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Elk City Chamber of Commerce Awarded Over \$200,000 for Route 66 Revitalization Project



Teresa Kilhoffer / WW

The Parker Drilling Company's Rig 114 is located in Elk City on the corner of N Madison Street and Route 66. It was once the world's tallest and deepest oil tower, standing at over 180 ft. tall and reaching nearly six miles into the Earth's crust. Elk City has housed the rig since 1991, and it has been a popular attraction on Route 66 ever since.

Susie Cupp
Elk City Chamber President

The Elk City Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce it has been awarded over \$200,000 through the Route 66 Revitalization Grant Program to enhance one of Elk City's most iconic landmarks: *Parker Drilling Rig 114*. This grant is a major step forward in our ongoing mission to preserve and promote Elk City's place on the historic Route 66 corridor. Parker Drilling Rig 114 is a symbol of our community's rich oil history and frontier spirit, and this funding ensures it remains a destination for generations to come.

The Chamber thanks the Oklahoma Department of Commerce and all stakeholders involved in securing this grant and looks forward to sharing progress updates with the community.

We would also like to thank Lisa Church (SWODA) for helping us facilitate the grant application.

This significant investment will fund a comprehensive improvement project that includes:

- Lighting and Uplighting
- Landscaping
- Painting and Equipment Restoration
- Digital Signage for Historical Content
- Parking Improvements
- Installation of City Benches
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Minnie Simmons

Minnie Lee Simmons was born August 31, 1944, in Antlers, to Felix "Hobe" Ellis and Jewell Lee (Riddle) Russ and passed away Friday, April 25, 2025, at home in Weatherford, at the age of 80 years, 7 months and 23 days.



Minnie was born near Antlers, OK and her family soon moved to western Oklahoma where they eventually settled in Rocky when Minnie was in middle school. She soon graduated from Rocky High School with the Class of 1963. After high school, Minnie worked at Southwest State Bank in Sentinel.

On October 22, 1965, she married Billy James Simmons in Cordell, OK. Bill was drafted into the military and together they soon moved to San Antonio where Bill was stationed. After his military service was complete, they returned home to Oklahoma and made their home in Cordell. Minnie worked as a CNA and receptionist at an optometrist office in Hobart.

In 1979, Minnie and Bill moved to Minnie's mother's home in Rocky. They later moved in 2002 to Weatherford to be closer to family.

Minnie enjoyed reading, was an amazing cook and loved to bake and feed her family. Her biggest priority was spending time with her family. One of her very favorite things to do was to sit and rock babies, she was known as the "baby whisperer". Minnie will be remembered as a very caring, compassionate and empathetic person that had the biggest heart.

Minnie is preceded in death by her parents, Felix and Jewel Russ; three sisters, Charlene Russ, Janie Wilson, and Pearl Franklin; and two brothers, Herb and Bill Russ.

Minnie is survived by her husband, Bill Simmons of their home in Weatherford; son, Adam Simmons and wife, Dana of Weatherford, TX; two daughters, Lisa Harrelson and husband Terry of Weatherford, OK and Misty Rebman and husband John of Keller, TX; one sister, Cora Little of Weatherford, OK; one brother, Gary Russ of Centerton, AR; nine grandchildren, Kylee, Luke, Jake, Dylan, Holden, Gage, Rylee, Josh, and Henzlee; and eight great-grandchildren.

Beverly Fesmire

Beverly Gene Fesmire, 75, of Altus, Oklahoma was born on January 5, 1950 in Sherman, Texas. She is the daughter of Lester Royce and Carmen Mozelle (Buck) Jones.



Beverly went to be with her Lord and Savior on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at Integris Hospice House, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, surrounded by her loving family.

Beverly married James Fesmire on April 18, 1973, in Altus, Oklahoma. Together they raised their children and shared many wonderful years of marriage together.

Beverly enjoyed sewing, and was an avid sports fan, her favorite teams were OU Softball and Tennessee Girls Basketball. She loved watching her grandchildren play sports throughout their lives and spending time with her and family and friends. Beverly will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.

