

From devastation to new growth, West pulls itself together, stronger than ever.



Thursday | April 17, 2014

Rising from the ashes



TRAVIS TAYLOR | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR

City of West celebrates rebuilding one year later

By RAE JEFFERSON
 STAFF WRITER

A handful of concrete slabs occupy the spaces where various homes once stood in the town of West. The newly erected beams of these houses rise like wooden skeletons, waiting for flesh in the form of floors, walls and ceilings.

Reconstruction continues one year after the devastating April 17, 2013, fertilizer plant explosion that left many surrounding homes and an apartment uninhabitable. Some property owners were forced to demolish existing structures and rebuild.

John Crowder, pastor of First Baptist Church of West, said the costs of reconstruction were often too high for owners to bear, sparking a generous outpouring of support for those affected via local recovery organizations. His church, just one of many organizations involved with reconstructing homes, has helped build seven homes from the ground up.

"We have been able to do quite a bit because so many folks were generous in their donations to us," he said.

SEE REBUILD, page 4

Stars adorn a tree near the former site of the West Rest Haven nursing, which was damaged by the West fertilizer plant explosion and later demolished. West is remembering the one year anniversary of the disaster on Thursday.

Community remembers fallen with memorials

By KAT WORRALL
 STAFF WRITER

"Blessed are those who give their lives for others."

Those words, inscribed on a memorial plaque, is one of the ways a small Texas town is commemorating those who lost their lives.

One year ago today, the West Fertilizer Co. plant exploded, killing 15 and injuring over 160. As the town continues to heal, rebuild and evolve, West has created memorials to ensure that though the wounds may eventually heal and leveled buildings may be revived, those lost in the explosion will not be forgotten.

Prayer Garden Plaque

Ray and Clarice Snokhous, residents of West, Texas, saw the impact of the West ex-

plosion firsthand.

Ray, the Honorary Consul General of the Czech Republic for Texas, was about 400 yards away from the explosion, while his wife Clarice was home and felt a jolt. Two of Ray's cousins, both volunteer firefighters, were killed in the blast.

"You realize how precious life is — how fragile life is — only when you see it under these conditions and these circumstances," Ray said. "You have the full impact of the hurt that follows and the devastation that causes the hurt."

The Snokhouses took that hurt and funded and designed a granite memorial plaque for the 12 first responders who lost their lives in the explosion.

The plaque is in the Infant Jesus of Prague

SEE MEMORIAL, page 4



TRAVIS TAYLOR | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR

A statue honoring the fallen firefighters from the West fertilizer plant disaster stands outside of the West Fire Department on Wednesday. The statue is inscribed with the Fireman's Prayer and is flanked by a cross bearing the names of the firefighters killed in the explosion.

West Memorial Service

When:
 7:15 p.m. today

Where:
 West Fair and Rodeo Ground on Main Street

See BaylorLariat.com for online coverage of the memorial service and other stories.

College Board releases revised SAT questions

By KIMBERLY HEHLING
 ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Calculate the foreign exchange rate a vacationing American would pay in India. Estimate from a random sample the number of 18- to 34-year olds who voted for a candidate. These are sample questions from the newly redesigned SAT, which aims for more real-world applications and analysis from students.

The College Board released the sample test questions on Wednesday, offering clues to how the revised college entrance exam, taken last year by 1.7 million students, will look when it rolls out in 2016.

One of the biggest changes is that relatively obscure vocabulary words such as "punctilious" and "lachrymose" are unlikely to appear on the test. Test takers will see words more likely to be used in classrooms or in the workplace, like "synthesis."

Instead of a wide range, the math section will concentrate on areas that "matter most for college and career readiness and success," the College Board said.

The essay section is becoming optional. And it now will require a student to read a passage and explain how the author constructed an argument instead of offering the student's

SEE SAT, page 6

RecycleMania Tournament

| SCHOOL | POUNDS PER PERSON |
|------------|-------------------|
| Baylor | 12.649 |
| K State | 11.178 |
| OU | 8.298 |
| Texas Tech | 7.005 |
| UT Austin | 6.965 |
| KU | 5.400 |
| WVU | 2.939 |

ILLUSTRATION BY CARLYE THORNTON | LARIAT PHOTOGRAPHER

Baylor wins Big 12 in recycling competition

By MEGAN GRINDSTAFF
 REPORTER

Baylor found unprecedented success in the 2014 RecycleMania competition. After seven weeks of competition, the results are in, and Baylor outranked even its own record.

