

County Record

Vol. 64 No. 27

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Week of Wednesday, November 29, 2023

Big savings come with new property tax bills

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

Orange County Tax Assessor-Collector Karen Fisher has mailed out the property tax bills and homeowners are in for a shock. Their bills are drastically lower this year, even with an increase in appraised values.

The tax savings come from a new Texas Constitutional Amendment approved by voters in November to lower public school taxes. Depending on exemptions, taxpayers will be saving hundreds of dollars on their 2024 tax bills.

The cuts will not affect large commercial or indus-

trial property tax rates.

Usually, tax statements are mailed in October. But this year, the statements were delayed because of the November 7 election. The amendment passed earlier this year by the Texas Legislature and approved by voters was then calculated into this year's tax bills.

Under the new guidelines, homeowners with a homestead exemption for their main residence are getting an additional \$100,000 exemption on their houses. That means if a owner has a house with an official appraised value of

PROPERTY TAX Page 3A



Shangri La Gardens to host annual Christmas Strolls

Ring in the season at Shangri La Botanical Gardens and Nature Center. The festive landscape features thousands of lights, unique Christmas trees decorated by talented community members and holiday flowering displays. The holiday magic opens to the public on December 5. Admission to Shangri La Gardens is free of charge. Christmas Strolls are open to the public Tuesday through Saturday from 6-9 p.m., with the last entrance at 8:30 p.m.



The Bridge City Chamber of Commerce office is decorated for the holiday festivities.

RECORD PHOTO: Janelle Sehon

Bridge City ready to sparkle for holidays

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

Bridge City is already full of the color red. Add a little green, gold, and silver, and you get a festive mix for the holidays.

The city and chamber of commerce are making sure the community gets together to kick-off the holiday season on Friday and Saturday. First will be Christmas in the Park and the next evening, the 14th annual Christmas Lights Parade.

Chamber Director Mandy Lyda said Christmas in the Park will begin at 5 p.m. on Friday, December 1, at 150 Parkside Drive. The park will be filled with vendors selling gift items, dec-

orative items, plus all sorts of goods. A variety of foods will also be on sale.

At 6 p.m., Mayor David Rutledge will light the city's official Christmas tree and local choirs will sing songs of the season.

The chamber is sponsoring "Reverse Santa." This Santa accepts toys from children. Lyda said Santa will pose for a photograph in exchange for a new, unwrapped toy. The toys will later be distributed to needy children in the Bridge City and Orangefield school districts.

The parade as of Tuesday had 45 entries, with more expected. Lyda said a number of decorated Jeeps from

BRIDGE CITY Page 3A

Downtown Orange Christmas celebration Sat.

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

Downtown Orange will be full of characters on Saturday as Santa, Buddy the Elf, and even Mickey Mouse will be part of holiday fun throughout the day and into the evening. Activities will be centered around Stark Park on Green Avenue.

Of course, the 74th Annual Christmas parade, beginning at 6 p.m. will be part of the festivities. The parade is now sponsored by the Orange Kiwanis Club with the theme this year "The Toys that Made Us." The route will form a rectangle around downtown. The staging area will be on Front behind the Luther Theater. From there, the parade will travel west to 10th Street, the turn northward to Green Avenue, turning eastbound on Green. After traveling past Green Avenue landmarks

like First Presbyterian Church, the Stark Museum of Art, and LSCO, the parade will turn southward on First Street, the back west on Front.

The day will begin at 7:30 through 10 a.m. with the Kiwanis having a fundraiser, Breakfast with Santa at Spanky's Bar and Grill on 16th Street. The pancake breakfast is \$12 per ticket and allows children to eat and visit with the Jolly Old Elf. Tickets are available online or at Spanky's.

The city of Orange and its Explore Orange program has the Gumdrop Shop Holiday Market from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Stark Park. Vendors with Christmas decorations, gifts, crafts, and food will be set up in the park for people to stroll around, visit and mingle, and buy. Buddy the Elf will be at the park from 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. to take pho-

CHRISTMAS Page 3A



Adam Conrad as Buddy the Elf outside the Stark house in downtown Orange.

County keeps sales above inflation rate

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

Orange County continues to have healthy commercial sales as reflected by the sales taxes collected for the month of September. The Texas Comptroller's Office collects the taxes and sends the shares back to the entities.

Orange County, which has a 0.5 percent sales tax is up 11.8 percent for collections during the year to

date. So far, the county has received \$7.48 million so far in 2023, compared to \$6.69 million for the same time last year. For September, the county received \$714,733, an 11.34 percent increase from the \$641,893 for September 2022.

The U.S. Department of Commerce reports the national inflation rate for September this year was 3.7 percent, so the county's sales tax returns were three times the inflation rate.

The city of Orange, with a 1.5 percent sales tax, was down slightly for the month compared to last year, but remains way above the collections for the year to date. In September, the city received \$813,718, a decrease of 1.73 percent from the \$828,125 for September 2022. For the year to date, the city is at \$8.89 million, an increase of 31.18 percent from the \$6.77 million for the same period last year.

Bridge City, with a 1.5

percent sales tax, received \$236,448 for September, up 6.28 percent from the \$222,458 for September 2022. The city now has \$2.076 million, compared to \$2.062 million last year, an increase of 0.69 percent.

Pinehurst, which has been seeing steady declines in the amount of sales taxes collected, was up 5.77 percent for September 2023,

TAX REVENUE Page 3A



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Texas Supreme Court considers abortion challenge

Eleanor Klibanoff
Women's Health Reporter
The Texas Tribune

The Supreme Court of Texas heard arguments Tuesday in a landmark case that could impact how the state's abortion laws apply to medically complicated pregnancies.

In August, state District Judge Jessica Mangrum ruled that the near-total abortion ban cannot be enforced in cases involving complicated pregnancies, including lethal fetal diagnoses. The state immediately appealed that ruling, putting it on hold.

Texas law allows abortions only when it is necessary to save the life of the pregnant patient. But this lawsuit, filed by the Center for Reproductive Rights in March, claims that doctors are unsure when the medical exception applies, resulting in delayed or denied care.

"No one knows what [the exception] means and the state won't tell us," Molly Duane, senior attorney for the Center for Reproductive Rights, told the justices Tuesday.

The state argues the judge went too far in her injunction by reading exceptions into the law beyond what the Legislature intended.

"What the legislature has done is chosen to value unborn life and prohibit abortion in all circumstances, unless that life is going to conflict with the life of the mother," said assistant attorney general Beth Klusmann. "The legislature has set the bar high, but there is nothing unconstitutional in their decision to do so."



President of Center for Reproductive Rights Nancy Northrup speaks at a press conference announcing the filing of *Zurawski v. State of Texas*, at the Capitol on March 7, 2023. The lawsuit demands clarity from the state on what constitutes a "medical emergency" exception to abortion bans.

Credit: Leila Saidane/The Texas Tribune

Justice Jimmy Blacklock questioned Duane on the "capaciousness" of the injunction, asking whether this might allow abortions as a result of common pregnancy complications like high blood pressure.

"It seems to me, looking at the case you presented and the injunction that was granted, that this very well could open the door far more widely than you're acknowledging," he said.

Duane said the injunction would only apply to emergent medical conditions that could become critical or life-threatening if not treated. But she acknowledged that Mangrum's ruling is "doing more work than normal," because "legislators don't usually write laws that people who are regulated by those laws simply do not understand."

This case represents the first time since before *Roe v. Wade* was decided in 1973 that women affected by state abortion bans have directly challenged those

laws in court. Twenty women and two doctors have signed onto the case.

Most of the women were carrying wanted pregnancies that endangered their health or had limited chance of viability outside of the womb. Many had to travel to abortion clinics out-of-state. Some continued their pregnancies, delivering babies that survived only minutes or hours. Others were told to wait until they were closer to death before the hospital was willing to terminate the pregnancy.

At the center of Tuesday's hearing was the question of standing, or whether the plaintiffs have the legal right to bring this suit. The state has argued that because these women are not actively seeking abortions at the moment, clarifying the law would not address their claims.

Justice Jeff Boyd seemed aghast at that argument.

"Your position is that, in order to seek the kind of clarity that these plaintiffs

are seeking, you have to have a woman who is pregnant, who has some health condition that she believes places her life at risk or impairment to a major bodily function, but her doctor says, 'I don't think it does,' he said. "And she has to then sue the doctor, and maybe the attorney general, at that point, and then she would have standing and sovereign immunity would be waived?"

Klusmann said that wasn't the only situation that would generate standing, but "you would at least then know that the law is the problem, and not the doctor."

"Some of these women appear to have fallen within these exceptions but their doctors still said no," she said. "That's not the fault of the law."

"That's what gives rise to the need for clarity," Boyd said, exasperated.

Several of the justices asked Duane why the Center for Reproductive Rights did not bring a wider suit, challenging the law on the grounds that it is too vague to be properly enforced.

"Generally, a vagueness challenge is a facial challenge to the statute, to take down the entire statute," Duane said after the hearing. "So if that's what the court wants us to do, we're happy to do it."

The justices did not indicate when they expected to rule. Duane said they anticipated a ruling by June.

The number of plaintiffs in the lawsuit has more than tripled since it was originally filed in March, and the center has filed similar suits in Tennessee, Idaho and Oklahoma.

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Merry Christmas Crusade for CHRIST

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**Director & Evangelist
Dr. Gerald Edwards**



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The Orange County Christmas Crusade for Christ is a prayerfully planned, coordinated event by area churches. Dr. Gerald Edwards, Director and Evangelist for the Crusade said, "It is a Southern Baptist Evangelist backed effort." "However," he said, "area Orange County churches and pastors have been involved in the past few months in this Crusade effort and have felt a spirit of love and excitement about this non-denominational worship and praise event."

