



ART,
COMMUNITY,
CONNECTION
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EXPLORE
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LADY TIGERS
KEEP WIN
STREAK ALIVE
PAGE 8

Dripping Springs Century News

34th Year, No. 51 December 18, 2025 drippingspringsnews.com 75 Cents

Community Calendar

Driftwood Lights Holiday Music Series at Vista Brewing
Dec 18-20 • 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Dec 21 • 2 p.m. - 4 p.m.
Celebrate the season with four evenings of family fun and holiday tunes in the Hill Country! Vista Brewing will host a different local songwriter each night, indoors by candlelight. Enjoy dinner, drinks, fire pits and smores. There will be a sprinkling of holiday tunes mixed into the artists' sets, and on Dec. 21, a full Christmas album - "A Savannah Red Family & Friends Christmas!" Free, all ages, dog-friendly, no reservations needed. Vista Brewing • 13551 FM 150 W • Driftwood, TX 78619

Crafting at Laudrey Rose
Dec 19 • 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
Every Friday, bring your craft project, supplies and settle in for a relaxed time of connection and creativity. Whether you're junk journaling, crocheting, mending or any creative project you are working on, there's a seat for you. Swap craft/creative supplies, make a friend (or two!), get help or lend a hand. Enjoy a cozy, come-as-you-are space for all kinds of creatives. Laudrey Rose • 102 S. Bluff St. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Music Bingo at Suds Monkey

SEE **CALENDAR** ON PAGE 7



THANK YOU VETERANS FOR YOUR SERVICE

Inspirational Quote of the Day

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN EASY TO HATE AND DESTROY. TO BUILD AND TO CHERISH IS MUCH MORE DIFFICULT
- QUEEN ELIZABETH II



Vendors sold a variety of holiday themed items during December.
PHOTO BY LAURIE ANDERSON

Farmers Market to return Jan. 3

Laurie Anderson
Editor
The final Farmers Market of 2025 for the City of Dripping Springs was held Wednesday, Dec. 17 at Dripping Springs Ranch Park. The market will return on Jan. 3. This week, visitors had one last chance to grab some fresh produce, baked goods and other treats before the holidays. There were also vendors offering some holiday gift shop-

ping. One of those vendors was Tolly's Turnings, which is run by twin brothers Jimmy and Johnny Tolly. They craft all kinds of items, from platters and bowls to Christmas ornaments, bells, spinning tops and more. Both brothers are Air Force veterans and long-time woodturning enthusiasts. "We both have our own studios. He has his own lathe, and I have my own lathe. We do kind of different things, but we do things together, too," Johnny said. "And because he's had cancer and I just went through a bout with it, we help each other. It's kind of hard for one person to do everything by themselves. Their woodturning hobby actually pre-dates their time in the Air Force. "Back on the farm in Kansas, we had a little bit of lathe," Johnny said. "We put SEE **MARKET** ON PAGE 5



A weaver demonstrates her craft.
PHOTO BY LAURIE ANDERSON

A CHRISTMAS CLASSIC

Guests celebrate the holiday at Pound House Farmstead

Laurie Anderson
Editor
Visitors to Christmas at the Pound House Farmstead & Museum last Saturday got a chance to step back in time with a classic Christmas celebration. Spinners and weavers were doing demonstrations on the front porch, while Santa greeted families in the parlor. In the back yard, there were several food vendors set up, including Turcotte Butcher Shop and Pig Pen BBQ. There were also booths offering hand-crafted items for sale. There were a variety of activities for the kids, including a petting zoo and a hayride. Kelly J. Hammack, great-great grandson of Dr. Pound, came out with his family to celebrate and reminisce about past Christmases at the old homestead. "It was good times," Hammack said. "My grandmother and great grandmother lived here, and we'd come up every time we were out of school. Every Christmas was spent here." He said the place reminds him of the innocence and wonder of childhood. "It was a lot of fun. We'd just go out and run amok out in the



The petting zoo allowed children to get up close with a variety of farm animals.

pastures and stuff," Hammack said. "Whenever dinner was ready, they'd honk the car horn three times, which you could clearly hear, no matter where you were, and you had about 10 minutes to get here or you were in trouble." Hammack said he has a lot of favorite Christmas memories from those times. "Stringing popcorn, stringing cranberries, and actually having candles on the tree," Hammack said. "Eve-



Wimberley Fire and Rescue Chief Chris Robbins behind bars with Hays County Sheriff Anthony Hipolito.
PHOTO COURTESY OF HAYS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff's Office Holiday Lock-Up raises \$24K for families in need

Shannon West
Staff Reporter
Santa was wearing brown this year and locking up local officials and business leaders ... for a good cause. The Holiday Lock-Up Fundraiser was held by the Hays County Sheriff's Office on Dec. 5, where many well-known faces were placed in a temporary jail structure at the Hays County Government Center. Sergeant Jeffrey Jordan is the chairman of the Hays County Brown Santa Program, of which the lockup is just one of its associated events. "This was the 14th year we have conducted the Lock-Up, where we have had public officials and business leaders 'arrested,' and they helped SEE **LOCK-UP** ON PAGE 2

Elmore-Carson sentenced to 40 years for dealing fentanyl

Staff Reports
On Dec. 2, 21-year-old Izaac Elmore-Carson of Austin was sentenced to 40 years in prison for delivery of fentanyl and 20 years in prison for possession with intent to deliver heroin, according to Hays County Criminal District Attorney Kelly Higgins. On Sept. 22 Elmore-Carson pleaded guilty to delivery of fentanyl and possession with intent to deliver heroin with the agreement that District Judge Bruce Boyer of the 22nd Judicial District Court would decide punishment between a range of 10 to 50 years in prison. The sentencing hearing occurred on Dec. 2. The State presented evidence that SEE **CARSON** ON PAGE 8



Izaac Elmore-Carson.
PHOTO BY LAURIE ANDERSON

Elmore-Carson was one of the largest suppliers of fentanyl to drug dealers in Hays County. He was involved in extensive drug dealing within the county, as well as dealing firearms and illegal firearm switches. At the conclusion of the sentencing hearing, Judge Boyer stated that he had a duty to protect the community as he issued his sentence. SEE **CARSON** ON PAGE 8

Capital Highlights

Crockett, Talarico to face off in Democratic primary



Gary Borders
Texas Press Association

U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett, D-Dallas, entered the U.S. Senate race on the final day to file, pitting her against state Rep. James Talarico, D-Round Rock. The Austin American-Statesman reported the difference between the two is more of style than substance, with both raising the issues of income inequality, rising prices, corruption and polarization.

