



Just Rambling

with Stephen Henry

Advice is what we ask for when we already know the answer but wish we didn't.

A couple of weeks ago, I asked for old photos of the two-story building at 814 Austin that is being remodeled by the Bynum family as a coffee shop and music studios.

I owe Joy Pearce a big thank you because she reached out to Betty Copeland Patton of Houston, who sent me photos of not only the exterior of the building, but one of the interior showing both she and her mother, Wilam Esther Copeland, in the hardware store.

The building, former home to Infinity Connection, was home to Copeland Hardware Store for many years.

"My parents were owners of the store. I think we moved to Levelland about 1947 or 1948," Mrs. Patton wrote. "The store later moved to Avenue H about 1962."

Her father, Walter Wilson Copeland, relocated the hardware store to the original First National Bank building, which later was acquired by Eddie and Jo Beth Courtney and turned into Eddie's Cowboy Store. Three years ago, it was acquired by the county and totally renovated and is now the Hockley County Annex and home to the tax assessor-collector's office, as well as the justice of the peace and the voter registrar and administrator's offices.

Mrs. Patton said that her father passed away in 1970 at the young age of 54. Her mother subsequently sold the store to Cecil Haney.

Tina O'Connor says that her dad, the late Bob Buster, and Copeland were very good friends and that her dad mourned his untimely death. Buster's Shoe Store was also on the west side of the square.

Mrs. Patton has great memories of growing up in Levelland and says "high school was wonderful. We had great teachers."

A special memory is visiting Ford's Ice Cream Parlor, which was located north of the square on Avenue G and enjoying a treat after school.

She remembers that the hardware store was much more than nuts and bolts, having large

selections of all types of items including pots and pans, china, refrigerators and even the first television sets.

"Television was so new that my dad would leave a set on at night and people would come down and watch it through the front window," she remembers, adding that she has a photo taken from inside the store in her vast photo collection.

She says local resident Sandy Israel was one of her dad's long-time employees. "I know Sandy remembers a lot about the store."

After graduation from high school, Mrs. Patton attended Texas Tech and married her high school sweetheart.

She says her mother moved from Levelland to care for her parents, who lived in Seagraves.

Her mother later remarried and enjoyed 33 years of marriage before her second husband passed away.

"She passed away two days before her 100th birthday. I buried her in Seagraves this past January 10th," Mrs. Patton says of her mother.

Mrs. Patton, who is now in her early 80's, says she revisited Levelland and found that it has changed tremendously.

"When I got past the memorial in the park, I didn't recognize anything. Downtown has changed a lot. We went by the house we lived in on 10th Street and it had changed, too! Nothing in town was the same except the First Baptist Church!" she says.

I called Mrs. Pearce to thank her for reaching out to Mrs. Patton. She explained that her mother worked at Copeland Hardware Store and that she also helped part-time as a teenager and has good memories of the experience. She says it was a very busy store.

Mrs. Pearce reconnected with Mrs. Patton through Facebook and encouraged her to share the photos of the store, which was an important part of the community for many years.

I have in turn shared them with sisters Megan and Leah Bynum, who plan to have the Mosaic Coffee Shop open early this summer.

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Thursday, around 7:45 p.m., officers executed a felony warrant service at a residence in the 700 block of Avenue D. Officers were assisted by special agents with the Department of Public Safety.

The wanted subject was Anthony Flores, 33, of Levelland. He had a parole violation warrant and was a documented criminal gang member of the West Texas Tangos.

An officer observed a vehicle driven by a woman traveling westbound in the 300 block of 10th Street. The officer knew the woman was associated with Flores and observed a subject's arm

hanging out of the passenger-side window, heading towards a residence that belongs to Flores' family.

The officer made contact and said he needed to speak with Flores. Officers then observed Flores running southwest from the corner of the residence. The officer gave verbal commands for the man to get on the ground, which he complied, and was taken into custody.

Shortly after detaining the man, his parole warrant was confirmed by dispatch.

A special agent with DPS informed officers he located a bag

containing a crystal-like substance in a bush. The substance weighed 5.6 grams.

Flores was transported to the Hockley County Jail on charges of manufacture, delivery, of a

controlled substance between four grams and 200 grams; and his parole violation warrant. His bond for the drug charge was set at \$20,000.

CHILD ABUSE continued from page 1

one of the parents is being appropriately protective of the child, we don't get involved."

She said in cases where children are removed from their parents, normally there is an issue that puts the child at immediate risk of abuse or neglect.

"If there's a danger to the kid, basically if there's evidence of abuse or neglect and reasonable efforts have been made to allow the child to remain in the home," Hord said. "Some examples would be drug use, occasionally alcohol, medical neglect, broken bones, those kinds of situations. If a child has an injury that is unexplainable...that might be the cause of it."

And though physical abuse is the most commonly thought of type of abuse, Hord said abuse and neglect can stem from children not having adequate food, water or access to utilities.

