

# THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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## Inspiring Women

“If that is your dream, and you want to go for it, go for it. You just take it one step and one day at a time, and don’t let others or anything hold you back.”

- Kara Jones

### Kara Jones begins new career with new degree

By John English  
The Community News

By the time most people are in their mid-to-late 50s, retirement is the next major milestone in life.

But for Aledo resident Kara Jones, that was the time she decided to pursue her bachelor’s degree - her second bachelor’s degree.

The Natchez, Mississippi native received her Bachelor of Science in Nursing on Dec. 15 from the University of Texas at Arlington, and in so doing accomplished a lifelong goal.

“This is something that I’ve always really wanted to do,” Jones said. “I graduated from TCU a long time ago. I got my degree in kinesiology and worked as a clinical exercise physiologist, and I’ve had a long career. I was a corporate wellness program director, and I’ve worked in hospitals, so

I’ve had a very diverse career in the healthcare industry.

“But this is something I’ve always wanted to do, and the time was just never right with life and children. My husband is a great support system, and he finally told me, ‘You always wanted to do it, go do it.’”

Jones, 61, graduated from TCU in 1984, so when she decided to pursue her nursing degree, she had to retake a few prerequisites before entering the program in 2019.

“In the beginning, it was rough, because it’s so different than how we did it,” Jones said. “We went to class, and we had books, and now, 90 percent of what you do is online. So I had to transition to that way of thinking and really became a lot more proficient with the computer because I had to. So that was a challenge for me, but I had help along the way and guidance along the way. But yeah, it was night and day.”



COURTESY PHOTO

At an age when many folks are preparing for retirement, Kara Jones of Aledo is preparing for a new career after receiving her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Texas at Arlington.

### Age an asset

While Jones was older than most of her peers in the nursing program, the Aledo woman said

her age also proved to be a great

asset in certain respects.

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RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Amy Slape answers the phone call during her final week of employment with Aledo ISD. She has officially retired after 16 years with the district.

### Amy Slape retiring, excited about future

By Ryan Wade  
The Community News

When the calendar turns over and we welcome in a new year every Jan. 1, for most people it symbolizes a new beginning. It’s a time to dream new dreams, set new goals, or to take on a new challenge.

After 16 years at Aledo ISD, for Amy Slape the new year marks the start of a new adventure: retirement.

“My plans are three-fold,” Slape said. “I have a grandbaby. She’s 18 months old. To me, that’s life. I want to be part of her life. I don’t know if that’s the main reason, but it really kind of is.”

“The second reason is, I want to spend more time with my mom while I have her. And thirdly, my husband and I want to travel. We went to Paris and London last October for the first time, and the travel bug got us.”

### DFW all through

While travel is a big part of her plans for retirement, Slape is a DFW girl through-and-through. Raised in Fort Worth, she graduated from Arlington Heights High School back in “nineteen-something-or-other.” After high school she went off to college at Texas A&M, but returned to DFW to work in hotels once her degree was finished.

“When my husband and I first got married, we lived in Lewisville,” Slape recalled. “He was in the hotel business, too. We both decided to get out, because you need to be more flexible as far as where you’re going to live. Every three or four years, they want you to move to a different place.”

She spent a dozen years as a human resources director for hotels all over the Metroplex. She finished up her career working at a Hilton in Arlington and a Sheraton in Las Colinas. While she enjoyed the work, as her young family began to grow, she enjoyed being at home with her children much more.

### Coming to Aledo

In 1996 they decided to move out of the city to a quiet, small town west of Fort Worth called Aledo. While her children attended school, Slape began to volunteer at the school. Sixteen years ago when her family purchased a new home on Crown Road that put her youngest child in the Weatherford ISD, she decided to interview for a job with Aledo schools.

“My youngest still had four more years until graduation,” Slape remembered. “When I interviewed, I said I just needed to be somewhere for four years. That turned into 16.”

“My husband is retired. We both just want to have down time. I feel like my life has been on fast-forward. When I started here, it was at the middle school. I

Turn to SLAPE, page 4



Welcome to the 29th annual Good News edition of The Community News.

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

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

We hope you enjoy this issue - and we hope you and all who are dear to you have a wonderful 2024!



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# In & Around Parker County

## Aledo Athletic Club - Your Bridge to Health and Fitness

Americans struggle, year after year, around getting fit, eating better, and losing weight.

Those goals often seem elusive in our busy world, but Aledo Athletic Club can help you get there.

Owner Shane Davis wasn't always as fit as he is today. In fact, he once weighed about 400 pounds. Following college he put on weight, and struggled with yo-yo dieting.

"I needed to figure out how to get healthy and enter the gym," Davis said. "I got under 300 pounds, but never really stayed there."

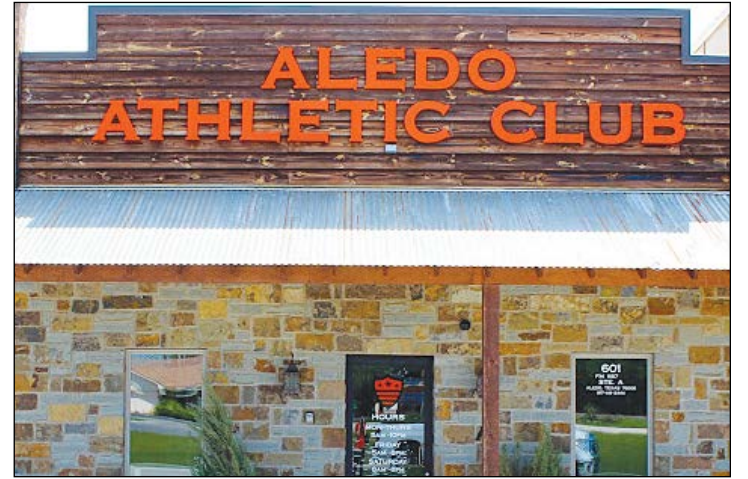
That changed in 2006 or 2007 when he came to Aledo and started working out with a trainer. He weighed 296 in January and competed at 178 pounds in December.

"It took discipline — there were a lot of things that I had to dispel from my mind of what constitutes a healthy meal," Davis said. The issue wasn't just losing the weight, it was keeping it off.

"I think that's where most diets today fail," Davis said. "They, can get you where you want to go, but they can't keep you there."

Shane has taken what he learned and now provides the coaching and support to help others reach their goals as well.

"I was the king of the late night drive thru — whatever is quickest, because my schedule was hectic. I made every excuse in the world," Davis said. You have to plan, you have to have a goal and, and then you have to have a plan B for when that when that goal doesn't work



out — you're sitting in a restaurant that you didn't plan on being in and what do I do now?

"And that's, that's where I can help you. My phone's on 24/7. If I'm awake, I'm answering, if you know ahead of time, hey, I'm gonna go to this restaurant, we look at the menu together, I help you pick out the best meal for you. And I don't think you're gonna get that a lot of other places."