Crockett, in her second House term, has made a name by attacking both President Donald Trump and other GOP opponents, such as U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene. In her announcement on Dec. 8, she warned Trump, “I’m coming for you.”

Talarico has also gained a large social media audience with a message far less confrontational in nature. He is a Presbyterian seminary student whose Christian faith is a running theme.

“I am called to love all of my neighbors like I love myself, because despite our dif-

ferences, we all want the same things: a safe neighborhood, a good job, a quality, well-funded public school, and the ability to see a doctor when you need one,” he said at his announcement.

The Republican primary also promises to be a spirited race, with incumbent U.S. Sen. John Cornyn facing two challengers: Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt, R-Houston.

Tax cuts major part of Abbott’s re-election campaign

Gov. Greg Abbott is seeking an unprecedented fourth term and is making property tax cuts the centerpiece of his campaign. He faces 10 largely unknown candidates in the GOP primary and is widely expected to win the nomination.

Abbott wants to make it harder for Texas cities and counties to raise property taxes and has also called for the elimination of school property taxes for homeowners and a slowdown in the rise of property values, according to The Texas Tribune.

Both cities and counties rely heavily on property taxes to pay for services such as public safety, parks, libraries, and road maintenance. Lawmakers in 2019 passed tighter limits on how

much they can increase property taxes without voter approval.

“Local property taxes are the foundation of essential community services — they keep police and firefighters on duty, streets maintained, and trash collected,” said Monty Wynn, who heads the Texas Municipal League.

In recent years, the Legislature has cut school property taxes by billions of dollars, primarily by raising the homestead exemption. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick has proposed increasing that exemption by another \$40,000 and allowing homeowners at age 55 to take an additional \$60,000 off their home’s taxable value. That benefit is now limited to those 65 and older.

Texas leads nation in 12-month job gains

The state’s job market continues to outpace the rest of the nation, according to labor market data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Texas Workforce Commission. The state now has the largest labor force in its history at 15.879 million, gaining 168,000 jobs from September 2024 to September 2025.

“Texas’ job market and labor force continue to grow because we have a dynamic

workforce system that fosters opportunity for businesses and workers alike,” said TWC Chairman Joe Esparza. “TWC will continue to provide the resources and support needed to keep this momentum and ensure that Texas remains a national leader in economic opportunity.”

The state’s unemployment rate stood at 4.4% in September, nearly identical to the national rate.

State plan to battle screwworms faces pushback

As the New World Screwworm makes its way to the Texas-Mexico border, potentially endangering livestock and wildlife, the Texas Animal Health Commission’s proposed plan to combat it is facing pushback from agriculture groups, The Tribune reported.

A panel of lawmakers heard from state and federal officials as well as industry groups last week.

“The plan needs significant revision,” said Tim Niedecken, executive director of the Livestock Marketing Association of Texas. He said the draft plan would require animals being moved out of an infested zone to have an ear tag, a vet inspection and receive treatment. That does not “meet the realities of this industry today,” he

told lawmakers.

Dr. Lewis “Bud” Dinges, Texas Animal Health Commission’s executive director, said it will likely publish its response plan in about two months. He said the goal is to align with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to ensure their actions do not harm trade.

The USDA is building a sterile fly production facility at Moore Air Base in South Texas and is also assisting with similar efforts in Panama. The screwworm was detected about 70 miles from the Texas border in September. It infests cattle by laying eggs in open wounds and can be fatal if untreated.

November was warmer and drier than normal

A trend that began in August continued through November, with warmer and drier weather throughout much of the state, according to Dr. Mark Wentzel, a hydrologist with the Texas Water Development Board. By the end of November, 54% of the state was in drought – up 20 percentage points in about a month.

Wentzel said by the end of next February, drought conditions are expected to improve in the eastern half of the state but get worse in the western half.

South Texas and the Big Bend region of

West Texas are experiencing the most severe levels of drought, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor.

More than 4 million real Christmas trees sold in Texas annually

Real Christmas trees are an important contributor to the Texas economy, according to Texas A&M Forest Service, with more than 4 million sold each year. That generated a total economic contribution of \$812.7 million and produced more than 6,000 jobs last year.

“Real Christmas trees hold cultural, environmental and economic significance, but the scope of this study was focused specifically on the economic contribution of the real Christmas tree industry,” said Xufang Zhang, Ph.D., Texas A&M Forest Service Forest Resource Analyst.

Tree production acreage has increased from 945 acres in 2017 to 3,565 acres in 2022. The average Christmas tree takes about seven years to reach maturity.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span, including in Longview, Fort Stockton, Nacogdoches, Lufkin and Cedar Park. Email: gborders@texaspress.com.

LOCK-UP FROM PG. 1

raise ‘bail’ money to purchase food and toys for families in need,” Jordan said.

Several people arrested to raise money this year, including:

- Sheriff Anthony Hipolito
- Fire Chief Christopher Robbins
- District Clerk Amanda Calvert
- Wimberley EMS Director Ken Strange
- Hays County Pct. 1 Commissioner Debbie Ingalsbe
- Hays County Pct. 2 Commissioner Dr. Michelle Cohen
- Hays County Pct. 3

Commissioner Morgan Hammer

- Hays County Pct. 4 Commissioner Walt Smith
- Hays County Assistant District Attorney Landon Campbell
- Hays County Assistant District Attorney Neil Kucera
- Hays County Assistant District Attorney Allie Buess
- Hays County Judicial Services Director Jason Facundo
- Hays CISD School Board Trustee Johnny Flores
- Kyle City Councilman Marc McKinney
- SMCISD Superintendent Dr. Michael Cardona
- Hays County Sheriff’s Office Captain John Saenz
- Hays County Sheriff’s Office Sergeant Mark Opiela
- Hays County Sheriff’s Office Sergeant Jeffrey Jordan
- Hays County Sheriff’s Office Deputy Mark Andrews
- Krista Melton
- Crystal Dixon, Edward Jones in San Mar-

cos

- Chris Shoopman, The Lucky Heifer in Buda
- Christy Degenhart, manager of Wimberley Ace Hardware
- Bob von Rosenberg

Jordan said \$24,000 was raised at this year’s lockup and that will purchase toys and food for the annual delivery day.

The fundraiser is a part of the Brown Santa program, which is a nonprofit run solely by employees of the Hays County Sheriff’s Office.

“Our mission is dedicated to serving our community by supporting families in need during the holiday season,” Jordan said. “Through acts of kindness, volunteerism and community partnerships, we deliver food, toys and holiday cheer to ensure every family in Hays County feels remembered and cared for.”

