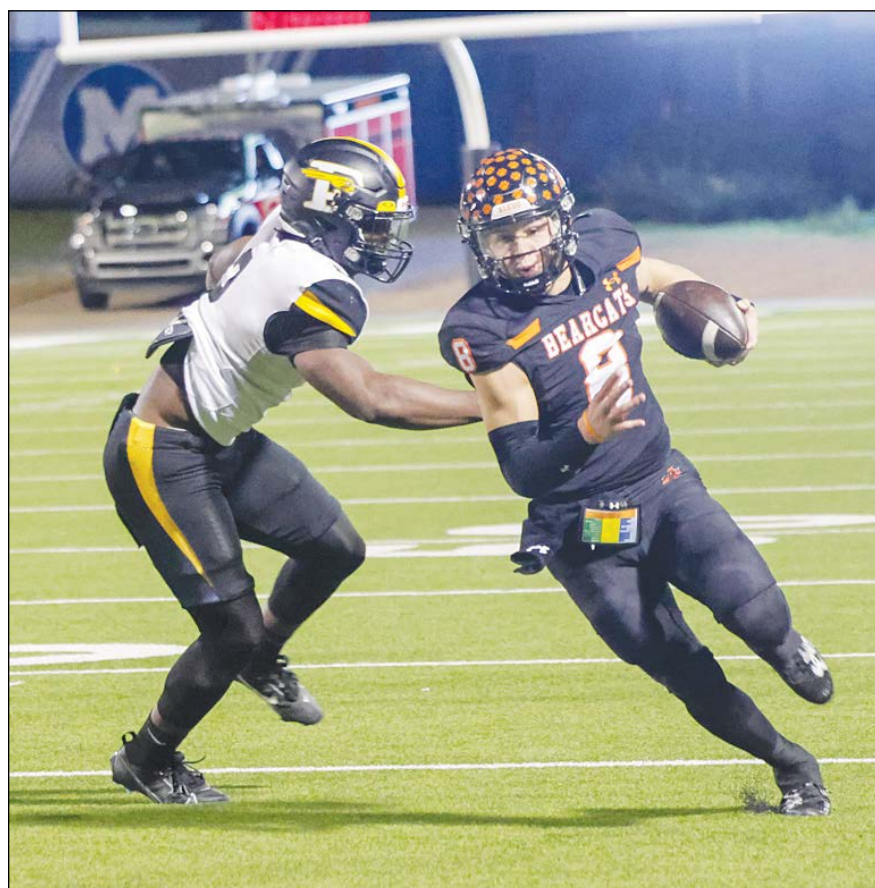
Smithson Valley offensive
leaders: Rushing - RB
Bradley Sowersby (over
1,200 yards, rushed for 245
yards in quarterfinal win
over A&M Consolidated).
Passing - QB Ryland Walker
(63% completions, over
2,000 yards and more than
20 TD). Receiving - WR
Freddie Dubose (over 50
catches, almost 800 yards).

Aledo defensive leaders: Keys
(99 tackles, 16.5 for loss, 3
sacks, 3 int., 1 returned for
TD, 2 fumble recoveries), S
Jake Gillespie (56.5 tack-
les, 4.5 for loss), S Boogie
Owens (46 tackles, 2 int.,
fumble recovery returned
for TD), CB Chris Johnson
(42 tackles, 3 for loss, 2
int.), LB Ben McElree (41.5
tackles, 8 for loss).

Smithson Valley defensive
leaders: DL Owen Hack
(86 tackles, 15 for loss, 3
sacks), DL Hudson Woods
(55 tackles, 24 for loss,
12 sacks), LB Nicholas
Dudzickowski (117 tackles,
18 for loss, 3 int., 2 defen-
sive TD), DB Zach Gingrich
(6 int., 4 returned for TD).

Aledo special teams leaders:
Keys (2 blocked kicks), K
Cole Crawford (67-69 PAT,
6-10 FG, 3-3 from 20-29
yards, long 38 yards), KR
Aven Lawrence (34.5 aver-
age on 12 returns, 1 TD),
Gillespie (18 punt returns,
14.4 average; 6 kickoff
returns, 11.7 average).

Smithson Valley special
teams leaders: Gingrich (2
blocked punts), K Clayton
Amaya (69 PAT, 12-12 FG,
long of 56 yards).



BREILEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Aledo quarterback Hauss Hejny had 15 carries for 125 yards.



BREILEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Tyson Timms had two catches for 67 yards against Forney.

regular season. They rallied to win 48-45 at Class 6A playoff qualifier Denton Guyer and scored late to defeat district foe Denton Ryan, which reached the second round of the 5A Division I playoffs.

