

# The Gonzales Inquirer

OUR 169TH YEAR SERVING GONZALES COUNTY \$1.00

GONZALESINQUIRER.COM • /GONZALESINQUIRER • ESTABLISHED IN 1853 • GONZALES, TEXAS: HOME OF JOHN ZAVADIL

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 Tucey, president of the Edwards Association.

Tucey said that an individual donated \$1,800 for the material and the city has provided

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

## NIXON HOSTS CHRISTMAS PARADE



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

## County contracts with firm to develop master plan

BY LEW K. COHN  
Inquirer Publisher

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 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

## STARS IN THE VILLAGE



Bill Finch and The Bucksnot 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.

LEW K. COHN

## 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 2022, 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

See TAX, page 13



# 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.



VANDY VAN EPPS

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



CONTRIBUTED

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

**Sage Capital Bank**  
Financial Wisdom. Texas Roots.

[www.sagecapitalbank.com](http://www.sagecapitalbank.com)

830-672-8585



Member FDIC

## 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 to "ensure the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability 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.

## Celebrations

### Birthdays

**December 14th**  
Katherine Gillett  
Dillard Glass  
Glenn Glass  
Curt Ramkisson  
Nancy Sanders  
Tyree Schurig  
Doug Walshak

Devin Kistler  
Peggy Maloch  
Candy Washichek  
Dianne Neuse  
Angela Saldana

Janie Guevara  
Elaine Hoffpauir  
Kalie Leal  
Lupe Longoria  
Glynnia Penney  
Timoteo Solis  
Damian Sprayberry  
Isaac Villareal  
Sylvia Yackel

**December 15th**  
Barry Boothe  
Chassidy Bryant  
Angela Fonseca  
Karalyn Irving  
Isaac Mathis  
Chad Ruddock  
Richard Thiele  
Catina Valenta  
Lorraine Walshak

**December 17th**  
Jeff Downey  
Derek Floyd  
Houston Grier  
Holly Young

**December 20th**  
Frances Bibas  
Charise Brown  
Debbie Brown  
Sorelle Goodwin  
Sandra Tomas Philips  
Ray Lee Raley III  
Sue Shilling  
Debra Wallace  
Leroy Wenzel  
Collyn Brea  
Whiddon

**December 16th**  
Susan Adams  
Sophia Faulkner

**December 19th**  
Frank Benes

brought to you by

**STOREY JEWELERS**  
FINE DIAMONDS SINCE 1903

1606 N Sarah Dewitt Drive, Gonzales, Texas  
(830) 672-2402  
[www.storeyjewelers.com](http://www.storeyjewelers.com)

## Gonzales Weather



**December 14**  
61°/48°

Sunshine  
4% chance of rain • RealFeel 61



**December 15**  
55°/46°

Low clouds with a shower in spots in the afternoon  
40% chance of rain • RealFeel 53