Jordan said Brown Santa was started in 1983 by a group of deputies who had a desire to help children in need around Christmas



Brown Santa with Hays County Corrections Bureau Captain John Saenz in the jail.

PHOTO COURTESY OF HAYS COUNTY SHERIFF’S OFFICE

time.

“Initially, deputies purchased stuffed animals to give away,” Jordan said. “The program expanded to accepting toy donations, and by 1988 or 1989, the program also collected food donations and delivered food and toys to families and children in need throughout Hays County.”

In addition to Sheriff’s Office employees, Jordan said Brown Santa is made possible by the help of community and local business volunteers and donations.

“This program means so much to those in need during the holiday season,” Jordan said. “While the holiday season is a joyful time for many, some families continue to face challenges such as low income, unstable housing and limited access to essential resources. Your generosity helps ensure these families feel sup-

ported, remembered, and cared for during the holidays. This year, our program anticipates assisting approximately 750 families and 2,500 children in Hays County.”

There are several volunteer opportunities for those wishing to help out:

- Dec. 14 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. — Food Bag making at the Hays County Food Bank, 1612 S IH-35, San Marcos.
- Dec. 17 from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. — Brown Santa Gift Wrapping and Sorting Day 1 at the Sheriff’s Office warehouse, 198 HP Business Drive, San Marcos.
- Dec. 18 from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. — Brown Santa Gift Wrapping and Sorting Day 2 on at the Sheriff’s Office warehouse
- Dec. 20 from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m. — Brown Santa Delivery Day (meets at the warehouse)

Dripping Springs Century News

STAFF

MANDY FARROW - Publisher/Group Operations Manager
mfarrow@mosercommmedia.com

DALTON SWEAT - Regional Editor
dscenturynews@gmail.com

LAURIE ANDERSON - Editor
landerson@drippingspringsnews.com

SHANNON WEST - Staff Reporter
swest@sanmarcosrecord.com

JAMES JONES - Regional Advertising Director
jjones@sanmarcosrecord.com

TERESA KENDRICK - Contributor
tkendrick@wimberleyview.com

JONATHAN LIMA - Designer

Contact
(512) 858-4163 • dscenturynews@gmail.com

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**Dripping Springs
Art League**
ART | COMMUNITY | CONNECTION

ART BEAT

Presented by the Dripping Springs Art League

Art | Community | Connection



Ivy Sheppard (center) hosts the Watercolor Club.



DSAL hosts member social coffees and cocktails monthly.

Steve Friedman

In May 2023 eight local gallery owners/curators participated in a gallery tour presented by the Dripping Springs Art League. However, the Art League had actually not formed as yet, it was just a convenient name to represent the local galleries. Hundreds toured the galleries with many shocked to discover the vibrant art scene that already existed in their hometown.

During the summer, those same art enthusiasts sought to answer the question, "What's next?"

- Was it a one-time event?
- Should we have another gallery tour later?
- Perhaps this was the tip of the iceberg?

We concluded that we needed more information. We needed to connect with the local artists and see what they wanted.

We hosted a community meeting in August 2023, unsure what attendance our social media posts would provide.

Over 50 people attended that night. It was clear, art in Dripping was alive and well.

What we heard from those gathered that night became our mission:

Art | Community | Connection

Art: People wanted to hone their skills and explore new art mediums

Community: People wanted to meet other artists that share similar interests

Connection: Artists were interested in exhibiting and selling their art.

These three simple words captured the energy and passion of those who attended and the Dripping Springs Art League was formed.

Our programming these first two years has reflected our mission:

Art: Twenty clubs ranging from glass and fiber arts to oil, watercolor, woodworking and much more; all offering new and experienced artists the opportunity to explore and grow.

Community: Member socials, Create & Connect workshops and social time embedded in all our programming.

Connection: Exhibits



DSAL Member social recognizing the many volunteers of the Art Lounge at Songwriters Festival.



<https://artindripping.com/2025eoycampaign/>



around town, markets, and our West of Weird Art Tour with over 35 art studios and galleries sharing their talent and inspiration across Dripping.

And while our Clubs are flourishing and our Markets and Tours have helped facilitate over \$100,000 in local art sales, it is clear that Community is what brings us all together. Our members have helped drive this clarity and our programming has expanded accordingly:

Five aspects of Community have come to the forefront.

Find Your Tribe: So many of our members are seeking their 'tribe.' Whether they are newcomers to Dripping Springs or have been here a while but just haven't found a group of people with a common bond, many join and attend our socials and Clubs to meet fellow artists. In these divisive times in our nation, it's wonderful for people of diverse backgrounds and ideologies to bind together around art.

Make a Difference in Your Hometown: I have no doubt Dripping can boast of hundreds of fabulously talented artists. Most create at home and share their artwork amongst family and friends. The DSAL offers opportunities to go beyond. Many brave souls have joined our Art Markets at the Triangle, our exhibits at Rolling in Thyme & Dough, or created a magnificent

Star that now adorns our parks and along Mercer Street. They are sharing their art and brightening up our town with their creations.

Impacting Others: The members and leaders of the DSAL are pursuing our Vision of being a catalyst for Dripping to be an art destination. Hosting events like the Art Lounge at Songwriters, our West of Weird Art Tour, and our 'Night to Inspire' gala help showcase the beauty of Dripping Springs for residents and visitors alike.

More Art for Everyone: Art often appears to take a backseat in schools and in our hectic lives. We offer free art classes for students and adults along with our intergenerational art program, Art Across the Ages, at Ledgestone Senior Living Community. Art should be accessible and affordable for all.

An Eye Toward the Future: The DSAL awards scholarships to local high school graduates pursuing a career in the arts. We are also developing options for a permanent home that can offer gallery space, meeting space, and makerspace to serve the local art scene through our Creative Horizons Initiative.



Erin Hounsels presents her 2025 Star at the unveiling at DSRLP.



Art on display at the DSAL Gallery at Rolling in Thyme & Dough.

Together, the members of the Dripping Springs Art League, along with our incredible sponsors and partners, continue to pursue our expansive and inclusive mission of...

Art | Community | Connection

Come, find your tribe and make a difference in your community.

You are welcome anytime.

Find details and schedules for all these programs at artindripping.com.

