

# Lindale News & Times

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50¢



## Break time is fun time

Local youngsters enjoyed their Spring Break from school this week at Darden Harvest Park's playground. The weather was mild enough for the kids to get in some serious play time. Photo by Terry Cannon

## Smith County, DPS shut down illegal gambling

Investigators with the Smith County Sheriff's Office and the Texas Department of Public Safety seized gambling paraphernalia, money, financial ledgers and other documents associated with illegal gambling from the Top Shelf Poker Room in Flint late Wednesday night (March 10), said sheriff's office spokesman Larry Christian.

State District Judge Austin Jackson issued the search warrant on March 9.

The investigation was launched in mid to late 2021 after several complaints were lodged citing an illegal gambling operation in the 17000 block of FM 2493, also known as Old Jacksonville Highway.

Christian said during the past several months investigators, some operating in an undercover capacity, developed probable cause there was illegal gambling taking place at the Top Shelf Poker Room.

The owners and operators of the establishment were determined to be in violation of Texas Penal Code Chapter 47 relating to gambling as well as the promotion of gambling, a Class A misdemeanor, punishable by a sentence of up to 1 year in the county jail and/or a fine of up to \$4,000, or up to two years community supervision (probation) or three years with an extension.

In this investigation, probable cause has been determined to support prosecution of Engaging in Organized Criminal Activity, a state jail felony, punishable by imprisonment from 180 days to two years in a Texas State Jail Facility and a fine up to \$10,000, Christian said.

On its website, Top Shelf has an online petition claiming the business



was illegally raided and closed by the county, adding that during the six years its been open the business has raised "more than \$10,000" for nonprofit organizations in the county.

Smith County Sheriff Larry Smith issued a statement regarding the investigation and arrests.

"As long as gambling of this nature is deemed illegal by the Texas Penal Code, these activities will not take root and grow in Smith County, period," he said. "Simply providing donations to a charitable organization does not make otherwise illegal gambling legal."

This investigation is ongoing and further developments in the near future are expected, Christian said.

## Lindale man guilty, gets life in prison for killing trooper

Dabrett Black of Lindale was found guilty of capital murder and sentenced to life in prison without parole this past week by a jury in Brazos County for killing Texas Department of Public Safety trooper Damon Allen on Thanksgiving Day, 2017.

Black, 37, has 30 days to appeal the decision. The trial was moved

from Freestone County to Brazos County on a change of venue in March, 2019. Allen stopped

Black for speeding on Interstate 45 in Freestone County on Thanksgiving Day in 2017. As the trooper approached the vehicle, Black shot and killed him with a rifle.

Black then fled the scene but was apprehended hours later hiding in a hay field in Waller County.

He attended Lindale schools and was a 2003 graduate of Lindale High School.

Four months prior to killing the state trooper, Black had been released on a \$15,000 bond for leading Smith County deputies on a 100-mile per hour chase during which he rammed a deputy's vehicle.

After being freed from the wreckage, the deputy was taken to a hospital for treatment.

Black was charged with evading arrest and assault of a public servant and reckless driving.

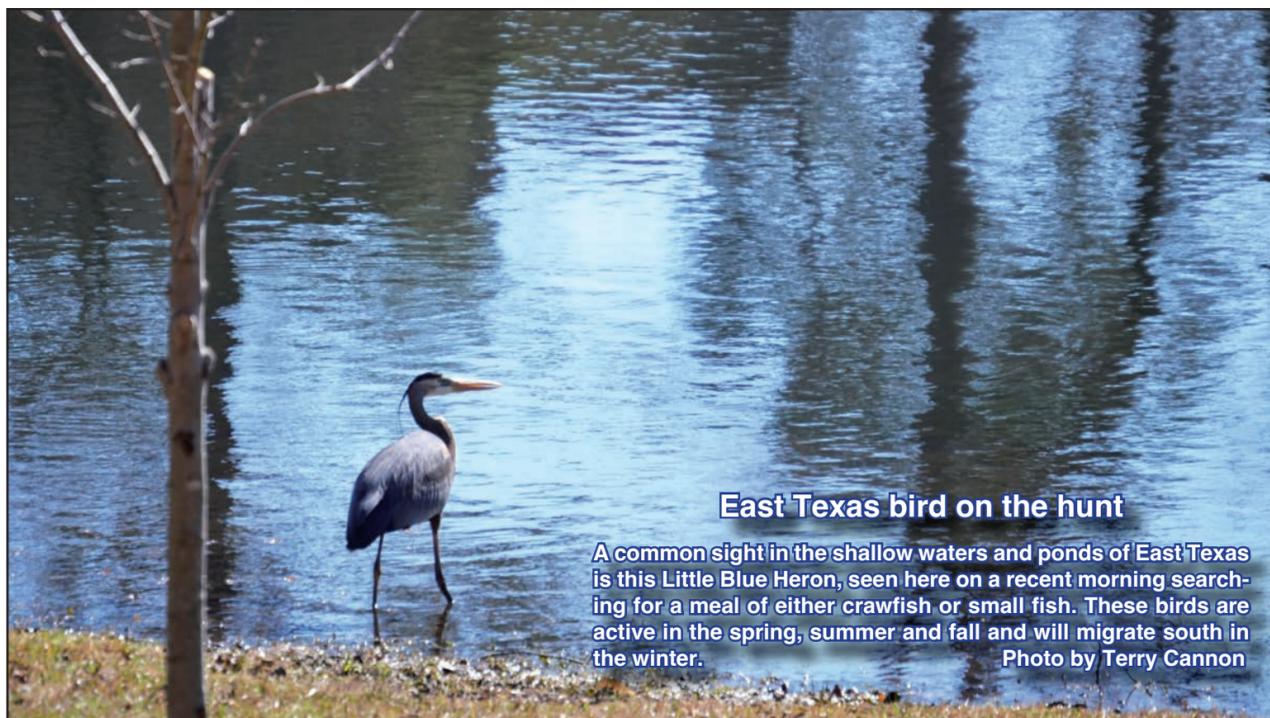
In another violent incident involving Smith County authorities, Black was arrested in March, 2015, after a sheriff's deputy was attack while trying to restrain him after responding to an assault call.

The deputy suffered a broken nose and two black eyes as a result of the assault. Black was named in two felony complaints for the violent action, but under terms of a plea agreement reached a year later, an assistant prosecutor recommended a one-year jail sentence in exchange for a guilty plea to misdemeanor assault in lieu of the two felonies. The deal reached by the assistant prosecutor was without Smith County District Attorney's approval, a violation of office policy.

Both the Freestone County District Attorney Brian Evans and defense attorney Suzanne Anderson presented their closing statements to the jury prior to the reading of the verdict, with Evans reminding jurors of the testimonies of DPS trooper Matthew Poole as well as Texas Ranger Jason Bobo.

Poole testified he found Allen in a pool of blood and saw Black's name on Allen's patrol car computer. Bobo discussed the evidence of the case, including the fatal shot that came through Allen's driver's side window.

Also testifying for the prosecution was city of Magnolia Police Sgt. Stephen Tucker, who stopped Black in Waller County.



## East Texas bird on the hunt

A common sight in the shallow waters and ponds of East Texas is this Little Blue Heron, seen here on a recent morning searching for a meal of either crawfish or small fish. These birds are active in the spring, summer and fall and will migrate south in the winter. Photo by Terry Cannon

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# OPINION/COMMENTARY

**PUBLISHER'S NOTE:** Suzanne's weekly columns meant a lot to many people over the years and I have received many requests to rerun her columns. I miss them too. So here is the "Best of Suzanne Bardwell." I hope you enjoy them.

## Sunshine, sousaphones & spring break memories...

The sun is shining on Main Street. Smiles are in abundance and friendly drivers are honking as they pass two young men playing their sousaphones (a kind of marching tuba) while walking down Main Street. If you have never heard a sousaphone duet, trust me, you are missing out.

Monday at the Mirror is deadline day. Usually our heads are down and our fingers are flying over our computer keyboards. Often we are behind schedule, just a hair tense and occasionally grumpy. Suddenly we heard music, very unusual music, which was floating down the street. Naturally I ran outside to accost the musicians with my camera.

Gladewater sophomores Kade Johnston and Jacob Robertson then serenaded me with their "Earthquake" duet. It was so good I had them play it again to post on our Gladewater Mirror Facebook so all our dear readers can see and hear two teenage boys who are not glued to a screen playing video games on their spring break...and who are darned good musicians.

I am still smiling from their impromptu mobile concert.

I have always had a soft spot for the 'tuba' players. First those kids get one heck of a work out carrying their instruments. Also, you don't realize how much depth those musicians add to the band until you hear a piece without their power playing. Second, I have yet to meet a sousaphone/tuba player that didn't have a great sense of humor. This was true of Kade and Jacob for sure.

Kudos boys on a great spring break memory. It reminded me of one of my favorite memories from my now, far distant past. I can remember walking on shiny spring and summer days, with my two best friends, the length of the very small town where we went to school. I can remember that warm sunshine, the silly giggles and harmless pranks of that long ago (now) golden youth.

## The Best of Suzanne Bardwell



I was reminded of those fun times walking Dawson's Main Street after meeting Kade and Jacob.

My friends and our spring break prank was a little, okay, a lot, more ridiculous than strolling 'tuba' duets.

At 15 we piled into Joyce's car, after liberating a stuffed antlered deer mount from her Dad's man cave den. We put 'John Deer' behind the wheel of the car. One of us was on the floorboard working the gas and brake and one of us was eye level with the dash driving. And, one of us was in the backseat... probably praying for our safety while all of us laughed hysterically.

