

Penny Record

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Week of Wednesday, January 31, 2024

Harmon recalls local Mardi Gras beginning

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

More than 20 years ago, Betty Harmon began putting into motion an idea from the late Carolyn Hogan for Orange to have a Mardi Gras celebration.

"I never thought it would grow to this magnitude," Harmon said as the city gets ready for three days of events with the 20th anniversary of the first parade.

The celebrations will start Thursday evening with a free concert at the Riverside Pavilion and culminate Saturday evening with the grand parade through downtown Orange.

Before Mardi Gras was a big deal here, Harmon was in charge of the Greater Orange Area Chamber of Commerce. She recalled the group was looking for

a community fundraiser to replace the gumbo cookoff that had started in the late 1970s. She said the Orange cookoff drew fewer and fewer people as more groups in the area had similar cookoffs.

Carolyn Hogan of Orange came into the chamber office one day. Hogan and her husband, Melvin, had a beach house on Bolivar Peninsula, which had a Mardi Gras celebration. The Hogans participated with a float there, but wanted to bring the experience to Orange.

"Carolyn said, 'It's a shame Port Arthur and Beaumont have a Mardi Gras, but Orange, which is so close to Louisiana, doesn't,'" Harmon said.

Harmon brought the suggestion to the chamber

Mardi Gras Page 3A

Republican forums let voters meet candidates

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

Orange County voters will get a chance Thursday to meet and hear the three candidates running for Precinct 2 constable. Then next week, the the four Republican candidates will be featured in a forum.

The forums are sponsored by the Orange County Republican Party for three of the four local contested races. Because the Democratic Party has no local candidates, the winners of the Republican primary races will run unopposed in the November General Election.

On Thursday, February 1, the forum for Precinct 2 constable will be at 6:30 p.m. at Mauriceville Elementary School, 20040 FM 1130 in Mauriceville. Incumbent Jeremiah Gunter is being opposed by retired law enforcement officers David Bailey and Harold Hass. Bailey currently sits on the Orange City Council with his

seat up this May. So far, he has not filed to run again for the council.

Only registered voters who live within Precinct 2 are allowed to vote for that constable's position.

The sheriff's forum will be Thursday, February 8, at 6:30 p.m. at Little Cypress Elementary School, 5723 Meeks Drive in Orange. Candidates are incumbent Jimmy Lane Mooney, who is seeking his second four-year term. He is being challenged by veteran law officers Ron Dischler, Mike Sanchez, and Bobby Smith.

All registered Orange County voters will be able to cast a ballot for sheriff. A candidate must have 50 percent of the vote plus one more to win without a runoff. If needed, a runoff will be between the two candidates with the most votes.

In Texas, the primary runoff races this year will

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Mark Bunch, pastor of St. Paul Methodist Church was named Citizen of the Year Monday at the Bridge City Chamber of Commerce Banquet. Pictured left to right: Senator Robert Nichols, Mark Bunch and Wanda McGraw.

RECORD PHOTO: Penny LeLeux

Citizen, Businesses honored at BC Chamber banquet

PENNY LELEUX
For The Record

Bridge City Community Center was busting at the seams Monday night with a capacity crowd at the Bridge City Chamber of Commerce annual banquet. It was the biggest crowd they've ever had in attendance.

"We've never had this many tables before," said Mandy Lyda, executive director of the chamber. "I had to turn a lot of people away." She remarked they may have outgrown the venue.

Kirk Ellender, emcee for the evening recognized all the businesses that bought tables for the evening. "These are businesses that are giving not only their time but all of their efforts to make this evening a success as well," he said.

Citizen and Business of the Year are announced by the chamber ahead of time, but the Ambassador



Countryland Properties was named Business of the Year at the Bridge City Chamber of Commerce Banquet, Monday evening. Pictured left to right: Senator Robert Nichols, Stephen Gault and Wanda McGraw.

RECORD PHOTO: Penny LeLeux

of the Year is kept secret to be revealed that night. From the look on her face, Lucy Fields was taken completely by surprise when her name was announced for the honor.

Senator Robert Nichols was on hand to present the awards to Fields and the other honorees.

Mark Bunch, pastor of St. Paul Methodist Church was named Citi-

zen of the Year, while Business of the Year went to Countryland Properties, a land development company owned by Stephan Gault.

Bunch has pastored at St. Paul Methodist Church since 2013. He participates in many community organizations including Bridge City-Orangefield Ministerial Alliance, Boy Scouts, Rotary Club, Band Booster and he umpires for Little League Baseball.

"Each of you are part of my life and it's a joy to serve in this community and to be a part of what God is doing in our midst," Bunch said. "I'm thankful for this honor to be recognized for that and to continue to be a part of what God does here in our life, our community. We've been blessed with a great community, great schools, great people,

BC CHAMBER Page 3A

New hospital celebrated

MARGARET TOAL
For The Record

Philanthropist Gisela Houseman and Dr. Marty Rutledge took the center of attention Tuesday afternoon as the helped cut the ribbon for Orange's first hospital in seven years.

The two were crucial in getting the new, 24-hour hospital built and operating on what is now called

the Gisela Houseman Medical Campus, which includes a professional building. Dr. Rutledge is an Orange native with a longtime general family medical practice here.

The 55,000 square foot hospital is operated by Christus St. Elizabeth Hospital in Beaumont and is located on 20 acres of Eagle Point development off Interstate 10 at Texas

Highway 62.

The hospital has a 24-hour emergency room plus in-patient rooms, along with a full laboratory and services like CT scans, MRI, ultrasound, and 3D mammograms. Several specialists and specialist clinics have already moved into the professional building at the site, including Dr. Rutledge.

Dr. Rutledge worked to get the hospital plans going after Baptist Hospital of Southeast Texas announced in late 2016 that the hospital would close its emergency room in January 2017.

Baptist had the former Orange Memorial Hospital on Strickland Drive since the county sold it in

NEW HOSPITA Page 3A



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TEXAS STATE NEWS

Texas GOP increasingly considering push to close its primaries

PATRICK SVITEK
The Texas Tribune

Texas Republicans are increasingly debating who should be allowed to vote in their primary as the March 5 contest nears with the presidential nominee at the top of the ticket.

The debate has increased in recent days as presidential candidate Nikki Haley has talked openly about targeting states like Texas that have open primaries, or primaries that are open to voters regardless of partisan affiliation. But even before the former South Carolina governor started trumpeting her strategy, GOP activists in Texas were zeroing in on limiting the state's primary to Republicans, crafting a nonbinding ballot proposition on the March 5 ballot to gauge support for the idea.

Haley's strategy only added fuel to the fire.

"This is a very obvious call for Democrat crossover voting in the Republican Primary, which we know already happens in Texas on a large scale," Texas GOP Chair Matt Rinaldi said last week in response to a Haley campaign memo on the topic. "The [Texas GOP] must prioritize closed primaries."

Even U.S. Sen. John Cornyn — who is often at odds with the state party under Rinaldi — said he is fine with closing the primary.

"I don't have any problem with closing the primary, but I don't see it as a huge issue in Texas," Cornyn said in a radio interview last week.



Presidential candidate Nikki Haley has talked openly about targeting states like Texas that have open primaries to get a boost over Trump.

Texas is one of 16 states that have open primaries, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Texas voters do not have to declare a party affiliation when they register to vote, and they can choose to vote in either the Democratic or Republican primaries. In the event of a runoff election, they cannot switch to the other party's primary runoff to vote.

Eight states have fully closed primaries, according to the NCSL. Those are states where a voter formally affiliates with a party and can only vote in that party's primary.

There are shades of gray, however. In several states, voters can identify as unaffiliated with any party before a primary and then choose which primary to vote in.

That is the case in New

Hampshire, where Haley recently finished second to former President Donald Trump in its primary.

Trump and his allies were quick to note that Haley appeared to benefit from New Hampshire's primary. Exit polls showed that "independents or something else" made up 44% of the electorate and they favored Haley by a comfortable margin. Democrats comprised 6% of the votes, and they almost all preferred Haley.

In a memo the day after New Hampshire, Haley campaign manager Betsy Ankney said they were looking forward to competing in upcoming open primaries, including Texas, calling them "significant fertile ground for Nikki."

"Eleven of the 16 Super Tuesday states have open or semi-open primaries," Ankney wrote. "Of the 874

delegates available on Super Tuesday, roughly two thirds are in states with open or semi-open primaries. Those include Virginia, Texas, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Carolina, and Vermont, all with favorable demographics."

Ironically, on the same ballot where Haley hopes to attract non-GOP voters, the state GOP will have a non-binding ballot proposition measuring support for closing primaries in Texas. The proposition — one of 13 — asks primary voters to vote "yes" or "no" on whether the "Republican Party of Texas should restrict voting in the Republican primary to only registered Republicans."

Closing the primary in Texas would require the state or parties to come up with a party registration system. Proponents have largely avoided that topic for now, instead focusing on raising alarm that Democrats are meddling in Texas GOP primaries.

Beyond the presidential nominee, Texans will be asked to vote for their party's nominee for U.S. Senate, Congress and Texas Legislature. The state has long been dominated by one party — the GOP — and after redistricting the general election is less competitive than it has been in years, placing even more importance on the primary. So it's not new that Democrats may feel like their vote matters more in a Republican primary than a Democratic one. But measuring the impact of crossover voting is seldom easy and accessible, requiring granular

analysis of voters and their preferences.

Even as he expressed openness to a closed Texas primary, Cornyn suggested it would not affect how he runs his races.

"I've run in a number of primaries, and you know, typically repeat primary voters are the target for advertising and those are the ones you're talking to," Cornyn said in the radio interview with Mark Davis in Dallas. "And once the primaries are over, then you broaden your appeal to the people who are not primary voters, who are general-election voters, who you

need to win."

On the right, there has been a more specific outcry over crossover voting in special elections in Texas, which are also open and often so low-turnout that such voting can make more of a difference.