Cherishing her memory is her loving husband, James Fesmire of Altus, Oklahoma; two sons, Mike Fesmire and wife, Shanda of Lone Wolf, Oklahoma, Kyle Fesmire and wife, Amber of Guymon, Oklahoma; one daughter, Heather Frith of Blair, Oklahoma; eight grandchildren, Sierra Lyng and husband, Nick of Altus, Oklahoma, Logan Frith of Blair, Oklahoma, Kelsey Frith of Blair, Oklahoma, Delaynie Peters of Corpus Christi, Texas, Jaxon Fesmire of Lone Wolf, Oklahoma, Tyler Fesmire and wife, Disneyrenee of Braymer, Missouri, Beau Fesmire of Guymon, Oklahoma, and Cross Fesmire of Guymon, Oklahoma; one great grandchild, Lettie Fesmire of Braymer, Missouri; one brother, Nick Jones and wife, Katy of Belfair, Washington; one sister, Lynn McDaniel and husband, Larry of Canute, Oklahoma; and numerous other relatives and friends.

Beverly is preceded in death by her parents, Lester Royce and Carmen Mozelle Jones; and one son-in-law, Judd Frith.

Memorials can be made to the Western College, Altus, Oklahoma in care of Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services, P.O. Box 707, Elk City, Oklahoma 73648.

We invite you to leave a message of condolence, expression of sympathy or perhaps share a memory of Beverly at www.martin-duggerfuneralhome.com, the Martin-Dugger Funeral Home and Cremation Services website.

Michael Fitzgerald

Michael Fitzgerald was born to Renee Nelson and Thomas Henderson on June 3, 1987 in Tulsa, OK, and entered into Heaven on Wednesday, April 23, 2025. He met his adoptive parents, David and Marilyn Land, on April 22, 1992 at the Sand Springs Home.



Michael was an energetic, talkative, active child with an infectious smile and contagious laugh. He was fearless and adventurous.

Michael had an uncanny ability to entertain others. Michael could laugh without a sound coming out of him, but he could make others belly laugh for hours. He loved to make others laugh and be entertained with his antics. He was also a great impersonator. Michael loved to play sports which included basketball, football, baseball, soccer, and even wrestling and track for at least one season. He enjoyed the teamwork, camaraderie, and competition. Although he was very talented athletically, his most natural talent was his singing, dancing, and he had perfect pitch and was an active member in choir throughout school and show choir in high school. He played the guitar and loved all genres of music. As a youth, he assisted Ethan Sperle leading worship at church.

After a short stint at Southwestern Oklahoma State University, Michael spent years working in the oil field industry and later in the construction industry. He was an accomplished artist and was great at construction and carpentry. At the time of his death, he was an independent contractor specializing in fence and outdoor construction and remodeling.

Michael married Tara Sparks on December 17, 2013. He had a very close and special relationship with his sister, Brooke, and spent years in his adult life living with her and her children. "Uncle Mike" was one of his favorite roles in life.

Michael is survived by his adoptive parents: Chuck Marquis, Marilyn (Land) Marquis, and David Land, all of Weatherford, OK; and his biological parents: Renee Nelson and Thomas Henderson, both of Tulsa, OK; as well as his seven siblings: Derek Williamson of Meridian, OK; Brooke Jarvis and her husband Nathan of Yukon, OK; Carissa King and her husband Garrett of Weatherford, OK; Alicia Charnick and her husband Mike of Ft Collins, CO; Farrell Umholtz of Kansas City, MO; Bonni Nelson, and Samuel Nelson both of Tulsa, OK; and one grandmother, Mary Bryant, of Weatherford, OK.

Also cherishing his memory is eight nieces and nephews: Wyatt Williamson and his wife Kelsie of Guthrie, OK; Reese Williamson of Watonga, OK; Ryder and Bray Jarvis of Norman, OK; Ransom and Bria Jarvis of Yukon, OK, and Nellie and Margie King, Weatherford, OK; two great-nephews, Bentley and Houston Williamson; aunts and uncles: Cathy and Mark Shadid of Norman, OK; Debbie and Sparky Hurst of Edmond, OK; Greg Nelson of Tampa, FL; Cindy and Randy Hartt of Columbus, WI; Julie and Paul Astbury of Connecticut; and cousins: Tyler Shadid of OKC, OK, Trent Shadid and his wife Anna of Memphis, TN; and Emberly Hurst of Edmond, OK.

Michael had a close personal relationship with extended cousins Bryan, Janice and Ethan Sperle. Tara Sparks also survives Michael.

Michael was preceded in death by his grandparents Bobby Bryant, Proctor and Dixie Land, Vernon Nelson, and Bonnie Dillard, brother, Brian Land, and uncle Fred Nelson, as well as his close friend Cameron Clark.

Nannie Wheeler

Nannie Lenora Wheeler of Hammon, was born on December 31, 1940, in Elk City. She is the daughter of John and Blanche (Stanley) Woodhouse. Nannie went to be with her Lord and Savior on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at Great Plains Regional Medical Center, Elk City, surrounded by her loving family.



