SPECIAL EDITION: Meet Your Candidates
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LSCO increases education, career options

Dr. Wendy Elmore and Dr. Tom Johnson, vice president and president of LSCO, on the third floor of the Ron E. Lewis Library. In the background is a construction crane at the steel skeleton of the new $38.1 million Academic Building.
RECORD PHOTO: Margaret Toal

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

If you've got it, flaunt it.

And Dr. Tom Johnson, president of Lamar State College, loves to flaunt the campus and programs the school offers.

"The thing that I'm most excited about is our graduation rate," he said.

That rate includes students earning a certificate, rather than a two-year degree. "Come in and get a low-cost certificate, then get a job, and then come and get an associate's degree," he said.

Besides the percentage of students graduating through programs, he also brags about students who are the first in their families to attend college. "Well over 70 to 75 percent of graduates have been the first generation to go to higher education," he said.

Dr. Johnson and Dr. Wendy Elmore, executive vice president of the college, spoke about the programs and progress of the campus from his third-story office above the Ron E. Lewis Library.

The south windows overlook Front Street and the Sabine River, while outside the west windows, a tall crane sticks out of the landscape as it works on the campus's new $38.1

LSCO Page 3A

Citys, schools prepare for May 5 elections

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

The West Orange-Cove school district will have a $72 million bond issue on the May 4 election for city councils, school boards, and special districts.

However, the only contested races will be for Bridge City mayor and for directors of the Orange County Drainage District.

The cities of Orange, West Orange, Pinehurst, and Vidor are able to cancel council elections because of no contested races. In addition, the Bridge City and WO-C school boards, along with the port district, have no contested races. The LC-M district offices are closed for winter break and no one was available to answer whether that district has a contested race. Orangefield's school board election is in November.

The May elections are not to be confused with the March 4 party primary races for county, state, and federal government positions. Early voting started this week for those races.

In Bridge City, Mayor David Rutledge is facing challenger Carl Harbert, a former council member. The three open positions on the Bridge City City

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Beaumont film-music fest has lots of Orange

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

The Boomtown Film and Music Festival Friday and Saturday, February 23-24, in Beaumont may be on the west banks of the Neches River, but it has a strong showing from Orange County.

The festival's director Penny LeLeux, a local film maker, is from Orangefield. Special guest Dolores Cantu is a West Orange High graduate and will talk about her 50-year career in Hollywood as an actress and agent. She will also appear at a showing of "Saturday Night Fever" to talk about her role in the film. That break-out production for John Travolta helped Cantu gain the reputation as the only woman to beat up the star in a movie. She will speak at a forum on Saturday.

John Frederick of Mauriceville is in one of the featured films showing this year, plus a short movie by a Lamar University student was shot in Vidor. Actors like Frederick, who is retired from the U.S. Navy, and has appeared in a Tom Hanks movie, are getting more roles in independent productions.

John Frederick Jr. played the pastor in the local feature film "The First Step" produced by Studio 220 Films. Frederick played an integral part in getting the film produced including bringing on Orange cinematographer Travis Myers. Photo still from film.

Orange County is producing several filmmakers, but does not have a certification from the Texas Film Commission to make it film-friendly and attract more movie making. Port Arthur, Beaumont, and Jasper are now on the statewide film commission list to promote movie-making.

This week, "The Example," a 24-minute 2016 film set during the 1943 Beaumont race riot, will be show at Rice University. Part of the movie was shot in the Old Orange Historic District and one of the co-stars is from Orange. The film continues to have showings across the country.

The Boomtown Festival is drawing people in the independent film and music businesses to Southeast Texas to display their talents and give advice.

The short film "11:34" was written, directed, and edited by Lamar University student Ashley Ramirez. It was shot this summer in the home of Jason and Carrie LeLeux, and in a classroom at Lamar University.

It's a thriller about a young teenager who once again is plagued with a reoccurring nightmare. Sometimes, it's more than just a bad dream. Penny LeLeux was the producer, and Trini Gonzalez, an L-CM graduate, is one of the main characters in the film. Ava Bergeron, the niece of Adam Conrad,

BOOMTOWN Page 3A

Justice served for OPD Officer Gray death

DEBBY SCHAMBER
For The Record

After nearly 50 years, justice was finally served for the family of Orange Police Officer Danny Gray who was killed in the line of duty.

Billy Wayne Dowden died in prison on February 1. He has remained in prison after pleading guilty of capital murder charges for the June 28th, 1974 death of Captain Danny Gray, 31, of the Orange Police Department.

"No more parole parole board hearings and my mother and sister no longer have to relive the trauma brought by this man," said Stephen Gray, Danny Gray's son.

Captain Danny Gray, was a 10 year veteran of OPD and worked the night shift. It was well known among his peers he wanted to catch a suspect during a robbery. That day would arrive. But, it would also be his last day before being fatally shot.

Orange Police Officer Danny Gray

The unraveling of the events began around 1 a.m. when he was dispatched to the Sak-N-Pak drive-in grocery at 10th Street and Green Avenue. Charles Dowden was walking out of the store still wearing his mask and trying to stuff the gun into his back pocket when he saw officers outside. He tried to reach back for the pistol. But, he quickly realized the efforts were futile, and surrendered. He was arrested and taken to the Orange jail.

Billy Wayne Dowden, who had been at the store with his brother, decided to break him out of jail. He drove to his brother's house where he picked up his sister-in-law, Darlene, and told her of his plan. Dowden and Darlene then drove to Clifford Blansett's house where they picked up a loaded rifle and pistol. From there the trio drove to the police station/jail arriving around 4 a.m., according to the information from documents from the Texas State of Appeals.

Danny Gray, dispatcher Ronnie Denton and Officer Bryan Windham were doing paperwork when Billy Wayne Dowden boldly entered the police station and directly went to the dispatcher's office which is located a short distance inside the door.

Dowden slammed open the door to the dispatcher's office and pointed an automatic pistol at the officers. He declared he had come to get Charles.

Gray, who was standing near the dispatcher's window, hit Dowden in the face, which knocked him into the hallway. By this time, Blansett had entered the building and struck Gray over the head with a shot gun causing the

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Justice served

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gun to break. Dowden attempted to use Gray as a shield to once again enter the small dispatch room, according to Denton.

"I pulled the pistol out after I said that. I was standing in the doorway. One of the officers grabbed me. I tried to hit him, but he was holding my arms. I just started shooting then. I shot through the little window. I don't know how many times I shot, it must have been 6 or 7 times. I just kept pulling the trigger," Billy Wayne Dowden would later say, according to documents.

The officers were stunned at the offset, but quickly regained composure. It was Danny Gray who had lunged at Dowden while grabbing the gun while placing his other arm around Dowden to force him into the hallway. The door, which operated on a spring closing device closed automatically behind them, according to documents.

An exchange of gunfire followed. Windham and Denton, not knowing whether the assailants had left or whether they had taken a breather, radioed for help. It was not until Windham crawled back to join Denton in the back area of the dispatch room that he knew the man lying in the doorway was Captain Gray, and the suspects, out of bullets, fled into the darkness.

Gray was rushed to Orange Memorial Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Dowden initially sought help from a friend to help with his bleeding ear, but the friend panicked and called police. Dowden left to find solace elsewhere.

The break would be short lived as officers moved swiftly. By afternoon officers throughout the area and Louisiana converged on a small frame house located in northern Orange County. Nearly 70 officers surrounded the house with a helicopter flying overhead with horses and bloodhounds nearby.

The jail cells on the top floor of the jail at one time housed inmates. They are now used for storage.
RECORD PHOTO: Debby Schamber

Chief Deputy Charles Morvent, Jr. telephoned the house and informed, Billy Wayne Dowden, he had a warrant for his arrest, and there was a "small army" surrounding the house.

Dowden surrendered while Blansett was found hiding in a houseboat in West Orange and taken into custody too.

Judge James D. Stringer, the justice of the peace for Precinct 1, set the bond at $500,000. Sharon Bearden, the district attorney, was responsible for the case against the men.

Billy Wayne Dowden and Clifford Blansett were indicted on capital murder charges.

The prosecution was steadfast in their dedication to the task at hand of a successful prosecution of the suspects. Bearden utilized a recently passed statue. This was the first time the statue was used in the State of Texas.

"We just had to do what we could within the law," Bearden said.

Charles Dowden, who was upstairs in the jail during the breakout attempt, received a life sentence on charges of murder and aggravated robbery. The jury wanted to give him the death penalty but it was abolished in 1973.

Prior to the death of Danny Gray, Charles Dowden was convicted of murder and received 25 years in prison. He shot and killed a man in a bar, according to Stephen Gray.

"This man's rap sheet is beyond comprehension," Stephen Gray said. "He is extremely violent and has committed the worst crimes imaginable."

Nevertheless, he was released from prison in 2015 and lives in Orange. He is currently on state parole.

The Gray family feels their rights as victims were not considered or met under the law. They did not know he was being considered for release. They were notified after the parole board had already decided on his release.

Blansett also went to trial which lasted about three weeks. He refused to plead guilty to murder, but pleaded guilty to other charges, such as felon in possession of a firearm. However, when the guilty verdict was returned he received a life sentence. He later died in prison.

Following a change of venue to Harris County, Billy Wayne Dowden pleaded guilty to the indictment and waived trial by jury pursuant to a plea bargain agreement. He was sentenced to life in prison, according to documents.

Stephen Gray never met Charles Dowden but did meet his brother, Billy Wayne Dowden, and Clifford Blansett years later while they were behind bars. Both of them continued to blame others for their actions and never took responsibility even after 25 years of imprisonment, according to Stephen Gray.

Following the death of Danny Gray, his family was left to pick up the pieces. After nine years of marriage, Gail, had two children, Stephen, 4 years old and 7-year-old Stephanie.

One thing Billy Wayne and Charles Dowden and Blansett will never be able to take away is the love the Gray family shared. Their treasured memories will always belong to them.

Stephen Gray remembers a game he and his father played called "hut hut." It was in the hallway while the Dallas Cowboys game played in the background.

"I would try to run past him and he would attempt to tackle me," Stephen Gray said.

The joyous laughter that once filled the hallway is gone as the family moved to other cities to make new memories. But, they continued to honor and cherish the man they knew and loved throughout their lives and share to future generations.

On the day he died, Danny Gray received a letter he had been waiting for. It was an acceptance letter to go to Quantico, Va. for the FBI academy. Danny Gray was a police officer by night, but by day attended Lamar University for a degree in Criminal Justice. Gray had plans for his life ahead such as be-

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LSCO oportunities

From Page 1

million Academic Building. The steel skeleton of the building under construction is also in view. Catacorner on Green Avenue is the old First Baptist Church, which is getting a $6 million addition plus interior design to turn it into an all-purpose welcome and counseling center so prospective students can learn about the programs and enrollment.

Not visible from the president's office, though, is a flat concrete lot to the east. It's the site where students can get a commercial driver's license and learn to drive a school bus or 18-wheel truck rig.

"The city of Orange told us they need dump truck drivers; so we've added a dump truck," Dr. Johnson said.

After all, he also likes to flaunt that he's helping local entities, businesses and industries train people for jobs. The school bus driving program was added after he heard local superintendents talk about a lack of drivers for student bus routes.

Dr. Johnson is also quick to praise local District 21 Representative Dade Phelan and the state legislature, which has approved the expenditures for new buildings and programs. The legislature in the past five years has also lowered tuition rates to draw more students. In addition, local industries, including the new Chevron Phillips Golden Triangle Polymers plant, have helped purchase equipment needed to train process operators. Electromagnetic technology used in the petroleum and chemical processing is also available.

More contributions come from the Stark Foundation, which rescued the century-old brick Baptist Church from flood mold after the congregation abandoned it. The foundation donated the building and annually gives scholarship money to LSCO, Dr. Johnson said.

"Orange County is a great place to be right now," he said.

Dr. Elmore said the campus is adding more training for jobs like construction managers, electricians, and plumbers. And then after getting certificates and jobs, the credits fall under a business associate's degree. They can come back to classes and learn how to run their own electrical or plumbing companies.

LSCO is working with Lamar State College Port Arthur and has a $2 million grant to develop a mobile maritime training unit to provide workers for the shipping industry. Dr. Elmore said the mobile unit, along with a mobile processing unit, are nice to drive to local high schools and show students what kind of jobs and training are available here.

Those mobile units will also help spread the learning and programs to people in Newton and Jasper counties. Dr. Johnson said LSCO has received a T.L.L. Temple Foundation grant for education in rural areas.

Dr. Elmore said soon, the Deweyville ISD in Newton County and adjacent to Orange County, will be getting an early college program for high school students. The program will be introduced to eighth graders so they can decide what to study if they choose to enter the program. Then their freshman year of high school, they will begin taking college classes along with their high school classes. By the time they graduate from high school, they could earn two years of college credits.