The dynamic was closely watched in 2021, when U.S. Rep. Jake Ellzey of Waxahachie, upset a Trump-endorsed rival, Susan Wright, in a special election runoff for an open congressional seat in North Texas. One GOP analysis later found that 14% of voters in the runoff were likely Democrats.

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Mardi Gras From Page 1

board. She said it took about two years for the board to approve the plan and rules for krewes having a parade.

Mardi Gras in French translates to “Fat Tuesday,” or the day before Lent season begins. Gradually, it became a term for a party or a special parade.

Because other nearby cities have their Mardi Gras celebrations the weekend before Fat Tuesday, the Orange chamber set theirs to two weekends before Fat Tuesday. That way, the Orange event did not compete with parades in other communities.

That decision ended up a wide choice. The Orange Mardi Gras parade has become known for the large amount of beads, stuffed animals, and other trinkets thrown by the krewes from their floats. Hundreds of the spectators lining downtown streets are from out of town.

Now, the City of Orange Convention and Visitors Bureau helps the chamber sponsor the parade.

Traditionally, a ball is held for the krewes before the parade. The Hogans were named king and queen of the ball and parade the first year because of their contributions to starting the event.

According to Harmon, getting krewes and people to support making the floats and dressing in costumes, took some work. “We had so many community volunteers,” she said. “It wasn’t just me.”

Besides the Hogans, Juanita Smith and her late husband, Edward, were organizers along with Ebb and Kim Moore. “We had so many good volunteers, I know I am leaving some out,” said Harmon, who has been retired for several years.

The ball has become as much of a community mainstay as the parade. Krewes, or groups that sponsor the elaborate floats, also sponsor the Mardi Gras ball, complete with handmade imaginative costumes for royalty, including the king and queen.

Last week, Jerry and Susan Pennington reigned over the ball as 2024 king and queen when past kings and queens were honored. Harmon and her late husband, Corky, were named king and queen the second year of the Mardi Gras here.

This year, Harmon received a standing ovation as she walked at the ball during the tribute to the past royalty.

She marvels at how the ball, too, has grown and is pleased to see new generations participating. “It’s catching on with the young,” she said. “It’s not a society event like the country club.”

This year, a young man looking dapper in a tuxedo came up and greeted her. She didn’t recognize him until he told her his name. He was one of the best friends of her grandson.

Except for one year, the ball has been held at the VFW hall off North Highway 87 in Orange. Harmon said the open floor space is perfect for the march of royalty pageant. Plus, ball-goers use the bar at the VFW for purchases, so the event helps the post, too, Harmon said.

Each krewe decorates their own table and brings their own foods. And of course, after the pageantry and presentations, dancing begins. It wouldn’t be a Mardi Gras event without a good fais do-do.

Harmon, who is in her 80s, is not dancing as much as she used to. She uses a walker to get around these days, but emphasizes it’s only because of her knees. “Everything else is fine,” she said.

But though she doesn’t move as quickly as she once did, you can bet to see Betty Harmon out celebrating Mardi Gras on the Sabine. And she’s one of the ones praying the rain stays away Saturday.



Lucy Fields was named Ambassador of the Year Monday, at the Bridge City Chamber of Commerce Banquet. Pictured left to right: Senator Robert Nichols, Lucy Fields and Maureen McAllister. RECORD PHOTO: Penny LeLeux

BC Chamber banquet From Page 1

thank you.”

Gault thanked his wife and daughter for allowing him to chase his dream. He also acknowledged Elaine Hearn for “paving the way in real estate.” He is grateful for what Bridge City has offered for his business. “I love what it stands for and the things that operate this town.”

Gault’s original home office was in Mauriceville. He opened an office in Bridge City in 2018 and another one in Buna. After the pandemic forced many to work remotely from home, Gault decided in 2023 to merge the other offices with Bridge City as the only physical location.

Also honored were three businesses reaching the 50-year mark in Bridge City: Elaine Hearn Realty, Bill Nickum State Farm Insurance and David Olsen, DDS.

Nickum said, “Living here is easy, it’s the staying alive that is hard.” He did not elaborate on that statement as the audience laughed and he stepped down.

Fields said when she requested a 250-word synopsis from Olsen, he replied that he only needed 10. “It’s been great and we’d do it all over again.”

The chamber presented the year in review, including a slide show presentation.

In 2023 they held 11 ribbon cuttings and 12 coffees. They gave four \$1,000 scholarships, with money raised from their annual Christmas tree auction to two Orangefield students and two Bridge City students. Applications are open for the new year. National Night Out had 48 booths participating and there were over 65 entries in the Christmas parade, making for an impressive collection of toys presented to BC/OF Ministerial Alliance. Their two Designer Purse Bingo events raised \$40,000.

Wanda McGraw passed the gavel to Brandy Slaughter.

Milano’s Italian Grill provided lasagna and chicken alfredo with salad and rolls for the meal, with a variety of cheesecakes for dessert.

Red’s liquor provided the alcohol.

There was an extensive silent auction that ran the gamut of sports collectables and memorabilia, trips, jewelry and more.

Small succulents in tiny clay pots decorated the tables as favors for the attendees. They each had a tag with the Chamber logo and tagline: Growing Stronger Together.

Republican forum set From Page 1

be May 28. If someone votes in the Democratic Party primary, they will not be allowed to vote in a Republican primary runoff.

A forum for the two Precinct 4 constable candidates, incumbent Matt Ortego and challenger Captain Joey Jacobs with the Orange County Sheriff’s Office, was held Monday, January 29, in Vidor.

A contested race is also being held this year for chair of the Orange County Republican Party with incumbent Leo Labouve III being challenged by Cheryl Warren. No forum has been set for that position.

The March 4 primaries this year will include voting for presidential candidates to represent the individual parties. The last day to register to vote in the primaries is Monday, February 5. Early voting will begin February 20.

The party primary races should not be confused with the May elections for city councils, school boards, and boards of special districts. Filling for those office is ongoing through February 17

New hospital From Page 1

1988. In May 2013, the hospital quit delivering babies and providing obstetrics because of a loss of income. Then two years later, Baptist closed the 112-room in-patient services.

Still, Baptist kept its emergency room open, but that ended seven years ago. Since then, the county had only privately-owned, free-standing emergency clinics serving people. Ambulance service required an emergency patient be taken to a hospital with in-patient rooms, so local emergency patients had to be transported to Beaumont or Port Arthur.

A group of citizens worried about the lack of a local hospital, tried to form a special hospital district with taxing powers. However, the election in 2016 failed by a large margin as local voters didn’t want to pay more property taxes, even to support a hospital.

Houseman, who owns the Houseman Companies, donated the land at Eagle Point, which had been designed for commercial development, and has helped with the Houseman Foundation.

The city of Orange’s Economic Development Corporation also assisted by paying for an entryway and drives into the property. The city EDC also financed the construction of water and sewer services to the acreage and even built a new water plant and storage tower nearby.

Orange Mayor Larry Spears Jr., along with Orange County Judge John Gothia, Greater Orange Area Chamber of Commerce President Ida Schossow, and other dignitaries attended the ceremony, which was festooned with purple balloons and purple curtain backgrounds.

Health care is returning to Orange County.

A NEW ADVENTURE

Sen. Carl Parker For The Record

If you are reaching your so-called “Golden Years,” you most likely have a new adventure in store. I just finished eight weeks as a guest of a hospital. I escaped but learned a lot about medical practice in the USA. It is said that we have the highest quality but worst delivery of any developed nation I the world.

Your first challenge is to negotiate the requirement to gain access. What insurance or what government program such as Medicare apply. Most doctor’s offices will help somewhat.

Unless you are admitted via emergency, you will be greeted by a dozen or more forms to sign. The forms give permission for any treatment you may get and if you expire, it’s no one’s fault. You then will be wheeled to a room. You ride because they are worried that you might fall. At the room a “gowning” takes place: Not like graduation. This gown opens and closes from the rear.

The hospital bed is something you will learn to dislike. Hospital beds are about the same quality as bunk beds in the military. They appear to be designed for the



Former State Senator Carl Parker

Carl Parker is a 1958 graduate of the University of Texas School of Law. Elected to the Texas House of Representatives in 1962 and the Senate in 1976.

convenience of staff but not for getting comfortable. In bed you are at the mercy of staff for a drink or to take care of bodily functions.

Usually, two needles are stuck in you and taped down. Most for the purpose of giving medicine. You will still be jabbed to get fresh blood. Even though you may be enjoying a nice nap, you will be roused to check your vitals and for a new shot.

The food is a story of its own. Menus are much the same, devoid of any flavor.

Salt is an example. You would be surprised by the things containing salt. It is claimed that you can order special things which too often turn out to be incomplete or wrong. You might get cereal with no milk.

The one good thing about hospitals is the good nurses. With a very few exceptions, nurses are like angels.

If possible, hospital is one adventure you should avoid.

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From the Creaux's Nest

DEALING WITH COVID

For over three years Roy had been very cautious to not be in contact with COVID. He quit going to the office and avoided being around people. He and his family knew that because of existing health problems it would be nearly impossible to overcome a battle with COVID. He and Phyl didn't take any chances. They took all the shots, all but the last booster shot. They had let their guard down somewhat and didn't wear their mask while doing doctor's visits. They thought they had beaten the rap and dodged COVID until Roy became so ill he had to be rushed to hospital. It turned out Phyl also tested positive for the virus but with less health issues was able to stay home. From their experience and from others, they learned COVID is not just a one week sickness, the effects are severe and long lasting. One thing they found is that they are both losing their hair but have been assured it will return. Roy claims he doesn't have any time to spare. Food tastes different, everything tastes salty. No extra salt for Roy anymore. (That's a good thing.) They have less energy and tend to sleep a lot. A visit to a new doctor this week may bring some relief for his COPD. All in all they are thankful, after everything they've been through, to be getting better each day. The Dunn's say it's a long haul so dodge it if you can.

