

The STRAIGHT FORWARD



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Stetson Starr and Jett Spear bundled up and braved the cold so they could have some fun in the snow.
(Photo submitted by Elaina Starr-Spear)

Stilwell Library Friends Book Sale THIS Thursday, Friday and Saturday at Stilwell Public Library!



Stilwell Sports Spotlight

Commentary by John Bankel

Stilwell Lady Indians Wrestling Team Takes 1st Place At Maverick Conference Tournament



No wonder they won! Four girls advanced to the finals while one wrestled for 3rd place. That performance propelled the Wrestling Lady Indians to a First Place finish in the recent Maverick Conference Tournament. The 4 finalists, who all ended up placing 2nd, are Josaline Blevins, Isabell Limon, Jolie Wilhite, and Adrianna Chronister. Finishing in 4th place was Rylin Bailey. Adrianna Chronister lost in the semis and ended up with a 4th place award.

On the Boys' side, Chalino Martinez wrestled well enough to capture 5th place. Alex Rider and Daysun Sanders also wrestled well but did not place. The Team and coaches were awarded this spectacular plaque for the trophy case. Perhaps one of many more to come?



Congratulations to the Team and all the coaches for your marvelous achievement. The Straight Forward FREE Press salutes you!

PROVERB POWER

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen... Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." – Hebrews 11: 1, 3

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Faith Phillips to Speak at Depot

By Regina Philpott McLemore,
ACH&GA Secretary

The Adair County Historical and Genealogical Association (ACH&GA) will host highly successful local author/producer Faith Phillips at their next community meeting, Thursday, February 17, at 6 p.m. She has a lot of exciting news to share, which directly impacts our town. Thanks to her efforts and the support of like-minded citizens, a new cultural arts district is slated to open in downtown Stilwell. According to Ms. Phillips, the district, which will be named "Beyond the Trail Cultural District," will "unite the dynamic arts and cultural heritage of Adair County by anchoring our vast artistic talents in downtown Stilwell."

She will also speak about her recent career developments. The Oxygen series "Relationship Killer", will feature an episode based on her third



Pictured above is the architect's vision for the Stilwell Arts and Cultural Center.

book, Now I Lay Me Down, that will air on Sundays at 6 p.m. In addition, Ms. Phillips has completed a screenplay and will begin filming a

documentary series in the Cherokee Nation in late spring.

We hope to see all of you at this informative, entertaining meeting.

Stilwell FFA: An Aquaponics Journey

By Kaylee Stewart,
Stilwell FFA Reporter

Last year marked the first year for Stilwell FFA's 8th grade program. Advisors, Garret Bergman and Josh Gilstrap set out to establish a vision for the program that would provide hands-on opportunities for the new students. Mr. Gilstrap and Mr. Bergman met with local businesses like Mountain View Meats to get input on developing a plan that would help students pursue interests in the food and fiber industry. The final goal was to write a grant to purchase a state of the art Aquaponics system. The \$15,000 grant proposal was a success! Once the system was purchased Ag students spent countless hours assembling the system in a customized design as the original plans required extensive modification to fit in our existing greenhouse facility.

Members of Laura Wood's Horticulture and 8th grade classes have been able to literally reap the benefits of the new aquaponics system by growing lettuce in the Stilwell FFA greenhouse for the past few months. Aquaponics Food Produc-



Shown above are students drying off freshly picked lettuce grown in the aquaponics system in the Stilwell FFA greenhouse.

tion systems are sustainable, water-based gardens. Aquaponics systems

are special because they combine Aquaculture, which is the growing of fish in a closed environment, with Hydroponics, which is the growing of plants in a soil-less environment.

Ms. Wood's Horticulture class travelled to Moore's Fish Farm in Inola, OK back in November, where some Tilapia fish were generously donated to the chapter. These fish were placed into their own tank. After weeks of testing, the students were finally able to begin germinating seeds. Once the seeds sprout, they're placed into floating plant rafts. The plants root into the water, where they receive nutrients filtered through the tank from the fish' feces.

After a few short months, the lettuce is finally grown. The students involved have learned so much from the construction of the system to the production of plants and fish.

This project has had a broad impact on the entire program. Horticulture is a big sector of agriculture, because it is heavily involved with the production of food and fiber. The chapter is very excited to be able to learn about the food production process in this way, and proud of all of the progress that has been made with this project, and are looking forward to more projects like this in the future.



Students in the Service Careers program at the ICTC-Stilwell campus prepare to paint the SHS football field.

ICTC Students Continue to Transform Football Field as a Community Service Project

Participation in community service projects is a large part of the program curriculum and CareerTech student organization activities at Indian Capital Technology Center. For the past 15 years, students in the Service Careers program at the ICTC-

Stilwell campus have taken on the monumental task of helping lay out, mark, and paint the Stilwell High School football field before every home game at James Bradley Memorial field. The students met with (See ICTC Students on Page 3)

THE CONSERVATIVE VIEW

By Russell Turner

BEYOND A SHADOW OF A DOUBT

In our system of justice, it is based upon the premise of making sure that anyone who is accused of the crime of murder is not convicted beyond a shadow of doubt. It is not unusual for a person to be tried several times before a guilty verdict is rendered. Many times, the jury will become deadlocked by one juror. I can agree that the system can be aggravating at times, but it would be a huge injustice for an innocent person to be convicted of a crime that he or she didn't commit. When you are dealing with people's lives, we all should understand the need to be 100 percent sure of the outcome. The same concerns should be applied to what goes on in all levels of government, the actions taken in the halls of Congress and by the president have a direct impact on our ability to maintain our freedoms and the ability to earn a living.