**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



**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



**December 19**  
71°/46°

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



## 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:

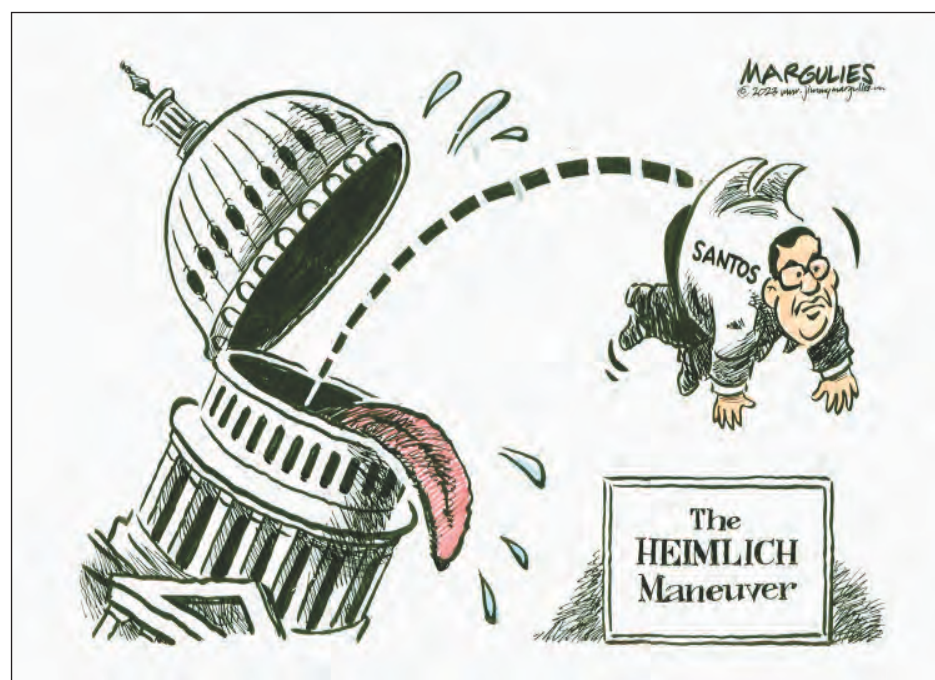
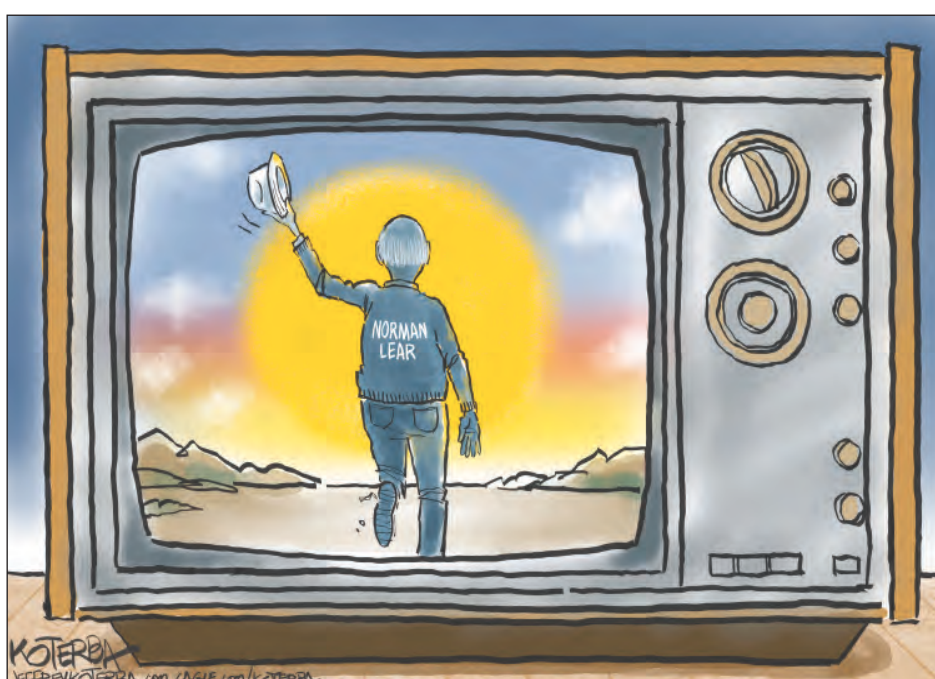
- depicts a cartoon-like fictional character that mimics a character primarily aimed at entertaining minors;
- imitates or mimics trademarks or trade dress of products that are or have been primarily marketed to minors;
- includes a symbol that is primarily used to market products to minors;
- includes an image of a celebrity; or
- includes an image that resembles a food product, including candy or juice.

A 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.



**DR. DON NEWBURY**  
The Idle American

## 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 foul-ups 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...”

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

### 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.com
- U.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.

## The Gonzales Inquirer

**The Gonzales Inquirer**, 622 St. Paul, Gonzales, TX 78629 is a periodical postage paid at Gonzales, Texas and additional mailing offices.

Postmaster: For change of address, notify **The Gonzales Inquirer**, P.O. Box 616, Gonzales, TX 78629-0616

### Mail Subscription Rates

Payable in advance

#### In county

One year ..... \$48  
Six months ..... \$36  
Three months ..... \$28

#### Out of county

One year ..... \$60  
Six months ..... \$48  
Three months ..... \$38

#### E-Edition

One year ..... \$40  
Six months ..... \$25  
Three months ..... \$20

You can reach us at: 830-672-2861 OR publisher@gonzalesinquirer.com

**Affiliations:**  
National Newspaper Association

South Texas Press Association

Texas Gulf Coast Press Association

### Staff

**PUBLISHER**  
Lew Cohn

**STAFF WRITER**  
Vandy Van Epps

**CONTRIBUTING**  
Betty Cohn  
Clayton Kelley

**BOOKKEEPER**  
Sanya Simmons

The Gonzales Inquirer is published every Thursday by Guadalupe Valley Publishing Co. USPS 221-740 • ISSN 1059-7158 • 622 St. Paul St., P.O. Box 616 • Gonzales, TX 78629



Quality healthcare, close to home.