HEARING FROM OLD FRIENDS

Anthony Pennington called the office last week. It had been many years since we heard about his whereabouts. He now lives in Pearl and apparently had been there several years. He called to check on Roy and Phyl. Quincy had told him the Dunn's had been on the sick list. Back in the early 1970's, their newspaper, The Opportunity Valley News, carried the story of the Vietnamese boat people, their flight and the hardships they faced with many dying at sea. Many personal human interest stories came from Anthony's Pennington's contacts. We have preserved all of the OVN copies in book form. The stories carry the history of success and also of dying. Some lost their entire families at sea to reach the U.S. shores. We wouldn't have all the stories if it weren't for Anthony's help. His dad was a longtime advertising salesman for the Orange Leader. We often kidded him about being a subject of the Queen. He was from England and had served in their military. It was good to hear from Pennington. He had a world of stories that would fill many books.

THANKS FOR THE MESSAGE

It's always good to hear from old friends. I'm always amazed at some of the faraway places we hear from. Our web site, therecordlive is read around the world. We are especially thankful to hear from old friends just checking in. We got a nice long letter from Doyle Wayne Morse, Jr. who follows us on the web. Doyle's dad Wayne, who owned Big Red Pantry, and his late grandfather Howard, who was on the Bridge City Bank board for many years have been friends with the Dunn's for over 60 years. Doyle writes a nice letter. It's hard to believe Wayne and ex-wife Sherry are great-grandparents to 4-month-old **Ruger Allen Tucker**.

TURNING BACK THE HANDS OF TIME

10 Years Ago-2014

When bridges freeze, everything comes to a halt. Schools and government offices shut down and businesses might as well close. Nothing is moving. The freezeout last Friday and the shutdown this week even affected our business. Our production people, who live in Port Arthur, couldn't get in. If the freeze prevents our publications from coming out of Lafayette, then the papers will be distributed late. It's just crazy how so little cold weather can shut down an entire region, when other parts of the country live with 12 inches of snow, blizzards and near zero temperatures.**** Orange eyes on **Thomas** in **Super Bowl**. **Super Bowl XLVIII** pits the Denver Broncos and Seattle Seahawks Sunday. They would like to see **Payton Manning** win a **Super Bowl** and yet they feel a loyalty to Orange's own **Earl Thomas**. In an interview Monday, Denver receiver **Demaryius Thomas** said Seattle's '**Legion of Boom**' secondary, cornerback **Richard Sherman** and strong safety **Kam Chancellor**, provide the **Boom**, and free safety **Earl Thomas** is the brains behind the **Boom**. I think he's the best in the league.****We were saddened to learn of the death of **Nolan Joseph Devillier**, 82, of Bridge City, who passed away Wednesday, January 22, 2014, at St. Elizabeth Hospital in Beaumont. Services were held Monday, January 27. Our deepest sympathies to daughters **Gwen**, **Ginger**, **Kathy**, son **Wayne** and the entire family. (Editor's note: **Kathy**, **Ginger** and **Wayne** have since passed away.)******Nancy Vincent** said her goodbyes Monday at **First Financial**

Bank. After 40 years in banking she has now retired. Her plans now are to do home improvements and to travel. Most importantly, she plans to spend more time visiting with her mom who is in a far away assistant living facility.******Robert Dale Vance** is an "Old Rocker" who can't get enough of those rock concerts. He and **Karen Jo** made it to Marks-ville, Louisiana to catch a performance of **KANSAS**. Good concert, great time. Speaking of **Karen Jo**, our county clerk, who doesn't have an opponent, got a letter informing her that she again has been endorsed by the **Sabine Area Central Labor Council**.****Feb. 2, **Don Kachtik**, one of **Bear Bryant's** boys, who survived Junction and football at **A&M**, celebrates another big day.****Feb. 4, super star champion pole vaulter, the late **Dot's grandson**, **Eric Eshbach**, celebrates.**** **Mark Dunn's** youngest daughter, **Jenna**, husband **Robby** and the two kids, **Nate** and **Delilah**, flew in Saturday from Boston. They drove off Monday afternoon, ahead of the cold weather, in a Jeep they got from her dad. While in Bridge City they celebrated **Delilah's** 6th birthday and cousin **Leland**, **Garrett** and **Brittney** son's 5th birthday. By Tuesday, the **Bellou** family was halfway to Boston with a slight detour to New Orleans for Beignets at Café Du Monde. (Since that visit the **Ballou's** have added two to their family tree, **Willow** and **Chase**.)

20 Years Ago-2004

Local female boxer, **Valerie Mahfood**, is returning to the ring in a Texas title bout with **Carletta Ewell Mahfood**, who works out and trains at the **GYM**, in Bridge City, holds the world championship in the **IBF light heavyweight**, 175 pound class for women. **Boxer Derick Buford**, fresh from winning **Texas Silver Gloves boxing championship** for 132 pound 12 and 13 year olds, headed to the region six championship in Arkansas, where he brought home the championship. (Editor's note: I wonder what happened to that young boxer? ****Bridge City 12 year old bags an eight point buck. **Cody Greer** downed the deer at the **Double D Hunting Club** off Hwy. 1442.******Anabel** and **Arthur Anderson** celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary on Feb. 3. **Arthur** also celebrated his 91st birthday on the same day. (Editor's note: Both of these great people have passed away in the last ten years.)******GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN**. **Charles Morvent, Jr.**, 74, of Mauriceville, died last week Jan. 21.*****William "Bill" Sullivan**, 60, of Orange, died Jan. 17.*****Robert A Bourgeois**, 71, of Orange, died Thursday, Jan. 22.*****Arthur "Mike" Borres**, 61, of Orange, died Jan. 19.*****Percy L. Gaston**, 77, of Orange, died Jan. 22.*****Frances Loiacano Staley**, 89, died Jan. 22. You might remember her from the courthouse concession stand she and her sister, **Marie Tindall**, operated for 33 years. **Audie Parsons**, 80, of Orange, died Jan. 23.*****Bradley O'Neal Choate**, 77, of Orange, died Sunday Jan. 25.

45 Years Ago-1959

President Jimmy Carter pardoned **Patty Hurst** after 22 months of confinement. **Patty** announced she would be marrying her former bodyguard on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14.**** On Jan. 21, **Judge Sid** and **Mrs. Denise Caillavet** celebrated their 62nd anniversary.**** **KOGT** hires a new midday, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Monday thru Friday, disc jockey. **Arthur E. "Terry" Lloyns** is blind and has been since shortly after birth.

65 Years Ago-1959

State Representative Louis Dugas has been appointed to five legislative committees. **Dugas** supported **Waggoner Carr's** Speaker of the House opponent **Rep. Joe Burkett**, in a bitter campaign for the speakership.******Dow Gene Anderson**, of Bridge City, fresh from a second round knockout over **Bruce Hill**, will be seeking his third straight welterweight championship in the **Golden Gloves tournament**. He has won nine straight fights by knockouts. (Editor's note: **Dow** is still around and I wouldn't want to take a punch from him today even at his late age.)

A FEW HAPPENINGS

As Bridge City grows, so does its chamber. **Bridge City Chamber of Commerce Director Mandy Lyda** had a hard time fitting everyone into the community center during a packed annual banquet. Even with new growth, the chamber also relies on the businesses that have helped make the city great. The chamber honored **Bill Nickum**, **State Farm Insurance**, **Elaine Hearn Realty**, and dentist **Dr. David Olsen** for being in business in Bridge City for 50 years. That's half a century. They certainly have some tales to tell, but they are modest people. Congratulations to **Pastor Mark Bunch** from **St. Paul Methodist Church** for being named '**Citizen of the Year**.' Of course, the new **Chevron Phillips Golden Triangle Polymers** took a table. Their executives have been every where and are heartily welcomed.****After two Saturdays in a row of galas and balls in Orange County, this past weekend was a bit quiet. But some locals traveled to Beaumont for **Baptist Hospital's annual LaSoiree** with this year's theme **A Night at the Coliseum**. This year, **Stephen** and **Jami Lee** were the chairs of the fund-raising event. **Ross Smith** brought family members **Denisha LaFleur** and **Scott** and **April Goodman**. We heard **Eva** and **Matt** were under the weather. Also spotted in the crowd was **Stephanie Robertson** from Orange County.****Celebrity priest **Father Jim Sichko**, who grew up in Orange and now travels the world as a special missionary for the **Pope**, is already planning for this year's **St. Mary School gala** for the school's centennial. This week he announced he has arranged for a private tour and tasting in **Napa Valley, California**, as one of the prize items.****Congratulations to LC-M grad **Erinn Callahan** for landing a job with **American Songwriter News**. She's the first grandkid of the late **Grover** and **Sue Halliburton**, and only child of **Alvin** and **Holly Callahan**. **Erinn's** aunt is the award-winning sports writer **Suzanne Halliburton**. **Erinn** is now living in Colorado.******Mikail**

Molley of Bridge City Troop 290 is the newest **Eagle Scout** in the **Boy Scouts Three Rivers Council**. Congratulations for the big achievement.****Also sending kudos to **Gena Rogers** and the **Main Street Ministries Women's Care Center** for graduating its first resident into the sober world. The new Christian-based residential program helps women with substance addictions live while they learn to support themselves in a new, sober life.******John Frederick** of Mauriceville traveled to Augusta, Georgia, and put on a tux to walk the red carpet for his latest movie, '**The First Step**.' **Frederick** is retired from the Navy and is making a new career in film.******Heather Dyson** has returned from a jaunt to the Bahamas, while **Caroline** and **Mike Hennigan** spent their weekend at their beach house on Crystal Beach.******Benetris Edwards** went to Galveston to meet with her brothers and sister-in-law.******Dr. Wilbur Hah** has announced he will be retiring on his 60th birthday in April. The surgeon has been in Orange for 30 years and has spent his recent years specializing in cosmetic surgery.****Who was the guy with the handlebar mustache running outside in his underwear during a thunderstorm recently? **Security cams are everywhere**.****In 1852, the county of **Madison** was formed, later changed and became **Orange County**. In those 172 years, there has never been an official elected from this district that held a **statewide leadership** roll in state government. Today people in Austin, for the first time, know where **Orange County** is, in Southeast Texas, on the Louisiana border, because **Texas Speaker of the House** is from this district and we elected him. Think about that.