Over the course of the 117th Congress, Democrats have made several efforts to radically revamp U.S. election law; in my opinion, those proposals would essentially change our election process to that of a banana republic. One recent example was the "For the People" Act; that would have forced states to allow convicted felons to vote and, according to Senator Ted Cruz, it would have also allowed illegal aliens the right to vote. Fortunately, Democrat Senator Joe Manchin broke ranks with his fellow Democrats and refused to vote for the bill, which essentially killed it. Not to be out done, just a couple of days ago a group of Democrat senators are pushing a bill that would weaken the ability of Representatives and Senators to challenge the electoral count in presidential elections. The 1887 Electoral Count Act (ECA), allows only one member of the House and only one member of the Senate need

object before the objection is moved to a floor vote in the chamber. Under the new draft of the bill, this would be raised to one-third of the Senate before an objection could be moved to a floor vote. The bill would also narrow the list of potential objections lawmakers can make to certifying a slate of electors. In the last electoral vote count President Trump tried to persuade vice president Pence to use his constitutional powers to challenge the results in several state elections that posed the highest risk of widespread fraud, unfortunately Pence refused to use that power. Under the new proposal, the power of the vice president would lessen his role over elections. The founders of our nation were wise to give us the ability to slow down the process and prevent bad legislation from being pushed through congress that would be a huge mistake. The so-called reforms being touted by the Democrats are just an attempt to stack the deck in future elections. One of the tools that has helped to slow down the process is the filibuster, and even that is coming under attack from the Democrats. Even though the Democrats have utilized that tool on many occasions, they are wanting to do away with it so that they can impose their socialist agenda upon the country. It is a sad fact that the majority of the American people do not understand the benefits and protections that the electoral college system guarantees us, in my opinion it would be very foolish to start tampering with it.

If we as a society are intent upon making sure that there is not a shadow of a doubt when convicting an accused murderer, would it not make equal sense to make sure that our elections are fair and honest and held to the same standard?

In Search of a Word

By Donna Boecher

Copyright—An author has the right to protect his intellectual property – his writings. There is a formal way of protecting rights, but the "poor man's copyright" is to

sign, date, and mail the writing to yourself, then leave the envelope unopened. The postal dating on the outside of the envelope is the "poor man's copyright."

Vocabulary WORD of the DAY

Blizzard

Example: Thankfully, we had six inches of softly falling snow, not the blowing blizzard of flying snow that the weathermen had predicted.

• a severe snowstorm with high winds and low visibility.

The STRAIGHT FORWARD FREE Press

Truth is Our Target

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John Bankel.....Journalist
Joy Coleman.....Composing

PROVERBS 29:2—"When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn."

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The Lady in the Blue Sari

Part 30

By Donna Boecher

As soon as Lydia saw the ancient oaks at the roads edge, she felt at home. She had reached the end of her 600-mile trip. The time of adventure was at its beginning; India was in the past. The fence ahead kept outsiders at bay. The giant oak loomed over all; watching who would come through the cattle gate. If the oak ever received mortal storm damage,

its burl wood and worth 10s of thousands of dollars. The metal drive-through gate had outlasted a 100-plus years of white oak yard fencing. The yard fence welcomed all. Replaced only once in 100 years; its walk-through gate replicated exactly as the first with a drop-down arm that locked it in place. The same family milled the first and the second boards; a local handyman built both. There was 3"x 6" wire on three sides

to keep the chickens in and, strays out. Passing through, she gave James a big hug and kiss for bringing her home; she could rest now.

La Casa de Encinas Sion ranged from 50-100 plus years of age, depending which generation had remodeled the home. The trees had named the land-La Encinas Tierra de Sion. Lydia remembered re-christening the property after roaming around the state of Michoacan Mexico one spring. Perhaps she should have called it Tierra de Promise (the land of promise). It had always been a land of promise—a way of life, a good life. In the flat plain surrounded by impressive hills on all sides, it was protected from impending storms.

She had a jump on surprising Edward who she knew was inside – sitting in the den – awaiting supper since it was twilight and his chores had been completed. Why a jump? Because one-foot-thick rock walls were the best insulation for the weather and for noise. Slipping around to the back porch, she swung open the screen door to the back porch. There was a slight noise as the door springs relaxed. Still no sound from inside. Tip toeing up from the work porch to the tiny late 1920's kitchen, she saw her grandmother sitting in the living room rocker watching the evening news and weather. She could hardly wait to be updated on the farm "happenings."