We slapped some of those giant sun glasses from our FHA trip to the State Fair on John Deer creating quite the dashing driver cruising Main Street Dawson. After surviving that stunt we took John Deer to Navarro Mills Lake where we all sun bathed. Of course we had brought our Deer John his own beach towel. So there we were side by side...Joyce, John Deer, Sara and Suzie.

We thought we were hilarious.

I still do! My musicians today reminded me of how much fun can be had on a sunny day with friends with a little imagination making memories that can last a lifetime.

Carpe Diem boys!

You made the day a little sunnier and life lighter, and for that I thank you.

Never forget your day in the sun. It will bring laughter and joy to you long years from now.

Although friendships of our youth may grow distant with the miles they never have to become distant in our hearts or our memories.

Cherish those times and those friends. Memories really do last a lifetime. And boy, can those memories come in handy on a nose to the grindstone Monday when an infusion of joy can turn a gray day into a sunny one.

**THE FIRST AMENDMENT:** Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of all the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

## Gary Borders Capital Highlights



### Nine accused of sex trafficking at center

Nine employees at a Bastrop County facility that cares for young victims of sex trafficking have been accused of trafficking those same girls, according to the Austin American-Statesman.

One employee of the state-contracted Refuge Ranch has been arrested on an undisclosed charge and more arrests are anticipated, according to Tara Olah, a director with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

The facility employed more than three dozen employees to provide 24-7 care for the girls. According to Olah, DFPS received multiple phone calls in January to the statewide intake hotline that "alleged sexual and physical abuse, sexual exploitation, neglectful supervision and medical neglect" at Refuge Ranch, according to the Statesman.

"This is appalling and is a disregard of these children," U.S. District Judge Janis Jack, who presided at a hearing Thursday evening, told state staff, including Family and Protective Services Commissioner Jaime Masters and contract monitors. "And we had to wait for eight calls to come in before we took already trafficked children out of this situation. This is a system that remains broken."

Jack pointed out it took almost six weeks and several phone calls before the girls were removed from the facility. The Texas Rangers have been called in to investigate.

Refuge Ranch opened in 2018 on 50 acres in Bastrop County and is designed to house girls ages 11 to 19. The state ordered the shelter to close on Friday.

### Task force to address teacher shortages

At the behest of Gov. Greg Abbott, a task force has been created by the Texas Education Agency to address staffing shortages facing the state's public schools.

"Teachers play a critical role in the development and long-term success of our students," Abbott said. "This task force should work diligently to ensure that best practices and resources for recruitment and retention are provided to districts to ensure the learning environment of Texas students is not interrupted by the absence of a qualified teacher."

The Teacher Vacancy Task Force is intended to ensure Texas schools are equipped to deal with these challenges, relying heavily on the input of current and former teachers. More than two dozen superintendents, administrators and teachers have been appointed to the task force.

The state has long endured a shortage of certified teachers that has been exacerbated by the pandemic. A survey of more than 900 teachers last year by the Charles Butt Foundation revealed 68% of those surveyed were seriously considering leaving the profession.

### Drought conditions stable in February

Precipitation in February was close to normal, but Andrew Weinberg with the Texas Water Development Board predicts the entire state will be in drought conditions by the end of spring.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, only a few counties in Texas, mainly in far south Texas and along the Gulf Coast, are not considered to be in drought conditions.

The most severe drought is occurring in the Texas Panhandle, through the Great Plains and into the Big Bend area.

### Panel reviews Rolling Pines wildfire

An independent panel reviewing a prescribed fire that got out of control at Bastrop State Park recommends requiring more personnel present and smaller burns at the park.

The Rolling Pines wildfire in January involved nearly 800 acres and forced about 150 households to temporarily evacuate. No private property damage was reported. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department two days later formed the panel to investigate why the fire got out of control.

The panel also recommended that bulldozers be required to be on site during prescribed burns, which are intended to lessen the risk of large-scale fires such as the Bastrop County Complex Fire in 2011, which destroyed nearly 1,700 homes and scorched almost 35,000 acres.

### Kaufman woman arrested for timber theft

A Kaufman woman has been arrested for timber theft in Hopkins County, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service.

Frances Charline Cole, 51, was charged with hiring a logging company to harvest timber on 42 acres on which she had entered into a real estate agreement but never actually bought.

A timber deed filed with the county clerk indicates she was paid \$8,000 for the timber. However, the logger returned to cut the tract and discovered she had backed out of buying the land.

## Guest Column

### At the root of democracy: Free flow of information

By Kelley Shannon  
Executive Director

Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas

As Ukrainians fight and die for democracy, Russia is arresting its own citizens who are protesting the war and threatening prison for journalists who report the truth.

The attempt to crush a democratic government and stop the flow of information comes as American news organizations and transparency advocates observe Sunshine Week from March 13-19, a time for highlighting government openness and a free press.

Certainly, let's commemorate the freedom of information we enjoy – and constantly strive to improve – in the United States. But it's imperative to contrast it with what's happening around the world and understand how devastating it is when a government allows only its own tightly controlled version of events to trickle out.

Earlier this month, Vladimir Putin's government changed its domestic media laws to make it a crime to distribute what it deemed to be "false news" about the war. Doing so could mean up to 15 years behind bars. Many news organizations pulled journalists out of the country or shut their operations; the government also cut off access to major social media sites, the Neiman Journalism Lab reported in its thorough rundown on the severe restrictions.

The censorship amounts to an "information dark age," according to the Committee to Protect Journalists, which called on journalists everywhere to stand in opposition.

Thwarting free speech isn't only happening in Russia. We simply need to think back to the Olympics a few weeks ago to remember the spotlight on China's crackdowns on dissent and free expression and its control of internet content. And, of course, there are other examples.

It's astounding – and a lesson for us all.

Blocking information is a favorite weapon of authoritarian regimes. Information is essential for democracy to

flourish. The ability to examine public records and tune in to independent news sources enables us to speak out and hold our leaders accountable.

In our state, we are fortunate that the Texas Public Information Act, originally known as the Open Records Act, was established in the early 1970s to ensure citizens have the right to watch over government. It gives us the ability to obtain public documents and largely forces state and local officials who want to withhold information to argue to the attorney general's office – an umpire, of sorts – as to why information should be kept secret. The law presumes all records are open unless a specific exemption in law states otherwise.

In short, the Texas law is intended to give an advantage to the individual information requestor, not the government, unlike some states' information laws.

Public officials are only the custodians of our public records. They do not get to tell us what information we have a right to view. Texans want to see basic police reports, documents relating to a local school district's property purchase and a state university's athletics consulting contract. That's just a small sampling of how our state's Public Information Act is used.

The law is not perfect. There has been incremental weakening of it over the years, but open government supporters work every legislative session with lawmakers of both political parties to strengthen the act. We should fight with all our might to protect it.

In the end, in a democracy, the people get to judge their leaders and decide whether they will remain in office or get voted out. The free flow of information is the people's path to questioning authority. That, ultimately, is real power.

**Kelley Shannon is executive director of the nonprofit, non-partisan Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas, based in Austin. For more information go to [www.foift.org](http://www.foift.org).**



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# Baseball has returned and for now all is well

Could that ray of sunshine peeking over the horizon be the dawn of the new day for another baseball season? After nearly 100 days of unnecessary bickering between billionaires and millionaires?

Apparently so.

Last Thursday, running out of room as they approached the edge of the cliff, Major League Baseball's owners and players came to an agreement to begin a new season on April 7.

For seam heads such as yours truly, this new Collective Bargaining Agreement was a welcome development. The new CBA will last until 2026 and if history is any indication, the two sides will do the same frustrating dance all over again in four years.

The new CBA contains some interesting tweaks which are designed to make the game relevant again and to hopefully grow a shrinking fan base.

To wit:

-- A universal designated hitter, which means we have seen the last of pitchers flailing away in the batter's box. In the baseball universe, only the National League continued to have their pitchers pick up a bat. Naturally, the player's union was in favor of the universal DH because it means players such as Nelson Cruz, still a devastating hitter but not a good fielder, can add 15 more teams to his list of potential employers.

-- Increasing the minimum salary for players from \$570,500 to \$700,000, rising by \$20,000 per year in each successive year of the deal. Yep, half a million bucks is a lot of money to play a game, but a lot of the players earning the minimum won't have a long enough career to cash in like the superstars.

-- Adding another playoff team in each league for a total of six for both leagues.

-- A draft lottery which will feature six teams culled from the 18 non-playoff teams, which is an attempt to keep clubs from



tanking just to get a better draft position year after year. Which is pretty much how the cheatin' Astros bobbed to the surface after spending many seasons on the bottom of the ocean.

-- Increasing the competitive balance tax -- basically a soft salary cap -- from \$210 million to \$230 million for this season, rising to \$244 million by the end of the four-year deal. This was a sticking point with the players because owners would use the tax as an excuse for not signing good players in free agency.

Other changes, such as eliminating shifts and instituting a pitch clock, will take effect in 2023.

It's a fine thing, for sure, that my favorite game will return in a few weeks but the wasting of nearly three months -- which included cancelling Opening Day -- was totally unnecessary.

And in my view, the majority of the blame goes to the owners. This time around, owners unilaterally shut down the game in December without trying to start negotiations until spring training camps opened. As it turned out, that was a ham-handed effort at best.

For sure, it's hard to work up a lot of sympathy for players who are making so much money, but for the past 100-plus years, the owners have lorded over their fiefdom like stingy autocrats.

Down through the years owners haven't been what you

might call "magnanimous." From the parsimony of Charles Comiskey, the "Old Roman," in the early 20th century to later skinflints such as Charles Finley, Marge Schott, the Texas Rangers own Eddie Chiles and Wayne Huizenga, owners kept their payrolls in a death grip and in some cases (i.e. Huizenga) sold off the majority of a World Series winning team the following year.

