

THE COMMUNITY NEWS

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ALEDO ISD

Board approves upgrades

Aledo Middle School. Aledo High School, McKinney Elementary School

By Randy Keck
The Community News

The Aledo ISD Board of Trustees took care of their action items in fairly short order at their regular meeting on March 17.

The board unanimously agreed to approve a proposal for \$509,754 to replace the turf at the Aledo Middle School stadium.

Chief Facilities and Construction Officer Chris Campbell told the board the existing turf is more than 12 years old, while the general life span of turf is 8-10 years.

The board also approved the purchase of student Chromebooks. The purchase of the new Chromebooks for the opening of Lynn McKinney Elementary School was delayed as Chromebooks were allocated from other campuses. Those intended bond funds will now be used to

purchase the new Chromebooks at a cost of \$184,140.

Finally, the board approved the purchase of an upgraded sound system for the Aledo High School Auditorium.

Chief Technology Officer Brooks Moore said “The majority of the Aledo High School Auditorium sound system equipment has met its useful lifespan and is in need of an upgrade due to poor sound quality and performance issues.”

The cost of the new system will be paid from 2023 bond funds allocated to Aledo High School.

Leading up to those action items, the board addressed other items.

In his president’s report, Forrest Collins addressed the funding shortfalls facing public schools across Texas.

“Last year, we had to make a lot of difficult cuts,” Collins said. “It was very painful for everybody. This year, we find ourselves in a little bit better spot because we did



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

McKinney Elementary School students (from left) Liam Scott, Brooklyn Newell, and Carolina Luna led the Pledge of Allegiance at the March 17 meeting of the Aledo ISD Board of Trustees. Also shown is AISD Board President Forrest Collins.

the things last year you're seeing. If you're watching the news, you're seeing school districts having to close schools. You're seeing school districts layoff teachers. We don't find ourselves in that position,

but we will continue to keep you informed.”

On the same topic, board member David Lear said he would be among a group going to Austin

Turn to **BOARD**, page 2

WEATHERFORD ISD

Student athletes recognized by school board

New assistant AD welcomed

By Candy McMichen
The Community News

Student athletes were the stars of the show during the March 10 Weatherford ISD school board meeting.

Post-season basketball honors were given to the boys’ basketball team, who advanced to the playoffs for the second season in a row. They finished the season with a 26-8 record.

Basketball players who were honored include Brendan Ballard, District 3-6A Player of the Year, Academic All-District; Deshaun Lewis, First Team All-District; Academic All-District; Thomas Loa, Academic All-District; Kamryn McDonald, Second Team All-District; Brady Mills, Academic All-District; Micah Moore, Academic All-District; Landon Morris, Academic All-District; Corbin Norris, Academic All-District; Trevor Poetsch, Academic All-District; Aidan Pool, Honorable Mention All-District, Academic All-District; Alex Rodden, District 3-6A Newcomer of the Year and Cristian Taylor-Cutino, Academic All-District.

Bri Lily, Lady Roos soccer, and Mason Walker, wrestling, were named as the district’s Student Athletes of the Month.

A four year starter, Bri, a defender, and her goalie, allowed just one goal to be scored against the Lady Roos in 15 games this year. Bri plans to major in kinesiology and pre physical therapy at Ouachita Baptist University while piling soccer there.

Mason is a four-year letterman, with a 37-13 record. He is a regional and state qualifier. A stunt pilot, Mason plans on attending flight school after graduation.

New Assistant AD

Michael Swenson was welcomed as the district’s new Assistant Athletic Director.

Swenson has had 20 years of coaching experience, including AD and head football coach at Iowa Park. He has also been a head baseball coach, with 14 playoff appearances.

“We are excited to welcome Michael to the Weatherford athletics team,” Superintendent Dr. Beau Rees said, “His passion for student success - both on and off the field - aligns perfectly with our vision for Weatherford ISD athletics.”

“I have seen firsthand the difference a coach and educator can make in a student’s life,” Swenson said. “I’m excited to be part of the Weatherford family and look forward to working with out athletes and coaches.”

In the open forum, Amy Beerwinkle and Merrie Kechnie expressed their

Turn to **SCHOOL**, page 2

BUSINESS

Eager shoppers surge to new Costco

Grand opening held March 15

By Randy Keck
The Community News

It was a big day for the City of Weatherford, the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce, and aficionados of Costco as the major retailer held its grand opening at 7 a.m. on Saturday, March 15.

The day started much earlier not only for the staff of the store, but for would-be customers who began lining up during the night to be among the first to enter the store when it opened.

Rosendo and Rebecca, residents of Fort Worth, arrived about 1 a.m. to be the first in line.

“She loves Costco,” Rosendo said of Rebecca. “She’s never been to a grand opening, and we only live about 30 minutes away, so we thought we’d make the trip.”

It took a couple of hours for the next couple of places in line to fill up, but about 3:30 a.m. Nancy and Samuel Linguist took their place in line. They live only a half a mile away, so the trek wasn’t difficult.

When asked why they decided to go to the opening at 3:30 a.m., they replied simply “something to do.” Though not previous Costco customers, they obtained a membership card the previous Wednesday.

Just before the 7 a.m. ribbon cutting festivities, a line of eager customers snaked around the



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

The line of people wanting to be among the first customers of the new Weatherford Costco snaked around the building as the 7 a.m. ribbon cutting neared.

building as, in the parking lot, members of the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce and Weatherford city officials awaited their roles in the event.

Weatherford City Manager James Hotopp told The Community News that a development like Costco is a huge event for the city.

“It’s a signal of the strong local economic growth that we’ve got here in Weatherford and Parker County, and we’re super happy to have it,” Hotopp said. “Putting a store like Costco on the ground is a huge effort on a lot of people’s parts.”

Hotopp pointed to Parker County’s extension of Clearfork Road and TxDOT’s improvements to the highway.

“Those are all things that go on behind the scenes, but that’s what allows Costco to locate here.”

As the local business crowd gathered for the ribbon cutting,



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Costco General Manager Dan Rioux cut the ribbon as the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce welcomed Costco to the neighborhood.

Weatherford City Council member Matt Ticzus welcomed the crowd and spoke. A video of his presentation can be found at community-news.com.

“Today we celebrate a big win for our local economy,” Ticzus said, “especially the more than 200

high-paying jobs that this store brings to this community.”

Ticzus spoke about the three “Ps” related to Weatherford: peaches, partnerships, including partnerships with Parker County and TxDOT, and people.

Turn to **COSTCO**, page 2



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BOARD

from page one

to advocate for school funding, and he explained some of the bills up for consideration by the Texas Legislature.

Heather Street, principal of Lynn McKinney Elementary School, led a campus presentation along with students Kensington Campbell and Julianna Hughes.

Campbell spoke about a student-led online newspaper she has been working on. Hughes spoke about her participation in the Principal's Cohort at the school.

Following commendations, a number of residents rose to speak during the public comment. Most had virtually identical messages accusing the district of “deliberately failing” their special needs children and “ignoring education laws.”