Edwards stated that "the purpose of this meeting was "three-fold: to honor Orange County (a place where he was born and lived), to win the "lost"; and to experience spiritual renewal and personal revival for Peace, Power and Purpose for life now and later!" This is a great step of faith by Orange County churches and pastors. They are very supportive of the Crusade. Key Bible verses for this effort are: Ephesians 3:20-21, "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think..." and 2 Corinthians 5:21 "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

This effort includes successful athletes and musicians who will share, their personal testimonies. This includes the McNeills singing group and the great "Christian Wrestlers" from Greenville, Texas. One such outstanding athlete that will be coming is Pat Nelson. Pat was on the 1961 All-District Team as a Split End. Pat went on to Texas A&M on a full scholarship.

We want you to come! Bring your friends and neighbors each evening at 5:30 PM for free, wonderful meals. We are placing a big emphasis on our Senior Adults each evening at 4:30 PM. We are reaching out to our local High Schools and Junior High Schools of Little Cypress-Mauriceville, West Orange-Stark, Bridge City, Orangefield, and Vidor. The Christian Wrestlers will speak to our youth when they attend the free "Gigantic Pizza Meals" in the local churches Christian Life Centers.

Edwards expressed his personal feelings as follows: "Orange County, you have experienced much trauma in recent years! We love you. I grew up here, I was born here! Saved here at North Orange Baptist Church under the Rev. C. W. Williams. I Quarter-backed for the Orange Luther Stark Tigers football team in 1958-1961. We are so appreciative of friends, coaches, teachers, pastors and deacons, and church members." However, he continued to say, "This effort is not about us. It is about Christ and His Glory." I am looking forward to seeing you at the Convention Center December 8, 9, and 10.

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Two Bridge City volleyball players named to Academic All-State Team

Two members of the Bridge City High volleyball team, which made the playoffs, have earned recognition from the Texas High School Coaching Association for being named to the Academic All-State team.

Demi Carter was named to the first team and Natalie Chavez was an honorable mention. The honors include not only the players accomplishments on the volleyball court, but also in the classroom.



Mauriceville Heritage group celebrates season

Staff Report
For The Record

The Mauriceville Heritage Association is once again hosting holiday activities in North Orange County, including the traditional Senior Citizens Christmas Dinner.

The activities will begin Thursday, November 30, with the Christmas tree lighting ceremony plus a vendors market. The event will be from 5 to 9 p.m. at the Mauriceville Community Center, 7441 Cohour Road off Highway 62 North.

Besides the tree lighting, there will be live music, vendors with a variety of items for gifts and decorating. There will also be visits with Santa, letters to Santa,

plus hot chocolate and cookies.

The Mauriceville Heritage Association for decades has been providing senior citizens in the community a Christmas dinner gathering that includes a lot of fellowship and stories about the past. The traditional holiday dinner with all the trimmings and desserts will be Saturday, December 2, at 5 p.m. at the Mauriceville Elementary cafeteria.

Santa will be there handing out gifts. Plus there will be a backdrop setting perfect for holiday selfies.

More information on the events and the Mauriceville Heritage Association are available through Danielle Powell, 480-272-2488.

Christmas events Orange From Page 1

tophographs with kids and adults. After all, who can resist Buddy?

The W.H. Stark House by the park will have a free open house from noon to 5 p.m. with tours of the first two floors. The 1894 mansion will be decorated for the season, including the Victorian dining room

table set with china, silverware, and crystal of Miriam Lutchter Stark, the lady of the house.

The Stark Museum of Art, which is across Green Avenue from the park, will be giving away holiday craft kits for kids and families from 3 to 5 p.m.

The historic First Pres-

byterian Church on Green Avenue will host its annual pre-parade open house beginning at 5:30 p.m. Free cookies, popcorn, hot chocolate, and punch will be served to visitors, who can get tours of the 1912 church with its famous Lambs Studios stained glass windows.

The parade will begin on Front Street at 6 p.m. After the parade ends, the community Christmas tree in Stark Park will be lit. Santa will be available for photographs. There will also be snow in the park, thanks to a snow machine. Then, a free outdoor showing of Mickey's Christmas Carol Movie will be shown on a giant screen.

Property tax bill savings From Page 1

\$125,000, they will pay taxes on a value of \$25,000.

That rate could be decreased even more, depending on other exemptions. For instance, those age 65 or older, or those with a disabled exemption, get another \$10,000 exemption off the appraised value.

The Texas Legislature this year agreed to cut back on local school taxes because of a \$13.3 billion

surplus in the state budget. The legislature promised to send \$7.1 billion to public school districts to offset the loss of income from decreasing taxes.

The school tax cuts are only for the maintenance and operations, or M&O, part of taxes. Those cover the daily operations of schools like staff salaries, utilities, and maintenance. Voters in bond elections approve added bonded in-

debtedness for new buildings or building improvements.

Not everyone may see a big savings on their tax bills. Orangefield school district voters in November approved a \$43 million bond issue that will increase the bonded indebtedness rate by an estimated 35 cents per \$100 valuation. Also, Little Cypress-Mauriceville patrons passed a "Voter

Approved Tax Rate Election" to allow the district to increase the M&O rate above the state's cap.

Texas has some of the highest property taxes in the U.S. However, the Texas does not have a state income tax. Forty-three states plus the District of Columbia have their own income taxes separate from federal income taxes.

Though the big tax savings are for homeowners, small business owners and landlords with property valued at \$5 million or less

are also getting a bit of relief. The new state law requires their property appraisals to not go up more than 20 percent a year.

The Orange County tax bills this year have a new format that includes informing the homeowner of how much they are saving this year on school taxes. The form also shows how much in county property taxes each property owner will save based on the 1/2 percent sales tax. That sales tax was ap-

proved by voters more than 30 years ago to offset property taxes.

The tax statements will also show five years of the history of appraised values on the property along with the tax rates and yearly payments to each taxing entity.

Property taxes are due by January 31 through the county tax appraiser-collector's office. Homeowners with mortgages usually pay property taxes through their monthly mortgage payments.

Tax revenue increasing From Page 1

compared, to September 2022. The city received \$59,711 for the month, compared to \$56,451 last year. For the year to date, Pinehurst is down slightly with \$613,055 this year, compared to \$619,555 for the same time last year, a decrease of 1 percent. The city has a 1.5 percent sales tax.

West Orange has a 1.25 percent sales tax, the lowest of the cities in the county. The city received \$118,655 for September, a 3.2 percent increase from the \$114,971 for September last year. For the year to date, the city has \$1.34 million, a healthy 7.29 percent increase from the \$1.25 million collected for the same period last year.

Vidor, with a 1.5 percent sales tax, had increases for

the month and the year to date. The September collections were at \$361,910, a 4.44 percent increase from the \$345,526 for September 2022. The city is up 6.6 percent for the year to date with \$3.5 million this year compared to \$3.28 million in 2022.

The Orange County Emergency Services District 3, Little Cypress Fire and Rescue, is the only special district in the county with a sales tax. The rate is 1.5 percent. The district received \$37,363 for September compared to \$26,137 for September 2022. The district is now at \$314,512 for the year to date, an increase of 16.11 percent to the \$270,855 for the same period last year.

Bridge City ready to sparkle From Page 1

local Jeep clubs will be included under one entry. Entries are still being taken through the chamber. The entry fee is one new, unwrapped toy for each individual participating. The toys will go to the Bridge City-Orangefield Ministerial Alliance to distribute as gifts.

The parade will begin Saturday, December 2, at 6 p.m. at the First Baptist Church on West Roundbunch Drive. From there, the route will past Bridge City Intermediate School and past Commonground Church.

This year's theme is "Safari Christmas." The winner of the Mayor's Trophy

or the best themed entry will receive \$200. Lyda said the parade winners will be announced on December 12 at 8 a.m. during the monthly chamber Networking Coffee at Bridge City High School.

Bridge City ISD will break for Christmas beginning with early releases for students on Friday, December 22. Classes will be out for two weeks during the Christmas-New Year's break. Teachers will return on Monday, January 8, for a workday, and then students will start back in classes on Tuesday, January 9.

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From the Creaux's Nest

Governor Abbott Calls Fourth Special Session

Governor Greg Abbott announced **Special Session #4** and issued a proclamation identifying agenda items for the special session that began at 5:00 PM on Tuesday. "The **Texas Legislature** made progress over the past month protecting Texans from forced COVID-19 vaccinations and increasing penalties for human smuggling," said **Governor Abbott**. "However, there is more work to be done. I am immediately calling lawmakers back for **Special Session #4** to complete their critical work to empower Texas parents to choose the best education pathway for their child, while providing billions more in funding for **Texas public schools** and continuing to boost safety measures in schools. We must pass laws that will enhance the **safety of all Texans** by increasing funding for strategic border barriers and mirroring the federal immigration laws. **Texas will also arrest people for illegal entry** into our state from a foreign nation, and authorize the removal of anyone who illegally enters our state, **with penalties up to 20 years in prison** for refusing to comply with removal. To crack down on repeated attempts to enter Texas illegally, illegal re-entry will be penalized with up to 20 years in prison. I look forward to working with members of the **Texas Legislature** to better secure **Texas** and pass school choice for all **Texas families**."

A&M NAMES NEW HEAD COACH

Texas A&M University has named **Mike Elk** as its new head football coach, university officials announced Monday. The hire comes just two weeks after the university spent over \$75 million to buy out former head coach **Jimbo Fisher's** contract. "Coach **Mike Elk** is one of the best leaders and coaches in college football. He is known amongst coaching circles as one of the best defensive minds in the country," **A&M athletics director Ross Bjork** said in a statement. **Elk** has been the head coach at **Duke** for the past two seasons, leading the team to back-to-back bowl games. He served as the **Texas A&M** defensive coordinator and safeties coach from 2018 to 2021, assisting the team with four straight bowl trips and an overall record of 34-14. Information about the duration of **Elk's** contract and how much he'll be paid was not immediately available.