Until the mid-1970s, players labored under the "reserve clause,"

Until the mid-1970s, players labored under the "reserve clause," which effectively bound each player to one team for life. At the end of the contract players weren't free to sign another deal with anyone else. After signing, the player -- at the club's discretion -- could be traded, released, sold or re-signed.

Year after year, decade after decade, salaries were kept artificially low because of the reserve clause, even for the best players.

Year after year, decade after decade, salaries were kept artificially low because of the reserve clause, even for the best players.

But it hasn't been just about money.

Owners were so consistent in their racist beliefs -- encouraged by the first commissioner Kennesaw Mountain Landis -- that a huge pool of talent went untapped simply because of the players' skin color.

Only when forward thinker Branch Rickey put Jackie Robinson in a Brooklyn Dodger uniform in 1947 did the owners grudgingly accept Black players in their sport.

But now, thankfully, spring training camps are open and baseball has returned. How the next four years will play out is anyone's guess, but using history as a guide, things could turn ugly again in four years.

## Bird in the hand just not worth the trouble

You know, sometimes I just can't win for losin'.

A while back Janet and I were scheduled for a flight out of Tyler Pounds Field at 6 in the morning. We were headed to Chicago. I was goin' there to work a trade show, and I was draggin' Janet along to show her the sights after I got through workin'.

Anywho, we had to get up at 4 a.m., so Janet could get ready.

"I don't know why you can't get ready any faster," I said. It don't take me no time, myself."

Janet looked at me.

"Did you know," she asked, "that your grammar gets worse as you get older?"

"Did you know," I answered, "that if you didn't waste all your time correctin' me, we'd get places faster?"

"If I hadn't wasted my time marrying you, I wouldn't have to keep coloring my gray hair, either."

"Just hurry up," I whined. "I'm gonna go wait in the truck."

"OK," Janet said, "but if you honk that horn at me, I'll come out there and make you eat it."

"Yeah, yeah," I said as I grabbed my bag. I loaded it into the truck and started back into the house to get Janet's 14-some-odd bags.

What is it with women

anyway? I mean, I can pack a whole week's worth of clothes in one little ol' bag, and it takes two bags just to pack Janet's shoes. Anywho, like I said, I started back into the house, when I noticed a little bitty bird inside our garage.

I started chasin' it around tryin' to get it to fly out. You know, birds are stupid. I mean, there's a openin' big enough to drive two cars through, and the ignorant thing wouldn't fly out. About then, Janet opened the door that leads into the garage. The bird dive-bombed Janet and dashed into the house.

"What was that?" Janet said.

"Bird!" I yelled, as I flew past her in hot pursuit.

"A bird? What are you doing chasing a bird?"

"Never mind," I said. "We're gonna be late. I'll take care of it."

"How?" asked Janet.

"When it lands, I'll shoot it," I said.

"You will not!"

"Why not?"

"Because, you can't kill that little bird."

"Well, Miss Greenpeace, you got a better idea?"

"We'll catch it," she said.

"Ha!" I haaed. "Miss City Girl is gonna catch a bird, huh? What'cha gonna do? Put salt on its tail?"

"Look," said Janet. "It



flew into our bedroom."

"Quick!" I said, as I ran after it. "Close the door!"

Janet ran in after me and closed the door. "Hmmm," I thought. "I know! Give me some panty hose!"

"What for?"

"I'm gonna use 'em like a butterfly net."

"That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard," she said.

"Just get me some," I said.

Janet dug a pair of panty-hose out of a drawer. "I hate to ruin a good pair of hose," she said, as she handed them to me.

"I could still shoot it," I said.

"Just take the hose."

I grabbed the hose, while keepin' an eye on the bird, as it circled the ceiling fan.

"Oh no," said Janet. "What if it flies into the fan?"

"It'll save me a lot of trouble," I said.

"You're cruel," Janet informed me.

I tried to stretch the openin' in the panty hose.

"Wow!" I exclaimed. "How do you get these things over your..."

"Watch it buster!" she warned.

"Feet," I said. "I was gonna say feet."

"Right," said Janet.

"I stretched the openin' as far as I could, then held the hose over my head and started chasin' the bird. I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror. There I was runnin' in circles with the two legs of the panty hose streamin' out behind.

Man, what a sight.

The bird flew into the bathroom with me hot on its heels. I slammed the door.

"I've got you now, Tweety," I sneered. It lit on the top of the shower door. I lunged for it, but it was quicker than me I was. I turned to swat the hose at it when my shin came in contact with the commode.

"YEEEEEOOOOOWW!" I hollered. Janet jerked open the door.

"Are you alright?" she asked.

I was rubbin' my shin, as the bird flew out and back into the bedroom."

"Stupid commode," I said.

"I thought it might have pecked your eye out," said Janet.

"Go get my gun," I said.

"NO!" said Janet. "Look! There it is on the bed!"

Slowly, I crept up to the bed. I had the panty hose poised over my head. I jumped. The next thing I knew my hands were goin' in circles. It seemed that the panty hose had gotten caught in the ceiling fan, and my hands were caught in the panty hose.

"Help!" I yelled as the fan wound the hose, and me, closer and closer. Janet turned off the fan, just as the blades started bouncin' off my head.

"Oooo," said Janet. "I bet that hurt."

"You think," I said sarcastically, as I tried to free my hands.

"Oh well," she said. "There's no blood."

"That's reassurin'," I said as I rubbed the rapidly growin' goose egg on my

forehead. I looked at my watch. "Man," we've got to git. They won't hold that plane for us, you know."

"Rusty, we can't leave that bird in this house for five days."

"What else can we do?" I asked.

"I don't know," she said, and she opened the bedroom door. That stupid bird flew right out of our bedroom and right out the door into the garage, then right out into the yard."

"Well," said Janet. "That was easy."

I just looked at her.

"Well," she said. "Let's go. We're going to be late."

I stumbled out of the house and pulled myself into the truck. I looked in the mirror at my forehead. I was beginnin' to look like a cross between a unicorn and a rhinoceros.

Janet was all giddy. "I just love going on trips, don't you?"

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## Times of Lindale



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This column comes from the archives of the Lindale News and Times, which is available online for \$2.99 per month. Call 903-882-8880 to set up your online subscription.

### ONE YEAR AGO, March 18, 2021

Country music superstar and Lindale native Miranda Lambert won her third Grammy Award for her album "Wildcard" during the 63rd annual awards show from Los Angeles.

Previous Grammy wins for Lambert include the 2014 album "Platinum" and in 2010, she won for best female country vocal performance for "The House That Built Me."

"Wildcard" is Lambert's seventh studio album. During the broadcast, she performed the single "Bluebird" from that album.

Trevor Noah hosted the event, which due to the pandemic, didn't allow for a live audience. There was a limited number of performers and nominees, and in addition to Lambert included Bad Bunny, Taylor Swift, Dua Lipa, Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion.

Beyoncé led the field with nine nominations and, after picking up the 28th Grammy win of her career, she broke the record for the most Grammy wins ever by a female artist and most Grammy wins ever by a singer.

Dua Lipa, Roddy Ricch and Swift each scored six nominations themselves, and Swift took home her third Album of the Year award.

Lambert lost out to Vince Gill in the solo performance category and lost in the country song award.

### FIVE YEARS AGO, March 16, 2017

Lindale merchants enjoyed another healthy month in sales tax receipts for the most recent reporting period, a 9.65 percent increase over this time compared to a year ago according to figures released by Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar's office.

For Smith County entities, the story was an up and down one as Bullard registered a 37.42 percent increase and Arp fell by a 19.39 percent. Winona had the second highest increase with a 19.32 hike.

Statewide, Hegar said that state

sales tax revenue totaled \$2.4 billion in February, 4.4 percent more than in February 2016.

"Growth in sales tax revenue was due to increased collections from most sectors of the economy," Hegar said. "While tax collections from oil- and gas-mining remain subdued, receipts from telecommunications, construction, services and retail and wholesale trade increased significantly."

### 10 YEARS AGO, March 15, 2012

Lindale High School senior Jordan Van De Kop was named the Most Valuable Player for District 14-3A as the league's coaches selected their all-district squad for the 2011-12 season.

Also, Lindale's Josiah Johnson was tabbed the league's defensive MVP. LHS sophomore Mason Terry was selected to the second team and Johnny Pittman, Steven Young and Nick Butcher were chosen for the Honorable Mention team.

Coach Scott Albritton's Eagles were 27-9 on the year and earned a berth in the state regionals.



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## Tips on improving motivation to achieve goals

By Claudann Jones

### Smith County Extension Agent Family and Community Health

All of us know that motivation is a key ingredient to accomplishing goals in our personal and professional lives. But if you wait for motivation to strike like a sudden lightning storm, you're a lot less likely to take a single step toward any goal.

Even if you have a much-desired goal in mind, it's all too easy to deplete motivation through feeling overwhelmed, procrastination, or impatience.

The strategies below can help you increase your motivation to accomplish the goals that matter to you:

-- Before setting a goal, it is critical to clearly identify meaning — why is successfully reaching this goal important to you? What will this achievement mean to you?

-- If you set a goal and find yourself procrastinating or not achieving it, revisit the meaning of the goal you have set. Is this a goal that continues to matter to you? If so, consider the meaning behind the procrastination or the difficulties that you are experiencing.

-- Be Specific (What exactly do you want to accomplish?)

-- Measurable (How will you know when you have succeeded?)

-- Achievable (Is the goal you have set possible?)

-- Realistic (Does setting this goal make sense for you right now?)

-- Time-bound (What is the specific time frame to accomplish this goal?)

-- Set up a to-do list — and tick it off. If necessary, break down tasks into manageable mini-tasks and write each one down. If you are having difficulty breaking down your goal into smaller tasks, just begin working toward it.