SCRIPTURE

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have [it] more abundantly." – John 10:10 (KJV)

Scripture sponsored by: Faith Tabernacle

Corner of Hwy. 51 & Piney Road • Stilwell, OK

THE KIPLING KORNER

"There was a small boy of Quebec Who was buried in snow to his neck: When they said 'Are you friz?' He replied 'Yes I is – But we don't call this cold in Quebec!'"

Health Tips from Larkin...

By Larkin Fouse, CHHP

Stress Busters—Part 4: Doing nothing: In Jewish thinking, the highest form of meditation is sitting in a chair and doing nothing when all hell breaks loose around you. The rabbi's believe this to be the ultimate demonstration of your self-mastery, as you will have overcome one of the greatest temptations of the human condition, and that is to freak out when stress hits. Thus, this stress buster, though unusual, is very effective. The formula is simple: When stressed about something simply sit down and do nothing about it, until you feel the stress leave. While you are sitting, you say the following statement: "The world

will not make me do as it wills, but I will do as I will when I will to do it." Then, after the stress leaves and you have regained a sense of peace about the situation, start working on it and you will find that a lot of kinks will have worked themselves out already, and your vision on how to solve the problem will be clear, because your emotions won't be clouding your vision. If I could offer only one stress busting tip it would be this one because it works so well!

Larkin Fouse is a certified holistic health practitioner, operator and owner of Crescent Clinic in Stilwell. See advertisement in this paper for more information.



Dear John,

My mother in-law says she is allergic to cats. We have had a cat for years. When she comes to visit we hide the cat in the guest room. My mother in-law has never gotten sick at our house when visiting. My husband's brother got married and his new wife has a cat. My husband told his brother to hide the cat from their mother but he didn't and when she went to their apartment and saw the cat and got sick. My brother in-law told her that it was all in her head because she never gets sick at our house. He then told her that we hide the cat from her and everyone in the family thinks she is psychosomatic. Now she is mad at everyone. She is telling people at church that we love the cat more than her. We love his mom, but we want to keep our cat? She didn't have a problem before. What do you think we should do?

Cat's Outta The Bag

Dear Cat...There are many who suffer in the presence of cats. So your mother is likely not a hypochondriac. Her feline aversion is real. Hiding the cat from her was a plausible and thoughtful and necessary solution for allowing her to come and visit. It looks like someone "let the cat out of the bag" and once it's out, it is impossible to put the cat back in. So what to do? I would talk to your mom and explain to her that having hidden the cat worked since she did not get sick. So, it seems reasonable to suggest to her that the cat would always be put away as long as she is in the house. She just might go for that so it is worth a try? And in a way, that would put "the cat back in the bag."

Sincerely,

Dear John

Got a question for Dear John? Email to: dearjohn@writeme.com. Real names are not used.

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Mullin It Over:

Peace Through Strength

By Congressman Markwayne Mullin

President Biden has repeatedly made America look weak on the world stage. His administration has failed to put America first and now, our country and our allies are suffering the consequences.

The Chinese Communist Party is a proven threat to American safety and security. It is also committing egregious human rights abuses. Despite this, the Biden Administration failed to offer more than a "diplomatic boycott" of the Olympic games starting this week in Beijing. This was nothing more than a slap on the wrist. Paired with recent legislation, Democrats have not just failed to condemn China but have conceded to them too.

This week, the America COMPETES Act, better known as the "America Concedes Act," is coming to the House floor. With a price tag of \$325 billion, this legislation will surrender America's global competitive edge to China. This bill fails to address true problems plaguing American industries such as regulation and high taxes. Instead, it focuses on liberal climate change initiatives and prioritizes unions and Democrat aligned non-profits. Additionally, it will only make inflation and the supply chain crisis worse.

Any bill aimed at improving our competitiveness with China should hold them accountable for intellectual property theft, their role in the COVID-19 pandemic, and their aggressive military and economic behavior towards the international community. This bill does none of

that. The only thing it offers our country is clarity on where the Democrats really stand.

Unfortunately, this posture is not just directed towards China, but Russia too. President Biden emboldened Vladimir Putin his first year in office by waiving sanctions on Putin's Nord Stream 2 pipeline, giving Russia a stronghold on European energy supplies. The Biden Administration even went so far as to lobby on behalf of Russian interests when Republicans tried to put these sanctions back in place. President Biden's inability to hold Russia accountable for its cyber-attacks, including one of the largest ransomware attacks in history, shows our lax attitude towards their malign behavior.

Further, Russia is on the verge of invading Ukraine. If it is successful, Europe will be destabilized and our national security will be at even greater risk. Yet, our president still doesn't seem concerned and has even described this threat as a "minor incursion."

Our allies and our enemies are watching. America cannot continue to project weakness. We should be striving for President Ronald Reagan's ideal of peace through strength. The United States is the greatest and most free country in the world. It's time the president governs like it.

Want to stay up-to-date on what I'm doing in Oklahoma and Washington on your behalf? Sign up for my newsletter by visiting Mullin.house.gov/newslettersignup.

Obituaries

In Loving Memory of Rylee Ann Nichols

October 10, 2004 – January 25, 2022

Rylee Ann Nichols, age 17, of Stilwell, OK, passed away on January 25, 2022. Rylee was born in Wichita, KS on October 10, 2004 to Chad and Dana Nichols. She attended Stilwell High School.

