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Previewing the 58th Annual “Tournament of Champions”



Chuck Ramsey
Wright Radio Commentator

“Take me back to Tulsa, I’m too young to marry!”

The words of Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys could never be more applicable to me than Wednesday, December 27th when yours truly will be “livin’ on Tulsa Time” as we bring you Eagle Boys Basketball at the 58th Tournament of Champions live from the BOK Center on Wright Media.

Although I’m not young and am happily married, the song still holds meaning because I hail from the Tulsa area (Coweta) and played high school basketball in what I consider the Golden Era of the tournament.

I never played in the tournament but my friends and I would make the trip to the Fairgrounds Arena particularly to watch the Booker T. Washington Hornets and the host of college talent they put on the court.

Of course, other schools in the tournament had great collegiate-level talent. Former Southwestern Oklahoma State University Head Coach Terry Evans was on the 1988 Millwood team that won the tournament and he was named to the all-tournament team.

Weatherford will have their share of the same

type of talent when they make the trip to Green Country as this undefeated squad features length and athleticism that I don’t recall in my teen years watching the tournament.

I’m sure there have been teams that featured similar top-end talent and players that even made it to the highest level professionally but this Eagles team amazes me in the fact they play so unselfishly and with a unified objective to win each and every time they take the court.

Of course, you can call me biased, but Head Coach Derrick Bull definitely has his imprint on these players and this team with their clamp-down defense and high percentage shot selection.

Weatherford enters the Tournament of Champions as a championship contender. Returning champion Dale of Class 2A returns to the event with OU Sooner commit Dayton Forsythe a favorite. Still, this Weatherford Eagles team is not just a last-second invitee to this tournament.

A Class 4A State Runner Up banner hangs on campus from last season and the Eagles didn’t lose a starter or contributor. Bull has even stated he and his team realize they are no longer the hunters but are the hunted and teams know what they can do

in a game.

In 1986, Cordell played in the Tournament of Champions led by Garrett Mantle. I remember this because we were told he was a nephew of the great Mickey Mantle. Cordell lost to Graham in the seventh-place game that year. Hydro-Eakly boys played in the tournament in 2021 and defeated Cashion in the seventh-place game after losing to Tulsa Memorial and Victory Christian School.

Weatherford will face Crossings Christian in the first round. The Eagles defeated them in the Class 4A Semi-finals last season and like Weatherford, they return their key players including guard Cal Furnish who has great shooting range and can be deadly from the three-point line.

Edmond North, Owasso, Tulsa Nathan Hale, Metro Christian and Okay will also be in the tournament.

A girl’s basketball Tournament of Champions will also be played which features Riverside girls.

You can see all the action of Weatherford Boys Basketball from the Tournament of Champions on Wright Media on Weatherford Eagles TV. Tipoff versus Crossings Christian will be at 1:30 P.M. on Wednesday Dec. 27th with the Pregame beginning at 1:15.

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June Pitzer

Oma June (Garnett) Pitzer was born October 12, 1930, to Chester and Della (Rowe) Garnett in Foss, OK and passed away Wednesday, December 13, 2023, in her Foss home.



From the age of two she lived with her grandparents, John, and Octavia Rowe. She attended all 12 years of her schooling at Foss, OK. She graduated from high school in 1949 and was salutatorian of her class.

At the age of 17 she met the love of her life, H.W. "Dub" Pitzer and they were married on her 18th birthday, October 12, 1948, in Sayre, OK. "Dub" was a farmer at heart and in 1950 they worked for her uncle in Cheyenne, OK. They moved back to Foss and started farming and operating a dairy and the farming continued until 1999.

She was employed part time at the Foss, OK Post Office and later transferred to Clinton Post Office where she retired in October 1990.

She was a longtime and faithful member of the Foss Baptist Church; she enjoyed square dancing for many years, and she was a member of the Elk City Western Swing Dance Club. She belonged to the Willing Workers Extension Club for many years. She and Dub were instrumental in helping organize the Western Okie Travel Club in 1988.

She was preceded in death by her husband, in 2010, and here son, Larry Wayne Pitzer was killed in a tactor accident in 1966 and a grandson, Bryan File.

She is survived by daughter, Debora Glasgow and husband, Neil, Burns Flat, OK and son Keith Pitzer and wife Donnita, Foss, OK.

She is also survived by nine grandchildren, Sheila Sutton and husband, Justin, Elk City, OK, Stephanie Pitzer, Yukon, OK, Cody File, Clinton, OK, Lance Pitzer and wife, Hollie, Canute, OK, Jared Schneberger and wife, Crystal, Carnegie, OK, Cory Schneberger and wife, Meredith, Edmond, OK, April Glasgow, St. Francis Ville, LA and Kyle Glasgow, Midwest City, OK, and great-grandchildren, Brooke Sutton, Macy McSparrin, Kaylie and Brance Pitzer, Brennon File, Addyson, Kuper and Kizer, Schneberger and Jackson, Mitchell, and Carter Schneberger.

Jim Ames

Jimmy ("Jim"; "J.D.") Dale Ames passed away on Monday, December 18, 2023, at Stone Creek Assisted Living in Edmond, Oklahoma, at the age of 95 years, 2 months and 13 days. He was born on October 5, 1928, in Thomas, Oklahoma to Archie and Bertha (Haggard) Ames.



Jim grew up in Thomas and graduated from Thomas High School in 1946. After high school he attended Southwestern State College in Weatherford, Oklahoma where he received a bachelor's degree in mathematics in 1950. Jim also lettered as a member of the Southwestern wrestling team.

After college, Jim continued working for his father at the Magnolia service station in Thomas. Jim, along with his longtime friend Ross Pickens, soon purchased the station, expanded operations and created Ames & Pickens Oil Company. They ran a successful business for 35 years. They also farmed and raised cattle and continued to do so after selling the business.