-- Surround yourself by other people who are actively working on their own goals. Their efforts may inspire you, too.

-- Create an image of yourself achieving this goal. Imagine what achieving this goal will mean for you. These positive emotions as you are completing the tasks on your to-do list will help to fuel motivation.

-- Try to choose a space that is organized, free of clutter, and with minimal distractions. Focus on one task at a time, not multitasking.

-- Decide how often you'll track progress toward your overall goal through your to-do list and identify stumbling blocks as you progress.

-- Think creatively about how to expand available time to work on your goal. Can you make certain tasks more routine in your life?

Remember to be kind to yourself when tracking progress toward achieving your goal and build small rewards into the process.

For more information about Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Family and Community Health programs, contact the Smith County Extension Agent for Family and Community Health at 903-590-2980 or email at cmjones@ag.tamu.edu. Like our Facebook page: Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Smith County.

Stay well and stay safe.

## Tips for growing the “Lucky” Shamrock

By Jim Powell

### Smith County Master Gardener

Today, March 17 is Saint Patrick's Day. We Americans traditionally celebrate with two symbols of this special day with the wearing of the color green and enjoying the beauty of the “lucky clover” Shamrock or Oxalis plant. “Shamrock” is the common name for three different kinds of three-leaf clovers native to Ireland.

The Shamrock was chosen Ireland's favorite emblem because of a popular legend that St. Patrick had used it to illustrate the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

The common name for Shamrock plants is Oxalis or woods sorrel.

The plants should begin appearing in nurseries around St. Patrick's Day. They have soft, thin, triangular leaves that are divided into three leaflets forming the clover.

Two versions of oxalis are popular in our area. Oxalis Crassipes, the green leafed version has small delicate white flowers, and Oxalis Triangularis, or False Shamrock, has dark purple leaves with pinkish lavender flowers.

Shamrocks can be grown both as houseplants and outside in the flower garden.

Here are some suggestions for growing Shamrocks outside if you are lucky enough to receive a plant as a gift for St. Patty's Day

or purchase one for yourself:

-- As an outdoor plant, Oxalis Crassipes makes handsome mounds of light green foliage. It often begins blooming in late winter but flowers more heavily in the spring. Though oxalis tends to invade the lawn, it can be used quite effectively to edge a sidewalk or flower border. It can also be grown in containers or in a rock garden.

-- The Oxalis foliage dies back in the summer's heat. Cut the leaves back severely when this occurs. The plant will reward you in late summer by sprouting, adding new foliage and blooming again. Propagation is obtained by dividing rhizomes, tubers, corms or bulbs (including offsets) at the end of a dormant cycle. Take the bulbs and replant just under the soil's surface, or in a mix of potting soil and sand. Most oxalis plants foldup their leaves at night, hugging them tight to the stems until daylight.

Plan to enjoy St. Patrick's Day festivities this year while wearing some green. If not, you may get pinched!

While you are at it, look for a four-leaf clover for good luck!

The Smith County Master Gardener program is a volunteer organization in connection with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.



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### Church of Christ – Swan County

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903-882-8009

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903-882-8949

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20465 US Highway 69 North  
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2401 S Main St  
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20428 CR 482  
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17117 FM 1253  
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14623 CR 463  
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Pastor John Offutt

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## Friday, March 4, 2021

Officer Philpot responded to a suspicious person at 13900 block CR 463, settled at scene. Sgt Dworaczyk and Officer Philpot responded to an accident at 3500 block S Main St, report taken. Sgt Dworaczyk responded to a public service at 800 block E Hubbard St, settled at scene. Sgt Dworaczyk and Officer Philpot responded to a disturbance at 556 E I-20, settled at scene. Officer Philpot responded to an assist smith county at 200 block E Hubbard St, settled at scene. Officer Philpot responded to a criminal mischief at 400 block W Hubbard St, settled at scene. Officer Capps responded to a public service at 700 block Abbey Rd, settled at scene. Sgt Dworaczyk and Officer Philpot responded to an assist smith county at 200 block N College St, settled at scene. Sgt Dworaczyk and Officer Philpot responded to a civil matter at 3500 block S Main St, settled at scene. Officer Philpot responded to a stolen property at 300 block Molly Ln, report taken. Officer Capps responded to an accident at 300 block S Main St, settled at scene. Officer Leevey responded to a public service at 200 block W Valley St, settled at scene. Officer Capps responded to a suspicious vehicle at 900 block Mt Sylvan St, unfounded. Officer Leevey and Officers Gillham and Capps responded to a warrant service at 13400 block I -20, arrest made. Officer Gillham and Officer Capps responded to a verbal disturbance at 300 block S Main St, unfounded. Officer Gillham and Officer Capps responded to loud noise complaint at 300 block Braziel St, unfounded. Officer Leevey and Officer Capps responded to a suspicious circumstance at 13300 block CR 472, settled at scene. Officer Gillham and Officer Capps responded to a business alarm at 2600 block S Main St, false alarm.

## Saturday, March 5, 2022

Officer Trombley and Sgt Houghton responded to an assist other agency at 300 block S Main St, settled at scene. Officer Trombley responded to a city ordinance violation at 3200 block S Main St, settled at scene. Officer Trombley and Sgt Houghton responded to a disturbance at 3500 block S Main St, settled at scene. Sgt Houghton responded to a flag down at 200 block N College St, settled at scene. Officer Trombley responded to an assist smith county at 554 W I-20, settled at scene. Officer Shurley and Officer Wells responded to a civil matter at 13400 block I-20, settled at scene. Officer



Shurley and Officers Allen and Wells responded to a loud noise complaint at 300 block Braziel St, settled at scene. Officer Shurley and Officers Allen and Wells responded to a loud noise complain at 300 block Braziel St, settled at scene. Officer Allen responded to a suspicious vehicle at 2200 block S Main St, settled at scene. Officer Allen responded to a welfare concern at 555 W I-20, settled at scene. Officer Trombley and Officer Jackquet responded to a suspicious person at 17000 block I-20, settled at scene.

## Sunday, March 6, 2022

Officer Trombley responded to a suspicious person at 3200 block S Main St, settled at scene. Officer Allen and Officers Shurley and Wells responded to a suspicious vehicle at 100 block E Van St, settled at scene. Chief Somes, Cpt Chambers and Officers Allen and Jackquet responded to an accident at 3500 block S Main St, report taken.

## Monday March 07, 2022

Officer Jackquet responded to a criminal mischief at 200 block Cannery Row, report taken. Officer Jackquet responded to an accident at 3500 block S Main St, report taken. Officer Shurley and Officers Allen and Wells responded to a suspicious person at 100 block E South St, warning issued. Officer Shurley and Officer Wells responded to a city ordinance violation at 13300 block W I-20, settled at scene. Officer Shurley and Officers Allen and Wells responded to a disturbance at 552 E I-20, settled at scene. Officer Allen responded to a city ordinance violation at city ordinance violation at 3500 block S Main St, settled at scene. Officer Allen responded to an assist other agency at 13400 block CR 472, settled at scene.

## Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Chief Somes and Officers Jackquet and Trombley responded to an accident at 3200 block S Main St, report taken. Officer Trombley and Officer Jackquet responded to a residential alarm at 15800 block CR 4191, false alarm. Officer Jackquet responded to a verbal disturbance at 400 block W Hubbard St, settled at scene. Sgt Houghton and Officers Trombley and Jackquet responded to a disturbance at 15300 block FM 16 W, report taken. Sgt Houghton and Officer Jackquet responded to an accident at 1100 block S Main St, report taken. Sgt Houghton and Officer Jackquet responded to a business alarm at 13800 block Hwy 69 N, false alarm. Officer Jackquet responded to a business alarm at 2500 block S Main St, false alarm. Sgt Houghton and Officer Jackquet responded to a burglary at 200 block W Valley St, settled at scene. Sgt Houghton and Officers Shurley and Wells responded to a peace officer warrant at 15300 block FM 16 W, report taken. Officer Shurley and Officer Wells responded to a lost property at 3500 block S Main St, unfounded. Officer Allen responded to an assist other agency at 13400 block CR 472, settled at scene. Officer Shurley and Officers Allen and Wells responded to a welfare concern at 2200 block S Main St, settled at scene. Officer Allen responded to a city ordinance violation at 13300 block CR 472, unfounded.

## Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Chief Somes and Officers Ramsey and Philpot responded to an assist other agency at 300 block Baker St, settled at scene. Officer Philpot responded to an accident at 500 block S Main St, settled at scene. Officer Leevey responded to a suspicious vehicle at 13400 block I-20, settled at scene. Sgt Dworaczyk and Officer Capps responded to a disturbance at 300 block S Main St, settled at scene. Officer Leevey and Officer Capps responded to a suspicious person at 13400 block I-20, settled at scene.

## Thursday, March 10, 2022

Sgt Dworaczyk responded to a burglary of motor vehicle at 100 block Ballard Dr, report taken. Cpt Chambers, Sgt Dworaczyk and Officer Philpot responded to a peace officer warrant at 1500 block Pearl St, settled at scene. Officer Leevey and Officer Capps responded to a stolen vehicle at 3200 block S Main St, arrest made. Officer Leevey and Officer Capps responded to a business alarm at 3200 block S Main St, false alarm.

# East Texas man pleads guilty to federal drug, firearm charges

A Leesburg man has pleaded guilty to federal drug trafficking and firearms violations in the Eastern District of Texas, said Davilyn Walston, publicity spokesperson for U.S. Attorney Brit Featherston.

Nathan Paul Hart, 34, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute a controlled substance and possession of a firearm during a drug trafficking crime today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Caroline Craven.