Baylor's main area of focus every year is the Per Capita Classic, which measures the number of pounds of recyclables per person. According to recyclemaniacs.com, in this category, Baylor clinched the first place spot in the Big 12, followed by Kansas State University and University of Oklahoma. Baylor finished third out of all Texas schools, bested only by The University of Texas

Medical Branch and Baylor College of Medicine, and 121 out of 332 universities across the country, Baylor's highest national ranking to date.

"Overall our recycling program has matured to the point where we are competing with some of the schools that used to be examples we were striving for," said Smith Getterman, assistant director of sustainability and special projects. "Baylor is one of those examples being talked about now."

In the Gorilla category, which ranks participants based on gross tonnage of recycling, Baylor finished fifth in the Big XII, producing more poundage than

SEE RECYCLE, page 6

WEB

It's a jungle out there. Check out a day in the life of the mammal manager at Cameron Park Zoo.



A&E p. 8

Highway to Splittsville? Despite rumors, AC/DC is still rocking out together as a band.



SPORTS p. 9

Baylor tennis prepares to match up against Texas in this weekend's tournament.



Common Core holds smart students back

Editorial

Thinking back to our K-12 years, it is easy to think about the diverse types of students we crossed paths with — some of the students were the “nerds” and some were not quite as smart. To combat this, many states have started implementing the Common Core approach to education.

This method asserts that there are certain skills student should learn at each grade or age level. Schools under this Common Core teach their students no more and no less than what is dictated by the curriculum.

This is an issue on two fronts. Students learn at differing paces and in different ways, and the Common Core completely does away with both aspects. There should not be a ceiling when it comes to K-12 education.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to education. Student A is going to learn at a different pace than Student B.

As bad as it sounds, there are always going to be students who rise to the top of the class and there are

always going to be students who fall short and are unable to succeed on pace with their peers.

There is nothing wrong with that, but there is something wrong with asking the student who is obviously ready for advanced coursework to wait while other students catch up.

There is an old saying, “Use it or lose it.” And that definitely applies here. Take a student who exhibits great study habits from a young age and is able to comprehend information at the level of students several years older.

Is it fair to ask them to not utilize those skills and instead be limited to material they deem simple to keep everyone at the same level? The fact of the matter is students do not all perform at the same level.

IQ exists and it makes no sense to try to perpetuate an all-students-have-equal-intelligence mentality.

If the student is not given the opportunity to utilize their study skills, they’ll forget them or, even worse, not learn them and be hurt later when they actually need them.

Some students need to go to magnet schools in order to further their education in a very specific way.

Under Common Core, public

schools would not be allowed to have specialized, accelerated education because it would be against the Common Core theory.

Using the Common Core approach, students are learning technique for subjects such as math in a way completely different from how their parents or even their siblings learned them. And they’re being forced to use only that approach.

For example, several weeks ago a post from a father frustrated with the common core went viral. He was helping his child with a common core math worksheet on subtraction.

He wrote, “Dear Jack, I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering which included an extensive study in differential equations and other higher math applications. Even I cannot explain the Common Core mathematics approach, nor get the answer correct. In the real world, simplification is valued over complication. Therefore, 427-316 is 111. The answer is solved in under five seconds — 111. The process used is ridiculous and would result in termination if used.”

Students look at subjects in many different ways. This is not something that needs to be dis-



ASHER FREEMAN

couraged, but students should be encouraged to find a method that makes sense to them and is easy for them to remember and stick to it.

The Common Core gets one thing right, though, and that is minimum standards at each grade level for students.

This ensures that students moving on to the next grade level are

able to do the work that will be asked of them, but there should not be a ceiling to a child’s education, especially while they’re growing up and developing the study skills they will carry with them to college and beyond.

The Common Core approach is not a bad one, but it should not be the only way to educate students.

Many states are beginning to take the Common Core approach out of their education and Texas never accepted it in the first place.

Other states should continue phasing out the Common Core approach in order to ensure students are being educated to their potential and that students are learning in a way that best suits them.

Athletes earn ‘free’ gear from Baylor

The other day I came across a post on the app “Yik Yak” that read, “the only time an athlete shows some school pride is when they are wearing the gear given to them that we pay for.”