1110 N. Sarah Dewitt Drive | Gonzales, Texas 78629 | 830.672.7581 | GonzalesHealthcare.com

# Kid Scoop

THE AWARD-WINNING PRINT & ONLINE FAMILY FEATURE



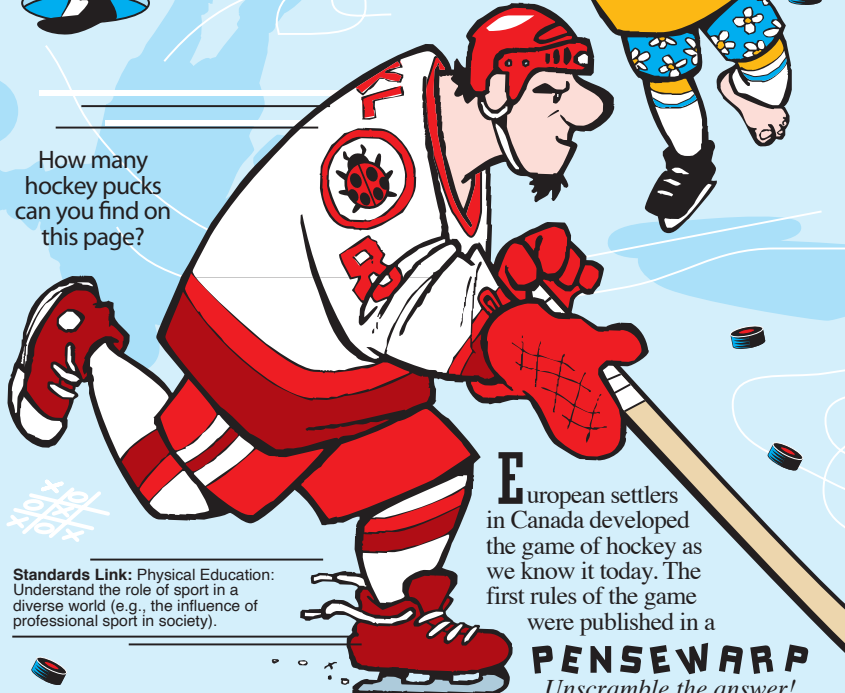
© 2023 by Vicki Whiting, Editor Jeff Schinkel, Graphics Vol. 40, No. 2

## Hockey!

How many silly things can you find in this hockey scene?



How many hockey pucks can you find on this page?



**Standards Link:** Physical Education: Understand the role of sport in a diverse world (e.g., the influence of professional sport in society).

Swish, click, swoosh. Swish, click. Click! Click! CLACK! "GOAL!"

These are the lively sounds of a hockey game!

Who were the first people to play hockey? No one knows for

sure. But for hundreds of years, kids have been sliding stones and other objects across ice with sticks and tree branches. Over the years, in different parts of Europe, a variety of games played on ice with sticks and sliding objects were created.

### WHACK!

A hockey puck slammed into the article about pucks, scattering the letters a, b and c. Can you put them all back where they belong?

Ho\_key pu\_ks weren't \_lw\_ys m\_de of \_l\_k ru\_er like they \_re tod\_y. The e\_rly pu\_ks were pro\_\_ly \_\_lls, \_ut other obje\_ts, su\_h\_s stones, lumps of \_o\_l, or frozen \_ow or horse poop were \_lso used. Wooden pu\_ks were used for m\_ny ye\_rs. Mothers sometimes put hot \_\_ked pot\_toes into their \_hildren's sk\_tes so th\_t the sk\_tes would \_e\_ozy \_nd w\_rm when the \_hildren re\_hed the rink or pond. The pot\_toes were not thrown \_w\_y. They eventu\_lly froze and were used \_s pu\_ks. Although ru\_\_er w\_s invented in 1939, it w\_sn't until the l\_te 1880s th\_t someone thought of m\_king ru\_\_er pu\_ks.

European settlers in Canada developed the game of hockey as we know it today. The first rules of the game were published in a

### PENSEWARP

Unscramble the answer!

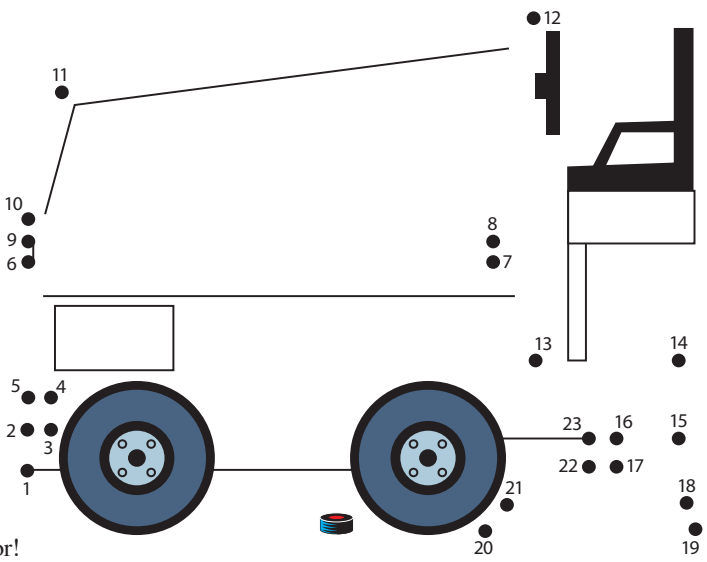
Source: Backcheck: Hockey for Kids Library and Archives Canada

## The Zamboni® Ice Resurfacing Machine

Ice hockey players push off and skate in bursts of speed up to 30 miles per hour! These quick starts, stops and turns chew up the ice very quickly.

In 1949, a man by the name of Frank Zamboni solved the problem of rough, chopped-up ice. He invented a machine that smoothed the ice by applying a layer of water which freezes to the top of the ice surface. This machine is still used today. It smooths the ice and is called a Zamboni® ice resurfacing machine after its inventor!

ZAMBONI and the configuration of the Zamboni® ice resurfacing machine are registered trademarks of the Zamboni Company.