Aledo Athletic Club is celebrating its 10 year in business, and can

accommodate beginners up to fitness enthusiasts.

"What we are probably best at is being supportive of your goals, whether you're a beginner, or whether you're an experienced lifter, you can come into our gym, and you're gonna be welcomed with open arms. And if you need help, we're going to be here to help you; if you know what you're doing, you're welcome to go on your own."

Shane knows the struggles many people deal with in getting healthy because he has been there.

Aledo Athletic Club has both machines and free weights, cardio equipment, and personal training. You can go all the way from basic calisthenics to CrossFit all under one 4,000 square-foot roof.

Whatever your goals, Shane and Aledo Athletic Club can help you get there.

"I understand the motivation," Davis said. "And I also understand that sense of desperation when you feel like you're trying everything, and yet the scale isn't moving or it's barely moving. You've got to

find some reasons to continue on, whether that be for your own health or someone else's health, but you've got to keep going. As with anything in life, if you keep fighting, and you keep pushing, and you keep your your head down, you will see success."

Aledo Athletic Club is located at 601 South FM 1187 in Aledo. Find out more by visiting <https://aledofitness.com/> or call 817-441-2444.

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# Town of Annetta hosts Toys for Tots drive



Rico Remigio is shown with Julie Hale, Toys for Tots coordinator for this area.

**Special to The Community News**

The Town of Annetta recently hosted a Toys for Tots drive from Oct. 20 through Dec. 18. Just before the Nov. 16 Annetta City Council meeting, all members of the council dropped off toys, which essentially

filled one large toy box along with other donations.

“I want to thank Rico Remigio for coordinating the Toys for Tots drive at the Annetta City Hall,” Annetta Mayor Sandy Roberts said. “It is an honor to be part of a community that



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Annetta City Council members Danny Coffman, Bruce Pinckard, and Shane Mudge, WebEx facilitator Eric Heaton, council members Kent Stasey and Jim Causey, Mayor Sandy Roberts, and City Secretary Jamee Long gave a jump start to toy collections in Annetta.

is so giving of others. I look forward to making this an annual event.

“I wish everyone a very Happy Holiday and a safe and Happy New Year!”

Originally, the toy drive ended on Dec. 8 with two full boxes and one bicycle donated. After a request from Toys for Tots, the toy drive was extended to Dec. 18, which resulted in one full additional box of toys donated. Tracy Jack commented on a Facebook post “We’re so glad you extended the deadline. My daughter had her birthday party over the weekend and the girls all

brought Toys for Tots! — all my daughter’s idea!”

Remigio, a 22-year Navy veteran, first volunteered with Toys for Tots while stationed in Columbus, Ohio while co-located with the Marines.

“I saw the joy in families when we were distributing toys, and I immediately fell in love with this program,” Remigio exclaimed.

Julie Hale, Toys for Tots coordinator for this area, said the need for toys is growing every year.

“Last year we served a little over 5,500 children and we were prepared for about 7,500 this year. We had an overwhelming surge in applications for assistance: over 11,700,” Hale said. “We couldn’t fill the need without communities like yours pitching in and helping out.”



All toys donated will benefit children in Hood, Somervell, Parker, and Erath counties. To learn more about Toys for Tots and how you can help or donate for our area, visit [toysfortots.org](http://toysfortots.org).



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# JONES

from page one

"To some extent, being older and having the maturity and having my life experiences and having to persevere through roadblocks and things along the way worked to my advantage," Jones said. "I would say that 99 percent of the students are in their 20s and some are in their 30s, but I've really made a lot of friends and have a great support system."

"We call it trauma bonding. We got to be real good friends really quick and supported each other along the way."

Being older served her well in dealing with a few of her professors as well.

"I've had some clinical instructors who were bullies," Jones said. "I've had a lot who were great and very helpful, but some that were very tough. I think with my age and maturity and experience, it's helped me persevere."

## Lots of travel

Another hardship Jones faced along the way was the sheer distance and travel time involved in obtaining her degree.

"I always knew nursing was tough," Jones said. "But I never expected it to be at this degree. I



think it is the hardest undergraduate degree that you can get.

"I live in Aledo, and UTA placed one of my clinical rotations at Medical City-Plano. That was tough because I had to make arrangements."

Jones would stay with a friend who lives in Plano, spend all week-end doing clinical work, and come back to Aledo on Monday.

She then had a medical rotation where she was placed in Denton and would have to wake up at 4 a.m. to get out on the road.

Eventually, Jones' husband, Andrew, stepped in.

"You know how treacherous 35 North is," Jones said. "It gets dark and you can't see. I got caught in a really bad storm one morning, and I couldn't see, and I was really upset. I came home and told my husband and he said, 'From now on, I'm going to drive you.' I told him he didn't have to do that, but he said, 'Yeah, I do. I promised your daddy that I would take care of you, and that's what I'm going to do.'"

Andrew would wake up at 3:30 in the morning, take Jones to Denton, come back to Aledo, take their daughter to school, go to work himself, pick up his daughter after school and then drive back to Denton to pick her up at night, before driving back to Aledo.

But Jones got through it and will be starting her residency in February at Texas Health - Fort Worth, working as a palliative care nurse. Jones will sit for her licensing exam in January.

"From sun up to sun down I study, and review and do practice questions and make sure I understand concepts," Jones said.

## Family support

Kara and Andrew have three grown children and a 16-year-old daughter at home as well as four grandchildren

Jones moved to Aledo in 1995 and started the very first personal training facility in Parker County in the year 2000 called Pro F.I.T.T. Personal Training.

She has volunteered with the Careity Foundation, which helps support cancer patients, and has worked as a corporate wellness program director, which was the job she was doing before she pursued her degree.

"My daughter is a NICU Nurse," Jones said. "We were talking and I said, 'Honey, think about it. You're going to be taking care of these precious little beings at their fragile beginning of life, and I'm going to be taking care of these precious beings at the end of life.'"

And Jones has a message for anyone who thinks they are too old to go after their own personal dream.

And Jones has a message for anyone who thinks they are too old to go after their own personal dream.

"I've always said, 'I want to do this, and I'm not dead yet,'" Jones said. "If that is your dream, and you want to go for it, go for it. You just take it one step and one day at a time, and don't let others or anything hold you back."



# SLAPE

from page one

was there six years until I came to the administration office.

"At the middle school I had, like, eight weeks off in the summer to kind of rejuvenate and get things done. Since then, the speed of the job has stayed the same, but while you get vacation time here, it's not the same. I just want to have calm time with my husband and to sleep. I haven't really slept in 16 years," she joked.

## What she'll miss most

With her retirement officially underway and Dec. 20, as her last day on the books, there's no question

about what her favorite part of the job was, or what she'll miss the most.

"Of course, everyone always says it's the people, but it really is," she said. "When I was a stay-at-home mom, Jane Dawson at the Methodist Church talked me into working at the preschool. I worked there for 11 years."