Dr. Johnson said West Orange-Stark High has the dual-credit studies and he praised WO-C Superintendent Dr. Rickie Harris for assisting getting the program started.

The new hospital at the Gisela Houseman Medical Center is also going to help LSCO students. For decades now, LSCO has gained a reputation for offering nursing and other medical fields training. Dr. Johnson said the new hospital provides more jobs for graduates and closer place to do supervised training.

Health care training at LSCO includes dental assisting, dental front office, emergency medical services on three levels, massage therapy, message therapy business management, medical assisting, pharmacy technology, pharmacy tech business management, phlebotomy, and pre-professional health science training for vocational nursing and registered nursing transition.

Other course work includes the basic arts and humanities, business studies for real estate.

May elections

From Page 1

Council drew no opposition. Gina Mannino is running alone for Place 2 after Mike Reed did not run. Incumbents Patty Collins in Place 4 and Sherby Dixon in Place 6 filed with no opposition.

For the Orange County Drainage District, incumbent James Scales for Precinct 2 is facing Richard Capaldi, and Precinct 3 incumbent Larry Ancelot is being challenged by Seth Mize.

The WO-C school board called for the bond election earlier this month. The main project of the proposal is to construct a new North Early Learning Center, a school on Cordrey Avenue that is 60 years old. In addition, the district wants to improve security, buy new school buses, and do other improvements on campuses.

According to information from the school district, no increase in property taxes will be needed because of the district's current tax base and valuations. However, state election regulations require the district to advertise a property tax increase. State law also requires that homeowners age 65 and older not have property tax increases for school bonds.

The district's two trustee positions, though, will not be on the ballot because incumbents Roderick Robertson and LaTricia Stroud are running unopposed.

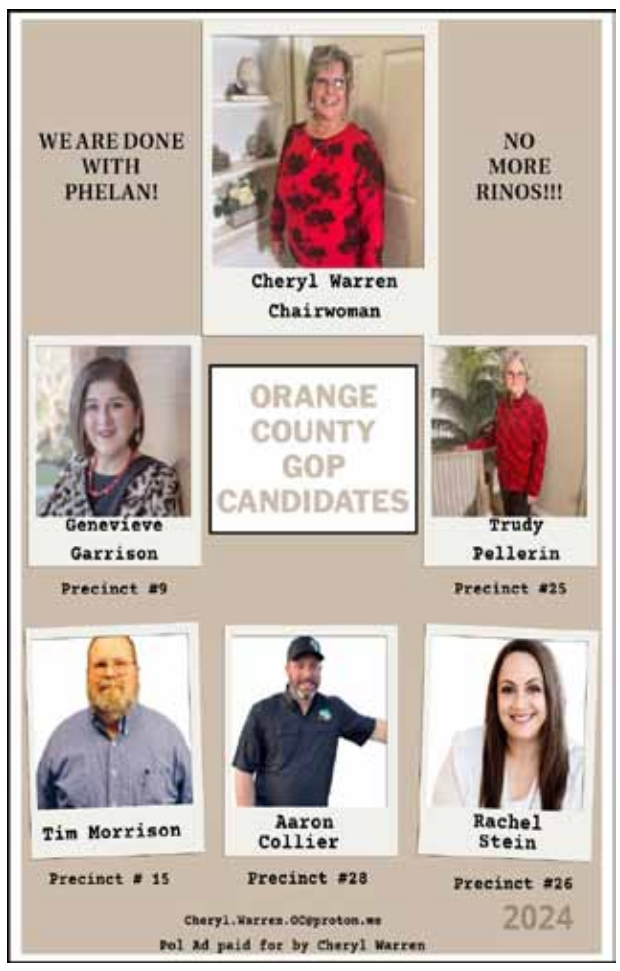
The Orange County Navigation and Port District has incumbents Walter Mullins III in Precinct 2 and John Montagne in Precinct 3 drawing no opposition.

The city of Orange will have a new Single-Member District 1 councilor with Matt Chandler. He drew no opposition as the incumbent, David Bailey is currently running for Orange County Precinct 2 Constable and did not file to run for reelection. Also, Mayor Larry Spears Jr. did not draw an opponent.

At West Orange, incumbent city council members Mike Shugart Sr., Lanie Brown, and Jay Odom are unopposed. Pinehurst has Mayor Sarah McClendon, along with incumbents Cynthia Adams, Greg Willis, and Joey Vance running unopposed.

The Vidor City Council has incumbents Nicole McGowan in Ward 2 and Michael Thomas in Ward 3 are unopposed, along with newcomer Mikayla Bourgque for Ward 5 after the incumbent for that spot, Gary Herrera, did not run.

The Bridge City ISD board has incumbnets Paul Zoch and Judy Cole running unopposed.



Boomtown festival

From Page 1

who is a former drama teacher and works at the Lutcher Theater, plays the main character's little sister.

Trini Gonzalez will be in a couple of other films screening at the festival. He's in the background of "5:01," the brainchild of Seth Sonnier of Vidor. The film was shot in Fred and Beaumont. Jade Hollier of Orange, a long time member of Orange Community Players, has a part in the opening scenes of the film. Other Orange County people on the crew include Penny LeLeux, Dakota Parker and Orange cinematographer Travis Myers.

Myers was also the director of photography on "Hoot," which was shot in Vidor and stars Little Cypress native, Reese Ravencraft. "Hoot" was Ravencraft's debut film in 2019. It has been "in the can" and is now being shown.

In addition, Ravencraft is in "Bad Guacamole" which was shot around Houston. It will screen Saturday in the Texas Proud Block.

Friday at the Texas Energy Museum, "The First Step" will screen. John Frederick of Mauriceville plays the pastor in the movie with a theme of religious faith. The film was shot in Jefferson County.

Not only is Frederick an actor, he is also a producer on the film and worked to get the film made, including bringing on Myers as the director of photography. Studio 220 Film is currently in the fundraising phase of their next project, "Chasing Faith" which will star Ravencraft. Frederick will also be part of that production in both cast and crew.

Music acts are Josh Palermo, Ariel Bush, Sick Ride and Running on Credit, Friday night at the Logon Cafe and Pub. The Golden Triangle Big Band will close out the festival with a concert at the Jefferson Saturday night.

Tickets for the complete festival or individual events are available online through boomtownfestival.com. Individual tickets to see "Saturday Night Fever" are available at the Jefferson Theatre website.

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Round The Clock Hometown News

From the Creaux's Nest

WORLD BELIEVES NAVALNY WAS MURDERED

Aleksei A. Navalny, an anticorruption activist who for more than a decade led the political opposition in **President Vladimir V. Putin's Russia** while enduring arrests, assaults and a near-fatal poisoning, died on Friday in a Russian prison. He was 47. According to Russian accounts**, Alexei Navalny** took a short walk at his **Siberian penal colony**, said he felt unwell, then collapsed and never regained consciousness. On Saturday, **Navalny's** family confirmed that the political activist died on **Friday, February 16**. His condition had deteriorated during his three years in prison, where he complained of being denied medical treatment and spent almost **300 days in solitary confinement**. Prior to his arrest in January 2021, he had already endured months of recovery from a **nerve agent attack.** Despite this, he appeared relatively upbeat and healthy in a court video just a day before his death. Even from prison, **Navalny** remained an unflinching critic of **Putin,** a former KGB officer whom he accused of corruption. He accused Putin of trying to turn **Russia into a "feudal state."** The international community's perspective does not align with **Russia's account** of what transpired at **IK-3**, one of **Russia's northernmost and toughest prisons**. French Foreign Minister **Stéphane Séjourné** asserted that **Navalny** "paid with his life" for his "resistance to Russian oppression," emphasizing the grim reality of **Vladimir Putin's regime**. **Navalny's** mother, **Lyudmila**, stated that her son was "alive, healthy, and happy" when she last saw him on **February 12**. His wife, Yulia, expressed skepticism, saying, "We can't really believe Putin and his government._ **Russian** reports indicate that medics spent **30 minutes** attempting to resuscitate **Navalny**. His spokesperson confirmed that his body is with official investigators, but his family has demanded its release to them.

TURNING BACK THE HANDS OF TIME

10 Years Ago-2014

Judge Carl Thibodaux, after 20 years, is not a candidate for re-election. He came in to the office of county judge after serving a successful apprenticeship as **mayor of West Orange**. He had the basics to take over from **Judge John McDonald**, who offered his help and advice for a smooth transition. **Thibodeaux** soon learned that serving as county judge is not a one day a week meeting. Being county judge is a very complex and time consuming 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. job. Daily, among the jobs as leader and administrator of the county is coordinating with department heads, obtaining federal grants, dealing with the **Texas Dept. of Transportation**, which isn't always a picnic, dealing with other elected officials and over 400 employees. Most important is to lead the county in times of disaster. No one could have done a better job during the hurricanes and he deserves much credit for our fast recovery after the storms. Obtaining lodging for our citizens, clean up and rebuilding. He will be big shoes to fill. **Judge Thibodeaux**, in his 20 years, has brought the county out of the dark ages.*****County Commissioner Owen Burton** is retiring. That's a big loss not only on Commissioners Court, but also to the people of Precinct 2. **Commissioner Burton,** a successful business man, has always governed in a quite, strong business manner. A conservative with strong ethics, he is not a grandstander who feels the need to be a newsmaker. He's efficient, and makes every vote after due study. He is a strong advocate for the citizens and needs of his precinct. **Owen Burton** has walked softly but he's a strong advocate of good government for the county.*****Our friend **Tommy Harmon**, financial director for the **Port of Orange** will retire Feb. 20. A gathering will be held at the Port. **Tommy** is a great guy.***** Feb. 23. Also, on this day, in 1996, teacher, mother, wife and friend to many **Annie Lee Knight** died after a long battle with cancer. We will never forget her.***** On Feb. 24, pretty **Regina Harrington**, widow of our longtime friend **Doug Harrington**, celebrates her first birthday without **Doug**.*** The **LBJ Library** will host a summit April 8-10 in Austin, marking the 50th anniversary of the signing of the **Civil Rights Act**. Former presidents **Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton** will speak and **George W. Bush** is expected to give the keynote address. **President Obama** may also attend. Other **Johnson initiatives** include **Medicare**, the **Clean Air Act**, seat belt requirements, health warnings on cigarettes and banned discrimination against racial and ethnic minorities and women.***** It's with sadness that we learned late Tuesday that **Larry Plant** had passed away**. Larry** has been married to **Flaudry,** one of the **Bonin twins**, for many years. **Flaudry** is in a nursing home and **Larry** had been caring for her. Watch our website, therecordlive.com for funeral arrangements. *****In 1885, 129 years ago, **Mark Twain's "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn**" was published for the first time. That story has stood the test of times. Today, his story sounds fictional but it depicts much of the times as they were then when few people were educated.

20 Years Ago-2004

Terry "Stud Duck" Fuselier, 53, lost his life in an 18 wheeler truck accident Feb. 11, in Columbia, SC. He leaves behind his wife **Yvonne**, son **Jesse**, daughter **Tammy**, brothers **Elvin, Tony and Richard**, all of Bridge City and sisters **Elaine Marceaux** of Little Cypress.*****A special 80th birthday celebration for **Gordon Baxter**, born on **Christmas Day,** is set for Saturday Feb. 28, at the Holiday Inn Atrium Plaza in Beaumont. The party starts at 11 a.m.(Editor's note: I recall that party quite well, an overflow crowd attended. **Mike Trahan and Skipper** will also remember that day. **Al Caldwell** emceed the occasion. Speakers were astronaut **Greg Harbaugh**, secretary of state **Jacik Rains**, mayor **Evelyn Lord** and many others. **Bax** died a short time later.)*****Preston Conway** will celebrate his 18th birthday on Feb. 29. He has a birthday every four years.*****Democratic party primary voting** begins. Running for U.S. president is **Lyndon LaRouche, John Edwards, John Kerry, Howard Dean, Joe Lieberman, Randy Crow, Dennis Kucinich, Dick Gephardt, Al Sharpton and Wesley K. Clark.** (Editor's note: Do you recall who was nominated.?)*****Locally, **Rodney Price, Troy Johnson and Jim Sharon Bearden** are running for county court at law judge. (**Johnson** won.)*****Mike White and David Bailey** ran for sheriff. (**White** won.)*****John Ford** beat **George Navarro** for constable Pct. 3.***** **Richard Lee Moore**, 47, formerly of Bridge City, died Feb. 17, while kayaking in the Gulf of Mexico. He was a 1974 BC grad.