Jim married Eileen Helzer on her birthday, June 3 in 1949, in Thomas, Oklahoma. They were happily married for 68 years until her passing in 2017. Jim was a member of the First Christian Church of Thomas. He was a 32nd degree Mason. He enjoyed boating and taught many local youths how to water ski.

He also enjoyed motorcycling and flying. Jim knew the meaning of hard work, saving, and living within one's means. He was dedicated to his family, community, church, and the educational attainment of his children and grandchildren.

Jim was preceded in death by his wife Eileen, parents Archie and Bertha Ames, and one newborn brother Alvin Eugene Ames.

Jim is survived by his daughter Linda and Tom Russell of Edmond, Oklahoma; son Mark and Tonda Ames of Collinsville, Oklahoma; son Craig and Avi DeTurenne of Los Angeles, California; grandson Rusty and Julie Moore of Thomas; grandson Jeremy Moore of Stillwater, Oklahoma; grandson Tyler Ames of Oklahoma City;

He is also survived by great-granddaughter Kinsley and Hunter Likavec of West Branch, Michigan; great-grandson Calton Moore of Thomas; great-granddaughter Violet Moore of Stillwater, Oklahoma; great-grandson Tucker Moore of Stillwater, Oklahoma; great-great-grandson Stetson Avery Likavec of West Branch, Michigan; as well as many cousins and various other relatives.

Rhonda Mowles

Rhonda Lynn Mowles was born May 12, 1962, to James D. White and Norma G. (Kirby) White in Clinton, OK and passed away Wednesday, December 6, 2023 in her Weatherford home.



Rhonda was raised in Clinton, OK and graduated from Clinton Highschool in 1980. She married David Mowles, SR., on May 19, 1985, in Oklahoma City, OK. She moved to Weatherford in 1987 and was employed as a dormitory house keeper at Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford.

She was preceded in death by her parents and a son in law, Jeremy McDow.

She was a member of the Pine Acres Church in Weatherford, she loved music, dancing and singing, taking pictures and spending time with her grandchildren. She was known to never meet a stranger and loved to visit, and she loved to care for others.

She is survived by her husband, David Mowles, Sr., of the home, two daughters, Tamara McDow, and D'Lisa Pool and husband, Tucker, all of Weatherford, two sons, David Mowles, Jr. and wife, Pamela, and Brad Mowles and Makayla Morley, Clinton, OK, sister, Shauna Precure, Weatherford, OK and brother, Timothy White, and wife, Bille, Clinton, OK. She is also survived by seven grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Calvin Oldcamp

Calvin Lee Oldcamp was born December 26, 1958, to Beaulah Oldcamp in Clinton, OK and passed away Thursday, December 7, 2023, in his Oklahoma City home.



Calvin started his younger life in Clinton where he attended school being raised by his mother and grandmother, Lizzy Lefthand. In 1964 Calvin was adopted by Bud and Joyce Frank and moved to Purcell, OK to attend school but returned to Clinton to graduate from Clinton High School.

Soon after graduating high school, he joined the U.S. Navy and served his time in San Diego, CA. Soon after his honorable discharge he returned to Oklahoma and attended Rose State College and Oklahoma City Community College to receive a degree in Cardiopulmonary Technology. He was employed as a technician at the Hillcrest Hospital for over 15 years.

He married Lynn Naranjo in March of 1987 and to this marriage two children were born, daughter, Tewa Leigh and son, Nocoma John.

Calvin was a member of the Native American Church. He was proud of his heritage being a member of the Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma as well as his Chinese heritage. He enjoyed the traditions of the Native Americans, pow wows, gourd dancing and participating in Native events. He had earned a 3rd degree black belt in Karate. He was an avid gun collector and loved to go to his Uncle Joe's land and practice shoot.

Mr. Oldcamp was preceded in death by his parents, Bud and Joyce Frank, stepfather, Vernon Magpie, Sr. and mother Buelah Oldcamp, grandmother, Lizzy Lefthand, and Uncle Hill Boy Lefthand.

He is survived by his daughter, Tewa Leigh Flyingout, son, Nicoma John Oldcamp, sister, Donna Bickette and Robbie Gee, three brothers, Grady Houch and wife, Vicky, Billy Bickett and Vernon Mag Pie, Jr., all of Oklahoma City, OK.

He is also survived by nephew, Tyler Magpie, OKC, OK and six grandchildren, Cohen Flyingout, Carleigh Flyingout, Kyson Flyingout, Cash Flyingout, Cannon Flyingout, and Keagan Flyingout.

Carol Duncan

Mable Carol Duncan, 80, Clinton resident passed away, Monday, December 18, 2023, in the Mercy Hospital in Oklahoma City, OK. She was born August 8, 1943, to Donald Duncan and Henrietta (Dunaway) Duncan in Cordell, OK.



Carol was raised in Clinton, OK and graduated from Clinton High School in 1962. She worked for several years for the 3M Plant in Weatherford until its closing.

She was inducted into the Route 66 Hall of Fame in 2012, for her many hours of volunteering and research that she contributed to the Route 66 Association. She is also a member of the Custer County Historical Society and Genealogical Society. In her younger years she enjoyed bowling in bowling leagues. Through the years she had dogs and cats which she loved.

She is preceded in death by her parents. She is survived by sister, Donna Sue Gorshing and husband, Larry and nephew, Lee Gorshing and a great-niece, Kaler Gorshing and great nephew Jacob Gorshing.

Laura Wohl

Laura M. Lyles Wohl was born January 12, 1958, in Cordell, OK to R.T. and Doloris (Tipton) Lyles and passed away Monday, December 18, 2023, in her Clinton home surrounded by her family and friends.



Laura was raised in Grandfield, OK and Cordell, OK. She attended most of her schooling in Cordell but moved to Clinton in 1974 and graduated from Clinton Highschool in 1976.

When moving to Clinton she met the love of her life, Danny Wohl. They were married on December 11, 1976, in the home of his parents.

