

ELECTION 2024

New faces sign up for commissioners court races

Incumbents do not file for re-election in Precincts 1 & 3

FROM STAFF REPORTS

There will be turnover at the Gonzales County Courthouse as three county officials did not file for re-election by the Dec. 11 filing deadline, according to Gonzales County GOP Chair Liz Hernandez.

Voters in the 2024 Gonzales County Republican Primary will be selecting a new county attorney as well as new commissioners for Precinct 1 and Precinct 3. Incumbent County Attorney Paul Watkins has said he will retire at the end of his current term and neither Precinct 1 Commissioner K.O. "Dell" Whiddon nor Precinct 3 Commissioner Kevin La Fleur filed for re-election either.

There are three candidates running for Precinct 1 commissioner in March. David Janota of Gonzales filed for election on Dec. 6 and joins Anton "Tony" Matias of Gonzales and Ryan W. Mills of Gonzales on the primary ballot. Janota is a data collector, while Matias is a foreman and Mills is a natural resource consultant.

Meanwhile, the only two candidates who have filed for Precinct 3 commissioner are Thomas "Tommy" Barnick of Harwood and Roy A. Staton of Gonzales. Both list their occupations as being in road and bridge. There are no Democratic candidates for commissioner, so the winners of the primary will be considered to be elected to the court.

The only person to file for Gonzales County Attorney in the GOP Primary is Eduardo "Eddie" Escobar, a local attorney with the firm of Reese & Es-

See ELECTION, page 17

Edwards Association receives donation for repairs

BY VANDY VAN EPPS Gonzales Inquirer

The Edwards Association got some needed help for minor repairs for their gym last week.

The association received several anonymous donations for roof repairs for the old high school gymnasium.

"We're going to be getting ready to start restoring a portion of the roof here at the old gym. It is the portion that covers the men's and the ladies' bathrooms and the whole locker room, so we're getting ready to restore that portion," said David Tucy, president of the Edwards Association. Tucy said that an individual donated \$1,800 for the material and the city has provided

NIXON HOSTS CHRISTMAS PARADE



Gonzales County commissioners officially approved contracting with Tere O'Connell and O'Connell Architects LLC on a Courthouse master plan on Monday, Dec. 11, but not before one commissioner gave his reasoning for why he didn't

See EDWARDS, page 18

GISD food service workers speak up for pay increases

BY VANDY VAN EPPS Gonzales Inquirer

The Gonzales ISD school board met for a regularly scheduled meeting Monday, Dec. 11 at the district administration building. The meeting began with members of the GISD Food Service Department speaking in the public comments section.

Lisa Blackwell, the cafeteria manager of Gonzales Elementary, said the purpose of staff being at the meeting is for the board to consider a raise for the Food Service Department employees.

See **GISD**, page 18

VANDY VAN EPPS

Santa Claus waves to parade watchers for the annual Christmas parade in Nixon Saturday, Dec. 9. For more photos, see page 6.

YMCA Gonzales raises \$345,000 for afterschool program at GES

BY LEW K. COHN Inquirer Publisher

It was a day of celebration at Gonzales Elementary school as major donors, stakeholders and members of the Gonzales YMCA board of directors came together to celebrate the donation of some \$345,000 to create a new afterschool program in Gonzales for children in grades 1-3. YMCA Gonzales President Connie Kacir said the

See YMCA, page 17

STARS IN THE VILLAGE



LEW K. COHN

Bill Finch and The Bucksnort Boogie Band perform in the old church at Gonzales Pioneer Village Living History Center on Saturday, Dec. 9, as part of the Stars in the Village Christmas celebration. The event helps residents experience what pioneer life may have been like during yuletide. For more photos, see page 6.

think the county could afford to spend that money at this time.

Last month, commissioners heard a presentation from O'Connell on the process of drafting a master plan — the first necessary step to apply for up to \$10 million in grant funding to restore the Courthouse from the Texas Historical Commission's Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program (THCPP).

O'Connell and Chuck Larosche of WJE Engineering also pointed out some of the issues the Courthouse is currently having that would need to be addressed.

The county would be responsible for paying the cost to produce the master plan, which is estimated to be about \$219,000. However, they cannot apply for any government grants, especially from the THC, without the document, County Judge Pat Davis said.

"For any future grant applications, you have to have a master plan, regardless of requirements. There's no way around it," Davis said. "To me, this is something that we've got to have. A majority of all the courthouses have a master plan.

"You've got a \$10 million grant that could come that your taxpayers couldn't pay down the road, even if we had to put \$2 million on it," Davis added. "It's a very historic building and every day people are coming here and they say how nice it is, but there's a lot under the scenes with water that runs into the basement and everything

See PLAN, page 7

1 section 18 Pages



December sales tax allocations for the area down from 2022

BY LEW K. COHN

Inquirer Publisher

The year 2023 will end on a sour note when it comes to local sales tax allocations for Gonzales and the surrounding area, according to information released by Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar.

December 2023 sales tax allocations for Gonzales County were \$59,279.98 from those made in December 2023, marking the fourth straight month the county has seen an overall decrease in sales tax receipts when compared to the

previous year.

Hegar announced has sent cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose districts

Laurel Ridge Antiques brings Christmas to life in Gonzales

SPECIAL TO THE INQUIRER

You haven't experienced "Christmas Shopping" until you've been in Laurel Ridge Antiques & Inn during the holiday season.

Located in a beautifully restored 1914 historic home at 827 Saint Joseph St. in Gonzales, Laurel Ridge has been a Gonzales Main Street business for more than 44 years. A visit to Laurel Ridge is not only a step into a yuletide wonderland, but also a step back in time.

After all, Laurel Ridge is first and foremost an antiques & gifts Christmas store with a reputation

for unique offerings and quality craftsmanship that has stood the test of time. Filling the house to overflowing with Christmas treasures from around the world, owner Barbara Crozier takes pride in each and every room.

Crozier began Laurel Ridge Antiques in 1979 in the small carriage house behind the main house that was being renovated. By 1999, all the Christmas antiques and gifts that were being sold from the carriage house out back had made their way into the main house, where more antiques joined them.

"Operating the shop within the home allows visitors to Gonzales to see one of the unique, historic homes every day, while still being able to purchase fabulous Christmas antiques and gifts," Barbara said of her decision to make the mansion the showcase for the business.

In 2011, Crozier took her enterprise to the next level, opening the second floor as an inn as well as a shop. Her creativity has made way to fun groups including "Girl's Weekend Shopping Sleepovers." Gonzales Main Street is pleased to recognize Laurel Ridge Antiques & Inn as their Main Street Business of the Month for December.



The Gonzales Main Street Board names Laurel Ridge as the Main Street Business of the Month for the month of December.

A HELPING HAND



CONTRIBUTED The Gonzales High School Community Health workers were spreading holiday cheer at Green DeWitt last week! They partnered up with Two Rivers, Faith Family, East Side, Methodist and First Baptist churches to gather up 100 toiletry gift bags for the holiday season.



All will be revealed at the Crystal on Dec. 30

SPECIAL TO THE INQUIRER

What is going to be revealed at The Crystal Reveal? To start, when doors open at 7 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 30, at the Crystal Theatre, 511 Saint Lawrence St., Gonzales, it will be the first chance most patrons have had the chance to see the interior newly restored in a "historic palette."

The entire evening is open at no charge to friends, audience members and anyone interested in the arts, entertainment and the enrichment of our youth. A bit of the bubbly or a great non-alcoholic punch, along with some homemade treats, await the patrons as they arrive.

At 7:30 p.m., the evening will begin to reveal the tremendous talent that performs with the historic walls and beyond. It starts with a call to party in romantic Verona, written over 500 years ago by Shakespeare for Romeo and Juliet. The night continues with vignettes from the work of the Young Texians' performances depicting local settlers when they



Participants from this year's summer workshop will be at the Crystal Reveal on Saturday, Dec. 30.

arrived in Texas full of hope and enthusiasm for their home.

At 8 p.m., an auction takes us to Ireland and beyond for some amazing trips at great prices and an opportunity to raise funds for a great cause ... the Crystal Theater and its world class youth programs. For details on these amazing trips and how to bid on the phone if you can't make the party, watch the Crystal Facebook over the next few days. After the auction, turn

you attention to the talent from far and wide ... local dancers and professionals from both coasts will perform numbers from the upcoming productions of the Nutcracker Jan. 6-7. Tickets for the three Nutcracker performances will be available that evening, and after you have seen the segments they are performing at The Reveal, you will know you don't want to miss it.

What? A wrestling match will be part of the fun, along with a call to

meet in the woods to perform a play for some really important folk. A few winged fairies who seem to know it all are just a start to the joy that is part of the Crystal Reveal Saturday, Dec. 30, at 511 Saint Lawrence St.

Who knows, we hear that Patsy Cline may even join the fun. We have no confirmation on that yet, but again watch details and timed schedule of events next week.

See you at the Crystal on Dec. 30!

RIBBON CUTTING AT O TASTE & SEE BAKERTY & COFFEE SHOP



The Gonzales Chamber of Commerce & Agriculture held a ribbon cutting for O Taste & See Bakery & Coffee Shop on Friday, Dec. 8. The new shop is located next door to Come and Wash It at 605 E. Sarah DeWitt Drive in Gonzales.

LEW K. COHN

Weather **Sponsored by**



Gonzales Weather

Cloud added back to House Committee on Oversight

SPECIAL TO THE INQUIRER

The House Committee on Oversight and Accountability announced the return of Rep. Michael Cloud (TX-27), where he is expected to take part in the committee's impeachment investigation into the Biden administration.

Cloud had been a member of the Oversight Committee since his election to office, only stepping away in January 2023 after being added to the House Appropriations Committee. When a seat on the Oversight Committee opened up in November, Cloud became a candidate and was officially added back

last week. The Committee is led by Chairman James Comer (KY-01) and is tasked with the mission effectiveness, and ac-

to "ensure the efficiency, countability of the federal government and all its agencies." "I am excited Michael

Cloud will be bringing his talents back to the **Oversight Committee** as we continue to follow the facts to hold President Biden accountable. Michael Cloud is a strong advocate for the American people who helped us deliver results when he previously served on the Oversight Committee. We are glad to welcome him back," said Chairman Comer.



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Whiddon

UNNY	December 14 61°/48°	Sunshine 4% chance of rain ● RealFeel 61
.OUDY	December 15 55°/46°	Low clouds with a shower in spots in the afternoon 40% chance of rain ● RealFeel 53
OWERS	December 16 61°/42°	Mostly cloudy; showers in the morning followed by a shower in spots in the afternoon 80% chance of rain ● RealFeel 59
LY SUNNY	December 17 58°/43°	Mostly sunny 0% chance of rain ● RealFeel 59
	December 18 70°/49°	Warmer with plenty of sunshine 0% chance of rain ● RealFeel 73
LY CLOUDY	December 19 71º/46º	Mostly cloudy with a couple of showers in the afternoon 63% chance of rain ● RealFeel 71
	December 20 54°/37°	Cooler with abundant sunshine 20% chance of rain ● RealFeel 67

Upcoming Events at J.B. Wells Park in Gonzales

December 16th J and K Productions

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3

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USDA accepting online applications for farm loans

SPECIAL TO THE INQUIRER

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has launched an online application for Direct Loan customers.

More than 26,000 customers who submit a Direct Loan application each year can now use an online, interactive, guided application that is paperless and provides helpful features including an electronic signature option, the ability to attach supporting documents such as tax returns, complete a balance sheet and build a farm operating plan.

This tool is part of a broader effort by USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) to streamline its processes, improve customer service, and expand credit access.

"The Biden-Harris Administration is working hard to make it easier for farmers and ranchers to get the loans they need to keep growing food, fiber, and fuel for our country," said Deputy Secretary Xochitl Torres Small. "Online services are commonplace in commercial lending, and with USDA Farm Service Agency's new online loan application feature, it is now easier for producers to get the financing they need to start, expand, or maintain their farming and ranching operations"

farming and ranching operations." The online farm loan application replicates the support an applicant would receive when completing a loan application in person with an FSA Farm Loan Officer, while continuing to provide customers with one-on-one assistance as needed. This tool and other process improvements allow farmers and ranchers to submit complete loan applications and reduce the number of incomplete and withdrawn applications.

Through a personalized dashboard, borrowers can track the progress of their loan application. It can be accessed on farmers.gov or by completing FSA's Loan Assistance Tool at farmers.gov/loan-assistancetool. To use the online loan application tool, producers must establish a USDA customer account and a USDA Level 2 eAuthentication ("eAuth") account or a Login.gov account. For the initial stage, the online application tool is only available for producers who will be, or are currently, operating their farm as

See LOANS, page 7



GONZALESINQUIRER.COM • THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2023

Q. Why do some live oak trees produce a large area of foliage suckers at their base. It is unattractive. Does it hurt the tree? What can be done to control it?

A. It is not clear why some live oak trees produce the suckers at the trees base. It happens a lot in our shallow rocky soil but as you stated some trees don't do it. The best we can do is to mow the suckers at the same level as the surrounding lawn. Do not use herbicides such as glyphosate because the suckers are directly connected to the parent tree's root system. Hopefully researchers will learn more about the suckers and what stimulates their production in the future.

Q. Do deer eat iris or not? It appears that in our neighborhood after years of ignoring the plants, during the droughty summer after the record freeze damage events several iris beds were destroyed. We are not sure that the plants were relished by the deer, but the beds received attention from the deer and disappeared.

A. Yes, I experienced the same problem and am going to replant to see if it was more related to the freeze damage or to a change in the deer food preferences. Anyone else that experienced the problem or experiences the problem in

LIVESTOCK WEEKLY REPORTS

the future please let me know.

Q. Our flower garden is lush with a grassy weed that I haven't been able to identify. What contact herbicide should we use? Will it matter which of the grassy weeds it is, and which flowers are planted in the garden?

A. I like Poast, GrassbeGone, Ornamec or Fusillade for control of both of the winter annual grass weeds rescue grass and annual blue grass, and also Bermuda grass. Review the label instructions on the product you are considering reviewing its operating requirements. The products listed are safe to use in most flower and shrub beds.