I wasn’t going to post anything in response to it because personally, I will never lower my maturity level and argue behind anonymous postings on social media, but I realized how this student was entirely misinformed. And as a student-athlete, this really didn’t sit well with me for several reasons. This is why I want to take the time to clear up any misconceptions that athletes are just given things because it’s statements and ideas like these that cause this gap between student-athletes and students.

I understand not every student hates or dislikes all student-athletes. However, there is a negative attitude that some students have towards student-athletes because of the “privileges” that students believe student athletes get.

It’s understandable when a student sees an athlete with a nice backpack, pair of shoes or warm-up jacket that are all sponsored by the same brand with a Baylor logo on them and gets annoyed with how much money those three items may have cost that the student athlete didn’t pay a cent for.

First, student-athletes aren’t “given” anything. Ask any coach on campus whether it be a strength coach, head coach or assistant coach and they will say everything an athlete receives is earned. For my sport, we must pass



Anja Rosales | Reporter

our fitness test in order to play and receive our gear.

Second, I don’t know who this person is who posted this comment on Yik Yak, but unless they are a donor or work for the athletic department, I am most certain they did not pay for our gear.

The amount of gear we earn depends on how much money our program’s budget has for that season, and that goes for all sports. Our budget depends on how successful our season was and how successful the program has been overall.

Not to mention, a lot of how much money the athletic program has overall has much to do with the success of the football program. Students aren’t paying for our gear. That money comes from hard work across the athletic department.

Third, not all athletes are on a full-

ride scholarship or even on partial scholarship for that matter. The number of athletes who receive only academic scholarships to come to Baylor, pay just as much or even more than some non student-athletes.

So yes, those student-athletes are “given” the opportunity to work just as hard in the classroom as they do on the field in order to keep their scholarship.

Some of the student-athletes on college campuses come from an extremely opposite home-life than the demographic of the average Baylor student so this “free gear” is seen as a blessing to some athletes.

I can see how a student might get frustrated when they see a student-athlete decked out in nice gear and assume that student-athlete is on a full-ride scholarship, getting a free education as well as free gear on top of that.

But that isn’t always the case, and just like earning their gear, student-athletes have worked just as hard to earn their scholarship, whether it’s a full-ride, partial or academic scholarship, let alone their spot on the team without any money.

I don’t think students realize the dedication and sacrifices we have made in order to become a student-athlete, or even the sacrifices we still make as a student-athlete. I think this is where the negativity comes into play- when they see a student-athlete with nice gear and don’t take a moment to see the gear as a means of reward.

After countless early morning workouts and practices outside in the cold, after long hot summer days of two-a-days, after having to miss school holidays and festivities due to travel, practice or team curfew, after arriving back to school at 1 a.m. after a long weekend of games and travel and having to get up for an 8 a.m. class that same day, some “free gear” is nice to have as a reward for the hard work we put in as a student-athletes.

By no means, am I complaining about the life I’ve chosen, or even asking for your sympathy for that matter.

I just don’t want these negative perceptions of athletes spreading based off of misconceptions.

I love being able to represent this university by doing something I love, something I’ve worked hard at since the day I realized I wanted to be a collegiate athlete. So when students snarl at the fact that we receive gear from our sport, it’s insulting to discover that students don’t respect the hard work we put in and make negative comments about it.

As student-athletes, we greatly respect your support of the athletic department; don’t tarnish that with snide comments based off of misconceptions.

After all “We are Baylor, and Baylor we’ll always be.” We are one successful, prestigious school. Lets take pride in that together.

Anja Rosales is a junior journalism major from San Antonio. She is a reporter for The Lariat.



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Pledging should be removed altogether

Regarding Megan Grindstaff’s April 15 column titled “Greek organizations should have pledges,” perhaps it is time to throw the baby out with the bath water.

With at least 10 hazing deaths since 2006, separating pledging from hazing is simply too fine a distinction for a Greek organization heretofore known preeminently for slurring the distinction between Rush Week and Death Week.

This would be for new pledges and so-called experienced members still obsessed with the old way of doing business. Animal House is way passé. Producing a new baby with freshly-drawn bath water, while putting tradition-wracked pledging on the R&R view mirror would truly uncover whether fraternities can regain their value, impetus, pulse and integrity. Now this would really, really be a new tradition of honor and self-esteem.

George Starks
Anti-hazing advocate

Baylor Lariat

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Opinion



Injuries on the homefront

PTSD affects veterans physically, socially

By REBECCA FIEDLER
STAFF WRITER

Many veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, known as PTSD, aren't receiving the treatment they need, said panelists yesterday at the Mental Health Symposium downtown.