If you'd like to donate to the Dripping Springs Art League this giving season, please go to <https://artindripping.com/2025eoycampaign/>



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2026

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[Artindripping.com](https://artindripping.com)





Dripping Springs CLASSIFIEDS

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Public Notice

Public Notice

DRIPPING SPRINGS ISD IS REQUESTING FOR

proposals for RFP #25-26-11 Online Payment Solution. Proposals will be accepted electronically through our eBid system. IONWAVE until 01-19-2026 at 2:00 p.m.CST. Specifications are available in the DSISD Purchasing office (512-858-3039) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Proposal responses must be returned to the DSISD Purchasing department, Attn: Valerie Littrell, 300 Sportsplex DR, Dripping Springs, Texas 78620, by the date and time indicated above. No faxed or emailed submissions will be accepted. Late bids will be returned unopened. Dripping Springs ISD reserves the right to reject any/or all submissions and waive all formalities in the bid process.



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Letter to the Editor

There is a box on Rob Shelton that collects items to be delivered to animal shelters (like PAWS) every Friday. People complain about driving all the way out to PAWS, or into the city shelters, and this collection box gives them a chance to contribute without the drive. Win/win. Winter is cold for our furry friends and there are no coat drives for dachshunds!

They need:

- *used* blankets and towels (pets love people smell)
- Litter
- Purina brand food (consistency)
- Scented laundry detergent
- Bleach

Thank you,
A friend to all those who are friendly, feral, and/or furred

The League Kitchen & Tavern hosts toy drive for SAFE Alliance

Staff Reports

The League Kitchen & Tavern is holding their annual Toy Drive starting benefitting SAFE Alliance. SAFE Alliance is a merger of the Austin Children's Shelter and SafePlace, serving victims and survivors of abuse.

Participants are invited to bring in a brand new, unwrapped toy to any of The League locations to donate until December 24, during the restaurant's operating hours. Donors will get a raffle ticket to win a replica of the iconic League Leg Lamp from classic

movie, A Christmas Story. The raffle will be drawn and the winner will be contacted on December 24. The Dripping Springs location of The League Kitchen & Tavern is located in Belterra at 166 Hargraves Drive Suite B300, Austin, TX.

CHRISTMAS FROM PG. 1

least a half a dozen different types of pies, and she was offended if you didn't try them all," Hammack said. He said times have changed a lot from those days. "There were 250 people in Dripping Springs when I was a kid and used to come up," Hammack said. He said he's very glad that the homestead has been preserved. "I hope that people will continue to support it, and we hope that it will be something that continues," Hammack said. "It's important to keep track of our history." He said the area has changed so much that it's hard to recognize sometimes. But when he looks around, he still sees where things were, and it comes back. "I remember how grandmother would be outside, and we'd come out and get ready to leave and she would say 'Oh, Charles, don't leave yet. Oh, don't leave yet,'" Hammack said. "So yes, it's bittersweet. I'm just grateful that everything is still here."



The silent auction included a variety of gift baskets.
PHOTOS BY LAURIE ANDERSON



Zion Huey entertains the crowd.



Kelly J. Hammack (right), great-great grandson of Dr. Pound, takes a photo with his family.



A family poses for a Christmas photo with a special Pound House guest.

MARKET FROM PG. 1



A vendor talks with customers at one of the last markets of the year.

PHOTOS BY LAURIE ANDERSON



Johnny and Jimmy Tolly sell unique wood crafts at market.

a washing machine motor on it and we did little stuff." When Jimmy got out of the service and was living in Connecticut, he got into woodturning again. Johnny was stationed in Oklahoma, and also started woodworking. At first, neither knew that their twin was back into the hobby. Eventually, the brothers both ended up in Texas, working for Motorola and crafting on the side. "It's kind of therapeutic to be able to get out into the studio and do some wood turning and stuff like that," Johnny said. When Jimmy got cancer and lost his hair, he decided to turn his hobby towards a good cause. He heard that there was a big need for wigstands for people, especially women, who had lost their hair due to chemotherapy. "So I started making wigstands to donate to Texas Oncology," Jimmy said. "So far, I donated I think like 1330." Last week he donated another 21, and he's got another 20 or 30 in the works. "It's something I do all the time," Jimmy said. Johnny also helps out with the effort. "We scrounge around, if you will, and if somebody's got wood that's usable, we will take it and then repurpose it into the wigstands and we donate those free to the ladies," Johnny said. "It's kind of a way for us to give back for humanity." At Christmas time, the twins add a few more items to their inventory for the season. Jimmy makes ornaments in the shape of Christmas trees



A kid decorates a wooden Christmas tree at the Tolly's Turnings booth.

and bells. "Those are basically made from branches of trees," Jimmy said. "I find something anywhere from 2 to 3 inches diameter, about 4 1/2 inches long, put it between centers, and then I turn what we call a tenon. That'll be the handle part, and I hollow out the bell part, and then I reverse it and put it on a chuck and then shape the bell and the handle. The hard part is to put in a little eyelet to put the bell inside." Johnny's specialty is elegant Christmas ornaments made with chopsticks and epoxy. He uses those same materials to craft spinning tops for the kids. "It's a toy for kids of all ages, and they do not need batteries," Johnny said. "These kids learn how to spin them and they'll have them for the rest of their life." They also take old 4x4 wood pieces and turn them into a Christmas tree craft for the kids. "We paint them green, like a Christmas tree would be. And then we give those to the kids free and they'll come in here and they'll paint them," Johnny said. "We do that every December for the kids to have something that they can do here and take home as a gift." The twins take great pride in repurposing used wood for their projects. "The best part is to take a junk piece of wood and turn something beautiful, so instead of going into the burn pile or the trash, it's turned into something useful," Jimmy said. Both Jimmy and Johnny are members of Central Texas Woodturners Association, which meets the third Tuesday of every month at American YouthWorks in Austin. They have a mentor program that's open to adults of all ages, as well as to teens. To learn more, visit www.ctwa.org.

Grab family or friends to explore local favorites

Laurie Anderson
Editor

Throughout this holiday season, consider supporting your local small businesses to contribute to the vibrancy of our community! Here are a few recommendations to get you started.

SHOP: Texas Hill Country Olive Co.

Texas Hill Country Olive Co. has been bringing the tradition of olive oil production to the Hill Country since 2008. Cara Gambini owns and operates the business with her dad, John Gambini. It includes an onsite store with a variety of gifts, as well as a bistro.

“We were inspired by a love for Mediterranean culture, good food, and sustainable farming,” Gambini said. “Beyond producing award-winning olive oils, we craft an entire experience - from tasting tours to farm-to-table dining in our bistro.”