Commendations

In other business, the district handed out commendations to numerous students and groups, including:

the featured collaborative team of fourth-grade teachers from Annetta Elementary School - Lindsey Rutherford, Adeana Chasteen, Amanada Bach, and Lauren Drew;

Bearcats of Character (Love)
- Kaymi Jones, Aledo Learning
Center; Kylie Jo Weber, Aledo
High School/Daniel Ninth

Grade Campus; Harper Roberts, Aledo Middle School; Hayden McCulloch, McAnally Middle School; Rebekah Edwards, Annetta Elementary School; Adi Lerman, Coder Elementary School; Finley Burroughs, McCall Elementary School; Molly Joslin, McKinney Elementary School; Taylor Reeder, Stuard Elementary School; Dennis Gordon, Vandagriff Elementary School; Jonathan Valles, Walsh Elementary School; Olivia Briseno, Early Childhood Academy;

70th Annual National Merit
Scholarship Program National
Merit Finalist - Lauren Schoolfield,
Aledo High School/Daniel Ninth
Grade Campus;

Academic All State swimmers
from Aledo High School – Tyler
Jackson-Elite, Avery Faulker-1st
Team, Haley Roberson-2nd Team;

Solution Tree Promising Practices Professional Learning Community at Work Award-Annetta Elementary School;

VASE (Visual Arts Scholastic Event) Competition Qualifier from Aledo High School - Ariana Storms; and

UIL State Swimming and Diving qualifiers from Aledo High School - Haley Roberson - 200 Free Relay, 400 Free Relay, 200 IM (6th place), 800 Free (8th); Victoria Crews, Julia Gordy, Mackenzie Oligschlaeger - 200 Free Relay and 400 Free Relay; Kale Roberson, Braden DeBoer, Tyler Jackson, Ian Perez - 400 Free Relay.



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Bearcats of Character are shown with Aledo ISD board members.



RANDY KECK/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

The featured collaborative team of fourth-grade teachers from Annetta Elementary School - Lindsey Rutherford, Adeana Chasteen, Amanada Bach, and Lauren Dre are shown with Aledo School Board members.

SCHOOL

from page one

thoughts concerning the need for a natatorium in the district.

In new business, the board approved:

- Resolution for bad weather days
- Professional non-chapter 21 contract positions
- Purchase of student-use devices
- Purchase of cybersecurity tools
- Purchase of security radios
- Adoption of reimbursement for land acquisition and related capital
- Board operating guides



WEATHERFORD ISD

The Weatherford basketball team was recognized at the March 10 school board meeting.



WEATHERFORD ISD

Bri Lily, Lady Roos soccer, and Mason Walker, wrestling, were named as the Weatherford ISD's Student Athletes of the Month. Also shown are Superintendent Beau Rees and school board member Brian Catlin.

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COMMUNITY LIFE

Weatherford artists draw from unique sources

By Alison Anderson
Weatherford Art Association

The Weatherford Art Association announced Artist of the Month winners for February. WAA members can compete monthly for ribbons and the opportunity to showcase their artwork at Weatherford banks and The Doss Heritage and Culture Center.

First place winner Joyce Pinkarton is a new WAA member, winning with her watercolor, "Storm Coming," inspired by a trip to Davis Mountain State Park where she enjoyed the view of a storm rolling in. This and other artwork by Joyce was featured at The Doss Heritage and Culture Center throughout February.

Second place went to Randy Loyer with his oil painting, "NoNo." Loyer was experimenting with complementary colors when he created this fun piece. His piece was on display at the First Bank Texas in Weatherford through the month of February.

Third place honors went to Anne Feriend with her watercolor, "Golden Rule Day." This piece was inspired by a photograph of the Blackwater School in New Zealand founded in 1913. Her art was on display at the Fort Worth Community Credit Union on South Main Street in Weatherford.

Artist of the Month first place winners are eligible to compete for the Artist of the Year award voted online each June.

As part of our mission as a non-profit 501 (C) (3) corporation, the Weatherford Art Association provides monthly demonstrations to increase the knowledge of our members and support arts education for the community. Meetings are 6-7:45 p.m. the fourth Monday of each month at the Weatherford Senior Center, 1225 Holland Lake Drive. Visit the Weatherford Art Association at www.weatherfordart.com.



ALISON ANDERSON/WEATHERFORD ART ASSOCIATION
Anne Feriend, Randy Loyer, and Joyce Pinkarton are winners in the Weatherford Art Association's February contest.

WEATHERFORD ISD

Trustees announce resignation of longtime member

By Charlotte LaGrone
Weatherford ISD

The Weatherford ISD Board of Trustees has announced the resignation of Greg Shaw, who is stepping down due to a change in residency. Shaw was first elected in May 2016 and was serving his third term.

During the March 10 school board meeting, Shaw was recognized for his years of dedicated service. In his remarks, he reflected on the district's progress during his tenure, including enhancements to athletic facilities, the construction of a new CTE building at the high school, the launch of the Grizzard Regional Institute of Technology, the addition of a new auto tech center, and the Collegiate Academy that gives high school students the opportunity to earn an Associate's Degree from Weatherford College during high school.

"It has been an honor to serve the students, staff, and families of Weatherford ISD," Shaw said. "I am incredibly proud of what we have accomplished collectively as a team, and I look forward to seeing the district continue to grow and thrive."

Board of Trustees President Mike Guest expressed gratitude for Shaw's leadership and service.



WEATHERFORD ISD
Greg Shaw, center, has resigned from The Weatherford ISD Board of Trustees due to a change in residency. He is shown with (from left) Weatherford ISD Superintendent Beau Rees and fellow board members Adam Feriend, Kindra Lucia, Board President Mike Guest, Jeff Ford, Brian Catlin, and Wally Wallace.

"Greg has been a steadfast advocate for our students and an important part of our district's progress," Guest said. "His dedication and vision have helped shape the future of our school district, and we deeply appreciate his years of commitment."

Three candidates have filed to run for Shaw's Place 4 seat in the

upcoming May 3, 2025, election: Samuel Stephens, Dan Woods, and Devon Flowers.

The Board of Trustees and Weatherford ISD extended their "heartfelt appreciation to Greg Shaw for his years of service, leadership, and unwavering commitment to students."

Aledo Spring Fling set for March 29

The Aledo Spring Fling: Craft Fair & Market Expo will have more than 125 vendors from all over the Parker and Tarrant County areas from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, March 29 at Aledo High School. The event will take place in the Aledo High School cafeteria, main foyer, and practice gyms. These vendors have products varying from children's and women's boutique items, personal healthcare and wellness, home décor and candles, woodworking,



unique artwork, crochet and sewn items, including quilts, and a large variety of foods from sourdough and specialty breads to pickles, cheeses, charcuterie, and dessert sweet treats.

Finally, there will be five food trucks who will be out front and can serve Mexican and American food, specialty grilled cheese sandwiches, Dub's Delights lemonades and personalized Bearcat drinks, Kona Ice, and Frios Gourmet pops.

Admission is \$5, children under 10 are free. Aledo ISD school employees are also free with school ID.

Proceeds benefit the Aledo High School class of 2026.

Find Kid Scoop on Page 7!

FROM THE **Kid Scoop** LESSON LIBRARY

Desert Deal

Look at the advertisements in today's newspaper. Write an ad describing all the great features of camels. Draw a cool picture of a camel for your ad, too.

Standards Link: Writing: Write descriptively using details.

How do camels hide in the desert?

ANSWER: They wear camellage.

Write On!

Camel Fact and Opinion

Describe a camel with three facts and one opinion. Label each one.

Standards Link: Language Arts: Write descriptively using supporting details.

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Content Submission Policy

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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 time-ly 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

Texas farmers concerned over growing trade war



Gary Borders
gborders@texaspress.com

Texas farmers are voicing growing concerns about tariffs being enacted by President Trump adversely affecting their ability to sell agricultural goods overseas, the *Houston Chronicle* reported. Texas Farm Bureau President Russell Boening said the tariffs could be especially tough on younger farmers.