According to information presented in court, Hart conspired with others to distribute methamphetamine, marijuana, and other drugs in east Texas. On Nov. 30, 2020, Hart was stopped by a Texas State Trooper in east Texas with almost two kilograms of methamphetamine, which had been imported from Mexico.

He was also in possession of a pistol. In May 2021, while in jail, Hart directed a shipment of \$22,680.00 to another person as payment for drugs from California. Hart was an organizer and leader in the drug trafficking operation, which included five or more participants and was otherwise extensive.

Hart was indicted by a federal grand jury on Aug. 28, 2021. He faces up to life in federal prison. The maximum statutory sentence

prescribed by Congress is provided here for information purposes, as the sentencing will be determined by the court based on the advisory sentencing guidelines and other statutory factors.

A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the U.S. Probation Office.

This case was prosecuted as part of the joint federal, state, and local Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Program, the centerpiece of the Department of Justice's violent crime reduction efforts. As part of this strategy, PSN focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and partners with locally based prevention and reentry programs for lasting reductions in crime.

This case is being investigated by the Mount Pleasant office of the Texas Department of Public Safety, Criminal Investigation Division with assistance from the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jonathan R. Hornok.

### Pair indicted in crypto laundering scheme

A 75-year-old woman and a 33-year-old man have been in-

dicted for their roles in a cryptocurrency money laundering scheme in the Eastern District of Texas, said Walston.

Lois Boyd, of Amelia Court House, Va., and Manik Mehtani, of McLean, Va., were named in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury, charging them with a violation of the Travel Act, money laundering, and money laundering conspiracy.

According to the indictment, Boyd and Mehtani are alleged to have conspired with others to receive victim money derived from a variety of fraud schemes and launder the proceeds through cryptocurrency. The defendants are alleged to have routinely structured deposits in order to avoid transaction reporting requirements and to conceal the nature and source of the criminal proceeds. The defendants allegedly exchanged the criminal proceeds for cryptocurrency and directed the cryptocurrency to wallets under the control of their foreign co-conspirators. In August 2020, the defendants traveled to Longview, Texas, where they attempted to exchange more than \$450,000 for Bitcoin. They were temporarily detained and the money was seized. In the course

of their operation, Boyd, Mehtani, and their co-conspirators allegedly laundered more than \$750,000.00.

If convicted, Boyd and Mehtani face up to 20 years in federal prison. A grand jury indictment is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

### North Texas man sentenced for child porn

A Lewisville man has been sentenced to federal prison for child pornography violations in the Eastern District of Texas, Walston said.

Aliyah George Simpson, 26, pleaded guilty on June 2, 2021, to five counts of production of child pornography and one count of transportation of child pornography and was sentenced to 540 months in federal prison by U.S. District Judge Sean D. Jordan.

According to information presented in court, in the fall of 2020, members of HSI and the Flower Mound Police Department were investigating an individual using an online cloud storage service to transport files of child pornography. As part of that investigation, investigators served a search warrant at Simpson's residence,

during which they seized several items of digital equipment. Through a forensic investigation, agents located a number of images and videos of a child identified as Victim 1, a minor who had not attained the age of 10-years old. Agents also located messages with other minors in a social media application, in which Simpson induced the teens to engage in sexually explicit conduct, film that conduct, and then send the recordings to him.

As part of his plea agreement, Simpson admitted to abusing Victim 1 on multiple occasions. Specifically, while Victim 1 was sleeping or unconscious, Simpson sexually abused the child and recorded the abuse on cellular telephones that he owned. Simpson has also admitted to persuading, inducing, and enticing two other minors, known as Victim 2 and Victim 3, to film themselves engaged in sexually explicit conduct and to send him the recordings. Simpson was indicted by a federal grand jury on October 15, 2020.

This case was investigated by Homeland Security Investigations and the Flower Mound Police Department and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Marisa Miller.

## Parsley a welcome, health addition to your garden

By Greg Grant

### Smith County horticulturist

Although most often associated as an herb or as a garnish, you'll want to eat as much parsley you can, as it's extremely nutritious. I used to frequent a restaurant in San Antonio that served it fried to a crisp and it was wonderful. Parsley can be frilly and curled or flat-leafed, and it is easy to grow, if you start with a nursery-grown transplant. It must be grown when the temperatures are cool.

My Cajun bride can't cook a thing without green onions and parsley.

Parsley is a cool-weather plant that bolts or goes to seed and dies when the weather is hot. Its flavor gets stronger with heat as well. For parsley to be vigorous and tender, the weather must be cool.

Parsley can tolerate frosts but not hard freezes, so it should be planted in late winter or early spring for an initial crop. A fall crop can be planted around September or October in East Texas.

It is planted from transplants, which are often available from garden centers and feed stores. They should be placed 12 inches apart.

This tasty plant requires at least eight hours of direct sun each day but can tolerate a bit of filtered light, or as



Parsley is easy to grow in early spring gardens. (Courtesy photo)

little as five to six hours of direct sun. It should be planted in a rich, well-drained soil, either in the ground or in containers at least 12 inches in diameter or preferably larger.

Small containers dry out quickly in the frequent warm temperatures of Texas, leading to plant death or stress. Ideally, till several inches of organic matter into the soil and incorporate 2 pounds of a complete lawn fertilizer (15-5-10, 18-6-12, etc.) per 100 square feet of bed or every 35 feet of row.

In small plots use 2 teaspoons per square foot or foot of row. The ideal pH for growing parsley is 6.0 to 7.0.

Parsley can be grown either in the ground or containers. I prefer the ground, so the plants don't dry out as much. Transplants should be planted in well-cultivated soil. Dig holes that

are the same size as the existing pot the parsley is growing in. Gently firm the soil around the transplant, being careful not to plant it any deeper than it was growing in the pot. Water thoroughly with a water-soluble plant food such as Miracle-Gro at half the labeled recommendation.

It is relatively easy to grow. To promote new shoots and foliage, pick leaves and remove flowers regularly, and apply several teaspoons of a complete lawn fertilizer (15-5-10, 18-6-12, etc.) every two to three weeks or a water-soluble fertilizer every one to two weeks. The main pest to look out for is the larva (caterpillar) of the beautiful eastern black swallowtail butterfly. Many gardeners leave them alone and plant extra parsley for the butterflies.

The fully expanded but still tender lower leaves of parsley can be harvested at any time within weeks of transplanting. Pull pest-free leaves from the base of the plant (or trim the top), and wash, use, or refrigerate immediately. Parsley leaves can also be dried and stored for later use.

Recommended varieties for Texas include 'Moss Curled', 'Petra', 'Triple Curled', and 'Italian Flat-Leaf' (preferred by most cooks). Parsley is native to the Mediterranean.

## Former county elections chief pleads guilty to 2 counts of assault

Former Smith County elections administrator Denise Hernandez pleaded guilty and received probation this past week for giving her employees colon cleanser they believed was an energy drink last year, officials said.

Hernandez, 54, of Athens, entered a guilty plea to two counts of assault causing bodily injury in the Smith County Court-at-Law No. 2 Wednesday (March 9) to receive 18 months of deferred adjudication.

Deferred adjudication is similar to probation, but it allows the person enters a guilty plea to keep the conviction off their criminal record.

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# Junior high school girls dominate meet

The Lindale Junior High School girls' track teams dominated the standings during their track meet held this past week.

The 7th grade girls finished first with 273 points while the 8th graders claimed second place with 166.6 points.

For the 7th grade, leading scorers were Ella Hutchens with 32 points, Kyndal Thurmon, 28 points; Tori Cooper, 26 points; Addyson Daughtry, 24 points and Brooke Lewis, 18 points.

Leading scorers for the 8th grade were Macy Luster, 37 points; Sadie Clay, 21 points and Alyssa Potts, 19 points.

## 7th GRADE RESULTS

Triple Jump – Tori Cooper – 1st Place (29'5); Ahlyvia Luwizhi – 3rd Place (28'7); Ma'Kaylin Smith – 4th Place (27'8 1/4)

Long Jump – Ella Hutchens – 2nd Place (13'3 1/2); Brooke Lewis – 3rd Place (12'3); Jordyn

Weesner – 4th Place (12'3)

High Jump – Ma'Kaylin Smith – 1st Place (4'6); Addyson Daughtry – 4th Place (4'0); Lilly Johnson – 5th Place (4'0)

Pole Vault – Sadie Melton – 1st Place (7'0); Ava Grogan – 3rd Place (5'6); Kyndal Thurmon – 4th Place (5'6)

Discus – Ella Hutchens – 1st Place (70'5); Tessa Dennis – 2nd Place (67'4); Emma Watkins – 3rd Place (64'6 1/2)

Shot Put – Lexi Pinson – 2nd Place (28'2 1/4); Ella Hutchens – 3rd Place (26'10 1/2); Tessa Dennis – 4th Place (26'8 3/4)

2400 Run – Madison Devisscher – 2nd Place (10:05.61); Bella Van Dyke – 4th Place (10:36.90)

400 Relay – Tori Cooper, Ma'Kaylin Smith, Brooke Gissell, Kaidance Smith – 3rd Place (56.13)

800 Run – Brooke Lewis – 2nd Place (2:52.07); Ava Grogan – 6th

Place (2:58.68)

100 Hurdles – Kyndal Thurmon – 1st Place (17.66); Lilly Johnson – 2nd Place (18.67); Addyson Daughtry – 3rd Place (18.85)

100 Dash – Addyson Daughtry – 3rd Place (14.42)

800 Relay – Tori Cooper, Ma'Kaylin Smith, Brooke Gissell, Kaidance Smith – 1st Place (2:00.11)

400 Run – Ella Hutchens – 2nd Place (1:13.45); Ahlyvia Luwizhi – 5th Place (1:14.96); Jaelynn Colocolan – 6th Place (1:14.97)