Rylee enjoyed participating in yearbook, loved photography, adored her niece and nephew, and loved her family and friends. She loved playing Xbox, listening to music, shopping, spending time with friends, and hanging out with her cousin Katelyn. She loved to go camping and fishing, and she loved her dogs. She was so caring and giving. She had a great sense of humor, and a smile that would melt your heart. Rylee had a big heart, and was loved by many.

Rylee is survived by her parents, Chad and Dana, of Stilwell, OK, her brother, Shawn Nichols and wife Phelicia, and their two children, Dennis and Emilia, (Wichita, KS), brothers, Cameron Nichols (Wichita, KS), Ethan Nichols (Wichita, KS), and Kelton Nichols (Stilwell, OK), Grandmother, Edna Nichols (Wichita, KS) and many other family members who loved her so. She was preceded in death by Grandfather Dennis Nichols, Grandmother Janice Denner, and Grandfather Joseph Denner.

Funeral services were held at 1 pm on Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at Roberts/Reed-Culver Funeral Home, Stilwell, OK.



Larry Darrell Hardbarger

March 30, 1947 – January 24, 2022

Larry Darrell Hardbarger, son of Albert and Ellouise (Center) Hardbarger, was born March 30, 1947 in Stilwell, Oklahoma and departed this life on January 24, 2022 at the age of 74 years, 9 months, and 24 days.

Darrell married the love of his life, Karen Limore, on May 18, 1973. Together they had 2 wonderful sons, Denton and Randall. Darrell worked many years as a cross-country truck driver and in his free time enjoyed coon hunting, riding his horses, playing baseball, fishing, and deer hunting. In his later years, his favorite place to be was in his "office" sitting on the front porch or going out to run rabbits with his beagles. Most of all, he loved being at home with his family and looked forward to seeing his grandkids every Sunday. He especially loved the addition of two grandbaby boys after years of spoiling his granddaughters.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his Granny Mary Center, his little sister Retha, his brothers Marty and Gregg, his sister-in-law Mary June Limore, and his father-in-law George Limore.

Darrell is survived by a very loving family that includes his wife of over 48 years: Karen Hardbarger of the home, children: Denton Hardbarger of Bunch, OK, Randall Hardbarger and wife Jessica of Bunch, OK, 1 Brother, Donnie Hardbarger and wife Rosemary, 8 Grandchildren: Shayla and husband Cody, Tenille, Timber, Randi, Paige, Camry, Evelyn, Jaxen, and 1 Great-Grandson, Casen. Several other relatives and many friends also survive him.

Memorial services were held in a private ceremony on Monday, January 31st at the family's home cemetery under the direction of Roberts/Reed-Culver Funeral Home.

Honorary Pallbearers: Kenny Dale Kimble, David Bolin, Chad Nolan, Kevin Limore, Will Limore, Andy Kimble, Ronnie Batt.

Songs for Viewing: Grandpa Told Me So by Kenny Chesney, Good Dogs by Jameson Rodgers, Come Back As A Country Boy by Blake Shelton, Go Rest High On That Mountain by Vince Gill, When I Get Where I'm Going by Brad Paisley, If Heaven Wasn't So Far Away by Justin Moore, You'll Be There by George Strait, Jealous of the Angels by Donna Taggart, I Wish Grandpas Never Died by Riley Green.

Lonnie Eugene Davison

December 31, 1940 – January 26, 2022

Lonnie Eugene Davison, son of Geneva (Hulse) Davison and Ralph "PaPi" Davison, was born on December 31, 1940 in Lincoln, Arkansas and passed from this life on Wednesday, January 26, 2022 in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

He was a strong man. He had survived a massive heart attack, triple bypass, brain bleed, stroke and cancer. Yet, he was still a humble man. He was a man of few words, who loved spending time with his wife. They loved each other dearly and had been married since February 4th, 1965. They were blessed with almost 57 years of marriage.

Lonnie was a hard worker. He was drafted into the Army in January of 1964 and served for years. He was also a construction worker for 20 years and worked at Jet Stream for 30 years until retirement.

He took pride in his mowing. He liked to go to Silcox and buy knives. He liked listening to old country music while driving down backroads going way under the speed limit. He loved coaching his son in baseball. He had a blast spending countless hours at the casino with his wife, son and daughter-in-law. He liked to get pedicures. He was a Chicago Cubs Baseball fan and loved the Arkansas Razorbacks.

Lonnie was preceded in death by his wife, Eileen (McCown) Davison, parents: Ralph and Geneva Davison, brother: Russell Davison, great-grandkids: Hunter Burrows and Kaisley Frazier.

He is survived by his sister: Wilma Dennis of Carlsbad, Texas and her children: Vicki, Denise and families.

His children: Ronnie Davison and wife Laura of Westville, OK and grandchildren: Felicia, Aaron, Lacey, Nikolas and 10 great-grandkids.

Rhonda Hale and husband Scott of Westville, OK and grandchildren: Kassi, Brandon, Tiffany, Jonathan, Kiley, Cash, Xyler, Kerryonne, Easton, Hudson, and 10 great-grandkids.