Q. I attended a program that you presented several years ago about tough modern and old-fashioned roses. I have misplaced the list of roses you recommended that bloom over a long season, do not need constant pruning attention, and perform well without pesticides. Please provide that list for me again.

A. My favorite tough modern and old-fashioned roses are Belinda's Dream, Mrs. Dudley Cross, Martha Gonzales, Mutabilis, Grandma's Yellow, and Carefree Beauty Pink. For more information on each of the roses visit my archived articles in plantanswers. com .



GONZALES LIVESTOCK MARKET December 9th Cattle – 1300 Compared to our last sale: Number 1 choice calves and yearlings sold fully steady to 4.00-7.00 lower on heavy end. Less quality calves and yearlings sold 5.00-8.00 cheaper. Packer cows sold steady & bulls sold steady. Stocker-feeder Steers: Medium and large-frame No. 1: 150-300 lbs., 285-335; 300-400 lbs., 275-

and large-frame No. 1: 150-300 lbs., 285-335; 300-400 lbs., 275-330; 400-500 lbs., 250-330; 500-600 lbs., 210-272; 600-700 lbs., 210-230; 700-800 lbs., 191-217. Bull Yearlings: 700-900 lbs., 90-155.

Stocker-feeder heifers: Medium

600-700 lbs - \$179-189-201 700-800 lbs - \$167-177-185 Slaughter Cows - \$45-100 Slaughter Bulls - \$86-112 Stocker Cows - \$650-1100 Pairs: \$960-1500 Our last sale of 2023 will be on december 18, 2023. We will be closed on december 25, 2023 and january 1, 2025. See you

on january 8, 2024.

HALLETTSVILLE LIVESTOCK COMMISSION CO., INC. Sale date: December 5th Cattle on hand: 1883 **Packer Cows:** Canner and Cutter Cows: \$88-103 Utility & Fat Cows: \$64-88 Light Weight Canner Cows: \$54-66 Pair/Weak: \$34-55 Packer Bulls: Heavyweight Bulls: \$113-124 Utility & Cutter Bulls: \$100-112 Lightweight Canner Bulls: \$88-100 **Stocker Cows:** Good Stocker/Cows & Heifers: \$1350-2650 Medium Stocker Cows & Heifers: \$1025-1400 Good Cow & Calf Pairs: \$1800-3550 Medium Cow & Calf Pairs: \$1250-1750 Stocker & Feeder Calves & Yearlings: Number 1 steer & bull calves: Under 200 lbs.: \$240-340 200-300 lbs.: \$255-365 300-400 lbs.: \$260-350 400-500 lbs.: \$245-320 500-600 lbs.: \$225-285 600-700 lbs.: \$205-255 700-800 lbs.: \$185-217 Number 1 heifer calves: Under 200 lbs: \$220-310 200-300 lbs.: \$240-320 300-400 lbs.: \$235-300 400-500 lbs.: \$230-300 500-600 lbs.: \$210-255 600-700 lbs.: \$190-216 700-800 lbs: \$170-200 **Replacement Heifers:** 350-700 lbs.: \$225-300 The calf market was \$5 to \$8

lower on the heavy weight classes and \$10 to \$20 higher on the light weights. Lower fat market and futures hurting heavy weights, grazing demand on light is extremely strong. Packer cows and bulls sold steady on approximately 225 head. Last sale of the year will be December 19th.

SEGUIN CATTLE CO.

December 6th Quality good over all. Stocker cattle steady. Packer cows & bulls 5 dollars softer. Cattle - 798 Sheep & goats - 909 Medium & large frame #1 Steers: 200-300 lb. .65-2.40-3.30 300-400 lb. .55-2.47-3.30 400-500 lb. .70- 2.36-2.90 500-600 lb. .40-2.00-2.72 600-700 lb. 1.70-2.03-2.47 700-850 lb. .90-1.52-1.89 Medium & large frame #1 Heifers: 200-300 lb. .30-1.90-2.75 300-400 lb. .25-2.23-2.80 400-500 lb. .63-2.05-2.62 500-600 lb. .36-1.81-2.50 600-750 lb. .60-1.76-2.18 Cows: Utility & commercial - .55-.75-.95 Cutters - .60-.70-.80 Canners - .50-.60-.70 Palpated cows - 635-725 Cow/Calf Pairs - 1700 Bulls: Heavy High Yielding - 1.00-1.28 Light & Low Yielding -.40-.99 Sheep & Goats: Nannies - 80-215 Kid Goats (Fat) - 2.40-3.50 Wethers -1.50-3.25 Billies - 1.20-2.65 Dorp. Ewes - 60-190 Dorp. Lambs (Fat) - 2.00-3.00 Wooled Ewes - NONE Wooled Bucks - 1.12-1.80 Lambs - 2.07 Barb. Bucks - 200-650 CUERO LIVESTOCK MARKET

There were 354 cows and 33 bulls. Top packer bull was down to \$118/cwt while tops on packer cows was down to \$92/cwt. A good supply sold well. Demand is very strong just at a lower level. The calf market was much lower as most classes saw prices drop from \$5-\$15/cwt. The live cattle market and the futures market have taken their toll on the calf market. Packer bulls: 94.00-118.00 Packer cows: canners & cutters 78.00-92.00 30.00-57.00 poor & weak 90.00-140.00 Palpated: 84 BRED 30 sold by the head \$825 -\$1,110 ranged from PAIRS: 27 \$1,325-\$1,450 Steer Calve Under 200 lbs. NONE 200-249 lbs. 205.00-320.00 250-299 lbs. 282.00-340.00 232.00-317.50 300-350 lbs. 350-400 lbs. 233.00-322.00 400-450 lbs. 236.00-294.00 450-500 lbs. 245.00-300.00 500-550 lbs. 227.00-285.00 550-600 lbs. 217.00-280.00 600-700 lbs. 208.00-237.00 700-800 lbs. 183.00-204.00 Bull Calves: (AVG-HIGH) Under 250lbs 216.00-302.00 250-300 lbs. 253.00-338.00 300-350 lbs. 262.00-330.00 350-400 lbs. 253.00-324.00 400-450 lbs. 248.00-310.00 450-500 lbs. 231.00-285.00 500-550 lbs. 215.00-270.00 550-600 lbs. 201.00-240.00 600-700 lbs 183.00-232.00 Over 700 lbs. 179.00-210.00 (AVG-HIGH) Heifer Calves: 202.00-280.00 under 200 lbs. 182.00-320.00 200-250 lbs. 250-300 lbs 233.00-335.00 300-350 lbs. 224.00-300.00 350-400 lbs. 223.00-304.00 400-450 lbs. 215.00-295.00 450-500 lbs. 208.00-285.00 500-550 lbs 203.00-246.00 550-600 lbs. 193.00-220.00 600-700 lbs. 187.00-219.00 Over 700 lbs 153.00-211.00

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and large-frame No. 1: 150-300 lbs., 285-295; 300-400 lbs., 235-295; 400-500 lbs., 210-255: 500-600 lbs., 188-227; 600-700 lbs., 165-195.

Packer Cows: Good lean utility and commercial,72-87; Cutters, 89-95; Canners, 52-78; High yielding fat cows, 87-92. Packer Bulls: Yield grade 1 & 2, good heavy bulls, 112-126; Light weights and medium quality bulls, 100-110. Stocker Cows: \$750 to \$1,500. Pairs: \$1,100 to \$1,600. LAST SALE OF 2023, DECEMBER 16TH; FIRST SALE OF 2024, JANUARY 6TH.

NIXON LIVESTOCK December 11th Cattle – 1095 Steers: 200-300 lbs - \$261-271-340 300-400 lbs - \$258-268-330 400-500 lbs - \$242-252-320 500-600 lbs - \$221-221-265 600-700 lbs - \$186-196-221 700-800 lbs - \$176-186-200 Heifers: 200-300 lbs - \$217-227-290 300-400 lbs - \$218-228-300 400-500 lbs - \$210-220-282 500-600 lbs - \$191-201-253

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December 8, 2023

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Comptroller reminds retailers of new e-cigarette law

SPECIAL TO THE INQUIRER

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar is reminding retailers that beginning Jan. 1, 2024, it will be a crime in Texas to market, advertise, sell or cause to be sold an e-cigarette product in certain containers that are designed to appeal to minors.

"It is illegal to sale e-cigarettes to minors — these products are dangerous and most contain nicotine, heavy metals and cancer-causing materials — yet these products are intentionally designed to attract minors," Hegar said. "Texas has taken action to deal with this kind of deceptive marketing and I greatly appreciate the partnership with retailers across this state to help us protect one of our most vital resources: our children."

House Bill 4758 says a person commits a Class B misdemeanor that can lead to civil and criminal penalties if they market, advertise, sell or cause to be sold an e-cigarette product and the product's container meets any of the following criteria:

• depicts a cartoon-like fictional character that mimics a character primarily aimed at entertaining minors;

• imitates or mimics trademarks or trade dress of products that are or have been primarily marketed to minors;

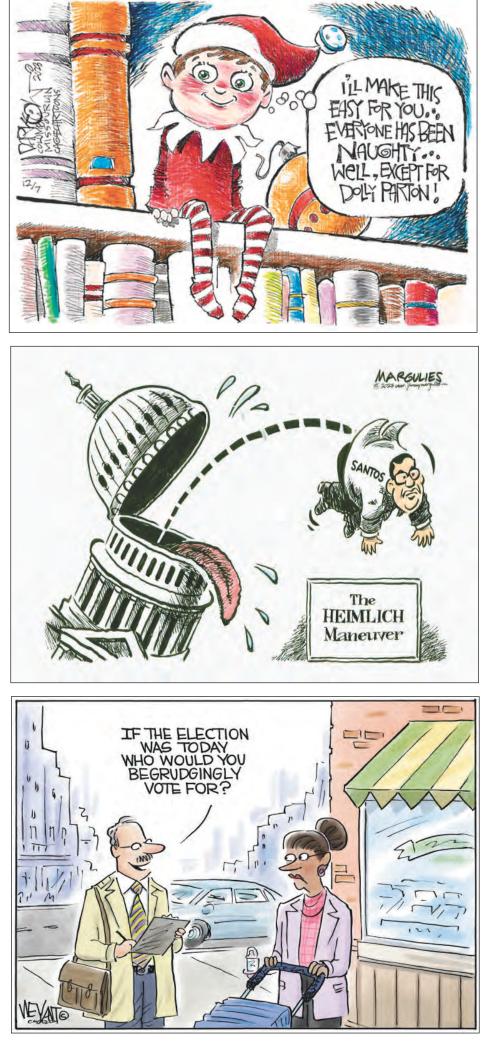
• includes a symbol that is primarily used to market products to minors;

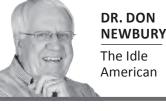
includes an image of a celebrity; or
includes an image that resembles a food product, including candy or juice.

À violation can result in a Class B misdemeanor conviction punishable by up to 180 days in jail, a fine up to \$2,000, or both. E-cigarette retailers also can face civil penalties up to \$3,000 and a permit suspension or revocation for repeat violations.

More than 2.1 million high school and middle school students who participated in the 2023 National Youth Tobacco Survey said they use e-cigarette products, which were the most popular tobacco product among youth users for the 10th year in a row. The Comptroller's Tobacco Enforcement Program helps prevent children from obtaining cigarettes, e-cigarettes and other tobacco products. This vital public health mission requires constant vigilance and continuous effort on the part of parents, business owners, government officials and all concerned Texans. The Comptroller's office and partnering agencies perform inspections for signage and employee compliance concerning the sale, possession and use of cigarettes, e-cigarettes and tobacco products. Violations of tobacco control laws can be reported anonymously by calling the Texas E-Cigarette and Tobacco Hotline at 800-345-8647 or by emailing tobacco.enforcement@ cpa.texas.gov.







Maximizing mascot mix-ups...

The State of Texas is known far and wide for its citizens' love of football. Taken a step further, names of school mascots can cause head-scratching and sometimes absolute disbelief when their plural names are discovered.

There are some "doozies." I don't know if Trivial Pursuit is often a game of choice these days, but Googling for what groups of creatures are called can help us understand why name foulups can produce heat when games--trivial or football--are taken seriously.

The public address announcer at a recent play-off football game in Crowley between Brownwood High School and Springtown High School learned quickly that fans of both schools want "plural" of their team mascots to be "done up right." And, since football is a team sport, the guy at the microphone described multiple Lions and Porcupines numerous times.....

It was brought to his attention that referencing Lions and Porcupines as being in packs or bunches simply wouldn't get it done.

The poor announcer already had much on his plate, what with scheduling commercials, pronouncing players' names correctly and discharging other verbal responsibilities. He may have been caught unawares. In previous games, he probably wasn't challenged when referring to multiple players as being in packs or bunches.

He took correction well, however, and subsequent plural references were spot on. It's not news to many folks that two or more lions constitute a pride, but I'm thinking one might need to be closely involved with Springtown athletics to know the plural of "porcupine." So you'll know in the future, when we're talkin' two or more porcupines, they are a "prickle of porcupines." Now you know, and so does that public address announcer. (An aside: With Pickleball the new "semi-athletic" game rage, they'll understandably come up with something called "Prickleball" in Springtown.)....