"We understand that's his negotiating tool, but at the same time tariffs can be hard on agriculture," he said. "If you're in a good spot you can withstand this, but you worry about the producer who has only been in this for five or 10 years and doesn't have a lot of equity built up. Those are the operations that could be in trouble."

Drought and low commodity prices are already taking a toll on agricultural revenue. Cotton sank to its lowest price in four years this month after China announced a 15% retaliatory tariff on several U.S. agricultural goods. China, the largest purchaser of grain sorghum in the world, has almost completely stopped buying the crop from Texas farmers, Boening said.

Farmers are hopeful the Trump administration will provide federal relief as occurred during his first term. Voters in counties dominated by farms and ranches voted for Trump by 77.7%, the *Chronicle* reported.

Dust storm in Panhandle causes fatal crashes, fans wildfires

A dust storm that swept across the U.S. last week caused a number of deadly crashes and fanned dozens of wildfires, *The Dallas Morning News* reported. Three people were killed Friday in car crashes in the Texas Panhandle. One dust storm in Amarillo County caused a crash involving an estimated 38 vehicles.

"It's the worst I've ever seen," said Sgt. Cindy Barkley of the Texas Department of Public Safety. "We couldn't tell that they were all together until the dust kind of settled."

As of Sunday, the Texas A&M Forest Service reported eight active wildfires. The largest was the Windmill Fire in Roberts County in the Panhandle. It covered 23,000 acres and was just 50% contained. A total of 130 counties have burn bans in place.

Bill filed to clarify state's abortion ban

The author of the bill that essentially outlawed abortions in Texas has filed a bill that would give doctors more latitude to end pregnancies during medical emergencies, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported. The bill, sponsored by state Sen. Bryan Hughes, R-Mineola, would remove language in the abortion ban that required pregnant women to have a "life-threatening condition" before doctors could legally induce an abortion.

The bill would also clarify that women in Texas can access abortions if they are at risk of a "substantial loss of a major bodily function," such as their fertility. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick last week designated Hughes' bill as a priority, increasing the chances it will pass. An identical bill has been filed in House by state Rep. Charlie Geren, R-Fort Worth.

The abortion ban authored by Hughes passed the Legislature and was signed into law in 2021.

"Our medical communities are desperate for relief and protection ... so that they can practice reasonable medical judgment in the face of pregnancy complications," state Rep. Ann Johnson, D-Houston, said. "This bill goes a long way to putting doctors back in the position of acting immediately."

Texas continues to lead nation in renewable energy

The Lone Star State is known for its oil and gas industry, but information from the U.S. Energy Information Administration and reported by the *San Antonio Express-News* indicates the state's



PEXELS

A firefighter works to stop one of many wildfires burning across the state after a large dust storm fueled the flames.

lead in solar and wind power increased in 2024.

However, natural gas continues to dominate electric generation both in Texas and across the nation at 43.3% of the country's electricity last year, while the use of coal continues to decline, down to 15.2% from 16.1% in 2023.

Coal-fired plants continue to close across the state and country, largely because they are more expensive to operate. There are 15 active coal plants in Texas, down from 20 a decade ago.

Texas generated 169,442 gigawatt-hours from wind and solar in 2024, nearly double that of California, which generated 92,316 gigawatt-hours from those resources. Iowa ranks a distant third, almost all from wind power.

"Texas is the most innovative, most interesting market, and clean energy is thriving because it makes sense economically," said Ric O'Connell, executive director of GridLab, a nonprofit that does technical analysis for regulators and renewable power advocates.

Measles outbreak continues to spread

The Texas measles outbreak has now, in less than three months in 2025, surpassed the total number of cases in any full year since 1992, *The News* reported. A total of 259 cases have been reported, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services, primarily in West Texas. The outbreak began in Gaines County, near the New Mexico border, which has reported 174

cases and one fatality — a school-age, unvaccinated child.

Four new cases were reported last week in Lamar County, 100 miles northeast of Dallas. Health officials said the four infected patients were not vaccinated and had traveled to Gaines County.

Measles is considered one of the most contagious viruses in the world and can spread rapidly among unvaccinated people.

Four Texas counties among fastest growing in U.S.

Census figures released last week show that Kaufman County, east of Dallas, was the fastest-growing county in the state and second-fastest growing in the country, *The Texas Tribune* reported. The number of people living in that county grew by more than 50,000 residents from 2020 to 2024. More than half the county's residents are commuters to jobs in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

"I do think a lot of people are attracted to that small town vibe," Kaufman Mayor Jeff Jordan said. "You're getting people that appreciate that and want to be a part of it."

Of the 10 counties in the U.S. that grew the fastest between 2023 and 2024, four were in Texas: Kaufman, Liberty, Montgomery, and Caldwell counties.

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.

Idle American

Aggie leader no joke



Dr. Don Newbury
newbury@speakerdoc.com

Had a Texas Aggie been a Rip Van Winkle wannabe in 2011, he (she) might hardly recognize the university upon awakening from slumber in 2025.

There might be understandable confusion. Is real time clearly in focus or is the awakening accompanied by swirling figmentary dream extensions from a heap of sleep? Surely the eye-rubbing Aggie isn't experiencing the world's biggest Aggie joke.

Hardly. Retiring Chancellor John Sharp spent his tenure wielding political capital, vision, and energy so expertly that when he retires on June 30, he will leave behind the nation's largest higher education system of on-campus students. Texas A&M has excelled academically, athletically and in numerous other ways. And that's no joke.

Student body president, he also was a charter member of the anything-for-a-laugh crowd,

where loose boundaries started. He was challenged to lead some fellow Aggies in rounding up a passel of armadillos, cover them with burnt orange paint, and set them free in Austin.

Actually, the challenge was more specific. They were to be loosed in equal numbers from all corners of the field during half-time of the 1971 A&M-UT game, when the Longhorn band was ready for its halftime show. It was "mission accomplished" when 33 armadillos scurried through the ranks, setting the band asunder before the first formation was in. (Okay, one of the corners had an extra critter, so here's fodder for an Aggie math joke).

Turns out that a prominent former A&M student planned the prank, so all John got was a wrist-slapping, perhaps with an "atta-boy wink" to boot.

R. C. Slocum — winningest and longest-tenured head football coach who led the Aggies to their last conference championship 26 years ago — and quite simply is as good as it gets — dared to remind Sharp of the prank recently on the chancellor's weekly TV show, "Around Texas."

It was all in good fun. The affable Slocum — given walking papers in 2002 despite compiling the Aggies' best record of 123-47-2 and climbing to number six

in wins nationally by coaches at major schools — stayed on as a special presidential assistant until January. Just turned 80, he is cancer free, closing out 53 years of service to Texas A&M. (First member of his family to graduate from college, he loves Texas A&M, where 15 members have graduated — so far.)

Back to Sharp: He thinks at warp speed, mastering political maneuverings honed during Austin years. He's as comfortable there as Roy Rogers was on Trigger. Visionary, hard-working, courageous, thick-skinned, and doggedly committed, he has "bulls-eyed" numerous targets that arguably make him the most effective CEO in the history of higher education. The oft-quoted late Houston Oilers Coach "Bum" Phillips comes to mind. When asked if Earl Campbell was in a class by himself, "Bum" drawled, "If he ain't, it don't take long to call the roll."