Gambini said that they have remained committed to U.S. production, even after a hard freeze damaged their orchards. A customer favorite is Texas Miller’s Blend Extra Virgin Olive Oil - which Gambini describes as robust, peppery, and perfect for dipping or drizzling. Those looking for something bolder can try infused oils like Blood Orange or Jalapeño.

DINE: Crepe Crazy

One of the busiest places in Dripping Springs on a Saturday morning is Crepe Crazy, a small eaterie near the high school that serves up delectable paninis, croissants, bagels, salads... and of course, crepes!

The family business, which is deaf owned and operated, was founded by Vladimir and Inna Giterman. The Dripping Springs location was their first brick-and-mortar. It is now operated by their children, Michelle and Sergei Giterman.

“We’re proud to be a showcase for the Deaf community, proving that food is a universal language,” Michelle Giterman said.

Visitors who know

American Sign Language can use their skills to order at the restaurant. But knowing ASL isn’t required - pointing to the menu item is how most customers make their requests.

Crepe Crazy has another location in Austin, and recently, has opened up shop in Baltimore and in Washington, DC. All locations are deaf owned and operated.

UNWIND: Hawk Shadow Winery

If you have family in town for the holidays, show them the beauty of the Hill Country with a drive out to Hawk Shadow Winery.

“We have about a 22-mile view from where our tasting room is,” owner Doug Reed said. “And we’re off the beaten path enough to be extremely quiet. People comment on that all the time.”

Reed and his family started the vineyard back in 2005 and bottled their first wine in 2011. They have now produced 14 vintages.

“Everything we do is 100% Texas grapes. That’s one of our big selling points, is that it’s all made here,” Reed said. “We have about 7 acres of vineyard, and we do make about 20% of our wine from grapes that are grown on site.”

They focus on Bordeaux-style reds, and they also make some Spanish Tempranillo from the estate. Hawk Shadow barrel ages their wines 3 to 5 years on a regular basis, with a goal of producing world-class wines.

Small Business Saturday, founded by American Express in 2010, is dedicated to promoting small businesses across the country. For every \$1 spent locally, \$0.67 stays within the community. The Dripping Springs Chamber of Commerce proudly serves as a Neighborhood Champion for the American Express Shop Small movement. Visit the Chamber’s website at dstxchamber.com to find hundreds of small businesses to support and to discover special deals for Small Business Season.



PHOTO COURTESY OF HAWK SHADOW



PHOTO BY TOMAS SEGURA



PHOTO BY MICHELLE GITERMAN

Hays County introduces new Budget Officer

Staff Reports

On Dec. 1, Hays County welcomed a new Budget Officer, Scot Woodland, who brings notable experience in public finance and a strong record of service within the County Auditor’s Office.

Inspired by his father’s service in the U.S. Air Force from an early age, Woodland has long valued public service and its impact on local communities. After earning two degrees and beginning his career in public accounting, Woodland sought a path that would allow him to follow in his father’s footsteps.

For the past three and a half years, Woodland has served Hays County in the Auditor’s Office, first as Accounting Manager and later as the First Assistant County Auditor. In these roles, he gained extensive knowledge of the County’s financial structure, revenue budgeting and overall budget cycle. Woodland also reviewed the work of the previous Budget Officer and built strong professional relationships across departments.

“Having already learned so much about Hays County’s finances, I can now focus fully on mastering the budget process and ensuring a smooth transition,” Woodland said. “The County’s most significant financial challenge is navigating a period of slower-than-usual growth paired with lower property value appreciation. Addressing this challenge will require strategic planning and efficiency improvements.”

Woodland’s connection to Hays County began earlier in his career, when he worked with the County as an independent auditor. Woodland was impressed by the County’s strong financial controls and by the people who dedicated themselves to public



Scot Woodland
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

service. Later, as Woodland sought a position that involved less travel than public accounting, Hays County was at the top of his list.

As Budget Officer, Woodland’s responsibilities will include protecting public funds through efficient operations, ensuring that expenditures remain within approved appropriations and working closely with County departments to maintain accurate and responsible budgeting practices.

Looking ahead, Woodland is eager to build new relationships across County departments, contribute to long-term planning efforts and promote financial efficiencies that support responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Woodland’s top priorities for the Budget Office include maintaining strong reserve levels during challenging economic conditions, enhancing transparency and communication through regular updates at Commissioners Court and upholding the high standards of excellence established by outgoing Budget Officer Vickie Dorsett.

“I look forward to being an integral part of the County’s future planning,” Woodland said. “My goal is to ensure that Hays County remains financially strong while continuing to meet the needs of our growing community.”

For more information, visit <https://www.hayscountytx.gov/budget-office> or contact 512-393-2275.

WEEK AT A GLANCE

Week of: Dec 22nd - Dec 27th

MONDAY Chair Yoga 9:00-10:00 Holiday Themed STEAM lab 10:30 Qigong 1:00 3:30 Family Gingerbread House Showdown 4:45 D&D	TUESDAY 1-4 Mahjong 4:00-6:30 D&D	WEDNESDAY MERRY CHRISTMAS	THURSDAY MERRY CHRISTMAS	FRIDAY MERRY CHRISTMAS CLOSED
SATURDAY 10:30 Read to Ruby Family New Years Resolution Wall Open				



Ida • Female
11 years old
Chihuahua

Woof woof! My name is Ida, and I'm a gorgeous little lady with the fluffiest coat you'll ever snuggle. I haven't always had the easiest life, but now I'm ready for all the love and adventures with a family of my own. I'm full of affection and can't wait to share it with you! I get along great with other dogs. I pretty much just ignore them and do my own thing. And cats? Most are bigger than me anyway, so we're totally cool. No drama here! What I love most is being held, talked to in that sweet voice you humans have, and curling up on your lap for cuddles. Whether you want to foster me or make me your forever fur-baby, I'll be the most loyal, loving companion you've ever had. Please visit LizzysHospice.com or email us at LizzysHospice@gmail.com if you have any questions or would like to fill out an application.



Starr • Female
2 years old
Terrier mix

Hey there! I'm a Star! Well, actually it's Starr but that doesn't change anything! I'm the sweetest girl around. Just wait till you meet me! I'm already house trained and crate trained, so no worries there. I walk awesome on a leash (no pulling from this girl!), and I absolutely love car rides with the windows down, wind in my fur, face flopping in the breeze! I get along great with other dogs. We can play or just chill together. I also love playing with my toys! My favorite game is grabbing one, zooming around with it for a bit, dropping it to do something else, then racing back for more. It's the best! But my very favorite thing? My people! I want to be with you all day, hanging out, going on walks or even runs, and snuggling up for TV time in the evenings. I'm ready for adventures, playtime, and tons of love. If you're looking for a sweet buddy who's fun, affectionate, and the perfect size, I'm your girl! Please visit LizzysHospice.com or email us at LizzysHospice@gmail.com if you have any questions or would like to fill out an application.

