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SWOSU and WHS Celebrate the Classes of 2024 Last Weekend



Provided

SWOSU hosted the Spring 2024 commencement ceremonies this past weekend at the Pioneer Event Center on the SWOSU campus. Three ceremonies were held over Friday and Saturday with thousands of guests in attendance over the weekend.



Provided

Weatherford High School Senior Avry Nailon gives the camera a double thumbs up while waiting to graduate this past Saturday.



Provided

Guests wait for SWOSU's College of Education and Behavioral Sciences commencement ceremony to begin.



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Weatherford High School also held their 2024 graduation ceremony at the PCEC on SWOSU's Campus this past Saturday. Pictured above, Weatherford High School Seniors gather before their graduation ceremony begins.



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SWOSU Installs New Video Scoreboard for Milam Stadium



Courtesy SWOSU Athletics

Photos show workers installing the new video board for the 2024 season at SWOSU's Milam Stadium in Weatherford.

Weatherford Celebrating Rt. 66's 98th Anniversary Friday, May 31

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Mark your calendars and make some room for some cake and ice cream because the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce is celebrating the Mother Road's 98th birthday in style. Beginning at 5:30pm on Friday, May 31st at Heritage park near City Hall in Weatherford, the Birthday Bash will feature the 3rd annual homemade ice cream contest, live music from the Slim Picken's Band, food trucks, vendor booths, and free birthday cake.

"It will be the third annual ice cream contest event," said Weatherford Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kim Silman who is coordinating the event. Wristbands will be on sale to taste the ice cream at the event which start at \$5 for individuals and \$10 for families. "We will have a non-profit winner, and of course a for-profit winner, which will be voted on by a panel of judges. And then we will also have a People's Choice Award which will be determined by the guests,"

added Silman.

Guests who purchase wristbands will be given a ticket to use to vote on which ice cream they liked best. Along with the ice cream, the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce will be serving birthday cake to any any interested guest for free. There will also be food trucks that would make any foodie salivate, with burgers, tacos, and various other treats.

"We're just super excited to continue this tradition," said Silman. Silman also noted that the proceeds from this event as well as the Halloween themed Boo-Bash happening later this year will be used to create monuments in anticipation of Route 66's centennial that's slated to occur in 2026.

For more information you can visit the Weatherford Chamber of Commerce's Facebook page by searching Weatherford Area Chamber of Commerce or by giving them a call at 580-772-7744.

HIGHER GROUND

On Satisfaction

Jim Morrison

Mother's Day! For those of us who will soon join our mothers in their heaven abode, it may conjure up memories of sacrifice, tender love, doing without and putting up with.

My mother went home to be with the Lord over 40 years ago. But I still see her trudging down a cotton field, row after row in the hot sun. Then going home to prepare supper for the family of 5 kids and dad. Sometimes the evening would find her soaking her aching feet in a small basin. But I don't remember her complaining. It was the role she would play as Mom in difficult times on the farm. She did what she could. She had only a 7th grade education but was proud of the education we kids were getting.

It all began in 1928, not a good year to get

married. What had seemed to be prosperous times suddenly imploded as the stock market crashed in '29 that sent shock waves throughout the country--particularly in rural areas when the price of cotton plummeted.

In 1935, before I was born the family left the farm to start over in Arizona where my uncle had work. I was born in 1937. I'm sure it was not a planned event. They didn't need another mouth to feed. Dad found work where he could--often for a dollar a day. I'm too young to remember those days. There were no food stamps or food resource centers in those days. Somehow, God provided and we grew stronger in the fact that mom and dad loved us and were there for us. We were poor in many ways but far richer than many today who grow up in single parent homes, often left to fend for themselves.

As the clouds of war approached, Dad found regular work in a munitions plant near Pryor. I remember the evening when we learned that Pearl Harbor had been bombed. I didn't realize it's significance--only that it was a big deal. By 1943 Dad had enough of working for wages and we had accumulated a little cash so it was back to Western Oklahoma where he grew up, hoping to find a farm.

That is where Mom's field work began. I was too small to leave at home so Mom made me a little sack and I began my career as a cotton picker at 6 years of age. I was so short that I didn't have to bend over to reach the bolls so I didn't see it as a problem. If such records were kept, I probably set a world's record of puling 200 lbs. one day as a six-year- old.