The Texas A&M System now includes eight universities with total enrollments exceeding 150,000. There are some 75,000 at College Station, more than double the number enrolled when Sharp took over.

Both dental and law schools were acquired, with the latter ranked 57th nationally five years later and now in the top 30. Sharp's accomplishments are

many, including his successful pursuit of an appropriation of more than \$1 billion for Texas A&M projects last year from the Texas Legislature.

Sharp, 73, isn't being fitted for a rocking chair. He has already volunteered to help his successor, fellow Aggie and current Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar, in all the ways that he can. (Maroon blood doesn't change colors at retirement.)

Finally, I'm given the chance to expound on the correct pronunciation of "comptroller." It is exactly the same as the pronunciation of "controller." True, most comptrollers call themselves "KOMP-trollers." Superb "audience-reader" that he is, Sharp likely claimed he was "controller" in the presence of academicians, and KOMP-troller when addressing most Aggies.

My 30 years of "chancellor-ing" falls light years short of Sharp's. I was elected "most likely to remain left-handed" in high school, though, but never once trapped an armadillo.

Dr. Newbury, longtime university president, continues to speak and write. The Idle American, begun in 2003, appears weekly in newspapers throughout Texas. Contact: 817-447-3872. Email: newbury@speakerdoc.com. Audio version at www.speakerdoc.com.



Peaster classes buzz with excitement

Students get up close and scientific with bees

By Christopher Amos
The Community News

Students are learning how un-bee-lievably important a common insect is in the ecosystem as classes study apis mellifera, or the common honeybee.

Eric Ribble, a second generation Peaster alumnus, teaches horticulture science, small animal management, and equine science as part of the Peaster's FFA program. Four years ago Ribble started the school's first bee apiary.

"They are a little temperamental. If things aren't going right, they will leave you," Ribble said of the bees. "We've had them going good before and then something will happen and they leave. We've had a few tragedy stories too, but we keep trying."

Students are involved with the program from kindergarten to high school. The youngest learn horticulture in the classroom and occasionally study bees captured in a jar. Older horticulture students are allowed to don bee suits and study bee habits and their productivity up close.

It's not easy keeping bees. Although intelligent animals, bees don't have

time to communicate their wants and needs with us humans. They are just too buzzy.

"When the bees are doing good, we go down there about once a week with the kids and feed them and check on them. It is a great experience for the kids to see them up close," Ribble said.

The Peaster horticulture classes are dual credit with Weatherford College. Ribble explained bee colonies need time to mature to reach the point of producing enough honey for harvesting, so the Peaster bees are for study and enjoyment only.

Fellow ag science instructor Brent Wicker said there are very few school bee programs, but told of a school district in Hawkins, Texas that has grown their bee program into a profitable honey business over the years.

"Our program is a good way to explain how big of a role the bees play in our ecosystem and gives the students hands-on experience with the responsibility of caring and raising them," Wicker said.

High school principal Doug McCollough said the bee program reaches far beyond the hive.

"The impact extends beyond the classroom as students gain a sense of responsibility and pride in contributing to the health of local ecosystems," McCollough explained. "As they work with the bees, they learn firsthand how crucial these pollinators are to the community's agriculture and overall biodiversity, preparing them for future careers in sustainable farming and environmental science."



CHRISTOPHER AMOS/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Peaster ag science instructor Eric Ribble shows cousins Hannah and Chloe Pilgrim a new bee hive the class will include with their bee apiary this spring.

Bee economy

Students have been learning the importance of bees in the ecosystem and in the economy. According to the U.S. Forest Service, bees are needed to pollinate numerous varieties of plants, vegetables, and nuts, including berries, cherries, watermelons, peaches, corn, pears, apples, and strawberry crops. Because of the increasingly diminishing numbers of bees in the wild, many bee farmers, or apiarists, lease and deliver colonies of bees to farms to pollinate crops. And, of course, bees are the primary pollinators of flowers.

Bees and plants cannot survive without each other. Bees produce their nutrition by converting nectar from plants into

honey for carbohydrates and fermenting pollen into a food substance called bee bread for protein. In return, when bees trample around in blossoms collecting nectar and pollen they move pollen from the male parts of a flower to the female parts to allow plants to reproduce.

FFA legacy

Ribble was inspired to make agriculture a career by his father, Orville Ribble. According to the instructor, in the 1950s his father believed the school identity as the Peaster "Stars" was not a strong mascot and suggested school administrators switch to the current greyhound mascot. The elder Ribble had a graduating class of six boys and one girl.

Furthermore, Ribble now teaches Hannah and Cloe Pilgrim, granddaughters of Donald Pilgrim, Ribble's former high school ag instructor.



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Events

March 21, 2025
THE COMMUNITY NEWS
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More events can be found at www.community-news.com/calendar

Container Vegetable Gardening



March 25th
6-7:30 PM
604 North Main Street
Weatherford TX 76086



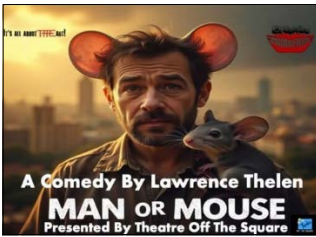
Space is limited. Pre-regs. only.
register at 817-598-6168.
\$15 per person
cash or check

MARCH 25
Container Vegetable Gardening Workshop
Sharon Abner will present a Parker County Master Gardener community workshop on Container Vegetable Gardening from 6-7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25, at 604 North Main Street in Weatherford. Fee for the workshop is \$15, payable by either cash or check. To pre-register for the event, call 817-598-6168. Space is limited.

Bats and their interaction with Native Plants
The Cross Timbers Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas invites you to join us for a presentation by Jessie Woodall, NPSOT member and director of Bat World Cross Timbers! Jessie will introduce us to the world of Texas bats and how Texas native plants can help with the survival of our native bats.

Bat World Cross Timbers, an official Bat World Sanctuary Rescue Center, opened in 2024. They are a non-profit volunteer organization. Over the last 8 years as a subcommittee Jessie has helped raccoons, squirrels, and opossums. When her boys found an Eastern Red

mama with three pups in their backyard six years ago, she discovered a tremendous need for protecting our native bats. Jessie worked diligently with Kate from Bat World MidCities and received her permit in 2021 specializing in bats. She handles most of the school programs, and works with local organizations sharing educational presentations in hopes of spreading awareness about why bats are essential. 6-8 p.m. at the Mount Pleasant Historic School, 113 Raymond George Way in Weatherford.



MARCH 27
“Man or Mouse at Theatre off the Square
Theatre off the Square in Weatherford will present “Man or Mouse,” a comedy by Richard Thelen. Shows will run March 27-30. For more information, visit theatreoffthesquare.org/ or call 817-341-8687.



MARCH 29
Aledo Spring Fling Craft Fair and Market Expo
The Aledo Spring Fling will be from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. on

March 29 at the Aledo High School. Come and shop creative quality craft vendors and market vendors who have everything to share with you from wood crafts and paper goods to beauty, floral, and boutique products! Proceeds benefit the Junior Class at Aledo High School every year.