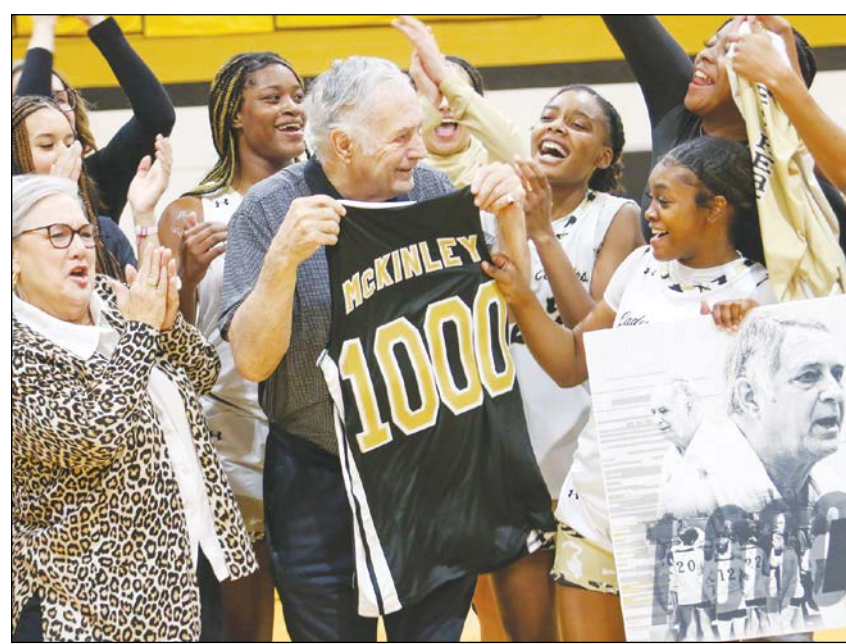
While they steamrolled most of their regular-season opponents, the Rangers have had three close calls in the playoffs. In the second round they escaped Magnolia West 20-17, then they defeated College Station 26-21 in the third round and rallied to top A&M Consolidated 31-24 in the Region III final.

Staying put next two years

Both Aledo and Smithson Valley will remain in Class 5A Division I, at least until 2026. AHS reported an enrollment of 2,267 students and SVHS turned in 2,075.

WEATHERFORD COLLEGE

McKinley reaches 1,000 wins



WEATHERFORD COLLEGE

Weatherford College women's basketball coach Bob McKinley celebrates his 1,000 wins with members of the Lady Coyote players.

By Crystal Woerly
Weatherford College

Bob McKinley, Weatherford College's longtime athletic director and women's basketball coach, reached the 1,000 wins plateau as the Lady Coyotes defeated Paris Junior College Friday night at the Betty Jo Graber Athletic Center, 89-84.

McKinley is one of only five coaches in the history of the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) to reach

1,000 victories in men's or women's basketball. He is also the winningest active NJCAA Division I basketball coach in the nation.

"The first thing I thought of is all of the special people that I've had play and the memories that it brings back," he said a few minutes after the final buzzer Friday. "Tonight, this is got to be the most special time ever."

As of Friday, McKinley has a career record of 1,000 wins and



WEATHERFORD COLLEGE

McKinley celebrates his 1,000 wins with members of the Lady Coyote players.

522 losses since joining the WC coaching staff in 1977. He is a member of the NJCAA Women's Basketball Coaches Hall of Fame and is a 12-time Coach of the Year awardee from the Northern Texas Junior College Athletic Conference.

Under McKinley, the Lady Coyotes have earned 16 conference championships, five regional championships, five

national tournament appearances and one NJCAA Final Four appearance. 20 NJCAA All-America honorees have played for the WC coach.

The college community will honor McKinley with a reception on Thursday, Jan. 18, from 4:30 to 6 p.m. in the Community Room of the Emerging Technologies and Workforce Building. The public is invited.



SUBVARSITY ROUNDUP

Ladycats sweep Rider

Defense takes command

Staff Reports
The Community News

Aledo JV 49, Wichita Falls Rider JV 19

Aledo	13	10	16	10-49
Rider	3	2	9	5-19

Aledo scoring: Mesoma Emeka-Okoye 10, Karsyn Evans 9, Lily Heckathorn 8, Kaelee Berkley 6, Coral Slough 6, Jaylee Owens 5, Breleigh Mayer 3, Savannah Salas 2.

Aledo freshmen 30, Rider freshmen 23

Aledo	13	0	12	5-30
Rider	4	2	3	14-23

Aledo scoring: Sarah Edwards 11, Nealee Parsons 6, Ruby Tarrant 4, Autumn Gudel 3, Macie Laidley 2, Ashlynn Jenkins 2, Hayden Spoon 2.

Aledo JV 45, Cleburne JV 21

Aledo	11	11	13	10-45
Cleburne	4	6	11	0-21

Aledo scoring: Evans 16, Berkley 10, Heckathorn 6, Emeka-Okoye 4, Owens 2, Slough 2, Mayer 2, Natalie Browning 2.

Aledo freshmen 48, Cleburne freshmen 6

Aledo	27	1	8	12-48
Cleburne	0	2	2	2-6

Aledo scoring: Gudel 11, Parsons 10, Journee Shackelford 10, Edwards 4, Tarrant 4, Olivia Hancin 3, Laidley 2, Jenkins 2, Braylin Wiggins 2.