Renee Bird and husband Terry of Stilwell, OK and grandchildren: Lonnie, Gary, Jeanene and 5 great-grandkids.

Rusty Williams and wife Samantha of Westville, OK and grandchild: Aiden.

He is also survived by several nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends. Funeral services were held at 2 pm on Monday, January 31, 2022 at Roberts & Hart Funeral Home, Westville, OK with Bro. Clarke officiating. Interment followed at Westville City Cemetery, Westville, OK.

Jackie Nadine Hargrove

November 30, 1939 – February 2, 2022

Jackie Nadine Hargrove, of Prague, Oklahoma, passed away on February 2, 2022 at the age of 82. Jackie was born to Jack and Gladys Chaffin in their home November 30, 1939 in Stilwell, Oklahoma.

Jackie graduated from Stilwell Public Schools and then attended Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. While attending NSU, she met her future husband, James B. Hargrove, Jr. on a blind date. They married August 29, 1958 and were married for 61 years. Following their wedding they moved to Tulsa, OK where she stayed home to raise her two children—Blake and Leah. In 1968, James took a new job with First National Bank and they moved to his hometown—Prague, OK. After both children reached school age, she continued her college education at Oklahoma Baptist University where she graduated with honors and a Bachelor's Degree in Education. She went to work for Prague Public Schools and would remain working there until she retired. She later received her Master's Degree in Education from East Central University in Ada, OK. During her career at Prague, her positions included: elementary music education teacher, middle school English teacher, middle school principal and she retired as the high school counselor. She was very active in her community and church. She led Bible studies in her home, taught the young adult Sunday School class and sang in the choir at First Baptist Church of Prague. She was very active with the youth group and attended multiple trips to Falls Creek summer camp as a sponsor. A highlight of her life was when she got to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and walk in the same steps as her Savior Jesus Christ. She was also active in various community organizations. She helped to change the lives of countless students; and, even though she remained in the small town of Prague her whole life, her sphere of influence was broad and immeasurable. She was many things to many people—a teacher, an advisor, a counselor, a mentor, a listener. She was wise, patient and kind. She was a wonderful wife, mother, grandma and great-grandma. She loved Jesus and knew The Bible inside and out. While there is some pain, sadness and



tears for the void she has left; it is greatly outweighed by the wonderful fact that there is no more pain, sadness or tears for her. Only joy in glory with Jesus and her husband James.

She was preceded in death by her husband James Hargrove.

She is survived by her son Blake Hargrove and wife Marva; daughter Leah Denney and husband Mike. Four grandsons: Heath Denney and wife Emily; Jason Denney and wife Rachel; Blake Hargrove, Jr. and wife Kandice; and Dillion Hargrove; as well as one granddaughter: Beth Denney; and six great-grandchildren, as well as many other family members and friends. She will be greatly missed.

Services in care of Parks Brothers Funeral Service, Prague, OK.

ICTC Students (Continued from Front Page)



The SHS football field after the students finished painting it.

Athletic Director Ronnie Littlejohn and Head Coach Don Harrison prior to the beginning of football season to discuss and plan the project and began laying out fields before the first home scrimmage.

Students involved in this project were: Grace Allen, Trevor Case, Rodney Elmore, Tylan Goodrich, Ashley Green, Ivorie Greenlee, Logan Halm, Nickalas Hammer, Bryce Ketcher, Ethan Moreno, Colton Newman, Joey Olive, Sebastian Ritter, Jose Sam, Elsie Winkler, Landon Yarbrough, Kaden York, and Logan Young. The students worked with local artist Sheila Bruner on the layout of the field, the gridwork, and designing and painting the school mascot.

There have been many benefits to this community service project being performed by the ICTC students including relieving Stilwell High School coaching staff from being pulled away from daily coaching duties and allowing them to focus more time and attention on working

with their athletes. Also, SHS purchased materials for the project, but ICTC students performed the labor, gained valuable work experience, and improved their skills sets needed to complete the project. In addition, the football field was transformed into results that were aesthetically pleasing, and this project promoted a large amount of civic involvement and instilled a strong sense of community pride. The work done on this project will also be something the ICTC students will remember for the rest of their lives and they can add to their career portfolios.

ICTC Superintendent Tony Pivec said, "We love it when our students can get involved with community service projects and give back to the communities in which we are located. Mr. Gilstrap and his students do a great job of getting the Stilwell High School football field ready each year, and we're very proud of the hard work they put forth with this project."

ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL

Commentary by John Bankel

Today's Trail Treks To The Feb. 7 Stilwell City Council Meeting CROSS CREATES CONTINUED CONTROVERSY

The removal of a memorial cross continued to spur controversy at the most recent Stilwell City Council meeting. Feathers started flying almost immediately when the Agenda item came up for discussion.

The City Code Enforcer, Shawn Noel, had initiated this brouhaha when he made a heavy handed phone call to Lora Gallardo during which he demanded that she take down the memorial that she had set in its place some 24 years ago. The phone call was followed by a similarly ungracious letter giving Lora 10 days to remove it. The City claims that the cross is a distraction and a nuisance, and ostensibly, requires "much" maintenance and cleanup?