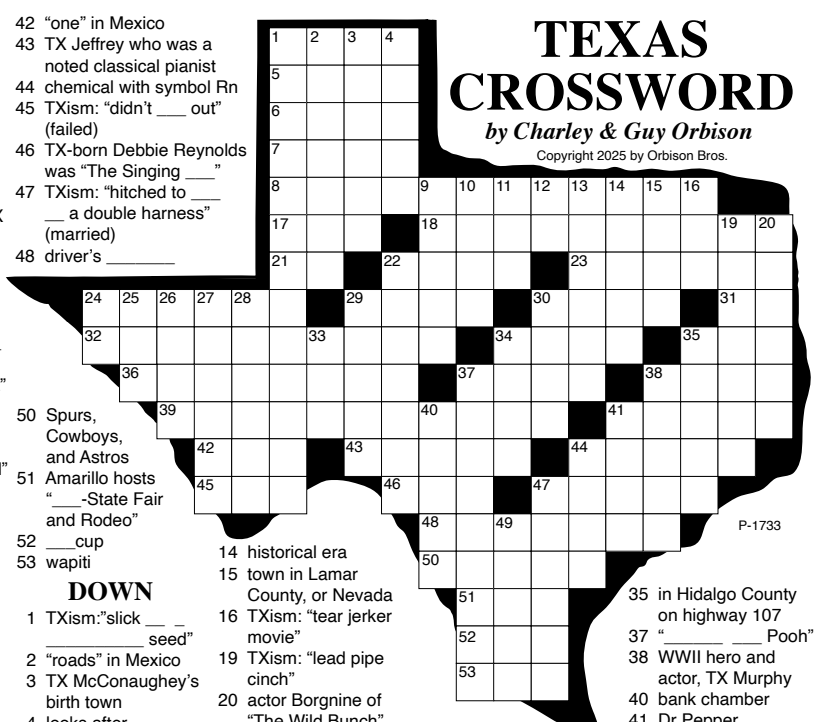
19th Annual Glow Run
Get ready to GLOW! Join us for the Aledo AdvoCats Glow Run, Walk and Crawl—a night full of fun, fitness, and flashing lights! Gate open at 6:30 p.m. at Bearcat Stadium on Saturday, March 29. Choose the 1K (7:45 p.m.), 5K (8:15 p.m.), or both, and race under the stars. Glow gear, food, entertainment, and all the fun included! Best part? It all benefits Aledo ISD students. Let's light up the night! Register at <http://go.rallyup.com/advocats-rwc2025>

APRIL 8
Dementia Support Group
Join the Dementia Support Group from 4-5 p.m. at Harvest of Aledo 1043 Bailey Ranch Rd. Even more so, we value the efforts of the caregivers, especially the families of our residents. This meeting will take place on the second

ACROSS
1 TXism: "bellered like ____ bull"
5 TXism: "salt some away"
6 to Houston from moon: "one small step for ____"
7 Wet 'n' ____ Waterworld in Anthony, TX
8 Texans are head ____ above others
17 a foot digit
18 a non-lawyer can be a Justice ____ in Texas
21 "mi casa ____ su casa"
22 sharpen something
23 in 1965, Astrorome was called "Eighth ____ of the World"
24 more just
29 style of buildings in Fair Park: Art ____
30 in Hamilton County on U.S. 281
31 hosp. nurse
32 river trout, e.g. ____ (2 wds.)
34 trail in the woods
35 TXism: "____ some gravel" (fell)
36 suppurated
37 TX Quaid film: "The Night the Lights ____ Out in Georgia"
38 expression of grief
39 TX Willie's "Still is ____ to Me" (1993)
41 TXism: "____ up like a boarding-house pie" (divide)

DOWN
1 TXism:"slick ____ seed"
2 "roads" in Mexico
3 TX McConaughy's birth town
4 looks after
5 TXism for "liquor"
10 Lorrie Morgan hit: "What Part ____"
11 New Mexico Reservoir, near the Texas border
12 TX Hunt who founded the Kansas City Chiefs (init.)
13 Cuero's county
42 "one" in Mexico
43 TX Jeffrey who was a noted classical pianist chemical with symbol Rn
45 TXism: "didn't ____ out" (failed)
46 TX-born Debbie Reynolds was "The Singing ____"
47 TXism: "hitched to ____ a double harness" (married)
48 driver's ____
50 Spurs, Cowboys, and Astros
51 Amarillo hosts "____-State Fair and Rodeo"
52 ____ cup
53 wapati
14 historical era
15 town in Lamar County, or Nevada
16 TXism: "tear jerker movie"
19 TXism: "lead pipe cinch"
20 actor Borgnine of "The Wild Bunch" of Texans (1969)
22 "don't kick him when ____"
24 Sinatra of "4 for Texas" (init.)
25 agcy. that made first raid on Waco Branch Davidians
26 angers
27 take a nap (2 wds.)
35 in Hidalgo County on highway 107
37 "____ Pooh"
38 WWII hero and actor, TX Murphy
40 bank chamber
41 Dr Pepper containers
44 what a Cowboy or Texan RB does
47 actress Lee of "The Detective" with TX Al Freeman, Jr.
49 TX Sissy's role in "Badlands" was based on life of ____ Ann Fulgate

TEXAS CROSSWORD
by Charley & Guy Orbison
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P-1733

Tuesday of every month. For more information call 682-209-0643.

APRIL 10
Alzheimer's Group
The East Parker County Alzheimer's Group meets from 1-3 p.m. on the second Thursday of each month at Aledo United Methodist Church, 100 Pecan. Drive. For more information, call 817-441-8329.

APRIL 12
Annual Plant Sale
Join Parker County Master Gardeners from 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Saturday, April 12 at 311 Santa Fe Drive,

Weatherford, for the annual plant sale! We will have plants specialized for our local climate and members will be on site to offer suggestions and advice. Proceeds are used to fund local projects and grants. Parker County Master Gardeners Association in a non-profit organization affiliated with the Texas Master Gardeners through Texas A&M AgriLife.

APRIL 15
Taste of Parker County
Prepare your taste buds for the 2025 Taste of Parker County hosted by the Weatherford College Foundation from 4:30-7:30



p.m. on Tuesday, April 15 at Heritage Park 317 Santa Fe Drive, Weatherford, TX. Buy tickets at the gate or online at <https://wc.edu/about/foundation/taste.php>

APRIL 17
Medicare Class
A Benefits Advisor explains Medicare Services at the Weatherford Public Library, 1014 Charles Street. Class begins at 10 a.m.

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS AND PARTIES:

Profrac Services, LLC, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for renewal of Air Quality Permit Number 103026, which would authorize continued operation of the Profrac Manufacturing located at 119 Nu Energy Road, Aledo, Parker County, Texas 76008. Additional information concerning this application is contained in the public notice section of this newspaper.

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Look at it This Way

Hoops fever in Aledo? You bet!



Rick Mauch
sports@community-news.com

Winning a district championship is hard.

Well, unless you're the Aledo Bearcats football team, which has been collecting them every year since 2008. Then it's about as common as a golf ball being attracted to water.

But for most sports teams, it's a big challenge to bring that special trophy back to your school to put on display. For example, it had never happened for an Aledo Bearcats basketball team before this season.

But it has now. First-year head coach Brian Blackburn and his team captured the District 5-5A title this season.

The Bearcats finished 27-7 overall and were 11-1 in district.

I realize that it's hard to believe that at a school that epitomizes championships, it's hard to believe there existed a sport that had not won its league. But for some reason boys basketball, while it showed a modicum of success at times, had never achieved championship status.

Until now.

It's not as if the cupboard was bare in Aledo. The Bearcats actually started turning around under former coach JD Robinson, including winning a bi-district playoff game in a 20-13 season in 2023-24.

And, who's to say if Robinson had stuck around he might not be the coach celebrating that historic title? But he didn't and so Blackburn is.