45 Years Ago-1979

The Bob Hope Telethon held in Houston to build and equip the new **Bob Hope Vocational High School** at **Hughen School** for Crippled Children in Port Arthur was a big success. The Telethon raised **$1,200,000**. Many stars appeared including **Jimmy Dean, Kathy Crosby, Doug Kershaw**, who brought wife **Pam** and their two boys, **Zachary** and baby **Tyler, Kenny Rogers, Andy Williams, Vic Damone, Johnny Desmond, Dennis James, Fred Travillino, Buddy Rogers, Pia, Nancy Ames, Lynn Anderson** and many more. **Bill Hughes and Joe C. Norman**, of **Norstok**, presented a photo of the proposed **Bob Hope School** to **Bob. W.T. Oliver** and his committee put the show together. Some of the local folks spotted were **Earl and June Bishop, Curtis and Marion Lee, Roy and Phyllis Dunn,Charles and Pat Johnson, Weldon and Jane Leger, Martha Hughes, Patsy Norman** and Orange Bank owners **Vincent and Mary Kay Kickerillo,** who contributed **$50 thousand** to the telethon. Sports figures present were **Bum Phillips, Darrell Royal and Mike Barber**, who presented **Hope** with a western Stetson.

A FEW HAPPENINGS

You can't slip up the plans of **Father Jim Sichko.** The papal missionary who grew up in Orange was planning to surprise sister **Thereze Sichko** in Orange for her **60th birthday**, but she showed up for a visit at his Lexington, Kentucky, home. So he brought the party to her. He flew her friends in to surprise her at his favorite steakhouse. **Coach Cornell Thompson** came, along with **Gina and Skipper Yeaman, and Joan Haddock,** who now lives in Dallas. **Thereze** has been running the West Orange-Stark athletic department for years, many of them spent with **Coach T.** The day after the party, **Father Jim** showed the visitors around the University of Kentucky athletic facilities, including the football training area, plus they got to meet the men's head basketball coach.*****Our friend **Harry Stephens** was under the weather over the weekend after spending 24-hours in hospital. Thankfully Monday he was back at work. **He and Margie** are having an anniversary sale at **Harry's Appliance.** A good time to buy.*****Several people from Orange County traveled to Colorado Springs for the wedding of the son of **Stephen and Jami Lee**. Some of the guests got to wear their furs up in the snowy mountains as they celebrated the nuptuals of **Mitchell and Kirstin Lee**. Guests from here included **Cecil and Nancy Byers, Kathy Gunn, Patty Cloeren, Grant and Amberly Craft, Natasha Garrett, Jack Dallas, and Jimmy and Tracey Gilliam.*****Sydney Williams and Cody Carr** traveled across the world to get married. They went all the way to **New Zealand.** And getting married wasn't their only big plunge. They some free falling from swing seats in the Auckland mountains.*****Julie, Sam, and Samantha Patronella** took a cruise to Mexico. They're already planning their next cruise.*****Cody Strause,** who is in a U.S. Army choral group, sang at the Daytona 500. Mom **Janoise Grizzaffi** will tell you all about it.***** **Orange's O'Shaquie Forter** retains his boxing lightweight title at **Madison Square Garden,** New York, Friday with a win over **Abraham Nova** in a 12 round fight. *****Orange Community Players** had another successful fundraising show at the Orange Train Depot. This time, they coerced retired choir teacher **Theresa Cronin** to join the show fun. Other singers included regulars **Paul Burch, Tanyia Guillotte, and Codie Vasquez.** And if there's anything with **OCP,** you can count on seeing **Diana Hill, Tiffany Overstreet**, **and Caroline Hennigan** helping out.***** I got a note from a friend who is a public servant, who I won't disclose. Here is his take. He says to trade our state representative **Dade Phelan,** Speaker of the Texas House, the second most powerful leader in the state, for an unknown, unqualified, with no government experience is like the **K.C. Chiefs, Super Bowl Champs,** trading **QB Patrick Mahomes** for a future draft choice. **Phelan** has two **Republican** opponents.**** Be sure to check out **Danny's** in West Orange. I bought fresh catfish fillets a couple of weeks ago. Very good item for **Lent.** On special now, the areas best **Cajun Boudin.** Also delicious breakfast or lunch served in **Danny's Deli.*****A **Down Life's Highway** column about **Roy's** father, **Clay Dunn,** who died February, 19, 1959, is running in this week's paper. Besides what's in **Roy's** column **Clay** pioneered many businesses throughout the county. He built the **Silver Slipper Dinner Club** in Bridge City in 1927, and over 50 years ago, the first and only motel in Bridge City (**Midway**). **Clay** also opened the first liquor store in Orang**e (Warehouse)** and **(Midway)** in Bridge City.***** **The Houston Chronicle** endorsed **President Joe Biden** for president. I believe most major newspapers throughout the country will not endorse **Trump.** According to a recent survey ranking "Presidential greatness" of the 45 Presidents of the United States, President Joe Biden emerged as the 14th-best President, while his anticipated 2024 presidential contender, former President Donald Trump, came in last place. I was surprised **Clinton** wasn't in the top 10.***** **Central Mall** has new owners. **Port Arthur's Central Mall** has all the right ingredients for success according to **Felix Reznick**, principal with **4 th Dimensions Properties,** which recently bought the mall. **Reznick** said company officials started with cosmetic fixes, but the mall remains open business and owners are ready to attract different types of tenants. Currently there are a couple of national stores interested in locating at **Central Mall.** "We're looking to bring in a bit of everything," **Reznick** said. **Central Mall** is very handy to **Bridge City, Orangefield** and the **Orange area** shopper. If they will let us, I know we can help them.*****West Orange **Mayor Randy Branch** and his wife, **Jane,** celebrated their **53rd anniversary**.***Bridge City **ISD Police Chief Cliff Hargrave** and wife, **Sally,** had their **36th anniversary**.***Also celebrating another year of marriage were **Ricky and Meri Elen Jacobs**, coming in at **33 years**.

BREAUX BIRTHDAYS

A few friends celebrating birthdays in the next few days. **Feb. 21:** Our old friend **Paulette Stevens, Erin Boren, Beverly Satir, Jim Izer** and **Amanda Newman.*****Feb. 22; Chad Boatman, Harry Risher, Jasmine Lindner, John Curphy, Leslie Braus, Wesley Arnold** and **Brint Carlton.*****Feb. 23; John Hughes, Jody Andes, Crystal Jones, Misti Bishop, Kelle Betz, Matthew Bland, Rachel Doucet** and **Joe Hebert.*****Feb. 24: Dalton Bonds, Brently Sholmire, Regina Harrington** and **Angela Brinson.*****Feb. 25: Brad Frye, Zelda Jones, Doris Byrd, Angela Brinson.*****Feb. 26: Betty Sherman, Braelyn Baugh, Zachary Gilliam, Amanda Beeson. *****Feb. 27: Jeffrey Fregia, Bailey Noah, Beth Mathews, Butch Choate, Gretta Brinson, Lindsey Moreau, Sarah Havens, Allisha Bonneaux.*****Other birthday celebrations this past week. **Joann Gabriel** turned **91,** while **Kay Stone** marked birthday **No. 80**, while **Randy Richardson** and **Bobby Hommel** made **70.** Others with birthdays this past week included **Janet Bland, Linda Gunstream, Paul Anthony Hardin, Olivia Revis, Lexi Tubbleville, Ruby Richard, Te'Ron Brown, Shelly Williams, Teri Harmon, and Hester Cheshire. Paige McKee** got to go to NYC for her **Sweet 16**, but we haven't heard if **Jean Parker** took time to enjoy cake on her birthday because she's so busy overseeing her political Facebook page.*****We can't overlook **Prince Frankie**. The family of **Michael and Angelique Catt** threw an elaborate birthday party for their furry little pup. But he wasn't the only dog celebrating. **Father Jim** up in Kentucky had his Orange guests over to celebrate **Gracie** the bloodhound's ninth birthday. Perhaps **Thereze** traveled to Kentucky so **Gracie** wouldn't chew up her belongings at home in Orange.

CAJUN STORY OF THE WEEK

Every couple of months **Sally Badeaux and Lucy leLeux**, dem go for a girl's night out. Da mens, dem, keep da chillums. At the girl's outing last week dem womens drank way too much beer and got plain drunk. After leaving **Tee-Boy's Bar & Grill,** they staggered dere way towards home. While cutting through da graveyard, **Sally** said, "Me, I got to use da bashroom so bad."

Lucy said, "Me too."

Sally said, "Why don't we do our business behind a headstone."

Lucy say, "Mais, okay."

Sally didn't have nutting to wipe wit so she use her panties, den throw dem away. **Lucy,** her, was wearing some expensive underware dat her husband **Henry** had given her for her birthday and she didn't want to ruin dem. She was lucky enough to salvage a big ribbon from da wreath dat was on da grave and wiped herself wit dat. Den da womens stagger dere way home.

Da next morning, **Clovis Badeaux** call **Lucy's** husband, **Henry**, and he say, "**Look cuzz,** dis girl's night out has got to stop, yea, las night **Sally** came home witout her panties her."

"Dats nutting, said **Henry, Lucy** came home her wit a card stuck on her butt wat said, **"From all of us at da fire station, we will never forget you."**

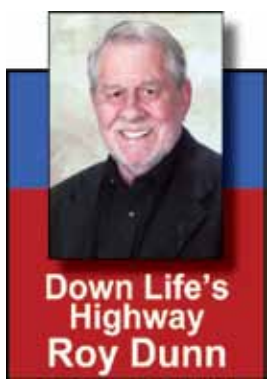
C'EST T'OUT
GOP WHISTLEBLOWER INDICTED
Truth and Accountability Matters

The **GOP whistleblower,** who was once considered a central figure in the party's case against **President Joe Biden** and his son **Hunter Biden,** has now been indicted. This **FBI** informant, **Alexander Smirnov,** had previously made false allegations about the **Biden's**, which were used as a key piece of evidence during the impeachment inquiry into the president. However, **Smirnov** now faces charges for lying to the **FBI** and falsification of records related to the case. An attorney for **Hunter Biden** told **NBC News** that **Republicans** had been warned that they "built their conspiracies about **Hunter and his family** on lies told by people with agendas, not facts." "This is just another instance of **Chairman James Comer** and **Rep. Jim Jordan** peddling falsehoods based on dishonest, uncredible allegations and witnesses," The **whistleblower's** lies were daily top news on **Fox News. Sean Hannity** had done **85 segments** based on the lies and all but convicted the **Biden's.** House Oversight Committee Ranking Member **Jamie Raskin** called for the end to the impeachment inquiry.***** Just as I was wrapping up I got word from the office that pretty **Ms. Windee** had dropped off a package from **'Top Hog Processing.'** Can't wait to see what that is. Thanks for your time. Please shop our family of advertisers, read us cover to cover. Thank you for making us Orange County's most widely read newspapers. **Take care and God bless.**

The life and times and the death of Clay

Clay Dunn flirted with the odds, walked on the edge on a quick rise to the top. By the time he was 27 he had been to hell and back. Lady luck rode with him.

DOWN LIFE'S HIGHWAY
Roy Dunn - Columnist
For The Record



Clay Jackson Dunn was the product of a pioneering background. His father, Allen, had come to Texas from Arkansas in a covered wagon with his mother, Sarah Jane, who apparently was a pretty tough cookie for a 26-year-old. She embarked on a 14-month journey in Texas that held many uncertainties and dangers. Her husband, Dr. Stephen James Dunn, had been killed a few months earlier in the Civil War. Sarah Jane sought a new life for her son and younger sister.

Abraham Lincoln was president of the Union when the trio arrived in Texas. The territory was almost lawless with only a handful of Texas Rangers. Outlaws and raiding Indians were still prevalent. The Dunns settled around Rising Star. Sarah Jane, my great-grandmother, home-schooled the two youngsters.

Allen caught and branded stray Longhorns, acquired land; and at age 26, my grandfather married 14-year-old Laura Dunn. This union produced eight children. My father, Clay, was their fourth child and second son.

My grandmother was a very religious woman, who raised the children in the Methodist Church. All, a law-abiding citizen, had gained respect in the territory. Nothing in their background indicates anything other than that they were good, law-abiding, Christian folks, who raised their children accordingly. Allen instilled a good work ethic in all of his children. I mention the above to establish the foundation my father Clay, came from.

Before his 15th birthday, Dad was the first of the boys to leave home.

After graduating from the seventh grade, he took his diploma on the road, leaving home on a donkey.

At Comanche, he got a job with the telephone company that a few years later landed him in Port Arthur.

He had learned to drive while stringing wire and poles with the phone company.

The Port Arthur Fire Department had obtained its first motorized equipment, the "Belle Stearns," named in memory of Assistant Chief George Stearns' wife.

Dad was hired in 1915 to be the first driver of the first fire truck.

Within a few months, he used up his saved money to purchase three cars from Linn Motor Company.

Clay Dunn

He started Port Arthur's first taxicab service.

The cabs made the long dirt road hauls to Sabine Pass to pick up and deliver seamen to their ships. The cab business was thriving when Clay was called to serve in World War I.

Death would soon become a daily occurrence for Clay, even before they reached the battleground. While crossing the ocean, influenza attacked their ship. Many mornings Clay woke up to find a soldier at his side dead. So many died that they soon ran out of flags to drop the bodies in the ocean and just got to throwing them overboard for burial at sea.