## Extra! Extra! Hockey Words

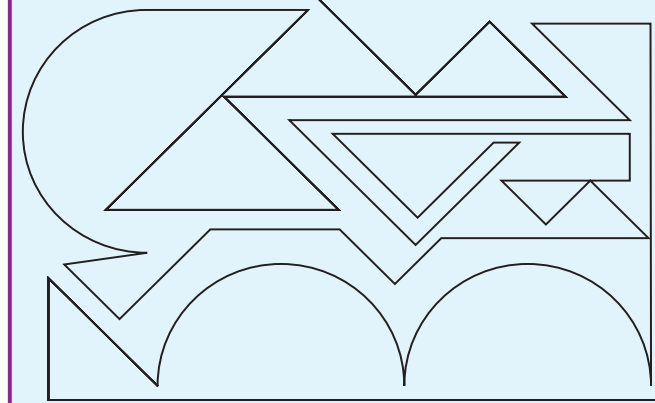
Look through today's newspaper for words that go with the game of hockey. The words can be nouns, verbs or adjectives. Put the words in ABC order.

**Standards Link:** Grammar: Identify nouns, verbs and adjectives in writing. Spelling: Put words in alphabetical order.

Standards Link: Writing: Use strategies to edit written work.

## Kid Scoop® Puzzler

**Icy Art** Can you redraw the pattern a skater left on the ice without crossing over any lines or removing your pencil from the page?



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

## Double Double Word Search

- HOCKEY
- STICKS
- PUCKS
- ZAMBONI
- PENCIL
- INVENTOR
- POTATOES
- COZY
- SKATES
- GAME
- RINK
- THIN
- FROZE
- POND
- COAL

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

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

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

FREE DOWNLOAD: Kid Scoop Teacher Activity Pack!

With hundreds of topics, every Kid Scoop® printable activity pack features six-to-seven pages of high-interest extra learning activities for home and school! Get your free sample today at: [kidscoop.com/activity-pages/](https://kidscoop.com/activity-pages/)

### Write On! Hockey Happiness

Write an *alliteration* about ice hockey. *Alliteration* is the repetition of initial consonant sounds in two or more neighboring words. **Example:** *Awesome ants always agitate!*

# BECOME A KID SCOOP SPONSOR!

Contact Sanya today for sizes and pricing! [Sanya.Simmons@GonzalesInquirer.com](mailto:Sanya.Simmons@GonzalesInquirer.com) or 830-672-2861

FIND OUT WHAT ALL YOUR FRIENDS ARE TALKING ABOUT

YOUR NEWS. YOUR WAY.

The Gonzales Inquirer

f GONZALESINQUIRER

### STARS IN THE VILLAGE



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 Naval 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."

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 available 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:

- A simplified direct loan paper application, reduced from 29 pages to 13 pages.
- The Loan Assistance Tool on farmers.gov that provides customers with an interactive step-by-step guide to identifying the Direct Loan products that may be a fit for their business needs and to understanding the application process.

**ARE YOU READY TO TRANSFORM YOUR LIFESTYLE AND CREATE A BETTER YOU?**

Join us for THRIVE's

# NUYU Lifestyle & Nutrition Program

Mondays January 8th - March 25, 2024  
classes offered at 11 am or 5:30 pm



**Register December 4th, 2023 - January 5th, 2024**  
**\*space is limited\***



### Nutrition Education

12 Educational classes led by our team of experts including a Registered Dietitian, certified therapists plus other professionals



### Personal Training

You will receive a personalized exercise program and keep you accountable throughout your journey.



### And so much more...

Includes but is not limited to: body composition analysis, access to THRIVE Healthplex and its amenities, 30-minute massage, and more.

Facilitators will include:

- GHS Registered Dietitian, Kristen Wollmuth
- THRIVE Healthplex Certified Personal Trainers
- Rejuvenate Med Spa Licensed Massage Therapists
- Physical Therapist, Ron Johnson
- GHS Nurse Practitioner, Diana Picha
- & so many more educated professionals!

*All for just \$450!*  
*Payment due at time of registration.*  
*\*10% discount for members.*