TENNIS

All-District 5-5A

Aledo leads selections

Staff Reports
The Community News

The district champion Aledo Bearcats/Ladycats paced the All-District 5-5A selections as made by the league's coaches recently.

Joe McCoy was named the league's Coach of the Year, while Bryanna Orr is the Girls Most Valuable Player. Also, Will Beyer was selected as Boys Newcomer of

the Year and Lila Satterfield is the Girls Freshman of the Year.

Also honored were Boys doubles: Line 1 second team, Scott Mason/Craig Mason; Line 2 first team, Jacob Heckathorn/Francois Britz; Line 3 first team, Beyer/Tom Ruminsky.

Mixed doubles: First team, Ben Farmer/Satterfield.

Boys singles: Line 1 honorable mention, Craig Mason; Line 2 first team, Ben Farmer; Line 3 first team, Scott Mason; Line

4 first team, Beyer; Line 5 first team, Heckathorn; Line 6 second team, Britz.

Girls doubles: Line 1 first team, Kenley Germany/Orr; Line 2 first team, Elli Kate Bussmeir/Patrice Loftin; Line 3 first team, Natalie Nawrocki/Eleanor Jack.

Girls singles: Line 1 first team, Orr; Line 2 first team, Germany; Line 3 first team, Bussmeir; Line 4 first team, Satterfield; Line 5 second team, Gracie Heydman; Line 6 first team, Sydney Byrd.

CROSS COUNTRY

Aledo runners honored

All-state awards

Staff Reports
The Community News

Several runners from the Aledo Ladycats and Bearcats were honored recently by various associations across Texas.

Named all-state by the Cross Country Coaches Association of Texas (CCCAT) were Ladycats Molly Garrison and Micah Neal. They were both named all-state by the Texas

Girls Coaches Association, along with Madison Larsen.

A trio of runners were named academic all-state by both the Texas High School Association and CCCAT, Aubrey Connally, Vincent Luffey and Caden West.

The Ladycats and Bearcats both advanced as teams to the state meet this past season. The Ladycats finished second, the highest finish ever for an Aledo squad, while the Bearcats were 10th.





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THE COMMUNITY NEWS



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WRESTLING

Aledo teams split with Benbrook

First home match of season

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

In their first of just two home matches this season, the Aledo High School wrestling teams split matches with Benbrook on Monday, Dec. 11.

The Bearcats had little trouble, coming away with a 60-18 victory. The Ladycats dropped a hard-fought dual, 42-30.

All but three Bearcats won by a pin. Antonio Madera won the 157-pound division with a pin in only 15 seconds, while Noah Chasteen (120) and Carlos Obregon (285) won in pins at 52 and 43 seconds, respectively.

The Ladycats were led with from Lilly Carruthers (100 pounds), Jordan Clift (114), Ari Mathias (138) and Baillie Sessom (185).

"The girls are looking to continue to grow and get better as we get closer to the district tournament," coach Austin Stockon said. "The boys team is hoping to carry this momentum as they head to the Nest Invitational (in Azle) Jan 5-6."

The varsity girls will next compete alongside the boys in Springtown on Jan. 10. The second and final home match of the season for the boys and girls will be Jan. 22 against Brewer on Senior Night.

Winners for Aledo against Benbrook were:

- Boys**
106 pounds: Matthew Douglas won by fall at 2:25.
113: Brice Bohn won by fall at 2:35.
120: Noah Chasteen won by fall at 52 seconds.
126: Oliver Tatro won by fall at 1:01.
138: Ian McCormick won by fall at 4:26.
150: Kyle Scharlow won 7-3 decision.
157: Antonio Madera won by fall at 15 seconds.
165: Samuel Belyeu won by fall at 1:00.
190: Zane Brandon won by fall at 5:39.
215: Bryce Vonasek won 10-3 decision.
285: Carlos Obregon won by fall at 43 seconds.

- Girls**
100: Lillian Carruthers won by fall at 1:38.
114: Jordan Clift won by fall at 2:45.
126: Kyra Wright won by forfeit.
138: Arienne Mathias won by fall at 1:29.
185: Baillie Sessom won by fall at 2:49.



Ari Mathias

RANDY CUTSHALL PHOTOGRAPHY



Brice Bohn

RANDY CUTSHALL PHOTOGRAPHY



Sam Belyeu

RANDY CUTSHALL PHOTOGRAPHY

TITLE

from page 6

The Bearcats ended the night with 441 yards of offense, of which 356 came on the ground.

"We thought they'd come out in a three (man) front, but they came out in a four front, so we had to adjust," offensive lineman Cody Cartwright said.

As a result, Forney's defense was frustrated all night. While they did register one sack, they also surrendered 20 running plays of 6 or more yards, including a dozen of more than 10 yards.

Stout defense again

A team doesn't reach the state final without a good defense, but for a second straight game the Bearcats clamped down on an opponent - especially their running game. A week after holding Abilene to minus 2 rushing yards, they held the Jackrabbits to 80 yards on 23 carries.