Gallardo does her own maintenance for this memorial and clean-up it doesn't need. It is just a wooden cross upon which is placed, from time to time, some decoration. How much of a nuisance or distraction can it be?

This writer has gone by that spot for over 13 years now, and until this controversy emerged, had never noticed it was there? Just a hunch, but this writer believes that he is in good company? The nuisance and distraction angle doesn't fly. Neither

does the maintenance and clean-up angle.

Maybe it's the fact that it is a cross? For over 2000 years, the cross has become a symbol of offense for many. For some, it is a symbol of supreme sacrifice and salvation. For Lora Gallardo and family, it is also a symbol of sacrifice and a reverent memorial for the death of her father, Vernus Bales, who, on January 16, 1998, was tragically killed at this very spot while working to build the wall against which the cross now stands.

In a heated exchange between Lora Gallardo and City Attorney, Jeff Jones, who is of the opinion that the City has full jurisdiction over the disposition of the "nuisance" and wants it removed, going so far as threatening Lora with arrest. Eventually, cooler heads prevailed and, upon Gallardo's request, the Council tabled the matter until the March 7 meeting giving Gallardo time "to seek adequate counsel."

Yet apart from the "letter of the law," which in this case involves the issue of jurisdiction and has not yet been settled, there is also the "spirit of the law." The letter of the law



First Saturday Night and Last Saturday Night of Every Month, Bethel Church, Stilwell, OK, 7:00 p.m., Rodney Chuculate.

* * *

Adair County Litter-Free & Green monthly Recycle Day is from 9 am to noon at the Adair County Commissioner District 2 Barn located on Hwy. 59 N and Fairfield Road. You may contact Cathy Unger at 918-696-1178 or Joyce Radtke at 918-696-7316 if you have questions or comments. Below is a list of projected recycle dates and will only change if there is inclement weather conditions that day.

February 19th, March 19th, April 16th, May 21st, June 18th, July 16th, August 20th, September 17th, October 15th, November 19th, and December 17th.

* * *

Oklahoma Bigfoot Symposium, March 12-13, 2022, CC Camp near Stilwell. Keynote speaker: Ken Gerhard, noted author, TV star and Cryptid investigator.

* * *

Vendor Applications for the May 14, 2022 Strawberry Festival are being accepted now. ALL applications and payments must be received by **5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 5,** to meet Oklahoma Tax Commission requirements. NO late entries can be accepted. For more information or to get an application, log on to the Stilwell Kiwanis Club website at: <https://strawberrycapital.com>. If you have questions, please call 918-797-5097.

Free CPR Class

FREE certified CPR class Thursday, February 17 from 5:30-8:30 p.m. at the Stilwell Library meeting room, 5 North 6th Street. Call Grace at (918) 315-4279 to register.

WHAT'S SO PUNNY? PUN FUN

John Travolta tested negative for coronavirus last night. Turns out it was just a Saturday night fever.

The World Health Organization has announced that dogs cannot contract Covid-19. Dogs previously held in quarantine can now be released. To be clear, WHO let the dogs out.

I saw an ad for burial plots, and thought to myself – that's the last thing I need.

engages peoples' minds; the spirit of the law engages peoples' hearts. The Gallardo memorial reaches down to the heart of the Gallardo family, as does any memorial.

So, the question becomes: does the City of Stilwell have the heart to do what is right? This writer hopes so. And what is right in this case? Leave the memorial alone.

Today's Trail has come to an end. And until the next time, when we shall meet again around the bend, may your Trail end up on the right side of the fence.

John Bankel is a freelance journalist and a retired High School Math teacher and can be reached by email: writewright@journalist.com.

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It Doesn't Have to Be Perfect

By Donna Boecher

Have an imagination? Write. Have a story to tell? Write. Love words? Write. As Nike the athletic shoe company says, "Just do it." You are the person to tell the stories within you. It doesn't have to be perfect.

Winter Pictures of Worst Snow Storm in 15+ Years



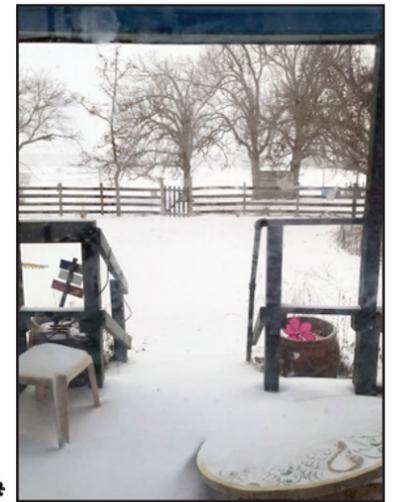
Alan Starr, Stetson Starr and Jett Spear having fun in the snow.
(Photo submitted by Elaina Starr-Spear)



(Photo by Elzie B. Hickerson)



This nativity painting welcomes you to Donna Boecher's Zion Oaks Farm.
(Photo by Donna Boecher)