And with all due respect to Robinson, his exit created another challenge that is common in sports. Sure, coaches are allowed to take other jobs, just like anyone else in society — and I even encourage it if it's perceived as a step up.

Turn to **HOOPS**, page 11

SOFTBALL

Ladycats cruise past Saginaw

Aledo secures 19-0 victory in 3 innings

By **Geoff Heppes**
The Community News

The No. 6 Aledo Ladycats softball team continued its demolition through district opponents with a home contest Tuesday night against the Saginaw Lady Roughriders. The Ladycats came out of the gates with great force and execution, scoring an astounding 15 times in the first inning alone. Aledo's dominant entrance paved the way for smooth sailing, to the tune of a 19-0 final score in three innings via mercy rule.

Saginaw saw its starting pitcher exit after recording two outs due to injury, but the visitors were already in a sizable hole at that point. Regardless, Aledo was able to manufacture 19 total runs from just six hits, eight walks drawn, and eight Saginaw errors.

"It's truly such a blessing. I was standing over there at third base thinking, 'Man, they are still in the game,' and these types of games can be really boring," Ladycats head coach Heather Myers said.

Turn to **SOFTBALL**, page 11



Geoff Heppes/The Community News
Sophomore pitcher Riley Marx is surrounded by teammates after the 19-0 win over Saginaw.

BASEBALL

Bearcats battle back to best Brewer

Aledo completes sweep of district rivals

By **Geoff Heppes**
The Community News

The score of 3-2 may be something tattooed on the hearts of the Brewer baseball brass for the rest of this season, courtesy of baseball heroics from the Aledo Bearcats.

After taking down the Bears 3-2 on the road on March 12 in the first part of the teams' scheduled home-and-home series, Aledo returned to its home field and won in a similar fashion. This time, the Bearcats used strong pitching while applying consistent offensive pressure to transform a 2-0 deficit into a 3-2 victory to give Aledo a strong start to begin district play.

"Anytime you can come in and sweep someone, it means you have a tiebreaker over them (for playoff purposes)," Bearcats head coach Chad Barry said. "Starting off district with two wins over a good

quality ball club gives us plenty of momentum. They are very well-coached and definitely showed us some things we need to work on during our off week, so we are going to go back to the drawing board, go to the batting cages and work even harder."

Devin Miller got the start on the mound for Aledo and came out of the gates strong, retiring six of the first seven batters he faced, including three strikeouts. Bearcats catcher Lucas Nawrocki opened up the bottom of the second inning with a single on the first pitch he saw, and Blake Burdine singled to put runners on first and second after a flyout in the previous Aledo at-bat. Then, Dylan Duran singled to load the bases. Despite that, Aledo's next two batters were retired to end the threat.

Miller's command remained on the mound in the following frame as he collected two more strikeouts and forced a groundout in spite of a single. Aledo couldn't strike first on the scoreboard in the bottom of

the third, which allowed Brewer an opportunity it took advantage of as the Bears manufactured a run with well-executed small ball. Aledo threatened again in the bottom of the fourth but left a pair of runners on base.

The Bearcats then went to their bullpen in the fifth inning, managing to escape a bases-loaded jam after allowing another run by the Bears to score. The run came courtesy of Khyler Farris stealing home plate on a heads-up play that made the Bears' 2-0 lead seem insurmountable. Despite that, the Bearcats knew they had more magic up their sleeves in this contest.

The Bearcats saw Luke Trager steal home during their latest road contest, which proved to be a difference maker. The sentiments rang true in the battle at home as Trager proved to be a catalyst once again.

Trager was the first to bat for Aledo in the fifth inning, and he

Turn to **BASEBALL**, page 9

SPORTS BRIEFS

By: **Rick Mauch**
The Community News

BASEBALL

Bearcats state ranked

As the week began, the Aledo Bearcats were ranked No. 7 in Class 5A by the Texas High School Baseball Coaches Association. They are 12-4 overall and 2-0 in District 5-5A.

FISHING

Aledo Anglers fourth in tourney

The Aledo Anglers fishing team placed fourth in the OH Ivie Tournament recently near San Angelo. They are currently in fourth place in the state high school standings, only four points out of first. Aledo's top finishers was the team of Peyton Hills and Tyler Page, who were eighth. Dominic Rigoli and Declan Lickerman finished 25th.

GIRLS SOCCER

Garrett makes college commitment

Ava Garrett of the Weatherford Lady Kangaroos has committed to play soccer for Kansas State next season.

Lady Roos drop first game

The Weatherford Lady Kangaroos lost their first game of the season on March 11, falling 2-1 at home to Mansfield. They finished the regular season with a 16-1-2 record and the loss dropped them to second in District 3-6A with a 9-1-2 mark, behind Mansfield Lake Ridge at 10-1-1. The Lady Roos have posted 17 shutouts this season and have outscored their opponents 60-3. They will play Keller Central (14-6-1) in bidistrict on March 21 at 6 p.m. at Azle High School.

GOLF

Lady Roos varsity win tourney

The Weatherford Lady Roos golf team took the championship at the Canyon West Varsity Classic on March 11. Freshman Ava Cordary won the individual title, shooting 82. The Lady Roos also placed second in the Wilson Boaz Spring Classic at Diamond Oaks Country Club recently. Cordary was fourth individually. The Weatherford boys also played and were led by sophomore Carter Bruton, who shot 4-under-par 68 for first place.

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SOCCER

Thompson standing tall in final season as Ladycat

District title, valedictorian among accomplishments

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Aledo Ladycats soccer coach Bryan Johnson remembers facing a dilemma a few years ago concerning one of his best players on the team now.

He was watching Emery Thompson, all of 5 feet, 2 inches tall, playing soccer in middle school. While he could see she was obviously a good player, he asked himself a question concerning her possibilities at the physical varsity level.

“She was the smallest girl in middle school. I thought, ‘There’s no way I can get her on the field,’” he recalled. “And then it was, how can I take her off the field?”

He hasn’t done much of the latter. Thompson, whose nickname is Tiny, is now a senior captain and has been a starting member of the Ladycats defense all four years of her high school career.

She has lettered all four seasons with the Ladycats, was named the district defensive MVP as a sophomore and first team all-district as a junior, along with more accolades almost certainly coming this season.

She was also named all-region twice by the Texas Association of Soccer Coaches, selected all-state by the United Soccer Coaches and is a two-time national champion with her club team out of Fort Worth.

District champs

And now, for the first time she and her teammates are district champions. The Ladycats captured the District 5-5A championship after finishing as runners-up in Thompson’s first three seasons.

“This means a lot, not only for me, but for the team,” she said. “It’s a testament to the hard work we put in. We have a strong bond on the field and off.”

The Ladycats, 15-4 overall, won district with a 10-2 record. After falling 2-0 at Saginaw Chisholm Trail on Feb. 21, they outscored their final four opponents 16-0.

In all, Aledo outscored their opponents 60-20, the fewest goals Thompson and the Ladycats defense have surrendered in her varsity career. They also posted eight shutouts and held five other opponents to a single goal.

The Ladycats were playing their bidistrict match against Birdville (14-5) at press time.

Aledo has advanced to the second round of the playoffs each of the past two seasons.

Tops academically

Not only is Thompson a stand-out soccer player, she’s also a superb student. She is the frontrunner to be the valedictorian of this year’s AHS graduating class with a 4.72 grade point average.

“She’s really smart, just a bright individual,” Johnson said. “She comes from a wonderful family.”