They moved to Tulsa for a short time and moved back to Clinton and Danny and Laura followed the family tradition of the Wohl family and owned and operated a Phillip 66 Service Station, as well as operating Wohl's Flowers and Gift. In 1995 she opened Laura's Loot and Tea Room.

They loved to buy and sell antiques and they owned and operated an antique store to the east of Clinton.

They eventually made their home in Custer City, OK and their love for junking and collecting, they opened a junk and collectable business in an old service station.

Their last year of marriage they moved to Colorado where they became superintendent of the grounds at the Masonic Lodge Park. Danny's illness brought them back to Clinton where Danny soon passed away.

Laura worked for the Lions Den at the Emporium for Toni Lee until it sold to Dawnel Snider and was renamed the Little Red Wagon where she was employed at the time of her death. She was very artistic and loved to design and arrange flowers and home decorating.

She was a member of the First Christian Church, she loved to fish, play card games and was an excellent cook.

She was fascinated with native American traditions and enjoyed going to pow wows and collecting native art.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Danny Wohl, Sr., parents, R.T. and Dolores Lyles, two sisters, Mary Jean Lyles, Sherry Fowler, and brother, Ricky Lyles.

She is survived by son, Danny Wohl, Jr., nine grandchildren, one of which she and Danny, Sr. raised, Blake Wohl and three great grandchildren.

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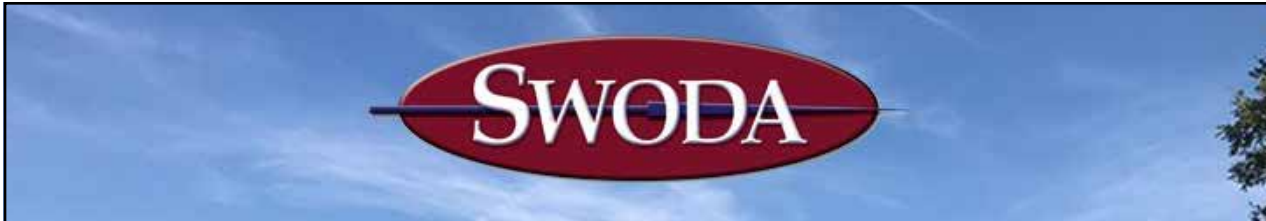
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Masonic Fraternity of Oklahoma Providing Funding for Services Other Agencies Don't Cover



The Masonic Fraternity of Oklahoma is once again partnering with the South Western Oklahoma Development Authority (SWODA) Area Agency on Aging (AAA), along with other Area Agencies on Aging across the state, to assist with funding direct services for people 55 years of age and older in need of some type assistance not otherwise provided by other agencies.

Some of the types of services include minor home repairs, wheelchair ramps, air conditioner window units or space heaters, and/or air condition or heater repairs.

There is an application and funds will be used on a first come, first served basis until they are all utilized. Funding for each type of service will be limited. Those who have desperate or unique needs should file an application because those situations are considered on a case-by-case basis. Assistance will be available once per person every three years. Counties covered by the

SWODA AAA are Beckham, Custer, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Kiowa, Roger Mills, and Washita. The SWODA Aging Services Information Assistant receives calls daily from older people and/or their caregivers with needs, and many are told nothing is available to help. This Masonic funding will enable AAA staff to assist many callers with resources that were not available previously.

This funding "will not only help Oklahoma's older population but will also relieve some of the stress placed on caregivers whose older relatives are continually turned down because of the lack of resources for needed help," said Anita Martinez, SWODA AAA director of Aging Services. Applications will be available January 2, 2024.

To learn more about this and other available services, call the SWODA Masonic Program Coordinator, Joanie Swanson, at 1-800-627-4882, or call the statewide toll-free Senior Info Line at 1-800-211-2116.

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Mulready: Mental Health and Your Insurance

Often, when we discuss health insurance, we focus mainly on physical health benefits for operations, hospital visits or medication and don't mention another important component of well-being: mental health. More than one in five U.S. adults live with a mental illness, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Around the same percentage of Oklahomans (almost 790,000 people) experience a mental illness every year. This is a topic I hope enters the conversation more, and I want Oklahomans to understand mental health parity and insurance coverage.

What is Parity?

First, it's crucial to understand what parity is. In this case, mental health parity means mental health coverage under an insurance plan is equal to physical health coverage. Mental health hasn't always been treated the same as physical health coverage, with this issue addressed by multiple laws over the decades. In 2008, Congress passed the Paul Wellstone and Pete Domenici Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008 (MHPAEA), which generally prevents group health plans and health insurance issuers that provide mental health or substance use disorder benefits from imposing less favorable benefit limitations on those benefits than on medical/surgical benefits. In Oklahoma, we passed SB1718 in 2020, which requires carriers in the state to offer mental health and substance use disorder coverage in parity.

Is My Plan Included Under Mental Health Parity?

All fully insured health plans sold to individuals, small employer groups and large employer groups must include benefits for mental health and substance use disorder services. Self-funded health plans (commonly provided by large employers) aren't required to cover these services. If they do include this coverage, it must be provided in parity with benefits for physical illness.

In general, Parity Rules apply to:

- Private-sector employment-sponsored group health plans with 51 or more workers
- Private plans of smaller employers that started offering health insurance benefits or made major changes to their health insurance plans after March 23, 2010
- Plans sponsored by non-federal governmental employers with 51 or more workers (although self-insured non-federal governmental plans can opt out if they follow certain procedures)
- Most health insurance coverage individuals can purchase, including coverage sold through the Health Insurance Marketplace
- Most, but not all, Medicaid managed care programs and all Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) programs
- However, parity does not apply to Medicare fee-for-service or Medicare Advantage plans.

What if My Health Insurance Plan Doesn't Treat Mental Health and Physical Health Equally?

Review your health insurance plan and look closely at your benefits. If you determine your insurer does not meet parity but does meet the above criteria, contact us at the Oklahoma Insurance Department at 800-522-0071 or visit oid.ok.gov.