TURNING BACK THE HANDS OF TIME 10 Years Ago-2013

Gone but not forgotten: We were very sorry to hear of the death of Betsy Dunn, age 72. She died last Thursday, November 21, 2013. Betsy was a long-time educator and community civic worker. She and her husband, **Judge David Dunn**, were longtime residents of Orange County. She was a wonderful, friendly lady. Funeral services were held Monday, Nov. 25, at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Orange. She is survived by her husband, a son and three daughters and their families.****Congressman Steve Stockman in more hot water: The Houston Chronicle devoted over a full page in Sunday's paper stating, "Rep. Stockman has failed to make federally required disclosure about business affiliations that stretch from Texas to the **British Virgin Islands**. He has provided no details about the businesses he claims as his sole source of income. He also claimed \$350,000 in salary from an unexplained entity called "Presidential trust marketing." The Chronicle was unable to find any business by that name. Also there's more, much more. Congress claims to police themselves but where's the hearing on **Stockman**? In fact, two weeks ago Eric Canter hosted a \$1,000 a plate fund raising for him. Why? Because he's a Tea Party **obstruction vote**.**** Everyone knows by now that Judge Courtney is expecting twins, a boy and a girl. Well, we learned last week that **Ms. Pearl** is a twin, also with her late brother Earl. Pearl was five-foot and Earl was six-foot, five inches.****We also discovered that Jody Raymer married to Beverly, one of Pearl's lovely daughters, is the same Jody that was a baseball and basketball star at West Orange, lettering four years from 1959 to 1962. He was a pitcher for the Chiefs in Coach Ronnie Anderson's first year in 1962. We also hear the basketball player was six feet tall in the eighth grade and he kept growing.****Time repeats itself. We got a text from Collin Gros at the end of the third quarter of the LSU/Aggie game. Besides being cold in Tiger Stadium, he said, "Turn out the lights." He was right, LSU whipped up on Johnny and the **Aggies** 34-10. (Editor's note: Last Saturday Collin, Morgan Shaw and the Shaw family attended the LSU-A&M game in Baton Rouge. LSU won, again.)

12 Years Ago-2001

The Bridge City Cardinals defeated Sweeny 17-13 in the regional playoffs. The Cards earned a slot to meet the Mexia **Blackcats** in the quarterfinals. Running back Dwayne Breaux's running style and

speed has burned defenses all season. The Bridge City senior has carried for 941 yards to date and nine touchdowns. In the Sweeny victory, Breaux carried 14 times for 88 yards and a touchdown. All purpose Cardinal Jamey **Knight** kicked a 24-yard field goal and a fake punt/pass in the fourth quarter, by Luke Wolford, followed with the winning TD pass to Luther Sanders. The mighty Cardinal defense hasn't given up one touchdown pass all season. Quarterback **Wolford** and **Knight** combined on 16 of 19 passes for 200 yards against Sweeny. Prior to the playoffs they had thrown for 371 yards total. Both Bridge City and Mexia made it to the regional playoffs last season but didn't survive to make it to the quarterfinals.****Pct. 3, **Justice of the Peace Judge Flo Ederly** has announced that after 20 years she will not seek re-election. Janice Menard, Ederly's chief clerk, has filed for the post in the March 12 primary. Menard has many years of experience in the JP office.

47 Years Ago-1976

City of Orange election passes mix drinks; the Roselawn area was also voted wet. The election was filled with controversies and fire works between the wets and the dries. Lew Malcolm and **Robert Nelson** from the Orange Conventions Commission did a great job selling the wet issue.****Greater Orange Chamber names attorney, former meat cutter, bad joke teller Roy Wingate as its Citizen of the Year.****Carl Thibodeaux reports his pet stick stolen from his West Orange Pharmacy. The stick is only one of three sticks custom made. Roy Dunn and Richard Corder own the other two. Bad luck follows Carl this week. Over the weekend while fishing, he completely tore down his boat motor. After massive repair work, a mechanic came along and pointed out that the reason the motor wouldn't start was because the motor was in gear.**** Orangefield Coach Ed **Pevet** named All Orange County Coach. Players making the team are: B.C. Cardinals: David Gauthier, Tony Mulholland, **Kim Bryant**, **David Cagle** and Lon Hubbard. West Orange Chiefs are: Randy Martell, James Bell, Steve Hudson, **Hosie Boston**, **Rick Bachman**, **Tony January** and **Bennie Pousson**. Orangefield Bobcat players are: Brian Day, Ronnie Huckaby, **Jeff Fruge**, **Ronnie Rudeasal**, **Dudley Kraus** and **Jeff Pevet**. LC-M Bears are: Wade Kachtik, Kevin Harmon, Lynn Hogg, **Sam Leifeste**, **Richard Ellis** and Shon James. Stark Tigers: **Charles Champine**, **Mark Eghers**, **Roy Rhodes**, **Jeff Keszeg**, **Patrick Sillers**. Vidor Pirate players are: Doug Seymour, **Butch Leger**, **Cal Pevet**, **James Gallier** and Keith Woods.

A FEW HAPPENINGS

The long, scorching dry summer left everyone praying for rain. Now, even though **rain is still needed here**, we're hoping the bad downpours won't rain on our parades. And Christmas tree lightings. The **National Weather Service** is forecasting rain for Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, just when Bridge City, Mauriceville, and Orange are ready for lots of events and celebrations.****People are recovering from Thanksgiving dinner, and leftovers. The **Sanders** and **Ragsdale** families gathered at the **McClelland** family's Cow Creek cabin for food, bonfires and memories. Sisters **Myra McClelland**, **Sanders** and **Paula McClelland Ragsdale** are keeping traditions going as they remember their parents, **Joe** and **Judy**.******David** and **Belinda Huerta** went to the Woodlands to be with family for their holiday.******Roy** and **Phyllis Dunn** entertained the children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren at home in Bridge City. Some traveled from Florida to make it a family occasion.******Cecil** and **Nancy Byers** were with daughter, **Elizabeth Sanchez** and her family, including two little ones.******Nevella** and **George Toal** had a house full as daughter **Rebecca Carmack**, with husband **Dr. Dave Carmack** and kids **Sophia**, **Salma**, and **Cyrus** came to town. Son **Jason** and wife **Amber** traveled from College Station to join for the holiday.****Justice of the Peace **Joy Dubose-Simonton** got to spend time with granddaughters **Sage Marie** and **Harper Kate**, along with their mom and dad.****The **Service League of Orange** has been making daily drawings for its benefit **Designer Purse Raffle**. Besides purses, the prizes included goods from some of the OC's great home bakers. **Brad Childs** provided one of his signature cheesecakes, while **Paul Burch** and **Adam Conrad** were each making cakes to give away. **Brad** and **Paul** are on the Orange City Council, which leaves the question of what local governing body has the best cooks and bakers. The raffle was to help raise money for the **Service League's** many **charity projects**, including the backpack project that helps teachers discreetly put food in Fridays in the backpacks of kids who might not have enough food for the weekend. The **Service League** is also preparing for the annual **Toy Coffee** next week, December 7, to help the **Orange County Salvation Army** with Christmas toys and donations. The coffee and tours this year will be in two restored historic houses owned by **Beth** and **Kenneth Wheeler**.******Paul Burch** will be donating his time again on Sunday as he is the celebrity bingo caller for the **Orange Train Depot** as they have a bingo fundraiser. Tickets may still be available through **Rose Simar**.****Thanksgiving week travels weren't only for family dinners. Baylor University invited Orangefield football standout **Mason Manning** to Waco and the West Virginia game. His dad, **Doug Manning**, accompanied him to see the Bears win.******Jody Chesson** and **Adam Conrad** stayed close to home, enjoying wine by the fireside in the new tasting house at **Free State Winery**.****Happy **45th Anniversary** to **George** and **Janelle Schon**, and also **Sue** and **Tommy Semar**, who celebrate their 35th anniversary. **Lee** and **Elizabeth Ludwig** had another anniversary, as did **Kristopher** and **Regina Marple**.

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

Folks celebrating birthdays in the next few days: Nov. 29: **Tyler Bearden**, **Keith Lange**, **Sharon Evans**, **Troy Manuel**, **Angela Webb**, **Carrisa Guidry**, **Freda Riley**, **Erik Tutt**, **Jim Bob Aven**.****Nov. 30:

Evelyn Brandon, **Vance Chauvin**, **Erin Evans**, **Jamie Applebach**, **Kirk Ellender**, **Sandra Smith**, **Kenneth Manuel**, **Tish Garrett**, **Brad Braus**, **Ricky Harper**, **Ryan Anderson**.****Dec. 1: **Stephen Clopp**, **John Garrison**, **Kelsey Dardeau**, **Mitchell Backer**, **Wesley Duncan**, **Amanda George**.****Dec. 1: **Cheryl Fornols**, **Jake Glazner**, **Vergie Thomas**, **Lisa Walker**, **Beverly Blalack**, **Edd Brown**, **Eddie Robertson**, **Marie Moran**.****Dec. 3: **Wayne Scales**, **Barbara Blackwell**, **Sandra Huthison**, **Todd Wilson**, **Trisha Anderson**, **Amber Franklin**, **Vincent Hoyt**, **Carolyn Andrus**, **Sylvia Bland**, **Chris DeCuir**.****Dec. 4: **Dana Simmons** and **Stephanie Kreger**.****Dec. 5: **Francis Breaux**, **Belinda Force**, **Susie Collins**, **Rory Piccone**, **Shea Bolton**, **Steve Hightower**.****People who marked birthdays this past week included Orange's legendary **Cecil Broom**, who turned 92. As a young girl, she was a mascot twirler for the **Bengal Guards** drum and bugle corps sponsored by **Lutcher Stark**. And she can still twirl a baton.***Looks like the end of November babies can turn out to be good at writing for newspapers. Retired sports editor **Van Wade** and LC-M grad **Suzanne Halliburton** had birthdays, along with former Leader editor **Ken Sury**, who turned 60.***Others celebrating another trip around the sun included **Shirley Kogas**, **Penny Thompson**, **Debbie Hughes**, **Butch Campbell**, **Karen Colburn**, **Gene Soper**, **Bob Manning**, **Ricky Jacobs**, **Kaye Sims**, **Ben Wernig**, **Mason Grizafi**, **Devin Janise**, **Kade Parkhurst**, **Carla Steele**, **Rhonda Hanauer**, **Theresa Martin**, and **Kirby Read**.