Dad marched every step of the way from one end of France to the other. Fighting was mostly hand-to-hand combat. Like most country boys, he was a good shooter, but he killed more of the enemy with a bayonet than he did with a rifle shot. At wars end in 1918, he returned to Port Arthur. His taxicabs had been wrecked, torn up and put out of commission. Clay started over with one cab.

One day a man he called 'Captain' hired Dad's cab after Captain had been told that Clay knew where all the speakeasies were. Dad drove him around all day. The man asked Clay to drive him to Beaumont to catch the train. He told Dad he didn't want him to stop anywhere; he wanted to get to Beaumont. Wrapped in some newspapers, Captain said, was $10,000 that he was giving him. Clay found out the man had taken orders for 1,000 cases of whiskey and the man was giving Clay $10 commission on each case. The man told him he would return each month and do the same because he trusted him. With so much money at stake, he had to have someone he could really trust. Dad said that amount of money was so great it scared him. For several months, the procedure repeated. Clay now had plenty of money. He expanded the cab business and went a step further. He hired Captain Livingston in Orange to build him a ship and started importing the liquor from Nassau himself. He paid $17 per case and sold it for $125. A load of 1,000 cases was earning him $90,000 a month. Clay was off and rolling and living the good life when the Ku Klux Klan got after him. The Klan, in 1920 in Port Arthur, involved almost everyone who wasn't Jewish, Black or Catholic. Clay's brother, Carl, had been mistaken for him and had his stomach cut open and had carried his guts in his hands to the hospital. Clay went to the jailhouse and requested that Sheriff Walter Covington lock him up for his own protection until he could figure out his next move. Covington reluctantly locked him up, but when the Klan showed up, he let them drag Clay out of the cell. They took him out to the outskirts of town, now known as Port Acres, and tarred and feathered him and left him to die. A Catholic man had noticed a cross burning about midnight. The next morning he found Clay nearly dead. He took him home, hid him out; and he and his wife cared for him and saved his life. Up to his last day on earth, Dad couldn't grow body hair where he was tarred. For a couple of months, the law looked for his body. When his brother, Carl, was able to leave the hospital, he returned home to Rising Star and told his parents he believed Clay had been killed. Meanwhile, Clay had gotten a message out to his folks that he was alive and hidden out. After a few weeks, Clay got word to Joe Teage, a friend who picked him up and drove him to his parents. He stayed until he was fully recovered, could walk and use his arms.

A young Clay Dunn started the first cab business in Port Arthur. Cabs were called HACKS. Shown in picture standing far left is Clay Dunn, the drivers are Joe Tigue; middle unknown and far right driver is Little Joe Viator. The cars are on Proctor Street in or around the year 1925. Mr. Linn, standing on sidewalk later owned car dealership.

According to historian W.T. Block, almost everyone in law enforcement, judges and so forth, belonged to the Klan in Port Arthur in 1920. Apparently Covington was also a Klan member. Clay vowed to kill him. He just missed him once when he learned he was in Mexico on vacation, but Clay arrived too late. For the rest of his life, Covington kept a law enforcement job so he could tote a pistol. He was convinced Clay would kill him if he got the chance. An ironic story involved me in something that I wasn't aware of. Walter Covington had a job as a jailer for the Port Arthur Police Department. It was located across the street from Mrs. Shuggart's Boarding House. Covington ate lunch there every weekday. I had moved into the rooming house while I operated the pony ride at Pleasure Island. Harry Waddell, who has recently passed away, and I roomed together. Everyday I had lunch with Covington and the other residents. I didn't know him. He didn't know me. When he found out who I was, he never ate at Mrs. Shuggart's again. A policeman friend later told me that Covington believed I had been planted there to kill him. Clay hated anyone who hid behind a mask. He called them "gutless son's-of-bitches." In August of 1922, the Orange oilfield boom hit big time with the discovery of the Oscar Chesson Wonder Well. Most of the Klan members disbanded after tar and feathering a doctor in Beaumont, a move that brought in the Texas Rangers. Clay, who had parlayed his seventh-grade diploma into a bachelor's degree in the school of hard knocks, returned to the area and set up shop at Orangefield and embarked on a path that would earn him a master's degree from the same school. (Editor's note: Clay became a very successful business man. On February 19, 1959, 65 years ago, at age 65, Clay died on the operating table in a Dallas hospital during gall bladder surgery. His heart just quit.)

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Justice served

From Page 2A

coming a FBI agent.

His plans for the future also included attending law school, becoming an attorney and eventually a prosecutor as well.

The reason the library at OPD is named after Danny Gray is because of his encouraging officers to get their college degrees and educate themselves, according to Stephen Gray.

Danny Gray's profession also influenced his children. Both chose a service profession. Stephen Gray wanted to honor his father and continue the legacy of "fighting crime" and chose law enforcement. Stephanie Gray chose nursing.

Stephen Gray married and has three children. His oldest daughter is a special education teacher. His son recently graduated from college and is considering a career in law enforcement. His youngest daughter recently accepted a scholarship to play volleyball in college.

Stephanie Gray-Haley is married and has five boys. Three of her sons are married while another son is busy with his career while another is finishing up in college. Stephanie is busy working as a nurse, but she males sure she is always available for her four grandchildren.

Following the death of Danny, Gail later married Randy Powell. He was a wonderful step-father to the Gray children. He encouraged the family to talk about their father and share their feelings.

Tragedy struck again when Gail lost her husband to cancer in November 2023. Forever strong in her faith, Gail is active in her church and is still serving people. She also enjoys spending time with family and friends.

Stephen Gray's dedication to seeing justice served remained as he made his way to Austin for the parole board hearings to keep Billy Wayne Dowden in prison. He thought it was important for the parole board to see his face and not just a letter from the son or family member.

The family and friends of Danny Gray faithfully wrote letters to the parole board. Each time Dowden came up for parole, the entire family wrote to protest his release.

"I never look forward to writing these letters. It is such a painful experience to put down on paper how losing my dad effects me in my life everyday. The loss I feel is overwhelming even after all of these years," Stephanie Gray-Haley wrote to the parole board.

Her son, Hendon Gray Haley, also wrote to the parole board. He stated he was honored to have the his middle name Gray in like that of his grandfather.

"He was a great man and will be remembered as such," he wrote.

For the Gray family there is a sense of relief with no more parole board hearings and letter writing to relive the trauma.

Deaths & Memorials

Judy Catherine Breaux, 84

Judy Catherine Breaux

Judy Catherine Breaux, 84, of Orange, Texas, passed away on February 12, 2024, at Stonewood Senior Living in Orange.

Funeral services will be 3:00 p.m., Saturday, February 17, 2024, at Claybar Funeral Home in Orange. Officiating will be Chaplain Belinda Breaux. Burial will follow at Autumn Oaks Memorial Park in Orange.

Visitation will be from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m., Saturday, February 17, 2024, at Claybar Funeral Home in Orange.

Born in Wichita Falls, Texas, on December 20, 1939, she was the daughter of Joe Bolton, Sr. and Frances Stearns Bolton. She was known for her kind spirit and beautiful blue eyes. Judy had a sweet personality that endeared her to everyone she met. One of Judy's greatest passions was quilting and sewing. She poured her heart into creating masterpieces to gift to her loved ones. Judy loved flowers of all kinds and enjoyed being in and decorating her yard. A devoted member of Old First Orange Baptist Church, Judy found comfort in her faith. After retiring, Judy embarked on an adventure, traveling extensively all-over North America with her husband, Francis. She had the remarkable ability to connect with people effortlessly. She never met a stranger and treated everyone she encountered with kindness and genuine interest. Above all else, family meant the world to Judy. Her love for them knew no bounds, and she cherished every moment spent together. She will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Joe and Frances Bolton; her grandson, Ryan; and her brother, Joe Bolton, Jr.

She is survived by her loving husband, Francis Breaux; her daughters, Julie LeDoux and husband, Ronnie, Janet Pineda and husband, Ricky, Jodie Anders and husband, Mark, and Jennifer Lawrence and husband, Joseph; her grandchildren, Lori, Leslie, Michelle, Matt, Misty, Stef, Holland, Jordan, Chrissy, and Shanna; her close friends, Anita, Robbie, Roger, and Melanie; and numerous other loving cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends.

Serving as pallbearers will be her grandchildren. Honorary pallbearers are her daughters and sons-in-law.

Jan Eland, 67, of Bridge City

Jan Eland, 67, of Bridge City, passed away on February 13, 2024, at home. Although the family appreciates the kindness and sympathy of friends and loved ones, they kindly request privacy during this difficult time.

Cremation will be held under the direction of Claybar Funeral Home in Orange. In lieu of flowers and other expressions of sympathy, please make a donation to The Humane Society at 2050 Spindletop Ave, Beaumont, TX 77705.

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EARLY VOTING
FEB. 20TH
THRU
MARCH 1ST

ELECTION DAY
MARCH 5TH

Stephanie Roberts
Precinct 15

Pol. Adv. Paid for by Kandice Bacon, John Dubose, Robert Simonton & Stephanie Roberts

RE-ELECT
Leo LaBauve
ORANGE COUNTY REPUBLICAN PARTY OF TEXAS CHAIRMAN

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FEB.20-MARCH 1, 2024

PRIMARY ELECTION DAY
MARCH 5 , 2024

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Four years ago, I was elected sheriff of Orange County, an honor I cherish. Taking office six months early, I swiftly formed my team, which necessitated tough decisions. Consulting with the previous sheriff, we agreed that not all employees would continue under my administration. While difficult, these decisions were made to prioritize the safety of our community. Some chose to move on, but our commitment to excellence in law enforcement remains steadfast. In my 4 years of sheriff we have achieved the following:

- The only sheriff that is born and raised in Orange County.
- One of two candidates that has worked in Orange County
- Endorsed by the Orange County Sheriff's Employees Association.
- 35 years of law enforcement experience, 27 years with Orange County agencies.
- The only candidate that has sheriff experience
- Been through years of community disasters and stood firm as a leader.
- Reduced property crimes in rural areas by 33%
- Reduced overall crime rates in rural areas by 7%
- 0 deaths in our jails.
- 2 ratified union contracts to give stability to the Orange County Sheriff's office employees.
- Increased active shooter training and SWAT training for our officers.
- Increased equipment for deputies without costing taxpayers money.
- Never had go back to commissioner's court and ask for the budget to be increased.
- Saved tax payors an excess of $500,000 by using drug asset forfeiture money.
- Reopened unutilized rural substations.

Strong Partnerships and Exemplary Actions: A Collaborative Effort Ensuring School Safety

Several individuals have alleged that our department lacks collaboration with other agencies, but it's important to clarify that we have always maintained strong partnerships. On February 16th, The Orange Police Department, Orange County Sheriff's Office, Texas DPS, and Newton County Sheriff's Office all collaborated in apprehending three suspects, ensuring the safety of Deweyville High School.

During the pursuit, I am personally proud of the exemplary actions of the Orange County Sheriff's Department officers on the school premises. Even while off duty, a K-9 handler and their partner were instrumental in the suspects' capture. Particularly impressive was the proactive approach taken by our officers, who strategically positioned themselves between the wooded area where the suspects were located and the school buildings, effectively shielding the students.

We are grateful for the support of numerous law enforcement agencies and proud of the professionalism and training demonstrated by the Orange County Sheriff's Department were particularly noteworthy on this occasion. -Sheriff Jimmy Lane Mooney

Keep Orange County Moving Forward Re-Elect Jimmy Lane Mooney

BC softball has new coach, returns pitching ace

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

Last season was another winning one for the Bridge City Cardinals softball team. The record was very good but the Cardinals did make an earlier exit than usual in the post season.

The new head coach for Bridge City softball who served as an assistant coach the last two years Kylie Bradley recapped the season. "I was proud of what these girls did because at the end of the day they came out and gave us all they've got. When it came to our playoff run we did fall a little short of our expectations. We fell to Huffman in the first round, and that's something that hurt but it also kind of fueled us for this year. We know that we want to do better than that, we would like to do much better than that. We did a lot of good things last year, but we had some struggles with injuries, but I think it made us stronger, and I think we're prepared for that mentally this year if we do hit injuries we'll lean on how we made it through last year and we'll be okay this year," Bradley reminded.

Nine returning Cardinals on the varsity will be moving around to help achieve depth at every position. Bradley explained, "We've just emphasized a lot on putting the Cardinals in different situations so that if we do hit a bump in the road or I do need to put them somewhere else or someone is having an off day we're going to switch it up, and I trust all of those returners to really go out on the field and play any spot I ask them to go."

Lexi Nugier played primarily shortstop last year will see more time at third where she played two seasons ago. Makenna Knight is back at second base and will move over to shortstop when Nugier switches to third.