The symposium was hosted at the Heart of Texas Region Mental Health Mental Retardation Center on South 12th Street, and featured talks about the complications suffered by veterans with PTSD and traumatic brain injuries.

Speakers informed the audience about the struggles military veterans face upon their return from service, noting that many veterans are impaired because they never seek treatment for mental and physical wounds.

"One study has found that 83 percent of people who have PTSD also have at least one or more mental health disorder," said Dr. Mike Hauser, a counselor at the Killeen Heights Vet Center.

People suffering from PTSD may have difficulty maintaining relationships or going to work on a regular basis, Hauser said. However, he said he feels the perception of PTSD sufferers as being less-than-capable members of society or inherently dangerous is a very skewed belief.

"A lot of veterans, within the first two weeks after the recent Fort Hood attack, came in and were really upset with the media, because the media portrayed them as crazy, unstable, problematic and that everybody's ready to go off if

you give them the right excuse," Hauser said. "That's not true. I think the media has done PTSD survivors a great disservice."

Many veterans avoid mental trauma treatment, Hauser said. Many think they can solve their own problems and reintegrate into society on their own. Others avoid treatment because of pride. Some, he said, avoid treatment because they feel guilty, feeling they may be taking too much advantage of resources offered.

Lt. Col. David Tharp, an Air Force veteran, previous adviser to the U.S. Army mental health team and medical advisor to the Kandahar Air Field, spoke on the personal struggles of veterans suffering from post traumatic stress disorder.

"You are trained over and over again to respond to different things," Tharp said. "When you come home, you don't train back down."

Tharp said veterans can struggle with adjusting to the context of the home they return to after having been overseas. Those in the military are trained repeatedly to be vigilant of danger and attack, and it can be difficult to undo that training, he said.

"I don't believe time heals," Tharp said. "Time gives you the opportunity to do things that will help you heal."

Tharp shared multiple online resources for veterans' health, recovery and benefits. These included programs providing post-deployment assistance, and a program called the Sesame Street Workshop. The workshop is designed to help children of

military families process and understand deployment and military service.

"I love that our country is supportive of our military," he said. "There are a lot of resources and things you can get involved with."

Waco graduate student Sarah Martindale, a psychology doctoral candidate at Baylor, also spoke at the panel, explaining what traumatic brain injuries are and how they affect people today.

Traumatic brain injuries can include things like concussions, Martindale said, and can be received by people like athletes and those in military service.

Martindale said deployed individuals can receive traumatic brain injuries from blast injuries, improvised explosive device injuries, and motor vehicle accidents. Only a small percentage of people who suffer traumatic brain injuries are hospitalized, and 52,000 people die a year from them, she said.

"TBI and PTSD are very frequently diagnosed together," Martindale said.

There tends to be an increase in emotional reactivity when someone with PTSD has a traumatic brain injury, and there is a large overlap in cognitive symptoms between PTSD and traumatic brain injuries, Martindale said.

Speakers encouraged the public to be aware and mindful of veterans and those struggling with PTSD and injuries.

"The more we know about veterans, the better we will serve them," Tharp said. "I firmly believe that."



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Holy Week in Spain

Penitents take part in the "Procesion del Silencio" by the "Cristo de las Injurias" brotherhood during the Holy Week on Wednesday in Zamora, Spain. Hundreds of processions take place throughout Spain during the Easter Holy Week.



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On Topic

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WITH SPECIAL GUEST

Juan Williams

Thursday, May 1, 2014

7 p.m.

Waco Hall

Baylor University Campus



A prominent journalist, speaker, and political commentator, Juan Williams is the award-winning author of a number of books, including *Thurgood Marshall: American Revolutionary* and *Muzzled: The Assault on Honest Debate*. He is a political analyst for Fox News and served as host of NPR's "Talk of the Nation." He previously spent 23 years at the *Washington Post* as a political columnist and national correspondent.

Admission is free and requires a ticket.
Pick up your ticket at the Bill Daniel Student Center Ticket Office 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday - Friday beginning April 14. Available tickets will be distributed through the ticket office on a first-come, first-served basis through April 30. Any remaining tickets will be available at the Waco Hall Ticket Office on the day of the event beginning at 2 p.m.



BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

REBUILD from Page 1

Crowder said the church has received almost \$900,000 in donations from the public. They have also received supplies and equipment donated from construction companies and help from about 2,500 volunteers.