I didn't always appreciate it at the time but I am grateful that I learned to do hard things and to get by with little.

Why am I sharing all this nostalgia? The main reason is that I never really appreciated what Mom and Dad went through to provide for us kids. As I look back, I never really thanked them in a heartfelt way . I took so much for granted. Toward the end Mom wound up living in a nursing home for 10 years with rheumatoid arthritis, twisted limbs, finally unable to walk; often writhing in pain for hours. I wish I could thank her again for all she went through to keep the family together and love on us as best she could.

I'll do that one day, the next chance I get. It might not be very long. Maybe some of you need to do that before it is too late.

To comment: 580-302-1142 or jhm82@outlook.com

Weatherford Ladies' Soccer Season Ends After State Championship Loss



Courtesy Jimmy Busellato



Courtesy Jimmy Busellato



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The advertisement features a stylized orange house icon with a chimney at the top. Below it, the text "BRANDED M SERVICES LLC" is written in large, bold, orange capital letters, followed by "HOME & COMMERCIAL INSPECTION" in a slightly smaller, bold, orange font. A list of services is presented in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters: "PRE-SELL INSPECTION", "TERMITE INSPECTION", "MOLD TESTING", "WATER QUALITY TEST", and "HOME ENERGY AUDIT". At the bottom, there is a black rectangular box containing a QR code on the left and the text "Scan the QR Code to visit our website" on the right. A large, white, hand-drawn arrow points from the QR code towards the bottom right corner of the box. Below the black box, the phone number "Call 580-330-8550" is displayed in a large, bold, black font.



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CADDO CO / UNRUH - A Hydro man is charged in Caddo County District Court with a total of 25 sex-related crimes, including two counts of first-degree rape, 11 counts of lewd acts, and 12 counts of child sex abuse. 36-year-old Shawn Unruh allegedly committed sexual abuse dating back to January 2018 until his recent arrest by Caddo County authorities. A preliminary hearing conference is planned for June 27th.

CLINTON / HAY BALE FIRE - The Clinton Fire Department was called to battle some 300 hay bales on fire north of Clinton Regional Hospital on 28th Street, just past the River Bridge. Fire Chief Brett Russell says it appears that lightning started the blaze. He described the scene as “quite the light show when we pulled up.”

CORDELL / CLEAN UP – Clean-up from a recent tornado in Cordell went quickly, says Washita County Emergency Management Director Kenneth Trent. “Everybody stepped up to help haul off approximately 100 loads of debris, Trent explained, “Things are looking good. Things are just about back to normal.” The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been on-site to assess the damage. 50 houses were negatively affected by the storm. Businesses that were affected are waiting on insurance.

SWOSU / GOLF TORNADO - The SWOSU Women's Golf team took shelter in their hotel from a tornado that struck Bartlesville, OK. They were attending a recently held NCAA Central Region Tournament. The Tulsa Weather Team provided adequate warnings for the weather, 30 minutes before the storm arrived, reports Head Coach Brad Fleetwood. Storm damage at the Hillcrest Country Club delayed round two of the NCAA Central Region Tournament.

SWOSU / PROMOTIONS - Southwestern Oklahoma State University and the SWOSU Foundation have announced the promotion of key personnel in the SWOSU Office of Institutional Advancement. *Erin Adams* has been promoted to Director of Development & Engagement; *Clarke Hale* has been promoted to senior Director for Major Gifts & Donor Relations; *Jessica Heard-Perry* will assume the Director of Advancement Operations role; and *Kari Jones* has been promoted to Director of Advancement Projects & Executive Assistant.

WEATHERFORD / MAYOR ELECTION

Weatherford Mayor Mike Brown says he plans to seek re-election. Brown is focused on building new sidewalks, repairing Route 66, and finishing the YMCA Community Center. The filing period for mayor begins in June.

WEEKLY SHOUTOUTS!

Oh HAPPY Day to YOU!

