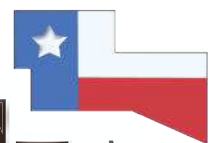




The Kerrville DAILY TIMES



Thursday, December 7, 2023

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Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

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DECEMBER 7, 1941 - "A DATE WHICH WILL LIVE IN INFAMY"

Sheriff: New post will focus on fight against human smuggling

Sean Batura
Special to The Times

Kerr County Sheriff Larry Leitha recently said he'll begin evaluating which of his deputies will be most suitable for a special, ongoing mission: nabbing human smugglers and stopping associated criminal activity.

"This isn't something a rookie can do," Leitha said during the Nov. 27 meeting of the commissioners court. "This has to be a good, experienced officer. We have several who can do it."

After hearing from Leitha and a member of his command staff, Capt. Jason Waldrip, county commissioners voted unanimously to approve a job description for the new position of criminal interdiction deputy. The deputy will report to Lt. Scott Gaige of the agency's Special Operations Division, which is headed by Waldrip.

According to Leitha, the criminal interdiction position, or OLS deputy, was planned for in the budget, with funding

See **SHERIFF**, page 3A

Overby joins race for Pct. 1 commissioner

Staff report
news@dailytimes.com

Anne Overby, who was appointed County Commissioner for Precinct 1 in late October, has recently filed to seek the nomination for a four-year term in the March 2024 Republican primary.



OVERBY

Overby has lived in Kerr County, Precinct 1, for more than 30 years, 10 years in the city and more than 20 years outside the city limits.

She graduated from the University of Texas at Austin with a BBA in 1987.

She and her husband, Kerwin Overby, a CPA, have been married for 34 years. They have two married children and one granddaughter. Their children are graduates of Tivy High School and the University of Texas at Austin.

See **OVERBY**, page 3A



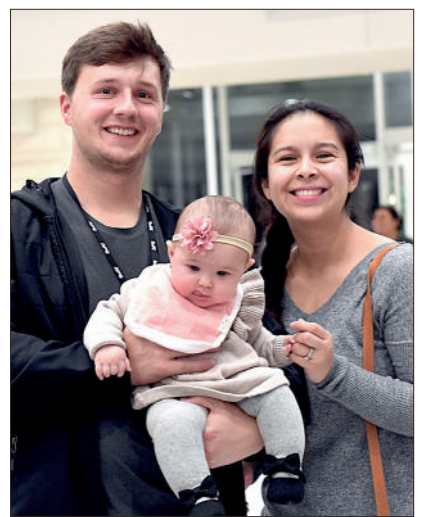
ABOVE: Santa arrives at the Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library for Tuesday's activities.

Storytime with Santa

The Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library hosted a special visitor Tuesday evening as Santa Claus stopped by to visit with local youngsters and read during library storytime.

(Times photos by Tom Holden/
photo@dailytimes.com)

BELOW: Niklas Gross and his wife, Vanessa Espinoza, bring their daughter, Olivia Espinoza Gross, to the library to see Santa.



ABOVE: Santa and Mrs. Claus read "A Night Before Christmas" to a crowd of children at the library on Tuesday evening.



Santa visits with Gwen and Madelyn Forrester.



AT RIGHT: Layla Frazier, 8, and Santa have a conversation Tuesday at the library.



Lyle Zunker, 6, and his sister, Holland, 2, wait for Santa to arrive at the library on Tuesday evening.



Greg Bitkower, a founding member of the Jewish Community of the Hill Country, displays two menorahs and a wooden dreidel at his office as he prepares for the start of Hanukkah. The Jewish Community will host its sixth annual Menorah Lighting Celebration on Sunday evening at the Kerr County Courthouse. (Times photo by Tom Holden/photo@dailytimes.com)

Jewish Community invites public to annual menorah lighting event

6th annual celebration set for Sunday evening at courthouse

Paul Gray
paul.gray@dailytimes.com

The Jewish Community of the Hill Country will host their sixth annual Hanukkah Menorah Lighting Celebration from 6 to 7 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 10, outside the Kerr County Courthouse.

The event will feature a reading of a traditional Hanukkah story, live music and the lighting of the 12-foot, computerized menorah from Israel.

Kerr County residents are welcome to attend, regardless of membership in the Jewish Community of the

Hill Country.

Greg Bitkower, the sole remaining founding member of the Jewish Community of the Hill Country, said the lights on the menorah will be lit one at a time as their meaning and significance are explained and will be left on for the duration of the holiday season.

The music will be performed by Bitkower, Chris Huber, Karen Billingsley and David Isadore.

Additionally, coffee, hot chocolate and water will be provided by the Kerrville Board of Realtors Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Committee.

This year, Hanukkah begins after sundown on Dec. 7 and goes until sundown on Dec. 15.

Bitkower said the celebration is not a replacement or alternative for Christmas but simply occurs around the same time as Christmas.

"It's the festival of lights," Bitkower said. "It's to spread goodwill and love through a community, and by understanding what happened, you can understand the, we'll call it the historic miracle."