We can help review policies and contact insurance companies on your behalf to ensure compliance with state and federal parity laws. For immediate mental health assistance, call or text Oklahoma's Mental Health Lifeline at 988.

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HIGHER GROUND

The Day After Christmas



Jim Morrison

It's the day after Christmas and all through the house, not a creature is stirring, it is quiet as a mouse. Just a few hours ago the rafters rang with shrieks of laughter and good fellowship as six teen-agers, three young adults and their parents enjoyed each other in silly games and contests. We wouldn't have it any other way. I even recorded some of the sounds of laughter to play back when it is too quiet. We are so grateful that the weather cooperated and safe travel brought us all together again. We realize that we are beautifully blessed. They all are in fellowship with the Lord with three of them going on mission trips this spring. All this is in such a contrast to delivering forty-eight Christmas gifts to homes that have a member of the family in incarceration. Our church works in cooperation with Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree

ministry. It is a joy to see some smiles and get some hugs from appreciative parents and children. I am grateful for the generosity of members of the church who made the gifts possible. Approximately 175 man/woman hours were involved in the bell-ringing ministry to raise funds for the mission house in Clinton. I am grateful for the many who gave of themselves to stand in sometimes cold weather to give out candy canes and call attention to the ministry. Someone please remind me next September that I must find some way to share some of these responsibilities. This mind is getting too old to take on the stress involved.

Longfellow's well known poem "I heard the bells on Christmas Day," came out of a time of personal tragedy. In 1861 he lost his devoted wife of 18 years in a tragic fire. In trying to save her he was severely burned. He grew a beard to hide the scars on his face. His oldest son joined the Union army against his father's wishes. In a letter he explained, "I have tried hard to resist the temptation of going without your leave but I cannot any longer. I feel it my first duty to do what I can for my country and I would willingly lay down my life for it if it would do any good." He was severely wounded and missed the Battle of Gettysburg. So, he survived to return to his family

It was on Christmas day in 1863 that Longfellow wrote the poem that was later put to music. He exposes his grief in line three which reads, "And in despair I bowed my head: 'There is no peace on earth,' I said, 'For hate is strong, and mocks the song of peace of peace on earth good will to men.'" But his faith rebounded in line four, "Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: God is not dead, nor doth He sleep; The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, with peace on earth good will to men."

I'm afraid the atmosphere of today mirrors the lyrics of line three. Certainly hate is strong and peace is mocked with every newscast of violence and unstrained evil. But we must not live there; for God is not dead nor does he sleep. He is moving in history to accomplish his purposes. We must choose which side we will live on and in the power of His Spirit and with all our resolve give our best efforts to right the wrong. Certainly the lines are sometimes blurred, but the prayers of David in Psalms 25: 4, 5 must be our guide. "Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in our truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior and my hope is in you all day long."

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Anthony Moore Named to Presidential Order of Merit by SWOSU President Diana Lovell



Provided

SWOSU President Dr. Diana Lovell presents State Representative Anthony Moore with the "Presidential Order of Merit."



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WEATHERFORD, OK

State Representative Anthony Moore has been named to the Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) Presidential Order of Merit. Moore, who resides in Clinton with his family, represents District 57 (which includes SWOSU's main campus at Weatherford) in the Oklahoma House of Representatives where he serves as Chairman of the Committee on Higher Education & Career Technology Education.

The SWOSU Presidential Order of Merit is an honor bestowed upon an individual who has shown outstanding achievement, on the state, national or international level, in the arts, sciences, business, industry, the professions, sports, social service or public service. The prestigious award represents recognition of significant distinction that a member of the SWOSU family has attained. SWOSU President the late Dr. John Hays introduced the award in 2004. The SWOSU Presidential Order of Merit is the highest honor in the personal gift of

SWOSU's chief executive.

SWOSU President Dr. Diana R. "Diane" Lovell bestowed the honor on Moore in conjunction with SWOSU's 2023 Homecoming festivities.

"Representative Moore has been a steadfast and focused advocate for higher education in Oklahoma. Moore's leadership led Oklahoma to establish universal Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion, and as Chairman of the House Committee on Higher Education, Moore has fought for and secured historic levels of increased investment in SWOSU's public instruction and workforce training mission," Lovell said. "For support of higher education in Oklahoma, and particularly of SWOSU, we sincerely thank Representative Moore!"

For more information on the SWOSU Presidential Order of Merit, please contact the SWOSU Office of the President by calling 580-774-3766, or emailing president@swosu.edu

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BRIDGEPORT / FIRE - Hinton Fire Chief Andy Walsh says a home in Bridgeport was recently destroyed by a fire. Walsh says no injuries were reported, thanks to assistance from Geary and Hydro Fire Departments.

CANUTE / BOND ISSUE - Canute Public Schools is asking voters to approve a 12-year, \$5.8 million bond at the ballot box in February says District Superintendent Jamey Cook. Canute will vote on February 13th, 2024. Cook says homeowners who pay \$1000 in property tax in 2023-24 would expect to pay \$15.84 more a month in 2024-25.

HYDRO / BARN FIRE - Fire crews from Hydro and Weatherford worked a barn fire, 2 miles east of Hydro, over the weekend says Hydro Fire Chief Ben Slagell. The structure was likely a total loss and many of the contents inside were damaged or lost.

CLINTON / STRUCTURE FIRE - A fire recently did substantial damage to a home in the 400 block of South 14th Street in Clinton. Fire Chief Brett Russell says one firefighter suffered a minor burn.

PSO / REFUNDS - Public Service Company of Oklahoma residential customers will see refunds of interim rates on their monthly bills starting in January. The Oklahoma Corporation Commission approved new rates for PSO customers on November 21st, resulting in refunds with interest on interim rates that began May 22nd. PSO will apply refunds to customer bills as a credit from January through April. For the typical residential customer who uses 1100 kilowatt hours a month, the monthly refund is \$2.81.