300 Hurdles – Kyndal Thurmon – 1st Place (55.27); Addyson Daughtry – 2nd Place (57.71); Lilly Johnson – 3rd Place (58.18)

200 Dash – Tori Cooper – 2nd Place (29.92); Kaidance Smith – 3rd Place (30.49)

1600 Run – Madison Devisscher – 2nd Place (6:44.92); Bella Van Dyke – 6th Place (7:03.46)

1600 Relay – Brooke Gissell, Kyndal Thurmon, Brooke Lewis,

Ma'Kaylin Smith – 2nd Place (4:56.61)

## 8TH GRADE RESULTS

Triple Jump – Macy Luster – 1st Place (30'5 1/2); Carly Schultz – 6th Place (27'6)

Long Jump – Macy Luster – 1st Place (14'9 3/4); Sadie Clay – 2nd Place (14'8 3/4); Alyssa Potts – 6th Place (13'1 3/4)

High Jump – Abigail Kelley – 6th Place (4'2)

Pole Vault – Alyssa Potts – 3rd Place (6'6); Macy Hodde – 4th Place Tie (6'0); Ava Burns – 4th Place Tie (6'0)

Discus – Haylee Crawford – 1st Place – (71'8); Sadie Arriola – 3rd Place – (70'4); Kirby Kleam – 4th Place – (69'0)

Shot Put – Kaniya Pierce – 1st Place (33'0 1/2); Sadie Arriola – 2nd Place (32'6 1/2); Kirby Kleam – 5th Place (28'3 3/4)

2400 Run – Abigail Hanley – 2nd Place (10:31.50)

400 Relay – Abigail Lee, Alyssa Potts, Sadie Clay, Macy Luster – 1st Place – (56.11)

800 Run – Ava Burns – 6th Place (2:55.16)

100 Hurdles – Abigail Kelley – 3rd Place (18.87); Jolene McKinney – 5th Place (19.27)

100 Dash – Baleigh Yarbrough – 5th Place (14.68)

800 Relay – Lauren Stanton, Alyssa Potts, Sadie Clay, Macy Luster – 2nd Place (2:03.56)

400 Run – Samantha McConathy – 6th Place – (1:15.20)

300 Hurdles – Jolene McKinney – 5th Place (58.56); Abigail Lee – 6th Place (59.94)

200 Dash – Macy Luster – 2nd Place (30.31); Sadie Clay – 4th Place – (31.50)

1600 Run – Abigail Hanley – 5th Place – (6:43.08)

1600 Relay – Alyssa Potts, Alea Garza, Lauren Stanton, Jolene McKinney – 3rd Place (4:57.18)

## Dry conditions still plague areas of state

By Adam Russell

### Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

Soil moisture levels continue to decline in most areas of the state after a months-long dry spell as warm-season crop plantings and preparations increase, according to reports from county extension agents.

Critically dry conditions have been reported in many parts of the state over the last several weeks.

The U.S. Drought Monitor shows more than 93 percent of the state is in abnormally dry to extreme drought and nearly 81 percent of the state dealing with moderate-to-extreme drought.

Plantings and fieldwork that require rainfall are being delayed in the hopes that moisture will arrive sooner than later. Cool-season forage and grain crops were failing in some parts of the state, or in poor condition and progressing slowly due to lack of moisture.

The lack of forage and dependence on heavy supplemental feed rations was driving deeper and deeper herd culls for cattle producers in some areas.

"It is very, very dry," said Jourdan Bell, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension agronomist, Amarillo. "There is no surface moisture and very few fields have subsoil moisture. We have had negligible moisture this winter."

Most of the Panhandle is experiencing extreme drought, according to the drought monitor.

### Historic winter dry spell

John Nielsen-Gammon, Ph.D., state climatologist in the College of Geosciences Department of Atmospheric Sciences at Texas A&M University, said much of the state has been very dry since fall and the rain outlook does not look promising.

Over the past 120 days, Nielsen-Gammon said much of the state had only received 25% of its average rainfall for that period. Several cities also reported some of the driest periods between November and March on record.

Amarillo reported 0.5 inches of rainfall during that time, which represents the fourth-driest winter over the past 131 years. There was a drier stretch during the same time in 2017-2018.

Midland experienced the fifth-driest period on record with 0.3 of an inch and Waco was the third driest in 121-years with 2.94 inches of rainfall.

Cities like Houston and Beaumont received much more rain, but it was still the driest spell between November and March on record for Beaumont with 5.81 inches.

"Dry is relative in Texas," he said. "A few swaths of the state have done OK, but most of the state has been dry since the widespread spring and summer rains ended last August."

Despite showers earlier this week, the East Texas area remained in desperate need of rainfall. Subsoil and topsoil conditions ranged from short to adequate. High winds dried out any recent moisture received. Houston County reported extremely high fire danger. Ponds and creeks remained low. Cool-season forages continued to be far below normal production due to dry conditions. Pasture and rangeland conditions varied from very poor to good in some areas. The cattle market remained steady to slightly better. Livestock were doing fair to good with supplemental feeding. Producers were concerned about high fertilizer costs and its effect on hay production. Wild pig activity increased with damages to pastures and cropland.



### County clerk's office honored

Smith County Clerk Karen Phillips recognized her Vital Statistics Department Tuesday (March 8) for the 5-Star Exemplary Award that it received at a recent conference the weekly meeting of the Smith County Commissioners. The Vital Statistics employees help citizens obtain marriage certificates, birth and death certificates, and other public records. Phillips said the department has received awards from the Texas Department of State Health Services since 2011, at the annual Vital Statistics Conferences. She said there are many criteria the department has to qualify for in order to receive the award. (Courtesy photo)

## Helping hints for new homeowners

The COVID-19 pandemic had huge impact on the housing industry, and although there are a few signs that it is slowing, potential buyers are still trying to capitalize on low interest rates.

Home sales in 2021 resulted in record-breaking home sales in the U.S. and Canada, and 2022 may be even busier. BBB reminds consumers who have purchased or are in the market for a new home to plan for upkeep and maintenance.

"Regardless of the age of your home, it will require regular maintenance to keep it running like a well-oiled machine," Mechele Agbayani Mills, President and CEO of BBB serving Central East Texas said, "It's important to do your homework and to choose vendors wisely, as you'll want to develop long term relationships with the companies you choose."

BBB recommends the following tips to help you care for your new home:

Perform home maintenance regularly. The Department for Housing and Urban Development reminds homeowners that regular home maintenance reduces allergens, prevents illness, and reduces injury from accidents. In addition, it can help you identify needed repairs before they become too serious, saving you time and money in the long run. Many homeowners use seasonal checklists to help them stay on top of home maintenance all year long. Another aspect of home maintenance is cleaning your home. Consider hiring a cleaning service if you need help.

Keep your lawn tidy. Not only will a well-kept lawn improve your home's curb appeal, but it will also make for an enjoyable place to spend time outside with your family. Lawn care also keeps harmful pests, such as snakes and mice, from making their home too close to yours. Lawn care generally falls into three main categories: landscaping, lawn maintenance, and sprinkler systems/irrigation. If you need help in one or more of these categories, consider hiring a lawn care professional.

Inspect your roof. A leaky roof can cause a plethora of problems, so it's wise to inspect your roof a few times each year, and especially after severe weather. Make sure there are no missing shingles, leaks, or other kinds of damage. You can prevent damage by clearing dead or low hanging branches away from your roof and removing debris. If at any point you find that repairs are necessary, roofing contractors can assist with repairing or replacing your roof.

Keep your air ducts clean. As a general rule, plan on having your home's air ducts

cleaned every three to five years. However, if you notice mold, vermin, or large amounts of dust clogging the air vents, you should get your air ducts cleaned by a trained HVAC technician as soon as possible. Clean air ducts will improve the efficiency of your heating and air conditioning system and extend its life. It may even reduce the cost of your energy bill!

Watch out for plumbing problems. Take a peek at your plumbing and fixtures as you perform regular home maintenance to make sure there are no leaks. Ask friends and neighbors to recommend a reputable plumber in the area and keep their number on hand, in case an emergency arises.

Consider installing an alarm system. An alarm system can make you feel more secure and protect your valuables when you are away. Choose a home security system from a credible, licensed company in your area and compare pricing before you sign up.

Add a fresh coat of paint. Quality exterior paint helps protect your home from insects and weather damage. Quality interior paint can protect your home from moisture and increase its value too. Both are important parts of regular home maintenance that should be evaluated every few years. If painting isn't your strong suit, consider hiring a professional painter who is equipped with the necessary tools, skills and safety equipment to get the job done efficiently.

Get professional help with remodeling. Unless you have a background in construction, it's best to leave large remodeling projects to professionals. Plan your project and budget ahead of time. Then look for a construction or remodeling contractor who specializes in the kind of remodeling you need.

Hire reliable contractors. No matter what kind of outside help you need, hiring a reputable contractor is key. Follow BBB's tips on hiring a contractor to make sure your project is in good hands.

Beware of home improvement scams. Home improvement scams abound, so watch out for red flags, such as high-pressure sales tactics, cash-only deals, and contractors who don't sign contracts. Always check references and ask for recommendations before you agree to hire a contractor. To avoid getting scammed, the Federal Trade Commission recommends getting multiple estimates, asking questions, and getting a written contract before you hire.

Search BBB.org to reputable roofers, painters, plumbers, lawn maintenance specialists, and security system companies in your area.