FOR MORE INFO CALL & ASK FOR ROBYN OR BELLE  
830-672-4986 ext. 2512









# 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.

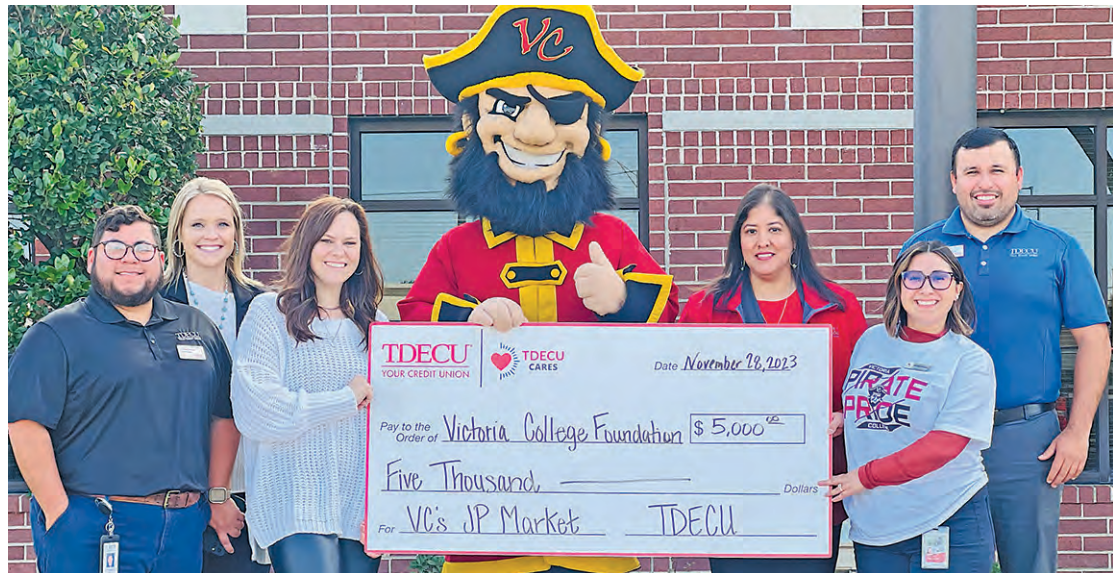
"We are grateful for the generous support of the TDECU Cares Foundation and our community

during this year's Giving Tuesday campaign," said Chelsea 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](http://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 Chelsea 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



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 Farrow 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.

# HERE'S MY CARD

Advertising You Can Use

Office: 830-672-3057 Mobile: 830-857-4006

- Residential & Commercial
- Septic System

A&A Contracting, Inc.  
**DBA / WALKER PLUMBING**

Sales & Service ML# M-8953  
 123 Bright Street Gonzales, Texas 78629  
[wwalker0522@gmail.com](mailto:wwalker0522@gmail.com)

**HACKNEY & TORRES**

**TREE SERVICE**

Service Residential, Ranch and Commercial Properties

**FULLY INSURED  
 FREE ESTIMATES!**

Call Larry at 361-649-4527  
 Call Jimmy at 361-564-8976

**Services Include:**

- Pruning
- Trimming
- Tree Removal
- Stump Grinding
- Cavity Work
- Cabling
- 100 ft Crane Svc

**MRAZ**  
 LUMBER CO., INC.

**MRAZ LUMBER CO., INC.**  
 BUILDING CONTRACTORS

361-594-3853  
 686 Hwy. 95 South  
 P.O. Box 1122 | Shiner, TX 77984-1122

**Fehner & Son Firearms**

Gun Shop • Safes • Hunting Supplies

For Assistance Call  
 Brandon or Stephanie Fehner  
**830-672-3710**  
[fehnerandson@gmail.com](mailto:fehnerandson@gmail.com)  
 1922 CR 197, Gonzales, Tx 78629

M-F 7am - 6pm • Sat - 7am - 1pm • Sun - CLOSED

**Stoney Herchek**

**BOOTLEGGER**  
 Off Road  
**ATV & UTV**  
 PARTS & SERVICE

**361-293-1941**  
 2345 Bootlegger Lane  
 Yoakum, Tx 77995

**DELTA ARMATURE and MOTOR WORKS**

Family Owned Since 1930

FOREIGN & DOMESTIC  
**RE**  
 WINDING  
 PAIRING  
 BUILDING

NEW ELECTRIC MOTORS IN STOCK, LG&SM, SINGLE PHASE & 3 PHASE - COMMERCIAL GENERATORS - PUMPS - REWINDING & REBUILDING - NEW AND REBUILT MOTORS

PHONE: 361-293-2213 • 1-800-752-2581  
 AFTER HOURS: 361-293-8979 • 361-293-8253  
 406 Forest St. • Yoakum, Texas 77995

**WEST MOTORS**

Sale • Service • 24 Hr Towing

1701 Sara Dewitt • Gonzales, TX 78629

830-672-7323 • 24hr 830-351-1152  
[www.westmotors.com](http://www.westmotors.com)

Sales: Mon-Thurs 9-6, Fri 9-5, Sat 9-1  
 Service Center: Mon-Fri 8-5, Sat - Closed

**Paul J. Jordan**  
 Owner

P.O. Box 1637  
 Gonzales, Texas 78629

**Jordan Equipment Co.**  
 New & Used Equipment Sales & Rentals

"Specializing in skidsteers and skidsteer attachments"

830-672-8393 Office  
 210-912-5744 Mobile

[jordanequipmnet@gvec.net](mailto:jordanequipmnet@gvec.net)  
[www.jordanequipmentco.com](http://www.jordanequipmentco.com)

**FRIEDEL DRILLING CO.**

**361-293-5545**

Complete Water Well Service  
 Residential - Oilfield - Municipal  
 Licensed Drillers & Pump Installers  
 Located in Hochheim, Texas  
 Email us - [fdc@friedeldrilling.com](mailto:fdc@friedeldrilling.com)  
 Call for free estimates

