

### Lake Watch

Lake Level  
on March 8

**531.52'**

Normal Elevation 533.00'  
Lake Watch is provided by the  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
on Lake Whitney

### Lakeline

#### Free dog training course offered

A six-week basic obedience dog training course will be offered free to the community beginning Saturday, March 21. The course is donation based to the sponsor, Paws Place Rescue. Sherry Pritchett, a professional dog trainer for over 30 years, will conduct the classes at Whitney City Park. Limited enrollment is available. To register or for more details, contact spritchett.hmc@gmail.com or pawsplacerescue.inc@gmail.com.

#### Chicks & Salsa event planned

The Lake Whitney Area Chamber of Commerce has set this year's "Chicks and Salsa" ladies' day out for Saturday, March 21. From 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., businesses throughout downtown Whitney will offer shopping and dining specials, drawings, promotions and games. For more information, contact the chamber at 254-625-2387.

#### Purrfect Corp. seeks volunteers

Purrfect Corp. cat sanctuary is seeking volunteers to help with repairs, computer work and a yard sale fundraiser. Call 254-694-7055 and leave a name and callback number.

#### Open house, events in Peoria

The Peoria Community Center will host an open house Saturday, March 21, beginning with a dedication ceremony of the Bradford-Underwood Auditorium at 3 p.m. Former Peoria school students will be recognized. There will also be a silent auction starting at 3 p.m., entertainment starting at 4:30 p.m. and a spaghetti supper fundraiser from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Anyone with historic photos of the Peoria school is asked to email mojo76645@yahoo.com.

#### Museum gala set for March 21

Texas Through Time paleontology museum will host its annual fundraising gala Saturday, March 21, at 6 p.m. The "Casino Royale" event will be at Peoria's Castle overlooking Lake Whitney. Tickets are available for \$100 each, and there are sponsorship and VIP packages available. For tickets or more information, visit texasthroughtime.org or call the museum at 254-262-3466.

## Hill County voters favor most incumbents

### Pct. 4 commissioner race heads to runoff...

Local incumbents largely had a good night when primary votes were tallied Tuesday, March 3, but the Hill County Precinct 4 commissioner's race is headed to a May runoff.

With no Democratic challenger in November, incumbent Justin Lewis won the race for the district judge's seat with about 57% of the vote. Lewis served as Hill County judge for over 18 years before being appointed to the 66th District bench by Governor Greg Abbott last year. Hillsboro attorney Stephanie Johnson was challenging Lewis for the seat.

The county treasurer's race was also decided on election

night with no Democratic candidates filing. Incumbent Rachel Parker was the winner with 65% of the vote. Parker was elected to her position in 2022 after serving as an assistant county auditor. Peggy Mann Lidster was challenging her for the treasurer's position.

One county commissioner race was also decided, with incumbent Larry Crumpton winning the Precinct 2 race with 81% of the vote. Alpha "Gigi" Bailey Ward was also seeking the commissioner's seat. Crumpton is a Peoria resident and has served the precinct since 2015.

A three-way race for Precinct

4 commissioner is headed to a May 26 runoff election after no candidate received over 50% of the vote. Allan Awtrey received 40% of the vote, and David Gelsthorpe garnered just over 30%. Martin Lake, who has held the commissioner's seat since 2016, will not advance.

In the hotly contested race for the District 13 Texas House seat sought by incumbent Angelia Orr and Kat Wall, Orr was the overall winner with 61% of the vote in Hill County and almost 56% district wide. Orr, an Itasca resident, is currently serving her second term in the House. The House race will continue to November with Democrat

Albert Hunter running in the general election.

Hill County voters joined with the rest of the state in selecting party candidates at the top of the Republican and Democratic ballots. Both parties had United States Senate races that drew voters to the polls.

Statewide, the Republican Senate race was expected to head to a runoff between incumbent John Cornyn and Ken Paxton. In Hill County, 43% of Republicans selected Cornyn as their preferred Senate candidate, and Paxton received just over 39% of the vote. The future of that race was unclear see RESULTS on page 2

## Longview man sentenced for area murder

A Longview man has been sentenced to 45 years in prison for the 2023 murder of a man near Whitney after accepting a plea deal.

Charlie Neal Harris Jr., who was 31 at the time of the murder, was sentenced to 45 years each on charges of murder and aggravated robbery and 10 years each on charges of unlawful possession of a firearm by a felon and tampering/fabricating physical evidence with intent to impair. He will serve the sentences concurrently.

The victim, Cory Shelton, was found lying dead in the roadway after he was shot in the 100 block of Bluegrass Street October 6, 2023.

A black pickup truck was seen speeding away from the area with two males and a female inside.

Hill County sheriff's deputies later found one man at a convenience store at the corner of farm roads 933 and 2604, and

see MURDER on back

## Sentences handed down in local court

The office of District Attorney Mark Pratt prosecuted the following felony criminal cases in the 66th Judicial District Court of Hill County. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice convictions are from February:

Rafael Jarrel Eastland, possession of methamphetamine under one gram, 20 months state jail

Charlie Neal Harris Jr., murder, 45 years prison; aggravated robbery, 45 years prison; unlawful possession of a firearm by a felon, 10 years prison; tampering/fabricating physical evidence with intent to impair, 10 years prison

Chasity Marie White, burglary of a building, 15 months state jail  
Michael Shane Munoz, theft of property between \$2,500 and \$30,000, nine months state jail

Joanne Michelle Upton, possession of methamphetamine under one gram, 16 months state jail

Adam Joe Knust, assault of a peace officer/judge, 10 years prison

Tony Rydell Holbert, failure to comply with sex offender's duty to register for life/annually, 15 years prison

District Judge Justin Lewis presides over the 66th Judicial District Court.