Kyleigh Hamilton will work in the outfield and come in to play second at times. Brooklyn Droddy will split time at the two corner infield positions at first base primarily and sometimes at third base

BRIDGE CITY Page 5B

Kylie Bradley takes over as the head softball coach at Bridge City after serving the last two years as an assistant with the team. RECORD PHOTO: Dan Perrine

Lady Bobcats build on success

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

The softball program at Orangefield had its most successful season ever last year. The Lady Bobcats won the district championship and advanced to the fourth round of the state playoffs before being eliminated by Grandview which at the time was the top ranked team in Class 3A.

Coach Rebekah Ragsdale of the Lady Bobcats hopes to build on that success this season. "It was really good to see that kind of competition, we can use Grandview as a measuring stick for us. To be up there with those kind of teams is exciting and promising for us," Ragsdale replied.

Coach Rebekah Ragsdale led the Orangefield softball team to its best season ever last year and hopes the Lady Bobcats can repeat that success this year.

Orangefield returns all but three players from that outstanding team of last year. Nine Lady Bobcats return from 2023 so Coach Ragsdale will have plenty of experience with which to build another strong team for this season.

Seven to eight of those nine were starters last season, and four of them are seniors. Abigail Curphey is a four year starter as a pitcher, Paris Becker will be a leader playing outfield for her third year as a starter on varsity, Greenlea Oldham is a three year starter at first base, and Abigail Broussard is a three year varsity starter for the Lady Bobcats.

Junior Alysen Vincent is back after getting extensive playing time last year. Four sophomores played as freshmen and will be counted on to produce for Orangefield in their second year on the varsity. They are Aubree Beck, Hallee Becker, Charlee Sanches, and Haylee Spears.

Ragsdale evaluated, "We're kind of in a different spot from a year ago when we felt we were so young. We just kind of rolled through the year and were kind of sneaking up on some people, and this year it's going to be completely different we're going to have to learn to play with a target on our back and learn to play with that kind of pressure. That's going to be the challenge for the Lady Bobcats this season

ORANGEFIELD Page 4B

Lady Bears loaded again for softball

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

Last year was a great season for Little Cypress Mauriceville in softball. The Lady Bears won thirty games, finished first place in a very difficult district, and made it to the third round of the state playoffs before being eliminated by the always loaded Liberty Lady Panthers.

LCM softball coach Dena Adkins assessed last season for her Lady Bears. "I am very proud of them. We finished first in district which is always our goal and the Lady Bears did that very well. We lost to a well-coached Liberty team again, but the kids played well. We did put some runs on the board against them, so I can't be too upset with how the season ended," Adkins recalled.

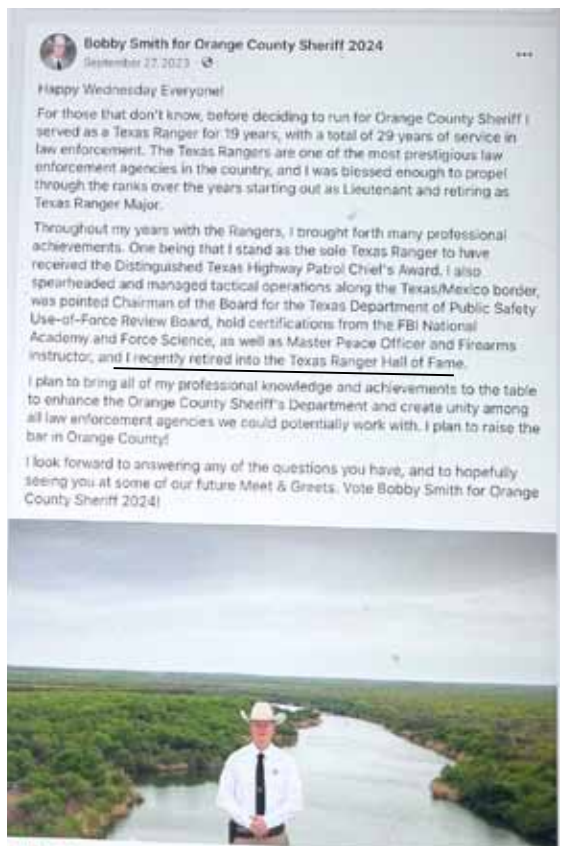
Coach Dena Adkins has most of her Lady Bears back to compete for another strong year in softball.

LCM LADY Page 4B

Is Bobby Smith right for Orange County?

Every Orange County resident should be informed that a person running for the highest law enforcement position in the county is being presented as something he is not. Many of his supporters were falsley claiming he had certain accolades, which he never corrected, until after his campaign was confronted with truth. After the truth was discovered, his website and social media changed those false potrayals.

- **Why should we VOTE for someone who hasn't cared enough to vote himself? Proven Fact: Mail in ballots work all over the world. Just ask our men and women serving and working abroad.**
- **Why did he allow his campaign and mislead the citizens of Orange County to believe he was inducted into the Hall of Fame and or Retired into the hall of fame?**
- **Why is there no record of Bobby Smith on the interenet, especially after years of service as a Texas Ranger?**
- **Why has 66% of his campaign funds come from outside of Orange County based on his 1/17/2024 financial report?**
- **Why are so many of the top Texas Rangers retiring after the investigations of the Uvalde school shootings? (An investigation , unfortunately, that has still left families with more questions than answers.)**


Bobby Smith for Orange County Sheriff 2024
September 27, 2023

Happy Wednesday Everyone!

For those that don't know, before deciding to run for Orange County Sheriff I served as a Texas Ranger for 19 years, with a total of 29 years of service in law enforcement. The Texas Rangers are one of the most prestigious law enforcement agencies in the country, and I was blessed enough to propel through the ranks over the years starting out as Lieutenant and retiring as Texas Ranger Major.

Throughout my years with the Rangers, I brought forth many professional achievements. One being that I stand as the sole Texas Ranger to have received the Distinguished Texas Highway Patrol Chief's Award. I also spearheaded and managed tactical operations along the Texas/Mexico border, was pointed Chairman of the Board for the Texas Department of Public Safety Use-of-Force Review Board, hold certifications from the FBI National Academy and Force Science, as well as Master Peace Officer and Firearms instructor, and I recently retired into the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame.

I plan to bring all of my professional knowledge and achievements to the table to enhance the Orange County Sheriff's Department and create unity among all law enforcement agencies we could potentially work with. I plan to raise the bar in Orange County!

I look forward to answering any of the questions you have, and to hopefully seeing you at some of our future Meet & Greets. Vote Bobby Smith for Orange County Sheriff 2024!

Orange County Sheriff Candidate's Voting Record

Vote for a Sheriff Who Votes

In a recent forum, all four candidates for sheriff were questioned about the importance of voting.

Despite unanimous acknowledgment of its significance, the past 12 year voting record proves different.

Mooney, Sanchez, ,& Dischler maintained a consistent voting record

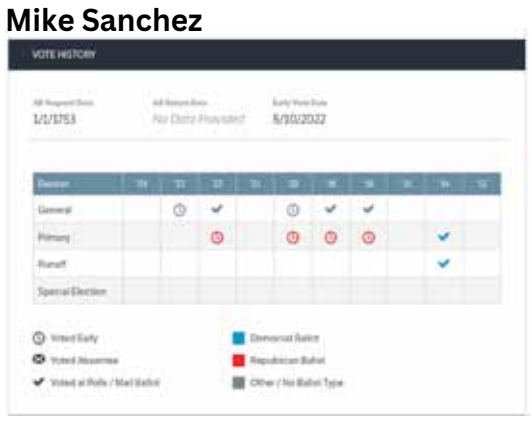
Bobby Smith voted once

Revision to the earlier advertisement on February 14, 2024: Our apologies for the oversight in the previous ad. Regrettably, there was a failure to update the records, resulting in an error when accessing Mike Sanchez's voting record and Bobby Smith voting once in 2023.

POLITICAL ADVERTISING PAID FOR BY NELDA BURTON

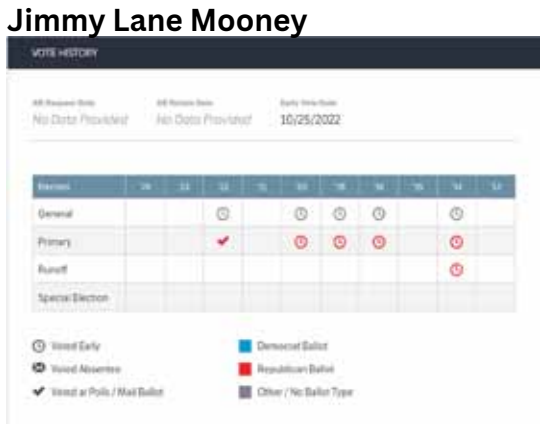
Robert Smith

Mike Sanchez



Ronald Dischler

Jimmy Lane Mooney



OUTDOORS

Bite continues to improve

OUTDOORS
Capt. Chuck Uzzle
For The Record

The loud noises you have been hearing from your neighbors garage more than likely have been the sounds of fishing tackle emerging from winter hibernation. The combination of warmer weather and better water conditions have many anglers scurrying to knock the dust off their boats and head for the water. Both freshwater and saltwater anglers alike have benefitted lately from the conditions and the bite has improved in both places. If the current forecast holds true it looks like we could have some really nice days in store for the next week or so and that should do nothing but make the bite even better.

The folks on both Sam Rayburn and Toledo Bend are enjoying some better than average fishing right now, especially for February. Both lakes are in good shape as far as water levels and they are still slightly on the rise. The water color is a little off due to what's left of the runoff but it's getting better. The warmer temperatures should push a few more fish up shallow but the best bite is in that area of 5-10 feet of water on the outside grass line. Classic spring patterns such as spinnerbaits in flooded brush and crankbaits out deeper are holding their own and producing fish. Some of the better fish are being caught on Carolina rigs or jigs in a little deeper water so you have several options to choose from. Provided we don't have another big winter storm event it shouldn't be long before we really see those fish get up shallow and start to spawn.

Chuck Uzzle

The bass fishermen aren't the only ones on the lakes taking advantage of the bite, the white perch fishermen have been doing really well themselves. The most consistent bite has been around deeper structure with shiners but a few good reports from some folks fishing shallower with jigs have been surfacing as well. Locally the white perch have been showing up in good numbers on the Sabine and Neches rivers for the folks who know where to look. It's amazing how good that bite can be once you locate those fish and that's exactly why those places are sworn to secrecy.

Over on the saltwater side there is a decent speckled trout bite on the south end in deeper water. The ship channel and jetties are both holding some fish right now and they have been fairly consistent. Incoming tides bringing better water in have been the best bet for anglers throwing swim baits or soft plastics near shell or other structure. The outgoing tide farther up the lake has kick started a redfish bite in the afternoons as the bait and warmer water empties out of the marshes. Rattling corks with soft plastics, swimbaits and topwater plugs have been good options for this program.

So far I haven't heard of or seen any really big trout yet this year from either Sabine or Calcasieu but it has to happen eventually. Both lakes have improved overall during the last year or so and it's just a matter of time before one of those really big fish shows up and puts a charge in the local fishing world. The folks that I know of that hunt these big fish religiously have been catching a few decent fish on Corkies and Mirrordine's with an occasional topwater fish thrown in for good measure. They continue to believe that the big fish will show up eventually. All I know is that you can't catch them if you don't go.

On a side note I read recently about how the biased left wing media has refused to identify the folks involved in the shooting at the Superbowl parade in Kansas City citing the fact that those who were arrested were minors. If my memory serves me correctly the same media had no problem identifying Kyle Rittenhouse, who was 17, during the Kenosha Wisconsin riots. In fact they plastered his face on every media platform out there because he fit the narrative that the gun control advocates want you to believe. The current administration that continues to cater to things like illegal immigrants and funding Ukraine while leaving American citizens to foot the bill and do without would love nothing more than to pass as many gun control laws as they possibly can. Hopefully during this next election the American people will finally get tired of being set aside, like they have been for the last 3 years, and put some elected officials in office who will truly put America first.

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• VIYL AS LOW AS $.54 sq ft
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ONLY VETERAN CANDIDATE
✓ US ARMY (Vietnam Era) Paratrooper, Leadership Graduate, Special Nuclear Weapons Section Seargent
✓ Held security clearance and retained as special investigator to the U.S. Office of Personnel (OPM) to conduct background investigations for subjects requiring government security clearance.
#2 ON THE BALLOT FOR PRECINCT 2
✦ Married for 48 years to my wife Gail, being longtime residents of the McLewis community
✦ Two children who are graduates of LCM & Lamar
✦ Five Grandchildren, with two attending Mauricveille Schools
I will better serve the precinct 2 community by partnering closely with the OCSO and all law enforcement agencies, as well as fulfilling the duties as it pertains to the Justice Court.
My focus will be crime prevention through visibility and my prior training/experience, while developing strong school partnerships within the precinct. I will NOT focus on interstate drug interdiction or request county funds for the same. I will be available to assist all local agencies in such instances.
In contrast to the incumbent, I will not work "side jobs" or operate time consuming businesses, as my focus will be dedicated to the community of precinct 2 as FULL TIME constable
Unlike other candidate(s), I have never been asked to resign nor have I been terminated from employment, with such termination resulting in a lawsuit with Orange County
Political advertising paid by Gail B. Hass, Treasurer

Three Orange County teams move into playoffs

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

The final regular season basketball games were played by the four local boys teams on Tuesday, February 13. Three of those teams have more basketball to play as they will be going to the post season.