"I don't want the church to look like we're bragging about this stuff — we've just coordinated a lot of different efforts," he said.

The church began reconstruction about one month after the explosion and has been at work since that time. More than 60 homes and an apartment complex were demolished at the church's expense, collectively saving owners about \$1 million. The church has also covered about \$450,000 in other goods and services, including monetary gifts given to families in need, leveling homes and providing home health care.

"The reason we were able to do this is because folks were generous and other entities worked with us to do this," Crowder said.

Volunteers have primarily been from Baptist churches across Texas, although groups have also included out-of-state churches and students from the Baylor Law School, Crowder said. The church is expecting another 500

volunteers this summer.

Volunteers have also frequented the West Long-Term Recovery, an organization focused on meeting the needs of the explosion victims. Rosanne Lockhart, the organization's administrative assistant, said she has participated in construction with other volunteers.

"It was satisfying to be a participant," she said.

Lockhart said she has volunteered with West Long-Term Recovery as an administrative assistant since August but had the opportunity Wednesday to do construction with a group of women at a badly-damaged home that was being renovated.

"We all pitched in and did a full day of sanding, sheet rocking and insulation," she said. "It's fun and I think women can do just about all the construction they want to."

West Long-Term Recovery is also expecting more volunteers this summer, Lockhart said. Both local and out-of-state groups will be doing major reconstructive projects, with many of these groups being college students. One college group that studies landscaping technologies will help develop landscaping for homes that are fully

constructed, Lockhart said.

"It's wonderful," she said, referring to the continuous flow of volunteers helping the organization. "When they come, they come because they want to be here. Everybody is enthusiastic and there's a feeling of camaraderie when everyone comes together to do what needs to be done."

Crowder said although he is not sure when the church will be done with construction, he expects most of their work to be finished by the end of the summer.

"I can't say for sure when we'll be done, but as long as there are needs, we're going to be working," he said.

A memorial service will be held tonight at 7:15 p.m. at the West Fair and Rodeo Grounds on Main Street. West Mayor Tommy Muska said the memorial will celebrate the lives of loved ones lost in the explosion, as well as the progress made by the town during the past year. Attendees can expect to hear an opening address given by Baylor President and Chancellor Ken Starr and a vocal performance by the Baylor Senior Choir. All West ISD schools will be closed in remembrance of the explosion.



CONSTANCE ATTON | LARIAT PHOTOGRAPHER

Wade in the water

Boerne sophomore Kate Naquin (left) and Edmond, Okla., freshman Sarah Law fish out rubber ducks on Wednesday at the Baylor Marina during TriDelt's Delta Duck Races as their spring fundraising event, the proceeds of which went to St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

Do it for the 'gram.
@baylorlariat



MEMORIAL from Page 1

Ancestral Prayer Garden next to the Snokhous' church, St. Mary's Assumption Catholic Church, on Harrison Street in West. Clarice, along with a few committee members, founded the garden four years ago to honor the Infant Jesus of Prague, a prominent religious figure in the Czech Republic.

The top of the memorial plaque reads "God Bless Our Fallen Brothers," and then has an emblem of the West Fire Department. Underneath "First Responders — April 17, 2013," the 12 deceased first responders' names are listed. At the bottom, the phrase "Blessed are those who give their lives for others" is inscribed.

"There is no greater sacrifice than to give one's life for another," Ray said.

The garden also includes a large Italian marble statue of the Infant Jesus of Prague. Benches line the inside of the iron fence, and Clarice said the garden will always be open for visitors to pray or meditate.

"It is a place that people can come to and to remember our fallen brothers," Clarice said. "That was what our aim was, that this would be a place that they could come

and pay homage to them and remember them and say a prayer for them."

Though the 12 men were not all Catholic, all of the families, despite religious affiliation, attended a mass and plaque dedication at St. Mary's and at the garden on Nov. 24, 2013.

"You know what you feel and you try to express your feelings," Ray said. "I want those people to be remembered there for the bravery that they demonstrated and the loss of their precious lives."

Firefighter Memorial Wall

The day following the West explosion, Donald Rogers woke up in his Hubbard home, less than 30 miles from the explosion site, and began to build a memorial wall in front of his property, right off the highway at 6808 Farm to Market 2114 in Hubbard, Texas.

"I woke up in the morning, and something told me to go build the wall," he said.