**FIRST SHOT LIQUOR**

730 Seydler St, Gonzales • 830-672-3107  
 Hours: Monday-Saturday 10am-9pm

**FREE ESTIMATES**

**LEO MILLER & SONS**  
 ROOFING

**512-398-6961**

30 YRS EXPERIENCE

**THE HEIGHTS OF GONZALES**

**BABY SONIA MARES**  
 Marketing/Admissions Coordinator  
[admissions@theheightsgonzales.com](mailto:admissions@theheightsgonzales.com)  
 830.263.2239 cell  
 830.672.4530 phone  
 830.672.4543 fax

**TEXAS COOL ONE**

(830) 822-1474

Serving Gonzales and surrounding cities

- Air & Heating
- Repair & Replacement
- Maintenance Plans

"We Bring the Comfort"  
 License Number: TA CLB60045C

**GONZALES LAWN PRO**

(830) 339-1236  
[www.gonzaleslawnpro.com](http://www.gonzaleslawnpro.com)

Landscape Irrigation Privacy Fence  
 Maintenance Installation

Jacob Carter  
 LI#0026605

Want to place an ad on the Business Card Page?  
 Call Sanya at 830-672-2861

**The Gonzales Inquirer**

or email information to  
[sanya.simmons@gonzalesinquirer.com](mailto:sanya.simmons@gonzalesinquirer.com).

**ELSTNER DOZER SERVICE LLC**

**KEITH & SHEILA ELSTNER**  
**830-857-4719**

RANCH TYPE FENCING  
 LAND CLEARING  
 STOCK PONDS  
 ROOT PLOWING & SHAPING  
 HOUSE AND BARN PADS

**Mulching Services and Land Management**

**Michael Durrett**  
**830-857-4442**

**BNM ELECTRIC LLC**

Residential - Commercial - Industrial  
**830.857.0930**



OBITUARIES

BILLY DON PARKER



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

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



Lea Ann Johnson, 63, passed away on December 8th, 2023. She was born February 8, 1960, in Victoria, Texas to William Gunn (Bill) Johnson and Bobbie Anderson Johnson. She graduated from Gonzales High School in 1978 and her beloved University of Texas in 1981 with a Bachelor's Degree in Advertising. She was a member of the Alpha Phi Sorority and a Bevo's Babe for the UT swim team. In her youth, she was an outstanding athlete at both tennis and golf. Lea Ann had worked over the years for Martindale-Hubbell Lexis/Nexis, Amelia Bullock Realtors and the Attorney General of Texas in the State Law Library. She lived in Austin for

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 United Methodist Church in Gonzales.

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

MERLE EUGENE OLLOM



Merle Eugene Ollom died Thursday, December 7, 2023 in Gonzales. He was born on June 11, 1928 to Henry Leroy Ollom and Neva Ray Rickard Ollom in Burt, Iowa.

Merle was a graduate of the Burt High School Class of 1934. After graduation, Merle 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 the advertising department for the San Antonio Express News, and as the art director for Motorola's advertising department. He also had his own design school, publishing company, and graphics company.

He taught commercial art at Incarnate Word College, Trinity University as well as San Antonio Community College. He was an accomplished cartographer, artist, and engraver.

He married Lynna Jean Carter in 1952 and remained married for 50 years until her death in 2002. The couple had

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

11/28/23
• Malatek, Christian
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

11/30/23
• 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

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 - 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

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

Table with 2 columns: Agency Name and Count. Includes GCSO (18), DPS (02), GPD (05), WPD (01), NPJ (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).

Advertisement for Britney Jones Caka, LUTCF, FSCP, CLU, Agent. Includes contact information and Texas Farm Bureau Insurance logo.

Advertisement for 'Your News, Your Way' with a group photo and social media information.

Advertisement for Xpress Truck Accessories. Lists various services like Exhaust Systems, Tool Boxes, Bed Covers, etc. Includes contact info: 717 N. Hwy 123 Bypass Seguin, Texas 78155, (830)379-8100.

VISIT US ONLINE AT GONZALESINQUIRER.COM

Gonzales Healthcare Systems December 2023

Calendar table showing doctor appointments for Monday through Friday. Columns include Day, Doctor Name, and Appointment Time.

Located at THRIVE Healthplex

Orthopedics: Gloria Box, MD 830-672-8497; Surgery: Kathleen Koerner, DO, FACOS 830-672-8497

Cardiology: William Craig, MD 830-672-3845; Dermatology: Alpeh Desai, DO 713-864-2659

Specialty Physician Outpatient Clinic

List of specialty services and physicians: Audiology (Amy Trost), Pain Management (Eric Miller), Urology (Robert Ryan), Ophthalmology (Joseph Kavanagh), Dermatology (Vicente Quintero), Orthopedics (Trent Twitero), Nephrology (Azhar M. Malik), Podiatry (Terri Quebedeaux), Obstetrics (Alyson Kirchner), Austin Maternal Fetal Medicine.

Gonzales Healthcare Systems logo with tagline 'Feel the Difference'.

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...