WEATHERFORD / HWY 54 - According to Oklahoma Department of Transportation Division 5 Engineer Brent Almquist, construction crews continue to work and make progress on a road construction project on State Highway 54 north of Weatherford. Almquist says the work is scheduled to be complete in the summer of 2024 on the more than \$15 million project.

CLINTON / HOSPITAL - Clinton Mayor David Berrong says the reopening of Clinton Regional Hospital has gone well. The reopening has lessened the number of patients who have to seek care at neighboring hospitals.

WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!

OH HAPPY Day TO YOU!



Have a birthday, anniversary, or other special event? Email us at sales@westokweekly.com to announce it here for FREE!

Alcohol causing problems? Alcoholics Anonymous meets daily at 928 W. Main, Weatherford. Call (580) 819-0727 for more information. **Christian Free Store** - Donations of school supplies, clothes, shoes, etc. are needed or if you are in need. Please call (580) 637-2345 or (580) 291-3875. **Alfalfa, OK, Community Center** "Bible Study," Every Monday Night from 7:00 to 8:00 Hwy 58. Five miles South of Hwy 152. For more information contact (405) 643-9211. Free and Open to the Public. **OK Parkinson's Alliance**, monthly support group meeting the second Thursday of each month, excluding December, at 5:30 p.m. at Weatherford's Pioneer Center, 1000 Gartrell Place. Patients, caregivers, family or friends are welcome. Questions? Contact OK Parkinson's Alliance (405) 810-0695 or info@OKpa.org. **Iron Sharpens Iron** is a Christ-centered adult support group every Tuesday night at 7pm. 233 E Main in Hydro, First Christian Church.

Happy Birthday Wishes for Dec. 27 - Erno Cook, Abby Ewing, Gabe Ferrell, Lee Hamilton, Mark McClure, Chad Meinhardt, Fay Schwartz, Matt Wisdom; **Dec. 28th** - Kayla Albert, Beth Bendure, Debbie Dehn, Pam Garrison, Mark Mapel, Margaret Meek, Marylou Mejia, Debbie Mosburg, Tracy Murray, Craig Price, Ginger Reed, Kaila Royalty, Hannah Sandoval, Lexi Sheperd, Kaye Soddors, Garla Wisdom, Josephine Whiteskunk; **Dec. 29th** - Darrell Coit, Westyn England, Bayley Forbes, Randy Goucher, Garret Graybill, Logan Guthrie, Nicole Horn, Shawn Lindsey, Ruth Mogg, Lars Sittingbear, Triniti Sparks, Tiara Tripp, John Yelloweagle; **Dec. 30th** - Karen Bragg, Carlos Diaz, Kim Hicks, Danny Lenaburg, John Nutry, Charlotte Perry, Sharon Snider, Charlene Tanner, Randy Wynn; **Dec. 31st** - Emma Brown, Bill Bursosky, Lexi Hamilton, Myron Lustfield, Jerald Stelling, Tracy Watkins; **Jan. 1st** - Cody Barrera, Mandi Bozarth, Lyla Bridgeman, Doris Brittain, Gage Butcher, Jolena Elisondo, Megan Hanna, Jenna Hines, Grant Lee, Karen Melton, Harold Miller, Rose Millsbaugh, Kenneth Teek, Barbara Walker; **Jan. 2nd** - Lynn Broadbent, Leon Evans, Rodney LaGrange, Steve Millsbaugh, Jimmy Ridgeway, Dustin Rose, Jordan Stark, Kim Suter, Jeffery Thomas, Nell Walker, Linda Young;

JC Cowboys Celebrating the 2024 New Year all Weekend Long



Are you looking for a fun way to ring in the New Year? JC Cowboys Event Center and Concert Hall in Weatherford has you covered with family-friendly dining Wednesday through Sunday as well as live musical performances planned for Saturday and Sunday night.

For those looking for one of the best dining experiences in Western Oklahoma, JC Cowboys's doors will be open Wednesday through Sunday at 4 pm, with the steak house opening at 6 pm each night.

Dining from 4 pm to 8 pm is family-friendly and open to guests of all ages, however diners are required to place a reservation in advance as seating availability may be limited based on demand.

After 8 pm JC Cowboys becomes an 18-and-over establishment and on Saturday and Sunday they have a great line-up of live country music performers planned. Interested guests are asked to purchase tickets in advance for both events. On Saturday night Matt Castillo will headline JC Cowboy's "Tonkin New Year's Eve... EVE" event. Local musician Krislyn Arthurs will also be making a return to the JC Cowboys stage to open for Castillo. Guests are asked to purchase advance tickets for the event which are priced at \$15 per person.

On Sunday night JC Cowboys brings back Jason Boland and the Stragglers to headline their New Year's Eve festivities. OKC-based musician Kyle Rainer

will open up the live performances at 9pm with Jason Boland and the Stragglers set to take the stage at 10pm. Tickets for the New Years Event start at \$40 and just like Saturday night's event guests are asked to purchase tickets in advance.

And while New Year's weekend is sure to be filled with great food and drinks the ownership and staff at JC Cowboys want to make sure everyone has a safe experience at their establishment. They offer a complimentary shuttle service to and from JC Cowboys for any guests who make reservations at least 24 hours in advance. That means any guests who live within 12 miles of JC Cowboys and want to enjoy an alcoholic drink can do so without taking any dangerous risks.

Bo Seibold, JC Cowboy's owner kindly asks that anyone who wants to take advantage of this complimentary shuttle service call at least 24 hours in advance as shuttles will be in high demand.

For more information about JC Cowboys, you can visit their website at jccowboys.com or you can find them on Facebook by searching "JC Cowboys Event Center and Concert Hall." To purchase tickets online, you can visit www.eventbrite.com/o/jc-cowboys-56593288223 or just by searching JC Cowboys on the Eventbrite website.