UNIVERSAL CROSSWORD

12/14 Themeless Sunday 163 by Chad Hazen and Jeff Chen

ACROSS

- 1 Spineless people
- 6 Do a tempera-
ture check, maybe
- 15 Permeate
- 16 One who brings
the past to the
present
- 17 "I can get be-
hind that"
- 19 It might be
tight or loose
- 20 Solo such as
"Habanera"
- 21 Waves that
don't wash away?
- 22 Sweethearts
- 24 Bits of land
surrounded by
water
- 27 Diana of the
Supremes
- 28 "Gah!"

DOWN

- 29 Six-line stanza
- 31 Injures with a
horn
- 33 Part of a natu-
ral air filter
- 37 Snoozes
- 39 Become more
cheerful
- 41 Held nothing
back
- 45 Sacred suste-
nance
- 46 Game of love?
- 48 Word after
"poke" or "punch"
- 49 Guard's station
- 53 Cubist Picasso
- 54 Enjoy a pool
- 55 How Samuel
Adams may be
served
- 57 That ain't
right!

ACROSS

- 59 Partook of
pizza, perhaps
- 60 "I can get
behind that"
- 64 Secretly lis-
ten
- 65 Indigenous
people of the
Arctic
- 66 Iditarod
squad
- 67 Words on a
check

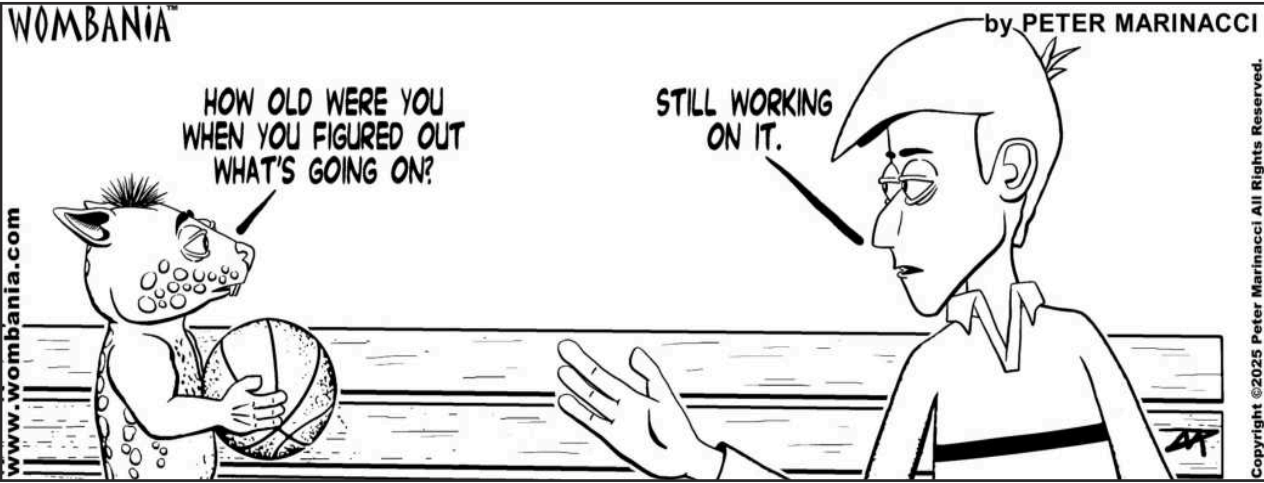
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- ated "Portlandia"
- 7 Cross-reference
words
- 8 "Barbie" role
for Ryan Gosling
and Simu Liu
- 9 Insect that can
live 30 years
- 10 Scratchy vocal
quality
- 11 Cave painting
pigment
- 12 In ____ (be-
fore birth)
- 13 Standards
- 14 Put clothes on
- 18 "Exodus"
writer Leon
- 23 Piece of bed-
ding
- 25 Kang and Ko-
dos of "The Simp-
sons": Abbr.
- 26 Ooze
- 30 Us vs. ____
- 32 Rotisserie rod
- 34 Many Libyans
and Syrians
- 35 "There's some-
one who can help
..."

- 36 Take the bull
by the horns
- 38 Instructions
part
- 40 South Caro-
lina's state tree
- 42 Protein synthe-
sis molecule
- 43 Covered with
roses, perhaps
- 44 Accumulations
- 47 That ain't
hard!
- 49 Tree and
mountain, e.g., in
yoga
- 50 "Shaqtin' a
Fool" host
- 51 Name hidden
in "best-ever"
- 52 Got out of
beast mode?
- 56 "Hey, you!"
- 58 Stumble
- 61 Summertime
drink suffix
- 62 It has cups but
not glasses
- 63 "____ min-
ute!"

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64									65					
66									67					

Want more puzzles? Check out the "Just Right Crossword Puzzles" books at QuillDriverBooks.com



"Wombania is about a family of Wombies who move in with their human relative and take over his home and his life. An all-ages comic, Wombania is a unique look at life, relationships, food, and technology, and how we struggle to cope with the fast-paced, ever-changing world in which we live."

CALENDAR FROM PG. 1

Dec 20 • 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Every Saturday night is music bingo at Suds Monkey Brewing Co. Bring the whole crew for some big time jammin'. Always family and dog friendly. The BINGO cards are free to play with 4 chances to win 4 prizes. Suds Monkey Brewing Co. • 12024 US-290 • Austin, TX 78737

Ornament Painting Workshop at Vista Brewing
Dec 21 • 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Create a keepsake for your Christmas tree at this DIY Wood Ornament Painting Class, hosted with local women-owned pop-up Grow Slow. Using simple paint pens, you'll personalize wooden ornaments perfect for gifting or displaying year after year. A great activity for all ages and an easy way to spend a cozy holiday morning at Vista with great food & drinks available for purchase. Vista Brewing • 13551 FM 150 W • Driftwood, TX 78619