BREAUX BIRTHDAYS

A few folks celebrating birthdays in the next few days. Jan. 31: **Lily Fields**, **C.B. Burns**, **Marty Delano**, **Eric Mangham**, **Regina Gaspard**, **Steven Kimbell**, **Telisha Kuykendall**, **Lucas Adams**.****Feb. 1: **Lucas's** twin **Mason Adams**, **Kimberly Bernard**, **Gera Benoit**, **Quade Clark**, **Wayne Sullivan**, **Virginia Williams**, **Brittany Leonard**, **Garrett Kerger**, **Jake Williams**, **Lisa Monceaux**.****Feb. 2: **Don Kachtik**, **Daric Rogers**, **Fred Dohmann**, **Kelly McBride**, **Vance Thomas**.****Feb. 3: **Attorney Nolan LeBlanc**, **Michael Hilliard**, **Melissa Haley**, **Stephanie Broussard**, **Stephanie Carpenter**, **Alssa Allensworth**.****Feb. 4: **Eric Eshbach**, **Lisa Ludwig**, **Mike Boyd**, **Chelbi Sanford**, **Becca Mathews Peveto**, **Don Mosier**, **Lydia Wilson**, **Brad Freeman**, **John LeBlanc**, **Lindsey Hollingsworth**, **Mary Bull**, **Mel Moreau**, **Rheese Rhodes**, **Sylvia Holloway**, **Jack Jones**.****Feb. 5: **Madi Johansson**.****Feb. 6: **Melissa Monteaux**, **Grant Jones**, **Haley Arnold**, **Lindsey Day**, **David Gryder**, **Peggy Jones**, **Cindy Lessard**.***Birthday greetings also to our friend **Barbara Winfree** as she turns 85. She's retired from school teaching and serving as president of board of directors for the Orange County Port and Navigation District and has lots of time for grandchildren. **Jane Bonnin Jeanis** turned 91, while **Susan Tiger** celebrated No. 86. Others with recent birthdays included retired **Judge David Dunn**, **Bill Dixon**, **Ellen Nickum**, **Taylor Thibodeaux**, **Donito Burgess**, **Caroline Claybar**, **Sue Harris**, **Kerri Droddy**, **Judy Maull**, **Nick Winn**, **Shannon Ramirez**, **Deedie Frederick Mooney**, **Michael Mazzola** plus his wife **Kitty Mazzola**, **Haley Anders**, **Seth Dronett**, **Brandon Stanley**, **Beki Burton**, **Kait Patronella**, **Marie Whitehead**, **Sarah Broussard Simon**, and **Landon Sparks**.******Craig** and **Jessica Pachar** marked their 14th anniversary this past week.

CAJUN STORY OF THE WEEK

Alex Comeaux him, who was having daily headaches even after taking a bottle of aspirins and utta stuff, finally went to see **Dr. Quebedeaux** for help. Da doctor him, couldn't find anything wrong wit him so he suggest he go get his eyes checked. Maybe it was his eyes. Da eye doctor told **Comeaux** he had near perfect 20-20 eye sight and no cataracks him. Da eye doctor suggested he go see a dentist. Might be his teets. Da dentist, **Dr. Arceneaux**, him, pull all of **Comeaux's** teets. Da headaches dem didn't go away so **Comeaux** decide to go buy himself a new suit and stuff tinkin it might make him feel better bout himself. Da clerk say, "44 regular?" **Comeaux** say, "Dat's rite." "Shirt size 16 1/2-33?" da clerk axe. **Comeaux** say, "Dat's rite." Da clerk axe, "Wat size shorts you wear?" **Comeaux** say, "Size 38." "Oh no," said da clerk, "You should wear a 42 or 44, if you wear shorts that are too tight it will give you bad headaches."

C'EST TOUT WHEN IS SUPER BOWL SUNDAY?

Let the hoopla begin. The matchup for **Super Bowl 58** is now set, enabling fans to get ready for the big day. **Reba McEntire** will set the tone when she sings the national anthem before the game, while **Usher** is sure to set the stage ablaze when he headlines the halftime show. And may we also see **Taylor Swift**, who may have to race around the globe to get there in time after a concert in Japan. Of course, there is an actual game to be played on **CBS**, IN what is considered by many to be the biggest day on the **American sports calendar**.******Donald Trump** has been ordered to pay E Jean Carroll \$83.3m in defamation trial. The Manhattan federal court decision comes less than one year after **Carroll** won \$5m in her sexual abuse and defamation trial against **Trump**. **Carroll** said that **Trump** raped her inside the dressing room of a luxe Manhattan department store around early 1996.****My time is up, hope you're getting back to normal. Please shop our family of advertisers, they need it now. Take care and God bless.

Deaths & Memorials

Henry Harrison Ainsworth II, 82

Henry Harrison Ainsworth II, age 82, of Bridge City, Texas, passed away Saturday, January 27, 2024. Funeral services honoring Henry will be held at 11:00 AM Friday, February 2, 2024 at Liberty Baptist Church of Bridge City with Bro. Terry Wright and Bro. Trey Ainsworth officiating. Interment will be at 3:00 PM at Griggs Cemetery in Newton, Texas. Visitation of family and friends will be held Thursday, February 1, 2024 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Liberty Baptist Church.

Henry was born in Orange, Texas on August 18, 1941 to Jewell Raye (Johnson) and Henry Harrison Ainsworth. He married Nelda Joyce Phelps June 16, 1962. He was a pipefitter by trade, beginning in 1961, up until he retired in 2001 and he was a member of Pipefitters LU 195 of Beaumont, Texas. He enjoyed traveling and loved the holidays when everyone could be together. His family was his passion, but he always stated how important it was to put God first in your life. He served and worshipped at, first Circle Baptist Church and then Liberty Baptist Church in Bridge City. He believed that one should serve the community they lived in and served the area in many ways, including serving on the School



Henry Ainsworth II

Board of Bridge City ISD.

Henry is preceded in death by his parents and his parents-in-law, Jack and Mellie Phelps. Also, preceded in death by brother, Harry Ainsworth; sister, Bootsie Boyett; sister-in-law and brother-in-law, Ree and Johnny Peavy, brother-in-law, Kenneth Bishop; niece, Gina Patterson; and nephew, Jerad Jones.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Nelda Joyce Ainsworth; his son, Henry Harrison "Trey" Ainsworth III and wife Leslie; daughter, Charin Nel Price; grandchildren, Jadon Price and wife Kayla, Laurel Ainsworth, and Mason Price; great-grandchildren, Bryson Powell, Casen Powell, Ryan Price and Graysin Price; sisters, Judy Mouton and husband John, Linda Lansford and husband Hershel, and Sue Jones and husband Jeffrey; sister-in-law, Jaxine Bishop; many loving nieces and nephews; and a host of friends.

Serving as pallbearers will be Jadon Price, Mason Price, Laurel Ainsworth, Kent Mouton, Dale Mouton, Bruce Lansford and Micha Jones. Honorary pallbearers are the men of Liberty Baptist Church and Members of Pipefitters LU 195/211.

Ruby Jean Wimberley, 87

Ruby Jean Wimberley, 87, of Orange, Texas, passed away on January 24, 2024, in Beaumont, Texas.

Memorial services will be 2:00 p.m., Thursday, February 1, 2024, at Claybar Funeral Home in Orange.

Visitation will be from 12:30 PM to 1:00 PM., then a vigil from 1:00 PM to 1:40 PM, and a Rosary from 1:40 PM to 2:00 PM, Thursday, February 1, 2024, at Claybar Funeral Home in Orange.

Born in Texarkana, Arkansas, on November 14, 1936; her mother was Jeanette E. Reynolds Mozingo Broussard, her stepfather was Ferdinand Broussard and her father was Carl T. Mozingo.

Ruby was a longtime member of both St. Mary Catholic Church and St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church. Her devotion to God and the church community was unwavering. She also attended St. Mary Catholic School and graduated as the valedictorian of her class in 1954. Ruby began her career as the administrative assistant to the CEO of Orange Savings and Loan in the late 50's. She quickly became a lending officer as well as an invaluable team leader and rose to become President in the late 70's. In 1984 during a time of great turmoil in the industry, she became CEO. She was an outspoken advocate for the industry and testified before U.S. Congress about how to operate a successful thrift. She served as a Director of the Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas, as Chairman of the Texas Savings and Community Bankers Association, as a Director of the Institute of Financial Education, as a Vice Chairman of the Affordable Housing Committee and as an Advisory Director of Freddie Mac. Ruby also served many years on the



Ruby Jean Wimberley

Board of Directors with the Stark Foundation and worked directly under Nelda Stark on numerous occasions.

When she retired as President, she accepted a role as a Director of Orange Savings Bank. She served in that capacity until 2013 when the bank was merged with First Financial Bank and served as an Advisory Director with that bank.

Ruby served her community in multiple civic organizations, including the Beaumont State Center, the Altrusa Club of Orange, the Child Welfare Board and the Community Services Group of Orange County, the Orange Chamber of Commerce and the Orange Rotary Club.

During her illustrious career Ruby received numerous awards such as the "50 Year Banker" from the Texas Bankers Foundation and the Athena Leadership Award for Orange County.

She is preceded in death by her loving husband of 57 years, Jerry Wimberley along with her parents.

She is survived by her sons, Mark Wimberley and wife, Dianna, James Wimberley and wife, Suzy, and Robert Wimberley and wife, Pam; her grandchildren, Jessica Horton and husband, Sean Horton (deceased), Karaline Wimberley, Jeremy Wimberley, Sydney Hooker and husband, Gary, Katelynn Garza and husband, Garrett, Dalton Wimberley, and Grace Wimberley; her eleven great-grandchildren; her brother, Carl Mozingo; and numerous other loving family members and friends.

Cremation will be held under the direction of Claybar Funeral Home in Orange.

Bryan Abbie Herman Autrey, 89

Bryan Abbie Herman Autrey, 89, of Orange, Texas, passed away on January 26, 2024, at Baptist Hospital in Beaumont, Texas.