Researching the subject of plural names for animals, birds and other creatures fascinates to the max. Often, two, three or even more names are deemed acceptable. In the case of guinea fowls, plural names differ, depending on whether they are on the ground or in flight. On the ground, they are a gaggle. Once in flight, they become a flock. (One of 'em--waddling around on earth or flying alone in search of his or her flock--remains a goose.)... Remember, you read it here first.... Without leaving this general topic, let us segue to acronyms, some that are confounding and bitterly misunderstood. An example is the Fresno-Yosemite International Airport in California. When founded, it was called Fresno Air Terminal. Therein is the reason for its airport code: "FAT." One woman--unaccustomed to flying--was indignant at the luggage carousel, upset that "FAT" was printed in large letters on each bag tag. "I'll blame it on artificial intelligence this time," she said. "But if I ever visit Fresno again, they'd better 'smarten up.' I don't want to see anything about my weight, on luggage tags or otherwise."...: A former travel agent provided the previous account from her list of "you-ain't-gonna-believe-this" memories. She remembers one guy who had super-sensitive eyes that called for eyedrops multiple times daily. The travel agent learned this when she asked him if he preferred a window or an aisle seat. "Oh, an aisle seat for sure," he replied. "I have a terrible time if anything blows into my eyes; if I took a window seat, someone might open a window. No telling what might blow in at 35,000 feet.".... While on the topic of air travel, it seems there is a diminishing number of regional airlines. Though it slowly grew to major status, Texas International Airlines started out as Trans Texas Airways. It included service to smaller towns in Texas, some with population as small as 6,000. It had numerous nicknames, including "Tree-Top Airways" and "Tinker Toy Airways." Some wag jokingly described Trans Texas Airways thusly: "Trick or Treat Airways," adding, "a trick to get on and a treat to get off."...

Letters to the Editor Policy

Because of space limitations, we must limit all contributors to one letter per person per month. Letters of 400 words or less will be published unless they contain language or content that the editors feel is inappropriate. Letters must either be about Gonzales County, from a

resident of Gonzales County, or in response to a story that appears in print or online in The Inquirer. Examples of content that will cause letters to be rejected

- include the following:
 - Confusing or unclear points.
 - Crude language.
 - Poor taste

 Disrespectful comments regarding a group's or individual's ethnicity, gender, religion, culture, sexual orientation or race.

Other incendiary language or remarks.

- Endorsements for or complaints about individually named commercial products or services.
 - Poetry.
 - Personal attacks.

• "Thank You" letters that go beyond general thanks to the community; attempt to serve as an advertisement or is submitted in lieu of a paid "Thank You" advertisement.

The Inquirer will not knowingly publish factually incorrect information, and only letters written exclusively to the newspaper will be published.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters referring to news stories should also mention the headline and date of publication.

All letters must be signed and include the writer's street address or route address telephone number, which will be used for verification purposes only.

Please send Letters to the Editor

Email: publisher@gonzalesinquirer.comU.S. Mail: The Inquirer, P.O. Box 616, Gonzales,

Texas, 78629

 In person: The Inquirer, 622 St. Paul Street, Gonzales, Texas, 78629 (Please bring in a digital format, if possible).

Further questions may be directed to Publisher Lew Cohn, 830-672-2861.

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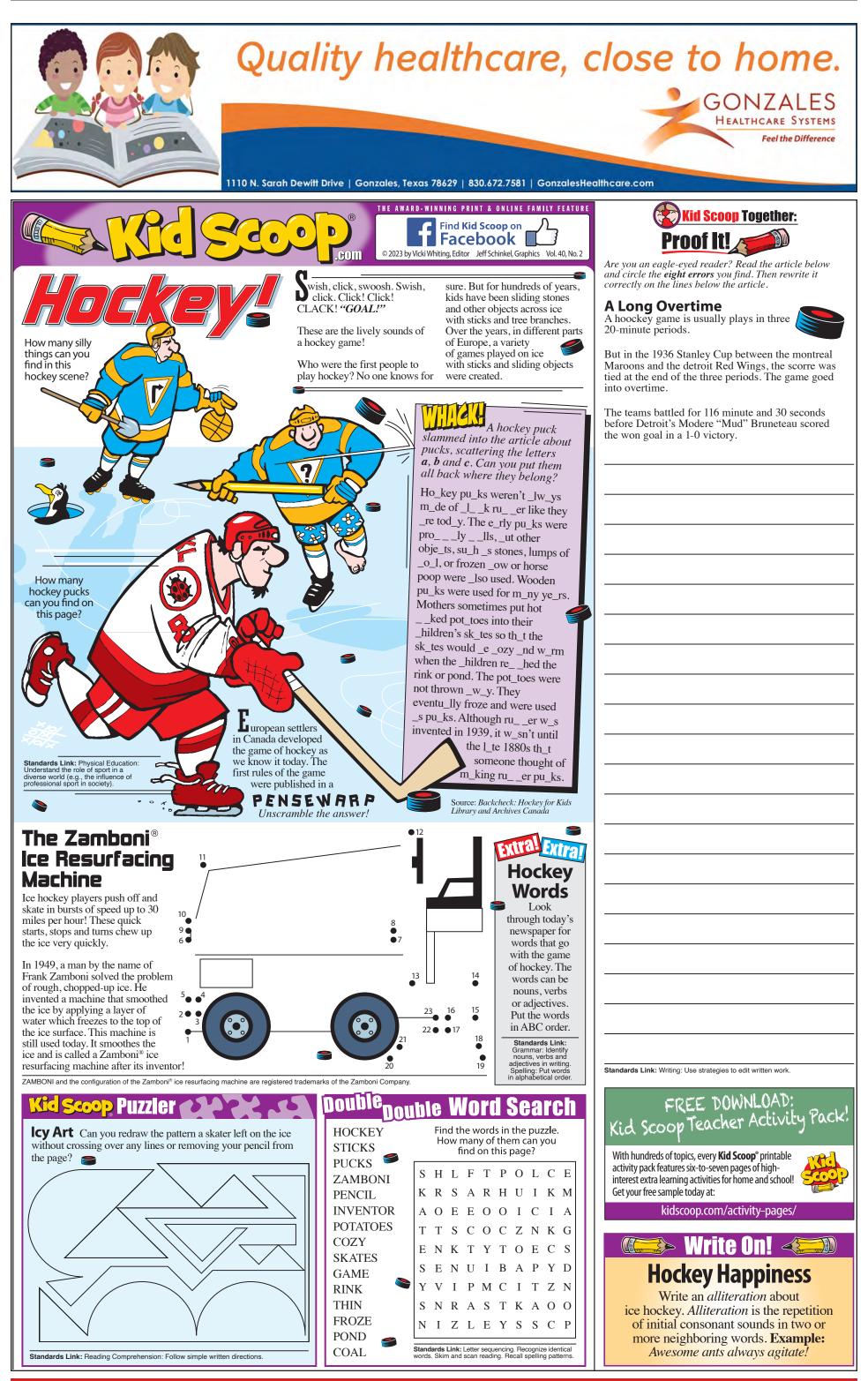
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Dr. Newbury, longtime university president, writes weekly and speaks throughout Texas. Contact by phone: 817-447-3872; email, newbury@speakerdoc.com.



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Those who came out to the Stars in the Village on Dec. 9 at the Gonzales Pioneer Village Living History Center had a great time learning candle making, churning butter, spinning, ornament making, creating corn shuck dolls, popping popcorn and roasting marshmallows around the campfire while also enjoying hot chocolate, wassail and holiday cookies. The blacksmith was back to work the live forge and Santa Claus asked the kids what they wanted for Christmas.

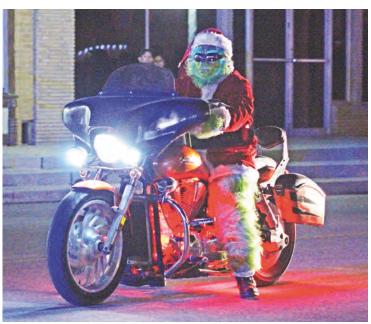
PHOTOS BY LEW K. COHN





NIXON HOSTS MIRACLE ON MAIN CHRISTMAS PARADE





The City of Nixon hosted its annual downtown Christmas parade Saturday, Dec. 9. Many people gathered for the Christmas festivities and watched as the lighted floats go by with appearances from Santa Claus and the Grinch.

PHOTOS BY VANDY VAN EPPS









JROTC HOLDS ANNUAL INSPECTION





The Gonzales **High School Navel** JROTC held their annual inspection Wednesday, Dec. 6 at the Apache Gym. The NJROTC is led by instructor retired Army Sgt. First Class Curtis St. Pierre. The NJROTC has made appearances at the beginning of every home Apache football game to present United States and Texas Flag and parade events. PHOTOS BY VANDY VAN EPPS



PLAN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

else, so it's something that's got to be addressed if we're gonna continue to maintain it."

"In addition to the requirements for the grant, this will also be a comprehensive plan for maintenance and restoration for the future," Precinct 4 Commissioner Collie Boatright added. "Regardless, even if you didn't go for the grant, it will still be good to have for basic requirements and for inspection purposes."

However, Precinct 2 **Commissioner Donnie** Brzozowski said paying nearly a quarter of a million dollars for a master plan "comes at a bad time because we've got that annex building," referring to the county's need to rehabilitate its 43-year-old Courthouse Annex on Sarah DeWitt Drive due to concerns about structural stability. All agencies in the building were told they had to vacate it by Dec. 15 so the county can decide what it will do to fix the problem.

"We haven't figured out what we're going to do with it yet," Brzozowski said. "We're going to spend a quarter of a million to get this and we might need that money to fix (the annex)."

Brzozowski said he has brought up the condition the Courthouse windows are in — including how some are painted and some are not — as well as photos O'Connell and Larosche took of paint that has begun peeling off the building.

"In my opinion, I think we need to let this (master plan) slide right now, because we've got a lot of things we need may have to do on that building (the

annex)," Brzozowski said. "For some of this stuff that we're talking about, we can fix it ourselves. I mean, it's just like your house, you can walk around your house and you can find stuff that needs to be fixed. We need to fix the windows, we need to paint the outside windows. The first thing we need to do is fix the windows; I mean, they look terrible."

"We can hire people like painters and carpenters and fix these windows. They're going to do the same thing we're going to do, but we can give it a facelift and not spend a quarter million dollars getting a grant paper put together. I know we need to do it. I know it's a big deal, but I'm thinking it comes in at a bad time and I think that some of this stuff we should have been keeping up with a long time ago."

Davis responded by saying, "If we're gonna pay for it ourselves, I mean, it'd be nice to have grant money to help us to pay. Regardless, you technically just can't come in on a historical building and start remodeling it; it has to be in the specs of the THC.

"I think this is something that we really need to go for," Davis said. "I mean, even if it cost you \$2 million and you are able to get \$8 million (in grants), that's money that the taxpayers won't have to pay, and we're utilizing this building today. Financial wise, we're still in great shape as a county. Y'all been frugal over the years. I don't think it will be anything that will set us back too far."

"There's a good time to do something and a bad

time. You don't see too many ranches building a bunch of new fences and bulldozing when they are in a drought," Brzozowski said. "And I think that other building – we don't know what we're gonna have to do with it. We've got all these people displaced right now. What are you going to do with them if we start remodeling the courthouse and we have to fix that building, where are you gonna put those people?'

Davis said the professional who has looked at the annex has indicated he doesn't think it has to be torn down, but the walls will need to be shored up. Davis added the county can find ways to save money when it comes to what they do on the annex because it doesn't qualify as a historic building (50 years of age or older), so there are less hoops to jump through when it comes to fixing the issues it has.

Precinct 1 Commissioner Dell Whiddon, La Fleur and Boatright voted in favor of contracting for the master plan, while Brzozowski voted against it.

Davis also told commissioners that representatives from O'Connell and WJE were looking in the attic at the Courthouse to determine how to place HVAC and heating throughout the building.

"There's some stuff that needs to be addressed immediately because of the heat that goes through that could pose a problem by igniting," Davis said.

Davis also said maintenance discovered "a black spot under the eave by the bell tower" and has decommissioned the Christmas lights for now because of concerns that a fire might start.

"That was scary," Davis said. "We had them on for the Christmas parade and there are a lot of them that are out and it didn't look good, but ... whew, we got lucky."

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Additional Christmas lights the county had originally ordered for \$45,000 were sent back to the company because "through the Historical Commission, you're not supposed to put any lights on the Courthouse if you're going for grants ... they don't like drilling into the building."

"They will try to get it done as fast as they can. I know that they have been here numerous times with different folks that are looking at it. And they're trying to compile it as quick as they can. The draft deadline is Feb. 5 so we should have it before February."

LOANS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

as an individual. FSA is expanding the tools availability to married couples applying jointly and other legal entities in 2024.

FSA has a significant initiative underway to streamline and automate Farm Loan Program processes. For the over 26,000 producers who submit a Direct Loan application to FSA annually, and its 85,000 Direct Loan borrowers, FSA has made improvements this year, including:

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al. Yard mainte- nance. Serving	LAUNDER WATER, SEWER & HANDICAP ACC Individuals with a disability wishing to to complete the application process is at 380-5 Para solicitor un apartmento favor 1830-582-1343. Para solicitor una adap Ilamar manager al siguierte manager al siguierte	RY ROOM & GARBAGE PAID CESSIBLE UNITS or equest a reasonable accommodation hould contact the apartment manager 28:1343. Iamar a manager al siguiente numero taticano e modificacion razonable, favor nte numero 830-582-1343.	Equal Opportu	toria College is an inity Institution.	AGAINST T Notice is hereby	LPH HAASE, § § E TO ALL PERSO HE ESTATE OF A given that Letters Tes	IN THE COUNTY GONZALES COU SITTING IN MAT ONS HAVING (AUGUST RUDC stamentary for the E	NTY, TEXAS TERS PROBATE CLAIMS DLPH HAASE state of AUGUST	
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the above-stipulated time will be rejected and returned unopened. The bids will be publicly opened and read aloud immediately after above-stipulated time. Bid evaluations will be completed at a later time and date.

Project Description:	The project consists of installation of one Water Plant Cooling Tower System, one Water Plant Chlorination System, Replacement of Well #3 Pump, upgrade Well #2 control system and all associated appurtenances.

Bid/Contract Documents including Drawings and Technical Specifications are on file and available for examination at the SOUTHWEST ENGINEERS, INC. office located at 307 St. Lawrence Street, Gonzales, Texas 78629 (Phone: 830-672-7546, Fax: 830-672-2034).

A set of these Documents can be obtained from Southwest Engineers, Inc. in two different formats: Hard Copy Set: \$80.00 (Non-Refundable) or Electronic (PDF Format) Set Downloaded: \$25.00 (Non-Refundable).