### PUBLIC NOTICE

#### Brief Explanatory Statements of Proposed Constitutional Amendments Special Election, May 7, 2022

##### Proposition Number 1 (SJR 2)

**SJR 2** proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for the reduction of the amount of a limitation on the total amount of property taxes that may be imposed for general elementary and secondary public school purposes on the residence homestead of a person who is elderly or disabled in order to reflect any statutory reduction in the maximum compressed rate of the maintenance and operations taxes imposed for those purposes on the person's homestead from the preceding tax year.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **"The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for the reduction of the amount of a limitation on the total amount of ad valorem taxes that may be imposed for general elementary and secondary public school purposes on the residence homestead of a person who is elderly or disabled to reflect any statutory reduction from the preceding tax year in the maximum compressed rate of the maintenance and operations taxes imposed for those purposes on the homestead."**

##### Proposition Number 2 (SJR 2)

**SJR 2** proposes a constitutional amendment increasing the amount of the residence homestead exemption from property taxes for public school purposes from \$25,000 to \$40,000.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **"The constitutional amendment increasing the amount of the residence homestead exemption from ad valorem taxation for public school purposes from \$25,000 to \$40,000."**



903-882-8880 classifieds@lindalenews-times.com

**LEGAL NOTICES**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of MARY CAROL DAWSON, Deceased, were issued on March 9, 2022, in Docket No. 46100P, pending in the County Court of Smith County, Texas, to Matthew Scott Dawson. Claims may be presented to the following address:  
 Matthew Scott Dawson  
 Independent Executor of the Estate of  
 Mary Carol Dawson  
 973 Evergreen Avenue  
 Hollister, Missouri 65672  
 All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Robert Ebertt Martin, Jr., Deceased, were issued on March 9, 2022, in Cause No. 46,120P, pending in the County Court of Smith County, Texas, to:  
 TOM C. BREWSTER.  
 All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to Kyle G. Waggoner, Attorney at Law, at PO Box 1152, Mineola, Texas, 75773.

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Notice is hereby given that Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Eugenia Ann Stroud Hibbs, Deceased, were issued to Billy Earl Hibbs, Jr. as Independent Executor on March 9, 2022, in Cause No. 46,152P, County Court of Smith County, Texas. All persons having claims against this Estate should present them to the Independent Executor, c/o John G. Payne, Attorney, 3650 Old Bullard Road, Suite 100, Tyler, Texas 75701, within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

**Notice to Creditors**

Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Shirley Cauley, Deceased, were issued on 4-10-18, in Cause No. 42883P, by the County Court of Smith County, Texas, to Levester Cauley. All persons having claims against this Estate currently being administered are required to present them to Levester Cauley, c/o Richard Patteson, Attorney at Law, 218 N. Broadway, Ste.304, Tyler, Texas 75702 within the time and manner prescribed by law.

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Carole A. Wilson, Deceased, were issued on March 9, 2022, in Docket No. 46232P, pending in the County Court of Smith County, Texas, to: DAVID G. WILSON.

The address of the Independent Executor is:  
 c/o Adams & Coker, P.C.  
 4540 Kinsey Dr.  
 Tyler, Texas 75703

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.  
 Date: March 11, 2022.

ADAMS & COKER, P.C.  
 Attorneys for the Estate

Advertise in the *Lindale News & Times*  
**Call Today at 903-882-8880**

**HOUSE FOR RENT**

3 BEDROOM 1 BATH in LISD school district, Central Air & Heat, fenced front and back yard, outdoor pets considered plus pet deposit.  
 \$1350.00 per month and 1st rent deposit  
 903-574-2492

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**Certified Medication Aide 2p-10p**  
**- Dietary Positions -**  
 Contact Candy Janes, HR • Linda Mayhugh, Administrator  
**903-962-7595**  
 1638 VZCR 1803 • Grand Saline, TX 75140  
EEOC/M/F/D/V

**NOW HIRING**

Lindale Rural Water is hiring a Field Tech  
 8-5  
 M-F  
 Starting pay \$18.00/hr after completing a 90 day probation You will receive a pay increase to \$19.00/hr and benefits including Medical, dental, and vision insurance and retirement.

Apply in person @15394 CR 431  
 Lindale, Texas 75771

**Divide & Conquer Estate Sale for Paul Bauereis**

(Note the time changes!!!)  
**Thurs., Mar. 17 ~ (NOT 7 AM) - 8:00 5:00 (NOT 5:30)**  
**Fri., Mar. 18 ~ 8:00 - 5:00 (NOT 5:30)**  
**Sat., Mar. 19 ~ 8:00 - 2:00**  
 2210 Kennebunk LN, Tyler, TX 75703  
 Outside SSW Loop 323 and off Jacksonville Hwy, turn into the Ashmore gated community across from Juicy's and Chicken Express (north of FRESH and south of Grande). The gates will be opened.  
 This great Ashmore gated community 2720 sq. ft. garden home, offered by Diane Hodge with Cornerstone, has a option pending; contents must go: dini. table & chairs; set of sterling silv. Grande Baroque dinnerware; Lenox china; crystal; assorted stemware; Bel-leck; clocks; leather sofa; 2 other sofas; lovely curved front TV cabinet; 2 lg. coffee tables; rugs; king bed, dresser, chest, & nightstand; queen bed; full bed; parson chairs; matching arm chairs; display cabinet; end tables; floor & table lamps; mirrors; home décor; lg. storage ottoman; bookshelves; vintage violin, wooden bow, & case; canvas wall hanging; wall décor; sofa tables; bar stools; consigned wedding dress, eve. wear, clothes; cost. jewelry; stainless flatware; pots/ pans; sm. appliances; tablecloths; linens; holiday items; office desk; office supplies; extra nice office chair; fold. chairs; stack tables; CD's; movies; cookbooks; artif. plants; very nice patio table/ chairs; yd. art; BBQ grill; hand tools; sm. safe; military insignias, buttons, medals; pipes; new Heddon giant fishing lure in orig. box; cowboy boots; Craftsman tool chest; firepit; battery powered CE52 lawn mower; TORO blower/vac; electronics; sooooo much more!!!  
 Pictures: DivideAndConquerOfEastTexas.com

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 community  
 events!

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**NEED CASH FAST?**

Sell your unwanted items in the Classifieds. Call us at 903-882-8880

**NOTICE OF COMPLIANCE TARIFF FILING**

Southwestern Electric Power Company (SWEPCO) filed with the Public Utility Commission of Texas (Commission) on March 14, 2022 its Petition requesting approval of its proposed Military Base Surcharge Tariff.

Section 36.354(a) of the Public Utility Regulatory Act (PURA), at Texas Utilities Code § 36.354, provides that each electric utility in an area where implementation of full customer choice has been delayed by the Commission in accordance with PURA Section 39.103 shall discount charges for electric service provided to a military base. Section 36.354(b) of PURA establishes the discount to be provided to military installations as a 20 percent reduction of the base commercial rate that the electric utility would otherwise charge the installation.

Section 36.354(c) of PURA provides that the electric utility may assess a surcharge to all its Texas retail customers to recover the difference in revenue between the revenues from the discounted rate for military bases and the base commercial rate. SWEPCO's Tariff Sheet No. IV-16 provides the Military Base Adjustment Factor per billing kWh as reflected below:

**MONTHLY FACTOR**

| Major Rate Classes                    | \$/kWh      |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|
| Residential                           | \$0.0000747 |
| Commercial & Small Industrial         | \$0.0000556 |
| Industrial / Large Lighting and Power | \$0.0000251 |
| Municipal                             | \$0.0000524 |
| Outdoor Lighting                      | \$0.0000909 |

SWEPCO has requested that the tariff become effective with the first billing cycle of June 2022. The Petition has been assigned Tariff Control No. 53351. Persons who wish to intervene in or comment upon this proceeding must notify the Commission within 21 days of SWEPCO's filing of the Petition. A request to intervene or for further information should be mailed to the Public Utility Commission of Texas, P.O. Box 13326, Austin, Texas 78711-3326. Further information may also be obtained by calling the Commission at (512) 936-7120 or (888) 782-8477. Hearing and speech-impaired individuals with text telephones (TTY) may contact the Commission at (800) 735-2988. The Company can be contacted at 428 Travis Street, Shreveport, LA 71101, or by calling (888) 216-3523 during normal business hours.

**TEXAS STATEWIDE CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING NETWORK**



TexSCAN Week of  
 March 13-19, 2022

**EVENT**

South Texas Home and Garden Show, Saturday, March 19, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. 15th annual. Free Admission - Plants - Concessions - Kids Activities. Floresville Event Center, 600 Hwy 97 W, Floresville.

**ACREAGE**

Hunting/investment/recreational property. Starting at \$650/acre. Trans Pecos region. Also the Hill Country (Edwards, Menard, Coke, Val Verde Counties - free ranging exotics), South Texas (Duval County - whitetail, hogs). Large or small acreage. 30-year fixed rate owner financing, only 5% down. Call toll-free or email for individual prices and terms, www.ranchenterprisesltd.com, 800-876-9720.

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Use Happy Jack® Paracide® shampoo to treat fleas & ticks on dogs & cats. Relieve secondary dermatitis. At Tractor Supply® (www.fleabeacon.com)

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**ARROWHEADS**

Indian Arrowheads Wanted - Point Type: Clovis, Yuma, Firstview & Eden. Must be old, authentic & unbroken. Absolute TOP DOLLAR paid - up to 5 figures for one point. I am a very serious high-end collector. Call 979-218-3351.

**AUCTION**

Karnes City Auction Special Sale - Sat., March 19 @ Noon, Regular Saturday Sale to follow. 200+ head: Hereford, Tiger Stripe, Santa Gertrudis, Brangus, Brahman, Young Bred Cows & Pairs, Heifers & Bulls. Call Josh 830-623-2855, 1918 Hwy 80, Karnes City, TX. Pictures: www.karnescityauction.com/special-sales

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FREON WANTED: We buy old refrigerants: R11, R12, R113 & more! Quick, local pickup & dropoff available. Call 312-625-5322. RefrigerantFinders.com ¡Te pagamos por tu refrigerante!