Funeral services will be held at 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 30, 2024, at Bridge City United Pentecostal Church in Bridge City. Officiating will be Reverend Murry Ray. A private family burial will be held.

Visitation will be prior to the service beginning at 1:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 30, 2024, at Bridge City United Pentecostal Church in Bridge City.

Born in Bleakwood, Texas, on September 30, 1934, he was the son of Cecil Milton Autrey and Ophelia Catherine (Pierce) Autrey. Bryan was a long-time, devoted member of Bridge City United Pentecostal Church where he served as Sunday School Superintendent for many years. He found profound strength and solace in his faith, and love of God and Family was of utmost prominence in his heart. He was not only dedicated to his faith and family, but he also took great pride in his service to the United States of America as a member of the United States Marine Corp.

Bryan spent most of his career at Fina, but the last ten years he worked at Sandoz/BASF as an Instrument Technician. He spoke often and fondly of the relationships he made during his work tenures. Prior to his retirement, in his last year at Sandoz he was blessed with a little luck winning a brand new Dodge truck in a safety award drawing.

Outside of his service and spirituality, Bryan had a deep love for the outdoors.



Bryan Abbie Herman Autrey

While attending First UPC Port Arthur in the 60's, he served as Scout Master and hosted many outdoor outings with his troop. He could often be found on his tractor working, gardening and growing all manner of plants and trees. He was one with nature and had a green thumb. Bryan was also a "Jack of all trades". He never walked away from a challenge. He was a very patient man who believed in grace

and forgiveness. He will be deeply missed by his family and all who knew and loved him.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Cecil and Ophelia Autrey; his siblings, Herk Autrey, Cecil Merle Autrey, Jean Autrey, Tommy Aldrich, and Ann McPherson; and his parents-in-law, Henry and Eula Mae Shaddock.

He is survived by his wife of almost 66 years, Kathryn Autrey; his children, Lori Ann Rice and husband, Kirk of Lumberton, Jana Kay Bedair and husband, Paul of Cypress, and Mark Herman Autrey and wife, Tisha of Little Cypress; his grandchildren, Courtney Tomplait, Blake and Ashlyn Rice, Ashton Pirtle, Trent Pirtle, Victoria Wilt, Madison Autrey, and Zayne Bryan Autrey; his great-grandchild, Waylon Rice; his sister-in-law, Judy Blacksher; and numerous nieces, nephews, and other loving family members and friends.

Serving as pallbearers will be Kirk Rice, Paul Bedair, Blake Rice, Louis Miller, Darrell Monceaux, and Jonathan Fener.

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The two properties, the first commonly known as 5615 Tyler St., Vidor, TX 77662 and the second commonly known as 1520 Buckhorn St., Vidor, TX 77662 are scheduled to be sold at public foreclosure auction on 02/06/2024 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.

CITATION BY PUBLICATION

The State of Texas
To any and all Unknown Heirs and all Persons Interested in the Estate of

MAUDIE AMANDA POPE, Deceased
Cause No. P19910
in County Court at Law, Orange County, Texas

The alleged heir(s) at law in the above numbered and entitled estate filed AN APPLICATION TO DETERMINE HEIRSHIP in this estate on the 30th day of JANUARY, 2024, requesting that the Court determine who are the heirs and only heirs of MAUDIE AMANDA POPE, Deceased, and their respective shares and interests in such estate.

The court may act on this application at any call of the docket on or after 10:00 a.m. on the Monday next after the expiration of 10 days from the date of publication of this citation, at the County Courthouse, 801 W. Division., Orange, Texas 77630.

All persons interested in this case are cited to appear before this Honorable Court **by filing a written contest or answer** to this Application should they desire to do so. **To ensure its consideration, you or your attorney must file any objection, intervention or response in writing** with the County Clerk of Orange County, Texas.

Given under my hand and the seal of the County Court at Law, Orange County, Texas at the office of the Orange County Clerk in Orange, Texas on on the 30th day of JANUARY, 2024.

BRANDY ROBERTSON,
County Clerk, Orange County, Texas

By: Danielle Kendrick, Deputy
Danielle Kendrick

CITATION BY PUBLICATION

The State of Texas
To any and all Unknown Heirs and all Persons Interested in the Estate of

DAVID HUERTA, Deceased
Cause No. P19908
in County Court at Law, Orange County, Texas

The alleged heir(s) at law in the above numbered and entitled estate filed AN APPLICATION TO DETERMINE HEIRSHIP in this estate on the 25th day of JANUARY, 2024, requesting that the Court determine who are the heirs and only heirs of DAVID HUERTA, Deceased, and their respective shares and interests in such estate.

The court may act on this application at any call of the docket on or after 10:00 a.m. on the Monday next after the expiration of 10 days from the date of publication of this citation, at the County Courthouse, 801 W. Division., Orange, Texas 77630.

All persons interested in this case are cited to appear before this Honorable Court **by filing a written contest or answer** to this Application should they desire to do so. **To ensure its consideration, you or your attorney must file any objection, intervention or response in writing** with the County Clerk of Orange County, Texas.

Given under my hand and the seal of the County Court at Law, Orange County, Texas at the office of the Orange County Clerk in Orange, Texas on on the 26th day of JANUARY, 2024.

BRANDY ROBERTSON,
County Clerk, Orange County, Texas

By: Danielle Kendrick, Deputy
Danielle Kendrick

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of DAVID GARETH PURDON, JR., Deceased, were issued on JANUARY 29, 2024, in Cause No. P19849, pending in the County Court at Law of Orange County, Texas, to: SUSAN POMEROY.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

c/o: Barron Law Office
P.O. Box 279
Orange, TX 77631-0279

Dated the 29th day of January, 2024.

George B. Barron
George B. Barron
Attorney for Administratrix
State Bar No.: 01817500
P.O. Box 279
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23. *Safety value
24. Disfigure

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28. Roofed colonnade
30. Dr. Seuss' Yertle
35. Auctioneer's final word
37. Sea eagles
39. Popular winter boot brand
40. Largest ethnic group in Rwanda
41. User's destination
43. Like Twiggy's skirt
44. Former anesthetic
46. Not all
47. Death notice
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50. Luau souvenirs
52. Opposite of WSW
53. Vatican's head
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George B. Barron

George B. Barron
Attorney for Administratrix
State Bar No.: 01817500
P.O. Box 279
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Local basketball teams eye standings

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

With two weeks remaining in the district basketball schedules every game is of increased importance. The boys basketball teams at Bridge City, West Orange-Stark, Little Cypress Mauriceville, and Orangefield are trying to earn spots to the post season which starts in the middle of February.

In District 19-4A Silsbee is undefeated in first place. Bridge City, Little Cypress Mauriceville, and West Orange-Stark will need to finish strong to insure a berth in the playoffs by ranking among the top four teams in that district.

The Bridge City Cardinals are in the best position of the three local teams after splitting their two games last week. Bridge City lost 104-53 to the Silsbee Tigers on Tuesday, January 23. Three Cardinals did reach double figures with Aaden Bush scoring 12 points, Lincoln Breaux totaling 11 points, and Aiden Gutierrez getting 10 points.

On Friday night Bridge City played the Bears at Little Cypress Mauriceville High School in the Dr. Pauline Colburn Hargrove Gymnasium. The Cardinals won 51-38 to raise their district record to 6-2 putting them in second place of the district standings.

Bridge City Coach Randall Robertson was very happy with the win at LCM. "Any time you go on the road and get a win in this district that's a big win for us. We're trying to take it one game at a time like we did the first half of district. We've just got to prepare for the next game every time. We get a much needed break before we've got Vidor at home next Friday (February 2)," Robertson indicated.

LCM jumped out 4-0 in the opening minutes. Jonah Fuller popped a three pointer to give the Bears a five point lead 7-2 in the first quarter.

The Cardinals took their first lead of the game 10-8 with 42 seconds remaining in the quarter on a three point shot from Aiden Gutierrez. Bryson Price of the Bears tied the game before Gutierrez hit another three to give Bridge City the lead 13-10 after one quarter.

The second quarter began with Aaden Bush popping a three for Bridge City before Gutierrez made a field goal and two free throws to increase the Cardinal advantage to double digits 20-10. Little Cypress Mauriceville would never get any closer the remainder of the game.

Bush scored ten in the third quarter to finish as the leading scorer with 17 points which featured his making four shots from beyond the three point arc. Gutierrez got 14 points. Bryce Linder and Rayburn Hebert came off the Bridge City bench to put in seven points with two field goals by Linder and a three from Hebert.

Alantheon Winn scored 14 points to lead LCM scoring. Price had 9 points for the Bears. The loss brought Little Cypress Mauriceville's record to 2-5 in district.

West Orange-Stark is still in the thick of the



Bryce Linder and Rayburn Hebert came off the bench to score key points in Bridge City's win over LCM.
RECORD PHOTO: Dan Perrine

BOYS Page 3B

Lady Bobcats extend win streak to 10 straight

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

Local girls basketball teams have a week left in their district schedules to finish in one of the top four positions to reach the post season. Final district games will be played Tuesday, February 6.

Orangefield has won ten straight district games to earn a share of first place in District 22-3A with Kountze. The Lady Bobcats won both of their games played last week.

On Tuesday, January 23, Orangefield played at home against Buna. The Lady Bobcats used a huge second quarter to beat the Lady Cougars 52-41.

Buna led 11-10 after the first quarter, but Orangefield ran off twenty points in the second to take a 30-19 advantage at the half. Mikayla Locke of the Lady Bobcats scored ten points in the quarter.

Locke added eight more points in the third quarter as Orangefield increased the margin to fourteen points 43-29 with a quarter to play. The Lady Bobcats played a conservative final eight minutes to win by eleven.

Orangefield successfully used twin posts Greenlea Oldham and Rebecca Durbin during much of the game. Durbin did a double double scoring 14 points, grabbing 11 rebounds, and even blocking a shot. Oldham scored 7 points and pulled down 9 rebounds.