A bid bond in the amount of 5% of the bid issued by an acceptable surety shall be submitted with each bid. A certified check or bank draft payable to the City of Smiley may be submitted in lieu of the Bid Bond. The City requires Payment and Performance Bonds in 100% of the contract amount.

Attention is called to the fact that not less than the federally determined prevailing (Davis-Bacon and Related Acts) Wage Rate, as issued by the U.S. Department of Labor and contained in the Contract Documents, must be paid on this project. In addition, the successful bidder must ensure that employees and applicants for employment are not discriminated against because of their race, color, religion, sex, sexual identity, gender identity or national origin.

The City reserves the right to reject any or all bids or to waive any informalities in the bidding.

Bids may be held by the City for a period not to exceed 30 days from the date of the bid opening for the purpose of reviewing the bids and investigating the bidder's qualifications prior to the contract award.

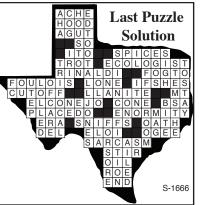
The City is an Equal Opportunity Employer and they strive to attain goals for compliance with Federal Section 3 regulations by increasing opportunities for employment and contracting with Section 3 residents and businesses where feasible.

All contractors/subcontractors that are debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation on federal assistance programs may not undertake any activity in part or in full under this project.

DECEMBER 7, 2023

CITY OF SMILEY The Honorable Lisa Benavidez Mayor

December 7 Puzzle Answers



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THE STATE OF TEXAS

Cause No. 27,851; Truitt Land Holdings LLC, Plaintiff v. Sustrein Goode, I Kelly Goode, Jr., Kareem Goode, Melvin Goode, Alvin Goode, Gloria Jackson, Jo Nell Miller, Eural Walker, Jr., Larry Goode, Jr., Tyrone Loving, Lionel Loving, Terry Clark, Susan Johnson, Stephanie Goode, Evonn L. Walker, Euralene Walker, Vangie Adams, Frances C. Goode, Carol White, Bambi Alford, Alfred Gene Goode, Jr., Verline Celestine, Anthony Goode, Therris Goode, Reginald Pierce, The Unknown Heirs of Latasha Loving Manuel, and The Unknown Heirs of Janice Johnson, Defendants; in the 2nd 25th Judicial District Court, Gonzales County, Texas.

TO: The Unknown Heirs of JANICE JOHNSON, Deceased, or the Executor or Administrator of the Estate of JANICE JOHNSON

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: "You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of forty-two (42) days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. In addition to filing a written answer with the clerk, you may be required to make initial disclosures to the other parties of this suit. These disclosures generally must be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more at TexasLawHelp.org."

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the PLAINTIFF'S FIRST AMENDED PETITION AND APPLICATION FOR TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER, TEMPORARY INJUNCTION, PERMANENT INJUNCTION, AND FOR IN-KIND PARTITION AND TO HAVE IMPROVEMENTS ISOLATED FOR THE BENEFIT OF PLAINTIFF at or before 10:00 o'clock a.m. on the first Monday after the expiration of 42 days from the date of issuance of this citation, the same being Monday the 15th day of January, 2024 at or before 10:00 a.m., before the Honorable 2nd 25th District Court of Gonzales County, Texas, at the Courthouse in Gonzales County, Texas. Said Plaintiff's First Amended Petition was filed on the 7th day of September 2023 in this case, numbered 27,851 on the docket of said court, and styled: Truitt Land Holdings LLC, Plaintiff v. Sustrein Goode, I. Kelly Goode, Jr., Kareem Goode, Melvin Goode, Alvin Goode, Gloria Jackson, Jo Nell Miller, Eural Walker, Jr., Larry L. Walker, Euralene Walker, Vangie Adams, Frances C. Goode, Carol White, Bambi Alford, Alfred Gene Goode, Jr., Verline Celestine, Anthony Goode, Therris Goode, Reginald Pierce, The Unknown Heirs of Latasha Loving Manuel, and the Unknown Heirs of Janice Johnson, Defendants.

A brief statement of the nature of the suit and a description of the real property is as follows, to-wit: Declaratory Relief, Application for Temporary Restraining Order, Temporary Injunction, Permanent Injunction, and for an In-Kind Partition of the surface estate of a tract of land containing 57.33 acres, more or less, located in the Prosper Hope Survey, Abstract 252, Gonzales County, Texas, and being the same land partitioned to Frances Allen in that certain Partition deed dated May 30, 1942, between Susan Allen and Frances Allen, recorded in Volume 198, Page 424 of the Deed Records of Gonzales County, Texas. The nature of the suit is more fully shown in said Plaintiff's First Amended Petition on file in this suit.

ISSUED AND GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF SAID COURT at Gonzales, Texas, on this 27th day of November 2023.



JANICE SUTTON, Clerk of the District Court of Gonzales County, Texas

By: <u>K. alanan</u>, Deputy

CITATION BY PUBLICATION

Janice Sutton District Clerk, Gonzales County Texas 414 St. Joseph Street, Ste. 300 Gonzales, TX 78629 Andrew M. Abrameit Abrameit Law Firm, PLLC P.O. Box 192 Cuero, Texas 77954 Attorney for Plaintiff

THE STATE OF TEXAS

Cause No. 27,851; Truitt Land Holdings LLC, Plaintiff v. Sustrein Goode, I Kelly Goode, Jr., Kareem Goode, Melvin Goode, Alvin Goode, Gloria Jackson, Jo Nell Miller, Eural Walker, Jr., Larry Goode, Jr., Tyrone Loving, Lionel Loving, Terry Clark, Susan Johnson, Stephanie Goode, Evonn L. Walker, Euralene Walker, Vangie Adams, Frances C. Goode, Carol White, Bambi Alford, Alfred Gene Goode, Jr., Verline Celestine, Anthony Goode, Therris Goode, Reginald Pierce, The Unknown Heirs of Latasha Loving Manuel, and The Unknown Heirs of Janice Johnson, Defendants; in the 2nd 25th Judicial District Court, Gonzales County, Texas.

TO: The Unknown Heirs of LATASHA LOVING MANUEL, Deceased, or the Executor or Administrator of the Estate of LATASHA LOVING MANUEL

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: "You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of forty-two (42) days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. In addition to filing a written answer with the clerk, you may be required to make initial disclosures to the other parties of this suit. These disclosures generally must be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more at TexasLawHelp.org."

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the PLAINTIFF'S FIRST AMENDED PETITION AND APPLICATION FOR TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER, TEMPORARY INJUNCTION, PERMANENT INJUNCTION, AND FOR IN-KIND PARTITION AND TO HAVE IMPROVEMENTS ISOLATED FOR THE BENEFIT OF PLAINTIFF at or before 10:00 o'clock a.m. on the first Monday after the expiration of 42 days from the date of issuance of this citation, the same being Monday the 15th day of January, 2024 at or before 10:00 a.m., before the Honorable 2nd 25th District Court of Gonzales County, Texas, at the Courthouse in Gonzales County, Texas. Said Plaintiff's First Amended Petition was filed on the 7th day of September 2023 in this case, numbered 27,851 on the docket of said court, and styled: Truitt Land Holdings LLC, Plaintiff v. Sustrein Goode, I. Kelly Goode, Jr., Kareem Goode, Melvin Goode, Alvin Goode, Gloria Jackson, Jo Nell Miller, Eural Walker, Jr., Larry L. Walker, Euralene Walker, Vangie Adams, Frances C. Goode, Carol White, Bambi Alford, Alfred Gene Goode, Jr., Verline Celestine, Anthony Goode, Therris Goode, Reginald Pierce, The Unknown Heirs of Latasha Loving Manuel, and the Unknown Heirs of Janice Johnson, Defendants.

A brief statement of the nature of the suit and a description of the real property is as follows, to-wit: Declaratory Relief, Application for Temporary Restraining Order, Temporary Injunction, Permanent Injunction, and for an In-Kind Partition of the surface estate of a tract of land containing 57.33 acres, more or less, located in the Prosper Hope Survey, Abstract 252, Gonzales County, Texas, and being the same land partitioned to Frances Allen in that certain Partition deed dated May 30, 1942, between Susan Allen and Frances Allen, recorded in Volume 198, Page 424 of the Deed Records of Gonzales County, Texas. The nature of the suit is more fully shown in said Plaintiff's First Amended Petition on file in this suit.

ISSUED AND GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND THE SEAL OF SAID COURT at Gonzales, Texas, on this 27th day of November 2023.



JANICE SUTTON, Clerk of the District Court of Gonzales County, Texas

By: <u>K. allenen</u>, Deputy

VC Foundation raises \$5,750 for JP's Market at Victoria College on Giving Tuesday

SPECIAL TO THE INQUIRER

The Victoria College Foundation surpassed its previous Giving Tuesday fundraising efforts, raising more than \$5,750 in support of JP's Market during this year's one-day giving campaign.

The funds raised, including a \$5,000 donation from the TDECU Cares Foundation, will directly benefit the food pantry and clothing closet located in the Student Services Building on VC's Main Campus. JP's Market provides nonperishable food items, toiletries, and hygiene items to any VC student experiencing food insecurity.

"We are grateful for the generous support of the TDECU Cares Foundation and our community during this year's Giving Tuesday campaign," said Chelsee Frank, VC's Advancement Services Coordinator. "The donations we received will impact student success and wellbeing by ensuring access to basic necessities."

Part of the funds were raised at a Giving Tuesday event at Texas Roadhouse, where diners were able to donate 20 percent of their bill to support JP's Market.

While the official Giving Tuesday campaign has concluded, the opportunity to contribute to JP's Market at Victoria College continues. Individuals and businesses can donate online at VictoriaCollegeFoundation.org/ Give-Now.

For more information, contact Frank at (361) 582-2418.



Displaying a \$5,000 check representing the TDECU Cares Foundation's donation on Giving Tuesday to support JP's Market at Victoria College, from left, are TDECU Manager Ernesto Briones, TDECU Market Director Kimberly Hairell, VC Advancement Services Coordinator Chelsee Frank, VC mascot Captain Vic, TDECU Manager Aubrey Gil, VC Title V Support Services Coordinator Brittani Cervantez, and TDECU Manager Joel Garcia.

STUDENTS INDUCTED INTO VC'S PHI THETA KAPPA HONOR SOCIETY



CONTRIBUTED

Twenty-one students were inducted into Victoria College's Zeta Gamma Chapter of the Phi Theta Kappa International Honor Society on Nov. 28 at VC's Museum of the Coastal Bend. From left, PTK officer Macey Allen of Victoria is pictured with inductees Hector Perez of Victoria; Suzette Salinas of Victoria; Hailey Lipscomb of Victoria; Jacilyn Tripp of Victoria; Alexandra Deckelmann of Victoria; Lilibeth Lazo of Victoria; Melissa Lawler of Victoria; and Mackenzie Ross of Victoria, are pictured with Chapter President Berenice Silva, of Victoria, and Victoria County Judge Ben Zeller. Inductees not pictured are Nathaniel Blackshear of Victoria; Dennis Block of Edna; Bunnet Bou of Victoria; Elisa Bullock of Edna; Jordyn Carville of Victoria; Emma Dugi of Cuero; Catherine Farrior of Victoria; Greta Grosenbacher of Shiner; Kaitlyn Hodon of Victoria; Tyler Paul of Inez; Amanda Salazar of Victoria; George Stingley of Port Lavaca; and Grace Weiler of Victoria. Students must have a 3.5 GPA to be eligible for induction and maintain a 3.1 or higher after induction. Phi Theta Kappa recognizes academic achievement of two-year college students and provides opportunities for individual growth and development through honors, leadership and service programming.

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Grieving the Loss of a Loved One

SPECIAL TO THE INQUIRER

When a loved one dies, it can feel like you're alone or that you have no hope or future. Few people understand how painful and isolating your grief can be but that doesn't mean you have to suffer by yourself. There are others who have experienced what you're going through and you can find them at a GriefShare support group.

GriefShare, the number one grief recovery support program that has helped over one million people worldwide heal from the pain of grief, will once again be offered in Gonzales to those struggling with the loss of a loved one.

It is a free, Christ-centered, nondenominational outreach ministry. People of all faiths (and those who do not practice a faith) are welcome. A GriefShare support group consists of participants who, over the course of 14 weeks, meet weekly where they will hear insights from grief recovery experts, meet others who understand what they are going through, receive comfort and support, learn practical tips for navigating their grief and most importantly, learn that they are not alone on their journev of grief.

The next offering of GriefShare is going to begin on Tuesday, Jan. 9, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at Abiding Word Lutheran Church, 1020 St. Louis St., Gonzales, and will run through Tuesday, April 9. To register or to learn more about GriefShare, call 713-582-0794 or go to www.griefshare.org.

For whom the jelly rolls

Howdy folks, hope your holiday prep is going even better than planned, and as my last trip to Walmart recently confirmed, we're in the thick of it now! Please be mindful, cautious and careful while shopping, as we've all seen how holiday shoppers can easily get out of control, and aunt Edna may be spying what's in your cart for uncle Ezra, and while she may look old, she's still pretty feisty...just sayin'.

Today I'll be continuing my short series on New Years resolutions in the area of better overall health. I think we all know that most New Year's resolutions fall away quickly, unfortunately leaving the folks that made them feeling somehow inadequate, and down on themselves for not being able to see them through. Whether it's a resolution or a simple goal, don't be too hard on yourself as the vast majority of us have been there also. It doesn't mean we're necessarily weak, undisciplined or unmotivated (although at times these can be determining factors). I believe it has more to do with setting unrealistic goals and expectations, already setting ourselves up for failure, while also having a mindset that things have to be difficult in order to see worthwhile results. I think that Arnold Schwarzenegger's mantra of "No pain, No gain", while delivered with good intent, scared the average person into thinking



that diet and exercise = torture. Sure, if you're aiming to become the best bodybuilder on the planet, it probably holds true. But, for the rest of us everyday mortals, it doesn't have to be anywhere near that extreme. Yep, aunt Edna's just trying to keep her core strength up enough to snatch uncle Ezra's gift from your basket and make her getaway before you've noticed!