Nannie's greatest joy was taking care of her children and grandchildren. She loved spending time with family and friends, playing dominoes and card games. Nannie enjoyed raising cattle, working in her flower garden, and going to garage sales. She also liked working on puzzles and collecting horses throughout her life.

Nannie had a deep personal relationship with God and was a devoted member of the Community Fellowship Church in Hammon, Oklahoma. Nannie will be truly missed by her family and friends that knew her so well.

Cherishing her memory is her loving son, Charlie Snow of Hammon, Oklahoma; her two grandchildren, Ledridge Lee of Hammon, Oklahoma, Charles Snow of Lawton, Oklahoma; one stepson, Brent Wheeler of Elk City, Oklahoma; and numerous other relatives and friends.

Nannie is preceded in death by her parents, John and Blanche (Stanley) Woodhouse; and her husband, Leland Wheeler.

Ronald Shepard

Ronald Lee Shepard was born July 21, 1938, in Bryan County, OK, to Clyde Jr. and Sarah (Simpson) Shepard and passed away on Saturday, April 26, 2025, in Clinton, OK, at the age of 86.



Ronald was born on the family farm in Bryan County, OK, near the town of Roberta. After high school, he attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, OK. From an early age, Ronald was fascinated by watching planes fly and in 1956 he enlisted in the United States Air Force where he served for 22 years, becoming a fighter pilot, being Honorably discharged in 1978. Ronald married Mary Kay Marsh in 1957. In 1960, they welcomed their son, Steven. He later married Mary Ann Weigand on October 11th, 1969, in Las Vegas, Nevada. To this union, his son, Tom was born. He was able to finish college in 1970 with a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of Nebraska.

In 1958, Ronald attended the Aviation Cadet Program at the age of 19 years old. This was a program specifically for enlisted soldiers to attend pilot training. His first assignment was flying F-100's at Cannon AFB with the 522nd Tactical Fighter Squadron. At the age of 20, he deployed to Turkey to sit on "nuclear alert" while waiting to fly into Russia with a nuclear bomb. In 1962, he attended the US Army Airborne School and Forward Air Controller School. He was assigned to the 101st Airborne Division while waiting to parachute into Cuba during the missile crisis. Ronald deployed to Vietnam in 1963 with the South Vietnamese Rangers in the war zone, as a forward air controller during the advisory period of the war. He was deployed again in 1965, flying F-100's out of Bien Hoa, South Vietnam. He provided close air support for the Battle of the Ia Drang Valley. In 1967, he attended Fighter Weapons School and graduated as Top Gun from his class. Ronald also attended and graduated from USAF Wild Weasel Program the same year. He was deployed a third time in 1968, with the 44th Tac Fighter Squadron to Korat, Thailand, conducting the suppression of enemy air defenses and bombing raids over North Vietnam. The missions were so dangerous that a deployment was not based on time but instead was considered finished when one completed 100 missions over North Vietnam.

After his 3rd tour, he came back and was an instructor in the F-4 Phantom and later was assigned to AFHQ Europe. His last assignment was as a pilot and squadron tactics officer in the newly established F-15A squadrons at Langley AFB Virginia. He retired from the USAF in 1978. After his discharge from the Air Force, he returned to Southeastern Oklahoma State University where he received a master's degree in accounting.

Ronald then worked for the Oklahoma State Auditor's Office for 18 years, which eventually transferred him to Weatherford in 1983, retiring in 1997. After retiring, he started working as a crop adjuster. Ronald enjoyed golfing, hiking, snow skiing, being outdoors, and driving fast in his Corvettes.

Ronald was preceded in death by his parents, Clyde Jr. and Sarah Shepard and his sister, Linda Kay McDonough.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Ann Shepard, of the home; sons, Tom Shepard of Weatherford and Steven (Tonya) Shepard of Burleson, TX; brother, Tom (Darlene) Shepard; three grandchildren, Jade Shepard, Tyler (Andrea) Shepard, and Spencer (Courtney) Shepard; five great-grandchildren, Gavin, Becket, McKenna, Cami, and Jackson; and many nieces and nephews.