Hord said there is a drug component to the increase in CPS cases and the cases as a whole. "Almost all of [the cases] are related to drug use," Hord said. "I don't have an exact number, but there is a drug component to almost every CPS case that I see."

Overall, the goal is reunification of the child and the parent, Hord said.

"That's the goal, if at all possible," Hord said.

And she said in Hockley County, there is a good rate of children who do get to go home to their parents eventually.

"I don't know exactly what our success rate is, but we have a high rate of parents working their services and getting to the spot where they can parent again," Hord said.

Unfortunately, that rate is not 100 percent and some parents do not get their children back.

"There are cases where that doesn't happen, and in those cases we seek termination [of their rights],"

Hord said. Though the thought of parents losing their rights to legally be a child's parent is sad to think about, Hord said it is all in the best interest of the child.

"The best interest of the child is what you're looking for, and sometimes the best interest is to not be raised by the parent if they can't provide a safe home without drugs and without domestic violence," Hord said. "There's not a doubt in my mind we have to terminate the rights of parents who absolutely love their kids, but their lives are not able to accommodate the things that a kid needs."

And, Hord said, at the end of the day, the goal is always to bring the child and the parent back together.

"Sometimes CPS has a stigma, and I understand that nobody wants to be involved with CPS, but on every single level there are case workers to help, there are resources they can give to a parent if they're struggling," Hord said. "I know the case workers we have here in Hockley County are invested in their kids and are invested in their case load. I have seen case workers cry over kids they've gotten."

She said though most people think of children who are in the CPS system as little kids, Hord said there are also teenagers in the system.

"I have seen, even after kids have walked away from care, those case workers continue to be a force in that child's life," Hord said. "Their goal is not to tear a family apart, but to mend it back together and equip the kids with the best possible chance of success moving forward."

If there are signs of neglect or abuse with a child, call the Child Protective Services hotline at 1-800-252-5400. Abuse can also be reported online at <https://www.txabusehotline.org>.

COVENANT continued from page 1

The first factor was a bad flu season and a higher volume than the year before.

The second thing that helped the hospital was the addition of the ambulance service, which had a pretty busy year, White noted.

The last thing that contributed to the improvement was a contract with a local pharmacy for a drug program.

White explained that through that program, the hospital is able to buy drugs for qualified patients at a much lower rate than average. He said then, the local pharmacy can replenish its stocks at the same cost as Covenant, increasing the pharmacy's margins and resulting in kickback for the hospital.

Regardless, White reiterated that rural health care is still in trouble and is not out of the woods yet.

He said at this point, the hospital should be okay for two more years, but beyond that is unpredictable.

Right now, White said Sen. Charles Perry has sponsored a bill in the state legislature that would require Medicare to pay the full reimbursement to hospitals for care.

"They have shorted rural health care for a number of years and I hope in that more funding from a Medicaid standpoint would be a good thing for us," White said.

He said that bill is on the move in the legislature and he is

keeping a close eye on the happenings in Austin.

But right now, White said the hospital is stable and should stay that way for the time being and the near future.

"Rural health care is still struggling and we continue to see hospitals close in Texas," White said. "Are we at risk? Yes. But fortunately, for this time period, I think we're stable. That break even piece is where we want to be."

He said in the past, he could predict the hospital's stability for at least five years, but that is not the case anymore.

"I used to say we're stable for the next five years, that five year window is shrinking," White said. "There's so much variability from year to year."

White said the hospital staff continues to be progressive and look at ways to increase revenue for investments.

"We are continuing to be progressive and look at what's best for our community," White said.

Sharla Baldrige, county judge, said she appreciates all the hospital does and has done to provide quality health care for the community.

"We appreciate our partnership and you do a great job for our community," Baldrige said. "You all do a great job for our community and are a necessity; we need you here."

Levelland ISD school board will meet Thursday night

The Levelland ISD Board of Trustees will meet Thursday at 6 p.m. in the administration building board room located at 704 11th Street.

The board will consider and discuss several items. The agenda includes:

-ABC presentation;

-Consent agenda items, including: approval of minutes, approval of the superintendent's credit card charges, approval of 2019 adoption recommendations, and the approval of the food service contract;

-Consider the financial report;

-Consider the depository agreement for the period September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2021;

-Consider the budget amendment; and

-Personnel information and professional new hires.

The board will also hear reports from Lance Terrell, chief financial officer, on the legislative session; from Jeff Northern on fundraising; from Tania Moody on trustee training; and from

board members and the superintendent on general activities.

The board may meet in executive session concerning any and all purposes permitted by state law, but not limited to, Texas Government Code Sections 551.071, 551.072, 551.073, 551.074, 551.076, 551.082, 551.083, 551.084, 551.0821, or 551.087.

There will be time for public comment at the beginning of the meeting.