"When I started at the middle school, I saw a lot of kids that I'd had at the preschool. That was the most heartwarming time. When I was at the middle school, and then I came here [to the administration office], a lot of the kids I had in middle school were graduating. That's the most heartwarming thing, watching those kids grow up. People talk about it, but I really understood it once I was in the middle of it."

"I love the kids. When I first got the job at the middle school, and the middle school was the only thing open, I didn't know how I would like being at the middle school. But after a month working there, you couldn't have taken those kids away from me. I had office aides every period. They would come tell me their stories, or what they were upset about. I so looked forward to talking with them every day. It was great! And, I never knew that was something I would enjoy so much," she added.

## Seeing a lot of changes

A lot has changed in this small town over the years Slape has worked with the district. When her family first moved to Aledo, there

## I think we still have that hometown feel, even though Aledo's getting so big.

- Amy Slape

was a single elementary school housing kindergarten to second grade. There were just four campuses in the entire district. All these years later, Aledo has six elementary schools with plans to open a seventh in August 2024.

"You see differences in the kids throughout the years, and differences in the parents," she said. "That's just growth."

That goes with it. I think we still have that hometown feel, even though Aledo's getting so big.

"It's because, as I said, I started seeing some of these kids when they were in preschool. Now they're adults. Some of them work for the district. They're having their own babies. That's so rewarding! That's one of the best things about the job."



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We welcome letters, articles and guest opinions from our readers. Opinions expressed in this newspaper will be labeled as opinions, editorials or letters, and do not 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 groups sue to stop new immigration law



**Gary Borders**

gborders@texaspres.com

The ink was barely dry on a law signed by Gov. Greg Abbott that makes unauthorized entry into the United States a state crime before a lawsuit was filed by civil rights groups and El Paso County challenging its constitutionality. *The Austin American-Statesman* reported the suit was filed in an Austin federal court by the ACLU and two immigrant advocacy groups on behalf of the county.

The complaint says Texas Senate Bill 4, passed in the recently concluded fourth special session, is "patently illegal" and that it violates "the federal government's exclusive immigration powers and the sensitive foreign policy implications of these powers." The law is set to go into effect on March 5.

SB4 allows any Texas law enforcement officer to arrest people who are believed to have entered the country illegally. Once in custody, they could either agree to leave the U.S. or face prosecution on misdemeanor or charges of illegal entry.

"These laws will help stop the tidal wave of illegal entry into Texas, add additional funding to build more border wall, and crack down on human smuggling," Abbott said after signing the bill.

### Border Patrol banned from cutting Texas razor wire

An appeals court has ordered the Border Patrol to stop cutting razor wire installed by Texas officials, *The Dallas Morning News* reported. The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a lower court ruling that gave federal authorities the legal right to remove the fencing, which federal officials said had been done to prevent injuries to migrants. The state contended, however, that federal agents were removing the

concertina wire simply to let migrants enter Texas without notification.

Col. Steve McCraw, Texas Department of Public Safety director, said the state agrees that the wire should be cut in cases of emergency.

"We're doing it to go rescue somebody," he said. "We're not doing it to allow a large number of migrants to enter between the ports of entry. We want them to go to the ports of entry."

### Texas has lowest gas prices in country

Gasoline prices in the state are at their lowest level in nearly three years, according to AAA. The current average is \$2.57 a gallon — the lowest average gas price in the nation, according to a *Texas Standard* report. Matt Smith, an energy analyst for Kpler (stet), warned Texans that higher prices are likely during the holiday period.

AAA is projecting 104 million travelers are driving at least 50 miles to their holiday destinations, while air traffic is expected to be the busiest ever, with 7.5 million air travelers this holiday season.

Smith said a number of factors, including unrest in Yemen and the Middle East, could cause oil prices to rise, leading to higher gas prices in the future.

"We've seen a lot of bearishness that has pushed these prices to multi-month lows here; we may be at the point now where we're seeing a bit of a turnaround going forward here," Smith said.

### ERCOT chief: Grid is ready for winter

The chief of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas told his board last week that added power generation will be sufficient this winter, despite population growth and lower output from wind power turbines because of less wind velocity.

"We are as ready as we have ever been to deal with the challenges of the winter season," ERCOT chief Pablo Vegas told the board.

*The Statesman* reported Vegas' statement of confidence in the grid comes just three weeks after

ERCOT warned much of the state could face rolling blackouts starting next month, most likely in the early morning hours before solar generating facilities can be utilized.

"In the wintertime, the peak of the system tends to happen in the early morning hours as people are starting to wake up at 7 a.m., 8 a.m.," Vegas said. "It's still cold from an overnight winter cold. And we don't yet have the resources like solar resources on the system at that point in time."

Vegas said 800 new projects have been added to the grid in the past year. ERCOT's chief meteorologist is predicting a milder than usual winter for much of the state.

### Amount of state in drought declines

Drought conditions across Texas are declining, with 43% of the state in some stage of drought at the end of November — down 22 percentage points from the end of October and 42 percentage points from early September.

"Despite the improvements on the landscape, our statewide surface water supply reservoirs haven't seen a lot of recovery yet," Mark Wentzel, hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board, wrote in his monthly report. "That's not unexpected. Compared to the landscape, our water supply systems take longer to respond to drought."

The surface water systems most adversely affected are clustered in

Central and South Texas, which are still experiencing drought conditions. Also still in severe-to-extreme drought are far West Texas counties and a scattering of counties in Deep East Texas.

### State leads nation in population increases in last year

Texas' population grew more than any other state in the country, up nearly half a million people, according to the recent census estimate. *The Texas Tribune* reported the population growth is centered in the state's cities. Nearly

70% of the state's residents live in the four largest metro areas — Houston, San Antonio, Austin, and Dallas-Fort Worth.

While the state had the largest total increase in population, two other states had higher growth rates than the 1.6% recorded here — South Carolina and Florida. The South accounted for 87% of the country's population growth in the latest census estimate.

*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@texaspres.com](mailto:gborders@texaspres.com).*



## Obituaries

### Nancy Duncan

Mildred Nanette (Nancy) Durie Duncan, (96) passed away peacefully on December 22, 2023 in Willow Park.

Nancy was born on November 17, 1927 in Waco.

As a child Nancy survived the depression, a devastating home fire, scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough, red measles, and appendicitis — all before the age of 12. As an adolescent, she became a summer camp counselor for the Camp Fire Girls and barrel racer on her beloved horse, Flax. She graduated high school from Sacred Heart Academy at age 17 after only 11 years of education.

She was a rodeo queen, a Waco Longhorn Riding Club representative at the Fort Worth Fat Stock Show and Rodeo, and was nominated as homecoming queen at Baylor. She was a member of Delta Alpha Phi, president of the Baylor Waco Club, president of the Boots 'n' Saddles Club, and president of the Alpha Kappa Delta sociology club.

After graduating Baylor, she taught school, caught the chick-enpox from one of her students, married a Baylor football player, honeymooned in Lampasas, and

moved to Fort Worth. There her husband, Glenn, worked for A. Brandt Company, Inc. and they started a family.