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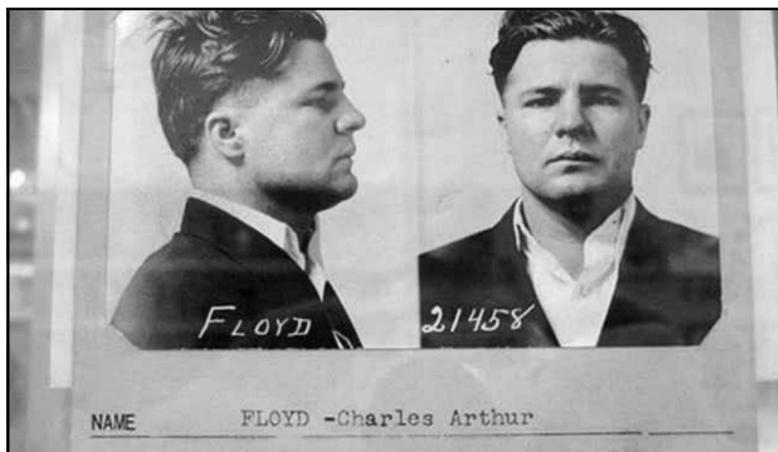
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Oklahoma History: The Life and Death of Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd



Provided by the FBI's Public Records

Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd's FBI mugshot, taken on June 22, 1933, following his arrest for bank robbery. This photograph was circulated during his time as Public Enemy No. 1. In various wanted posters, announcements and newspapers like these.



Provided by the FBI's Public Records

The body of Charles "Pretty Boy" Floyd after his death in East Liverpool, Ohio, on October 22, 1934. Law Enforcement officers and a coroner inspect the remains of the outlaw following the fatal shootout.

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

Charles Arthur Floyd, better known as "Pretty Boy" Floyd, was born on February 3, 1904, in Adairville, Georgia. In 1911, his family moved to Oklahoma, settling near Akins in Sequoyah County. Growing up in poverty, Floyd turned to crime early, with his first arrest at 18 for stealing \$3.50 from a local post office.

At age 20, he married Ruby Hardgrave and fathered a son, Jack Dempsey Floyd. For a brief time, he tried the honest life. But there wasn't enough money in farmwork. In 1925, a payroll heist in St. Louis earned him a few years behind bars. Fellow inmates started his infamous nickname of "Pretty Boy" for his good looks and slick style, a name Floyd hated for the rest of his life.

After his release, Floyd became involved with criminal gangs in Kansas City, Missouri, and began a series of bank robberies across the Midwest. Between 1929 and 1934, he was involved in numerous heists, often targeting institutions in

Oklahoma, Ohio, and Kentucky. Floyd gained a reputation for his supposed acts of generosity, with stories circulating that he destroyed mortgage documents during robberies to free debt-ridden farmers, earning him the moniker "Robin Hood of the Cookson Hills."

That notoriety helped him build alliances along the way. He partnered with men like George Birdwell, a fellow Oklahoman, and later Adam Richetti, a young outlaw from Missouri. He moved through a tight network of hideouts, from the back roads of Cookson Hills to the alleys of Kansas City. Friends and family sheltered him. Strangers too. In the Dust Bowl days, resentment against banks ran deep, and many saw Floyd not as a criminal, but as one of their own fighting back.

Still, Floyd's criminal activities made him a target for law enforcement. In 1934, following the death of John Dillinger, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover named Floyd "Public Enemy No. 1."

Despite the bloodshed tied to his name, Floyd

stayed fiercely loyal to his family. He often returned home in secret to visit his son or help relatives struggling through the Depression.

He paid off medical bills for neighbors. He bought groceries for families teetering on starvation. In private, they knew him as "Charlie," a loyal son, brother, and father, not as the face on America's "Public Enemy #1" wanted poster.

Eventually, the manhunt caught up to him and on October 22, 1934, Floyd was shot and killed by FBI agents in a cornfield near East Liverpool, Ohio. His last words were, "I'm Charles Arthur Floyd".

His body was returned to Oklahoma, where an estimated 20,000 to 40,000 people attended his funeral in Sallisaw, marking one of the largest funerals in the state's history.

Floyd's legacy remains complex; while law enforcement viewed him as a dangerous criminal, many remembered him as a complicated folk hero, a son of the Dust Bowl who fought the only way he knew how.

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LOCAL AND AREA NEWS



Mike Smith
News Director

“Space City Paddle Battle” Sees Huge Turnout from Across West OK



Weatherford Area Pickleball Association / Facebook

Weatherford recently hosted their third annual pickleball tournament. Attendees from across western Oklahoma stopped by to compete, watch, and participate in the event's many raffles.



