

Giddings Times & News

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LCSP Rodeo Arena, BBQ Cookoff entry vandalized

Man surrenders after surrounded by officers

Local law enforcement officers rushed to the Lee County Sheriff's Posse rodeo arena on Hwy. 290 West after a man got out of control and vandalized several buildings late on Monday afternoon.

Children practicing at the arena for the upcoming LCSP Rodeo Royalty Competition and their parents were scared for their lives when an unknown man showed up and walked across the arena asking for a pair of bolt cutters around 4:30 p.m. Parents asked the man what he was doing, then quickly placed an emergency 911 call.

Lee County deputies and DPS troopers rushed to the scene, but the man had already picked up a large piece of concrete he found

and used it to knock the knob off the concession stand door.

The man continued to the nearby contestant gate (where rodeo contestants pay their entry fees), grabbing ice chests, papers and folding chairs -- throwing them all over the ground.



Christopher Watts
Arrested for vandalism

The unruly suspect took one of the metal chairs and threw it through a 3-foot by 4-foot window at the contestant gate, causing the glass to shatter and everyone running for a safe place to hide.

Still walking around the arena looking for more stuff to destroy, the man was surrounded by local officers and surrendered without any type of struggle. He reportedly stated that he was dropped off there, and the destruction was an "initiation" of some type. He talked to the officers like he didn't do anything wrong, and said he was told that he could destroy everything, since the arena was going to be torn down soon. That is not the case, of course, See Arena, 7b



ROLLOVER -- A 3-vehicle rollover accident at the intersection of Hwy 77 North and Independence St. in Giddings injured the driver of the overturned 2015 Ford F-250 pickup

truck at 3:50 pm Wednesday, March 31. Giddings Police stated that the driver of the F-250 made an illegal left turn and failed to yield right-of-way to a southbound silver GMC

Arcadia. After spinning around, a 2017 Toyota truck was also struck. The driver of the F-250 pickup was transported to St. Mark's Medical Center in La Grange for treatment.

Blue woman confesses to murder of roommate

Victim's lifeless body found on side of roadway

A Blue woman allegedly confessed to stabbing her male roommate to death and dumping his lifeless body on the side of the roadway in a ditch a short distance from their house.

Jennifer Redden Kramer, 41, of Blue reportedly provided a confession to investigators about using a knife to stab and kill her roommate, 32-year-old Christopher Michael Gonzales.

They lived together in a residence located at 1004 County Road 314 -- about 10 miles away from where Gonzales' lifeless body was taken and dumped in the ditch off County Road 306, following the murder that had already occurred at their home.

A motorist was on her way back from shopping at Walmart in Elgin on Saturday, March 27 at



JENNIFER KRAMER

Eyewitness said murder victim found motionless

Man in ditch wearing boxer shorts, white socks

A Blue woman noticed something that looked like a bloody animal lying in the ditch out of the corner of her eye while driving along County Road 306 near Blue on Saturday, March 27 at 11:34 p.m., then turned around to find a male murder victim.

"I was on my way home from shopping at Walmart in Elgin when I noticed out the passenger side window of my vehicle what appeared to be a bloody animal lying in the ditch. I turned around to get a better look from my driver's side, and that's when I realized it was a person," the eyewitness

at the scene told the Times & News. "I shined a flashlight into his eyes, which were wide open, so I thought he was still alive. He was not moving and did not say anything, but I felt like his left eye moved a little bit."

"I didn't touch or get near him, since there was quite a bit of blood with a steady drip. It later became apparent his body was placed in the ditch, but he was not killed there," she added. "I said a prayer asking God to help the man and ease the suffering he went through. Whatever the man had done, he did not deserve

what he had gotten."

After calling 911 to get emergency personnel and sheriff's deputies on the way, the witness called her daughter and son-in-law to see if the victim was still alive in the ditch in the middle of a big tunnel used by trolleys delivering lignite to Alcoa many years ago.

The son-in-law got to the scene about 10 minutes later and tried to take a pulse, but could not find one, indicating the man was already dead and could not be saved.

The lifeless man had a lot of blood all over his

Local woman gets jail time for abuse of disabled child

Peggy Hooper Els given 60 days behind bars

Peggy Hooper Els, 60, of Giddings, was found guilty of Injury to a Child and sentenced to 60 days confinement in the Lee County Law Enforcement Center by Judge Reva-Towslee Corbett in Lee County District Court on Tuesday, March 23.