CAJUN STORY OF THE WEEK

Joe Boudreaux's boy Lester met his beautiful blond in da French.

Quarters. He fell in love rat den. He wanted to marry her rat away. Dolly, da blond, her say, "We don't know anything bot each utter."

Lester say, "Dat's alright, we'll learn as we go."

Dolly consented and dey went on dere honeymoon at a nice resort. While at da pool, Lester climb up to da 10 meter diving board and

did a two and a half tuck gainer, a tree rotation jackknife and cut da water like a knife. Lester came back and lay down on da towel.

Dolly say, "Boy, dat was incredible."

Lester say, "I was a national diving champion at LSU. You see, I told you we'd learn more about each other."

Dolly got up, went to da pool and started swimming. After 24 laps she came and lay down next to Lester, not even breathing hard.

Lester say, "Dat was really someting, were you an Olympic endurance swimmer hanh?"

"No," answered **Dolly**, "I was a hooker me, in Golden Meadow, Louisiana, but I worked boat sides of the bayou."

C'EST TOUT A Troubling Trump Pardon

A commutation for a drug smuggler named **Jonathan Braun** had broader implications than previously known. It puts new focus on how **Donald Trump** would use his clemency powers in a second term. Even amid the uproar over **President Donald J. Trump's** freewheeling use of his pardon powers at the end of his term, one commutation stood out. **Jonathan Braun**, of New York had served just two and a half years of a decade-long sentence for running a massive marijuana ring, when **Mr. Trump**, at 12:51 a.m. on his last day in office, announced he would be freed. **Mr. Braun** was, to say the least, an unusual candidate for clemency. A Staten Islander with a history of violent threats, **Mr. Braun** had told a rabbi who owed him money: "I am going to make you bleed." **Mr. Braun's** family had told confidants they were willing to spend millions of dollars to get him out of prison. At the time, **Mr. Trump's** own **Justice Department** and **federal regulators**, as well as **New York state authorities**, were still after him for his role in an entirely separate matter: his work as a predatory lender, making what judges later found were **fraudulent and usurious loans** to cash-strapped small businesses. Nearly three years later, the consequences of **Mr. Braun's** commutation are becoming clearer, raising new questions about how **Mr. Trump** intervened in **criminal justice decisions** and what he could do in a second term, when he would have the power to make good on his suggestions that he would **free supporters convicted of storming the Capitol** and possibly even to pardon himself if convicted of the federal charges he faces. Just months after **Mr. Trump** freed him, **Mr. Braun** returned to working as a predatory lender, according to New York State's attorney general. Two months ago, a **New York state judge** barred him from working in the industry. Weeks later, a **federal judge**, acting on a complaint from the **Federal Trade Commission**, imposed a nationwide ban on him. Since returning to predatory lending after being freed, **Mr. Braun** is still **engaging in deceptive business tactics**, regulators and customers say. In working to secure his release, **Mr. Braun's** family used a connection to **Charles Kushner**, the father of **Jared Kushner**, **Mr. Trump's** son-in-law and senior **White House** adviser, to try to get the matter before **Mr. Trump**. **Jared Kushner's** **White House** office drafted the language used in the news release to announce commutations for **Mr. Braun** and others. **Mr. Kushner** took a major role in the less structured vetting process that resulted in **Mr. Braun's** commutation. The **Justice Department** investigators from Manhattan involved in the cooperation negotiations with **Mr. Braun** were never consulted. **William P. Barr**, a **Trump attorney general** who had left by the time of the **Braun** commutation, said when he took over the **Justice Department** he discovered that "there were pardons being given without any vetting by the department." **Mr. Barr** added that he told **Trump** aides they should at least send over names of those being considered so the **department** could thoroughly examine their records. (Article by New York Times Michael S. Schmidt, Maggie Haberman, Jonathan Swan and Alan Feuer.)****Well my time is up. Thanks for yours. Read us cover to cover and please shop our family of advertisers. We thank you for your support. **Take care and God bless.**

Deaths & Memorials

Elwin "Keith" Daniels, 68, Orange

Elwin "Keith" Daniels, 68, of Orange, Texas, passed away at his home surrounded by loved ones on November 18, 2023.

Memorial services will be 10:00 AM, Saturday, November 25, 2023, at West Orange Christian Church in West Orange, Texas. Officiating will be Reverend Bobby Granger.

Born in Orange, Texas, on November 7, 1955, he was the son of Elbert Lee Daniels, Jr and Elsie Faye (Chandler) Daniels. Keith was a proud veteran of the United States Navy. While in the Navy, he was stationed in Pensacola and Scotland, falling in love with the country. In honor of his love of Scotland, he was gifted a plot of land there by his sister, Trisha, making him a Scottish Lord. Keith was a man of Christ and a member of West Orange Christian Church. He had a unique sense of humor, enjoyed a good joke, and was great with words and writing. In his free time, he liked watching the Dallas Cowboys, traveling, playing guitar, and singing. Keith had a love for horses and pickup trucks, especially Chevys. More than anything, though, he loved his family. His wife was his world, and he cared deeply



Elwin Daniels

about his great-nieces and nephews, whom he viewed as his grandchildren. Keith was an incredible husband, father, brother, and uncle, and he will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

He is preceded in death by his loving wife, Laurel "Lori" Daniels; his parents, Elbert Jr and Elsie Daniels; and his sisters, Tina Cassidy, Tonia Martz, and Tarianne Noe.

Those left to cherish his memory are his son, Jeremy Keith Daniels; his brother, Kirby Lee Daniels; his sister, Trisha Johnson; his nieces and nephews, Riley Faye Johnson, Ronin Scott Johnson, Nadine Noe, Andrew Noe, Brittany Noe, Bethany Riley, Laura Collins, Kevin "Rocky" Menard, Joel Cassidy, and Robert Daniels; his great nieces and nephews, Haidyn Savant, Hunter Savant, Jaxon Savant, Devin Savant, Payton Wood, Skylar De La Cruz, Mark De La Cruz, Asher Riley, Oliver Riley, Elsie Menard, Weston Menard, Landon Menard, Haidyn Menard, Kevin Collins, Jason Collins, and Teddy Collins; along with other loving friends and family.

Gumdrop Shop events schedule...

The Orange Convention and Visitors Bureau is thrilled to bring back the Gumdrop Shop to downtown Orange. The Gumdrop Shop will be held at Stark Park on Saturday, December 2, from 9AM to 3PM.

Spend the day strolling throughout Stark Park and find unique items provided by a multitude of artists and crafters from southeast Texas, southwest Louisiana, and surrounding areas. Food and drink vendors will be available on site.

Registration for the Gumdrop Shop will be first come, first serve by turning in an application and registration fee to the Convention & Visitors Bureau office. Applications may be found online at www.orange-texas.gov.

Please note, dogs and coolers will not be allowed at the Gumdrop Shop.

December 2nd not only includes the Gumdrop Shop, but an entire day of "Downtown Christmas" fun! The Explore Orange team is working in conjunction with the Stark Foundation, Kiwanis, Heritage House, and Lamar State College Orange to bring the holiday spirit to our community.

The halls will be decked, and the streets will be lit!

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

7:30AM-10:00AM

Breakfast with Santa at Spanky's Bar & Grill

9:00AM-3:00PM

Gumdrop Shop at Stark Park

9:00AM-5:00PM

Stark Museum of Art Open

3:00PM-5:00PM

Stark Museum Childrens Holiday

Craft Handout

12:00PM-5:00PM

Stark Family Christmas Tours

1:00PM-3:00PM

Buddy the Elf presented by

Heritage House Museum

6:00PM

74th Annual Kiwanis

Christmas Parade

FOLLOWING THE PARADE "Mickey's Christmas Carol" Movie, Lighting of the Tree, and Pictures with Santa in Stark Park. Additional information may be obtained from the Convention & Visitors Bureau.

• Durham/Ellis pecans and walnuts at WUMC

Wesley United Methodist Church will be selling this years crop of Durham/Ellis pecans and walnuts for their Annual Fund Raiser with delivery early November. Pecan halves or pieces \$13.00 per pound, walnuts \$8.50 per pound. Call Jan 409-734-8036 to place an order or for additional information.

• First Saturday giveaways Dec. 2 at FBC-BC

First Saturday in December will be the 2nd day of the month. The giveaways for December will be toys, books, puzzles, and games for children of all ages. First Saturday will begin at 10 am in the parking lot next to the sanctuary of First Baptist Church of Bridge City and will last until 12 noon. Our desire is to help children and families know the real meaning of Christmas. Prayer will be offered for anyone who is distressed, worried, or sick. Look for the blue canopy.

• Dementia Care Givers' Support Group

The Dementia Care Givers' Support Group meets at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, Canticle Building, 4300 Meeks Drive in Orange on the following days and times: Second Wednesday of every month at 10:00 a.m., and Second Thursday of every month at 6:30 p.m..

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Make no mistake, Bobby retired from the Texas Rangers to be your next Sheriff in Orange County. His loyalty is to the Constitution and the citizens of Orange County. He understands what that means and will protect and defend your rights. Bobby and his wife, Brandy Musgrove Smith, have four children and four grandchildren who all reside in Orange County. He wants to make Orange County a better place not only for them, but for all of you. Thank you for your overwhelming support and we humbly ask you for your vote to elect Bobby Smith as the next Sheriff of Orange County.

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LEGAL NOTICE

The property commonly known as 14110 I-10 A, Orange, TX 77632 is scheduled to be sold at public foreclosure auction on 12/05/2023 at 01:00 PM or no later than 3 hours thereafter at the back door of the Courthouse in Orange County, Texas, or if the preceding area is no longer the designated area, at the area most recently designated by the Orange County Commissioner's Court. The Substitute Trustee will be Margie Allen, Angie Brooks, Kyle Barclay, Tommy Jackson, Keata Smith, Stephanie Hernandez, Selim Taherzadeh, or Michael Linke, any to act. The winning bidder buys "as is" and must pay at the auction with certified funds.