Heralded Forney running back Javian Osborne came into the game with almost 2,200 yards and 37 rushing TD. The Bearcats limited him to 49 yards on 13 carries, with 22 of those coming on the Jackrabbits' lone touchdown.

"They're playing lights out, the way they expect our defense to play," Jones said. "The last 15 years we've added an explosive offense. It's a great combination."

The Bearcats also forced three turnovers via interceptions by Ky Howington, Jaden Allen and Kamron McCoy-Burnside.

Defensive ends Carson Dempsey and Cooper Cyphers, along with defensive tackle Jacob McIntire each had a sack.

"I have to give it all to coach (defensive coordinator Brad) McCone," Cyphers said. "When we saw they couldn't run, we knew we could be unstoppable on offense."

Over a third of Forney's runs ended in a loss of yardage or zero gain. They also had two pass completions for zero yards and one for a loss.

Long time, no see

This was the first time Aledo and Forney have played in almost two decades. It was also their first meeting in the playoffs.

The teams met in predistrict play from 2000-05, with Aledo winning four of the six games. The average score was 16-10 in Aledo's favor.

In fact, the last time the teams played, Midlothian Multi-Purpose Stadium was a year away from opening. Friday's win kept the Bearcats unbeaten in the facility.

Another new foe awaits

For a second time in this postseason the Bearcats will face a team for the first time in their history. Two weeks ago it was Abilene. This time it will be Spring

Branch Smithson Valley, led by Texas High School Coaches Association Hall of Honor coach Larry Hill, who has more than 300 victories.

While reaching the state final is as familiar to the Bearcats as snow is in Minnesota, this is the Rangers third state final. Along with 2004, they reached in 2001 and 2002.

Class 5A Divison I state semifinal At Midlothian Multi-Purpose Stadium

Friday, Dec. 8
Bearcats 43, Jackrabbits 7

Aledo 15 7 14 7 - 43
Forney 0 7 0 0 - 7

- A - Hawk Patrick-Daniels 13 run (Haus Hejny run)
A - Davhon Keys 1 run (Cole Crawford kick)
A - Keys 6 run (Crawford kick)
F - Javian Osborne 22 run (Asher Wall kick)
A - Keys 1 run (Crawford kick)
A - Patrick-Daniels 5 run (Crawford kick)
A - Keys 16 run (Crawford kick)

Statistics

Team
First downs: Aledo 23, Forney 13.
Rushes-yards: Aledo 52-356, Forney 23-80.
Passing yards: Aledo 85, Forney 128.
Caught-thrown-intercepted: Aledo 3-11-2, Forney 11-24-3.
Fumbles-lost: Aledo 0-0, Forney 1-1.
Punts-average: Aledo 2-38.0, Forney 6-28.8.
Penalties-yards: Aledo 5-55, Forney 0-0.
Third-down conversions: Aledo 4-of-9, Forney 6-of-13.
Fourth-down conversions: Aledo 0-of-1, Forney 1-of-2.

Individual
Rushing
Aledo: Patrick-Daniels 27 carries, 185 yards, 2 TD; Hejny 15-125; Keys 7-38, 4 TD; Kaden Winkfield 3-8.
Forney: Javian Osborne 13-49, TD; Kevin Espinal 4-23; Kyle Crawford 5-5; Cameron Carter 1-3.
Passing
Aledo: Hejny 3-of-10, 84 yards, 0 TD, 2 interceptions; Gavin Beard 0-1-0.
Forney: Crawford 11-24, 0 TD, 3 interceptions, 128 yards.
Receiving
Aledo: Tyson Timms 2 catches, 67 yards; Kaydon Finley 1-18.
Forney: Kofi Eduful 3-47, Orin Gee 2-46, Imari Jihiel 4-30, Alex Perrin 1-5, Osborne 2-0.
Defensive interceptions
Aledo: Ky Howington, Jaden Allen, Kamron McCoy-Burnside.
Forney: Joshua Gatlin, Josiah Turner.
Fumble recovery
Aledo: Jake Gillespie.
Sacks
Aledo: Carson Dempsey, Cooper Cyphers, Jacob McIntire.
Forney: One by several on same play.
Blocked kicks
Aledo: Keys (punt).
Tackle leaders
Aledo: Howington 5.5, Caden Atwood 4, Keys 4, Chris Johnson 3.5, Dempsey 3.5.
Tackles for loss: Atwood 1.5, Cyphers 1, Dempsey 1, Chase Wilburn 1, Howington 1, Gillespie 0.5.



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SANTA ANSWERS ALL!

Imagine you had a chance to interview Santa Claus! What would you ask? What would Santa say? Here are some ideas from some *Kid Scoop* readers, who came up with the questions and the answers for today's page.

Q: How did you become Santa and how did you get your magic?

Santa: I was a smart, cheerful child. When my parents died, I was heartbroken. I cried, not out of self-pity, but out of true love. One of my tears dropped into the snow and froze to make an ice marble. When I held it, it glowed and took me to the North Pole. I met the elves and they needed my help.

After I grew up with them I took on the greatest task of all—delivering presents.