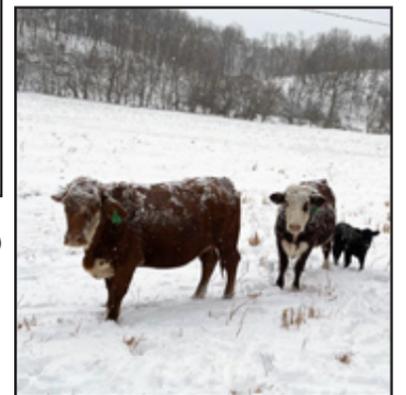
(Photo by Donna Boecher)



Nikki & Stetson Starr tagged along while Alan Starr took care of the cattle.
(Photo submitted by Nikki Starr)

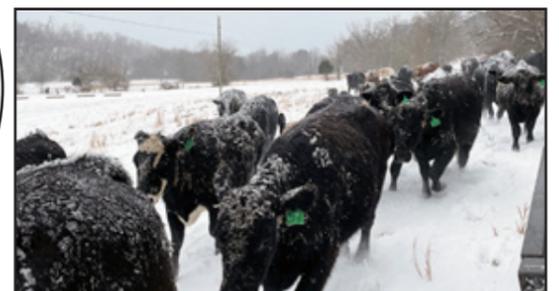


Charles and Tarra Boecher feeding cattle at their Zion Oaks Ranch.
(Photo submitted by Donna Boecher)



A Rarely Seen Stilwell Scene... Ski Slope?

(Photo by John Bankel)



Faith Tabernacle Church located on Highway 51 East in Stilwell.

(Photo submitted by Judy Grant)



Stilwell Main Street.

(Photo submitted by Judy Grant)

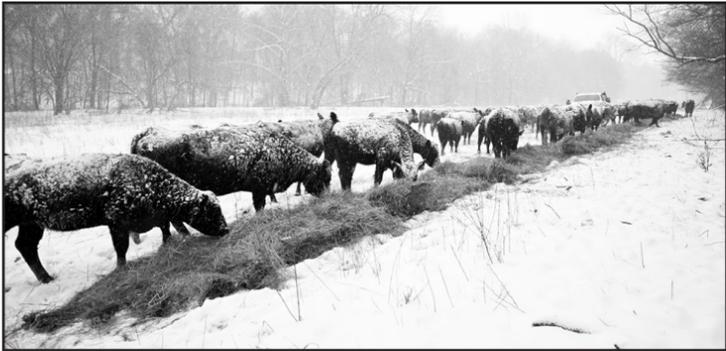


Downtown Stilwell at 3 p.m. Thursday...not a leaf stirring.

(Photo by John Bankel)



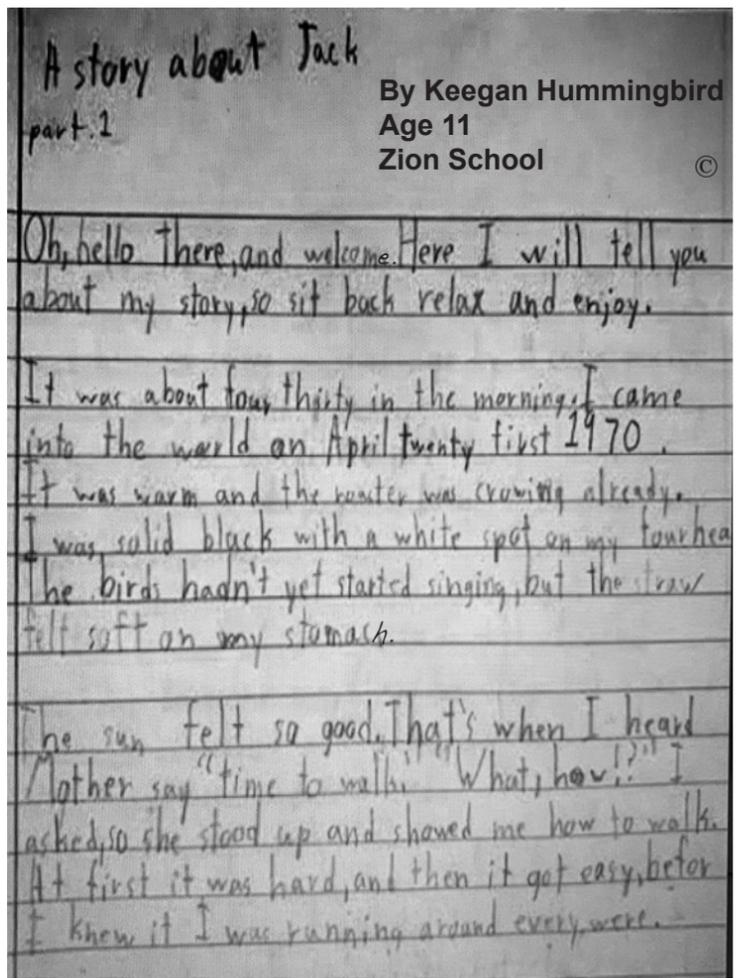
Snow covered county road located at Starr Springs.



Life Tips from Larkin...