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STATEPOINT CROSSWORD

THEME: MATH 101

ACROSS

- Loaded up
- Tube in old TV
- Pouches
- Tequila source
- Stick in water
- Jig's French cousin
- TV's "____ Secretary"
- Money in Myanmar
- Photoshop maker
- Result of multiplication
- Whole number
- Say 2+2 is 5, e.g.
- Arctic floater
- Dashboard acronym
- Fountain serving
- Spanky or Alfalfa
- Short for "hurry up"
- Live bait
- Turn upside down
- Cassette contents
- Retire from military, for short
- Jason's vessel
- Sicker
- "Sight for ____ eyes"
- Puppy cry
- Denver option, at a diner
- Apartment
- Green turtle's domain
- Final
- Personal trainer's place of employment
- Venn ____

- Point in 2.5 greens
- Barrel racing meet
- Gobbled up
- On the rocks (2 words)
- Fields Medal to a mathematician, e.g.
- Sports official, for short
- 8 of something
- Like Gulf Stream
- Big bang maker
- Required things

DOWN

- "I lift my ____ beside the golden door"
- Petri dish gel
- Carpenter's groove
- Dodge, as in tax bill
- Takes exception to
- Native Egyptian, in Roman times
- Line with one endpoint
- Path in the woods
- Left or right, e.g.
- Awestruck
- Three-dimensional figure with 6 square faces
- Palm reader, e.g.
- Cake with filling
- Three people?
- Neither here ____ there
- Subcontract (2 words)
- 1:2, e.g.
- Sacred song
- Canada's favorite tree?
- "Nobody ____ It Better"
- Fix a cat
- First discovered asteroid

- Measured in de-grees
- Parkinson's disease drug
- Banana remnant
- Between dawn and noon
- Brown shade
- Retread, past tense
- Non-alcoholic brew
- Rockefeller or Bezos
- Like today's phone
- Kind of pie
- No-win situation
- Wisconsin neighbor
- Jewish month of Purim

- Disease-causing organism
- Clever
- Indoor allergy cause
- Crushed it, as in a test
- "____ Make a Deal"
- *X

CROSSWORD

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LCM Bears want to repeat basketball feats

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

Last year was a history making season for boys basketball at Little Cypress Mauriceville. Matching that excellent record is the goal this year for the Bears basketball team.

The 2022-23 season was arguably the best ever for the Bears with 27 victories, a strong second place finish in district, and two wins in the state UIL play-offs. A loss to an excellent Center team in the third round of the post season was all that prevented LCM from reaching the regional tournament for the first time in school history.

Bear Coach Brad Jeffcoat reflected on last season. "Really good group of kids. I'm really proud of the effort and accomplishments they achieved. We are definitely proud of them and that season, but we are moving on to 2023-24 and the season that's just started," Jeffcoat responded.

Graduation took a bite out of the Bears coming back this year in basketball, but there are still a few quality players returning. Jeffcoat hopes to mix those returners with a good group of new players to the varsity.

Topping the list of returning starters for Little Cypress Mauriceville is Alatheon Winn who is a senior. Winn would have been a four-year starter this year except he broke



Coach Brad Jeffcoat of the LCM Bears boys basketball team. RECORD PHOTO

his wrist during his freshman year and missed quite a bit of time.

Jeffcoat elaborated, "As a sophomore and a junior Alatheon was kind of on the fence of being an all-region player. He's a really good basketball player, super athletic, super talented, has got a chance to have a really great year, and this is a guy who's going to be a college basketball player."

The other returning starter for LCM is senior Jayden Benton at the post. He basically started every game for the Bears last season.

"Had you told me that Jayden would start every game last year at this time I would have said you were crazy, but he works hard, he's physical, he does all the dirty work, and he's the guy that makes your team better," Jeffcoat praised.

A third Bear who saw a lot of playing time on the varsity in the previous season is Jonah Fuller a junior. Fuller started at guard on occasions and

played significant minutes in every game.

Jonah was described by Jeffcoat as an excellent defensive player who the coach is excited to get back. Fuller has the ability to score with the ball. He was recovering a little bit at the start of the basketball season from an injury incurred during the football season.

The best player on the junior varsity last season for Little Cypress Mauriceville was Bryson Price who has moved up to the varsity for this year. Price

LCM BEARS Page 4B



Townsend donates to Sheriff's Blue Santa program

The Orange County Sheriff's Office Blue Santa Program received a donation by Attorney Rodney Townsend. "Rodney's generosity during the holiday season is incredible and greatly appreciated," Sheriff Mooney said. Pictured above are: Capt. Joey Jacobs, Sheriff Jimmy Lane Mooney, Rodney Townsend and Robert Guzman.

BC Cardinals hope to grab trip to the post season

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

Bridge City just missed qualifying for the boys basketball playoffs last season. The Cardinals have several key players back that gives them the hope for a shot at the post season this year.

The record was 19-16 for the Bridge City boys last season. A tough close loss at Jasper in the last district game cost the Cardinals their shot at making the state playoffs.

Cardinal Coach Randall Robertson assessed last season. "We fell short of our overall goal of getting into the playoffs, but we did win 19 games. We just missed getting to the post season, but any time you can win nineteen to twenty games I think that's pretty good," Robertson evaluated.

Six seniors return for the Cardinals with varsity experience coming into this season. The two co-captains are seniors Aiden Gutierrez and Lincoln Breaux.

Gutierrez is a guard who hustles all over the court, shoots well from outside, and handles the ball for the Cardinals. Breaux is the big guy in the middle playing the post, scoring down low, rebounding, playing strong defense, and was second team all-district last year.



Coach Randall Robertson of the Bridge City Cardinals in basketball. RECORD PHOTO

Other seniors back on the Bridge City varsity are Rayburn Hebert, Jerris Brown, Stephen Stone, and Aaron Torres. Hebert and Stone play in the backcourt while Brown and Torres add depth at forward and the post.

Stone got special mention from Coach Robertson. "Stephen's been on the varsity a couple of years for us. He's just another guy who hustles off the bench really plays hard and gets after it grabbing rebounds while playing good defense," Robertson praised.

A returning junior from the varsity last season is Bryce Linder at post. Robertson described, "Bryce is another defensive guy, a rebounder, takes charges, and does the dirty work for us inside."

Not necessarily new to the varsity for Bridge City

BRIDGE CITY Page 4B

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FISHING

Lessons learned in warmer months spell winter success

OUTDOORS
Capt. Chuck Uzzle
For The Record



Chuck Uzzle

It's a common known fact that we have some of the craziest weather in the world here in Texas, especially on the coast. December, January and February have historically been some of our worst weather months, the conditions at this time of the year coupled with low water temps can make it down right miserable. During these periods the average fisherman may defer from the outdoors to a warmer climate by the fire thinking that the fishing won't be worth the effort, big mistake.

For many years fishermen on the lower coast have known what kind of magic can happen when the mercury dips and the crowds go somewhere else for the winter. This kind of thinking is gaining popularity on the upper coast every year and the fish that are being caught during this time of the year can be eye poppingly large to say the least. As an added plus once you find one of these big fish you can usually find another one in the same area, these fish will congregate together and sometimes be there in large numbers. Big concentrations of fish can key in on small areas so be sure to thoroughly fish an area before giving up.

A couple of years ago on Sabine Lake I came across one of these situations where the fish were piled up in a small drain, every cast was viciously attacked by a stud trout or oversized redfish. It was 2 hours of heaven, all you could ever ask for and more. The big fish were keying in on a small depression where two small ditches drained out of the marsh. The water was warmer coming out of the marsh and the depression offered up some refuge from the outgoing tide, the bait just kept pouring into the strike zone and the big fish were just killing everything that swam.

The small areas that most fishermen find holding good numbers of trout in the winter are usually found in the summer. Waders who are observant make notes of areas that should hold fish, piles of shell or oyster, ditches, transition areas from one type of bottom to the next are all excellent places to make mental notes. Summer water conditions are usually clearer than winter so you have the added bonus of sighting areas to fish. Winter and spring months on the upper coast usually mean heavy run off and off colored conditions, homework and notes taken during the summer can really come in handy when you are faced with bad water conditions.

Calcasieu Lake also has it's own nuances during this time of the year and they are very similar to Sabine for the most part. One big difference between the two sister lakes is the prevalent reef structure caused by oysters on Calcasieu,

this body of water is full of oysters and those are trout goldmines if you know where to find them. In the winter if you pay attention you can watch the oyster boats comb Calcasieu, they are doing nothing but giving away very valuable information to the fishermen. I have marked some great structure by hawking these guys on bad weather days or days when the fish weren't to cooperative. That little bit of effort translated into numerous productive open water areas

that I fish to this day. You can learn plenty if you just watch sometimes. The one thing that you cannot get enough of is learning what window of opportunity works best,

take the tides and temperatures into account as well as the feed times and get out there among them. You can't catch big fish from your cozy couch. Remember "You won't know unless you go."

Gulf Coast Fishing Reports

This week's Texas Gulf Coast Fishing Reports was compiled by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

• **Sabine Lake**

GOOD. 74 degrees. Limits of trout and bull redfish are great on Sabine Lake schooling under the birds. Fish off the bottom in the morning with ¾ ounce silver and gold spoons. Where there is bait along the banks there is fish, so drift off bank points and drops with ¼ ounce jig heads glo chartreuse plastics. Sot trout and redfish are chasing shad, mullet and shrimp in 2-6 feet of water from the ICW to North Island Pleasure Point.

Drift live shrimp under a popping cork or 5 inch glo chartreuse plastics. North Levee is as hot as a firecracker with limits of trout early on topwaters, crankbaits midday, then live shrimp under a popping cork. Nice catches of trout in Bessie Height Marsh in 6-8 feet of water off turnaround and points. These fish are feeding off mullet. Redfish are mixed in with the speckled trout, but they are undersized or oversized. Expect the sheepshead and drum to start hitting with the cooler weather.