North Pole Marble Run Workshop
Dec 23 • 3:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.
Drop in at the Dripping Springs Community Library for a festive STEAM challenge! The Jingle Bell Marble Run station invites families to build, test, and redes-

ign their very own holiday marble runs. All the materials are provided - tracks, tubes, bells, cardboard, tape, and seasonal decorations. This is a self-guided passive activity, open all day while supplies last. Perfect for all ages! Dripping Springs Community Library • 501 Sportsplex Dr • Dripping Springs, TX 78620
Free Dance Lessons at Mercer Dance Hall
Dec 26 • 7:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.
It's your last chance to come out to Mercer Dance Hall for free dance lessons. The dance hall has been sold, and will be closing at the end of the year! Mercer Dance Hall • 23490 RR 12 • Driftwood, TX 78619
The Driftwood Axe House Texas Hold'em Poker Tournament
Dec 27 • 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.
Join in the bi-weekly Texas Hold'em Tournament. Winnings Split 50/30/20. Great specials on food and drinks! The Driftwood Axe House • 18992 FM 150, Suite 201 • Driftwood, TX 78620 US

Last Show at Mercer Dance Hall
Dec 31 • 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
The dance hall has been sold, and this will be the last show! Come out and listen to Bob Appel and celebrate the last hur-

rah. Cover is \$10. Mercer Dance Hall • 23490 RR 12 • Driftwood, TX, TX 78619

Western Wonderland Open daily until Jan 4 • 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. (Closed Christmas, and open 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day)
This year's event includes an array of festive activities for guests of all ages. At the heart of Western Wonderland is the giant ice-skating rink. Visitors will glide and twirl under the twinkling lights on the largest outdoor ice-skating rink in Central Texas. Guests can also shop in the Holiday Market, which will be set up rinkside, or wander through the free Trail of Lights. Visit <https://www.dripping-springsranchpark.com/westernwonderland> for more details. Dripping Springs Ranch Park • 1042 Event Center Dr. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620

Dripping Springs Farmers Market
Jan 3 • 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.
The Dripping Springs Farmer's Market is held on Wednesdays at Dripping Springs Ranch Park. Visitors can gather and shop for fresh agricultural and related products. Dripping Springs Ranch Park • 1042 Event Cen-

ter Dr. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATION

Dripping Springs Community Library
The Dripping Springs Community Library hosts multiple events every week. Events include Toddler Story Time, Homeschool Chess Club, Legos @ the Library, Mah-Jongg, Master Gardeners on the Porch, Yoga and more. For library events, visit dscl.org/event-calendar.

City of Dripping Springs Public Meetings
The City of Dripping Springs welcomes residents and others doing business with the city to attend any of the public meetings below. City Council meetings are traditionally held at City Hall Council Chambers, 511 W. Mercer St., Dripping Springs, TX 78620. See cityof-drippingsprings.com for streaming options and meeting agendas.

Farmers Market Committee Regular Meeting
Dec 18 • 10 a.m.

Emergency Management Committee Regular Meeting

Dec 18 • 12 p.m.

Utility Commission Regular Meeting
Dec 18 • 4 p.m.

City Council & Board of Adjustment Meeting
Jan 6 • 6 p.m.

Hays County Commissioners Court Regular Meeting
Jan 6 • 9 a.m.
This is a regular meeting of the Hays County Commissioners Court, the governing body of the county. This group of elected officials and staff oversees the functions and budget for all county-related business. Hays County Historic Courthouse • 111 E. San Antonio St. • San Marcos, Texas. Streaming option available at hayscountytexas.com. Dripping Springs ISD Board of Trustees Monthly Meeting
Jan 26 • 6 p.m.
Live meeting of the DSISD Board of Trustees which sets policy, agenda and strategic planning for the Dripping Springs school district. Agendas and live streaming option available at dsisdtexas.us. Live meeting at the Center for Learning & Leadership • 300 Sportsplex Dr. • Dripping Springs, TX 78620.

Lady Tigers basketball keeps win streak alive

Carl Waits
Sports Reporter

The Dripping Springs Lady Tigers extended their win streak to eleven and it was their first win in district as well. Both of their wins were over a couple of weak opponents but nevertheless you still have to perform and the score should reflect the difference in talent. The Lady Tigers jumped all over the Bastrop Bears, leading 50-16 at half and went on to an 83-20 win. The first district game was with Austin Akins. The Lady Tigers harassed the Eagles from the onset bolting out to a 25-0 lead as the final was 82-11. As one would expect substitutions were liberal. Season record is 13-3.

Vs Bastrop: Chaela Luelling 16, Lily Aleshire 16, Ella Beatty 13, Bryn Kettler 7, Avery Taylor 6, Avery Ames 6, Bailey Rogers 6, Chloe Lightfoot 4, Camille Brown 4, Caitlin Lightfoot 3, Sloan Geck 2. Reb: Aleshire 9, Rogers 7, Taylor 5; Asst: Luelling 8, Beatty 4; Stls: Ames 6.

Vs Akins: Beatty 15, Aleshire 14, Rogers 12, Luelling 12, Ames 8, Kettler 6, Brown 4, Geck 4, Taylor 3, Ch. Lightfoot 2, Harper Teague 2.



Ella Beatty (#11) looks for an open player to pass to in Friday night's game against Akins.

PHOTO BY VINCE CURLETTA



Lily Aleshire (#20) goes for the layup Dec. 9 against Bastrop.

Tigers basketball holding strong as district

Carl Waits
Sports Reporter

The Tigers played in the South San tourney and came away with a split of the four games. Their first two foes were just a little stronger than the Tigers. They took a loss to SA Wagner 70-64 and Clear Springs 86-48 and then rebounded to take wins over Pflugerville 59-31 and Odessa Permian 71-63. In a regularly scheduled game, the Tigers travelled to Hays Johnson to play what was being called "The Battle of Drift-

wood." Coach Acker was disappointed at the Tigers poor shooting performance. He said they were leading by two with one minute to go in the third and then were outscored 22-3 for the 58-41 loss.

Vs Wagner: Rushton Budge 23, Isaac Terry 15, Grant Reagan 14, Solomon Igharo 4, A'myron Hurst 3, Will Gardiner 3, Maddox LaCopo 2. Reb: Terry 5; Asst: Terry 5; Stls: Reagan 2.

Vs Clear Sprgs: Harrison Hight 11, Budge 10, Reagan 8, Grant Gillum 8, Gardiner 3,

Terry 2, LaCopo 2, Igharo 2., David Allsbrook 2. Reb: Allsbrook 5, Asst: Gardiner 3, Terry 3.

Vs P-ville: No stats avail.

Vs Permian: Budge 24, Reagan 13, Terry 11, Hurst 6, Gardiner 5, Allsbrook 5, Gillum 4, Hight 3. Reb: Terry 9, Reagan 3; Asst: Terry 4; Stls: Terry 4.