Thompson said she plans to major in finance and minor in economics with a focus on business analytics or data science.

“First, I thought about the medical field and then I realized I despise germs,” she said with a laugh.

Her mother is a chief financial officer for a Fort Worth company. She watched her mom and started asking questions, which piqued her interest in finance.

“I was able to see how much math is in the business world,” she said. “I like the ambiguity and the concrete logic that goes with it.”

Of course, lots of schools are clamoring for her to join their student body. As for which one she will choose, she said, “It’s definitely a million dollar question.

“The dream school is MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston). If I get accepted I would get to play soccer there.”

Her academic accolades are equal to her soccer honors, with highlights being named the Daniel Ninth Grade Center Female Student of the Year as a freshman, being president of Leading Ladies and secretary of the National Honor

Society and being named academic all-district in soccer and track each of the past three years.

And she was recently voted Miss AHS.

“It’s definitely not something I take lightly. I don’t take it for granted,” she said humbly. “I definitely want to leave an impact with the underclassmen, have the confidence to take leadership roles.”

Thompson also wants to study abroad while in college.

“I want to work in London and live there for a couple of years,” she said.

Johnson said having such intelligence and fortitude is also a huge benefit on the soccer field.

“She studies and understands the game. She watches video,” he said. “She’s a vocal and physical leader.

“She’s always got a comment at halftime about what’s happening on the field. If she’s not talking, something’s not right.”

Started young

Thompson began soccer at the age of 3. It was evident — sort of — that she was a natural in the sport.

“It’s the beginning sport every parent throws their child into,” she said, adding with a chuckle, “I never cried, and that was a sign I liked it.”

Before long she loved it, and that love has continued to grow.

“I like the fast pace, but there’s a freedom to it that I love,” she said. “You let your body play the game.”

Thompson comes from an athletic family. Her dad played college baseball at Hardin Simmons University in Abilene, her older brother played football at Aledo, her older sister was an athletic trainer, and she has some cousins who have played soccer.

And while she wasn’t born in Aledo, she got there as quickly as she could. She was born in Mansfield and her family moved to Aledo when she was three months old.

End is near



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Emery Thompson races for the ball while being held by a Lady Texans player in 2024.

Like all seniors this time of year, Thompson realizes she has more senior year days behind her than in front of her. While she knows the end of her high school career is approaching, she understands the memories will be with her forever.

“Making varsity as a freshman was a big thing. I’m a very competitive person, and that was such a big honor and accomplishment in my book,” she said. “Making the playoffs every year is also special.

“And so many friends. Some of my best friends I met through soccer.

“And definitely class work is a big thing. It’s setting in what it really means and how hard I worked for it.”

When asked how she juggles it all, Thompson replies simply, “People ask how I handle pressure. My family, friends and coaches are all supportive. And I’m very supportive of my faith. I’m going to end up where the Lord wants me.”

As he prepares to say goodbye to one of the most memorable players to come through his program — who, in fact, helped him register his 300th career victory this season — Johnson said with a smile, “She proved me wrong — and I’m so glad she did.”



RYAN WADE/THE COMMUNITY NEWS

Saginaw goalkeeper covers the ball as Emery Thompson threatens to add another Ladycat goal during District 5-5A action in 2024.

BASEBALL

from page 8

was able to reach second base on an error in the outfield. His high-flying shot was not corralled in center field and the floodgates of momentum began to creak open.

“With runners in scoring position, I’m just trying to be a leadoff hitter and do my job in those situations,” Luke Gladchuk said. “We practice out here for hours every

day, and wins like this will give both ourselves and the fans some confidence. It’s definitely going to give us confidence when we face our next opponent.”

Next, Gladchuk belted a huge RBI triple to left that both cut the deficit in half and put the tying run 90 feet away. Fireworks continued to boom for the team clad in orange and black as Brooks Burdine reached first base on another Brewer error to score the tying run and eventually advanced to third

base on bad throws to first — and second — as the Bears’ pursuit of the speedy Burdine came up short. His efforts were rewarded on the next toss from the mound as he was able to get a jump on the wild pitch for the go-ahead run.

“When we caught a break and they made a mistake, we did a really good job of taking advantage of making them pay for it,” Barry said. “We were able to string together some good at-bats and hits to tie the game up. I think it was a passed ball

that got us the winning run against them the other night, and we were able to do the same thing here. I hope that the players seeing how we can get guys on at the right time and apply pressure with consistency will show them that we can open the floodgates at any time.”

Nawrocki then got the call to take the mound to close the deal and complete the sweep, and he answered the bell for his team in a big way, finishing the final two innings on the mound with five

strikeouts, two walks, a pick off at first and forced a groundout — all without allowing a hit. Additionally, the baserunner he allowed via a walk — Farris — was left 90 feet away from home plate once Aledo recorded the game’s final out.

The Bearcats are off this coming week before taking on Chisholm Trail in their next two-game district series. The first game will take place at 7 p.m. Tuesday, April 1 at home against the Rangers.

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SPORTS BRIEFS

RODEO

WC competes at Odessa

Weatherford College's Cashton Weidenbener and partner Bridget Ketcham from Ranger placed first in team roping at the Odessa Rodeo recently with a 10.1 on two go-rounds. WC's Jett Stewart, alongside John Hisel (South Plains College), placed third, WC's Dalton Huston and Brock Rouse had a no time in the short-go to finish eight overall, and Kyler Beshires (SPC) alongside WC's Beldon Cox placed ninth. Cash Fuesz placed second overall in tie-down roping receiving a 17.7 on two. In saddle bronc, Mitchie Story received a 163.5 in two to win second overall. Jacee Graff won second overall at 11.7 on two in goat tying. Sheyenne Lincoln finished ninth in barrel racing.

SOFTBALL

from page 8

“They were really disciplined with their at bats, which is very hard to do in a game like this. I’m very blessed to have a group of girls that know the expectations and rise to the occasion.”

Sophomore pitcher Rylee Marx was impressive on the mound, surrendering only one hit across three innings to go with six strikeouts. Additionally, she collected two hits with one RBI and one run scored. The young pitcher was praised by teammates throughout the contest, and this level of connectedness has proven to be a catalyst for the Ladycats.

“I think we really benefit from our mental preparation, we do a lot of affirmations for each other after every game, and I think that carries

into every game,” Myers said. “You’d be surprised by how much a meaningful piece of encouragement can do for someone and carry into the next game. Quality team effort and camaraderie are really carrying us – obviously we’re talented – but you have to have the team dynamic, and they do.”

Aledo senior Austyn Marriage mashed a two-run homer as the only Ladycat to go long in this game. Meanwhile, senior Gracie Jones had two runs and an RBI while Grace Heath added one hit and one run. Junior catcher Breleigh Mayer shined with a hit and three runs scored while Kyleigh Pawlak cleared the bases with an RBI triple that scored three runs.

The Ladycats (15-3, 4-0) will take the field again at 7 p.m. Friday at Granbury.

HOOPS

from page 8

But it is also a surety that a new coach means a new way of doing things. Often with that comes a period of adjustment and sometimes even a step back.

Not for these Bearcats. There was no stepping back, no extended transition period. They immediately bought into Blackburn's system, combined it with their desire to make history, and did exactly that.

“He kind of just saw it and he built around it,” Bearcats standout senior guard Joaquin Pacheco. “He’s a really good coach.”

Indeed he is, as his track record shows. And he’s worked with some great players, including current NBA star Marcus Smart, as an assistant at Flower Mound Marcus.