Have a birthday, anniversary, or other special event? Email us at sales@westokweekly.com to announce it here for **FREE!**

Alcohol causing problems? Alcoholics Anonymous meets daily at 928 W. Main, Weatherford. Call (580) 819-0727 for more information. **Christian Free Store**—Donations of school supplies, clothes, shoes, etc. are needed or if you are in need. Please call (580) 637-2345 or (580) 291-3875. **Alfalfa, OK, Community Center** “Bible Study,” Every Monday Night from 7:00 to 8:00 Hwy 58. Five miles South of Hwy 152. For more information contact (405) 643-9211. Free and Open to the Public. **OK Parkinson's Alliance**, monthly support group meeting the second Thursday of each month, excluding December, at 5:30 p.m. at Weatherford's Pioneer Center, 1000 Gartrell Place. Patients, caregivers, family or friends are welcome. Questions? Contact OK Parkinson's Alliance (405) 810-0695 or info@OKpa.org. **Iron Sharpens Iron** is a Christ-centered adult support group every Tuesday night at 7pm. 233 E Main in Hydro, First Christian Church.

Happy Birthday Wishes for May 15 - Taylor Boyd, Whitney Roper, Anthony Sperle; **May 16** - Ray Bagby, Chris Gregston, Buddy Holman, Katrina Howry, Carrin Klien, Jay Moore, Beth Perkins; **May 17** - Hannah Austin, Robert Crain, Deanna Davis, Andy Gonzales, Monty McCrary, Riane McNaught, Peggy Sellers, Joselyn Sperle, Susan Thomas, Elijah Yoder; **May 18** - Jenisa Atha, Tina Magpie, Florence Miller, Isaac Rhoads, Sharon Streck, Robert Toahty; **May 19** - Michael Bowman, Carol Christensen. Miranda Sebastian, Cheryl Wedel, Hath Whitefield, Noel Williams; **May 20** - Jeremy Biswell, Marlen Lehman, Addison Miller, Garrett Payne, LuCretia Schapansky, Chris Tackitt, Alexis Talamante, Elsie Thomason; **May 21** - Bradley Burger, Jamie Carrizales, Carrie Conner, Jeremy Hammonds, Allison Hayes, Alissa Lynch, Myles Madden, Kaylee Maddox, Jessica Phillips, Audrina Thompson;

Oklahoma History: Washita County and the Clinton-Sherman AFB



Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society

One of the U.S. Air Force's "Strategic Air Force (SAC) Tankers," among other US and UK planes not pictured, were put on display for the Clinton-Sherman Air Force Base's "open house show," circa 1959.



Courtesy US Geographical Survey

Clinton-Sherman Airport, OK-17.
Circa Feb. 1995

Chase Wright
Staff Writer

Chase Wright The Oklahoma Air & Space
Staff Writer Port is a public-use airport known as the Naval Air Station Clinton, later renamed to the Clinton-Sherman Industrial Airpark. Located in Foss, OK (near Burns Flat, located about 15 miles southwest of Clinton), the airport has had a colorful history of uses and, all the while, maintained its status as a premier airstrip for different operations.

Today it continues to serve as a strategic and one-of-a-kind port and base for testing, licensing, and training in use by branches of the Department of Defense, Boeing, and the Oklahoma Highway Patrol.

The port was originally built in 1942, but was not officially established until October of 1943 during the height of World War II as “Naval Air Station Clinton.”

The base would close for nearly a decade following the resolution to the war. Ownership was transferred to the city of Clinton, OK, on January 27, 1949. The only caveat: the government could dawn control of it at any point if a national emergency required it.

Despite it no longer being a national Base, the federal government still invested its resources into improving it, especially with the Cold War on the horizon and world-ending nuclear annihilation become more and more of a potential reality.

On September 15, 1954--the same month that the base was repurposed as a Strategic Air Command (SAC) base--the federal government began an extension of one of its runway to be nearly 3 miles long.

During this period, the air station had multiple facilities and strips built, acted as a salvage site, and became a site for the Air Force to develop and train specialized air equipment. This is also the period in which the base underwent its most recent change to become the Clinton-Sherman AFB.

Before its inactivation in 1969, bombardment squadrons used the site to practice new strategic readiness and training and acted to support operations of the Air Force globally.

The main group, the 70th Bombardment Wing, loaned several aircraft, crew, and maintenance personnel during 1968-1969 for combat operations in Asia.