The high scorer for the Lady Bobcats was Mikayla Locke with 23 points to go with her 4 rebounds and 6 steals. Kaylea Gravett handed out 4 assists, and Paisley Reeves rebounded 4 missed shots.



Rebecca Durbin pulled off a double double with 14 points and 11 rebounds while also blocking a shot in the Lady Bobcats' win over Buna

The following Friday night Orangefield went to Hardin. The Lady Bobcats left winners again 62-32 over the Lady Hornets.

Everyone contributed to the victory as once again Mikayla Locke was high scorer throwing in 13 points with 4 rebounds and 2 steals. Greenlea Oldham got 10 points, 7 rebounds, and blocked 2 shots. Brooklyn Wagoner tallied 9 points while dishing out a team high 5 assists. Rebecca Durbin scored 8 points, blocked a shot, and made 7 assists.

Coach Eric Girola attributed the success the Orangefield girls are enjoying to their preparation and execution. "For district games we have a couple of days to prepare, we get a game plan together, we go over film, we discuss it, and then we go execute it at practices and that's where we win the game. We win the games at practice. The Lady Bobcats are on a hunt they want to win a district championship," Girola explained.

The Lady Bobcats played at Warren on Tuesday and will travel to Win-

GIRLS Page 4B

Re-Elect Jimmy Lane Mooney for Orange County Sheriff

I'm Sheriff Jimmy Lane Mooney, and I've been married to Michelle for 36 years. We're proud parents of two sons, Marshall and Matthew, and I have lived in Orange County all of my life.

With over 35 years as a licensed Peace Officer in Orange County and holding a Master Peace Officer Certificate, I've served in various roles, including street cop, detective, narcotics investigator, and SWAT Team member.

Throughout my career, I've actively participated in initiatives such as responding to natural disasters, reopening the Vidor sub-station, and saving \$500,000 for Orange County through drug forfeiture money.

Under my leadership, we've achieved significant milestones, including pioneering Texas's first domestic violence vehicle without taxpayer funds, supporting community initiatives like the "Hope House," and reducing crime by 28% since 2019.

I've increased arrests, ratified Union Contracts, and invested in patrol vehicles, K9 training, and tactical/SWAT/School Shooter training to enhance safety.

Looking ahead, I have exciting plans, including launching Citizens on Patrol, a program where citizens work alongside law enforcement, establishing a motorcycle unit, and reviving the police academy at the Orange County Sheriff's Office.

In the upcoming 2024 Sheriff's election, I am the *only* candidate with a genuine desire, passion, and determination for this role. I humbly ask for your support and vote. Together, let's continue building a safer, stronger Orange County.

SATURDAY, FEB 03

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OUTDOORS

Making the best out of the worst

OUTDOORS
Capt. Chuck Uzzle
For The Record

It's a common known fact that we have some of the craziest weather in the world here in Texas, especially on the coast. January and February have historically been some of our worst weather months, the conditions at this time of the year coupled with low water temps can make it down right miserable.

During these periods the average fisherman may defer from the outdoors to a warmer climate by the fire thinking that the fishing won't be worth the effort, big mistake.

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

Big concentrations of fish can key in on small areas so be sure to thoroughly fish an area before giving up. 2 years ago on Sabine lake I came across one of these situations where the fish were piled up in a small drain, every cast was viciously attacked by a stud trout or oversized redfish. It was 2 hours of heaven, all you could ever ask for and more. The big fish were keying in on a small depression where two small ditches drained out of the marsh.

The water was warmer coming out of the marsh and the depression offered up some refuge from the outgoing tide, the bait just kept pouring into the strike zone and the big fish were just killing everything that swam.

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

Calcasieu Lake also has it's own nuances during this time of the year and they are very similar to Sabine for the most part. One big difference between the two sister lakes is the prevalent reef structure caused by oysters on Calcasieu, this body of water is full of oysters and those are trout goldmines if you know where to find them. In the winter if you pay attention you can watch the oyster boats comb Calcasieu, they are doing nothing but giving away very valuable information to the fishermen. I have marked some great structure by hawking these guys on bad weather days or days when the fish weren't to cooperative. That little bit of effort translated into numerous productive open water areas that I fish to this day. You can learn plenty if you just watch sometimes.

The one thing that you cannot get enough of is learning what window of opportunity works best, take the tides and temperatures into account as well the feed times and get out there among them. You can't catch big fish from your cozy couch. Remember "You won't know unless you go"



Chuck Uzzle

Gulf Coast Fishing Reports

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

• Sabine Lake

FAIR. 52 degrees. After another cold northern limits of redfish can be caught in the marsh ditches feeding on mullet and mud minnows. The Neches River is very low after the cold fronts, best catches in marsh canal points and rocks with 1/16 ounce jigheads on 5 inch red shad plastics. Lots of sight casting in the banks. Sheephead and drum can be caught fishing off the bottom with a Carolina rig or live shrimp under a popping cork. Few trout catches, few flounder but neither are keepers. Report by Captain Randy Foreman, Captain Randy's Guide Service Sabine Lake.

• Bolivar

FAIR. 40 degrees. North Jetty Boat cut and East Bay producing nice catches of trout. A few catches of black drum biting dead shrimp or crab off the bottom all over the bay. Redfish are on fire with slot fish being caught daily at the jetty and Texas City Dike using mullet, and live or dead shrimp under a popping cork. Report by North Jetty Bait Camp.

• Trinity Bay

SLOW. 52 degrees. Deeper reefs along the west shoreline coughing up scattered catches of speckled trout and redfish. Upper end of Trinity Bay, Tabbs, Scott, and Burnett have been slow, with few anglers finding trout, along with some sheephead and black drum. Runoff from recent rains could affect this area. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing.

Trout are hugging tight



The Record's Capt. Chuck Uzzle displays a nice Sabine Lake redfish caught using winter tactics.

to the bottom in 12-20 feet of water due to the wind. Bait fish are with the trout by the thousands. Trout can be caught dead sticking with small jigs and swim baits. Redfish can be found in the marsh and bayous being caught on darker swim baits and gulp. Drum are plentiful in the marshes and bayous too being caught in the same baits. Sheephead are hugging tight to structure being caught in free lining live and gulp shrimp especially around pilings with rip rap close by. Be safe, be smart and pay attention to the conditions prior to your trip! Report by Captain Zackary Scott, Zack Attack Fishing.

• East Galveston Bay

FAIR. 50 degrees. Few anglers on the water due to inclement weather. Scattered speckled trout being caught by those wading with mullet imita-

tion plugs. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter. Surface water temperature 47 degrees. The water clarity is stained for the most part, as a number of our areas have been blown out by the continual winds. The pattern remains unchanged, as success remains back in the marsh and bayou areas where one can get some protection from the wind and waves. Redfish bite is consistent in areas where good current flow has bait up against the shorelines and grass lines in 1-3 feet of water around oyster shells on Wac Attack Tails in Rollover Moon, fished with 1/8 ounce heads, as well as fished under a Fish Smack popping cork, with an 18 inch leader. The trout once again this week have preferred a super slow presentation, targeting deeper pockets close to channel bends with shell, triggering the most bites. The lighter the jig head

determined by the wind and current, the better, for a slow fall, as the bites have been light for the most part. Report by Captain Jeff Brandon, Get the Net Guide Services, LLC.

• Galveston Bay

SLOW. 48 degrees. Weather has kept most anglers from trying the open bay. Scattered catches of speckled trout reported along Sylvan Beach. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing.

• West Galveston Bay

FAIR. 52 degrees. Post freeze fishing was good. A few anglers caught some really nice trout, while others struggled to catch fish of any size. Traditional Winter spots seemed to be the best, like Offatts Bayou, Chocolate Bayou, and the Diversionary Canal. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing.

• Texas City

SLOW. 52 degrees. A few oversized black drums are being caught off the Texas City Dike and around the Galveston jetties. Beachfront piers on Galveston reported few anglers and those fishing are catching some whiting and the occasional oversized black drum and redfish. Report by Captain David Dillman, Galveston Bay Charter Fishing.

• Freeport

SLOW. 58 degrees. Sheephead, drum, redfish and trout are good in the old river and old intra-coastal. Bastrop Bay and Chocolate Bay are good for catches of trout and redfish using live shrimp, or 1/4-3/8 ounce jig heads. Report by Captain Jake Brown, Flattie Daddy Fishing Adventures.



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BC's Van Huis and Reeves sign scholarships

DAN PERRINE
Orange County Sports
For The Record

Two student athletes at Bridge City High School signed scholarships on Friday, January 26, to play baseball at the college level. Jon Van Huis and Landon Reeves will both be studying and playing ball at colleges in Texas.

Bridge City High School head baseball coach Chad Landry praised the young men for their hard work and dedication as members of his Cardinal baseball teams. He thanked them for the contributions they have made to their high school baseball program the last four years.

Van Huis will be attending Texas A&M Corpus Christi beginning in the fall. Van Huis has played on the varsity at Bridge City during all four years he has attended the high

school. Jon has been named to the All-District team twice and was the 2023 Team MVP for the Cardinals. He also served all four years on the student council and two years on the executive council at the school.

Reeves signed to attend and play at Angelina College this fall. Reeves played on the Cardinal varsity all four of his years at high school in helping the Cardinals make the post season playoffs each of the first three and hopefully again now in his final year.

Landon has been valuable to Coach Landry as a utility player, an infielder, a pitcher, an outfielder, and was selected All-District Honorable Mention as a sophomore and First Team All-District in the outfield as a junior.

He has received multiple recognitions as MVP and the top performer in tournaments with Bridge City.



Jon Van Huis and Landon Reeves have the support of coaches Shea Landry, Chad Landry, and Elmer Laird as they will go from Bridge City to play baseball in college.

Boys basketball

From Page 1B

playoff picture despite dropping three of its last five district games. The Mustangs are in third place at 5-3 in the district a game ahead of Lumberton.