Sheriff seeks information on burglary Monday night

The Hockley County Sheriff's Department is seeking the public's help in identifying a suspect in a break-in at West Plains Veterinary Hospital Monday.

Sheriff Ray Scifres said Monday deputies responded to a reported burglary at the business in the 4900 block of E. Highway 114.

The suspect is described as a black man with facial hair, possibly

a goatee. He is seen wearing a blue hooded sweatshirt, blue jeans and a baseball cap with "TX" on the front.

Anyone who recognizes the individual in the photos, which have been posted to the Hockley County Sheriff's Facebook page, is encouraged to contact the sheriff's office by calling 894-3126. All callers may remain anonymous.



SCENE FROM YESTERYEAR—The two-story building at 814 Austin was home to Copeland Hardware Store for many years before being relocated to the west side of the square into the original First National Bank building. The two story building has been acquired by Megan and Leah Bynum and is under renovation into the Mosaic Coffee Shop with music studios upstairs. (Photo courtesy of Betty Copeland Patton)



INSIDE THE HARDWARE STORE—Copeland Hardware Store offered something for everyone including hardware, housewares and appliances according to Betty Copeland Patton, who is shown here inside the store with her mother, Wilma Esther Copeland. She says that when television sets became available, her dad set one up in the front window and left it on at night so residents could gather and watch the newest technology. (Photo courtesy Betty Copeland Patton)



DONATION TO BILL'S BACKPACKS—Savannah's restaurant in Levelland donated \$350 to the Bill's Backpacks program to help feed students at Levelland ISD. The program feeds kids who may not have food at home at night and on the weekends. Tracy Barker started the program in 2011. Barker is pictured accepting the donation from Ashley Jaramillo, the daughter of David Jaramillo, the owner of Savannah's restaurant. (Staff Photo)

Police Report

An officer conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle in the 1100 block of Houston Wednesday around 9:15 p.m. The officer contacted the driver, who had an outstanding warrant for his arrest. The man was identified and the warrant for radio frequency licensed to a government entity. He was taken into custody without incident.

An officer served warrants for failure to maintain financial responsibility and failure to yield the right of way to a woman who was incarcerated at the Hockley County Jail Wednesday at 5 p.m.

An officer observed a man walking in the 1500 block of 5th Street Wednesday who had an outstanding warrant for disorderly conduct. The man was contacted, the warrant was confirmed, and the man was placed under arrest and transported to the jail.

A woman reported to police that a check belonging to her in the amount of \$1,480.24 had been cashed without her authorization. She said the signature on the

check was hers, but the signature on the back for endorsement was not hers. She said she didn't know the check had been cashed, but the bank advised her to make a report.

Around 5 p.m. Tuesday, an officer was dispatched to a residence in the 1800 block of Avenue I in reference to a juvenile who had been assaulted. A woman said her son was "jumped" at the car wash on 10th Street and College Avenue. The woman was advised to address the issue with a school resource officer, as well.

An officer met with a woman at the Law Enforcement Center Tuesday around 4:45 p.m. in reference to the disclosure or promotion of intimate visual material. The woman said four subjects were involved in distributing a photo of her. She said the picture was posted on Facebook and had been obtained from a woman. The woman said she didn't give consent for the photo to be shared.

Around 3 p.m. Tuesday, an officer met with a man who said someone had stolen his pressure washer. He said the item was stolen between 6 a.m. March 26 and 3 p.m. Tuesday. He said the washer was parked in the driveway of 1510 Avenue D when it went missing. He valued the washer at \$419.99.

Just before 11 a.m. Tuesday, an officer was dispatched to a residence in the 400 block of Cactus Drive in reference to criminal mischief. A woman said someone had damaged the rear window of her pick up truck between 6 p.m. Monday and 8 a.m. Tuesday. She said the damage would cost approximately \$225 to repair.

An officer met with a woman Tuesday around 7:30 a.m. in the 200 block of S. College Avenue in reference to criminal mischief. The woman said the north side of the building had been vandalized with graffiti. The officer who responded was familiar with the graffiti and had seen it around

town several times.

The woman estimated the damage to cost \$500 to repair. The officer was then dispatched to Nothing Butt Smokes to review video footage of the incident. The officer observed a suspect around 11:53 p.m. Monday walking up to the building and utilizing spray paint to write the graffiti.

Through the day Tuesday, the officer located several more instances of the same graffiti throughout town. The officer filed the charges as a state jail felony for criminal mischief between \$2,500 and \$30,000.

Monday around 10:30 p.m., an officer was dispatched to a residence in the 700 block of Avenue C in reference to a burglary that had already occurred. The officer met with the victim who said someone had gained entry to the residence through a window that was open halfway.

The woman said several items were taken, and valued the items at a total of \$270.

This edition's banner picture
Bluebonnets are beginning to bloom around the South Plains. These bluebonnets dominate the curbside in front of the home of Ronald and Karmen McCulloch at 105 Cottonwood.

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