The ice marble gave me powers I have today.

— By Chris

How many ice marbles can you find on today's page?



Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow one-step written directions.



Help Santa find his way through the magic maze back to the North Pole.



Q: What kind of milk do you like?

Santa: I like whole milk best, but Mrs. Claus put me on a diet so I have to drink non-fat.

— By Nick

Q: How can you visit all of the children of the world in one night?

Santa: I fly at super speed; that's why you can't see me.

— By Adrian

Extra! Extra!
Santa Comes to YOUR Town!

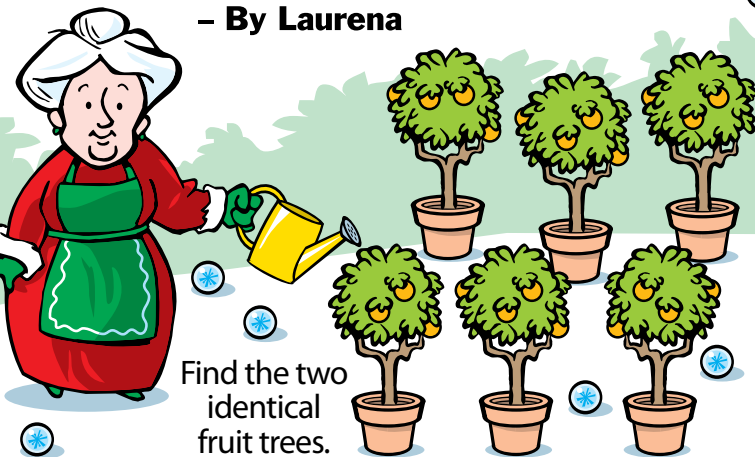
Pretend Santa has to buy all of his Christmas presents from the stores advertising in your newspaper. Help him by selecting a gift for everyone in your class using ads in the paper. Don't spend more than \$500.

Standards Link: Math/Number Sense: Solve addition problems using money amounts.

Q: Where do you buy your groceries?

Santa: I don't buy them; Mrs. Claus grows them. On Christmas Eve I come back with a sleigh full of soil instead of an empty sleigh. We grow food in our greenhouse and eat fresh veggies and fruit everyday.

— By Laurena



Find the two identical fruit trees.



Find at least 10 differences between Santa and his reflection.

Standards Link: Investigation: Identify similarities and differences in common objects.

Create an Interview!

Imagine you are a newspaper reporter. What question would you ask a Christmas tree and a snowman? Write your question, then write what you think the answer might be.

Q: _____

A: _____

Q: _____

A: _____

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Kid Scoop VOCABULARY BUILDERS

This week's word: **INTERVIEW**

Interview as a verb means to have a conversation between a reporter and a person who will be the subject of the report.

The newspaper reporter **interviewed** the mayor, asking her many questions.

Use the word **interview** today when talking with your friends and family members.

Kid Scoop Puzzler

Q: Do you think you'll want to be Santa forever?

Santa: As long as my heart is _____ and my belly is _____, I reckon I'll want to be!

— By Maya

Q: Has there ever been a year when you gave out more _____ than presents?

Santa: No, and I _____ that never _____.

— By Michael



Where does each of these words belong?

- JIGGLING
- COAL
- HOPE
- HAPPENS
- POUNDING

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

Double Double Word Search

- INTERVIEW
- MARBLE
- SANTA
- ANSWERS
- POUNDING
- FRUIT
- REFLECTION
- CLASS
- POLE
- MILK
- CLAUS
- CHEERFUL
- SNOW
- BELLY
- DIET

Find the words in the puzzle. How many of them can you find on this page?

P	H	A	P	M	Y	L	L	E	B
P	O	U	N	D	I	N	G	A	P
C	W	L	Y	S	D	L	M	A	A
L	D	I	E	T	W	A	K	T	T
A	W	E	I	V	R	E	T	N	I
U	Y	S	A	B	N	T	R	A	U
S	S	A	L	C	W	O	N	S	R
C	H	E	E	R	F	U	L	A	F
N	O	I	T	C	E	L	F	E	R

Standards Link: Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

What's the question?

Find five to ten quotes in articles in today's newspaper. On a separate piece of paper, write the question you think each quote answers.

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Analysis of media communications.

What did The ghost say To Santa Claus?

ANSWER: I'll have a boo Christmas without you.

Write On!

Interview Santa

Imagine that you could interview Santa Claus. What would you ask him? What do you think his answer would be? Write one question and make up an answer for the question as if Santa had answered it.



Read this story online

PHOTOS BY BRELEIGH MAYERS



LADYCAT OF THE WEEK

Elizabeth Griffin
Basketball


The sophomore guard averaged 11 points in a pair of victories by the Ladycats, 48-34 over Cleburne and 51-38 over Brock last week. She was the leading scorer with a dozen points against Cleburne and came back with 10 against Brock.