A key road victory was achieved by West Orange-Stark on Tuesday, January 23, at Vidor as the Mustangs edged the Pirates 65-64 by just one point. The result was much closer than when the two teams met at West Orange-Stark in a game won by the Mustangs 67-55 to open the district schedule.

Leading the Mustangs in scoring on Tuesday was Andrew Cooper with 22 points. Jamikael Davis and Ja'Vaughnte Richard

also scored in double digits with 14 and 11 points respectfully.

Friday, January 26, was a special date as West Orange-Stark played its first game in the new West Orange-Cove Event Center. A fire in the stands of the neighboring Dan R. Hooks Stadium during July allowed smoke to infiltrate into the event center causing its opening to be delayed until last week.

The Mustangs played the Lumberton Raiders and lost the game 61-49. It was eight fewer points than WOS has scored in any district game this season.

The Orangefield Bobcats with a record of 8-1 in District 22-3A are in sec-

ond place a game behind first place Kountze with five games remaining. The Bobcats won both of their games last week.

The second half of the district started on Tuesday, January 23, at Orangefield where the Bobcats beat the Buna Cougars 55-24. It was a slow start for Orangefield as the game was tied 9-9 after the first quarter.

Things got rolling for the Bobcats at the start of the second period when Zane Wrinkle wrinkled the twine with a long shot that gave them a three point lead. Orangefield played some defense too holding Buna scoreless for over six minutes to begin the second to take a 29-12



Keylie Washburn scored 19 points for LCM to help beat Bridge City last week.

lead at the half.

The Bobcats had another dominating eight minutes in the third quarter outscoring the Cougars 15-7 to open up a 25 point advantage. The fourth quarter saw Orangefield double up Buna again to finish off the thirty-one point triumph.

Jaden Scales of the Bob-


cats was the leading scorer with 21 points while assisting on 4 other baskets. Wrinkle had 13 points and 5 rebounds. Griffin Thomas tallied 8 points and grabbed 4 rebounds for Orangefield.

Bryan Whitmire the coach of the Bobcats credited defense by Orangefield as the key to the big victory. Whitmire commented, "The kids really locked in and played hard defensively. Our rotation was really good. I thought it started with us getting stops down there on the defensive end, and then we were able to get some shots to go down that ultimately put us on a couple of big runs that put some distance between us and them. The Cougars are a good team and they played really hard, and I thought

we were fortunate to put ourselves in position to make a couple runs."

The Bobcats followed that blow out with a similar lopsided win at Hardin on Friday, January 26. Orangefield blasted the Hornets 69-39.

Kadyn Rucker pulled off a rare double double with 14 points and 14 rebounds for Orangefield. Jaden Scales topped the Bobcats in scoring with 25 points and made passes that led to five other baskets by teammates. Kane Smith reached the magic figure of 20 points while also grabbing 5 rebounds. The road trip continued for Orangefield on Tuesday, January 30, at Warren. The Bobcats next game will be Friday, February 2, in Winnie against the East Chambers Buccaneers.



CHERYL WARREN

★★★★★

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as the Orange County Republican Party." -Cheryl L. Warren


ACTIONS NOT WORDS

The following is from Lydia Damrel, one of the
smartest, most reliable, and most dedicated
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"I have worked with the Orange County Republican
Party of Texas since 1978, yes 46 years. There have been
several Orange County Republican chairmen, including
me - TWICE! Cheryl is an asset and incredible worker,
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precinct chairs, provided classes and training for new
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our neighboring counties. She has already performed
the chair's duties unlike our present chair. He has
fought her at every turn, and only recently recruited
opponents for our hard working precinct chairs, some
of those he recruited have never darkened the door of
the Republican Headquarters and have no interest in
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FOR ORANGE COUNTY SHERIFF

Bobby Smith, a seasoned law enforcement veteran
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Republican candidate for Orange County Sheriff.
Bobby firmly believes that there is no greater
responsibility than safeguarding the cherished
citizens of Orange County. In an ever-evolving
landscape of threats, both traditional and new, he is
unwavering in his commitment to protect Orange
County with the highest levels of competence and
integrity.

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

FOL. ACC. POL. FOR BY BOBBY SMITH CAMPAIGN, KEITH MERRITT - TREASURER



Jaden Scales and Zane Wrinkle helped lead Orangefield to a decisive district win over Buna. The Orangefield Bobcats with a record of 8-1 in District 22-3A are in second place a game behind first place Kountze with five games remaining. The Bobcats won both of their games last week. • READ FULL ARTICLE ABOUT ORANGE COUNTY TEAMS ON PAGE 1B

Girls basketball From Page 3B

nie on Friday to play East Chambers. Their final district game of the regular season will be Tuesday, February 6, at Orangefield against Anahuac.

Little Cypress Mauriceville is battling for a playoff berth and took a big step in that direction on Friday, January 26. The Lady Bears beat the Lady Cardinals 39-33 at Bridge City to improve their record to 5-4 in District 19-4A tied with Vidor for the fourth and final playoff spot. Bridge City dropped to 6-4 with two district games remaining.

Coach Eddie Michalko of LCM credited the strong defense played by all of the Lady Bears as the key to the important win. Keylee Washburn with 19 points and 9 rebounds led the way for the Lady Bears.

Nicole Sasser led the Lady Cardinals in scoring with 11 points. Kennedy Campbell had 8 rebounds and made 2 steals for



Keylee Washburn scored 19 points for LCM to help beat Bridge City last week.

Bridge City.

Earlier in the week Bridge City lost at Silsbee 49-31 to the first place Lady Tigers. Kaylee Britten was the high scorer for the Lady Cardinals with 9 points, and she made 3 steals. Nicole Sasser grabbed 8 rebounds for Bridge City.

West Orange-Stark has struggled with consistency all season. The Lady Mustangs actually led Vidor on Tuesday, January 23, by four points after

three quarters but fell victim to the Lady Pirates' full court press in the fourth losing 53-42 at home.

Friday night the Lady Mustangs lost at Lumberton 70-53. West Orange-Stark is 1-9 in district with two games left.

The district playoff race could come down to the wire for both Bridge City and Little Cypress Mauriceville. The Lady Cardinals had a bye on Tuesday, January 30, and are at Vidor on Friday, February 2, before closing with the second place Lumberton Lady Raiders in Bridge City the following Tuesday.

The Lady Bears played at home on Tuesday against Vidor and will play at Lumberton on Friday. LCM closes the regular season at home against the last place Jasper Lady Dogs who are winless in district.

Chiefs to wear red, 49ers to wear white in Super Bowl

The Super Bowl LVIII uniform matchup is set.

The Kansas City Chiefs will wear their home red uniforms on Feb. 11 when they take on the NFC champion San Francisco 49ers, who will wear their road whites.

The Chiefs are the designated home team for the big game and were afforded first pick on what to wear.

This will mark Patrick Mahomes' fourth Super Bowl appearance, and he has seen success wearing both uniform options. Mahomes is 1-0 in Super Bowls while donning the Chiefs' white kit (Super Bowl LVII vs. Eagles), and is 1-1 sporting the red jersey.

The Chiefs lost the last time they wore red in the title game (Super Bowl LV vs. Buccaneers), but Mahomes and Andy Reid might be hoping Tuesday's choice will provide a familiar result.

When the Chiefs came back to defeat the 49ers in Super Bowl LIV they were in red with San Francisco in white.

Super Bowl LVIII kicks off at 6:30 p.m.

“Do Well Be Well” with Diabetes classes now in progress

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension of Orange County will hold free Do Well Be Well with Diabetes classes. Join them in learning how to prevent and control your type 2 diabetes, eat healthily, and much more to control your diabetes.

The series will last for 5 classes on January 11, 18, 25, and February 1 and 8, and will be from 2-4 PM. They will be held at the Neighborhood Facility Building at 303 N. 8th St. in Orange. To get the full educational benefit, you must attend all 5 classes IF POSSIBLE.

Call the Extension Office at 409-882-7010 to sign up for this series.

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A lifetime of loyal service

I am a lifelong resident of Orange County. My wife and I have five grandchildren. I am also a proud Little Cypress-Mauriceville graduate.

Currently I serve as District 1 Orange City Councilman. While I have very much enjoyed serving the citizens of Orange, Law Enforcement is where my heart has always been.

I have served in every position in law enforcement; from a corrections officer to a patrol deputy to a criminal investigator. I have held positions of supervision from sergeant to chief deputy. I hold a current peace officers license, an advanced peace officer license and an advanced corrections officer license.

Serving as a public official is a calling not a job. A law enforcement officer has to have the passion and desire to serve.

When elected I intend to be very involved in the Mauriceville schools at every level. I will immediately open and utilize the office in Mauriceville and be actively involved in all aspects of the community.

VOTE NO. 1 ON THE BALLOT

DAVID BAILEY

FOR CONSTABLE PCT. 2

REPUBLICAN

I humbly solicit your support and vote March 5

409-656-9865

Political advertisement paid for by Campaign to Elect David Baily, Constable Precinct 2

My 5-Cents By State Sen. Robert Nichols

A monthly column by Sen. Robert Nichols Senate District 3

One hundred and eighty-five years ago this month, the Republic of Texas passed a piece of legislation that set the framework for education funding to this day. On January 26, 1839, a bill passed that set aside land for public schools in Texas and two public universities. It fulfilled the vision President Mirabeau Lamar had for a public education system endowed by public lands in the state. Though not immediately successful, the program had lasting impacts and earned Lamar the nickname “Father of Texas Education.”

Here are five things happening around your state:

1. Senator Zaffirini becomes first female Dean of the Senate

Sen. Judith Zaffirini officially became the Dean of the Senate with the retirement of Sen. John Whitmire last month. The Dean of the Senate is the position bestowed on the longest serving senator. The dean oversees much of the timing, procedure, and function of the Senate. Sen. Zaffirini was first elected in 1986, making her the first Mexican American woman to serve in the upper chamber. Over her decades in service, she has been a well-respected and consistent member of the Senate. In fact, she has a record 72,132 consecutive votes. It has been an honor and privilege to serve alongside such a distinguished member. Congratulations on this well-earned honor, Sen. Zaffirini!