Soon they had three wonderful children. When her daughter came down with the mumps, Nancy had a very close call with meningoen- cephalitis. Even with a house full of kids, she still survived.

She attended the graduations and weddings of all of her kids and grandkids, and countless baptisms, confirmations, sporting events, and other activities.

Nancy volunteered in the school cafeteria, as a room mother, den mother, helped with Brownies and Girl Scouts, was historian for the St. Rita's Catholic Church garden club, and a faithful attendee of the Fort Worth Fat Stock Show and Rodeo since 1942.

She was a historian in her own right. Nancy was a member of the Troll Hjem chapter of the Norwegian Society of Texas and even took a few Norwegian lessons. She researched extensively her family genealogy as well as her husband's, and was a contributor to the Mayborn Museum - Texas Collection - at Baylor in Waco. If you needed to know an important place, date or other

information, her family always said, "just go ask Gram."

She suffered with Celiac Sprue disease, without complaint, for more than a decade before receiving a diagnosis that probably saved her life at the time.

Nancy and her husband traveled together to the "old countries" Norway and Scotland. Later in life, they became "land and cattle barons" of sorts at their ranch in Gorman. Together they made the big move to Bluff Dale, and then two years after her husband died, she moved to Willow Park.

Nancy was an avid Rangers fan and lived long enough to finally see her beloved Rangers win the World Series. She was the undisputed Reigning Queen as the 42 Champ, and was pretty good in straight dominoes too. She won her last round of 42, defeating her grandson and great-grandson only a few days before her rapid health decline.

She was her husband's caretaker. He had been given three months to live, but she kept him happily alive for another three years. They were married for fifty-seven years.

Nancy was a life-long Catholic, received a Catholic education through high school, and raised her three kids in the church. She brought her husband to the faith in his later years.

She was a devoted wife and mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, and through it all, she showed an overwhelmingly selfless and sacrificial love for her family. Family always came first to her. It was only fitting that she was surrounded by family at her passing. They will miss her dearly.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Roy and Edith (Kleypas) Durie; her husband, Glenn Wallace Duncan; and her sister, Mary Nell SoRelle.

Nancy leaves behind three children: Glenn Duncan (Suzanne), Nanette Nadeau, Susan Clemens (Bill); six grandchildren: Scott Duncan (Jennifer), Lindsey Flowers (Brandon), Philip Duncan (Monica), Cameron Kelman (Chip), Cole Thompson (Niki) and Brian Felker; fourteen great-grandchildren: Tanner Ward, Elliana, Evan, Adelaide, and Alexis Duncan, Coy and Charley Flowers, Jace, Juliette, Athan and Kai Duncan, Hadyn Felker and Tagg and Troop Thompson.

Mass of Christian Burial will be held at 11:30 a.m. on January 3, 2024, at Holy Redeemer Catholic Church in Aledo. The family will receive friends at 10 a.m. before the ceremony. Burial will be at 2:30 p.m. at the DFW National Cemetery.

BASKETBALL

# Retired jerseys have local connection

## Peaster High School honored four former players

By Randy Keck  
The Community News

Basketball came naturally to Braxton and Brooklyn Boshier.

After all, their dad Clark, who is now the pastor at Willow Park Baptist Church, was the basketball coach at Arlington Baptist College.

“Right when I was born, I didn’t have a choice but to be in the gym because he was always coaching,” Braxton said. “So I went to practices, went to games, rode the bus to games with the college teams — I was always around. I started playing organized basketball at three years old and I really haven’t known anything else but playing basketball.”

Braxton and Brooklyn were among four former Peaster High School basketball players who were honored by having their jerseys retired earlier this year.

The other two honorees were also related. Travis Hull, who coaches girls’ basketball at Aledo High School, and his niece, Payton, were likewise honored.

Braxton, who graduated from Peaster in 2021, said he was always a bit of a role player. His trajectory changed when Bubba Jennings was hired as Peaster’s head coach during Braxton’s sophomore year.

“Coach Jennings, helped my game and took me to another level



Coach Garrett Hilton, Payton Hull, Brooklyn Boshier, Braxton Boshier, Jo Anne Hull (Payton’s grandmother), and assistant girls coach Kirstin Otel show off the retired jerseys at a May presentation in Peaster High School.

RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

when it came to basketball,” Braxton said.

Peaster made it to the state semi-final Braxton’s junior year, but the COVID-19 pandemic was in full force his senior year.

Braxton now plays basketball at West Coast Baptist College in Lancaster, California. He said he

was surprised when he found out his jersey was being retired.

“I was shocked to say the least. It was such an honor because Peaster put so much into me and gave me so much — the school, the town, the athletic program, all the coaches — I’m just thankful for them doing that.”

Brooklyn graduated in 2023, so she was still a student at Peaster when she found out her number was also being retired.

Growing up with Braxton, Brooklyn spent many a day challenging her brother to one-on-one, and though he usually won, she no doubt gains valuable skill by going

up against an older and more experienced brother on the basketball court.

Brooklyn said she gave thanks to God for the ability to play and for the coaches and teammates she came to know during her high school career at Peaster.