Within three days, the basics of the wall were completed, but he continues to add to the wall today, even working on a firemen's bell to add to the site this week.

Rogers' memorial includes the firemen's wall, which has 12 plaques, with each of the deceased West firefighters names inscribed, a centered emblem of the firemen's prayer and brass firemen's symbols in the two corners.

Concrete benches also surround the site, giving visitors a place to sit and think.

"This is for people to come and do what they want — just honor the wall," Rogers said.

Rogers, who is now retired but used to work as a contractor, buys the materials and does the construction himself, but welcomes any ideas or help.

"It gives me something to do that's worthwhile," he said of his project.

Rogers is also the founder of the Veteran's Honor Wall, which is located next to the firemen's wall. Rogers, an Army veteran who served two tours in the Vietnam War, built the wall two years ago to honor veterans and said that wall has grown "like wildfire."

Any veteran can have his name added to the Veteran's Honor Wall, but the firemen's wall is reserved for deceased fire-

fighters from any area, not just from the West area.

"I feel these guys are all heroes too," Rogers said. "They go out and protect our families and are taking care of our people while we are overseas."

While he said it will take him a while to fill the 16-foot-long, 5-foot-tall firefighters wall, Rogers said he will continue to honor fallen heroes.

"I do this because it makes me feel good to do something for other people," Rogers said. "Nobody else will go out of their way to do something as extravagant as this. It might bring some people some peace of mind."

Rogers encourages anyone to come and visit and even has two parking areas for visitors. The cost to add a plaque to the firemen's wall is \$50.

Fireman statue

One night soon after the explosion, an anonymous donor placed a firefighter statue outside of the West Fire Department. Fire Chief George Nors Sr. said he still doesn't know who brought the statue

or how it showed up, but said it is a memorial to the firemen at the station.

The statue is a replica of a fireman clothed in bunker gear, firemen's outer protective clothing, and includes a helmet, coat, boots and an air pack.

Through these three memorials, one year after the tragedy, West is remembering the lives lost. The hurt is still evident throughout the town, but Ray Snokhous believes it is not a material hurt.

"Everything that is material can be replaced," he said. "It's really those that we know, the first responders, who are still in deep grief and it will take years for that to ever heal. Parents don't bury children — children bury parents. When you talk to those who lost loved ones, it is a different experience."

Yet as he and the others heal and remember the past, he believes the community, which he calls faith-based, can heal.

"This town is vibrant," Ray said. "It has come back together."

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One year later: Mayor says West is resilient, hopeful

BY PAULA ANN SOLIS
STAFF WRITER

Tommy Muska, mayor for the city of West, has served as the face of his hometown in ways he never planned this past year. When a fertilizer plant exploded on April 17, 2013 and took the lives of 15 West residents, this small Texas town suddenly had the attention of the nation. Muska, mayor for less than two years, struggled with the devastation of losing his home while trying to rebuild a city covered in ashes.

One year later, Muska sat down with the Lariat at his office in West where he manages an insurance business. He discussed the role divine providence had in rebuilding the town, the memories he still replays from that day one year ago and what the West of tomorrow will look like.

Q: As the representative for West in the media, you are often openly emotional in your expression and you appear to have a strong relationship with the city's residents. When did that relationship begin?

A: I grew up in this town, went to the local McLennan Community College and the area that was devastated was my neighborhood. When I was 8 years old I moved there — I knew the people. Most of the older people were there when we built our home in the 60s and I had a very close connection with that neighborhood. So yes, I am passionate about this town, probably to a fault. But it's a strong town and these are people I truly adore and I can't say enough about how strong and resilient these people are.

Q: Did serving as mayor while also losing your family's home prove difficult?

A: I think it was one in the same, and I think that's where God really played a role because He's been preparing me for this probably for a long time. It happened on my watch, it happened when a born-and-raised local boy was the mayor, the leader. However things happen, they happen for a reason and I think being their friend and mayor really helped. I could tell them as a friend and as a mayor it was going to be OK.

Q: Looking back on that day, what do you remember from the moment the explosion occurred to when the dust finally settled?

A: I was about a block and a half away and, when it blew up, I think it was more of a shock. I



Muska

don't remember anything falling around me; I just got back in the truck, moved over and started putting out the fire at the intermediate school. Then we started triaging — I went in disaster mode. I didn't really have a lot on my mind other than knowing my family was OK and that was the first thing I did. We didn't have a house to go back to, and I didn't see them until later. I didn't know about the deaths of my friends until later a number of hours after it occurred.