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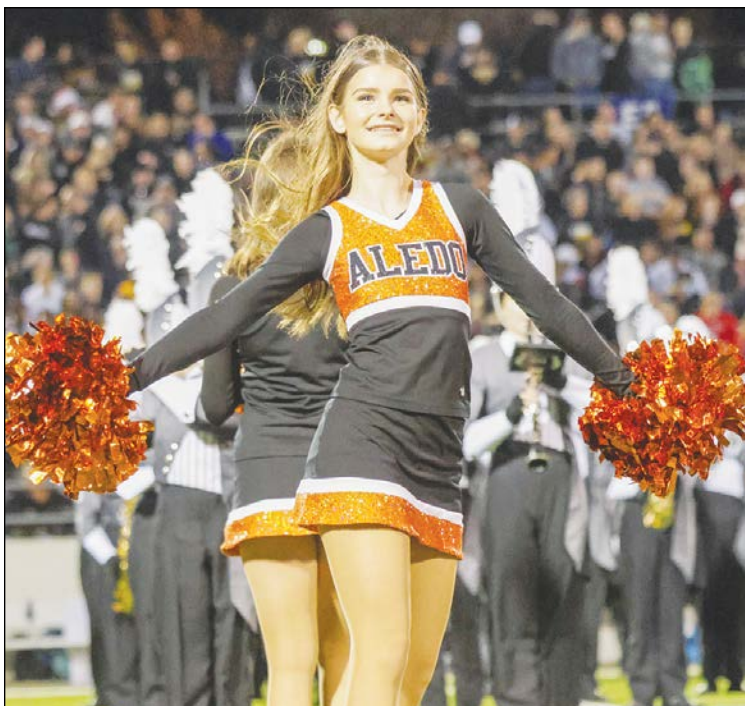


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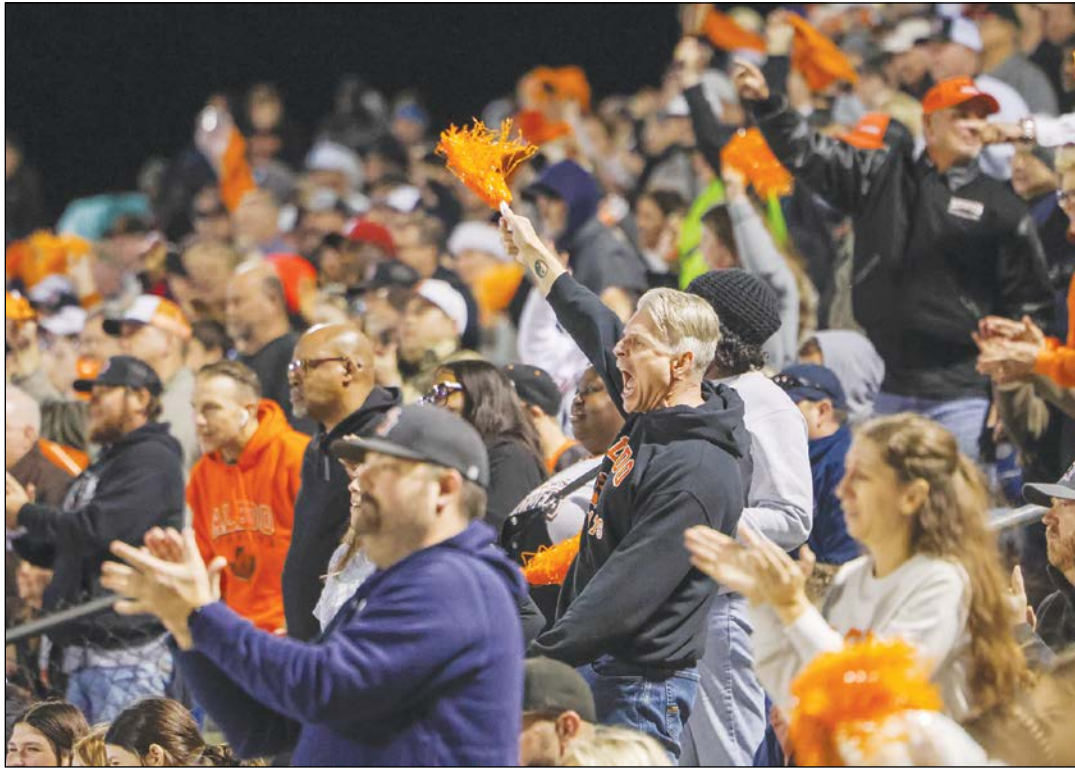
The senior was a force in all aspects of the game in this past Friday's 43-7 state semi-final victory against Forney. He posted four tackles on defense, including three solo. He scored four touchdowns on offense, and he blocked a punt on special teams.

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NOV. 29-DEC. 31
Pathway of Lights
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Christmas at the Castle 2023
Texas Pythian Home, Inc. invites everyone to come and tour the beautiful castle while it is decorated with Christmas Spirit. Lights will turn on at 5 p.m. and start going off at 9 p.m. You are always more than welcome to come in at any time and drive around and take pictures.