See **MENORAH**, page 8A

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Weather

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Christmas Walk draws Kerrville faithful



ABOVE: Andrew Dodson plays the guitar as the congregation sings "Silent Night" during the Christmas Walk. The Ministerial Alliance Christmas Walk took place in Kerrville Tuesday evening. Five churches took part in the annual event: First Baptist Church Kerrville, First Presbyterian Church of Kerrville, First Assembly of God, St. Peter's Episcopal Church and Notre Dame Catholic Church. **AT RIGHT:** Walkers move from one church to the next during Tuesday's Christmas Walk. (Times photos by Jeff Lavender/photo@dailymtimes.com)



Pregnant woman asking court to let her have abortion under exceptions to state's ban

AUSTIN (AP) — A pregnant Texas woman whose fetus has a fatal diagnosis asked a court Tuesday to let her have an abortion, bringing what her attorneys say is the first lawsuit of its kind in the U.S. since Roe v. Wade was overturned last year.

Texas is one of 13 states that ban abortion at nearly all stages of pregnancy. Although Texas allows exceptions, doctors and women have argued in court this year that the state's law is so restrictive and vaguely worded that physicians are fearful of providing abortions lest

they face potential criminal charges.

Kate Cox, 31, is 20 weeks pregnant and has been told by doctors that her baby is likely to be stillborn or live for a week at most, according to the lawsuit filed in Austin. The suit says doctors told her their "hands are tied" under Texas' abortion ban.

"Kate Cox needs an abortion, and she needs it now," the lawsuit reads.

Spokespersons for the Texas attorney general's office, which has defended the ban in court, did not immediately respond to a message seeking comment.

Air Force Reserve staff sergeant arrested on felony charges for role in the Jan. 6 Capitol riot

A staff sergeant in the U.S. Air Force Reserve from Texas was arrested Wednesday on felony charges related to the Jan. 6, 2021, riot, where authorities say he pushed and grabbed police officers and called one officer a "traitor."

Kyle Douglas McMahan, 41, of Watauga, was taken into custody in Dallas nearly three years after authorities say he joined the pro-Trump mob that attacked the Capitol wearing a red "Make America

Great Again" hat with "God" written on it in black marker.

After the riot, his Google search history included: "Can I resign from the military if I do not want to serve an illegitimate president?" and "capitol terrorists identified," according to court papers.

He faces felony charges of assaulting, resisting, or impeding officers and obstruction of law enforcement, as well as additional misdemeanor offenses.

Sheriff: Gunman's parents among 6 dead in Texas attacks; he was earlier arrested for family assault

AUSTIN (AP) — A Texas man suspected of killing his parents in San Antonio and four others in Austin in a violent trail of separate attacks had cut off his ankle monitor from a previous misdemeanor domestic violence arrest, authorities said Wednesday.

The suspect, Shane James, 34, also had been confronted by deputies for a mental health call when he was naked at his parents' home, Bexar County Sheriff Javier Salazar said at a news conference in the San Antonio area. But deputies did not arrest him at that time, despite a misdemeanor warrant for cutting off the ankle monitor. James will be charged with murder or capital murder in his county in the coming days, the sheriff added.

James has already been charged with two counts of capital murder related to the killings in Austin in separate attacks authorities said began Tuesday morning and ended with the suspect crashing his car that evening during a police pursuit. Four people were found dead in two homes in Austin, more than 80 miles (130 kilometers) away from the San Antonio area, officials said.

A cyclist in Austin also was shot and wounded

and two police officers were recovering from gunshots, including one who was shot in the leg outside of a high school, Austin interim Police Chief Robin Henderson said.

Henderson said it was unclear what, if any, relationship the man had to the victims in the Austin area.

Online jail records in Travis County show James was being held on two charges of capital murder in Travis County and misdemeanors from other counties. The records do not indicate whether James has an attorney and several people listed as relatives of James in public records did not immediately respond to phone messages Wednesday.

"We strongly believe one suspect is responsible for all of the incidents," Henderson said during a news conference early Wednesday.

James is a former U.S. Army infantry officer who served from February 2013 to August 2015, according to Lt. Col. Ruth Castro, Army spokesperson. He had no deployments and

his last rank was first lieutenant.

Court records show James was previously charged in San Antonio with three misdemeanor counts of allegedly assaulting a member of his family or household. Those charges are awaiting a hearing.

Henderson said authorities did not determine the Austin attacks were connected until the final one at a home, which happened more than eight hours after a school police officer was shot and wounded in a high school parking lot on the other side of the city.

In the San Antonio area, the Bexar County sheriff said the bodies of two people were found inside a residence after deputies saw water coming out of the home, as though something was leaking inside. He said the deaths appeared to have occurred before the shootings in Austin.

"This occurred, and then the suspect drove to Austin and did what he did there," Salazar told reporters.

Menorah

Continued from page 1

Bitkower said Hanukkah is one of the most festive Jewish holidays and is a celebration of a historical event rather than a religious holiday. He said it is a celebration of the cleansing and rededication of the temple during the Maccabean Revolt against the Seleucid Empire in 164 B.C.E.

"When they relit the temple menorah, they found that only one day's supply of holy oil was available," Bitkower said. "The miracle that occurred was, it lasted for eight days, and what goes along with that, there were a myriad of Jews in the desert who were waiting for the rededication, and they saw the light, but it also took eight days to get there."

Bitkower likened the miracle to a cellphone with only 10% of its battery lasting for eight days.

A menorah has nine lights or nine candles. The center candle, the shamash, is used to light the other eight candles.

The other eight candles, in the order they are lit,

represent freedom, family, study, holiness, righteousness, the happiness of sharing, the light around and within each person and peace.

The Jewish Community of the Hill Country hosts Shabbat services at 6 p.m.

on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at 960 Barnett St., as well as services for High Holy Days such as Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashana.

More information can be found at <https://thejchc.com>.

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