Els was the former caretaker for a local child with Cerebral Palsy, employed by the boy's family for about 10 years. She became the child's part-time caretaker when he was 2

years old, then promoted to a full-time position 4 years later. The boy was profoundly disabled -- non-verbal, non-mobile, and required 24-hour care.

Els worked inside the family's house. When the family suspected her of stealing from them, they placed cameras or "Nanny Cams" inside the home to confirm their suspicions.

It didn't take long for the cameras to catch Els in the act of theft, and she was caught on camera taking money from the family's home. She admitted to the thefts and paid back thousands of stolen dollars to the family.

But the thefts were not the only things the cameras showed. There was something worse. Much worse, as Els physically abused and starved the child that she was there to care for. She was seen on camera abusing and mistreating the child -- who was helpless and could not move, unable to fight back or speak out while the abuse was taking place.

Cameras showed Els pouring out the boy's formula, so he would go all day long without eating.

Els admitted to repeatedly taking out the child's feeding tube to the State

See Arena, 7b

See Chase, 6

See Testing, 8

Man located in backyard after foot chase by police

Suspect flees after allegedly assaulting girlfriend

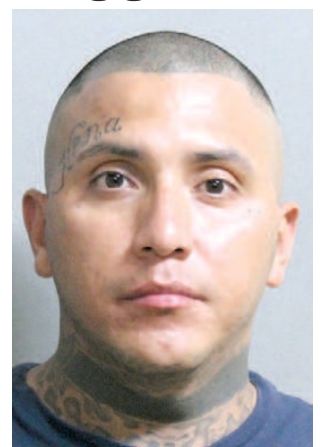
A man with numerous outstanding warrants ran from local police officers after allegedly assaulting his girlfriend, but was later found hiding in a backyard and arrested on multiple charges.

The series of events on Wednesday, March 31 started at 8:21 p.m. when officers were called to the area of Reba's Pizzeria in the 200 block of E. Austin Street, where an assault had occurred.

The alleged assailant took off driving in a brown 2007 Ford pickup, which was located a short time later at the Buc-ees convenience store, but he then ran on foot.

Officers chased after the suspect on foot behind Wilbert's Tire Center and Los Patrones Mexican Food Restaurant on Hwy. 290 East.

The suspect, 32-year-old Tomas Salinas of Laredo,



TOMAS SALINAS

ARES operators testing out emergency communications

Testing done from different locations in Pct. 4

Lee County Amateur Radio Emergency Service, LeeCARES, successfully completed a communications exercise on Saturday March 20.

The objective of the exercise was to test radio reception from different locations in Precinct 4 from both mobile units and base stations. Four LeeCARES members operated mobile units from a total of 28 locations from south of Dime Box to north of Lexington, and two members operated from stationary locations to assist the net control operator who was based in Lexington.

At each location, radio operators evaluated radio signals using both of the amateur radio repeaters

in Lee County and from mobile unit to mobile unit (simplex).

Only a few locations were not reachable using simplex. Both repeater signals were strong everywhere, including where cell phone service was

poor or none existent. Additional research is ongoing to determine the best locations to set up a temporary station with an elevated antenna mast in the Lexington area during an emergency event where



LOADING IT UP -- The city bid a fond farewell to the historic REO Speedwagon fire truck that has resided in Giddings since about 2016. Chuck and June Crane, former owners

of The Blast from the Past retail store downtown, recently sold their fire truck to a fellow member of the Antique Automobile Club of America. It was picked up on March 27 at the Lee

County Center for the Arts building and transported to its new home in New Jersey. A small crowd of bystanders gathered outside to watch its departure and take photographs.



Lady Buffaloes defeat LBJ 17-0

The Lady Buffs varsity softball team defeated LBJ 17-0, with the game being called in the 5th.

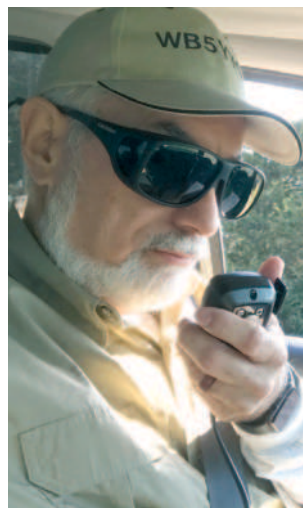
In the circle were Lillie Pietsch (2 innings), Ashlyn Abegglen (1 inning), and Savannah Weiser (1 inning).

No hits were allowed by the Lady Buffs pitchers. Pietsch had 3 strikeouts and Weiser had 2.