I'd like to assure you that I fully realize that each of us are different, coming from different backgrounds, experiences and early programing, resulting in somewhat different approaches to many aspects of life, including our own personal health and well being. Yep, God's gift of free will at work, and as it should be. Seeing as we're only here on a temporary basis, first Timothy 4:8 reminds us that "Physical training is good, but training for godliness is better, promising benefits in this life and the life to come." The way I see it, while keeping God first (something I think most of us struggle with at times, if we're being completely honest) is the number one priority, why not also put some effort into maintaining these awesome carriages God

has blessed us with, in order to get through our earthly journey as easily and pain free as possible?

During my school years I was always physically active, as I enjoyed the rush of endorphins, along with the sense of accomplishment it brought. As a young man I played football, baseball, hockey, ran track, was a gymnast, wrestler, diver, and weight lifter. I'd like to assure you that I was in no way an outstanding athlete (as some of my videos can attest to), but rather found it a fun way of staying away from home (as my home life was quite less than optimal), and found that girls really liked "Jocks", fueling my motivation even further. But like many of us, the involvement in physical activity began to fall away as work, women and nightlife activities replaced them. Slowly replacing a healthy lifestyle with one of physical neglect, definitely had its consequences. My new lifestyle was leading me into an addiction with food, as well as becoming a burgeoning alcoholic. Pizza, beer & donuts occasionally won't affect us too much (alcohol is not condemned biblically, but drunkenness is; I'm now sober over 32 years) but as a lifestyle ... too many jelly rolls (in my experience) will turn you into one, For whom the jelly rolls...yep, that'd be me!

Until next time, love you guys, Eric.



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FM 1681, NW of Nixon

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417 N. College, Gonzales

Sacred Heart

Catholic Church

St. John St., Gonzales

St. Joseph Catholic Church

207 S. Washington, Nixon

St. Patrick Catholic Church

Waelder

St. Phillip Catholic Church

Highway 87, Smiley

CHRISTIAN

First Christian Church

(Disciples of Christ)

712 Crockett, Luling

CHURCHES OF CHRIST

Church of Christ

1323 Seydler St., Gonzales

Church of Christ

(Iglesia de Cristo)

201 E. Second St. Nixon

Church of Christ

E. 3rd & Texas, Nixon

Church of Christ. Belmont

CHURCHES OF GOD

Community Church of God

1020 St. Louis, Gonzales

Gonzales Memorial

Church of God in Christ

1113 Hastings, Gonzales

New Beginnings

1020 St. Louis, Gonzales

Episcopal

Episcopal Church

of the Messiah

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Nixon

north of Nixon Full Gospel Church

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Adat Haderech, a Messianic shul HashemYeshua1 @yahoo.com

New Life Temple for Jesus Christ 16214 US 90 W, Harwood River of Life Christian Fellowship 207 Steele St., Smiley

"Agua Viva"

403 Highway 90 W,

Waelder

Emmanuel Fellowship

1817 St. Lawrence,

Gonzales

Encouraging Word

Christian Fellowship

Highway 80, Leesville

Lighthouse Church

of Our Lord

1805 Weimar, Gonzales



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First Baptist Church

422 St. Paul, Gonzales First Baptist Church

403 N. Texas. Nixon First Baptist Church

Highway 108 N., Smiley First Baptist Church 406 N. Avenue E, Waelder

Greater Palestine Baptist Church S. of 90A (sign on Hwy 80)

Greater Rising Star Baptist Church

Harwood Baptist Church North of Post Office, Harwood

Iglesia Bautista Macedonia 201 S. Congress, Nixon

Iglesia Bautista Memorial Highway 97, Waelder

Leesville Baptist Church E. of Highway 80 on CR 121

Memorial Heights Baptist Church 1330 N. College, Gonzales

Mt. Pilgrim Baptist Church 100 Capes, Gonzales

Oak Valley Baptist Church Highway 97, Bebe

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St. James Catholic Church Abiding Word Lutheran Church LCMS 1020 St. Louis St., Gonzales

> METHODIST Belmont Methodist Highway 90A, Belmont

Dewville United Methodist West of FM 1117 on CR 121

First Methodist 426 St. Paul, Gonzales

First United Methodist 410 N. Franklin, Nixon

Flatonia United Methodist

Harris Chapel United Methodist S. Liberty St., Nixon

Harwood Methodist Church Harwood

Henson Chapel United Methodist 1113 St. Andrew, Gonzales

> Monthalia Methodist CR 112 off Highway 97

Smiley United Methodist 1 blk. S. of Hwy. 87, Smiley Webster Chapel A.M.E.

1027 Church St., Gonzales NON-DENOMINATIONAL

Agape Ministries 512 St. James, Gonzales Bread of Life Ministries 613 St. Joseph, Gonzales

Christ the King Church 1262 U.S. Highway 77 South Hallettsville

Thompsonville Community Church CR 423, Thompsonville Between Harwood & Waelder off old Hwv. 90

Two Rivers Bible Church 1600 Sarah DeWitt Dr., Suite 210, Gonzales

INTER DENOMINATIONAL Faith Family Church 1812 Cartwheel Dr., Gonzales

Living Waters Fellowship 306 St. Paul, Gonzales

PENTECOSTAL Faith Temple Hwy. 80 (N. Nixon Ave.), Nixon

Holy Temple of Jesus Christ No. 2 1515 Dallas, Gonzales

Iglesia Pentecostes Filadelfia 893 S. Magnolia Ave., Luling

Temple Bethel Pentecostal 1104 S. Paul, Gonzales

> Life Changing Church of Gonzales 3.3 miles north on Hwy 183. right on CR 235, then right on CR 236

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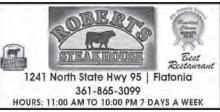
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OBITUARIES

Lea Ann Johnson, 63,

passed away on Decem-

born February 8, 1960, in

Victoria, Texas to William

Gunn (Bill) Johnson and

son. She graduated from

Bobbie Anderson John-

Gonzales High School

in 1978 and her beloved

with a Bachelor's Degree

in Advertising. She was a

member of the Alpa Phi

for the UT swim team.

outstanding athlete at

In her youth, she was an

both tennis and golf. Lea

Ann had worked over the

years for Martindale-Hub-

bell Lexis/Nexis, Amelia

Bullock Realtors and the

in the State Law Library.

Merle Eugene Ollom

died Thursday, December

was born on June 11, 1928

to Henry Leroy Ollom and

Neva Ray Rickard Ollom

Merle was a gradu-

migrated to San Antonio

where he began honing

his skills for his career

in commercial art. He

worked as a cartoonist for

the San Antonio Light, in

ment for the San Antonio

Express News, and as the

art director for Motorola's

design school, publishing

He taught commercial

College, Trinity University

Community College. He

cartographer, artist, and

He married Lynna

Jean Carter in 1952 and

50 years until her death

in 2002. The couple had

remained married for

company, and graphics

art at Incarnate Word

as well as San Antonio

was an accomplished

advertising department.

He also had his own

company.

engraver.

the advertising depart-

ate of the Burt High

School Class of 1934. After graduation, Merle

in Burt, Iowa.

7, 2023 in Gonzales. He

She lived in Austin for

Attorney General of Texas

Sorority and a Bevo's Babe

University of Texas in 1981

ber 8th, 2023. She was

Billy Don Parker, 95, of Gonzales, Texas, passed away on December 4, 2023. He was born on September 26, 1928, in the Slayden Community, to the late Lewis Malcomb Parker and Mayme Ruth Parker. Billy was a devoted son, husband, father, and friend. He committed his life to working to take care of those he loved.

After the passing of his father when he was just fourteen years old, Billy and his brothers worked tirelessly to continue their father's legacy. In 1959, Billy married Linda Katherine Figley, and together they began their family. Their children, Billy Jr. and Ruth Ann. were born in 1967 and 1969, respectively. Billy took great pride in his family and cherished the moments spent with them.

Billy proudly served in the Army and was honorably discharged after petitioning to return home to help his mother during a drought. Following his military service, Billy pursued a career as a cattle and poultry rancher. He dedicated himself to



BILLY DON PARKER

his work and found fulfillment in caring for his livestock.

Outside of his work, Billy enjoyed playing dominoes with friends and had a talent for auctioneering. He had a knack for entertaining others with his stories and made many lasting memories with his loved ones.

Billy was a member of First Baptist Church in Gonzales, where he witnessed the baptisms of both his children. His faith was an integral part of his life, providing him with strength and guidance.

Family was of utmost importance to Billy, and he is survived by his son and wife, Billy Parker

Jr. and Lori Parker; his daughter, Ruth Ann Parker; his former spouse, Linda Tallant; his grandchildren, Megan Benson (husband Jason), Tanner Hardcastle, Mackenzie Parker, Quinton Parker, and Hudsyn Parker; and his great-grandchild, Jackson Benson. He was preceded in death by his father, Lewis Malcomb Parker; his mother, Mayme Ruth Parker; and his brothers, Lewis Parker Jr. and Dale Parker.

A funeral service honoring Billy's life will be held at Seydler-Hill Funeral Home in Gonzales, Texas, on Friday, December 8, 2023, at 2 p.m. Visitation will take place on Thursday, December 7, 2023, from 5 - 7 p.m. Contributions in Billy's memory may be made to First Baptist Church.

Friends may sign the guestbook and leave condolences by visiting www. seydlerhillfuneralhome. com

Arrangements are under the care and direction of Seydler-Hill Funeral Home, 906 St. Paul, Gonzales.

LEA ANN JOHNSON



many years and recently moved home to be closer to family.

Lea Ann is survived by her sister, Jean Peterek Burns and husband Norman of Gonzales, her brother, Thomas (Tom) Johnson and wife Sissy, of Corsicana and Gonzales. She is also survived by

nephew, Greyson Peterek, and niece, Lana Peterek Dubose, her aunts, Dorothy Springs and Ruby Lindeman, both of New Braunfels and numerous precious cousins. She was preceded in death by her parents.

Graveside services will be held at 11 am, Wednesday, December 20, 2023 in Odd Fellows Cemetery with Dr. Matt Pennington officiating. Friends may leave their condolences to the family by visiting www.seydlerhillfuneralhome.com. Memorials may be made to the First Unted Methodist Church in Gonzales.

Services are under the care and direction of Seydler-Hill Funeral Home.

MERLE EUGENE OLLOM



three children, Mark Eugene Ollom, Callise Monet Ollom, and Kristi Linn Ollom. Following his wife's death, he married Jean Zappe Reese on July 2, 2005 and they were married for close to 20 years until his recent death.

Merle was the President of Artist Design of San Antonio, a member of the San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, Board of Governors of the Methodist Church and a member of the Men of Art Guild of San Antonio. In San Antonio, he was a member of the Harlandale Methodist Church. While in Gonzales, he was a member of the Presbyterian Church

of Gonzales, Texas.

Merle was preceded in death by his father and mother, his brother Wayne, and sister Bernadine, and his first wife. Lynna, He is survived by his second wife, Jean, son, Mark, daughter, Callise and her husband Frank "Buz" Roach, and daughter, Kristi and her husband Harvey "Buz" Hull, step-daughter, Kasey Reese Floyd, and step-son Noel Henry Reese and his wife Kerry Anne Reese as well as numerous grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Memorial services will be held 11 a.m. Monday. December 18, 2023 at the **Gonzales** Presbyterian Church.

Memorials can be made to the Presbyterian Discovery Center or the charity of your choice.

Friends may sign the guestbook and leave condolences by visiting www. seydlerhillfuneralhome. com

Arrangements are under the care and direction of Seydler-Hill Funeral Home, 906 St. Paul, Gonzales.

LAW ENFORCEMENT WEEKLY REPORTS

Gonzales County Sheriff's Office 11/26/23 - 12/02/23

11/26/23

• Lafleur, Crystal Nicole, 07/1983, Houston: Other Agency Hold – Unl Poss Firearm by Felon, Released – Transfer US Marshals

11/27/23

 Naranjo, Jaevyn Michael, 11/2005, San Antonio: Warrantless/ On-View – Unl Carrying Weapon, Released -\$2,000 Bond; Warrantless/On-View -Poss Dangerous Drug, Released - \$2,000 Bond

<u>11/28/</u>23

• Malatek, Christian

Nicole, 01/2001, Victoria: Warrantless/On-View -Poss Marij <2oz, Released - \$500 Bond

12/01/23

• Beene, Judge Roy, 09/1979, Gonzales: Commitment/Sentence -Poss CS PG 1<1G, Remains in Custody · Oden, Wesley Alan, 08/1985, Brenham: Local Warrant – Agg Sexual Assault Child, Released -Weekender · Fields, Zyshawn, 02/2000, Gonzales: Commitment/Sentence -Burglary of Habitation, Released - Weekender Goolsbee, Christopher Edmond, 11/1982, Houston: Warrantless/On-View -

Total Arrest, Court Commitments, other agency arrest and processing's:

GCSO	18
DPS	02
GPD	05
WPD	01
NPD	00
GISD	00
SMO	00
Constable 1	00
Constable 3	00
Constable 4	00
DWCSO	00
DEA	00
TPW	00
GCAI	00
Rangers	00
Other	00
Total	26

William, 07/2006, Gonzales: Warrantless/ **On-View- Theft Prop** >=\$750<\$2500 Enh IAT, Requires \$5,000 Bond, Remains in Custody

 Gurrusquieta, Felix Antonio, 06/1989, Hondo: Warrantless/On-View -Poss CS PG 2<1G, Released - \$5,000 • Farago, Eric Lynn,

09/1970, Gonzales: Warrantless/On-View -Poss Marij <2oz, Released - \$500 Bond • Tristan, Joshua

Matthew, 10/1992, Nixon: Local Warrant -**Continuous Violence** Against Family, Commitment/Sentence -Agg Assault Date/Family/ House w/Weapon, Commitment/Sentence -Assault Fam/House Mem Impede Breath/Circulat; Remains in Custody