## Steele Creek Acres VFD to hold sale

Steele Creek Acres Volunteer Fire Department will hold an inside sale Saturday, March 28, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The sale will raise funds for the department's kitchen remodel efforts, and donations of gently used items are currently being sought.

To arrange a donation pickup or drop off, call Gloria at 817-648-6643.

The department is located at 1337 Farm Road 1713 in Morgan, on the Bosque County side of the Katy Bridge.

## Lady Wildcats head to state powerlifting meet

The Lady Wildcat powerlifting team will be represented on the biggest stage later this month as two athletes have officially qualified for the state powerlifting meet.

Shayna Hughes earned her trip to state by capturing first place in her weight class at the regional meet. Hughes delivered an outstanding performance, increasing her total and setting new personal records on her way to a dominant finish.

Jaelyn Nava also secured her place at state with a strong second-place finish in her weight class at the regional meet. Nava's steady improvement throughout the season paid off as she punched her ticket to compete among the best lifters in Texas.

Their success at regionals reflects not only their individual commitment, but also the strength of the Lady Wildcat

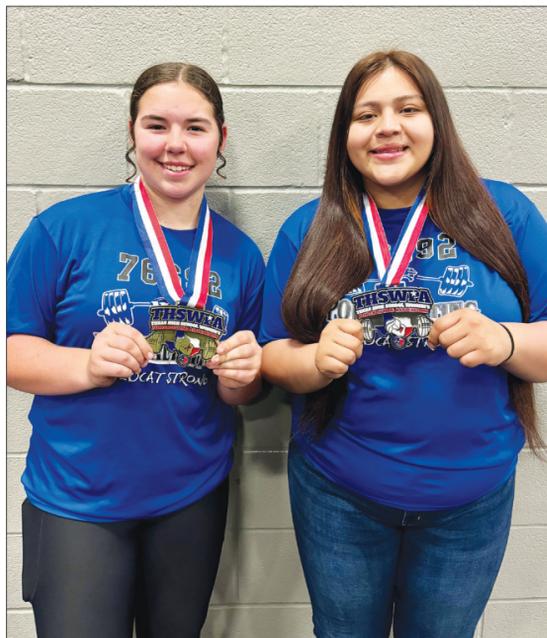
powerlifting team, which received the third place best team overall plaque.

Other regional medal winners were: third place - Claire Schneider and Xochitl Contreras; fourth - Olivia Delong; fifth - Kaedynce Wooten and Larami Sneed.

Other members of the regional team fell short of a medal but made huge gains throughout the season. Those lifters are Juli Snelson, Katie Roberts, Kylee Blackston, Kacie Ponder, Delyla Derrickson and Katherine Wright.

The state powerlifting meet will take place later this month, where Hughes and Nava will compete against top qualifiers from across the state.

The Lady Wildcats are proud of their accomplishments, and fans look forward to cheering them on as they represent their school at the highest level.



State-qualifying lifters Shayna Hughes and Jaelyn Nava



Lady Wildcat powerlifters include: front row - Xochitl Contreras, Claire Schneider, Shayna Hughes, Katie Roberts; middle row - Juli Snelson, Kathryn Wright, Kylee Blackston, Olivia Delong, Kaedynce Wooten; back row - Jaelyn Nava, Delyla Derrickson and Larami Sneed.

## 'Cats receive Dist. 17-3A All-District honors

District 17-3A officials recently released basketball all-district honors, with multiple Whitney High School basketball players making the cut.

For the boys, junior shooting guard Jaxon Landrum was named sixth man of the year.

First team all-district honors went to Kobe Haynes, K.J. O'Hearn and Delvion Walter.

Second team all-district

honorations included Keegan Estill and Jordan McGill.

Landon Bennett and Fisher Watson earned honorable mentions.

The Wildcats also had several players earn academic all-district accolades, meaning they maintained a grade-point average of 90 or above, including Jayden Ward, Billy Thomas, Riley Hill, Estill, Haynes,

Landrum, McGill, O'Hearn and Watson.

For the Lady Cats, freshman Ryhanna Davis earned newcomer of the year for her efforts at point guard during the 2025-2026 season.

First team all-district honors went to Alix Geren and Taryn Payne.

Earning second team all-district

see DISTRICT on back

## WHS German students earn top honors

Whitney High School German students competed at the Winterfest Regional German Contest hosted by Dallas College Mountainview Campus last month.

Under the tutelage of their new German teacher, Frau Kathryn Ferriere, and Dance Coach Haley Becker, the 2026 Whitney German team dominated at regionals in all the Sportfest events and also won first place overall sweepstakes for small school German programs.

Every year, roughly 1,000 German students from middle and high schools throughout Texas compete in 36 events representing a wide range of interests, including competitions in music, folk dance, academic knowledge, arts and crafts, extemporaneous and conversational speaking, skits and declamation.

Participants compete at their level of German and are awarded ribbons and trophies in individual and group events. Schools receive sweepstakes points based on their success and compete for overall sweepstakes honors. Students who rank in the top five in an event at one of the three regional contests are eligible to compete at the

see GERMAN on back

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