After being labeled as inactive on December 31, 1969, the base's operation was put under the ownership of the city of Clinton for the second time in its life.

Later, in 1999, Oklahoma Senate Bill 720 created the Oklahoma Space Industry Development Authority (OSIDA), and shortly after, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) granted a license to them to use the port and designated it as a licensed orbital launch site. The reason: the port has access to “The Infinity One”, the longest air strip (152 miles long and 50 miles wide) that is not in restricted airspace and not in a Military Operations Area (MoA). It is one of only 12 licensed FAA launch sites in the U.S.

Soon, different aerospace companies began conducting tests for astronautical prototyping. One of these companies was Armadillo-Aerospace, who used the base for space prototypes like its lunar lander. Their tests ended in 2009.

Alongside sub-orbital testing, many attempts were made to establishing a rocket racing league on the base. The first of these was established in 2005, with plans to race rocket-powered aircraft in a closed-circuit track. The rocket racers would be viewable by the public live and virtually through devices with internet access. Three prototypes were created and tested, but funding failed during plans to host their 2008 inaugural race. Additional funding was picked up, and one exhibition race was held in 2010. Unfortunately, funding again ran out before another race could be held and by 2014, the league ended.

The company Boeing picked up use of the base to test their autonomous landing system for their jumbo jets. By 2015, they were also using the site for proficiency training, flight tests, and recertification flights.

Other aircraft manufacturers and companies began to do the same, and the Department of Defense is still using it for flight training crews to this day.

The bunker facilities created prior are now used as the Law Enforcement Driver Training Center for the Oklahoma Highway Patrol and the Oklahoma Department of Safety. The annual Cadet Lawman Academy for high schoolers uses the site for their summer programs. According to the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, the facility is recognized as one of the top law enforcement driving centers in the nation.

In a 12 month operation period ending in June of 2020, the port saw over 30,000 successful operations. Today, the north and west WWII runways, while unused, can still be seen from aerial photographs.



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KYLE DILLINGHAM
VIOLINIST, ENTERTAINER

An OKC native, Kyle Dillingham started playing violin at the age of 9. While in high school, he was featured twice on Nashville's Grande Ole Opry, performing with Hank Thompson and Roy Clark.

He received his Bachelor's in instrumental music performance from Oklahoma City University. He has taken his music to 42 countries, earning him the title of Oklahoma's Musical Ambassador.

Oklahoma Opry / Stardust – May 24, 7pm

Kyle Dillingham / Mackynsie McKedy – May 31, 7pm



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Train to Volunteer for Western Oklahoma Courts on July 1, 2024



CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) volunteers are concerned citizens who are trained to be the eyes and ears of the juvenile court judge. These everyday heroes interview the children, their families and anyone who has information regarding the family. They read and study all reports pertaining to the families then report their findings to the court and make recommendations concerning the best interest of these children who have been abused and/or neglected.

CASA of Western Oklahoma is dedicated to improving the lives of the children in the Oklahoma

foster care system in Beckham, Custer, Dewey, Roger Mills, and Washita Counties. Our specially trained volunteers strive to become a positive, stable influence for children while ensuring they have a voice in the courts and the services they need for a stable future.

Executive Director, Jackie Aaron, stated that in 2023, 69 CASA of Western Oklahoma volunteers served 200 children on 90 cases in our service area. Unfortunately, this number represents only a percentage of the children that are currently in the foster care system in our area.

We are seeking individuals that might be interested in becoming a CASA volunteer to help close this gap while serving the needs of these children. Each CASA volunteer dramatically improves the lives of children experiencing foster care by working with the child until they are placed in a safe, permanent home. CASA volunteers often become the one constant adult presence in the child's life. CASA of Western Oklahoma worked with over 200 children in 2023 and the need remains great for more volunteers.

CASA Volunteers must be 21 years of age, be willing to commit to at least a year of service, participate in a free in-depth training, and pass an OSBI and national background check. CASA volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and circumstances. Many work full-time along with volunteering as a CASA while others work part-time, are retired, or are college students. The common thread that links all volunteers together is the desire to make a difference in the life of an abused child.

Flex Training offers flexibility and fewer hours in the classroom. Half of the training is online at your own pace and the other half is in-person. This option gives our volunteers more flexibility.