• Selio, Geronimo, JR, 08/1966, Temple: Local Warrant - Poss CS PG 1 >=1G<4G, Requires \$50,000 Bond, Remains in Custody

• Sanchez, Kaitlin Arlene, 04/2002, Stockdale: Local Warrant Evading Arrest Det w/ Veh, Requires - \$150,000 Bond, Remains in Custody

 Foster, Jacob Daniel, 02/1991, Gonzales: Warrantless/On-View -Fail to Identify Fugitive Intent Give False Info, Released - \$2,000 Bond

<u>11/30/23</u>

• Rugama-Rivera, Neyding Jessenia, 08/1997, Nixon: Warrantless/On-View -Traffic Offens, Released -Order to Appear JP1 Bohm, Arun Yusif, 02/1977, Waelder: Warrantless/On-View -Criminal Trespass, **Remains in Custody** • Hernandez, Isabelle

Driving While Intoxicated, Remains in Custody Torres, Juan Lugo, 01/1985, San Antonio: Warrantless/On-View -Poss CS PG 2 >=1G<4G. Released - \$2,500 Bond; Warrantless/On-View -False Drug Test, Falsification Device, Released - \$500 Bond

12/02/23

 Barthels, Chayce William, 04/1983, Gonzales: Warrantless/ **On-View – Driving While** Intoxication 3rd or more IAT, Released - \$25,000 Bond







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Gonzales Healthcare Systems

December 2023

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									Hearing Spe
									830-372-22
	4		5	6		7		8	Chiropracti
Austin MFM		Dr. Echols	Dr. Quebedeaux	Dr.	Ryan		Amy Trost		Jeff Echols,
			Dr. Miller	Dr.	Echols		Dr. Miller		512-799-68
	11	1	2	13		14		15	Dermatolog
Austin MFM		Dr. Echols	Dr. Quebedeaux	Dr.	Ryan		Dr. Bui		Vicente Qu
Dr. Malik		Dr. Quintero	Dr. Twitero	Dr.	Echols				830-626-55
Dr. Desai									
	18	19	Э	20		21		22	Nephrology
Austin MFM		Dr. Echols	Dr. Quebedeaux	Dr.	Ryan				Azhar M. M
			Dr. Miller	Dr.	Malik				361-576-00
				Dr.	Echols				Yong Du, M
	25	2	5	27		28		29	361-576-00
Closed		Dr. Echols	Dr. Quebedeaux	Dr.	Ryan		Closed at Noon		
Christmas Day				Dr.	Echols				Obstetrics
				Dr.	Kirchner				Alyson Kirch

Specialty Physician **Outpatient Clinic**

udiology my Trost earing Specialist 30-372-2237

Pain Management Eric Miller, MD 830-272-7746

Urology Robert Ryan, III, MD 830-379-8491

Joseph Kavanagh, MD

Ophthalmology

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Orthopedics

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Trent Twitero, MD

eff Echols, DC 12-799-6811

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lephrology zhar M. Malik, MD 61-576-0011 ong Du, MD 61-576-0011

bstetrics lyson Kirchner, MD, OBGYN

Podiatry Terri Quebedeaux, DPM, PA 830-303-0005 Charles White, DPM

830-379-1500

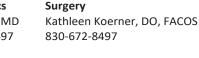
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Grand Ol' Christmas Show brings holiday cheer to VC's Welder Center



SPECIAL TO THE INQUIRER

Will Hearn's Grand Ol' Christmas Show, a musical comedy featuring Blue Water Highway and the Dirty River Jazz Band, will take place at Victoria College's Leo J. Welder Center for the Performing Arts on Tuesday, Dec. 19 at 7:30 p.m.

The special 20th anniversary tour presentation will feature a blend of traditional Christmas tunes, hilarious sketch comedy and contemporary pop-culture satire. The show is described as "SNL in reverse," offering a fresh take on the classic Christmas experience that appeals to audiences of all ages.

The performance recreates a

vintage radio program complete with a live studio audience, the N-O-E-L Radio Orchestra and Gospel Singers. Attendees can expect to hear their favorite Christmas classics like never before, from heartfelt renditions to unexpected pop-culture twists.

The event is sponsored by Robby and Tammi Burdge, South Star Wealth Management, and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

Tickets are \$35 for general seating and \$40 for premium seating. Tickets can be purchased online at WelderCenter.org or by calling the box office at (361) 570-8587.

The Welder Center is located at 214 N. Main Street in Victoria.



CONTRIBUTE

Celebrating Victoria College's first-place Adult Education & Literacy Co-enrollment Award, from left, are VC President Dr. Jennifer Kent, Adult Education Director Tiffany Johnson, Adult Education Program Manager Monica Migl, and Dean of the Division of Academic Support & Student Success Babette Lowe.

Victoria College earns top award, \$75,000 grant for adult education efforts

SPECIAL TO THE INQUIRER

Victoria College's Adult Education Department was recognized Nov. 30 with the first-place Adult Education & Literacy Co-enrollment Award at the 2023 Texas Workforce Conference in Houston.

The award, accompanied by a \$75,000 performance-based grant award, acknowledges VC for having the highest number in the state of adult education students co-enrolled in workforce services offered by the Local Workforce Development Board.

"We are proud of our Adult Education Department for receiving this well-deserved recognition," said Dr. Jennifer Kent, VC President. "This achievement highlights Victoria College's commitment to serving adult learners and empowering them to achieve upward economic mobility."

In partnership with Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent, VC offers adult learners opportunities to prepare for the GED, improve their English proficiency, and earn an industry-recognized credential leading to higher earning potential. "We are grateful for our partnership with Workforce Solutions Golden Crescent," said Tiffany Johnson, VC's Adult Education Director. "It is truly rewarding to see our adult learners take advantage of free services to enhance their skills, continue their education, and secure better jobs."

SALES TAX ALLOCATIONS

County	- City	\$ Rate	Net Payment This ‡ Period	Comparable Payment Prior ‡ Year	\$ % Change	¢ Payment YTD	Prior Year ‡ Payment YTD	¢ % Change
Gonzales	Gonzales	1.500%	\$259,094.76	\$318,120.09	-18.55%	\$3,181,478.47	\$3,245,156.08	-1.96%
Gonzales	Nixon	1.500%	\$28,847.65	\$31,365.58	-8.02%	\$394,937.01	\$373,885.26	5.63%
Gonzales	Smiley	1.000%	\$2,339.44	\$2,630.38	-11.06%	\$36,936.97	\$34,640.49	6.62%
Gonzales	Waelder	1.500%	\$11,658.65	\$9,104.43	28.05%	\$137,759.36	\$84,776.57	62.49%

County	Rate ‡	Net Payment This Period	Comparable Payment Prior Year	% Change ≑	Payment YTD *	Prior Year Payment YTD *	% Change *
Gonzales	0.500%	\$213,902.20	\$224,306.68	-4.63%	\$2,621,679.38	\$2,336,959.96	12.18%
Gonzales	0.500%	\$213,902.20	\$224,306.68	-4.63%	\$2,621,679.38	\$2,336,959.96	12.18%

SPD	*	Rate ‡	Net Payment This Period	Comparable Payment Prior Year	% Change 🗘	Payment YTD 🗘	Prior Year Payment YTD	% Change 🕈
Gonzales Co ESD 1		0.375%	\$37,515.67	\$30,708.18	22.16%	\$479,273.55	\$30,708.47	1,460.72%
Gonzales Co ESD 1		0.375%	\$37,515.67	\$30,708.18	22.16%	\$479,273.55	\$30,708.47	1,460.72%
Gonzales Co ESD 1-A		0.125%	\$287.54	\$499.05	-42.38%	\$3,947.64	\$499.05	691.03%
Gonzales Co ESD 1-A		0.125%	\$287.54	\$499.05	-42.38%	\$3,947.64	\$499.05	691.03%
Gonzales Co ESD 2		1.125%	\$119,191.98	\$59,934.57	98.87%	\$1,546,565.66	\$59,935.45	2,480.38%
Gonzales Co ESD 2		1.125%	\$119,191.98	\$59,934.57	98.87%	\$1,546,565.66	\$59,935.45	2,480.38%
Gonzales Co ESD 2-A		0.375%	\$897.56	\$1,525.76	-41.17%	\$12,700.53	\$1,525.76	732.40%
Gonzales Co ESD 2-A		0.375%	\$897.56	\$1,525.76	-41.17%	\$12,700.53	\$1,525.76	732.

TAX CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

\$1.1 billion in local sales tax allocations for December, 2.5 percent more than in December 2022.

These allocations are based on sales made in October by businesses that report tax monthly.

For the month of December 2023, Gonzales County municipalities received just a combined \$301,940.50 in sales tax allocations, down some \$59,279.98 or 16.41 percent below the \$361,220.48 received during December 2022.

For the year, county municipalities have received \$3,751,111.81, up \$12,653.41 or just a third of a percent, above the \$3,738,458.40 received through this time in 2022. Sales tax allocations for Gonzales, the largest city in the county which generates the lion's share of sales tax revenue, were \$259,094.76, down \$59,025.33 or 18.55 percent below the \$318,120.09 received during December 2022. 2022 was a record-high and the city had never before received that much in allocations, which could mean that last year was an aberration. The amount received in December was almost as high as the total amount received in November, which includes some quarterly tax receipts.

For the year, the city has received \$3,181,478.47, down \$63,677.61 or 1.96 percent, below the all-time record \$3,245,156.08 received at this same point in 2022. However, the amount paid to Gonzales in 2023 is still the second-highest amount the city has ever collected up to this point in a year behind 2022's allocation and marks only the second year ever the city has topped \$3 million in sales tax receipts. Waelder received a total of \$11,658.65, up a healthy 28.05 percent or \$2,554.22, above the \$9,104.43 received in December 2022. For the year, Waelder has received a record \$137,759.36, up \$52,982.79, or 62.49 percent, above the former record of \$84,776.57 the

city received last year.

Sales tax receipts for Nixon were \$28,847.65, down \$2,517.93, or 8.02 percent, below the \$31,365.58 received in December 2022. For the year, the city has received \$394,937.01, up \$21,051.75, or 5.63 percent, above the \$373,885.26 received at this same point last year.

Finally, Smiley's sales tax receipts were \$2,239.44, down \$290.94, or 11.06 percent, from the \$2,630.38 received in December 2022. For the year, the city has received \$36,936.97, up \$2,296.48 or 6.62 percent above the \$34,640.49 received at this point in 2022.

Three cities in Gonzales County

It is worth noting that the \$318,120.09 received in December

— Gonzales, Nixon and Waelder — collect a 1.5 percent sales tax rate, while Smiley collects a 1 percent sales tax.

Gonzales County itself also receives a 0.5 percent sales and use tax and for the year, the county has received \$2,621,679.38 — up 12.18 percent above the \$2,336,959.96 received in 2022.



UIL cutoffs announced, leaving school districts wondering where they'll be

BY LEW K. COHN

Inquirer Publisher

The University Interscholastic League announced the official realignment and reclassification cutoffs for all six divisions on Friday, Dec. 8, telling every member school in the state what conference they will be playing in for the 2024-26 biennium.

While there is no surprise for Gonzales High School that it will again be in 4A or for Nixon-Smiley that it will again be in 3A, there could be some trickle-down impact on both schools, especially when it comes to their alignment for high school football.

According to the numbers released by UIL, schools with an enrollment of 2,275 and

See UIL, page 15

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	Geieir	OTIAN	-	RECLAS	SIFICA	TIMN	
RECLASSIFICATION FREALIENMENT				G REALIENMENT			
	2025 & 2025		2024-2025 & 2025-2026				
CONFERENCE	ENROLLMENT	# SCHOOLS		FOOTBALL CONFERENCE & DIVISION	ENROLLMENT	# SCHOOLS	
6A	2,275 & Above	247		5A Division I	1,903 - 2,274	128	
	the second se			5A Division II	1,315-1,902	122	
5A	1,315 - 2,274	253		4A Division I	957 - 1,314	106	
4A	545 - 1,314	218		4A Division II	545 - 956	94	
3A	254 - 544	231		3A Division I	369 - 544	101	
				3A Division II	254 - 368	100	
2A	105 - 253	226		2A Division I 2A Division II	181.5 - 253 105 - 181.4	103	
1A	104.9 & Below	216		1A Division I	61.5 - 104.9	78	
VISITUMTEXA	S.ORG FOR ENROLLM	ENT NUMBERS		1A Division II	61.4 & Below	76	
VISIT OILTEAM	S. OAG FOR ENAOLLM	ENTROMBERS		VISIT UILTEXAS.OR			



Lady Apaches compete in Goliad tourney

STAFF REPORT

The Gonzales Lady Apaches brought home two wins from their Goliad Tournament appearance Thursday, Dec. 7 through Saturday, Dec. 9. The Lady Apaches beat Wood-

Gonzales junior Bella Aguero (2) passes the ball to sophomore Reanna Brown (22) in the game against St. Mary's Hall Tuesday, Dec. 12.

Turnovers plague Lady Apaches in loss to St. Mary's

BY VANDY VAN EPPS

Gonzales Inquirer

The Gonzales Lady Apaches are on their final stretch of non-district games and played one of two games Tuesday, Dec. 12 against St. Mary's Hall.

Turnovers plagued the Lady Apaches in their 64-27 loss to the Lady Barons, but head coach Mark Belford said they didn't execute their will against St. Mary's Hall.

Turnovers was the topic entering halftime when Belford talked to his team.

"We just talked about turnovers. We talked about not turning over the ball, making decisions with the ball. Defensively we're always giving ourselves a chance, but then

See APACHES, page 15



Gonzales sophomore Jayda Glass (21) shoots from the air for a two-point shot against the Lady Barons in a non-district match.



PHOTOS BY VANDY VAN EPPS Above: Lady Apaches' sophomore Kilee Schwausch (5) dribbles the ball down court against a St. Mary's Hall defender trailing her. Right: Lady Apaches' freshman Jordan Gonzales (1) dribbles the ball down court.



sboro, 40-10, and Yorktown, 45-20, in the Goliad tournament.