Montgomery Malone / Malone Video & Photography

Mac McCune (left), the Chairman of the Weatherford Area Pickleball Association, participated in the Men's 3.5/4.0 Division and managed to score 2nd Place alongside Dr. Brian Bluth (right).

<p>Men's Open (1st received \$500) 1st: James Seagraves/Michael Moody 2nd: Joseph Campbell/Joseph Sraader 3rd: Jake Brydges/Kenny Cowell</p>	<p>Women's 3.0 19+ & 50+ 1st: Isabel Li/Melody Li 2nd: Taylor Lewis/Mallory Hankins 3rd: Amanda Currier/Te Dragg</p>
<p>Men's 2.5 19+ & 50+ 1st: Jonathan Young/Karson Howerton 2nd: Allen Carson/Chad Cochran 3rd: Nic Townsend/Christopher Curtis</p>	<p>Women's 3.5/4.0 19+ & 50+ 1st: Arlee Copeland/Amy Bluth 2nd: Sherry Roden/Kathy Knight 3rd: Juli Cowden/Amy Poyner</p>
<p>Men's 3.0 19+ 1st: Chris Forbes/Sutton Hayes 2nd: Ben Cuevas/Alex Nelson 3rd: Richard Pope/Chris Fourcade</p>	<p>Mixed Open (1st received \$500) 1st: James Seagraves/Alex Bowers 2nd: Joe Merrell/Mandy O'Neil 3rd: Brian Richardson/Jennifer Harjo</p>
<p>Men's 3.5 50+ 1st: Chris Jones/Joe Munson 2nd: Jason Doughty/Michael Belter 3rd: Mike Baker/Chris Bivens</p>	<p>Mixed 2.5 19+ 1st: Michael Huang/Isabel Li 2nd: Katelyn Jones/Ivan Ding 3rd: Isaac Han/Ellie Beleleu</p>
<p>Men's 3.5/4.0 19+ 1st: Taiwo Adedipe 2nd: Mac McCune/Brian Bluth 3rd: Addison Augusta/Lewis Timbrook</p>	<p>Mixed 3.0 19+ 1st: Carson Ngo/Melody Li 2nd: Oliver Lackey/Olivia Lackey 3rd: Zach Hunt/Chayse Kirk</p>
<p>Women's 2.5 19+ 1st: Katelyn Jones/Olivia Lackey 2nd: Gabrielle Mangrum/Tara Cuevas 3rd: Valerie Stuart/Kensy Nelson</p>	<p>Mixed 3.0/3.5 50+ 1st: Jason Doughty/Melinda Parsons 2nd: Mike Belter/Martha Moore 3rd: Danny Parsons/Juli Cowden</p>
<p>Women's 2.5 50+ 1st: Cindy Wagner/Tereasa Kirkwood 2nd: Victoria Sturtevant/Jody Wiechmann 3rd: Missy Heard/Terri Harrelson</p>	<p>Mixed 4.0 19+ 1st: Austin Christopher/Dally Halbrooks 2nd: Jacob Kuehn/Sherry Roden 3rd: Jake Brydges/Megan Brydges</p>



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from Weatherford Athletic Department

The Weatherford Lady Eagles' golf team has been named “Academic State Champions” for having the highest cumulative GPA among all other 4A schools in Oklahoma.

BECKHAM COUNTY / FATALITY - The Oklahoma Highway Patrol says a California man was recently killed when the semi he was driving overturned on Interstate 40, five miles west of Sayre. OHP says 24-year-old Dilpreet Singh was pronounced dead at the scene. Troopers say Singh was driving east on I-40 when his semi departed the road, Singh overcorrected, and the semi overturned.

CLINTON / BLAKEBURN CLINIC - The Blakeburn Clinic in Clinton says Dr. Mark Mann, a highly respected family medicine physician, will join the practice as a concierge physician beginning July 1st. Dr. Mann brings a deep commitment to rural healthcare, patient-centered service, and community care. In the meantime, Dr. Blakeburn will continue to manage patient care and after-hours needs.

WATONGA / SHELTER - The Blaine County Sheriff's Office and Watonga Public Schools have created a partnership to ensure the citizens of Watonga have a safe and secure storm shelter during inclement weather. Sheriff's deputies will ensure that the storm shelter located at Watonga Elementary will be accessible if a tornado warning is issued. Meanwhile, the storm shelter at Watonga High School will be utilized if necessary. Individuals will enter the west side entrance of the elementary school to access the safe room. If the elementary school becomes crowded, the high school safe room can be utilized. This will be for hours outside the school day.