The special 20th anniversary tour presentation will feature a blend of traditional Christmas tunes, hilarious sketch comedy and contemporary pop-culture satire...

vintage radio program complete with a live studio audience, the N-O-E-L Radio Orchestra and Gospel Singers.

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...

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



CONTRIBUTED

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

Table with columns: County, City, Rate, Net Payment This Period, Comparable Payment Prior Year, % Change, Payment YTD, Prior Year Payment YTD, % Change. Rows for Gonzales, Nixon, Smiley, and Waelder.

Table with columns: County, Rate, Net Payment This Period, Comparable Payment Prior Year, % Change, Payment YTD, Prior Year Payment YTD, % Change. Rows for Gonzales.

Table with columns: SPD, Rate, Net Payment This Period, Comparable Payment Prior Year, % Change, Payment YTD, Prior Year Payment YTD, % Change. Rows for various ESPD categories like Gonzales Co ESD 1, 2, 1-A, 2-A.

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.

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

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 — 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.



Your Real Estate Resource for Life Serving Gonzales County and Central Texas

Rafe Jackson 512-217-3171 • Brie Schauer Irons 830-203-8759

ACROSS

- 1 TX Ann Sheridan 1949 film: "I \_\_\_ Male War Bride"
5 \_\_\_ gallon hat
6 pleased
7 TXism: "he \_\_\_ grip like a snappin' turtle"
8 "Fanthorp \_\_\_ State Historic Site"
9 doctors' assoc.
12 a kid who's not the seeker
17 TXism: "she has to \_\_\_ the same place twice to cast a shadow" (thin)
19 TXism: "she could talk the legs off \_\_\_ stove"
21 "Post \_\_\_" of East Texas
22 Jim De \_\_\_ was an Astro starting pitcher, 1985-91
23 TX Bobby Fuller's "I Fought \_\_\_"
28 " \_\_\_ up a little"
29 Texas-based "La Quinta \_\_\_ & Suites"
30 golf achievement: \_\_\_ -one
31 gets dirt on jeans
35 Cumanche Peak, a nuclear power \_\_\_
36 assist or encourage a criminal (3 wds.)
42 relating to the south polar region
44 Texas town or Nebraska city
46 whiners
48 TXism: "more than one way \_\_\_ a cat"
49 "good \_\_\_ boy"
50 road around a Texas city
51 high school student, e.g. (2 wds.)
52 intelligence agcy. of the Dept. of Defense
53 TXism: " \_\_\_ barbed wire for dental floss" (tough)
54 " \_\_\_, crackle, pop"
56 prong on a fork

TEXAS CROSSWORD by Charley & Guy Orbison

Copyright 2023 by Orbison Bros.

DOWN

- 1 TXism: "if he was a dog he wouldn't \_\_\_"
2 in Cass County on highway 43
3 serpent that doesn't go on land (2 wds.)
4 TXism: "a day late \_\_\_ dollar short"
9 lemon/lime endings
10 TX Gary Morris tune " \_\_\_ Bedroom" (1991)
11 stinging Texas pest: fire \_\_\_
12 moon to Houston: "Eagle \_\_\_ landed"
13 TXism: "quaking \_\_\_" (scared)
14 Texas jewelry designer, Malouf
15 a pen name of Texas romance novelist Sandra Brown: \_\_\_ St. Clair
16 small Eurasian deer org. for the Spurs, Rockets & Mavs
20 TX Nat who sang "Sweet Thang" (init.)
23 former Ranger "closer," Henke (init.)
24 jump
25 TX \_\_\_ Mae sang "Cow-Cow Boogie"
26 tilts, like a Pisa tower
27 TX Phillips book: "He \_\_\_ Bum"
32 TX Buddy Holly hit: "Rave \_\_\_"
33 TX Charley Pride tune: " \_\_\_ Rather Love You"
34 \_\_\_ Salle County
36 TX Strait's band: " \_\_\_ in the Hole"
37 TXism: " \_\_\_ warm your gullet" (satisfy)
38 "it's not a hill I'm willing to \_\_\_"
39 TXism: "never let \_\_\_ you sweat"
40 TXism: " \_\_\_ after" (resembles)
41 TXism: " \_\_\_ dig" (a party or dance)
43 motor home (abbr.)
45 TXism: "bat \_\_\_ eyelash" (blink)
47 cocker \_\_\_ (dog)
48 gray with a tinge of brown
55 "Amos 'n' \_\_\_"

SUDOKU

9x9 grid for a level: intermediate sudoku puzzle. Pre-filled numbers: Row 3: (3,5)=8; Row 4: (4,1)=1, (4,3)=9, (4,4)=7, (4,5)=3; Row 5: (5,2)=9, (5,3)=5, (5,4)=3; Row 6: (6,1)=4, (6,2)=1, (6,3)=2, (6,9)=6; Row 7: (7,3)=6, (7,8)=8, (7,9)=4; Row 8: (8,3)=1; Row 9: (9,4)=9, (9,5)=8, (9,9)=2; Row 10: (10,4)=7, (10,9)=5; Row 11: (11,1)=5, (11,2)=3, (11,3)=2, (11,4)=6, (11,9)=9.