Gonzales was handed three tournament losses over the weekend; the Lady Apaches fell to host Goliad by one point, 43-42.

The Lady Apaches were handed losses by Poth, 50-35, and Bishop, 50-25.

Gonzales will head back on the road against St. Mary's Hall Tuesday, Dec. 12 and Marion Friday, Dec. 15 to close out nondistrict play.

The Lady Apaches will open up district play against the YWLA Cardinals in the Apache Gym Tuesday, Dec. 19. Tip off is set for 6 p.m.

N-S Lady Mustangs top Poteet

STAFF REPORT

The Nixon-Smiley Mustangs hosted the Poteet Lady Aggies Friday, Dec. 8 in a non-district contest.

The Lady Mustangs kicked off the game strong, outscoring Poteet, 22-18, in the first half of the game.

The Poteet outscored the Lady Mustangs, 9-6, in the third quarter and cut the Lady Mustangs' lead to one, 28-27.

The Lady Mustangs would outscore Poteet in the fourth quarter, 12-5, securing the 40-32 win.

Nixon-Smiley will host Lytle Friday, Dec. 15, and will travel to South San Antonio West Tuesday, Dec. 19.

Lytle game tips off at 6:15 p.m. and the West game tips off at 6:30 p.m.

Mustangs fall to Poth in rematch

STAFF REPORT

The Nixon-Smiley Mustangs and the Poth Pirates met on the basketball court Tuesday, Dec. 12 for the first time since their area playoff match in February during the 2022-23 season, when Poth won 56-31.

The Mustangs kicked off the game strong and took the lead against the Pirates, 17-16, in the first quarter; and defensively held Poth to 7 points in the second period to claim a 31-23 lead at halftime.

Poth would flip the script on the Mustangs by holding them to 16 points in the second half while scoring 32 points of their own, handing Nixon-Smiley a 55-47 loss.

The Mustangs drop to 8-6 on the season according to Max Preps. Nixon-Smiley will hit the road, going to Victoria Tuesday, Dec. 12 in a nondistrict match against the St. Joseph Flyers.

The St. Joseph game tips off at 7:30 p.m.

The Mustangs will host their own tournament Thursday, Dec. 28 through Friday, Dec. 29, and they'll kick off district play against Marion Friday, Jan. 12 at 8 p.m.

Apaches fall to Navarro on the road

STAFF REPORT

The Gonzales Apaches returned to Geronimo Tuesday, Dec. 12 for a nondistrict match against the Navarro Panthers.

The Apaches fell to the Panthers, 74-51.

Gonzales will return home for a non-district game against the Lockhart Lions Friday, Dec. 15, and the Apaches will head back on the road in a matchup against the Natalia Mustangs Tuesday, Dec. 19.

The Apaches will kick

off district play against the La Vernia Bears on Friday, Dec. 29.

Lockhart game tips off at 6:30 p.m.

Natalia game tips off at 6:30 p.m.

La Vernia game tips off at 11:30 a.m.

Apaches compete at Navarro tourney

STAFF REPORT

The Gonzales Apaches hit the road Thursday, Dec. 7 for one last tournament in the Seguin area at Navarro High School.

The Apaches took home a tournament win over the Luling Eagles, 83-65, and played three other games, according to Max Preps.

Gonzales faced St. Mary's Hall, but no score was reported from that game. In the first game, the Apaches fell to the Davenport Wolves, 82-41, in a rematch of the season opener.

Gonzales fell to their district opponent, the YMLA Lions, 73-44, Friday, Dec. 8; this game counts as a tournament loss, not a district loss.

The Apaches would return to Navarro Tuesday,

Dec. 12 for a non-district contest.

Gonzales will return home for a non-district contest against Lockhart Friday, Dec. 15, with tip off set for 6:30 p.m.

The Apaches will then hit the road before going on their holiday break with a non-district match against the Natalia Mustangs. The tip off for that game is set for 6:30 p.m.

APACHES CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

we're killing ourselves when we turn the ball over on the other side," Belford said.

The Lady Apaches will take on the Marion Lady Bulldogs for their last non-district game, and Belford said they'll continue to work on the offense and building confidence from his players.





Mustangs hit the road for Moulton tournament

STAFF REPORT

The Nixon Smiley Mustangs competed in their second-to-last tournament in Moulton Thursday, Dec. 7.

The Mustangs squared off against four teams in the tournament, according to Max Preps; Nixon-Smiley faced off against Moulton and Shiner in the first day of the tournament; the Mustangs fell to Shiner, 51-34, and Nixon beat host Moulton, 42-37.

On the second day of the tourna-

ment, the Mustangs took home a win over Bastrop, 71-21, and fell to Sacred Heart, 59-52, in the final game of the tournament to finish in second place.

Seniors Carl White and Kade Dixon were named to the Moulton all-tournament team.

The Mustangs will hit the road in back-to-back games against Poth (Tuesday, Dec. 12) and Victoria St. Joseph (Friday, Dec. 15).

Nixon-Smiley will host its last tournament at home Thursday, Dec. 28.

Nixon-Smiley Mustangs earn all-district recognition

STAFF REPORT

Several Nixon-Smiley Mustangs took home all-district recognition for the 2023 season.

FIRST TEAM ALL-DISTRICT

Offense: freshman fullback Garet Gonzales, senior quarterback Luke Moses, senior offensive lineman Flores, junior defensive back AJ Zamora, senior offensive lineman Derek Maldonado, senior defensive back Kade Dixon, senior tight end Carl White

ACADEMIC ALL DISTRICT

Freshman Eric Rodriguez, freshman Jaylun Rodriguez, sophomore Abdiel Benitez,

Belford added it's still a learning process for many players, getting them to play new positions for the first time.

Gonzales will play on the road in Marion Friday, Dec. 15. Tip off is set for 6:30 p.m.

The Lady Apaches will kickoff district play against the YWLA Cardinals Tuesday, Dec. 19. Tip off is set for 6 p.m.

Junior Kilee Schwausch (5) shoots a corner two for the Lady Apaches in their match against the St. Mary's Hall Lady Baron Tuesday, Dec. 12.

Jesus Espino.

Defense: sophomore linebacker Davian Ramos, junior linebacker Timothy McGlothine, senior defensive lineman Jesus Espino

SECOND TEAM ALL-DISTRICT

Offense: junior offensive lineman Ryan Paez, senior offensive lineman Dakota O'Neal

Defense: junior defensive line Nick Martinez, junior linebacker John Garza, senior linebacker Carl White

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Junior defensive back Aiden

sophomore Gavino Moreno, junior Tristen Mikesh, senior Gracen Martin, junior Angel Estrada, junior Cesar Vazquez, junior Eduardo Betancourt, junior Adolfo Vazquez, junior Carlos Carlos, junior Noah Jenks, Carl White, Luke Moses, Aiden Flores, AJ Zamora, Nick Martinez, John Garza, Timothy McGlothine, Ryan Paez, Kade Dixon, Dakota O'Neal, Jesus Espino, Derek Maldonado.

ACADEMIC ALL STATE

First team: Luke Moses Second team: Jesus Espino

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

above will be in Class 6A — a total of 247 schools. Those with enrollment between 1,315 students and 2,274 will be in 5A, a total of 253 schools. Schools with an enrollment of between 545-1,314, which includes Gonzales, will be in Class 4A, the second-smallest classification in terms of number of members with 218 schools.

Schools with 254-544 students, like Nixon-Smiley, will be in Class 3A, which includes 231 schools. Those with 105-253 will be in Class 2A, which includes 226 schools, while those with 104.9 students and below will be in Class 1A, with a total of 216 schools.

Football is broken further down into divisions in Classes 5A-1A so that schools do not play anyone in district with more than twice their own enrollment. Gonzales will be in Division 4A-2, comprised of schools with 545-956 students, which is the third-smallest division in terms of number of member schools with a total of 94.

Meanwhile, Nixon-Smiley will be in Division 3A-2, comprised of schools with 254-368 students which will have 100 member schools.

According to the information released Friday, Dec. 8 by UIL,

there are a total of 22 schools which will be new to 4A-2 in 2024. These include Athens, Bonham, Brock, Burkburnett, China Spring, Dallas Hutchins, Eagle Mountain, San Antonio Memorial, Fort Worth Dunbar, Harmony Innovation, Katy Harmony, Kemp, Kingsville King, La Feria, La Vega, Lorena, Lubbock Cooper Liberty, Lubbock Estacado, Mineral Wells, Rockport-Fulton, Shepherd and Cleveland Tarkington.

Another 21 schools will be leaving 4A-2, including Clint, Clint Mountain View, Fabens, Pecos, Canyon West Plains, Sweetwater, Wichita Falls Hirschi (turned into middle school), Dallas Lincoln, Dallas Roosevelt, Texarkana Liberty-Eylau, Bridge City, Hardin-Jefferson, Liberty, Austin Achieve, Manor New Tech, SA Young Men's Leadership, Corpus Christi West Oso, Orange Grove, Bishop and Raymondville.

The last seven of those are all in Region 4, which was already the smallest of the four regions with just 20 schools. Rockport-Fulton will likely move into District 15, which will keep Ingleside, Sinton and Robstown, while La Feria and Kingsville King would likely move into District 16 with Port Isabel and Rio Grande City Grulla. District 14 would likely take in San Antonio Memorial to replace San Antonio Young Men's Leadership. Meanwhile, District 13 would still have Geronimo Navarro, Jarrell, Lago Vista and Wimberley without Austin Achieve or Manor New Tech.

Gonzales is currently in Region 3 in District 12 with Caldwell, Cuero, Giddings, La Grange and Smithville. There has been scuttlebutt that Gonzales and/or Cuero could move to District 15 to help shore up the Sinton, Ingleside and Robstown district, but it would not be immediately apparent what would become of District 12 in that scenario nor does it make sense to break up a tidy district.

In District 9, Cleveland Tarkington and Shepherd could offset the loss of Bridge City, Hardin-Jefferson and Liberty, while Harmony Innovation and Katy Harmony appear to best fit District 10, which retained all of its schools (Bellville, La Marque, Royal, Sealy, Sweeny, West Columbia and Wharton.

In District 11, La Vega, China Spring and Lorena would be a natural fit for a district with Gatesville, Madisonville, Robinson and Waco Connally.

If the UIL wants to offset losses in Region 4, they could move Salado to District 13 due to its proximity to Jarrell. If Cuero and Gonzales are moved to District 15 to join Ingleside, Sinton, Robstown and Rockport Fulton, then UIL would likely overhaul District 10 to be La Marque, Sweeny, West Columbia, Wharton, Harmony Innovation and Harmony; District 11 to be La Vega, China Spring, Lorena, Gatesville, Robinson, Madisonville and Waco Connally; and District 12 to be Caldwell, Giddings, La Grange, Smithville, Bellville, Sealy and Brookshire Royal. This would allow there to be balance in Region 3 and preserve 20 teams in Region 4.

Of course, nothing is official until February, when the UIL will announce its official and final realignment.

In 3A-2, there will be 13 new teams joining the ranks, including Anthony, Blanco, Cotulla, Dallas Gateway, Vanderbilt Industrial, Inspired Vision Dallas, Muleshoe, San Antonio Young Men's Leadership Academy, Slaton, Stockdale, Thrall, Tolar and Woodville. Leaving 3A-2 will be Ballinger, San Angelo Texas Leadership, Spearman, Abernathy, Comanche, Mildred, Palmer, Omaha Pewitt, Elysian Fields, Waskom, Hemphill, Florence, Danbury and South San Antonio West

14 schools.

It is easy to place schools in Regions 1-3, but the biggest issue will be in Region 4, where there are six new schools coming in — Thrall, Vanderbilt Industrial, Blanco, Cotulla, San Antonio Young Men's Leadership and Stockdale.

Thrall can go in Florence's place in 13 and Vanderbilt can replace Danbury in 14. But what to do with four new teams that would need to be placed in either District 15 (Comfort, Dilley, Karnes City, Natalia, Nixon-Smiley and Poth) or District 16 (Banquete, George West, Hebbronville, Monte Alto, Odem, Santa Rosa and Taft).

Due to the locations of the schools, the best hope might be a redo of the two districts. District 15 could include Comfort, Blanco, Cotulla, Dilley, Natalia, SA YMLA, George West and Hebbronville while District 16 would be Banquete, Karnes City, Monte Alto, Nixon-Smiley, Poth, Stockdale, Odem, Santa Rosa and Taft. This is all speculation — the only other option is to leave District 16 alone and create a Super 10 district in District 15 by adding Blanco, Cotulla, SA YMLA and Stockdale.

Again, we'll know in February.

GonzalesInquirer

Texas seeks public input on expanding high-speed internet access

SPECIAL TO THE INQUIRER

The Texas Broadband Development Office, operated by the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, is soliciting input from the public on the new Texas Digital Opportunity Plan. The plan outlines how these entities will connect the Lone Star State for a brighter future by making it easier for all Texans to access and use the internet.

From today through Jan. 5, 2024, Texans can give their opinions on the Texas Digital Opportunity Plan by visiting broadbandfortexas.com/tdop.

Almost 2.8 million households and 7 million people in our state lack access to broadband, or high-speed internet, according to U.S. Census Bureau data. The Digital Opportunity Plan will provide these Texans with the technology and knowledge they need to fully participate in an increasingly digital world.

"Access to reliable, highspeed internet as a means of advancing education, training, employment opportunities, healthcare, and delivery of essential services is critical to the future of our state," said Glenn Hegar, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. "But we know that we can't do this without partners in the regions and the communities that need this service the most. Your input, passion and local knowledge will help us ensure the Texas Digital Opportunity Plan establishes a clear roadmap to

bridge the digital divide and promote digital opportunities for all Texans."

"The Texas Digital Opportunity Plan will allow more Texans to access technology and thrive," said Greg Conte, Director of the Texas Broadband Development Office. "We know that starts with improving broadband (or high-speed internet) adoption, device access and digital skills training, but we want to hear more from community members most in need."