Turn to **JERSEYS**, page 7

## Matt Morris

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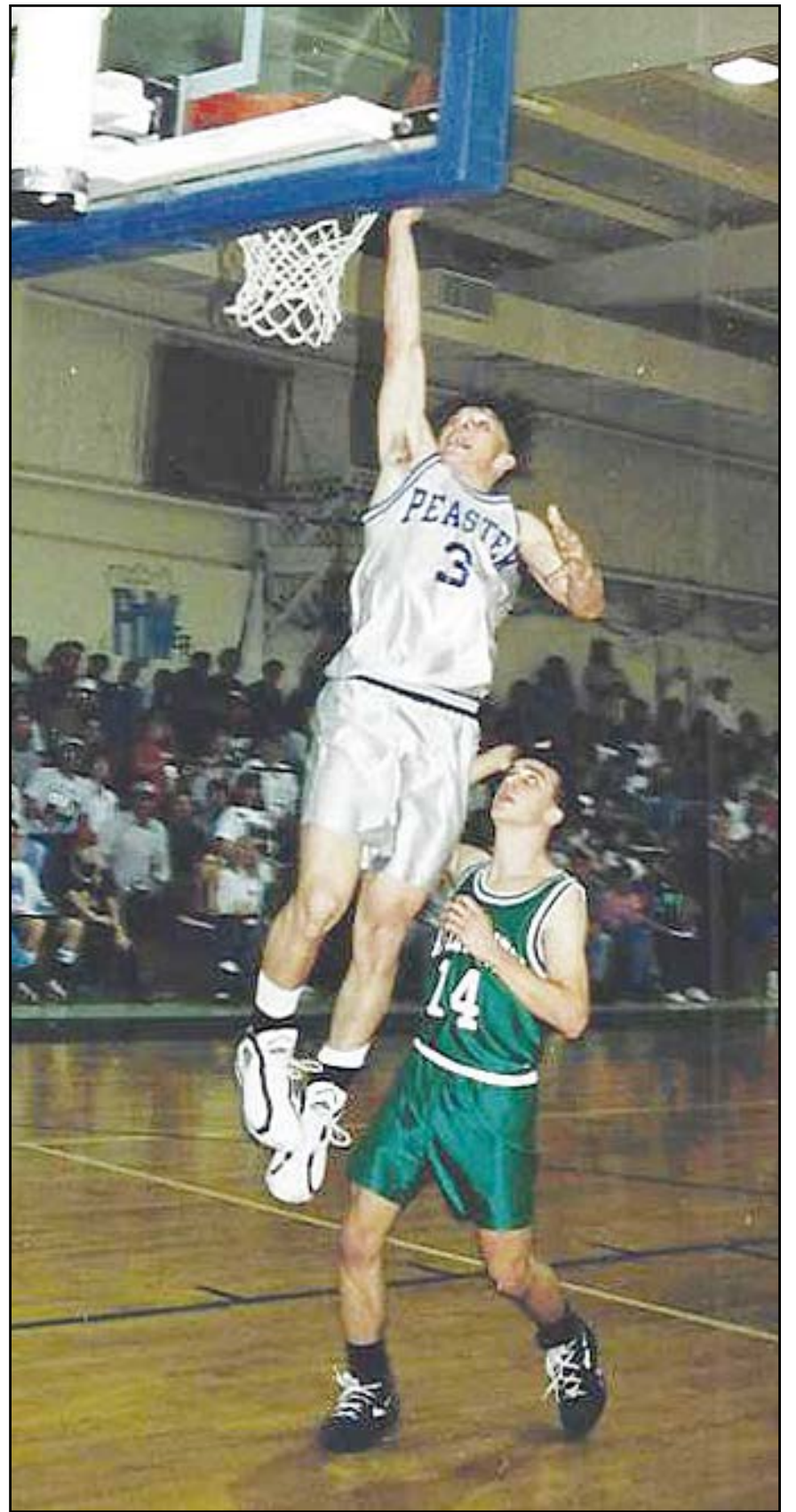
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SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Though her career at Peaster ended with her 2023 graduation, the school retired Brooklyn Boshers' number. She now attends West Coast Baptist College.



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Travis Hull, now a coach in Aledo, is the all-time leading scorer for Peaster High School.



SPECIAL TO THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Braxton Boshers, shown in a Peaster High School game, now plays at West Coast Baptist College.

## JERSEYS

from page 6

Like her brother, Brooklyn now also attends West Coast Baptist College, where she studies biblical counseling.

The college does not have a girls' basketball program, but she is hoping one gets started by next season.

### The Hull connection

Travis Hull played at Peaster from 1993-1997. During this days there was no football team — Travis played guard/slasher on the basketball team and participated in the long jump and triple jump in the springs.

Hull was a big scorer for the Peaster offense, and the team made

the playoffs his sophomore, junior, and senior year, making it to the regional semifinals his senior year.

Hull was the all-time leading boys basketball scorer at Peaster.

After high school Hull played basketball for one year at Midwestern State University, then transferred to Weatherford College for his sophomore season.

During his year at Weatherford College the Coyotes made it to the final four of the Junior College National Tournament, where they ended up third in the nation.

Hull finished out his college career at McMurry University in Abilene. He is in his third year coaching in Aledo, where his oldest

daughter and son recently graduated. He has another son who is a freshman at Aledo High School, and a fourth-grader.

Hull's niece, Payton, was the all-time leading girls' scorer at Peaster, and now plays at Abilene Christian University. Payton was unavailable for an interview.

At the presentation last May honoring the players whose jerseys are retired, Peaster girls basketball coach Garrett Hilton (now coach at Trinity Christian Academy) said the four players accounted for more than 10,000 points in their careers.



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1 Lone \_\_\_ State  
5 TXism: "it ain't \_\_\_ there ain't a cow in Texas"  
6 go by horse  
7 TXism: "he's \_\_\_ hombre" (mean)  
8 agcy. that regulates Texas utilities  
9 TX Trini sang " \_\_\_ Had a Hammer"  
12 TXism: "old \_\_\_"  
17 some say an \_\_\_ your socks will cure the flu  
19 it was Letterman's nightly list (2 wds.)  
21 Fox \_\_\_ carries NFL football games  
22 TXism: "he's \_\_\_ walk the river with" (reliable)  
23 "the die \_\_\_" (no turning back)  
28 hankering  
29 TX Vikki Carr album: " \_\_\_ Hombres"  
30 this 1967 hurricane hit Texas hard  
31 horny \_\_\_ (lizards)  
35 \_\_\_ of cotton  
36 museum Institution in Washington, D.C.  
42 the Alamo was originally "Mission San \_\_\_ Valero"  
44 TX Charley Pride's "Kiss an \_\_\_ Good Mornin"  
46 Seur \_\_\_ led first French expedition in Texas

**DOWN**

1 TXism: " \_\_\_ feedbag" (eat a meal)  
2 Quannah \_\_\_ Chief newspaper  
3 impudence  
4 this Donna was in "Apache Trail" with TX Chill Wills (privy to)  
9 " \_\_\_ the plan"  
10 Galveston had the \_\_\_ exchange in Texas  
11 TXism: " \_\_\_ slinger" (writer)  
12 TX Tanya Tucker sang "One Love \_\_\_ Time"

48 liquid absorber  
49 first 2 init. of president born in Denison, Texas  
50 high school student, e.g. Spanish for "little girl"  
52 driver's license agcy.  
53 it's used to catch shrimp in the Gulf (2 wds.)  
54 " \_\_\_ Day" (Wednesday)  
56 \_\_\_ City, Texas in Upshur County  
57 "Surf the \_\_\_" (online)

13 TXism: "he's still got \_\_\_ in his garters" (able)  
14 health resorts  
15 TXism: "pay \_\_\_ never mind" (disregard)  
16 they hang on basketball rims  
18 in debt  
20 TXism: "he's \_\_\_ spring chicken" (old)  
23 this Berlin wrote songs for TX Ginger \_\_\_ "Pretty Woman"  
24 " \_\_\_ Rim State Park" on the Gulf  
25 Havana's country

26 TXism: "does \_\_\_ office business"  
27 seasoned  
32 TX Roy Orbison's " \_\_\_ Pretty Woman"  
33 TXism: "honest \_\_\_ the day is long"  
34 TX Strait's "What \_\_\_ You Say to That"

36 bro's sib  
37 water ditch around a castle  
38 wasted time  
39 "hole \_\_\_"  
40 TXism: "he could shoot the eye out of \_\_\_"  
41 saying "no" (abbr.)  
43 symbol for sodium  
45 noted black golfer, TX Elder (init.)  
47 guaranteed  
48 Crackle and Pop's amigo  
55 New York's NL team in MLB

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FOOTBALL

## All-American Bowl

### Two Bearcats among nation's best

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

Two members of the Aledo Bearcats will be among the 100 top high school football players from across the country playing on national TV when they participate in the All-American Bowl on Saturday, Jan. 6.