Guests can also make dining reservations or place a request for a complimentary shuttle pick-up over the phone by calling 580-772-2851.

A Winter's Eve: A Short Story to Welcome the Winter Season

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

In the enchanting village of Celestria Vale, nestled deep within a snowy valley, there lived a girl named Eve who had a heart as vast as the starlit sky. The Vale was renowned for its magical winter market, where artisans traveled from around the world boasting crafted wonders that bent and defied the laws of reality.

On one brisk December morning, Eve stumbled upon a mysterious shop tucked away in the corner of the marketplace. Its sign read "The Timeless Emporium", and inside, she discovered a peculiar old man named Nicholas. The air in the shop crackled and hummed, and the shelves were adorned with trinkets that radiated beauty and emotion.

Nicholas, sensing her astonishment and deep excitement for something extraordinary, handed her a small ornate snow globe. Of all the lustrous knick-knacks available, this appeared to more knick than knack and she tried to stifle her disappointment. Without a word, he gestured for her to take another glance into the globe. As she peered into its crystal, the snow inside whisked and gushed, and she was transported into a bygone era. Celestria's market square was transformed into a kaleidoscope of colors

and laughter echoed through time.

In this magical realm, Eve encountered her grandmother, long departed but alive in the snow globe's ethereal world. Together, they twirled through the market, savoring the aroma of spiced cocoa and the melody of ancient carols.

As Eve gazed into her grandmother's eyes, a mix of emotions overwhelmed her – joy of reconnection, melancholy of loss, and warmth of enduring love. Nicholas silently observed Eve as she stood in his shop, her eyes closed and teary, as he understood the profound impact of the moment.

With a blink, she returned to the present.

Eve clutched the snow globe, its surface etched with the memories of winters festivals past. Determined to share this experience, she went around inviting villagers to witness the wonders within the globe.

The news spread like wildfire, and soon, the entire village had gathered in the square to experience the timeless memories, each one etching more intricate designs into the glass of the sphere. Some found solace in rekindled friendships, while others discovered the beauty of forgiveness.

Celestria's winter market became a tapestry of shared wonder and emotions that united the

community. Amidst the swirling snowflakes and the glowing lights, the villagers embraced the richness of their collective experiences.

Soon, the clock struck midnight, and the globe seemed to send itself flying out of the careful hands of Eve and into the frost-covered gravel, shattering. The merriment vanished instantly. Not a word was spoken. After what must have been an eternity, Eve, brimmed with sadness, moved forward to pick up the pieces when suddenly the globe's pieces began to shimmer and vibrate. A soft and subtle tone began to play out from one of the pieces. Then another, then another... then... a chorus of a carols rang out. One-by-one the pieces flew up to the top of the square's pine tree and projected the shared memories and emotions of the village for all to see. The Vale became a living, breathing storybook, illuminated by the wonder of its past and present.

As the final notes of the celestial carol faded into the night, Eve stood amidst the shimmering lights, surrounded by the beauty of shared memories. The villagers laughed and sang in merriment. The magic lasted through the night and deeply wove itself into the very fabric of the village. Leaving a legacy of wonder that would endure for generations to come.

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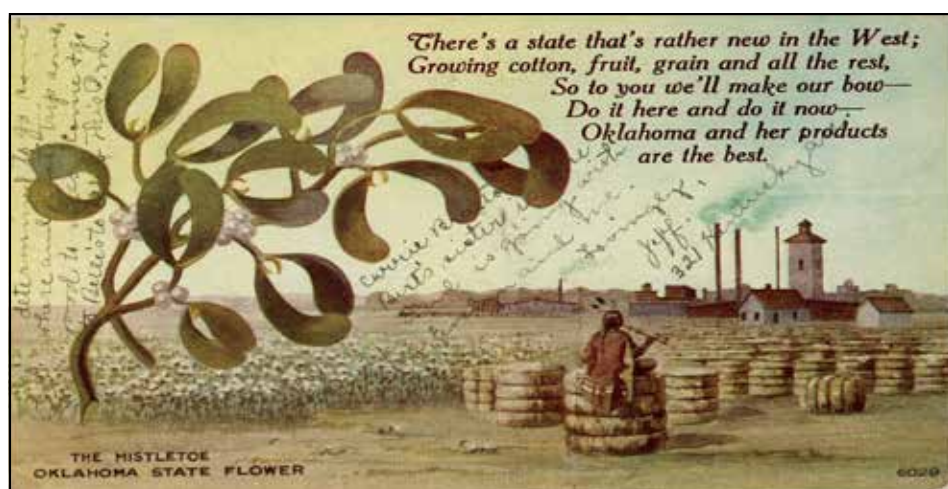
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Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society

A 1912 Oklahoma Postcard featuring the Mistletoe as our state flower, pictured left. The back can be seen on the right.

Oklahoma History: The Rise, Controversy, and Legacy of Mistletoes

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

In the rich tapestry of Oklahoma’s history, one unexpected symbol stands out — mistletoe, the unique and storied plant associated with Christmas decorations. Its journey to becoming the official floral emblem of the state is a tale that began over a century ago.

In 1893, the territorial legislature made history by designating mistletoe as Oklahoma’s official floral emblem. This landmark decision, recorded in House Bill 49 on February 11, 1893 (Oklahoma Historical Society [OHS]), marked the first instance of any legislature establishing an official floral emblem.

The mistletoe bill, introduced by Representative J. A. Wimberly, was met with skepticism and pushback. As a parasitic plant, the committee was hesitant to mark it as the territory’s symbol (OHS). Mrs. O. Beeson, a determined advocate from El Reno, passionately lobbied for mistletoe as the emblem. The territorial government was at the time considering floral exhibits for the upcoming World’s Columbian Exposition in 1893 (OHS), and opinions diverged. Some favored passion flowers, adding complexity to the debate.