West Orange-Stark captured a hard fought game with Bridge City at the West Orange-Cove Event Center. The Mustangs defeated the Cardinals 60-53 despite being outscored in three of the four quarters during the contest.

The difference for the Mustangs was the third quarter when they stampeded over the Cardinals 30-11 turning a five point deficit at the half into a fourteen point advantage 50-36 with eight minutes to play. Bridge City made it interesting shaving that lead to four points during the final quarter before West Orange-Stark secured the seven point victory.

Eight different Mustangs registered points led by Joshua Holifield with 14 and Ja'Vaughnte Richard who scored 12 points. Aaden Bush of the Cardinals topped all scorers in the game with 17 points followed by his teammate Aiden Gutierrez with 15 points.

Zane Wrinkle of Orangefield had a rare triple double in the Bobcats' win over Kirbyville that clinched a tie for

The game was Senior Night for West Orange-Stark. Seniors Chadrick Lee, Ja'Vaughnte Richard, Andrew Cooper, and Joshua Holifield were honored prior to the game.

The Bridge City Cardinals at 9-3 are the second place seed in District 19-4A, and played Livingston on Tuesday, February 20, in the first round of the playoffs. The West Orange-Stark Mustangs finished third in the district with a record of 8-4, and faced Huffman on Tuesday to open the post season.

Little Cypress Mauriceville finished its season losing 78-41 to the district champion Silsbee Tigers on Tuesday, February 13. Alantheon Winn of the Bears scored 26 points to close out his outstanding career at LCM.

The Orangefield Bobcats are going to the post season achieving their first district championship in basketball since 1954. Orangefield played the Woodville Eagles in the Bi-District Round of the playoffs on Tuesday, February 20.

The Bobcats finished the regular season with a 13-1 record in District 22-3A which earned them a first place tie with the Kountze Lions. Overall Orangefield is 31-5 on the season.

Orangefield split its two games last week winning 72-41 against Kirbyville on Tuesday, February 13, in the district finale before losing to Kountze in a seeding game 62-53 on Friday. The loss to Kountze places the Bobcats as the second seed in the district for the playoffs.

Jaden Scales of the Bobcats scored 27 points with 4 assists in the win over Kirbyville. Griffin Thomas played well scoring 19 points while grabbing 6 rebounds. Zane Wrinkle pulled off a rare triple double with 12 points, 13 rebounds, and 12 assists.

Wrinkle topped the Bobcats in scoring against Kountze with 19 points. Thomas also finished in double figures for that game with 14 points.

New coach sees improvement for Lady Mustang softball

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

The West Orange-Stark Lady Mustangs have a new head coach who is a familiar face for their softball program. Ashton Gautreaux takes the position as head coach of the Lady Mustangs after serving the past two years as the assistant softball coach.

In her two years at West Orange-Stark Coach Gautreaux has seen improvement in the Lady Mustangs. "I feel for sure we're moving in the right direction. We are doing a bunch of stuff differently than we have been in the past, and I know how West Orange-Stark has played before when I was at Orangefield. There's a lot of talent in our kids, there's a lot of athleticism. t," Gautreaux explained.

Ashton Gautreaux is the new softball head coach for the Lady Mustangs and is working to improve their performance this season.

Nine Lady Mustangs return this year who saw time on the varsity last season including seniors Jordynn Patton, Crystal Santibanez, and Marilynn Guillory. Gautreaux indicated, "They will all contribute in the outfield a lot, and Jordynn will also contribute as a first baseman."

Juniors Soleil Smith, Latessa Turner, Tykeira Montgomery, Carlysia Simien, and Imani Jenkins will play significant innings for WOS. "Soleil is really big in the outfield for us and so is Carlysia. Latessa is our pitcher right now. TK, Tykeira, will play a lot of infield positions, and Imani will play first base," Gautreaux pointed out.

Kensley Waller is a sophomore who played on the varsity as a freshman. Gautreaux added, "Kensley will play infield for us as well as be our number two pitcher."

There will be some new faces on the West Orange-Stark varsity softball team this season who are move ins to the school district or played on the junior varsity last year. Juniors Emma Warren and Miracle Watson will help the Lady Mustangs a lot. They will play infield and both swing big bats according to the coach.

Three sophomores Christian Berry, La'Riya Nelson, and Mallory Mims will provide depth for the Lady Mustangs in the outfield. Berry whose nickname is Tiny has an especially potent bat.

Last but not least on the varsity is freshman Alexia Guyton who will rotate filling two big holes for the Lady Mustang created by graduation. "Lexi will be big for us in the catching position which is a big spot to fill from T'Era Garrett who is now at Blinn, and she will also play shortstop for us replacing Nataliegh Sims from last year. Lexi is filling in some big spots where we need her," Gautreaux emphasized.

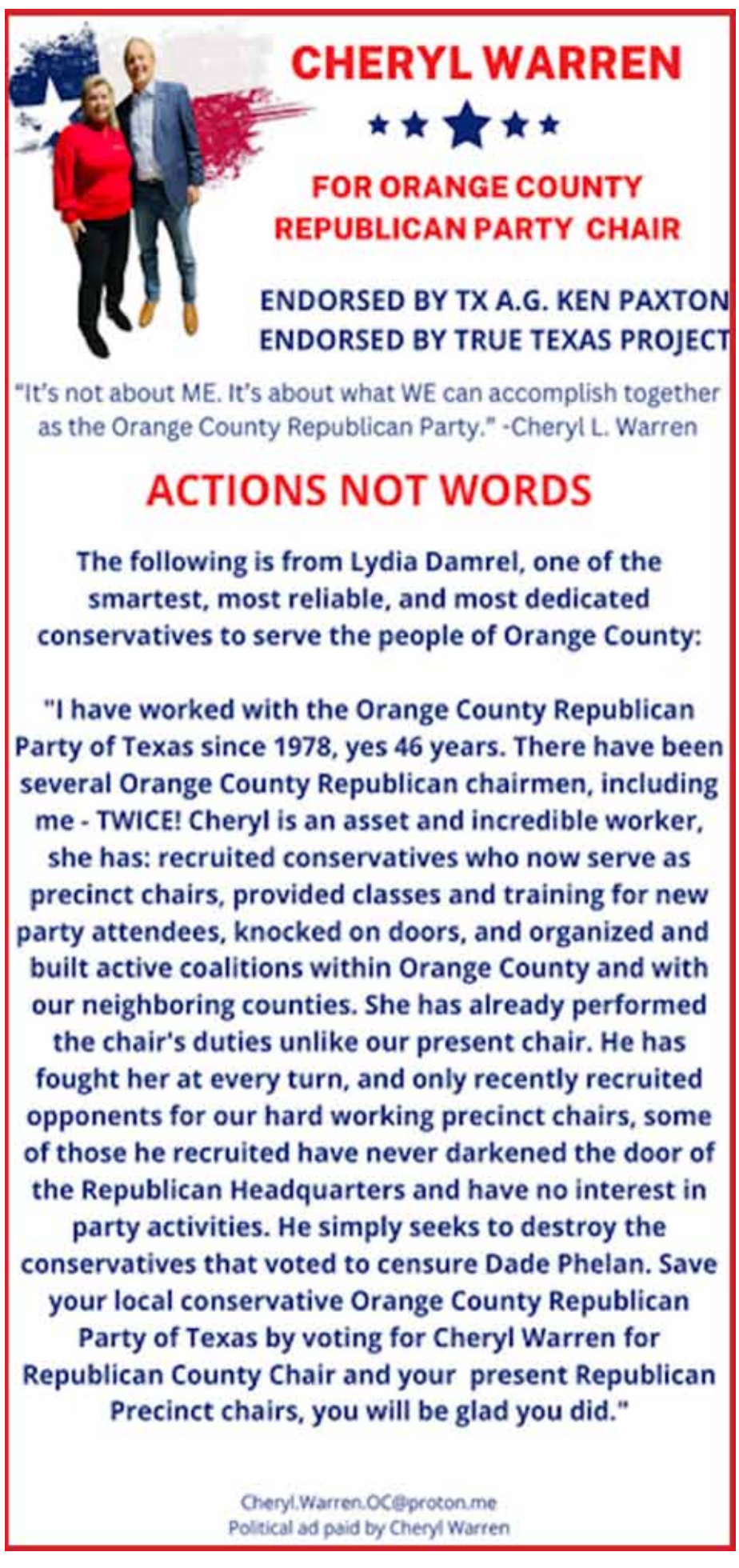
Some of the new Lady Mustangs have shown the capability to have an impact with their bats. Two of the best hitters from last season at WOS are expected to do more slugging this year.

Emphasis will be made on an asset the Lady Mustangs have which is their speed. "We're going to focus on the small game as well. We have a bunch of quick girls. We want to get the ball in play, we're going to do some punches, we're going to do some bunts, we're going to get on, we're going to steal bases, it's doing a lot of the little things right for us," Gautreaux described.

Good pitching is vital to have a successful team in softball. Gautreaux admitted, "I'm not going to lie pitching has really not been our strong suit since I've been at West Orange-Stark. We've had a lot of walks, a lot of hit by pitches."

The two Lady Mustangs that will see the most time in the circle are Latessa Turner and Kensley Waller. They have been working hard to get better.

"Latessa and Kensley are doing a lot better than they have been. They worked all off season on pitching. Latessa is our speed, Kensley is our movement. We're going to use them differently in different situations."



Orangefield

From Page 1B

to test our resilience and how we're able to bounce back playing with that kind of pressure."

There are three newcomers to the Orangefield varsity softball team. Audrey Sonnier is a junior who will see a lot of time running the bases. Two freshmen will be in the varsity lineup. Paisley Reeves will be coming out of basketball when the Lady Bobcats' season is over in that sport, and Brennah Lee is playing first base as Oldham's protege in order to fill that position after Greenlea graduates later this year.

The Lady Bobcats hit the ball very good last season and have started the scrimmages pounding it. Orangefield scored thirteen runs with thirteen hits in a scrimmage against Nederland on February 5.

The Orangefield lineup should have some girls good at getting on base and others with power at the top of the batting order. Leadoff batter Hallee Becker slap hits her way on base with frequency and has speed on the bases. Hallee's sister Paris will bat second ahead of Aubree Beck who should have plenty of opportunities for runs batted in followed by Charlee Sanches in the four hole where more big hits are expected from her like a year ago.

The middle of the Orangefield batting order is not to be overlooked. Abigail Curphey has been a consistent hitter, big hits are expected from Abbie Broussard, and Alysen Vincent is being counted on to produce some timely hits like she did in the Nederland scrimmage.

"I've been impressed with us offensively, and usually about this time of year that's not necessarily the case. Pitching is usually a little bit ahead of hitting, but so far I've been pretty excited. I think some of these younger girls that have been on varsity will come through, and I'm just hoping for a lot of consistency from them one through nine. We're going to have some young ones down at the bottom of the batting order, but I think all of the Lady Bobcats will have a chance to contribute, and I think for the most part we're going to be pretty balanced," Ragsdale expressed.

Pitching is always important in softball and Orangefield made it to the fourth round of the playoffs last year with outstanding pitching from Abigail Curphey. More of the same will be needed this season if the Lady Bobcats are to repeat that success.

Coach Ragsdale is hoping to have some depth this year in the circle. Three Lady Bobcats Abigail Curphey, Charlee Sanches, and Alysen Vincent are all seeing time during the scrimmages.

Curphey had knee surgery in December and is still working herself back into full shape to handle the responsibility as the number one starter. Abigail answered some of Coach Ragsdale's questions about her stamina with a nine inning complete game outing in a 4-1 win over Jasper on February 13.

Sanches should get more innings than she did after throwing during several varsity games last year. Ragsdale stipulated, "I haven't really decided what we're going to do yet. I don't know if we're going to work by committee or what the plan is going to be, but I do anticipate using all three throughout the season. I especially want to get Charlee some more innings because her being a sophomore and losing Curphey at the end of this season it looks like Charlee will be our ace in a year so definitely working to get her into that role as well."

Just getting to the playoffs is no easy trip around the diamond in Orangefield's district. The Lady Bobcats have tough district opposition in Kountze, Anahuac, Buna, and Kirbyville.

Coach Ragsdale said after winning the district and getting as far in the playoffs as the Orangefield Lady Bobcats did last year she has a new found appreciation for teams that can consistently do it year after year. She stated the fact that it is incredibly difficult to repeat last year's performance.