Report by Captain Randy Foreman, Captain Randy's Guide Service Sabine Lake.

• **Bolivar**

GOOD. 60-65 degrees. Thankfully it should be beautiful fishing weather this weekend. Flounder catches at the Dike for catch and release until December 15. Fishing is on fire pulling in redfish and black drum off the jetties on live shrimp under a cork. Crabs can be caught off the rocks at the jetties.

Bull croakers, small speckled trout in the jetties. The surf is good for redfish on the bay side and big black drum and bigger sized speckled trout live shrimp, or cut mullet. Report by Shane Rilal, North Jetty Bait Camp.

Fishing patterns remain consistent. The surf is holding numbers of black drum, shark, and some big redfish on cut bait or live bait on the bottom. The gulfside of the North Jetty is holding limits of trout, redfish, sheepshead with an occasional bull redfish against the rocks with live shrimp with popping cork. The cuts leading in the bay from ICW holding redfish against shorelines by the rocks. Lots of black drum around Goat Island. Report provided by Captain Raymond Wheatley, Tail Spotter Guide Service LLC.

• **Trinity Bay**

GOOD. 66-69 degrees. Scott, Tabbs, Burnet, and

San Jacinto Bays are holding fair numbers of speckled trout, nice redfish, black drum, and a few big sheepshead. Live shrimp under a cork is working best, but some trout and redfish have been caught on soft plastics. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing. Redfish can be caught in 2-6 feet of water with live shrimp under a popping cork beneath the pelicans. Trout are schooling on reefs under seagulls biting live shrimp under a popping cork or soft plastics. Sheepshead can be caught off rock in 2-6 feet of water with live shrimp under a popping cork. Black drum are in abundance around rocks and reefs with live shrimp under a popping cork or soft plastics. Report by Captain Zackary Scott, Zack Attack Fishing.

• **East Galveston Bay**

FAIR. 65-68 degrees.

Scattered speckled trout and redfish under diving gulls in open bay when wind allows. Waders doing the best along protected shorelines near drains and bayous.

Surface water temperature is 65 degrees and the water clarity is good. Early morning trips have been best with the high tides and strong outgoing tide movement. Points and flats with scattered shell have produced very good catches of trout, redfish, and a few black drum on our artificial lure trips in the 3-4 foot depth range. The fish are where there is nervous bait, so move on when there is not any bait activity. A few birds were working, but did not see as much bird action as the previous week. Shrimp imitation lures with Fish Smack popping corks, with 14-18 inch leaders have still been producing the most bites, as well as Deadly Dudley Terror Tails in Blue Moon Chartreuse on 1/4 and 1/8 ounce jig heads, depending upon wind conditions and water depth. Live shrimp under a popping cork with 20-24 inch lead.

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'The Lakes' Fishing

• **Toledo Bend Fishing Report**

FAIR. Water clear; 63-66 degrees; 4.42 feet below pool. Good numbers of bass showing up in back of creeks, and some of the main lake. The creeks are muddy from the recent rain. Best baits have been on lipless baits, shallow running crankbaits, and spinnerbaits with gold and silver willow leaf blades. Main lake fish coming from 14-22 feet, big crankbaits, Texas rigs and Carolina rigs. These main lake fish are following the shad, and we are following the fish. Check near the tops of ridges or on the sides. With the cool temperatures the shad are abundant, especially in the middot of the lake around the bridge. Report by Stephen Johnston, Johnston Fishing.

• **Sam Rayburn Fishing Report**

FAIR. Water slightly stained; 70 degrees; 6.48 feet below pool. Fishing patterns will hold steady through the Thanksgiving weekend. Bass are moving deeper with deep diving crankbaits coming into play. Some bass continue to be shallow chasing shad fattening up for winter. Wacky worms along the edge of grass and pads will continue to catch fish. Crappie continue to move towards the creek. Catfish are chasing shad balls up the creeks. White bass are schooling with catches on slabs.

R E P U B L I C A N

RODNEY TOWNSEND

FOR JUDGE COUNTY COURT AT LAW #2

Rodney Townsend grew up in Orange County. He was taught the value of hard work from a young age. His father went to work out of high school for Gulf States Utilities at the Sabine Power Plant located in Bridge City. After twenty-five years with GSU, his father started R&D Construction, building residential homes throughout Orange County. His mother worked for Dupont in its accounts payable department before starting her own business, a custom home, blueprint design company.

Rodney graduated from Bridge City High School. He was awarded a full athletic scholarship to play football at Brigham Young University. After an injury derailed his football career, he returned to Southeast Texas and graduated from Lamar University. Rodney went on to attend law school at South Texas College of Law in Houston. While still in law school he received a third-year bar card allowing him to handle cases under the supervision of a licensed attorney. Rodney interned at the Brazoria County District Attorney's office. Additionally, he represented indigent individuals through a legal aid clinic.

Upon graduation from law school, Rodney was hired by a nationally recognized firm specializing in civil litigation. He spent the next three years handling cases throughout Texas and in at least half a dozen other states. In 2003, he came back to Orange County and went to work for Barton, Price & McElroy later

becoming, Barton, Price, McElroy & Townsend. While there, his practice included civil and criminal litigation as well as estate planning, probating of wills and small business organization. After hurricane "Ike" destroyed the firm's building, Rodney took a bold step and started his own law practice in Orange. In 23 years of practice, he has stood beside both plaintiffs and defendants in civil matters, represented parties in divorces and other family law cases, criminal cases, probates, drafting of wills and contracts. Rodney has served as ad litem to protect the interest of minors. He is a certified mediator. Rodney has mediated over 800 cases for other lawyers. He is appointed by Judges throughout Southeast Texas to serve in that capacity.

Rodney is admitted to practice law in all Courts of the State of Texas, Federal Courts of the Southern and Eastern Districts of Texas. He is a member of the Orange County Bar Association and the Jefferson County Bar Association. Certified by the Alternative Dispute Resolution Forum as a mediator. He has been selected to the Million Dollar Advocates Forum. Rodney has been recognized as the Best Lawyer in Orange by the readers of the Orange Leader. Most recently in 2023. He is a supporter of all Orange County Schools, Special Angels Rodeo, Adaptive Sports for Kids, the local Ministerial Alliances, Meals on Wheels (Board Member), United Way, the Salvation Army, and the American Cancer Society to name a few. Rodney is an active member of the Chamber of Commerce, Ducks Unlimited (DU), and the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA).

Rodney is married to Amy Townsend, (Judge) M.D.. She is a physician with her office in Orange County. Together they have one daughter, Alexandria.

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New Bobcat basketball coach looks for same success

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

The Orangefield boys basketball team has been post season participants the last few years. The Bobcats have a new coach whose goal is to have them continue to play that same playoff caliber game with the round ball on the hard court.

Orangefield hired Bryan Whitmire to replace successful boys basketball coach Jake McDonald who left the Bobcats to coach the Class 5A Montgomery Bears. Raised in nearby Buna, Whitmire played basketball with East Texas Baptist University, coached basketball at Buna for fourteen years, before coaching last season at the The Woodlands High School as an offensive assistant on the varsity.

Whitmire is glad to be back in southeast Texas.

"Orangefield came open and the job ended up working out. I'm back in southeast Texas kind of near my family, and I'm super excited about it," Whitmire expressed.

One of the things that was attractive about the job at Orangefield for Whitmire was the success the Bobcats have had in basketball. Whitmire explained, "They've had a great run. Coach McDonald did a great job. The Bobcats have momentum going right now and a really good program, so we're just going to try to keep building on that really good foundation that they've established."

"They have some really good young kids coming, a lot of excitement about it. We've got a lot of participation from the kids right now. I think that's really going a long way and these kids know the game. We've got some Bobcats coming back that have



Coach Bryan Whitmire of the Orangefield Bobcats basketball team.

some really good experience because they have had a lot of success over the last couple of years," Whitmire added.

The Bobcats graduated several starters after last season, but they do return a couple of starters and some players with varsity experience that are expected to have a great season. Senior Zane Wrinkle is a three year starter for the Bobcats. Whitmire described, "Zane has a lot of experience, is a really

versatile player, a hard worker, he's really going to be a leader for us, and is already off to a great start."

Sophomore Jaden Scales started as a freshman. Scales should take on an even bigger role for the Bobcats. "Jaden's a really good player, shoots the ball well, and has done a good job stepping into that bigger role. Both Jaden and Zane are bringing back the majority of our experience from last year," Whitmire replied.

Kane Smith was frequently the first guy off the bench last season for Orangefield, played good defense, handled the ball well, and will be a starter this year. Whitmire said,

"Kane played a big role for the Bobcats last year, and again he's going to have an even bigger role for us this year. I think he's definitely ready for that."

"I'm really excited about those guys that are coming back. The Bobcats have had such a great run last year and the year before which should serve them well this year as they step into those bigger roles that we're going to be able carry that experience into some success," Whitmire analyzed.

The coach is looking for a team effort from the Bobcats in order to be successful this year. Sophomore Griffin Thomas is a newcomer to the varsity

who has played very well early. Thomas started in the first couple of games scoring in double digits both times and playing solid defense.

The biggest Bobcat 6-7 is senior Kadyn Rucker who will see many more minutes on the court than he did last year. Rucker is a good shot blocker.

Bringing a lot of athleticism and versatility to Orangefield is Mason Manning will be used to guard dangerous shooters on opposing teams.

Senior Garret Rawls is stepping into a bigger role after he played some min-

BOBCAT Page 5B

Big second quarter helps Orangefield beat WOS

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

The recent battle of Highway 105 was won by Orangefield over West Orange-Stark. The Bobcats beat the Mustangs 68-48 in a non-district basketball game on Saturday, November 25, at the West Orange-Stark High School Gymnasium.

The margin of the score was not indicative of how competitive the contest was except for the first six minutes in the second quarter. Orangefield scored sixteen unanswered points to start the second period to grab a 28-13 advantage and never allowed the Mustangs to get closer than thirteen points during the remainder of the game.