Davhon Keys

Representing Aledo will be linebacker Davhon Keys and quarterback Hauss Hejny.



Hauss Hejny

The duo led the Bearcats to their 12th state championship and second straight on Dec. 15 with a 51-8 win over Comal Smithson Valley to cap a 16-0 season.

Both players have also graduated early and will begin their college careers at LSU for Keys and TCU for Hejny in the first semester of 2024.

The All-American Bowl, which will be played at the Alamodome, will be broadcast on NBC television. Kickoff is noon.

"It's an honor, something I've been dreaming about since I was a kid," Hejny said, paying homage to several Aledo athletes who played in the game previously.

"I'll get to foresee what it'll be like on the field with them. I may be going up against some of them in the future."

Keys added, "I'm extremely excited. It's another chance to showcase my abilities, and this time on national TV. I'm familiar with very few of the other players, but I look forward to playing with them and against them."

Keys was named the Defensive MVP of the state championship game after posting a dozen tackles and a sack. For the season, he finished with 110.5 tackles, 19 for a loss,

Turn to **BOWL**, page 11

FOOTBALL

## Young Bearcats already set to continue tradition

### Work starts now

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

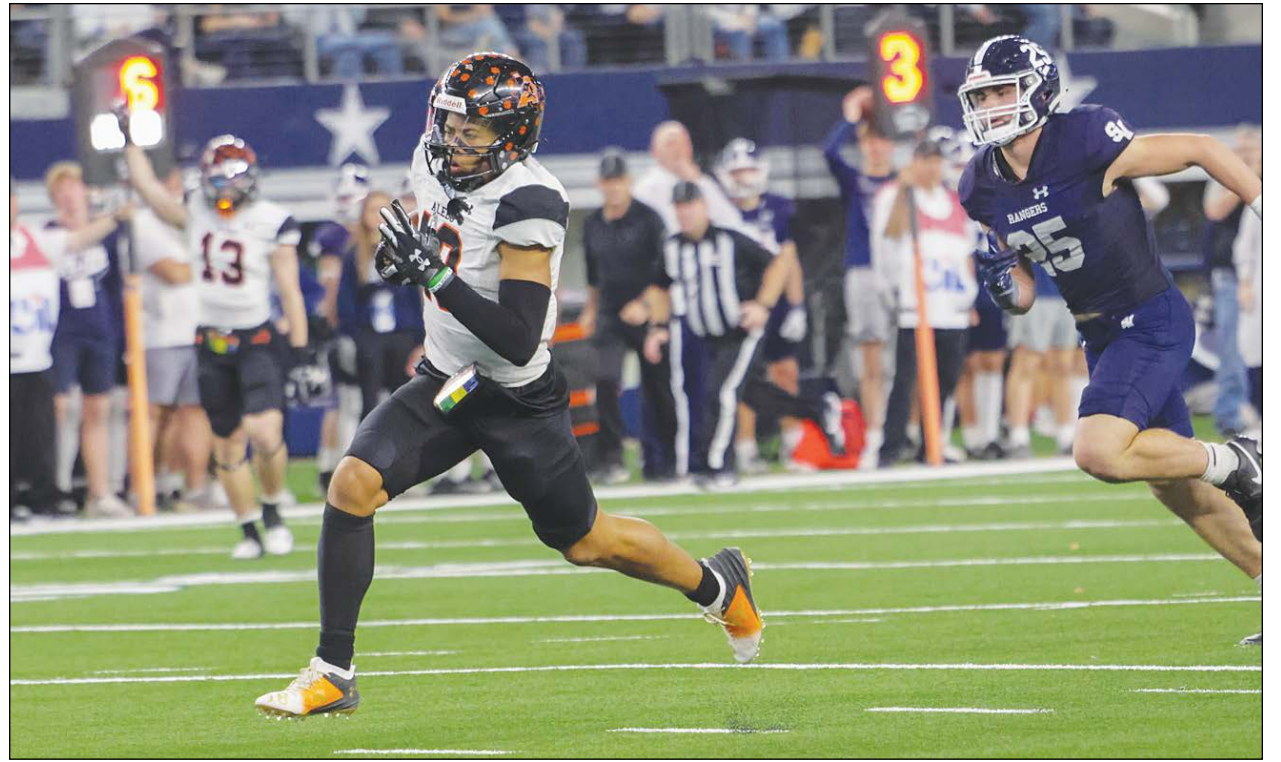
Ray Guillory soaked in the atmosphere at AT&T Stadium. Now, he understood what it means like to be an Aledo Bearcat and celebrate winning a state championship.

But there was nonetheless something missing. The sophomore who moved into the district prior to the 2023 season was, without question, a major reason Aledo made yet another appearance in a state final.

But he didn't play in the state championship game, a 51-8 thrashing of Comal Smithson Valley. He was on the sidelines with a knee injury he aggravated early in a 56-21 regional finals victory over Abilene.

Again, make no mistake, Guillory was a big, big reason Aledo reached its 12th state final in 15 years. Despite missing the better part of six games, he rushed for over 1,200 yards and scored 21 touchdowns.

But, much like teammates Trace Clarkson and Cooper Kohan, who missed the 2022 championship game - in fact the entire 2022 season - with knee



BRELEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Kaydon Finley had three catches for 89 yards and a touchdown in the state championship game.

injuries, it was thrilling to be there for the title celebration, but he wanted to be in the game.

And that's what he has his sights set on next season.

"I'm ready to come back like a villain," Guillory said. "Next year will be a year to remember."

Of course, it seems like every season is one to remember for the Bearcats. While nothing is guaranteed, Aledo football competing for - and usually winning - state championships has become about as solid a prediction one can make.

It's not as sure a thing as Christmas always coming on Dec.

25 or the jellied side of the toast always landing face down on the carpet, but it's pretty dang close.

"Gavin's gonna become a leader, I'm gonna be a leader, and we'll be back next year," Guillory said confidently.

Turn to **FOOTBALL**, page 11

FOOTBALL

## Bearcats ink seven to early scholarships

### Five going Division I

By Rick Mauch  
The Community News

On the heels of a 16-0 season that saw them win a state-record 12th state championship, the Class 5A Division I champion Aledo Bearcats had seven players sign early college letters-of-intent. To honor this, a celebration was held on Wednesday, Dec. 20.

"You get seven guys signing early, that tells you how much talent we had on the team this season," first-year Bearcats head coach Robby Jones said. "Not only talented, but hard workers, which led to great results as a team."

"Everybody has a goal to play in college, and these guys are about to realize it."

Signees were:

- Quarterback Hauss Hejny, TCU.
- Linebacker Davhon Keys, LSU.
- Cornerback Jaden Allen, Arkansas.
- Cornerback Chris Johnson, Arizona State
- Offensive lineman Djay Williams, Louisiana.
- Safety Jake Gillespie, Stephen F. Austin.
- Running back/wide receiver Hawk Patrick-Daniels, Tyler Junior College.