2. Southeast Texas ports receive \$66 million from state to improve safety, infrastructure

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) recently announced \$240 million in grant funding for Texas ports. Approximately \$66 million of those funds will go to four Southeast Texas ports to split between six projects. The Port of Port Arthur, Port of Beaumont, Port of Orange, and Port of Sabine Pass will all benefit from the funding. The six projects include building a flyover project in Port of Port Arthur, increasing cargo capacity, and adding stop lights in Port of Beaumont, building a trans motor yard and truck queuing area in Port of Orange, and repairing sheet piling in Port of Sabine Pass. Authorities anticipate these projects increasing safety at the ports and promoting economic development in the region.

3. Rural law enforcement grant applications now available

The Comptrollers Office announced that rural law enforcement grants became available for departments to submit applications starting January 1. These grants stem from Senate Bill 22, passed during the 88th regular session by Senator Drew Springer. The bill established a grant program within the Comptroller's Office to provide financial assistance to sheriff's departments, constable's offices, and district and county attorney's offices in eligible counties. The funding is intended to sup-

plement salaries for various positions in rural areas. Eligibility requirements mandate an office or department must serve counties with overall populations of 300,000 or less and certain conditions related to specific salary levels are met. If a county already pays the minimum salary levels for the sheriff, deputies, and jailers, the county may still apply for funds for additional personnel or equipment. To apply or find more information, visit <https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/development/grants/rural/>.

4. General Land Office approves increase to Veteran Home Loan amounts

This month, the General Land Office announced an increase to the Veterans Home Loan amount from \$726,200 to \$766,550. All qualified veterans will continue to receive competitive interest rates. Veterans with a qualified service-connected disability rating of 30 percent or greater qualify for a discounted interest rate. Veterans utilizing this benefit may be eligible for home loans with no down payment and no private mortgage insurance. Veterans can also use the program more than once. For more information, visit the Veterans Land Board's website at <https://s3.glo.texas.gov/vlb/loans/home-loans/>.

Recently, the Federal Communications Commission released a broadband coverage map that suggests most of Deep East Texas has access to broadband. Members of the Deep East Texas Council of Governments (DETCOG) have encouraged the community to

challenge the maps, as they are misleading and do not accurately reflect the reality of broadband access, especially in rural areas. The map was compiled by using data from internet service providers in the area.

The coverage map will help determine how much funding states receive from the federal government for

broadband projects. It's important that the maps accurately reflect access in the state. Challenges can be issued based on whether if a provider denies your request for service, has a waiting list longer than 10 days, or requires extra fees for installation.

For more information, to see the map, and to verify and challenge coverage areas, go to <https://broadbandmap.fcc.gov/home>.

5. Freezing

weather delays crawfish season

According to local boil shops, the weather conditions we have recently experienced are causing a delay in the crawfish supply. Due to a drought in Louisiana last year and the freezing temperatures in January, crawfish are not expected to reach harvest size until March. That is causing many boil shops to delay their opening for at least two months as many were set to open in January.



Sen. Nichols

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Almost 3.5 million Texans use ACA Marketplace for 2024

Elena Rivera NPR News

More than 21 million people across the country, including close to 3.5 million Texans, signed up for health care plans through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace for 2024.

Charles Miller, a senior policy advisor with Texas 2036, said it's a record high for Texas.

"It's been some explosive growth," he said.

About 2.4 million Texans signed up for a plan through the Marketplace during open enrollment in 2023, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and a little over 1.8 million in 2022. According to health policy organization KFF, Texas, Florida and Georgia "account for half of the national growth in Marketplace enrollment this year."

Miller said changes that made Marketplace plans more streamlined and affordable are part of the reason for the growth. The Inflation Reduction Act and the American Rescue Plan improved subsidies and lowered costs, and are in place through the end of 2025.

The federal government also gave out about \$100 million to expand insurance Marketplace navigators in community organizations. Navigators help people apply for health insurance on Healthcare.gov and answer questions about the process.

Miller said it's too soon to tell how this increase in coverage will impact the state's uninsured rate – the

highest in the country. According to the latest census data, 16.6% of Texans are uninsured, more than double the national rate.

Health insurance, Miller said, gives people options to deal with medical issues before they become chronic or life-threatening.

"If you have health insurance, you are going to have some financial peace of mind and financial stability," he said. "You are going to be able to make those decisions to seek care with finances being a little bit less of an issue."

Senior policy analyst Karla Martinez with Every Texan said while the growth is a good sign, there are still people who can't afford a Marketplace plan and don't qualify for other kinds of insurance, like Medicaid.


"Texas only has so many doors open for people," Martinez said. "A lot of people don't have a door at all for health insurance."

She said the Medicaid unwinding process – during which the state is determining people's eligibility after pandemic-era protections ensuring coverage ended – has left 1.8 million Texans without health insurance. According to KFF, more than 60% of people who lost coverage were kids.

"It's really hard to grasp both of those concepts, right," said Martinez. "Healthcare.gov is working really well, and at the same time a lot of people are losing their Medicaid."

One way the state could improve health care access for low-income families, Martinez said, is by expanding Medicaid. Texas is


one of only 10 states in the country that has yet to do so. But in the meantime, she encourages people who might have lost Medicaid coverage to check their eligibility for an ACA Marketplace plan.



TAX SERVICES

John Dubose

Certified Public Accountant



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Pope targeted for not preaching fire and brimstone

CINDY WOODEN
Catholic News Service

An emphasis on God’s mercy has so dominated Pope Francis’ pontificate that it should surprise no one that he said he hopes hell is empty.

Yet, a firestorm erupted on social media after Francis was asked in an Italian television interview how he imagines hell given his belief that God forgives everyone who asks.

“It’s difficult to imagine it,” the pope responded. “What I would say is not a dogma of faith, but my personal thought: I like to think hell is empty; I hope it is.”

“What about Hitler?” hundreds of people posted in reply on X, often adding other notoriously evil figures from history, their least favorite politicians or annoying neighbors.

“What about justice?” others asked. “What about the Bible?”

Dozens accused the pope of “universalism,” a belief, condemned by the church, that all souls go to heaven whether or not they repented of their sins.

Others, like @Knyexor, tweeted: “The number of people angry about the pope just saying what amounts to ‘hell is terrifying, I wouldn’t wish it on anyone’ is astonishing.”

Yet for days following the pope’s remarks, X also



Pope Francis cries as he prays for Ukraine in front of a Marian statue at the Spanish Steps in Rome Dec. 8, 2022, the feast of the Immaculate Conception. Marking the 10th anniversary of his election March 13, 2023, he told Vatican News he dreams of a world where people recognize they are brothers and sisters and where they are not afraid to weep and to smile.
(CNS photo/Vatican Media)

was filled with people quoting what is often referred to as the Fatima Prayer: “O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell; lead all souls to heaven especially those who are in most need of your mercy.”

Doesn’t that prayer match the pope’s hope, they asked.

The papal remark also was the occasion for dueling Scripture quotations.

Matthew 25:31-46, the “Judgment of the Nations,”

which Francis often quotes to insist people will be judged by whether they fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited prisoners and welcomed strangers, says those banished from the Lord’s sight will end up in “the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Then, someone wrote, how do you explain Luke 3:6 where St. John the Baptist preaches about the coming of the Lord when “all flesh shall see the sal-

vation of God.”

Or Jesus himself saying in John 12:47: “I did not come to condemn the world but to save the world.”

In more than 10 years as pope -- and more than 40 years of ministry before that -- Francis has made clear that he believes evil, the devil and hell exist; in fact, his frequent references to “the evil one” or to Satan were one of the first things people commented on when comparing his

homilies and audience talks to those of St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI.

At his meeting with cardinals two days after his election, the pope spoke about how the Holy Spirit unifies and harmonizes the church. “Let us never yield to pessimism, to that bitterness that the devil offers us every day,” the pope said. Rather, be certain that the Spirit gives the church “the courage to persevere.”

Just over a week later, in his homily for his first Palm Sunday as pope, he said that “a Christian can never be sad. Never give way to discouragement.” Christian joy comes from knowing Jesus is near, even in times of trial when problems seem insurmountable. “In this moment, the enemy -- the devil -- comes, often disguised as an angel and slyly speaks his word to us.”

At one of his first general audiences, he told visitors that Jesus is always near, ready to defend and forgive. “He defends us from the insidiousness of the devil, he defends us from ourselves, from our sins,” the pope said. “He always forgives us; he is our advocate. ... We must never forget this.”

Long before he announced 2015-2016 would be an extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy, Francis dedicated his first Angelus

address to the theme.

“God’s face is the face of a merciful father who is always patient,” he said. “Have you thought about God’s patience, the patience he has with each one of us? That is his mercy. He always has patience, patience with us, he un-derstands us, he waits for us, he does not tire of for-giving us if we are able to return to him with a con-tribute heart.”

The hope that hell will be empty is a hope that God’s mercy will prevail -- including by reaching all people through the wit-ness and ministry of other Christians.


In one of his morning Mass homilies in Decem-ber 2017, Francis said some people have a hard time experiencing the consolation and joy that the good news of God’s mercy brings.

As an example, he re-called a priest he knew who was a very good man but was “pessimism incar-nate.”


The priest, he said, would always “find the fly in the milk,” that is, some-thing wrong or out of place.

His brother priests, the pope said, would joke that when he died, he would ask St. Peter to show him hell and then, when he did, would complain about the lack of condemned souls there.

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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

“In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.”

John 16:33

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Pastor Dr. Hershell Garner
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Starlight Church of God in Christ
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Wed. Bible Study - 6 p.m. Worship 7:30 p.m. VIM Youth 6 p.m.
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Orange First Church of the Nazarene
3810 MLK Drive, Orange
Lead Pastor Shane Weaver
Sunday School: 9:45 a.m. Worship Service 10:45 a.m.
Wednesday Service 6:30 p.m.
www.ofcn.church



First Baptist Church
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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.,
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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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Wednesday:
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