The Bobcats' Griffin Thomas scored 14 points in the decisive second period including four three-pointers. Jaden Scales closed the quarter with a buzzer beater that put Orangefield on top 40-19 at the half.

The Mustangs took the initial lead on a basket by Carter Eglin, and led 4-2 on a field goal by Ja'Vaughnte Richard before Zane Wrinkle hit the first of his five three-pointers on the day to give Orangefield its first lead 5-4.

Kane Smith of the Bobcats got his fourth points of the game to increase the lead to four 10-6 before West Orange-Stark went on a seven-point run thanks to two put back



Griffin Thomas of the Bobcats hit five three-pointers and finished with 17 points in Orangefield's 68-48 win over West Orange-Stark on Saturday.

baskets by Richard and a three from Braylen Solomon that put WOS up 13-10 late in the first. Wrinkle added two free throws for Orangefield to make the score 13-12 in favor of the Mustangs after one period.

A three pointer by Scales started the sixteen point Bobcat splurge. Jamiakael Davis made a bucket with about two minutes showing on the second quarter clock for the first points of the period for the Mustangs, but it did not really stop the bleeding as Orangefield outscored WOS twelve to four in the closing two minutes before halftime.

The third quarter saw the Mustangs shrink the deficit from 21 to 17 points. Richard and Davis both hit three-pointers and Solomon made two field goals during the third period to make the score 52-35 in favor of Orangefield with a quarter to go. Orangefield overcame

seven turnovers in the final quarter to pad its lead. Wrinkle and Scales tallied seven points a piece in the final eight minutes to secure the victory for the Bobcats.

Three Bobcats finished in double figures with Jaden Scales scoring 20, Zane Wrinkle registering 19, and Griffin Thomas tallying 17 points. Kadyn Rucker played a strong defensive game for Orangefield with 6 rebounds, 4 steals, and 5 blocked shots. The Mustangs were led by Braylen Solomon who totaled 14 points and Ja'Vaughnte Richard who finished with 12 points.

Orangefield Coach Bryan Whitmire commented on the Bobcats' rampage

ORANGEFIELD Page 5B

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WOS Mustangs moving on up in basketball

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

Last year was deemed a rebuilding season for the West Orange-Stark Mustangs in basketball. With several returning Mustangs to the varsity this could be a very good year for boys basketball at West Orange-Stark.

Only one returning Mustang was on the varsity last year. West Orange-Stark had mostly sophomores and juniors making up the line-ups on game nights.

Coach Chris Castille of West Orange-Stark believes the Mustangs should be better this year. "With just sophomores and juniors we were building last season. I believe we are going to be way better than what we were because we have the same group coming back. All we've got are two new players on the team so we're building on our foundation and we're going to have a

good year," Castille predicted.

The bond between the returning Mustangs on the varsity should be a key component for their success this season. Castille explained, "The chemistry is going to be way better because now they know what to expect from each other, and they know the level on the varsity how fast it is moving which is a lot faster than it was on JV."

Eight varsity players return from last year for West Orange-Stark. They start with junior point guard Jamikael Davis who played extensively as a sophomore. "He's got more experience, got taller, and got better on his handles," Castille described.

Two shooting guards senior Ja'Vaughnte Richard and sophomore Geramichah Davis are back. Castille pronounced, "Geramichah and Richard can shoot the lights out from deep and can score at will."



Coach Chris Castille of the WOS Mustangs for basketball.

Supplying defense for the Mustangs are Andrew Cooper, Jamar O'Neal, and Tahj Amerson. "All three are defensive specialists. They can guard opponents on the whole court full court and they can attack the rim to get other teams into foul trouble," Castille insisted.

The starting post for West Orange-Stark will be another returner A'myrian Scott. He should have some help with the rebounding from Denim Orebo who will see more playing time

on the varsity this season. Castille added, "Denim is coming off the football field so he's going to help us with getting rebounds."

Joining Scott and Orebo with rebounding is Carter Eglin for the Mustangs. Carter, Denim, and A'myrian are expected to dominate the boards for WOS. They're going to both get the rebounds and they're going to help on the defense according to the coach.

A second newcomer to the Mustang varsity this season who could be a surprise for opponents is Braylen Solomon. Castille will use Solomon as his backup point guard. "Braylen is going to give a lot of energy coming off the bench," Castille stated.

"This is going to be one of our better seasons. A lot of people are going to be shocked at the way we come out. I know how they expect us to follow the way we came out last year, but we're going to be way more orga-

nized because the Mustangs understand way more now. They were young in my first year," Castille analyzed.

Because of commitments to the football program at West Orange-Stark the Mustangs did not actually have a basketball game until the third weekend of November. The Mustangs lost to Baytown Lee of Class 5A on November 17 by a score of 63-54 on the road. WOS then defeated Baytown Sterling 50-42 on November 21.

Castille is working eight football players into the mix for the varsity basketball team. Castille observed, "The football players are excited to be back. They're giving their energy and they are 112 percent in, and they understand the assignment, they know what we've got to do to reach our goal this year, so they're all in."

Upcoming action for West Orange-Stark will be the Nederland Tournament

during the first weekend in December. The Mustangs will also participate in the Orangefield Tournament the second weekend of December. After Christmas the Mustangs play in Baytown in the Lee Tournament.

"We're looking to compete in all of those tournaments. Those games should get us ready for district," Castille indicated.

The fortunes on the basketball court for the West Orange-Stark Mustangs should be much better this season than last year. "My expectation is for us to do well in district and make it to the playoffs.

"We will have no excuses on not making the playoffs. That's my motto for this year. The plan is to win a game or two in the post season. We'd love to get to regionals or even state by any means necessary. We hope to be busy all the way to March," Castille concluded.

LCB Bear basketball

From Page 1B

has been in the LCM system for several years and has grown a little bit. He is very athletic and dedicated. Jeffcoat added, "Bryson has really improved as a basketball player so we're excited to see how he does this year."

Dane Hawk is also moving up from the junior varsity. "Dane's a really good shooter and a really good kid. I think he's got a pretty high ceiling," Jeffcoat appraised.

A sophomore who should see significant playing time is Braylon Lewis. He may be the biggest newcomer to the Bear varsity playing

some point guard. Lewis has completed playing football earlier this month and stepped right into a game with Port Neches-Groves with no real practice and played well.

Jeffcoat evaluated, "Braylon is a really athletic sophomore. He's a good ball handler and a really good defender. At times he can shoot the ball well. Braylon started every game for the football team this year on varsity, and I think he's got a chance to be the next in line as one of the Bears' better guys, so we're excited to see where he can take us but I think he can be pretty

good."

The recent success in basketball for Little Cypress Mauriceville is making it more difficult for Coach Jeffcoat to find non-district opponents for his Bears to play. "Our schedule is a monster opening with The Woodlands where we learned some lessons to put it mildly. It was a good experience for us and our kids to go on the road and play a quality 6A opponent," Jeffcoat replied.

The first home game for the Bears played on November 14 was a good 54-48 win over the Port Neches-Groves Indians as the

defense played really well according to the coach, and the offense was still a work in progress. Alantheon Winn tallied 24 points and grabbed 11 rebounds. Jayden Benton and Dane Hawk both scored 9 points for LCM.

That same week the Bears traveled to Huffman losing 61-34 to the Falcons. Winn was again the high scorer for LCM with 18 points while Braylon Lewis contributed 12 points in the loss.

The recent success of basketball at Little Cypress Mauriceville means the schedule will be difficult all

the way to the start of district for the Bears. Jeffcoat surmised, "The bottom line is the road doesn't get any easier we've got nothing but land mines on this schedule until we get to district. The plan is we learn some lessons and we find out about ourselves a little bit making us battle tested by the time we get to district and the games count."

The Little Cypress Mauriceville Bears will be seeking to duplicate or possibly exceed last year's success of finishing second in their very competitive district. "The expectation is always the same we're going to get

in the playoffs, are goal is to win a playoff game, and see what happens from there. As I said before, the schedule is rough. By the time we get to district our record may not be great, but I do think when it matters this team will be a really good basketball team. For now we're going to try to get better every day at practice, we're going to try to perform a little bit better every game, and hopefully by January and February when things really matter we're clicking on all cylinders and playing really good basketball," Jeffcoat concluded.

Bridge City basketball

From Page 1B

is sophomore Aaden Bush who started as a freshman, but got hurt before the start of district action last season. Bush will take over the point guard role for the Cardinals this campaign.

"Aaden is kind of feeling his own as a sophomore captain. He's a do it all guy as our go to scorer and bringing the ball up the court as the point guard," Robertson responded.

A second sophomore who is starting in the early going is 6-6 post Hunter Silvera. Robertson indicated, "Obviously, at 6-6 we plan on Hunter blocking shots and rebounding in filling that post role."

The Cardinals are awaiting the complete return of another potential starter sophomore guard Abraham Mungia to playing condition. Mungia injured his neck against Silsbee during the last weeks of the football season and is still on the path to recovery. Abraham has left the hospital, is

back in school, and is shooting the ball around the gym, but is not expected back full-time until the start of district action in mid-December according to the coach.

Robertson elaborated, "Abraham is a really good ball handler, he can shoot it, he's probably one of our next best shooters, but he's also really good at facilitating the ball getting it where it needs to be. Abraham is a good defender and all-around good basketball player. We're really missing him right now."

Off the bench will be juniors Jagger Carlin and Peyton Doucet. Carlin and Doucet will help out as guards.

Bridge City dropped its opening two games against very difficult opponents. Orangefield made eleven three pointers against the Cardinals to take the opener 64-54. The first home game of the season for the Cardinals was against

Huffman and was also a loss.

"We did start with a strong slate of games to really test us. We did not plan to be as short-handed as we currently are, but you can't predict those things. We're just looking to get better each game," Robertson commented.

The Cardinals got their first win of the season 63-26 at home on November 17 against Beaumont Legacy.