At the plate, Weiser had 3 hits and 4 RBI. Keltzi King also had 3 hits with 5 RBI. Ariel Lopez had 2 hits with 1 RBI. Pietsch, Sadie Claxton, and Alyssa Brade had one hit each. Pietsch, Kailey Burgdorf, and Kamryn Schmidt had one RBI each.



Mark Allison KI5DYC, Net Control for the exercise.



Calvin Burnham, WB5YYQ, on his radio.

Items stolen from Lexington property

Deputy Pete Calvert with the Lee County Sheriff's Office was dispatched to a residence on CR 309 in the Lexington area to

take a burglary report on Friday, April 2. The stolen items were listed in the deputy's report, which was not provided, since the case is currently under investigation.

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Group picture from left to right: Julia Allison KI5LNM; Ken Malgren K7MAL, ARES District 7 Emergency Coordinator; Jason Korb KI5ABB,

LeeCARES Operations Section Chief for the exercise; Marida Favia del Core Borromeo, KD5BJ LeeCARES Emergency Coordinator and Plan-

ning Section Chief; Gaye Lynn Bailey KF5PWN LeeCARES Assistant E.C and Operations; Calvin Burnham WB5YYQ; and Jeff Bullard KI5HHI.

TESTING

(FROM PAGE ONE)
communications has been disrupted.

Efforts to map radio signals in Lee County continues, with the next exercise tentatively scheduled for mid-May.

"We are whole heartedly thankful to ZochNet, Lexington ISD, and Bubba's Travel Stop for allowing us the use of their premises during the exercise," said Marida Favia del Core Borromeo, LeeCARES Emergency Coordinator.

LeeCARES also participated on Friday, March 19 in a Florida emergency communications exercise sponsored by the Florida Baptist Disaster Relief group.

This exercise involved the Florida State Division of Emergency Management, the Emergency Operations Centers of five Florida Counties, one city, and several dozen volunteers from 13 states.

The exercise simulated the devastation caused by a band of tornadoes moving across the Florida peninsula, taking down

power and internet in their swaths, and then a terrorist attack on a telephone switching hub in the north east corner of the state.

It closely simulated the actual disaster caused by hurricane-line straight line winds that tore through two mid-western states in August last year, and left the city of Cedar Rapids, Iowa largely cut off from state disaster officials.

LeeCARES received special unannounced instructions during the exercise that generated several Winlink (email via amateur radio) messages and a few voice messages during this exercise.

According to Marida "These exercises help us to hone our skills and learn new techniques. In the event of an emergency that disrupts communications in the county, we're here to assist where we can"

The Lee County Amateur Radio Emergency Service@ (LeeCARES) is a member of the American Radio Relay League. The purpose of LeeCARES is to furnish emergency communication when regular communication

fails or is inadequate during natural or man-made disasters.

LeeCARES consists of licensed radio amateur operators who have voluntarily registered their qualifications and equipment, with their local ARES leadership, to assist with communications when disaster strikes.

"If you are a licensed operator, or you have a scanner, we can be found on the Giddings repeater frequency of 147.22 MHz during our training nets every Monday night at 7 p.m. We have monthly meetings on the third Sunday of each month at Elm Creek Café. Please verify meeting and repeater information on our website at www.leecares.org." stated Marida.

Man in ditch puts up cross memorial

Deputy Adams and Sgt. Ray with the Lee County Sheriff's Office checked on a man who was walking in the ditch along Hwy. 290 West in the Giddings area on Easter Sunday, April 4. The man was trying to put up a cross memorial.

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Appreciation Party

Please join us in honoring

Former Sheriff Rodney Meyer

for 49 years of service to the citizens of Lee County

Come-and-Go Celebration

Friday, April 16, 2021
2:00PM to 6:00PM
American Legion Hall
1502 S. Hwy 77
Giddings

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

GIDDINGS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Giddings Economic Development Corporation will hold a public hearing on the 12th day of April 2021, beginning at 5:30pm o'clock at the following address: City Hall, Council Chambers, 118 East Richmond Street, Giddings, Texas, 78942. The purpose of the public hearing is to discuss the expenditure of EDC funds in the form of a business assistance grant to G2K Development Partners for the development of a site to be leased to Dollar Tree, Inc., Project Value Retailer. The use and purpose of the grant under consideration is for the installation of curb cuts, roads, water and sewer, and other infrastructure as determined for the development of an approximate one acre tract of property located on north Highway 290 at the corner of Highway 290 and CR 133, adjacent to Buc-ees, in Giddings city limits. This notice is provided pursuant to Section 504.001 et. seq. of the Texas Local Government Code.