Volunteer as a CASA - Stand up for a child today. Your advocacy gives children in the foster care system a voice. Helping a child begins in your heart — for more information about becoming a CASA or other ways to help visit www.casawok.org or email Tamra Misak at tamra.misak@casawok.org.



Crystal Hamons / Volunteer Coordinator

Carrie Schmidt was the volunteer of the month for Connections Food & Resource Center for April. Carrie is a wonderful volunteer and has a very caring heart. She volunteers because she enjoys serving others and she looks forward to visiting with everyone.

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Krystal Blackwell / WW

The Weatherford Chamber of Commerce recently presented the Connections Food & Resource Center with a \$7,000 check from the 2024 Pickleball Paddle Battle Tournament held in April.

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Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU Women's Golf finished second place at the 2024 NCAA Division II Central Region Championship and in doing so, secured a spot at the national tournament for the third time in program history.

The Lady Bulldogs were one of nine qualified teams in the regional tournament field, held May 6-8 at Hilcrest Country Club. Henderson State won the tournament by six strokes after catching SWOSU on the leaderboard in Wednesday's final round. Seven strokes behind the Lady Bulldogs sat Rogers State.

The top three finishing teams (mentioned above) will advance to the NCAA Division II National Championships in Winter Garden, Florida, on May 21-25.

SWOSU entered Wednesday's third and final round with a four-stroke lead after shooting the lowest team score in each of the first two rounds before HSU overtook them in the final 18 holes of play. Two Lady Bulldogs finished inside the top-5 – Rebecca Lau in fourth and Freya Sala who tied for fifth.

Lau was tied for the lead after the first round after she

shot an even-par 72 on Monday. She added two strokes to her second round and two more in her final round and was +6 in the tournament. She birdied nine times in three rounds – the fourth most in the entire field.

Sala climbed the leaderboard from 19th all the way to fifth by tournament's end after shooting a 78 in her opening round. She carded a two-over 74 in round two before firing a one-under 71 in the final round – SWOSU's lowest day three score of any golfer. Sala faced 12 total par-5s in the tournament and performed the best out of the entire field in those holes at three-under par.

Megan Brown finished tied for 14th in the tournament. She had a share of the lead with Lau after 18 holes but fell off with an additional 12 strokes added to her final two rounds. Ashlyn Acosta, T-20th, and Drew Dodgion, T-35th, rounded out the team.

For the first time since 2019, SWOSU will advance to the NCAA Division II National Championships held at Orange County National this year. The program has competed at the national tournament two other times, finishing tied for fourth in 2019 and 12th in 2014.

SWOSU Athletes Earn All-Conference Status



Jon Chidester
SWOSU Media Relations

SWOSU Baseball had three named All-Great American Conference selections on Wednesday night, announced at the league's awards banquet prior to the start of the second weekend of the conference tournament. Headlining the trio was first team selection Jackson Syring, with Marco Barrera on the second team and Geoff Marlow as an honorable mention nod.

Syring (Derby, Kan.) batted .394 on the year with 12 home runs, 19 doubles, three triples, and 57 RBI. He ranked second in the GAC in doubles, third in batting average, and fourth in RBIs. Syring ended the season with a 39-game streak of reaching base safely and at one point this year rode a 15-game hitting streak. His 69 hits led the team, and he had 23 different games this season where he had at least two hits – highlighted by his 5-for-5 day against Newman when he blasted four home runs.

Barrera (Wilmington, Calif.) started the season slow with just four hits through the first 14 games before catching fire from game 15 and on. He belted his first home run of the season in game 15 against Ouachita on February 23 which seemingly snapped him out of the funk, and he went on to hit .423 in the final 35 games of the season. On the season, Barrera batted .376 with 12 home runs, 14 doubles, and 40 RBI. His 22 stolen bases led the league, and he was 10th in the GAC in batting average.

Marlow (Flower Mound, Texas) batted .359 with a league-leading 20 doubles. His team high 14 home runs ranked him fifth in the conference, and he was just inside the top-15 in the league in batting average. Marlow had two or more RBI in 16 games this year, a number that led the Bulldog lineup. Like Syring, he ended the season having reached base safely in 20 consecutive contests. At one point this year, he had built a 12-game hit streak.

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