Vs Johnson: Budge 14, Reagan 11, Gillum 5, Allsbrook 4, Hurst 4, Gardiner 1, Terry 1, LaCopo 1. Reb: Terry 5, Reagan 4, Budge 4; Asst: Terry 5; Stls: Budge 3, Terry 3.

DS swim team results

Carl Waits
Sports Reporter

These are the results for the Dripping Springs swim team as they competed in the two-day South Zone TISCA Swim & Dive Championships.

DS Girls Results: 200 Medley Relay: 3. 1.50.21 (Izzy Boldrick, Aubrey McLean, Charlotte Riffel, Laurel Hoskovec). 200 Free: 3. Hoskovec 1.53.83; 5. Riffel 1.54.49. 200 IM: 11. McLean 2.19.47. 50 Free: 8. Fairlane Bynum 25.04. 100 Fly: 5. Hoskovec 57.05. 100 Free: 4. Riffel 53.57, 10. Lexi Landrum 54.65, 11. Bynum 54.84. 200 Free Relay: 2. 1.37.97 (Riffel, Landrum, Bynum, Hoskovec). 100 Back: 10. Sidney Blake 1.00.89, 14. Boldrick 1.01.55. 100 Breast: 8.

McLean 1.09.95. 13. Kylie May 1.11.39. 14. Olivia Reeves 1.11.83. 400 Free Relay: 4. 3.39.18 (Boldrick, Landrum, Maddie Hovatter, Bynum). 50 Fly: 6. Hoskovec 26.22, 15. Bynum 27.51. 50 Back: 13. Blake 28.72. 800 Free Relay: 2. 7.50.49 (Riffel, Hoskovec, Hovatter, Landrum). 200 Back: 8. Boldrick 2.12.52, 11. Blake 2.15.82. 50 Breast: 7. McLean 2.30.22. 12. Reeves 2.35.76. 400 IM: 8. May 5.06.73. 200 Fly: 6. Hoskovec 2.10.27, 11. Eva Alford 2.25.46. 100 IM: 12. Boldrick 1.02.36. 1000 Free: 5. Riffel 10.48.77, 8. Landrum 11.10.88, 9. Alford 11.11.60.

DS Boys Results: 400 Medley Relay: 7.3.42.50 (Zachary Collins, Noah Beers,

Cooper Hamby, Harrison Woolard). 800 Free Relay: 5.7.21.29 (Collins, Chasyn Jones, Hamby, Woolard). 200 Back: 11. Jones 2.04.62, 12. Hamby 2.05.01. 200 Breast: 12. Beers 2.22.98. 200 Fly: 14. Hamby 2.08.07. 100 IM: 2. Collins 53.43, 11. Jones 57.43. 1000 Free: 15. Jacob May 11.03.30. 200 Medley Relay: 6. 1.41.13: 6. (Hamby, Beers, Collins, Woolard). 200 Free: 10. Woolard 1.49.38. 200 IM: 4. Collins 1.55.75. 12. Jones 2.04.84. 100 Fly: 7. Collins 51.73. 100 Free: 14. Woolard 50.30. 500 Free: 7. Hamby 5.02.40. 100 Back: 11. Jones 57.83. 100 Breast: 13. Beers 1.03.41. 400 Free Relay: 5. 3.18.52 (Collins, Hamby, Jones, Woolard).



Eight non-profit representatives received end of year donations from the St. Martin de Porres Knights of Columbus Council 11695.

PHOTO BY JOHN PACHECO

Knights make year-end community donations

John Pacheco
Special to the News

The St. Martin de Porres Knights of Columbus Council 11695 donated \$30,000 to eight local non-profits during a presentation ceremony at their last council meeting.

"The end of year donations are part of our ongoing mission of direct support of charitable activities in the Dripping Springs Community," Miguel Torres, head of local Knights, said. "The Knights are deeply in-

involved in our community, not just by these monetary donations, but also through the donation of our volunteer time. Our aim is to build a stronger, more connected community, and provide support to where it is needed."

The donations were as follows: \$3,000 to the Burke Center for Youth; \$6,000 to the Center to the Intrepid-Brooke Army Medical Center; \$3,000 to Fire-side Chat Support Network; \$3,000 to Hometown Missions; \$3,000 to the St. John

Paul II Life Center; \$3,000 to Patriots' Hall; \$3,000 to Project Connect; and \$3,000 to the Special Olympics.

"We want to thank all the people who support our fundraising activities throughout the year, whether it be through our charity golf tournaments, our Hill Country Heroes Charity Shootouts, or our food sales," Torres said.

For more information visit <http://hill-country-golf-shootout.perfectgolfevent.com>

CARSON FROM PG. 1

This case was investigated by the Hays County Sheriff's Office Special Services Unit and was prosecuted by Assistant Criminal District Attorneys Miranda Ebersole and Elizabeth

Schmidt. "Fentanyl remains a problem in our community and is of high priority to this office," Ebersole said. "Local law enforcement noted the decline of fentanyl's availability

within our community after this defendant's arrest. We will continue to support the efforts of law enforcement to stem the flow of this dangerous drug into the hands of our youth."

SCOTT DAVES REALTOR®
SCOTT@STANBERRY.COM / WWW.SCOTTDAVES.NET

512.415.2265

THIS WEEK'S FEATURED LISTINGS

22601 RR 12
Dripping Springs, TX 78620
For Sale - \$1,950,000
A great Commercial opportunity awaits on this 7.1-acre tract which boasts prominent frontage on Ranch Road 12, is Ag Exempt, and also fully entitled and permitted for a massive 42,000 sq.ft. of flex commercial space, primed and ready for construction.

2201 W Hwy 290 Suite #B
Dripping Springs, TX 78620
Just Leased!
2,175sf historical farmhouse that has been renovated for office, retail, hospitality, and other mixed uses. Includes separate 400sf private office/showroom with HVAC and water connected.

133 Glosson Ranch Rd Unit #A
Dripping Springs, TX 78620
For Sale - \$1,550,000
For Lease - \$1.00 + NNN
14,000sf across two versatile buildings with no zoning restrictions. Utilities are in place, with power, septic, and water connected, making this site move-in ready.

133 Glosson Ranch Rd Unit #C
Dripping Springs, TX 78620
Just Leased!
5,000sf fully HVAC warehouse, with 1,000sf of Office Space. This property is equipped adequately for efficient loading, there is both a loading dock and regular ground-level loading.

www.stanberry.com 512.894.3488
400 HWY 290 W / BLDG B / SUITE 101 / DRIPPING SPRINGS TX 78620