Also, like many great coaches, Blackburn has the right amount of humility to go with the required amount of ego needed to be successful. He knows he’s good at his job, but he also knows that in any job talent alone won’t bring victories.

“It really starts at the top with the administration,” he said.

And he’s right. Without a supportive administration, no sports program will succeed. Good luck finding more support than athletes get in Aledo.

So, can we say Bearcats fans have basketball fever? We sure can.

I compare what is happening with Aledo basketball with what has already taken place at the University of Alabama with head coach Nate Oates. With the exception of a splotch of success here and there, no one ever thought of the Crimson Tide as a basketball power — until now.

However, Oates has taken them to a Final Four last season, 30 wins two years ago, a No. 1 national ranking in the past and currently has them poised for no worse than a No. 2 seed in the upcoming NCAA Tournament.

And, voila, they have hoops fever in Tuscaloosa.

Also, just to be clear, it hasn’t replaced the popularity of football, but there is room for more than one form of fever on campus there — just as there is here.

While no one knows what the future holds, and I am certainly not going to guarantee another district championship (admittedly, only football has earned the privilege — so far), I will predict that next year’s team will be in contention for such, barring unforeseen injuries or such.

This season’s team, led by a handful of seniors, featured five juniors and three sophomores. Most successful programs have a good supply of underclassmen on their roster.

Looking beyond that, Aledo is likely to move up to 6A in two years. However, they can certainly still contend.

“As our community gets bigger, more kids will play. The growth of our student population will be key,” Blackburn said. “A lot of the people in the community have fostered this excitement.”

And now they have a district championship trophy as proof. I assume you can swing by the school and see it if you want — following proper protocol, of course.

After all, it is a bit of history. And while more could be coming, there is only one first championship.

BEARCAT OF THE WEEK



Grayson McKelvey

Baseball

The senior entered the game to pitch against Keller Fossil Ridge on March 12 with the Bearcats trailing 2-0 after three innings. He pitched the next three innings, getting the win, surrendering two hits with no runs, no walks and striking out eight.


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LADYCAT OF THE WEEK



Ari Mathias


Powerlifting

In her final meet as a Ladycat, the senior lifted a career-best total of 890 pounds to place seventh in the state in the 148-pound division at the 5A State Powerlifting Meet. It is the highest finish ever by a Ladycat.

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STATE

from page 12

Now it’s the boys’ turn

Five area lifters (three from Aledo, two from Weatherford) will compete Saturday at the Boys State Powerlifting Meet at the Taylor County Expo Center in Abilene.

Competing in Class 5A from Aledo are Chase Wilburn, 220 class; Anthony Flowers, 242 division; and Kruger Summers, 275 division.

Competing in Class 6A from Weatherford will be Talan Tart in the 275 weight class and Ryan Ekberg in the 148 division.

Seven from Weatherford among 6A state lifters

Seven Lady Kangaroos competed on March 12 in Edinburg, led by a fifth-place finish by Lauren Schweiss in the 105-pound division. She lifted a total of 690 pounds.

In that same division, Maddie Seago placed ninth with 625 pounds. Another top-10 finish was posted by Analia Barcenas in the 220 class, lifting 925.

In the 148 division, Ella Jester (870 lifted) was 11th and Reagan Hunt (855) was 15th. Khala Kuehler was 12th in the 114 division with a total of 700 pounds.

Zoe Todd of the Lady Roos also qualified for state in the 97 weight class, but was disqualified after failing to get a qualifying lift in one of the categories.

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TRACK AND FIELD

Aledo vaulter among nation’s best

Several Bearcats/Ladycats among state leaders

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Braylon Brown is the latest in a long line of Aledo High School pole vaulters to be considered among the best at their craft. The senior is tied for ninth in the nation with his vault of 16 feet, 6 inches at the Northwest Texan Invitational recently, according to MileSplit.

That vault has him tied for fifth in the state of Texas in all classifications and tied for third in Class 5A — which is where he finished last state at the 5A State Meet, his first time to compete at that level.

“Braylon is having a great year with two of his three meets over 16 feet,” Aledo pole vaulting coach John Rhodes said. “His goal is to break Sean Gribble’s school record of 17 feet, 3/4 inches — and I believe if the conditions are right he will have a chance.

“For now we are just focusing on preparing for the series of meets, district, area and state. Our goal is always to get to state and fight to get on the medal stand. Class 5A has two vaulters over 17’ already so it will be a challenge, but Braylon has put in the work and is up to the challenge.”

Bearcat Adam Averett is also among the top vaulters in 5A. He is eighth with a 15-0 vault.

The Ladycats have two pole vaulters among the girls’ state leaders in Class 5A. Maggie Kilburn is sixth, having cleared 11-9, and Emma Ralph has cleared 11-6 to tie for ninth.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ALEDO ISD

Pole vaulter Braylon Brown of Aledo is among the top athletes in the nation in his event and is one of several athletes from Aledo to be ranked in the state’s top 10 in their respective events.

In non-vaulting events, Tyler Connelly of the Bearcats is 10th in the state in 5A with his time of 9 minutes, 35.60 seconds in the 3200-meter run. He is a mere .01 seconds out of ninth and less than a minute out of ranking as high as sixth.

The Bearcats and Ladycats are back in competition March 27 at Saginaw Chisholm. They will follow by competing at the District

5-5A Meet at Saginaw High and will host the Area 5/6 Meet at Tim Buchanan Stadium on April 10.

The Bearcats are seeking a sixth consecutive district title — with no meet held in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Ladycats finished second in district by a single point last season to Justin Northwest, which has now moved up to Class 6A.

POWERLIFTING

Mathias makes history

Nine from area compete at state

By Rick Mauch
The Community News

Ari Mathias bid farewell to her Aledo High powerlifting career with the best performance ever at state by a Ladycat. She placed seventh in the 148-pound weight class at the Class 5A Division I State Meet at Bert Ogden Arena in Edinburg on Saturday, March 15.

This was Mathias’ third time to qualify for state and it was the highest placement ever for a Ladycat at this level. In accomplishing this, she set a personal record with a total of 890 pounds lifted, including 350

squat, 215 bench press, and 325 deadlift.

Also qualifying for state for a second straight year was Bryanna Orr in the 132 division. However, she was disqualified after not having a successful squat attempt.

“The competition was tough and the judges were strict at this year’s state meet,” Ladycats coach Josh Morgan said.

Both girls qualified for state by winning their division at regionals, where Aledo was also well represented with 20 competitors

“They are such a big part of our program and I am so proud of them,” Morgan said of Mathias and Orr.

Turn to **STATE**, page 11



ALEDO ISD

Aledo Ladycat senior lifters Ari Mathias (left) and Bryanna Orr competed at the Class 5A Division I Girls State Powerlifting Meet in Edinburg this past Saturday. Also shown is coach Josh Morgan.

Honored for Saving Lives

Seventeen Company Citation honorees are joined by Parker County ESD1 leaders for a moment together at the annual ESD1 awards banquet. Chief Stephen Watson, Assistant Chief David Pruitt, Seth Wells, Tyler Ramsey, Tommy Bond, Hunter Sereika, Dustin Rowe, Jordan Sereika, Keith Obert, Will Meyers, Logan Bushong, Richard Noe, Dusty Hallman, Chris Willmer, Justin Hanley, Caleb Wainscott, Steven Ward, Deputy Chief Jason Ingram, Roland Noe, Adam Gouge, and Dr. Justin Norheim of Parker County Hospital District.

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