All of the programs are high profile in their respective categories. TCU competes in the Big 12, which Arizona State is joining next

Turn to **BEARCATS**, page 12



MERCEDES MAYER, ALEDO ISD

Hauss Hejny - TCU  
JimAnne, Jesse, Beau and Jhett Hejny

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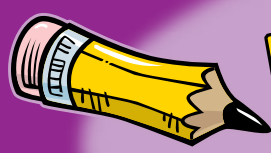
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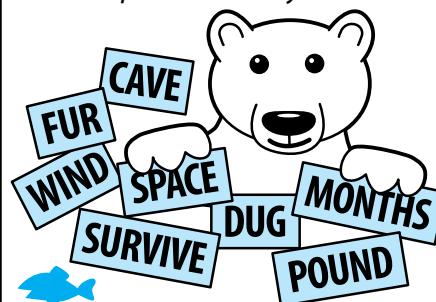


© 2023 by Vicki Whiting, Editor Jeff Schinkel, Graphics Vol. 40, No. 5

## Kid Scoop Together

### Life of a Polar Bear Cub

This little cub has taken some of the words out of this article. Can you find where each one belongs? Have a parent check your work.



A polar bear starts its life in a den or ice \_\_\_\_\_ that its mother \_\_\_\_\_ into the snow. The den protects the mother and the cubs from \_\_\_\_\_, cold and predators. The den stays warm inside as heat from the mother bear warms the tight \_\_\_\_\_ and the frozen walls trap the warm air.

A polar bear cub weighs only about one \_\_\_\_\_ when it is born and are about 12 to 14 inches long.

These little guys grow up to be BIG. A male polar bear can grow to be 1,200 pounds. A female about 650 pounds.

They start to get \_\_\_\_\_ at about eight weeks. They stay in the den drinking mama bear's nutritious milk for about three to four \_\_\_\_\_.

Young polar bears stay with their mothers until they are around 30 months old. By then, they have learned how to \_\_\_\_\_ in the cold and find food on their own.

# POLAR BEARS

**Big and white, fluffy and furry**, these are adjectives that describe a polar bear! Can you think of other adjectives that would describe this animal?

\_\_\_\_\_

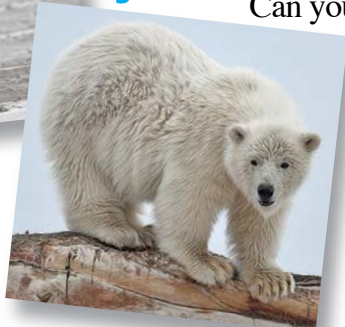
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Polar bears love fish! How many fish can you catch on this page?

Photo images courtesy of Alan D. Wilson



**Polar Bear Fur is NOT White!**

Each hair shaft is transparent with a hollow core that scatters and reflects visible light, much like what happens with ice and snow, giving it a bright white appearance.

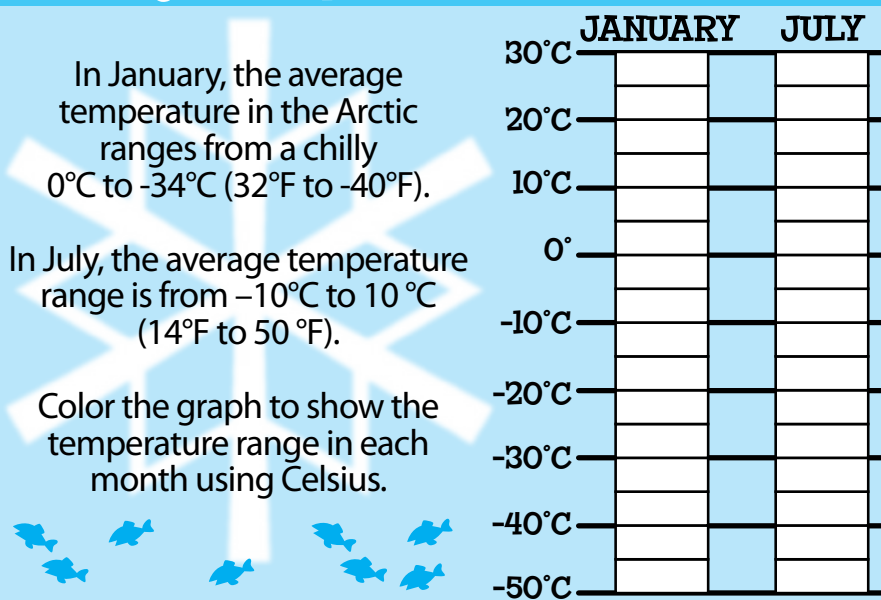
## How Polar Bears Stay Warm

Polar bears live on ice near the North Pole in the Arctic, which is covered in ice and surrounded by very cold water. But that doesn't bother a polar bear.

In each box, write the letter that comes before the letter at the bottom of each box to find a couple of cool ways these fluffy fellows stay warm.

	A		A		D
G	B	U	B	O	E
G	V	S			

## Average Temperatures in the Arctic

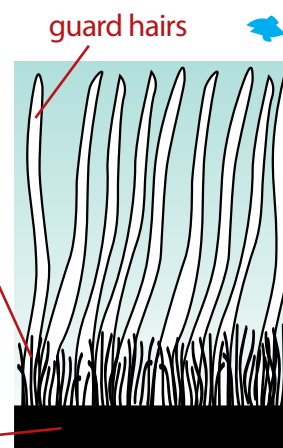


## Very Special Fur

Polar bears have two types of fur: long oily guard hairs and short insulating hairs.

The long, oily guard hairs are tiny, hollow tubes that trap warmth and hold it close to the skin. Their oily surface keeps polar bears dry.

Under the guard hairs is a layer of dense, short, soft hairs that trap heat close to the skin, like thermal underwear.



## Polar Bear Paws

Polar bear paws can grow to be 12 inches across (31 centimeters) and help distribute weight when treading on thin ice.

When swimming, their broad forepaws act like large paddles and the hind paws serve as rudders for steering.

Black footpads on the bottom of each paw are covered by small, soft bumps known as papillae. Papillae grip the ice and keep the bear from slipping. Tufts of fur between their toes and footpads may help with purchase as well as can their claws.



**START**

What's another name for a polar bear's layer of fat? The letters along the correct ice path reveal the answer.

Write the answer here:

## Verbs and Adjectives

Look through the newspaper and find five **adjectives** that describe a polar bear. Then find five **verbs** that describe how a polar bear moves. Write one or more sentences about a polar bear using your adjectives and verbs.

**Standards Link:** Research: Use the newspaper to locate information.

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## Kid Scoop Puzzler

### Polar Bear True or False

These statements are either all true or all false. Check your answers by adding up the numbers next to each of your answers. If the total is 33, you've got it right!