Historically, the digital divide in Texas has disproportionately left out rural communities, communities of color and lowincome families, according to a 2016 Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas report. Because the internet and technology touch so many aspects of life today, bridging this divide is essential to ensure all Texans can participate and succeed.

The Broadband Development Office is partnering with organizations like the Texas Workforce Commission, chambers of commerce, industry associations, educational institutions and elected officials to highlight how high-speed internet and digital skills training can help Texans realize their economic potential.

Participants in the public comment period will help build a stronger, more connected Texas that can offer:

• Better access for better lives. Faster, quality internet can improve people's lives by providing better access to education, healthcare, and job opportunities, no matter where they live.

• Economic growth and job creation. Identifying digital barriers can create more jobs, attract investments and strengthen local economies.

• Online learning tools. Sharing ideas about the plan can help close the "homework gap" and make sure students have what they need to succeed in the digital age.

• Digital skills for all. The public's feedback will shape training and education plans so all Texans can succeed in a digital world.

• Cybersecurity and online safety. It's vital that Texans have the training they need to keep them safe online and protect their personal information.

GONZALES ODD FELLOWS LODGE #38 SPREADS A LITTLE CHRISTMAS CHEER!



Victoria College Gonzales Campus Continuing Education Administrative Assistant Lucinda Leazer; Academic/Financial Aid Advisor Jaime Nobles; VCGC Manager Vince Ortiz; Larry Mercer of Odd Fellows Lodge #38; VN Instructor Trisha Storey; and VCGC IVN Administrative Assistant Cindy Finch.





Paula Pekar of the Shiner Public Library.

Gonzales Odd Fellows Lodge #38 are grateful for the community support for our fund raisers, which has made these gifts possible.

Gonzales Odd Fellows Lodge #38 are always looking for new members. If interested, contact Larry Mercer at 830-263-0331.



Norma's House representatives Catherine Graham, left, and Emily Cook, right, with Larry Mercer of Odd Fellows Lodge #38.

Caroline Helms-Blundell, Gonzales Library Director, and Larry Mercer of Odd Fellows Lodge #38.



Jeannie Padilla, CPS Investigative Administrative Assistant, with gifts for four girls.



Maggie Gaytan of the Gonzales County Child Services Board and Larry Mercer of Odd Fellows Lodge #38.



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from the staff of



We will be closed on Monday, December 25 so that our employees may spend time with their families.

ELECTION CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cobar who also serves as city attorney for Nixon. Escobar has no Democratic challenger next November.

Incumbent Sheriff Keith A. Schmidt has filed for re-election to a full term as the county's top law enforcement official and is the only Republican candidate. Schmidt was appointed to the position in 2021 after the untimely death of Sheriff Robert Ynclan and was elected to serve the remainder of Ynclan's term in 2022.

On the Democratic side, Gonzales County Democratic Party Chair Yolanda Messman said Clay Allen, a candidate in last year's special election against Schmidt, will be the only Democratic candidate in the primary. He would face off against Schmidt in the November general election.

Incumbent Tax Assessor-Collector Crystal L. Cedillo filed for re-election without opposition. Cedillo has held the position since 2013 and will be seeking her fourth full term in office.

Incumbent Precinct 1 County Constable Johnnie Hall has filed for re-election in the GOP primary and faces a challenge from former Smiley City Marshall Scott Rhodes Sr., who ran against Hall in the 2020 GOP primary as well.

Incumbent Precinct 3 County Constable Derek Johnson was the only person who filed to run for his position, while incumbent Precinct 4 County Constable John J. Moreno was the only person who filed to run for his office.

The two incumbent district judges were the only ones to file to run on GOP ballot. They are 25th District Judge Bill Old III and 2nd 25th District Judge Jessica Crawford. There are no



Guadalupe Valley Electric Cooperative (GVEC) pledged \$90,000 or \$30,000 per year for three years to fund the YMCA Gonzales Program Center at Gonzales Elementary, which will serve as an afterschool program for students in grades 1-3. Present from GVEC were general manager Darren Schauer as well as board members Morris Harvey and Henry Schmidt Jr.



Sage Capital Bank pledged \$75,000 or \$7,500 per year for 10 years to fund the YMCA Gonzales Program Center at Gonzales Elementary. Present from Sage Capital Bank were Ryan Lee and Ross Hendershot, who also serves as president of the Gonzales ISD Board of Trustees.

YMCA CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

organization is thrilled to partner with Gonzales Independent School District and to offer a program that could help change the lives of students for generations to come.

"We all know that the YMCA is here to focus on improving literacy and academic excellence. We saw a need in Gonzales to partner with the school district and work together with the district focused on our first through third graders," Kacir said.

"Data shows that third grade reading levels, determine graduation rates and determine the number of prisons that are built. If we don't focus on those young people today, we lose that battle. By increasing academic excellence and literacy in a community. We're able to decrease poverty levels. We're able to increase the hourly wage and earnings of these individuals. We're able to see more development and economic development because now we reach these children and we have a skilled and ready workforce in Gonzales."

Kacir said three major donors stepped up to help fund the program in addition to a \$150,000 pledge from the Victoria YMCA over three years.



I FW K. COHN

Episcopal Church of the Messiah pledged \$30,000 or \$10,000 per year for three years to fund the YMCA Gonzales Program Center at Gonzales Elementary. Present from Church of the Messiah were Kasey Floyd and Janna Christian. YMCA of Victoria also pledged an additional \$150,000 or \$50,000 per year for three years.

"And though church and state may prevent Jesus being talked about in these walls during the school day, those walls come down at 3:30 (p.m.) when the YMCA program starts."

The new executive director for the Gonzales YMCA is Lauren Harris, who will oversee the afterschool enrichment program for children in first through third grades. Harris is familiar to Gonzales parents because she also is the owner and artistic director for Studio E Dance.

YMCA board members and ex-officio members include Ryan Arrellano, the work of Gonzales Elementary Principal Nikki Nerada, who will help see that children are assessed before they start taking part in the afterschool program.

"We'll have a baseline for their academic achievement, and then we'll be able to report results at the end of the program," Kacir said.

Gonzales ISD Superintendent Dr. Elmer Avellanada praised the partnership with the YMCA and how it dovetails into what the district wishes to accomplish.

"I was asked, 'Why are you supporting this YMCA Gonzales partnership?' And to me, it was very simple," Avellanada said. "It's everything that Connie discussed. She's right. Prisons are built based on the reading literacy of third grade students. That's a shame, but that's also a fact. "On top of the this

"On top of that, this initiative is directly interrelated with our mission as a district. In Gonzales,

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we design meaningful experiences for our students, so that they can be inspired to make an impact beyond themselves. That's our mission in Gonzales ISD and this initiative was so easy to get behind because it does that work for us. It allows our students to have the resources academically, socially and spiritually, to become better students and to grow."

Avellanada said the only mistake he made was underestimating Kacir's ability to raise enough money for the program, which requires at least \$250,000 in local investment. He said he was doubtful the program would come to be after his first meeting with Kacir, even with her unbridled enthusiasm and support.

"After our meeting was over, I said, 'I don't know if we can get this done." he admitted. "I underestimated her. And I'm thankful that I was wrong. And I'm thankful that the resources are going to be provided to our students to grow and get better academically, socially and financially."

Democratic candidates.

The race for U.S. Congress for House 27 has two candidates in the March GOP primary — incumbent Michael Cloud of Victoria and challenger Luis Espindola, a defense contractor. Meanwhile, the two Democrats in the primary are teacher Tanya Loyd and tax preparer Anthony (A.J.) Tristan.

For state House 44, the incumbent Rep. John Kuempel has a pair of GOP primary challengers in federal procurement employee David Freimarck of Cibolo and retired U.S. Marine Greg Switzer of Seguin. The lone Democrat on the ballot is shoemaker Eric Norman. Darren Schauer, general manager at GVEC, and his board pledged \$90,000, or \$30,000 per year for the first three years, while Ross Hendershot, Chief Operating Officer/EVP of Sage Capital Bank, pledged \$75,000, or \$7,500 per year for a 10-year period. Finally, the Episcopal

Church of the Messiah in Gonzales pledged \$30,000, or \$10,000 per year with Janna Christian and Kasey Floyd representing that organization.

"We talked about the YMCA, and how it benefits our students in mind, body and spirit. The YMCA's purpose is the same today as it was 179 years ago when it started. It's built on Christian principles," Kacir said. the director of THRIVE Healthplex at Gonzales Healthcare Systems; Justin Schwausch, a Gonzales ISD board member and GVEC employee; Ryan Lee, an employee at Sage Capital Bank and member of the Gonzales EDC; Bud Oliver, CEO of the Victoria YMCA, which sponsors the Gonzales YMCA; Bruce Maulding, community executive, Live Oak District of Boy Scouts of America; Vince Ortiz, director of Victoria College's Gonzales Center; Ralph Camarillo, Gonzales parks director; Leah Glass, HR director at GVEC; local attorney Robert Bland; and Dr. John Thomas, family physician at Gonzales Healthcare Systems. Kacir also recognized





GISD CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"The reason I bring this request for your consideration is due to the fact that, for several months, the response has continuously been that it has been approved, but yet not have been applied," Blackwell said.

Blackwell said many schools in the surrounding area have reported providing raises across all functions of the school district. Currently the food service department in GISD is the lowestpaid department and has had an increase in staff turnover.

"In our school district, we continually promote that our district is committed to growing greatness. We know that our department is always ready to adapt to school needs to assist in growing greatness for all our students," Blackwell said.

"We have lost several employees this year to Buc-ee's and other businesses who are paying more than we currently do in GISD. In this case of Buc-ee's, the current pay is \$21 to \$24 per hour. This brings up a concern of what will happen once they complete the expansion of a 75,600-squarefoot facility which is only a 30-minute drive from Gonzales," Blackwell added.

Blackwell said the food service department fund has an excess fund balance that can absorb the pay increase without the affecting the district's general fund balance.

Blackwell added if an increase will not be provided then "the second clarification we seek is how do we align our department with a district's vision of growing greatness and retaining our staff without a financial incentive?"

"Our food service staff love serving the students and staff in Gonzales ISD. We look forward to your response to the clarification questions we are asking. Thank you for your time this evening and for your consideration of providing our department with a raise that we believe will be the first step increasing our staff retention rate," Blackwell said. High School Cafeteria Manager Adriana Perez expressed her concern over TRS insurance that the district provides to the staff. "Some of these ladies, as well as myself, do not have the option to choose. If we would like insurance, we simply cannot afford it. Being that eight percent is taken out of our check and another six percent twice, that leaves me as the manager with almost nothing. If I were to add insurance, in my situation, more would be taken out. As of now, \$300 is taken out of my check with TRS and taxes," Perez said. "These ladies have put in tremendous work this year to have breakfast in the classroom, closed campuses and having had some of our employees quit on us. It's been hard, but we keep showing up," Perez added.

In other board business, the board approved an interlocal agreement with Region 13 Education Service Center for the bond program management.

"Region 13 is already a partner with GISD and was recently engaged to support the district during the pre-bond phase," GISD Superintendent Dr. Elmer Avellaneda said. "Region 13 utilizes the services of Sledge Engineering as their preferred partner and professional engineering firm to support the district's facilities needs. Region 13 and Sledge Engineering have significant experience and success with bond programs similar to ours."

Region 13 and Sledge Engineering have worked with Nixon-Smiley Consolidated ISD, Poth ISD, Jarrell ISD, Lago Visa ISD, Floresville ISD, Moulton ISD and more.

Avellaneda added the administration recommended Region 13's program management service, which will provide project accounting, project plan review and project management.

"Their team will provide transparency via monthly board presentations and public meetings to share program progress. In details with our taxpayers, GISD is able to enter into an interlocal agreement with Region 13 in straightforward contracting terms," Avellaneda said.

The board approved the interlocal agreement, 7-0.

The board approved the following agenda items:

--approved the Ranking of Offerors and Delegate Contract Negotiations to the Superintendent for the Architectural/Engineering and Construction Administration Services for the November 2023 Bond Contruction Program.

--approved the Method for Construction Services for the 2023 Bond Program.

--approved a Resolution Declaring Intention to Reimburse Project Expenditures and Associated Budget Amendment

--approved the Annual Financial & Compliance Report for Fiscal Year Ended August 31,2023 and the Engagement Letter from Singleton, Clark, & Company, PC for the 2024 Fiscal Year Audit

--approved an Amendment to the Lease Contract with the Texas Department of Public Safety Clarifying Terms for Maintenance Costs

--approved the Purchase of One Regular Education School Bus and One Special Education School Bus and Associated Budget Amendment.



PHOTOS BY VANDY VAN EPPS

Above: The gym roof of the Edwards High School; the Edwards Association has received donations to repair the roof over the old locker room (below).

EDWARDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

a small grant to the Edwards Association. The Edwards Association was founded in the early 1980s by the alumni of Edwards High School in order to preserve the history of the city's segregated school, which served the African-American community of Gonzales.

"The property that was the high school was sold to the city in the early 1970s and then it was given back to the alumni association in the early 1980s ... the old alumni started renovating this property and trying to restore it," Tucy said.

Right now the Edwards Association is focusing on repairing a portion of the roof, Tucy said, but he added in the future they want to redo the entire roof.

"Along with that, we want to start renovation





on some of the other classrooms that's in the other building, the classroom buildings. We have future plans for those rooms as well. We're looking at trying to do some senior activities, evening activities for children, afterschool activities, but we need to get those rooms renovated in order to do A trailer full of roof repair materials sits at the Edwards Association.

that," Tucy said. "We are continuing to work here at the Edwards Association. Any volunteer work that we could get we would definitely welcome that. And I just want the community to know that the Edwards Community Center is open to the entire city and county of Gonzales," Tucy added.

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Perez used the Thanksgiving lunch this year as an example and she said it was the biggest they have ever had.

Perez added this was the first year that parents came to eat with their students.

"When we all say 'Growing Greatness,' our students, our future we are included in that slogan. We do it for our students and we do it for their future. We have proven we are growing greatness," Perez said.





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