NOV. 17 - JAN. 1
Lightscape
The international, sellout sensation Lightscape returns this holiday season to dazzle audiences for a second consecutive year. Don't miss the reimagined Lightscape. With an astonishing 80 percent newly designed displays, this year's reimagined event promises an even more immersive and magical experience for visitors of all ages. Tickets are now on sale. Lightscape runs Nov. 17 through Jan. 1. Tickets are required for admittance, with entry times available every 15 minutes from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. nightly. <https://fwbg.ticketapp.org/portal/pages/lightscape>

SATURDAY, DEC. 16
Winter Wonderland
Celebrate the holiday sea-



son at The Shops at Willow Park from 12-4 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 16, at 210 Shops Boulevard Willow Park, TX 76087 Join Willow Park North and The Shops at Willow Park for our inaugural Winter Wonderland. This event is free for everyone and perfect for the whole family. Featuring vendors, food trucks, holiday beverages, winter photo ops, a balloon dome, face painting, & more.



Live Nativity & Christmas Celebration
Waterhouse Church is proud to host a Live Nativity event featuring live actors, live animals and a telling of the birth of Christ every 15 minutes from 4-7 p.m., on Saturday, Dec. 16 at 1010 S Bowie Dr, Weatherford, TX. We'll also have hot chocolate, caroling, a bounce house and cookie decorating. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be there for photos and to remind kids of the true meaning of Christmas: Jesus' birth.

DEC. 20
Christmas Family Night at Clear Fork
Join us for our Christmas Family Night from 4-8 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 20 at

TEXAS CROSSWORD
by Charley & Guy Orbison
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ACROSS

- 1 gem found in Texas
- 5 this Guthrie was at several "Farm Aids" with TX Willie
- 6 owner of "Cantina" in song "El Paso"
- 7 Fri. night score
- 8 "adios" in Mexico
- 9 a primate is one
- 15 "___ to your own business"
- 16 TXism: "thin skinned"
- 19 TX Gary Morris' "___ Is All It Takes" (1991)
- 21 in Wichita County on highway 258
- 22 Baylor has bronze sculpture "___ Hands of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning"
- 27 leave out or exclude
- 28 fancy word for members of a household
- 29 in Johnson County on highway 174
- 30 enters again on a word processor
- 32 late Texas actor, Rip (init.)
- 33 barbecue beef cuts (2 wds.)
- 36 kick out
- 37 "Zip-a-dee-doo-___"
- 38 being a Texan can ___ you to brag and exaggerate
- 39 Dorothy Malone attended "___ Academy of Dallas"

DOWN

- 41 IRS number for an employer (abbr.)
- 42 this Houston played for the University of Texas in 2010 BCS Championship Game
- 45 "leave ___ that"
- 46 "Alamo City" abbr.
- 47 this Nen pitched one season for the Rangers
- 48 "___ Tex Cavalry" was an Indoor Football team
- 10 TXism: "got ___ itchy trigger finger"
- 11 Miss or Mrs.
- 12 this Texan won shot put Gold in 1992 (2 wds.)
- 13 South Padre Island acquisition (2 wds.)
- 14 capital of Peru
- 15 TXism: "brave enough ___ boomtown cafe"
- 16 narrow cut
- 17 homeless person
- 18 Crystal City, TX has a statue of "Pop ___ Sailor Man"
- 19 TXism: "that'll ___ (exciting)"
- 22 TX Carolyn of "The Addams Family" (init.)
- 23 ___ Fresno, TX
- 24 this Arthur won 1975 tennis title held in Dallas
- 25 emitted light
- 26 "___ Creek State Park"
- 28 "Don't ___ With Texas"
- 31 happy cat sound
- 34 actor Taylor of Texas-based "Ride, Vaquero!" (init.)
- 35 TXism: "he's green around the gills"
- 37 noted Texas jewelry designer, Malouf
- 40 TX Freeman was ___ Hall on "One Life to Live"
- 43 not less
- 44 put an end to
- 50 snouts
- 51 rape evidence abbr.

Clear Fork Assisted Living and Memory Care. Meet Mistletoe the Reindeer, holiday dinner, gingerbread house decorating contest & games. Join us for a deliciously festive evening as we celebrate the holidays with friends and family. Our talented Culinary Team will prepare a holiday dinner with all the flavors of home. 4-5 Meet Mistletoe the Reindeer | 5-6 Holiday Dinner | 6-8 Games RSVP Required RSVP to 817-948-6520



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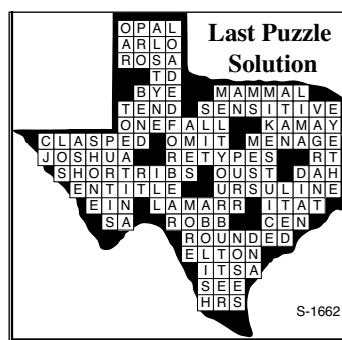
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NOTICE TO BIDDERS

The City of Aledo will accept bids submitted only in writing until 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 28, 2023 to establish a multi-year contract from a qualified person, firm, or corporation to provide janitorial services for the City of Aledo and surrounding areas as designated by the City of Aledo. The janitorial services to be performed under this Contract will include City property.