CORDELL / NEW SUPERINTENDENT - The Cordell School Board of Education has approved the hiring of a new superintendent. Board President Jeff Jaronek says Sam Belcher has been hired to lead the district beginning July 1st. “We're really excited to have him come to Cordell,” expressed Jaronek. “I think he brings a lot of expertise, a lot of knowledge, and I think he's going to fit in the community [well].” Belcher previously served as Mountain View-Gotebo's Superintendent and is currently a Calumet Principal. He succeeds current Superintendent Travis Victory, who recently submitted his resignation effective at the end of the current school year.

WRH / RADIOLOGY - Weatherford Regional Hospital CEO Darin Farrell recently told the hospital board that there has been a delay surrounding results on outpatient radiology reports. According to Farrell, the medical staff is seeking alternative solutions to help patients in need of imaging modalities. Farrell expressed how difficult it's been to find other agencies who are looking for other clients. Bridget Cosby with SSM stated a shortage of radiologists is responsible for the delay in outpatient radiology results.

ELK CITY / PD INSTAGRAM - Officials with Elk City Police say the department does not have an Instagram account. Officials say if you come across content shared from an “Elk City Police Department” Instagram account to not engage or share the content as it is not affiliated with Elk City Police and should be considered spam. The department has an official Facebook page as its only social media presence.

WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!



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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 April 23 - Marilyn Baldwin, Shelby Blagg, Lena Cardenas, Tyler Ellis, Andrew Fraser, Adam Fraser, Devon Jordan, Daryl Mosburg, Tom Willis; **April 24** - Sandy Duncan, Nikki Frye, Ron Goodman, Mary Harris, Jason Kemper, Shelby Martinez, Greg Mouse, Carol Wahnee, Jill Ward; **April 25** - Casey Elston, Gary Eytcheson, Regena Gardner, Mercedes Hampton, Edward Lopez, Bailee Pond, Kacie Roof, Brooke Schneberger, Shaun Skinner, Baylor Watkins, Lonnelle Whitton; **April 26** - Megan Britton, Peyton Carmin, Micah Dobrinski, Dennis Green, Alex Hicks, Matt Lamm, Denise Lay, Kenneth Maddox, Dakota Meinhardt, Benton Toczko; **April 27** - Richard Ballew, Kaden Buckner, Arthula Carmen, Songhawk Fields-Toahty, Melissa Martin, Liz McBrayer, Avry Nailon, Hermon Small; **April 28** - Janice Ball, Jacob Bass, Alison Mainers, Jay Martin, Alvin McNeal, Gentry Ortiz, Matthew Sumner; **April 29** - Mack Barnes, Ben Brown, Derek Carroll, Mary Frye, Dana Janning, Trent Koch, Summer Lettkeman, Logan Littke, Bailey Mae Matthews, Bruce McLemore, Michelle Nance, Suzzi Rossiter, Vernon Slagle, Cheryl Thomason, J.R. Ussery; **April 30** - Tanner Holt, Kenny Lehman, Ryan Lehman, Thomas Martin, Kassie Miller, Steve Owens, Mark Ray, Austin Richardson, Lauren Roles, Jack Schwartz.

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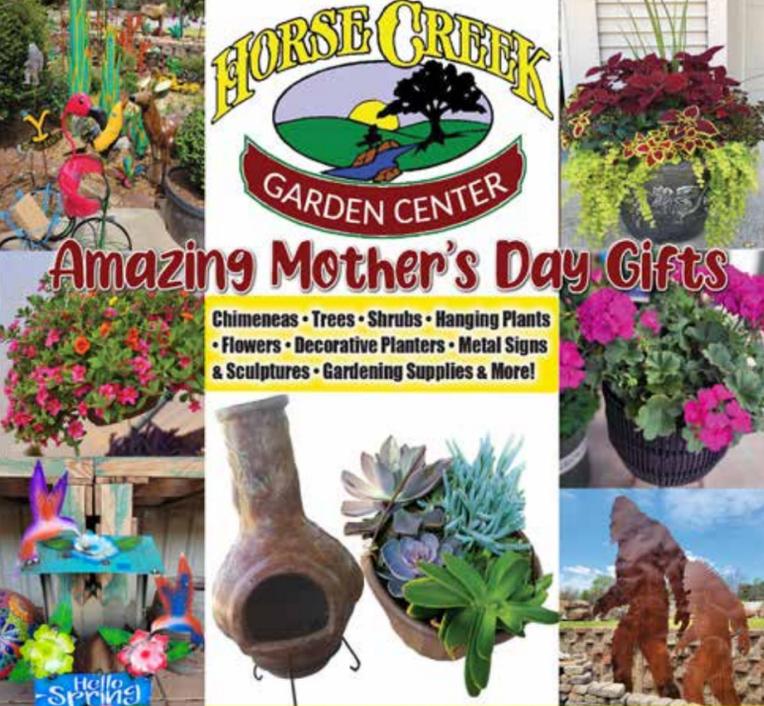
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Shining a Light on the Emotional Well-Being of Older Adults in Long-Term Care Facilities