Polar bear young are called cubs.  
 TRUE (10)  
 FALSE (8)

Polar bear cubs are born without hair and are blind and deaf.  
 TRUE (16)  
 FALSE (7)

A polar bear's nose can smell a seal on the ice 20 miles away!  
 TRUE (5)  
 FALSE (9)

Polar bear skin is black.  
 TRUE (2)  
 FALSE (12)

**Standards Link:** Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

## Double Double Word Search

- REFLECTS
- FOOTPADS
- THERMAL
- HOLLOW
- ARCTIC
- POLAR BEARS
- LAYER
- WHITE GUARD HAIRS
- DENSE TUFTS
- OILY PAWS

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

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

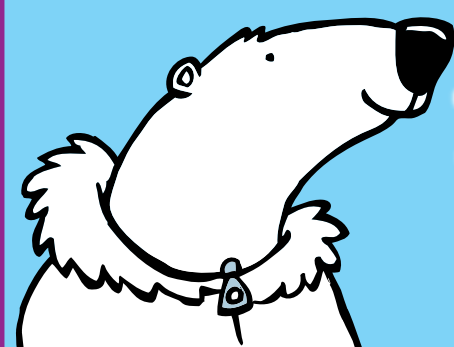
**Standards Link:** Letter sequencing. Recognize identical words. Skim and scan reading. Recall spelling patterns.

## FROM THE Kid Scoop LESSON LIBRARY

### News Article Mix-Up

Cut out an article from the newspaper. Cut the article into four pieces. Give the pieces to a friend to see if he or she can put the article back together in the right order.

**Standards Link:** Research: Use the newspaper to locate information.



## Why do polar bears have white fur coats?

**ANSWER:** Because they'd look kind of silly in Hawaiian shirts!

## Write On!

### Bears: Fact and Opinion

Write at least two facts and two opinions about bears.

# BOWL

from page 9

four sacks, three interceptions (one returned for a TD) and two blocked kicks (one returned for two points).

Keys also often came into the offense on short-yardage and goal-line situations. He rushed for 226 yards and 16 touchdowns.

Hejny passed for 2,709 yards with 27 touchdowns and nine interceptions. He also ran for 1,026 yards and 13 TD.

"Those two guys deserve everything they get. They are the hardest working and most talented players," Aledo coach Robby Jones said.

"Again, it shows you how talented our team was.

"These guys are examples of what dedication and hard work can bring you.

I'm so proud of them, the top 100 players in the country. That tells you a lot."



Devohn Keys tackles a Smithson Valley player. BRELEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS



Hauss Hejny carries the ball during the State championship game. BRELEIGH MAYER/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

# FOOTBALL

from page 9

He was referencing fellow sophomore Gavin Beard, the backup to starting quarterback and TCU commit Hauss Hejny. Beard saw limited action, but looked good when he did come into games, completing 45 of 62 passes (73%) for 517 yards with two TD and two interceptions.

## Seeking perfection

Sophomore wide receiver Kaydon Finley had one of the most impressive plays in the state title game. He caught a pass from Hejny near the sidelines, did his best ballerina impression to keep a toe inbounds and kept their first scoring drive alive with a clutch catch.

"As soon as my feet hit, I knew I was inbounds," he said.

Of course, being the son of former NFL tight end Jermichael Finley, Kaydon knows all about keeping his concentration when making a catch.

"My dad works with me all the time. Every weekend we catch 100 balls on Saturday," he said.

Kaydon, who was injured earlier in the season, ended his sophomore season with 39 catches for 602 yards and six touchdowns. In the state final he caught three passes for 89 yards and a TD.

And, having played significantly as a freshman, he now has two state championships as a Bearcat. That's halfway to his goal, accomplishing one of the few things the Bearcats have not done on the football field.

"I want to go 4-for-4," he said with a smile.

## Work starts now

After going 16-0 in his first season as a head - but celebrating his 11th state championship, as he was offensive coordinator from 2009-22 - Robby Jones understands the enthusiasm of his young players. He also advises that if they want to

get back to the top of the mountain, they need to remember one thing.

"This isn't normal. Winning 11 championships in 15 years, that's not a normal thing, but it is a special thing," he said. "Those guys coming back next year, the work starts now.

"I feel like we've got really good pieces to start building around."

It wasn't that long ago - 2022, in fact - that similar thinking was in effect. Hejny had to win a battle to become the starting quarterback. Patrick-Daniels was not the starting running back at the start of that season. The defense surrendered 68 points in the first two games in losses to Dallas Parish Episcopal (24-17, a game that was once 24-3) and Denton Guyer (44-14).

The Bearcats began a season 0-2 for the only time in Hall of Honor coach Tim Buchanan's storied career. They rebounded to win 14 straight and bring him his eighth state championship.



## Prepping for the long haul

Jones said something separates the Bearcats from other teams is they enter every season expecting to play 16 games. They've now done that a dozen times since 2009, also having played 15 games once, 13 another and a dozen once.

"First, you obviously have to have really talented football players willing to put in the work, but you have to get bodies in shape to go through a 16-game process," he said. "A lot of teams break midway through the playoffs, but we have a mindset here that whatever happens, if you can play on you do."

Clearly, as was the case with Guillory, Jones and no other Aledo coach will play a player if there is a risk of more serious or permanent injury. They also never force a player to play if they are hurting too much.

But Jones noted that in most cases, the players want to play through pain. And, as long as they

can't be injured any more and are cleared medically to play, albeit perhaps hurting some, good luck trying to keep them out, he said.

Such was the case with a pair of senior offensive linemen, Carter Campbell and Josh McCarley. Both played the first half of the state championship contest and came out when the game was well in hand.

"These guys are going to do whatever it takes to win a football game," he said. "They couldn't injure themselves any worse, but were going to fight through the pain.

"I didn't ask those kids to play, but they knew they could and they were determined to get out there."

Such determination has resulted in Aledo playing 82 postseason games since 2009, in which they are 78-4. That's the equivalent of eight additional regular seasons.

"I can't think of a better place to play high school than Aledo, Texas," Jones said. "If you're a part of this program, you are one fortunate person."

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Asia Jackson and Scott Keys



DJay Williams - Louisiana  
Angela, Devron Sr., Quinton and Payton Williams



Jake Gillespie – Stephen F. Austin State University  
Jodi and Joe Gillespie



Jaden Allen - Arkansas  
Tiffany, Bryan Sr. and BJ Allen

## BEARCATS

from page 9  
season, giving local fans more opportunities to see Hejny and Johnson. LSU and Arkansas compete in the

Southeastern Conference, which has won 14 national championships since 2004, including the past four.

The Louisiana Ragin Cajuns played a thrilling game against Jacksonville State in the New

Orleans Bowl on Dec. 16, going overtime before falling 34-31.

All of the aforementioned school are NCAA Division I. Stephen F. Austin plays at the NCAA Division I Football Championship Subdivision

level, formerly known as I-AA. The program has a history of success, having even played for a national championship at one time.

Tyler Junior College, also known as TJC, is one of the most renowned

junior colleges in the United States and has competed for national championships throughout the years.

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