"It's going to take a lot of hard work. Last year the girls worked their tails off. We had a lot of things go our way, and we joked we'd rather be lucky than good and sometimes we had luck that went our way too. It was like a Cinderella story, a fairy tale story book, but absolutely that's the expectation again, and with returning so many girls and just having the knowledge and experience that we do now I think anything less than a district championship a disappointment.

LCM softball

From Page 1B

Only one senior was lost to graduation last year for Little Cypress Mauriceville. The rest of the Lady Bears return from that first place team of last season.

There are two top notch pitchers in Ella Stephenson and Tessa Erickson who will be throwing in the circle for the Lady Bears. The catching corps is experienced too with Lexis Moss and Jillian Brown both back. Keylie Washburn returns at third, Eden Frenzel covers the hole at shortstop again, and Jacelyn Cook continues at second to give LCM a solid infield.

Adkins has an outfield that is A+ with Ava Wright, Ava White, Abby Sepulvado, Alex Pinder, and Asia Woodson. Adkins admitted, "I have a really good team coming back, and I'm looking forward to seeing what they can do."

Two freshmen have looked good enough for the coach to consider playing them on the varsity this season. Kinsley Doucet plays third, catches, and can be used in a utility role just about anywhere on the field.

Kendall Jones is the other freshman who will see more time now that the Lady Bear basketball season is over. Jones is a fast running left handed hitter like Eden Frenzel that will play in the outfield and could possibly be behind the plate as a catcher. "She's speedy and can put the bat on the ball," Adkins added.

First base is the one position that does not have a returning starter for Little Cypress Mauriceville. Adkins explained, "I'll probably move Ava White from the outfield to first every once and awhile. Ella Stephenson will play first, Tessa will play first. We're going to have a rotating crew over there at first. We'll figure it out, but that's the one hole I needed to fill this year."

There should be nine batters swinging good sticks in the Lady Bear lineup. The difficulty for the coach may be figuring out which position in the batting order to put each one of them.

Eden Frenzel should get on base to get the offense started at the top of the batting order. Lexis Moss is expected to be a leader offensively for LCM with her homerun power. Tessa Erickson, Keylie Washburn, Jacelyn Cook, and Ava Wright all have the potential to do some damage at the plate with the long ball according to Adkins.

Pitching is a prime component for any good softball team. Little Cypress Mauriceville has two good pitchers to call upon in the circle. Ella Stephenson is a junior with already two years on the varsity and begins the season as the number one pitcher in the circle for the Lady Bears. Adkins praised, "Ella has worked hard all summer and off season to get some more speed on the ball, and her spin looks really great as well. The ball moves really well. She had some great games last year in the district and in the playoffs, and I think she's matured a lot since last year."

Another good arm for Little Cypress Mauriceville is Tessa Erickson who is just a sophomore and saw a lot of innings in the circle as a freshman as the number two starter behind Stephenson. Erickson can put some fire on the ball, hit her spots very well, and still have movement on her pitches.

In preparation for the always difficult district competition LCM has a hard tournament schedule to start the season that Coach Adkins has setup for the team. Goose Creek is first, then the Lady Bears travel to Sweeney, and followed by a new tournament they will go to in Franklin should show the Lady Bears some teams they might see in the second round of the playoffs.

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Early Voting Begins February 20th
Vote for Number 3 on the Ballot

Pol. Adv. Paid for by Jeremiah Gunter Campaign

Bridge City softball

From Page 1B

like she did last season.

Cambree LaComb will pitch when Carson Fall is not throwing. "Cambree will also play both corners for me, and honestly I might stick her in the outfield, I might stick her on second or where ever I need to put her," Bradley added.

Anna Autrey will go into left field and third mostly, but Anna can play any of the outfield positions when needed. Behind the plate is Haley Munoz who was all-district there last season, but is another Cardinal that can play at first or third base if needed.

A leader for the Cardinals will be Nicole Sasser having finished being a star with the girls basketball team. "We expect Nicole to come in and fill her spot in centerfield, it's pretty hard to take that kid out of that spot because she covers most of the outfield for us. We are also really looking for her to carry a spot in the lineup. She always has been very clutch, she's always made things happen, and her speed on the bags is unmatchable. We've missed Nicole in preseason because she was playing basketball, but I do expect big things from her," Bradley praised.

There are some new Cardinals playing at the varsity level this season. One of the newcomers sophomore Gabby Moore traveled with the varsity a lot last year but will see much more time on the field this season. Moore has been doing a great job in the outfield during the preseason.

Two freshmen Jensyn Yeaman and Jada Juneau are expected to stick with the Bridge City varsity. Bradley indicated, "They both will contribute a lot, especially the deeper we get into the season. They will run some bases for me, they both can throw, and both girls can play infield or outfield. Right now the way our lineup is looking they're getting more outfield time, but they're going to make a difference for our team no matter where they are."

Two other girls Kennadee Sheffield and Cheyenne Mendoza were mainly junior varsity players last year will be used as pinch hitters with the varsity this season. Not to be excluded is Kaylynne Christian as another catcher for the Cardinals.

An early focus for Coach Bradley has been on hitting because she wants the Bridge City bats to support the Cardinal pitchers. Two of the better hitters for the Cardinals are pitchers Carson Fall and Cambree LaComb.

During the preseason Anna Autrey has been hitting very well. Haley Munoz made a huge impact last year so she is expected to follow up with another big season swinging the bat.

"We're also working on a lot of small ball aspects just because sometimes we might run into a tough pitcher where big swings may not be connecting. We might need to shorten it up, and we might just need to make something happen. I'm pretty confident in the bats of the whole team, but the Cardinals have been working on shortening up, putting the ball in play, making something happen, driving the ball into the ground, putting a bunt down, and things like that. I am confident we'll hit the ball hard, but I'm also very confident that if we do run into a wall that we're going to make something happen," Bradley emphasized.

Bridge City made a great run in the playoffs two years ago with Carson Fall throwing outstandingly in the circle. Carson was injured missing the end of the district schedule and the one playoff game last season for the Cardinals.

Bradley is excited to have Fall back ready to throw like she did in 2022. Bradley elaborated, "Last year was hard for Carson not just physically being hurt but mentally not being able to be out there I know took a toll on her. Having her back is great the girls really fall in behind her. I speak frequently how much of a leader she is and having her on the mound makes a big difference for us."

Fall is throwing well according to the coach. Carson and Coach Bradley are learning each other which will help the coach call pitches, and Fall is sharing her preferences on what pitches she likes to throw to certain batters and in various situations.

"You can't have complaints about a kid like Carson. She's going to go out, she's going to throw her best game every time, and whatever she can do she's going to do it," Bradley expressed.

Behind Fall is Cambree LaComb who is also a force in the circle after being called on as a freshman last season to replace the pitching ace after her injury. Bradley analyzed, "Cambree is also throwing well, and every time she steps in the circle I'm impressed with her."

Expectations are high for Bridge City softball this season. "We should definitely go further than we did last year. Your goal is always to be better than last year, but I strongly believe we have a group that can make a run for Austin. My expectation is every time we step foot on the field we have a goal to do something better than we did the last game. We have baby step expectations, and then we have that big expectation at the end, and hopefully if we do all those little things and we continue to work hard through the season we will find ourselves meeting that post season expectation," Bradley concluded.

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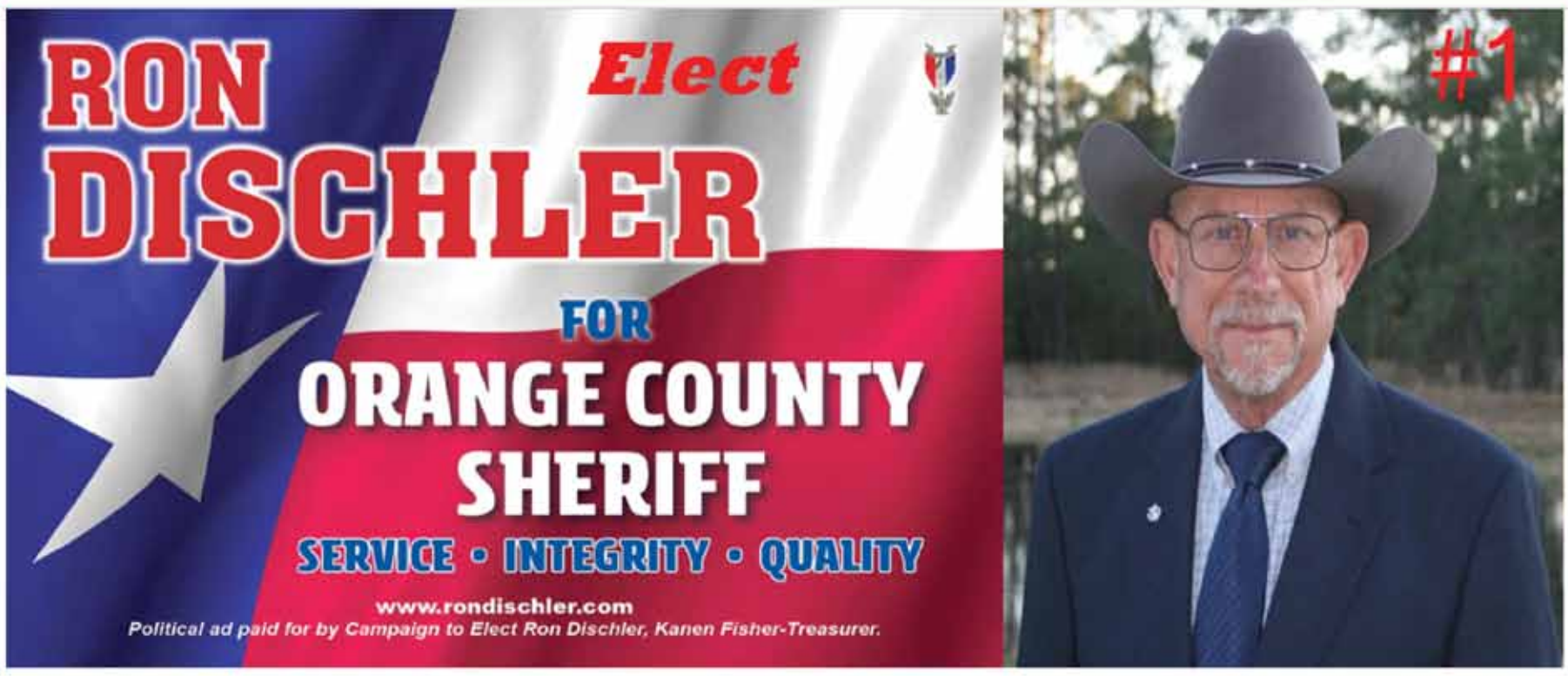

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I am Lt. Ron Dischler, candidate for Orange County Sheriff. When it comes to Leadership and Professionalism, nothing takes the place of the actual hands-on experience and training. With over 42 years of Law Enforcement experience, I have served in all aspects of Law Enforcement. Moving Orange County Sheriff's Department further into the future is top priority by utilizing the most modern Techniques, Technology and Equipment. I repectfully ask for your vote March 5th. I am "Number 1" on the Ballot.
Early Voting starts Feb. 20th.

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The Brave Mother of Men

Abigail Dodds
desirningGod.org

During our family's first time through Andrew Peterson's four-book series The Wingfeather Saga, I found myself carefully paying attention to one person more than any other: Nia Wingfeather. By the time we were rereading the series for the third and fourth times, I had to resist the urge to take notes on this courageous and queenly (albeit imperfect) mother. Her womanly valor, her fearless sacrifices, and her ability to bring out the best in men have spurred me on in my own callings as wife and mother.

Bravery in the Kitchen

For the uninitiated, Peterson's saga traces the unforgettable Wingfeather family, particularly the three children, as they run from the Fangs of Dang, from the Overseer of the Fork Factory, and worst of all, from Gnag the Nameless.

We get one early glimpse of Nia's savvy courage when she is faced with the capture of her son by the wicked Fangs of Dang — cursed creatures, men who have willingly been transformed into wretched beasts. In their twisted existence, their appetites are insatiable, but not for good food, only for all that is rotting and putrid. Nia negotiates the release of her son: "I told him I could cook the finest maggotloaf in the four seas and that if he let you go, I'd cook it for him every third day of the week once the meat had plenty of time to fester" (On the Edge of the Dark Sea of Darkness, 68).

Her quick thinking reminds me of women like Jael, who lures her enemy in, gives him milk, and covers him with a blanket before crushing him — or Abigail, who brings enough food for an army, accompanied by her own gracious words, to calm David and divert him from violence. Nia, though fictional, shows us a particularly feminine kind of think-on-your-feet bravery. She acts on behalf of her child, but she does not confront danger directly (for she would have surely lost); instead, she comes at the problem creatively. She proceeds to make the aforementioned maggotloaf to satiate the appetite and the anger of the Fangs.