May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness about the importance of mental wellness for all ages. As a Long-Term Care Ombudsman, I am committed to advocating for the mental and emotional well-being of our aging population, especially those residing in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and other long-term care settings.

While mental health concerns impact people across all demographics, older adults often face unique challenges—such as isolation, loss, physical decline, and transitions in living arrangements—that can contribute to anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues. Unfortunately, these concerns are frequently overlooked or misunderstood in aging communities.

Mental health doesn't diminish with age—if anything, the need for meaningful connection, dignity, and emotional support becomes more critical. Residents in long-term care settings deserve not only high-quality physical care but also compassionate mental and emotional support.

According to the CDC, nearly 1 in 5 adults aged 55 or older experience some type of mental health concern. Yet, too often, these issues are dismissed as “normal aging,” leading to underdiagnosis and

inadequate treatment. This Mental Health Awareness Month, we urge families, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and policymakers to prioritize the emotional needs of older adults.

How You Can Help:

1. Visit and engage with your loved ones regularly.
2. Support programs that foster social connection and purpose for seniors.
3. Encourage open conversations about emotional wellness.

As an ombudsman, I stand ready to listen, support, and advocate for the rights and dignity of every resident. Let us use this month to recommit ourselves to ensuring that aging with mental wellness is not the exception—but the expectation.

If you would like to volunteer or have any other questions or concerns regarding the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, please contact your local ombudsman supervisor, Chloe Nutley, by calling 580-821-4068 or emailing chloe@swoda.org

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HIGHER GROUND

Show Me the Way I Should Go



“Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. “Psalms 143:8. I memorized this verse years ago—even set it to a tune so I could remember it. To me it is a way of beginning my day with a renewed understanding that everything that will happen to me that day will first pass through the filter of God’s unfailing love.

His love is not diminished through my failures or weaknesses. Nothing I can do or fail to do will cause His love to fail. I can walk with confidence that I live in the shelter of His grace. The only condition for me to sense that love is that I “have put my trust in Him.” If I trust my gifts, my work ethic, my “get'er done” attitude, I will ultimately fail or fall prey to a self-righteous, prideful attitude which diminished the glory reserved for God alone.

In the many possibilities and options for the day, I need God to “show me the way I should go.” There are many things that could consume my time that are eternally worthless. I pray, “Lord, may I not be controlled by pleasure, convenience, or by others. Control my heart that I can give myself to those things that count for eternity.” Since the goal of a follower of Christ is to take on His image, I must constantly filter my thoughts, words, and actions on the basis of, “is this Christ-like? Does this reflect the ways of God?”

Then, I must always remember that I live under His Lordship. To God alone do I “lift up my soul.” I am reminded that “Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.” Heb. 4:13. It is not a walk of fear that I must monitor every moment lest I fall under His wrath, but simply a joyful adventure of faith; trusting the Holy Spirit to instruct and guide me as He promised to do.

Joni Eareckson Tada has long been one of my heroes. Paralyzed from her neck down from a diving accident when she was 17, she has been a tremendous example of a life lived to the glory of God through ministry to others, in spite of, or perhaps because of her handicap. In her book “A Quiet Place in a Crazy World,” she shares the secret of her power.

“I have determined that my bed is to be my place of prayer. Ken helps me out of my chair and lays me down around 7:30 every evening and that means I have plenty of time. How blessed I am because of my disability! Other wives are doing the second load of laundry, folding towels, or putting the third kid to bed. And I am paralyzed in bed. What a privilege! My bedroom is my place of prayer. My bed used to be a ‘bed of affliction.’ No longer. Now it’s my favorite place to be. I’m kneeling with Jesus in the Garden. I’m watching with him for an hour. And sometimes I can’t wait to meet with him there.”

Do you have a “quiet place” to meet with the One who loves and longs to meet with you?