CARDINALS Page 5B



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Texas A&M names Mike Elko as new head football coach



Duke Blue Devils head coach Mike Elko will be the new head football coach for Texas A&M, the university announced Monday. Credit: Scott Kinser/Cal Sport Media/Sipa USA via REUTERS

CAROLINE WILBURN
The Texas Tribune

Texas A&M University has named Mike Elko as its new head football coach, university officials announced Monday.

The hire comes just two weeks after the university spent over \$75 million to buy out former head coach Jimbo Fisher's contract.

"Coach Mike Elko is one of the best leaders and coaches in college football and has had high-level success at each stop of his career. "He is known amongst coaching circles as one of the best defensive minds in the country," A&M athletics director Ross Bjork said in a statement.

Elko has been the head coach at Duke for the past two seasons, leading the team to back-to-back bowl games. He served as the Texas A&M defensive coordinator and safeties coach from 2018 to 2021, assisting the team with four straight bowl trips and an overall record of 34-14.

"Director of Athletics Ross Bjork's unwavering dedication to the success of our athletics program truly hits a high point with this hire," A&M Interim President Mark A. Welsh III said in a statement.

"Coach Elko understands that fostering the growth of our student-athletes goes well beyond the playing field. He recognizes a successful athletics program requires nurturing athletic prowess while simultaneously instilling invaluable life skills and preparing them for facing challenges that will come after college."

Elko's six-year contract will last through Jan. 30, 2030, with an annual base salary of \$7 million. He'll also qualify for post-season incentives and pay increases depending on the team's performance.

The contract is pending approval by the Texas A&M Board of Regents, who will discuss it Thursday.

Elko's hiring puts an end to a national search to replace Fisher, whose buyout was paid for by donor dollars from the school's 12th Man Foundation and athletic department funds. The buyout is the most money ever owed to a football coach.

Fisher's initial \$75 million contract, signed in 2017, guaranteed him 10 years at the university and was extended another four years in 2021. Before his departure, Fisher earned an annual salary of \$9 million.

In contrast, Steve Sarkisian, University

of Texas at Austin head football coach, is set to make at least \$34.2 million throughout his six-year contract.

The decision to fire Fisher came after the team's 35-38 loss to the University of Mississippi. Ahead of Elko's hiring,

"After very careful analysis of all the

components related to Texas A&M football, I recommended to President Welsh and then Chancellor Sharp that a change in the leadership of the program was necessary in order for Aggie football to reach our full potential and they accepted my decision," Bjork said in a statement.

Bobcat basketball From Page 4B

utes last year on the varsity. Whitmire indicated, "Garret's a great rebounder, great defender, really hard worker, and a great leader."

A good team will be reliant on a strong bench. The Bobcats have three seniors that provide that needed depth in Scotty Szakmeister, Kamden Hare, and Logan Hickey-Broussard.

"All of those guys are going to do a good job along with the returners that we have. They are the core of our rotation. The year is young and we'll be looking forward to those guys growing. Since we have a lot of guys that are getting their first experience on varsity I think we're really going to see some growth in our team as the year goes," Whitmire emphasized.

The season opened on a positive score as Orangefield defeated the Bridge City Cardinals 64-52 at Bridge City. Zane Wrinkle scored 24 and Jaden Scales had 21 points. The Bobcats were 11 of 20 from three-point range.

Three days later the Bobcats struggled with their shooting and fell to the Vidor Pi-

rates 61-55 at Vidor. The first home game was a victory for Orangefield 75-61 over Onalaska. Scales pumped in 33 points to lead the Bobcats.

Whitmire evaluated, "We get better even in the losses. I think we saw things in the early games that we need to work on and since we've just added some football players to the roster we're still growing."

The expectation is for the Orangefield Bobcats to build on their success from the past several seasons. "We talk every day about not looking at the end of the road too much. We're really more focused on the process. I would say our ultimate goal is to get better every day, and the most important game is the next game. We're not looking too far down the road as far as results, and we've talked about not being results oriented. We're trying to be the best version of ourselves. Once district rolls around that's when we're trying to play our best basketball and get into the playoffs at the highest seed we can possibly get and then make a playoff run," Whitmire concluded.

Cardinals From Page 4B

Hunter Silvera was the leading scorer for Bridge City with 16 points. Aiden Gutierrez was a close second high point producer dropping in 15 for the Cardinals.

Tournament action picks up for Bridge City after the Thanksgiving holiday break. The Cardinals will participate in the Evadale Tournament the first weekend in December and the Orangefield Tournament the second weekend of December. The first district game for Bridge City will be December 15 at Silsbee.

The goal for the Bridge City Cardinals this year just like last year is to make the


playoffs. "Our district is really good, but we do return a lot of Cardinals. I think if we can stay healthy and get some key guys back we'll have a shot to make a run. With eight guys returning that won nineteen games last year we should be competitive in every game. Again our district is very good, but our ultimate goal is to make the playoffs whether it's first or fourth we just want to be one of those top four teams at the end of the district schedule and hopefully we can get there," Robertson concluded.

Orangefield From Page 4B

at the beginning of the second quarter. "We heated up there in the second quarter. We hit a lot of shots and when they're going down it definitely makes it look easier. What we did was once we built that lead we were able to sit on it and kind of just defend and hang on to it. I thought West Orange-Stark did a good job of pressuring us forcing us into a number of turnovers. I think we need to do a better job of taking care of the basketball. That second quarter

was our best job of transitioning and we were able to get some buckets off of it," Whitmire analyzed.


The Orangefield Bobcats will play in the Big Sandy Tournament the first weekend of December. The West Orange-Stark Mustangs will participate in the Nederland Tournament that same weekend. Both the Mustangs and the Bobcats will play in the Bill Tennison Orangefield Tournament which is the second weekend in December.




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Gratitude Gives Us Eyes for God

Steve Fuller
Contributor
desiringGod.org

When I was 8 years old, I had an eye exam. As I tried to make out the letters on the chart, I got so many wrong that the doctor thought I was joking. But this was no joke; I was very nearsighted.

A week later, when I got my first pair of glasses, I was stunned. I could read street signs, recognize people's faces at a distance, see far-off mountains and individual leaves on trees. I could see more clearly than ever. That's a lot like gratitude. Gratitude is like glasses, as it helps us see the glory of God's mercy more clearly. And therefore, because our greatest joy is seeing God's glory, gratitude increases our joy.

Gratitude Helps Us See

For many years, I did not experience more joy in God through gratitude. I dutifully thanked God for his blessings, but because I did not understand thanksgiving, my gratitude did not help me see God's glorious mercy, and so it did not increase my joy.

The problem was that I saw thanksgiving mostly as an obligation to be fulfilled. God had done something for me, so now I owed him gratitude. And once I had said, "Thank you," my debt was paid,



and I moved on to something else.

But that's not how the Bible talks about thanksgiving. Consider, first, how the Bible often links thanksgiving with joy.

Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! (Psalm 95:2)

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name! (Psalm 97:12)

Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of his deeds in songs of joy! (Psalm 107:22)

So, joy and thanksgiving are connected. But how?

We might think the connection is obvious: when we give thanks, we rejoice in what God has given. Think of the joy we feel in getting promoted,

or being healed. Surely, joy in God's gifts is part of gratitude. But it's not the only joy of gratitude. And it's not the greatest joy.

Gratitude's Greatest Joy

We can discover the greatest joy of gratitude by noticing how often God's word links thanksgiving with praise.

I will thank you in the great congregation; in the mighty throng I will praise you. (Psalm 35:18)

I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. (Psalm 69:30)

Then one of [the ten lepers], when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks. (Luke 17:15-16)

I was used to distinguishing thanksgiving

and praise. And of course, they are different: thanksgiving does focus more on what God does, and praise on who God is. But these verses show there's a connection. The fact that thanksgiving is linked with praise shows that thanksgiving does not ignore who God is. Thanksgiving helps us see and praise who God is. And this act of seeing and praising God is thanksgiving's greatest joy.

How does this work?

Putting on the Glasses

Let's say you get a promotion and want to thank God. Thankfulness starts with seeing the value and the mercy of God's gifts.

So, you would remind yourself of the value of this promotion — maybe it's more interesting work, higher pay, and a better career path. Then, you

would ponder the mercy of this promotion — that because you are a sinner deserving only hell, this gift is an infinitely costly mercy, bought for you by Jesus's suffering on the cross.

Then, as you thank God, recounting both the worth and the mercy of this promotion, the experience will be like putting on glasses — you see even more clearly the glory of God's grace in Christ. And this will increase your joy in God, because beholding God's glorious mercy is our all-satisfying joy.

So, when God calls us to give thanks, he's not just calling us to thank him for what he's done. He's calling us to rejoice in who he is, as displayed in what he's done. And that's why Christian Hedonists love to thank God: thanking God leads to seeing more of God, and seeing more of God is our greatest joy.

Growing Toward Gratitude

How can we thank God in a way that increases our joy in God? Here are five steps.

- First, ask for the Spirit's help. The goal of thanksgiving is seeing and feeling the glory of God's mercy, and we can't do that without the Spirit's work. So, ask.

- Second, ponder the

value of God's gifts. Consider the value of each gift. Think about health, friends, the food in front of you. Think especially about the Savior, whose death paid for your sins and purchased fullness of joy in him forever.

- Third, think about the mercy of God's gifts. Not only do we not deserve these gifts, but because of our sin, all we deserve is God's judgment. Ask God to help you see that, so you feel more wonder at the grace and mercy displayed in this blood-bought gift.

- Fourth, do this until you see and feel more of God's glorious mercy. Keep praying for the Spirit's Jesus-revealing work, and keep thinking about the worth and mercy of God's gifts, until you sense more of God's glorious mercy in Christ.

- Fifth, express your thanksgiving and joyful praise to God. Thank him for his gifts, expressing the worth of each gift and the mercy of each gift. And rejoice in how each gift displays the glory of God's grace to you in Christ.

We all need help seeing God's glorious mercy. And gratitude, like glasses, can help. So, for the sake of your joy in God, put on the glasses of gratitude. And see.

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