By Larkin Fouse, CHHP

Why Our Kids Are Messed Up, Part 4—Projected Expectation: The Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung one said that the greatest thing that affects the life of a child is the un-lived life of the parent. Why is this so? The reason is more often than not parents over identify with their children, for they see “their kids” instead of just another human being that God has sent their way to be treated as an equal. When someone over identifies with someone or something, all wisdom traditions tell us that whatever the person who has developed an over identification with, they will project all that they have not healed or completed in their own lives upon. This means that a child of a projecting parent will not be able to develop their own soul’s purpose as they will be forced to live out the foolish expectations of their half lived parents. Case in point: Say there is a child who is an artist by their nature, as this is what God has created them to be. Yet their parent was a coward who never finished college to get the computer degree like they were supposed to and thus instead of owning up to their own failure, will instead force their child into computer class so that they can live out their fantasy of being brave and fulfilling their purpose, yet still be a cowardly failure in real life. This happens all the time unfortunately. Yet we wonder why our children grow up to hate and resent us, when we set our face like flint to kill any God given purpose they had in them. So, if you are a parent, search yourself and see if you are pasting your own failures and unfulfilled potentials on your children, and not letting them live out God’s will for their life as you are instead imposing your will over their destiny. If you are doing this, stop it, let go and repent. Then start seeing your child for who they are and treat them as an equal, for you are both the children of God and both of you have a purpose, and your purposes may be similar or they may be totally different, but the key is to have you, your child, God and his purpose for both of you all at once. This is the definition of a healthy family.



More Aquaponics Photos From Stilwell FFA



Pictures above show the various stages of the aquaponics system process of growing lettuce.

Our Readers' Voice...

What's Your Problem?

By Concerned Citizen

(Nov. 29, 2021 Meeting)

Someone recently asked a Patriot, who'd been attending County Commissioner Meetings: **“What’s your issue with the Commissioners?”** This curious question, even if otherwise innocent, is pregnant with problems. First, it unjustifiably presupposes, by default, that a Citizen attending a public meeting has an axe to grind. Second, having erroneously leapt to the conclusion that attendees have grievances to air, such a posture – at least impliedly – highlights the inquirer’s own untenable stance that he has no such matters to resolve. In sum, he assumes you have a bone to pick... but he doesn’t.

To the first point, inappropriately framing Citizen involvement, as inherently indicative of friction, yields undesirable consequences. Open meetings are the incubator of participatory governance and public servant oversight. As the veritable checkpoint for balanced power between the Sovereign and their elected representatives with authority to act, the threshold for taking part is much lower than voicing complaints over past tense events. Indeed, collaborative and cooperative active efforts necessarily minimize points of conflict by fostering satisfactory outcomes before tensions rise. People more readily abandon bad ideas than bad decisions, so prevention is easier than eradication. Chronic participation, however, is

the prerequisite.

To the second point, such implicit claims, that one has no concerns about County business, are logically flawed. You cannot react (*or not*) to a non-existent stimulus. You cannot, with any modicum of intellectual integrity, ratify conduct you’re ignorant to. A clean bill of health doesn’t precede a physical exam, it follows it. Trapped in their own failed reasoning, the irony is that the contented non-participant must actually first attend in order to know, for certain, that they are content. To really know, you must go.

Pejoratively labeling active Patriots as miscreants provides cover for those who don’t want to be bothered, but the casualties of such feeble rationale can have deeper consequences. Indeed, Citizens fail to grasp even the basic inner-workings of local government. Additionally, Citizens fail to learn the facts and circumstances that provide context for government action. By merely attending, you could learn something that initially raises concern, only to understand and accept it once the background is known.

Involvement has other rewards. Unless you have your finger on the pulse, how can you vote intelligently? Is it merely a popularity contest, reminiscent of high school “superlatives?” Does mere name recognition carry the day? Do you count the number of signs at intersections or that remain nailed to trees long after election day? You may be surprised how much “attitude in action” can sway your opinion! Moreover, sometimes

the best way to ensure you have a worthy public servant in office is to become that person. Perhaps you one day realize that your attendance has been tantamount to job training! Are you ready?

It’s been said **“the few will save the many,”** and public meetings help network such ambitious Patriots. At the November 29, 2021 Commissioner meeting, “Digital Printing of Ballots” naturally led a new couple to inquire about election security – something other Citizen watchmen also care about. Why won’t Oklahoma audit and bury residual disquiet? The State could openly display its reportedly secure system, thereby pressuring dubious states to audit while simultaneously offering solutions. Oklahoma cries poverty when contemplating audit expense, but Patriots could crowd-fund it. Thus, you see, meetings are the staging grounds for more unified efforts at ensuring government we can have confidence in.

Public servants cannot represent the silent Sovereign. Construing active Citizen Patriots, merely performing their civic duty, as antagonists helps non-participants feel justified in passivity. However, a Constitutional Republic lacking a vibrant, engaged Citizenry is but an oligarchy in disguise. Accordingly, the **“what’s your problem”** question is actually best directed at those who make no contribution, but nevertheless audaciously expect the frail fabric of society to hold together in a manner that facilitates their wholly self-centered pursuits and indulgences.

ATTN: Adair County

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Answer: One gets 20 miles to the bale, the other 20 miles to the gallon?...
Photo by The Roving Reporter

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