To comment: 1580-302-1142, jnm82@outlook.com

SPORTS *Presented by:* HELIOS injection systems

SWOSU Lady Bulldogs Fall in the Final Inning of GAC Quarterfinals



Chase Wright
Staff Writer

SWOSU Softball's season came to an end in walkoff fashion in the opening round of the GAC Tournament, falling short against 2-seeded Oklahoma Baptist 3-2.

SWOSU closes out the year 22-25, representing its most wins since 2012. It was also the first postseason appearance for the Dawgs since 2019.

After a scoreless first inning, the Dawgs loaded the bases in the top of the second, trying to take an early lead. However, a Chesnie Hewitt pop-up ended the inning, stranding all three runners.

The third inning saw the first lead change, as a Riley Lusk single brought in Taylor McMahon to give SWOSU a 1-0 lead. Oklahoma Baptist quickly responded in the bottom of the third, with GAC Player of the Year Sammie Green knotting up the game with a single through the left side.

A sacrifice fly gave OBU the lead in the bottom of the fourth, but SWOSU responded with a run of their own.

Hewitt reached base on a successful bunt, stole second, and advanced to home on a Jaydn Hook single.

Neither team could gain an advantage in the next four half-innings, sending the game to the bottom of the seventh with the Bison at bat. OBU singled to open the inning before a miscommunication on a sacrifice bunt left runners safe at first and second with no outs. A sacrifice bunt by the leadoff hitter put the Bison runners on second and third with one out, and they capitalized on the moment with the next batter singling to right center, ending the game and the season for the Bulldogs.

Hewitt and McMahon led the way with two hits apiece and were the only players to score. SWOSU racked up eight hits, none of which were extra-base hits, and committed zero errors defensively.

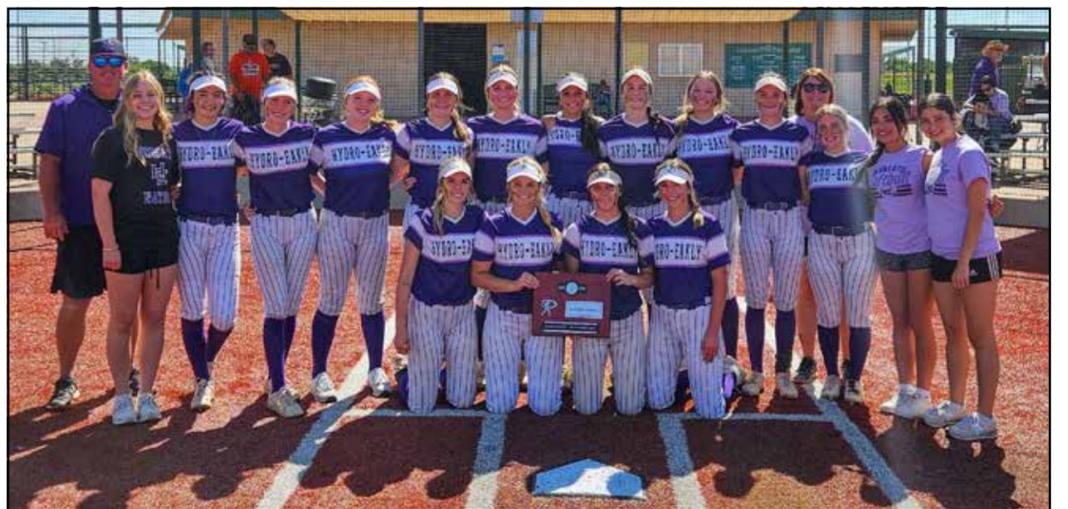
Alexis Taylor finished her freshman campaign 14-11 after taking the loss. She pitched a complete game, giving up eight hits and three runs with four walks and three strikeouts in 29 batters faced.

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Blastball
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from Hydro-Eakly Public Schools

On Wednesday, May 7, The Hydro-Eakly Lady Bobcasts will travel to Firelake Ballpark in Shawnee to compete in the OSSAA Slow Pitch State Championships.



from SWOSU Athletics

SWOSU Softball had four players named to Great American All-Conference teams, headlined by Chesnie Hewitt (left) who earned first team recognition. Jadyn Hook, Alexis Taylor, and Taylor McMahon (pictured, in order) were all named to the honorable mention team.

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CLASS 4A SOCCER STATE BRACKET

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Holland Hall Monday, May 5 @ 5:30PM vs. Victory Christian Winner, Game 1	Clinton Lady Tornadoes Monday, May 5 @ 7:00PM @ Chickasha Winner, Game 2	Weatherford Eagles Monday, May 5 @ 7:00PM vs. Cache Winner, Game 2

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