This type of feminine bravery is quite different from the bossy, brash, beat-up-the-boys counterfeit we see in so many movies today. Nia is a brave woman — not a manly woman — and she solves problems accordingly.

Fearless in Sacrifice

Later in the saga, Nia's second son has undergone the same sort of horrible transformation that the Fangs had. He is a beast, but still a boy. With her husband assumed dead, her life centers on helping her son become the man he should be, despite this irreversible change. When the people of the Hollows wish to cast her son out, she invokes Turalay, the law of pardon in the Green Hollows, and is warned, "You hold your life forfeit for his, and should he break the life laws of the Green Hollows, from this day forward, it is not only his blood that will be shed, but yours" (The Monster in the Hollows, 67–68)

On the surface, we may think she is confident simply that her son will somehow overcome his beastly reality, that she knows all will be well. But Nia's trust is deeper. She trusts her Maker, even if her son were to do the unthinkable and break the life laws of the Hollows. She binds her fate to her son because she trusts her Maker's purposes and does not fear death. And in tying her life to his, she strengthens his weak frame and plants seeds of hope in his heart.

Multiplying the Courage of Men

If there is one visceral driving force in mothers, it is the desire to nurture and protect. This natural, God-given instinct, however, can give way to fear-soaked overprotection. "Safety first!" can undergird almost every decision mothers make. Nia, however, taps into a rare feminine virtue — the cheerful willingness to forsake safety now for the better hope of raising courageous future men.

As Nia's oldest son nears his thirteenth birthday, he approaches a rite of passage for boys called the "blindplop." After being stuffed full of food on his birthday, he is left alone, deep in the woods, in the middle of the night. His guild master leaves him his pack and a letter saying,

No one is watching over you, ready to rescue you as soon as things get difficult. . . . That means you're on your own. Of course, if you don't show up at Ban Rona for a week or so, we'll send out a search party to bring you home, though there probably won't be much of you left. Your mother grew up here; she knows how it works, and she's given me her full permission. I expected to have to talk her into the blindplop, but she agreed without hesitation. That should make you feel some pride, boy. (The Warden and the Wolf King, 20)

A mother's willing release can put steel in the spine of young men. When a mother confidently blesses her son's launch into the world — whether in small matters, like persevering in hard work, or in large changes, like moving far away, independent of her — her blessing is like a current of wind that pushes his sails farther and faster and straighter than he would have otherwise gone. But when mothers coddle and hover, doing all they can to keep sons from any whiff of danger or failure or pain, they nurture vice rather than virtue.

Strong Men and Their Fearless Wives

Yet it isn't just sons who are bolstered by the appropriate confidence of their mothers. Husbands, too, can be inspired by the trust and assurance of their wives. Nia's husband, Esben, is mortally wounded after a heroic effort to stand between the Fangs and his family. Yet even as his blood pools around him, and he begins to sink to the ground, she issues an urgent but steadfast reminder not to give in to death — not yet. "Our children need you, my king" (The Monster in the Hollows, 332). And he rouses himself once more to do what seemed impossible, to do what she could not do — to rescue their children from the enemy at the cost of his life. Her words beckon his courage.

A woman's respect multiplies the courage of men, not with manipulation or fear, but with loyalty, hope, and abiding trust. To be a woman of valor is to be a woman who is free — free from the chains of fear because her security is fixed in her Maker. And it is free, fearless women who are best equipped to call forth and inspire the masculine strength and courage of Christ in the godly men around them. The world desperately needs such men — and such women.

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409-920-2271
youtube.com/c/cowboychurchoforangecounty

First United Methodist Church Orange
502 Sixth Street 886-7466
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All of our services are also available premiered on:
Facebook at 9:00 a.m. (https://www.facebook.com/FUMCOrangeTX)
or online on our Vimeo Page and YouTube.
SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR ALL AGES 9:00 A.M.
www.fumcorange.org
Pastor: Rev. Lani Rousseau
Director of Music and Fine Arts: Caroline Dennis

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John 16:33

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Starlight Church of God in Christ
2800 Bob Hall Road • Orange • 886-4366
Pastor: Ernest B Lindsey
Sunday School 9:30 a.m. Worship 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.
Wed. Bible Study - 6 p.m. Worship 7:30 p.m. VIM Youth 6 p.m.
Intercessory Prayer Daily 9:00 a.m.
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In Print & Online

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200 W. Roundbunch
735-3581
www.fbcbc.org
Sunday schedule: Bible study 9:15 a.m.,
Sunday worship: 10:30 a.m.,
Adult, Youth, Children
Discipleship Classes, Sun. 5:30 p.m.
Wednesday Schedule 6:30 p.m.
Prayer Meeting
Youth & Children's Activities
Pastor: Keith Royal

Winfree Baptist Church
19525 Hwy 62 S • 409-735-7181
office@winfreebaptist.org
Dr. Larry Haynes, Interim Pastor
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Morning Worship - 10:30 am
Wednesday:
Mid-Week Service - 6:00 pm
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LEGAL NOTICE

The three properties, the first commonly known as 1790 Bassett, Orange, TX 77632, the second commonly known as 7125 W. Windy Lane, Orange, TX 77630, and the third commonly known as 3396 Martha Dr., Orange, TX 77632 are scheduled to be sold at public foreclosure auction on 03/05/2024 at 01:00 PM or no later than 3 hours thereafter at the back door of the Courthouse in Orange County, Texas. If the preceding area is no longer the designated area, the sale will be held 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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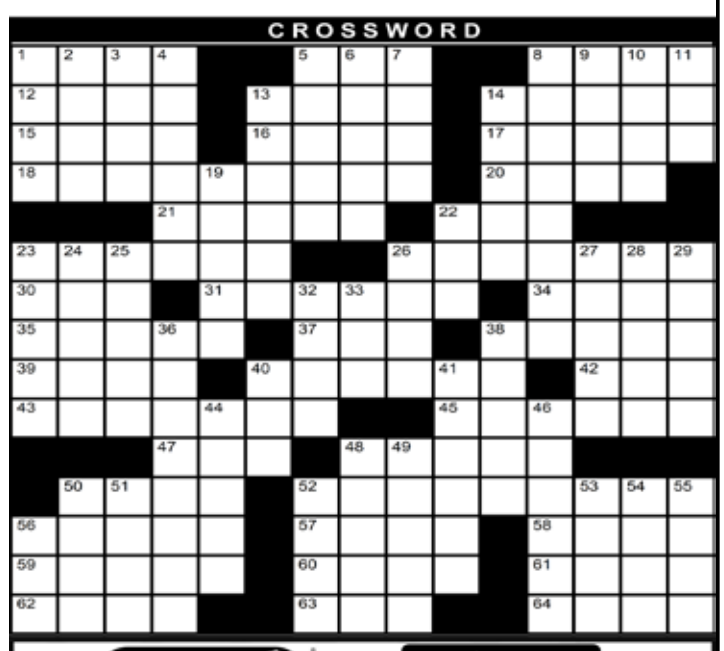
ACROSS

1. Falling out
5. Bottle top
8. Door fastener
12. Shoe emanation?
13. Staff note
14. Home to Buccaneers
15. Actress Spelling
16. Thor's father
17. Kidman's husband
18. *He served two nonconsecutive presidential terms
20. *JFK and RFK's relationship, abbr.
21. Foreword
22. J. Edgar Hoover Building org.
23. Pac-Man venue
26. Long and adventurous journey
30. Rudolph's Clarice, e.g.
31. Like life, according to some
34. Is it enough?
35. Jalisco plant
37. As opposed to rent
38. Grassy mound
39. Flat-top hill
40. *W in George H. W. Bush
42. Nicki Minaj's genre
43. Reusable painting pattern
45. Sacred songs
47. Horse control
48. Laughing predator
50. Gunk
52. *Nobel Peace Prize winning president
56. Social media button
57. Tangerine-grapefruit hybrid
58. Greek god of love
59. Cautious gambler
60. Trousers
61. Baltic capital
62. Port in Yemen
63. Follow ems
64. Not ever, poetically

DOWN

1. Campus drillers
2. One on a pedestal
3. Golfer's warning
4. "Jeopardy" question, e.g.
5. Closet wood
6. ____ acid
7. Body between England and U.S.?
8. *President who spent the shortest time in office
9. Orator's stand
10. Pampering establishments
11. J.M. Barrie's Peter
13. Like hot lava
14. Short and plump
19. Endow
22. *WW2 Pres.
23. *Thomas Jefferson was his VP
24. "Thesaurus" author
25. Cut it out
26. Sound on Old MacDonald's farm
27. Annoy a bedfellow
28. "Bravo! Bravo!" e.g.
29. Online reviews
32. Delivered by a mare
33. Hole punching tool
36. *a.k.a. Old Kinderhook
38. Danish money
40. Intelligent humor
41. Vomiting
44. Pressed beverage
46. Tap house
48. TV classic "_____'s Heroes"
49. Egg parts
50. Past tense of chide
51. Sand trap tool
52. Ill-mannered
53. Albany-Buffalo canal

CROSSWORD



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- Re-instating vital programs such as the Homicide Investigations Team, the Multi-Agency SWAT Team, and the Highway Criminal Interdiction Team.
- Rebuilding the Narcotics Division to encompass all aspects of narcotics enforcement within the neighborhoods throughout ALL areas of Orange County.
- Restoring relationships with ALL law enforcement partners.
- Restoring essential communication with the Orange County District Attorney's Office. This will increase the efficiency of the investigation, case preparation, prosecution, conviction, and providing dispositions for crime victims.
- Assessing Law Enforcement services for area schools, churches, and businesses to better assist and enhance their security.
- Working closely with the Sheriff's staff and Commissioner's Court on budgetary issues, including the Federal Asset Forfeiture Funds, to be fiscally responsible within the guidelines of state and federal law.

"I consider Bobby Smith to be one of the top law enforcement professionals in the country. His honesty, integrity, experience and training sets him apart from all other candidates."
John Kimbrough,
Orange County District Attorney

"When I first met Bobby, who was a Highway Patrolman at the time, you realized real quick Bobby is a professional with a deep desire to provide the best Law Enforcement services."
Keith Merritt, Orange County Sheriff (RET)

"During our time working together I found Bobby to be a man of integrity and truth. He always held strongly to moral and ethical principles and values. He was then and is now a man of integrity."
John Tarver Chief Deputy Orange County Sheriff's Office (RET)

Bobby Smith, Texas Ranger Major (RET.)

Bobby Smith is dedicated to the core values of professionalism, integrity, accountability, excellence, and teamwork.
His education, training and experience has given him the ability to stand out amongst other candidates.

Community members and local organizations supporting Retired Texas Ranger Bobby Smith for Orange County Sheriff 2024 are prepared to work hand-in-hand to ensure the safety of Orange County, with an array of endorsements as of press time Including:

- Sabine Area Central Labor Council AFL-CIO
- West Orange Municipal Police Officers Association
- Orange County Freedom Caucus
- Keith Merritt - Orange County Sheriff (RET)
- Mike White - Orange County Sheriff (RET)
- John Tarver - Chief Deputy Orange County Sheriff's Office (RET)
- Dennis Marlow - Captain Orange County Sheriff's Office (RET)
- Tommy Smith - Captain Orange County Sheriff's Office (RET)
- Flo Edgerly - Justice of the Peace Pct. 3 (RET)
- Mark Philpott - Constable Pct. 3 (RET)
- Babette Philpott - Former Bridge City Municipal Court Judge
- Dean Crooks
- BoJack Davis
- John Kimbrough - Orange County District Attorney
- John Banken - Former Orange County Commissioner Pct. 3/Former Bridge City Mayor
- Buster Ascol
- Jeff Mathews - AD/Head Coach Vidor ISD (RET)
- Cornell Thompson - AD/Head Coach West Orange-Stark ISD (RET)
- Sam Kittrell - Chief of Police (RET)
- Richard Howard - Sergeant Texas Department of Public Safety (RET)
- Janois Strause Grizzaffi - Orange County Sheriff's Office (RET)
- Kevin Williams
- John Houseman
- Kenny Pigg
- Gary Hinton - Texas DPS Trooper and Investigator, Orange County Sheriff's Office (RET)
- Jason DeMontmollin
- Cliff Hargrave

Bobby Smith with Lefty Block, Sr. Ranger Captain and Orangefield Native.

Bobby Smith is a Proven Leader:

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- Texas Department of Public Safety - Chairman Use of Force Board
- Texas Highway Patrol
- Texas Highway Patrol Sergeant
- Texas Ranger
- Texas Ranger Lieutenant
- Texas Ranger Captain
- Texas Ranger Major

CERTIFICATIONS

- Master Texas Peace Officer
- Advanced Crime Scene Investigations
- Advanced Incident Command and General Command Staff
- Force Science Analyst
- T.C.O.L.E. Instructor
- Firearms Instructor
- Critical Incident Response
- SWAT Command Staff
- Crisis Negotiations

TRAINING

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BOBBY SMITH
FOR ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF

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