Bid # PW-2024-002

CITY OF ALEDO – JANITORIAL SERVICES

City Staff will begin reading the bids at 2:01 p.m.
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Bid documents may be obtained without charge at the City of Aledo City Hall, 104 Maverick Street, Aledo, Texas 76008. Bid documents will be ready for pickup on and after **December 8, 2023**. Request for Bid documents may also be downloaded at www.aledotx.gov.

The City of Aledo website will be updated with addenda, additional reports or other information relevant to bidding the services. It is the sole responsibility of all plan holders, whether they have received digital downloads or paper copies of the plans and specifications, to periodically check for Addenda which may have been posted on the City of Aledo website.

There will be a non-mandatory pre-bid conference on December 19, 2023 at 9:00 AM. The Pre-Bid Conference will be held at Community Center Conference Room, 104 Robinson Court, Aledo, TX 76008.

Bidders should submit all inquiries and/or questions concerning this project to the person identified below by Friday, December 22, 2023 at 5:00 P.M. Questions that result in changes to the specifications will be answered in writing and copies distributed to bidders of record in the form of an addendum.

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GIRLS BASKETBALL

District opener

Ladycats drop Rider

By Ryan Wade
The Community News

With the preseason portion of the 2023-24 varsity hoops schedule officially in the record books, the Aledo Ladycats opened the District 5-5A portion of the schedule with a 51-37 win over visiting Wichita Falls Rider on Tuesday, Dec. 12.

"Obviously, I feel good because it was a win, but it definitely pointed out some things that we need to work on," Ladycats head coach Nikki Hyles said after the game. "Our inexperience showed a little bit with the type of defense that they had. It wasn't like they put crazy pressure on us. We just made bad decisions. We'll go back and look at that on film and we'll get better from that."

"We've got a lot of great kids. They don't wanna make mistakes and they don't wanna do the wrong thing. So, we gotta show them the things that we would like to see and what they should do in the situations on film. Then we'll get back in practice and re-create the same situation. Every team in the district is going to see this film, so we're going to see it again," she added.

After posting a dominant opening quarter where they went up 12-4, Aledo (12-7 overall) went shot-for-shot with the Lady Raiders in the second and third stanzas. Rider's physically aggressive style of play caught the young Ladycats off guard, resulting in errant passes that turned into scoring



opportunities at the other end of the floor for the Lady Raiders.

While they struggled to maintain possession of the ball in the second and third quarters, Aledo's youth-laden squad held their own on the home end of the floor. Wichita Falls Rider managed to close the gap on the scoreboard in the middle frames, but only ever so slightly.

Leading 36-30 as the fourth quarter got underway, Aledo posted their best eight minutes of the game to outpace the Lady Raiders, 15-7. The final offensive sprint by Aledo made an emphatic statement about the competitiveness of this team as their first district game came to a close.

The Lady Raiders opened the fourth quarter with a three-pointer just 40 seconds into the stanza to cut the lead to 36-33.

Elizabeth Griffin set up shop in three-point land near the Aledo bench on the ensuing possession. The Ladycats worked the ball around the perimeter, beating the defensive shift by just enough to give Griffin an open look at the basket before she buried a three-pointer of her own with 6:52 left in the game to push the lead back to six points, 39-33.

From there, a pair of trips to the charity stripe in a row for Aledo increased the lead for the home team. Natalie Anderson took a good foul that sent her to the hardwood where she slid into the wall. The padding on the wall did its job, as she popped up from the floor unscathed and went 1-for-2 from the charity stripe.

On the next possession, the Lady Raiders were called for a technical foul. Griffin knocked down both shots from the line to make it a 42-33 affair with just under five-and-a-half minutes remaining.

From there, Kinley Elms led the Ladycat offense to close out the night and send Rider home with a loss to go along with their long bus ride back to Wichita Falls. Elms dominated down in the paint, scoring seven of her eight points on the night in the final 4:52 of the contest.

"We had a great preseason," Hyles said. "We played a lot of really tough teams to prepare us for this. I feel like we're doing a good job. But, we just can't be satisfied with being okay. We just gotta keep getting better. That's what's great about these kids. These kids, they've got that drive to get better, and they want to do the right thing. They want to get better. That's the best thing about it, is they want to get better."

With the Bearcats playing in the football 5A state championship at AT&T Stadium on Friday, the Ladycats' hoops matchup against Northwest has been rescheduled for Saturday, Dec. 16 in Justin. Tipoff for that matchup with the Lady Texans is slated for 10:15 a.m.

Ladycats vs. Wichita Falls Rider - Dec. 12

Aledo	12	11	13	15	51
Rider	4	12	14	7	37

Aledo scoring: Elizabeth Griffin 16, Brooklyn Dempsey 11, Natalie Anderson 10, Kinley Elms 8, Ella Isbell 4, August Carlone 2.



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Natalie Anderson races for a loose ball after forcing a turnover during the Ladycats' district opener against Wichita Falls Rider on Tuesday, Dec. 12.



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