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Free Admission - Plants - Concessions - Kids Activities  
 15th annual South Texas HOME and GARDEN SHOW SATURDAY, MARCH 19  
 9 AM - 5 PM  
 Floresville Event Center, 600 Hwy 97 W, Floresville  
 65+ VENDORS!

**Public Hearing Notice**  
**Citizen Initiative by Petition on Proposed Ordinance Outlawing Abortion, declaring Lindale a Sanctuary City for the Unborn**

BE IT ORDERED BY THE CITY OF LINDALE, in accordance with Lindale City Charter, Section 11.06. City Council shall hold a public hearing upon the proposed ordinance. The public hearing is open to the public and the public shall be permitted to speak for or against such proposed ordinance.

This shall serve as notice of a Public Hearing Scheduled for:

Hearing Date: Thursday, March 24, 2022  
 Time: 6:00 p.m.  
 Location: Picker's Pavilion  
 205 E. North Street  
 Lindale, Texas 75771

A copy of the proposed Ordinance can be found at the City of Lindale website. www.lindaletx.gov

# Lindale ISD chief takes exception to recent second place ranking

Despite what a recent report stated Lindale ISD Superintendent Stan Surratt is sure the district is second to none among regional high schools.

According to the U.S. News and World Report's Best High School Rankings for the Tyler metro area, Lindale High School was second behind Tyler ISD's Early College High School. Which, Surratt said, isn't accurate.

"There's no way anyone from outside our area could possibly rank schools in our area," Surratt said. "With all the different types of rankings it is extremely difficult to compare one to the other."

U.S. News and World Report ranked 1,524 schools across Texas and 17,857 from the United States, considering charter, magnet, science and technology and engineering and math-centric schools.

"Personally, I don't put much stock in these type of ratings," Surratt said. "We do so much more than testing. We offer interventions, remediations ... all types of

(extracurricular) events."

Long known for academic excellence, the LISD is a renowned district not just in East Texas but across the state, Surratt said.

"We are extremely proud of all our campuses and we don't need an outside report to show that we're doing good," he said. "We know we are doing great and our students, staff and parents know it as well."

According to the report, the Tyler school ranks 82<sup>nd</sup> in Texas and as No. 532 nationally.

In 2015, The Texas Education Agency approved Tyler Early High School as one of 44 such schools across the state.

Public schools that ranked highest are those in which students exceeded expectations in math and reading state assessments, earned qualifying scores on college-level exams and graduated in high proportions, according to U.S. News and World Report.

There are six ranking indicators used to produce an overall score. These include college readiness (30 per-

cent of the ranking), college curriculum breadth (10 percent), math and reading proficiency (20 percent), math and reading performance (20 percent), underserved student performance (10 percent) and graduation rate (10 percent).

Also in the Tyler metro area, Whitehouse High School, Tyler Legacy High School and Troup High School were ranked as well.

The Best High Schools rankings identify the country's top-performing public high schools by compiling data from the U.S. Department of Education and statewide math and reading level assessment tests and high school graduation rates. When applicable, U.S. News and World Report also used data from the College Board for AP exam data and from International Baccalaureate as the source for IB exam data.

To produce the rankings, U.S. News and World Report teamed up with global nonprofit RTI International.

For high schools to be ranked in any metro area,

that metro needed to include three or more ranked high schools, according to the report. The metro rankings use the same methods as the national ones, but schools are grouped and re-ranked within their metropolitan areas when applicable.

All public high schools were eligible to be evaluated

as part of the ranking and nearly all were evaluated in the process of calculating the rankings.

"U.S. News and World Report reviewed nearly 24,000 public high schools in all 50 states and the District of Columbia," U.S. News and World Report states on its website. "That number was

reduced to approximately 17,860 schools that were eligible to be ranked. This is the total number of active public high schools that could be analyzed because they had 12th grade enrollment of 15 or greater during the 2018-2019 school year and had state assessment data available."

## Lindale's Marley Keith named MVP for District 16-4A basketball team

The District 16-4A champion Lindale High School Lady Eagles were well represented on the all-district team for 2021-22 with sophomore Marley Keith being named the league's Most Valuable Player and junior Brooke Everest selected co-Defensive Player of the Year.

The Lady Eagles finished the season with a 20-12 overall record and a district-best 11-1 mark. Lindale lost to Paris in the bi-district round, 55-44.

The team was selected recently by the district's coaches.

Marley Keith, Brooke Everest, Kaylie Vickery, Madison Luster, Makenna Burks, Landri Laing, Maggie Spearman, Allie Davenport, Madison Plunkett, Desirae Pennington, Brenley Philen, Felicity Thiem and Jillian Ortiz were all named to the district's All-Academic team as well.

Lindale placed two on the first team, three on the second team and four on the honorable mention squad.

Bullard's Tre'Anah Coppock was named the Offensive Player of the Year.

Henderson's Taylor Lybrand was named the Sixth Woman of the Year. Henderson junior Jordan Witt was named the Newcomer of the Year, and Henderson head coach Crystal Mills was selected as the Coach of the Year.

### All-District 16-4A Girls Basketball

**Most Valuable Player — Marley Keith, Lindale**  
Offensive Player of the Year — Tre'Anah Coppock,

Bullard

**Defensive Player of the Year — Brooke Everest, Lindale;** Kya Cook, Chapel Hill  
Newcomer of the Year — Jordan Witt, Henderson

Coach of the Year — Crystal Mills, Henderson

### First Team

Chapel Hill — D.J. Kincade, Alexia Rogers  
**Lindale — Brenley Philen, Maggie Spearman**  
Bullard — Carly Tucker, Anna Turgeau  
Henderson — Taylor Helton  
Spring Hill — Zailley McGee  
Kilgore — Ny'Kayla Hooper

### Second Team

Chapel Hill — Shania Miller, Kylei Griffin  
**Lindale — Makenna Burks, Desirae Pennington, Jillian Ortiz**  
BCumberland Academy — Elizabeth Adams  
Henderson — Ty'Esha Mosley  
Spring Hill — Laila Thompson

### Honorable Mention

Chapel Hill — McKenzie Peery, Hillary Crist  
**Lindale — Madison Luster, Kayli Vickery, Allie Davenport, Madison Plunkett**  
Bullard — Brooke Minton  
Cumberland Academy — Katie Branch  
Henderson — Kiera Dunham, Kara Washington,  
Ty'Ra Mosley, Brooklyn Conert  
Spring Hill — Laney Linseisen  
Kilgore — D'Shailynn Lacy, Jada Dennis, Summer Hayden-Epps  
Bullard — Avery Thomas, Kylie Gilbert

## WHAT'S HAPPENING

### Workforce Solutions to host Youth Opportunity Expo

Workforce Solutions East Texas is proud to partner with Region 7 Education Center to host its second Youth Expo, a job fair for teens age 16 and up who are looking for summer jobs, paid internships, or their next career!

This is a great opportunity to interact with employers interested in hiring the next generation of talent. It is also the perfect time for students to navigate the hiring experience and secure a job that will lead to a possible career.

This event will be held in person on April 7th at the Region 7 Education Service Center in Kilgore and virtually on April 8th. These events will be open for job seekers and employers across East Texas.

### Ronald McDonald House Scholarship Program open

Ronald McDonald House Charities of Greater North Texas (RMHCNTX) announced the opening of applications for its Scholarship Program, which grants more than \$60,000 to 30 local high school seniors each year. Funded by North Texas McDonald's owner/operators and donations from the community, the annual scholarships recognize students for their outstanding academic achievements and community involvement.

Applications are open on-

line at [rmhcntx.org/scholarships](http://rmhcntx.org/scholarships) and must be submitted by April 1, 2022. All students can apply. To qualify for an RMHC Scholarship, students must:

- \* be a high school senior
- \* be younger than 21 years old

- \* be eligible to attend a two- or four- year college or university with a full course of study

- \* be a legal U.S. resident
- \* live in the geographic areas of the RMHC of Greater North Texas Chapter

- \* and submit a complete application and all required documentation by the deadline.

"Our hope with this scholarship is to help students focus on their academics and college experience without having to worry about finances," said Cliff Johnson Sr., local McDonald's Owner/Operator and Chairman of the RMHCNTX Board. "As local business owners, we understand the importance of higher education and we are proud to help students achieve their dreams."

Since the Scholarship Program was founded in 1988, more than \$2.5 million has been awarded to over 1,536 North Texas high school seniors. For more information and to apply, visit [rmhcntx.org/scholarships](http://rmhcntx.org/scholarships).

### AEL students win Adult Learner of the Year awards

Kilgore College Adult Education and Literacy (AEL) students received

Adult Learner of the Year Awards for the seventh-straight year.

Three AEL students, representing the East Region of the Texas Association for Literacy and Adult Education (TALAE), received awards in the HSE Learner of the Year and ESL Persistence Adult Learner of the Year categories.

Abigail Gaona of Longview and Justin Carmack of Kilgore were awarded the HSE (GED) Learner of the Year Award, and Martha Castillo of Henderson was awarded the ESL Persistence Adult Learner of the Year Award.

Recipients of the awards were recognized at the TALAE annual awards ceremony streamed live via Zoom on Feb. 11.

Carmack and Gaona received cash awards of \$1,200 and Castillo received \$500.

Cash awards were made possible by sponsorships from GED Testing Service and Burlington English.

"These amazing students demonstrate the ideals stated in the AEL program's philosophy and mission statement. We are so proud of the hard work, leadership and perseverance each student has and continues to exhibit," said Charmyn Tumey, AEL director.

The award finalists were chosen from adult learners and educators nominated by local program instructors and staff for their contributions to the completion of academic goals.



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