Level: intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test.

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

Answers found in next week's Classifieds.

## 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-Smilely 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

**UIL**  
**RECLASSIFICATION & REALIGNMENT**  
2024-2025 & 2025-2026

CONFERENCE	ENROLLMENT	# SCHOOLS
6A	2,275 & Above	247
5A	1,315 - 2,274	253
4A	545 - 1,314	218
3A	254 - 544	231
2A	105 - 253	226
1A	104.9 & Below	216

VISIT [UILTEXAS.ORG](http://UILTEXAS.ORG) FOR ENROLLMENT NUMBERS

**UIL**  
**RECLASSIFICATION & REALIGNMENT**  
2024-2025 & 2025-2026

FOOTBALL CONFERENCE & DIVISION	ENROLLMENT	# SCHOOLS
5A Division I	1,903 - 2,274	128
5A Division II	1,315 - 1,902	122
4A Division I	957 - 1,314	106
4A Division II	545 - 956	94
3A Division I	389 - 544	101
3A Division II	254 - 388	100
2A Division I	181.5 - 253	103
2A Division II	105 - 181.4	103
1A Division I	61.5 - 104.9	78
1A Division II	61.4 & Below	76

VISIT [UILTEXAS.ORG](http://UILTEXAS.ORG) FOR ENROLLMENT NUMBERS

See **UIL**, page 15



PHOTOS BY VANDY VAN EPPS

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.

## 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-son, 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 non-district 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-Smilely 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-Smilely 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.



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.





# 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](http://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 Bu-

reau 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, high-speed internet as a means of advancing education, training, employment opportunities, healthcare, and delivery of essential services is critical to the future of our state," said Glenn Hegar, 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 low-income 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!



CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

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.



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.

**Mraz Quality Golf Carts**



**VOTED #1**  
**IN SERVICE AND REPAIR**

1538 Fannin Street, Columbus  
979-500-4075 • [www.mrazgolfcarts.com](http://www.mrazgolfcarts.com)

Tuesday - Friday, 9am to 5pm,  
Saturday, 10am to 4pm

Sales • Service • Accessories • Upholstery  
Rent to Own • Financing • Rentals

**2 yr old Hereford Bulls FOR SALE**




**Redbird Ranch**  
Harlen Merks, Mgr  
ph 361-649-1717  
Nopal, TX 11 mi. N of Yorktown

- Top Quality Genetics
- Strong, Fertile Breeders
- Heavy Weaning Weights
- Easy Flething
- Easy Handling
- Range Ready

[redbirdranchcattle.com](http://redbirdranchcattle.com)

**MERRY**  
**Christmas**

from the staff of

**The Gonzales Inquirer**  
OUR 165TH YEAR SERVING GONZALES COUNTY

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 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.



LEW K. COHN

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.



LEW K. COHN

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. 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.



LEW 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 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

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 that, this initiative is directly inter-related with our mission as a district. In Gonzales,

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."

## The Romberg Assisted Living Residence

210 Qualls St. • Gonzales TX



Celebrating 25 Years

Suites Currently Available

- Independent living with assistance
- Secure and private accommodations
- Affordable with no hidden costs
- Reliable personal care

Barbara Brzozowski  
830-672-8249

www.txarr.com

State License: 030010

HAPPY NEW YEAR  
**2024**

*Our thanks and best wishes to all of you!*

**The Gonzales Inquirer**  
OUR 165TH YEAR SERVING GONZALES COUNTY

We will be closed Monday, January 1

**Don't know what to get your hunter for Christmas? Fehner & Son Grain and Fehner Firearms has plenty of items to choose from. Come see us for your gift ideas!**

**830-672-3710**  
1922 Co. Road 197, Gonzales, TX 78629  
Hours: Mon - Fri. 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. / Sat. 7 a.m. - 1 p.m. / Closed Sunday  
For your Firearms needs contact Brandon or Stephanie  
Fehner Firearms is closed on Mondays

# 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 lowest-paid 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-square-foot 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.

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.

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 Construction 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,” Tucs said.

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

“Along with that, we want to start renovation



A trailer full of roof repair materials sits at the Edwards Association.

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, after-school activities, but we need to get those rooms renovated in order to do

that,” Tucs 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,” Tucs added.

## More Than You Expect!



# Exceptional Care Close to Home

**Did you know?** Every member of Gonzales Healthcare Systems’ remarkable team — from providers to department managers and every level of support staff — is committed to a single mission: providing high quality comprehensive healthcare to everyone we serve. That’s why we treat every patient like family, with a level of compassion and personal care that exceeds expectations. What’s more, we’re one of the few rural hospitals still delivering babies, and in the coming months we will begin remodeling our patient rooms and break ground on a new surgical wing. It’s all part of our commitment to provide every patient with an unexpected level of healthcare excellence.

To learn more of our commitment to exceptional service, visit [gonzaleshealthcare.com](http://gonzaleshealthcare.com).