Mrs. Beeson successfully persuaded Representative Wimberly, representing Kingfisher and Canadian counties, to champion the mistletoe cause. This collaboration led to the establishment of mistletoe as Oklahoma’s emblem, a decision that reverberated through the years (OHS).

Following statehood in 1907, mistletoe faced another legislative challenge. Senator John Golobie, a bachelor, editor, and publisher of Guthrie’s Oklahoma State Register and an immigrant from Yugoslavia, ardently filed a bill to retain mistletoe’s status as the official floral emblem. Golobie, who likely witnessed the original mistletoe bill’s passage in 1893 as a journalist, passionately spoke in favor, recounting mistletoe’s significance during the harsh winter of 1889 (OHS).

During that winter, the bitter cold and dry conditions posed challenges for people to find greenery or decorations to adorn their homes or gravesites during the holiday season. However, with mistletoe as an evergreen plant, it retained its greenery despite the odds. Its prevalence throughout the state became a symbol of resilience and hope.

Its common availability provided comfort and festivity to the homes of many Oklahomans.

In 1910, Golobie’s efforts in recognizing the role mistletoe played in the spirits of the communities resulted in the bill becoming law.

However, controversy resurfaced in the 1980s when Representative Kelly Haney of Seminole introduced House Bill 1649, aiming to designate the Indian blanket as the state’s official wildflower. The bill passed in February 1986, marking a shift in symbolism.

A ceremony held in the Capitol celebrated the new symbol, attended by representatives of more than twenty Indian tribes. Notably, officials acknowledged the enduring legacy of mistletoe as the state’s official “floral emblem.” (OHS)

The mistletoe’s journey from controversy to enduring emblem reflects the dynamic nature of state symbolism, shaped by cultural perspectives, historical connections, and the ever-evolving identity of Oklahoma.

Today, mistletoe remains a unique and storied representation of the state’s rich heritage and a staple of the holiday season for many throughout the country.

SWOSU Triumphs in Esports Championships



Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society

The SWOSU Blue Esports Team competed in the National Esports Collegiate Conference in July 2024. Fighting against 200 other universities in the United States and Canada, SWOSU returned home as Champions in three gaming tournaments:

Super Smash Bros., a fighting game by Nintendo featuring various video game characters; **Overwatch 2**, a first-person-shooter (FPS) well known for its colorful atmosphere and cast; and **Valorant**, an FPS focused on tactics and strategy with a wide variety of player abilities.

From left to right: Tanner McMullin, Drake Pena, Andrew Rogers, Ethan Abrahamson, Ralph Sartin, Thomas Dyer, Reed Kessler, Kade Hicks, Cameron Cochran, Aden Stubblefield, Chase Terry, Ethan Haikey, Zeb Seymour, and Timothy Lee.

The Southwestern Oklahoma State University (SWOSU) Blue Esports team concluded a week-long esports competition from Monday, Dec. 4, to Friday, Dec. 8, at the SWOSU Esports Arena in the Wellness Center on the Weatherford campus.

SWOSU Blue teams celebrated remarkable achievements, as they emerged as National Esports Collegiate Conference (NECC) champions in Valorant, Super Smash Bros, and Overwatch 2. This earned them an automatic qualification for the NECC national tournaments scheduled for May. Although the SWOSU Blue Rocket League team lost their challenging match that went to game 7 in overtime, the team demonstrated resilience in a hard-fought battle.

“Victory isn’t just about skill. It’s about strategy, teamwork, and the relentless pursuit of excellence. Seeing our Overwatch, Valorant, and Super Smash Bros teams win their conference championships is a testament to their dedication and belief in their craft that they work on constantly, said Dr. Hayden Harrington, SWOSU Esports Director. “But this is just the beginning. Champions aren’t crowned by chance, but by the consistent drive to surpass yesterday’s achievements. Each team will savor these wins, learn from it, and gear up to win a National Championship in May.”

The Super Smash Bros match proved to be the most intense, featuring two top five national teams competing for the conference championship. Valorant’s come-from-behind victory showcased the team’s ability to rally and persevere, and the Overwatch match saw a complete domination by the SWOSU Blue team.

Despite Rocket League’s loss in overtime during game 7, the team performed admirably against a strong opponent that had not lost one match all season. SWOSU Rocket League was the sole team capable of securing victories against Kansas State University.

“To say I’m proud of the team would be an understatement! These boys worked hard all season and it showed during the championship game with what I feel was one of if not their best performance of the season,” said Overwatch Coach Dakota Dye. “It’s truly an incredible feeling for us to win another conference championship in Overwatch and I’m just

again so proud of these guys. We can’t wait to get back in January to start our goal of winning a 3rd conference title in a row and hopefully a National Championship will follow that!”

Esports competitions, such as NECC, provide a crucial platform for students to showcase their talents and compete against other universities. SWOSU has established a program that offers students an opportunity to compete at the highest level.

For more information about SWOSU Esports, visit www.swosu.edu/campus-life/esports.php

Valorant Team:

- Cameron Cochran, Captain, “Sugar-Free”
- Brian Alvarado, “Clarity”
- Aden Stubblefield, “Griff”
- Ethan Haikey, “Rekk”
- Chase Terry, “Samsara”

Super Smash Bros. Ultimate Team:

- Tanner McMullin, Co-Captain, “Not_Epic”
- Adam Brown, Co-Captain, “Agent_A”
- Ralph Sartin, “Affergot”
- Ethan Henderson, “Edawg”
- Timothy Lee, “MrDraco”
- Drake Pena, “Big Drako”

Overwatch 2 Team:

- Brandon Owens, “Rizz” (Team Captain)
- Max Marler, “Pasty”
- Thomas Dyer, “MaxWitherMan”
- Hunter Albrightson, “Eden”
- Ethan Abrahamson, “Ballter”
- Reed Kessler, “Mighty”
- Andrew Rogers, “Exo”

Rocket League Team:

- Coby de Angelo, Captain, “Coby”
- Tyler Kirsch, “SlashrRL”
- Elias Rodriguez Gutierrez, “Astro_Boi_07”
- Andrew Gordon, “Drue”

The Fox and the Chihuahua



Maxine McCullough

A few months ago, my very kind son-in-law had just dropped off groceries for me and was on his way home. He called me on his way and said: “Don’t let Sugar out for a while. I just saw a red fox at the end of your street.” I asked him if he was kidding—if he was sure. He assured me he had

seen a red fox at the end of my street.

Now, Sugar is my little lightweight chihuahua cross (What does the cross in “Chihuahua Cross” mean? We don’t know...and we don’t really care, either). I watched her closely for weeks and kept my eyes open for this red fox, but it never appeared. After a month had passed, I had forgotten all about it.

A few weeks later, a friend was walking to their car from my house when I heard them say, “Hey, look, a red fox!” I looked and sure enough! Trotting across my front yard was a—no, the—red fox.

When confronted with a new face, Sugar is apt to run up to them—barking, wagging her tail, turning in circles, and generally acting like a complete pest. She would never bite but makes it impossible to have a conversation.

Can I quiet her? Not really. She’s very spoiled and I suppose she enjoyed the sound of her own high-pitched yipping voice. It can be annoying. What if she saw the red fox and decided to annoy it? The red fox might not have taken kindly to that.

Fortunately, the confrontation between us was short-lived. Bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, both figuratively and literally, the red fox stopped, looked back at us for a fleeting moment, and trotted off. I haven’t seen it since.

Safe travels, “red fox!” Just don’t come anywhere near my little Sugar. Her yipping means no harm, I promise.



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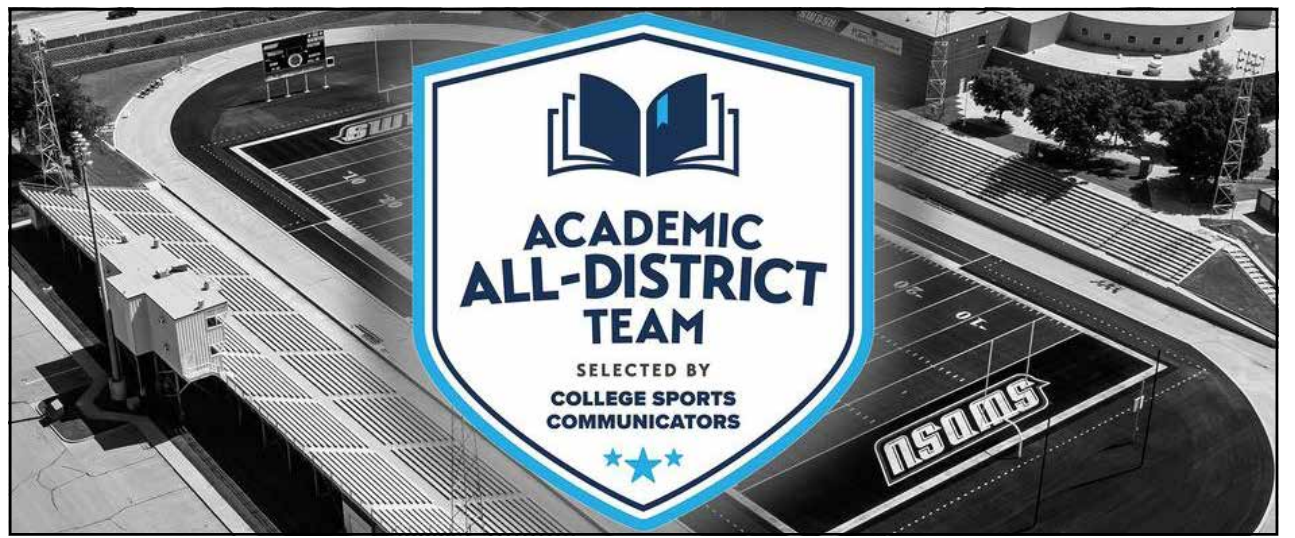
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Eight From SWOSU Football Named to College Sports Communicators Academic All-District



Jon Chidester
 Sports Asst. AD

Eight members of SWOSU Football were named to the College Sports Communicators (CSC) Academic All-District Team, announced this week by the organization.

Engle, Foster, Karsak, and Monroe all earn the recognition for a second straight year, while Creach, Horton, McNutt, and Tucker are first time recipients.

Academic All-District selections were based on combined academic and athletic performances/participation among other qualifications. One must also hold a 3.5 minimum cumulative GPA.

The 2023 Academic All-District® Teams, selected by College Sports Communicators, recognize the nation's top student-athletes for their combined performances on the field or court and in the classroom. The CSC Academic All-America® program separately recognizes honorees in four divisions — NCAA Division I, NCAA Division II, NCAA Division III and NAIA.

SWOSU's recipients include:

- #44 Carson Creach
Major: Entrepreneurship
- #00 Logan Engle
Major: Management
- #50 Isaac Foster
Major: Exercise Science
- #89 Andrew Horton
Major: Health Information Mgmt.
- #80 Jacob Karsak
Major: Health Sciences
- #35 Peyton McNutt
Major: Sports Management
- #10 Logan Monroe
Major: Exercise Science
- #21 Tye Tucker
Major: Management

Andrew Rice Officially Introduced to the Public as SWOSU's Newest Football Coach



SWOSU welcomes their newest Head Football Coach Pictured with a Meet-and-Greet open to the public. Pictured, from left: SWOSU Athletic Director Todd Helton, SWOSU 25th Head Football Coach Andrew Rice, and SWOSU President Diana Lovell.



After Helton introduced him, Rice expressed how excited he was to be given this opportunity to work with SWOSU. Rice was beaming throughout his entire 15-minute speech.

"Meeting [the current players] on Wednesday was awesome. I was fired up for the rest of the day from that. I cannot wait until January 16th when we can all get in the same room together and get to work!"

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