Q: National, state and local organizations reached out to your community in a large way. Is there an organization that surprised you with their generosity?

A: I think all of them surprised me at the generous donations both monetary and physical. We had volunteers here from the moment it happened from the Methodist church, the Catholic church, the Baptist church along with the Salvation Army and Red Cross.

I think part of the reason our recovery was successful is because this was a volunteer-driven recovery. They all worked together and a year later we've made great strides.

Q: Has the mood in West changed in one year or are there still strong resonances from that day lingering in the town?

A: I think I would describe this city as resilient and hopeful. Of course with this anniversary we've got to remember the price that was paid, the 15 people that died, the 12 firefighters and the other three individuals. Like Joey [Pustejovsky, 29, one of the fallen firefighters], I can still see him today. He had this little fresh face like a baby face and a dimple. You can't get him back. You've just got to keep him in our thoughts and prayers.

Q: You mentioned in the past to the Lariat that once financial concerns are in order you want to focus on the mental health

recovery for West. How has that been going?

A: Dr. Jim Ellor from Baylor is helping us a great deal. He's offered his services through his department and personally. The doctor from the hearing department came over and did free hearing checks.

But there is still the problem that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink. You can't see mental, posttraumatic stress from what happened. It's hard to get help for something you can't put your finger on.

Q: With issues like health still prevalent in the community, discussing the reintroduction of a fertilizer plant seems a difficult task but it has already begun in town meetings. What has the reaction been to this?

A: That was under the KIA group. They are a consultant group on economic development and bringing ideas to West. We are an agricultural town and we lost a fertilizer plant. Farmers need a place to get their stuff, to get their chemicals. I think it's vital we have it here.

If we make sure it's zoned right and constructed right, it would be the safest fertilizer plant ever built if it were built here, I could tell you that.

Q: The memorial service marking one year will bring to surface difficult emotions for the city. How did you handle this delicate issue?

A: It's going to be an uplifting service. I think it's going to be a very positive, hopeful message. It's for the firemen, the firemen's wives, the widows, the families, along with the people who lost houses and friends. It's a benchmark — there's closure.

If you lose somebody, you go by days, you go by months, you go by years. We've gone through a year and they've survived that. Now they go for number two and then number three.

Q: What do you see for that future West that will have survived two, three or five years after this tragedy?

A: I see this town moving forward and growing. I don't know what the new normal is going to be for West. We're going to have to find that out as time goes on.

It'll be different, it'll look different, it'll feel different but it'll be good. I swear, I promise.

To read the extended version of this article, visit baylorlariat.com.



COURTESY PHOTO

Marcy Russo, coordinator at the Humane Society of Central Texas, helps animals displaced after the West fertilizer explosion on April 17, 2013. The Humane Society housed over 100 animals such as dogs, cats, lizards, chickens and more.

Humane Society helps animals return home

BY TAYLOR REXRODE
A&E EDITOR

A year ago, citizens of West were faced with the horrific aftermath of the fertilizer explosion that left 15 dead, over 160 wounded and several homes destroyed.

In the midst of the tragedy, family pets were missing and injured, but with the help of the Humane Society of Central Texas, those owners were reunited with their furry family members.

Don Bland, executive director of the Humane Society, said almost all 115 pets were claimed by their owners and half of those pets were claimed within two weeks. Other families adopted the handful of unclaimed pets in the months following the accident. However, Bland said even those who had claimed their pets often had no home for them.

"They had to stay in a hotel, and so their pets had to stay here until they had arrangements to go somewhere with their animal," Bland said. "We housed some here for awhile and some of the owners came to visit their pets every day or every other day because that was their companion."

The shelter housed a variety of animals from dogs and cats to iguanas, birds and chickens. Livestock and horses were kept at a nearby facility for large animals.

Bland said much of their success in housing the animals came from donations from across the country.

"I got calls from Canada and all over the United States offering to help," Bland said. "I had someone who said they had a huge trailer to transport and pick up

food. There was a donation of a large food supply from Houston. It was really amazing to me the far reach this had."

The Dallas ASPCA also helped the Humane Society of Central Texas by taking several animals to their facility so that there was space for all the West animals.

With donations, the Humane Society was able to send supplies home to West families when they picked up their pet.

"I remember a little lady came to reclaim her cat," Bland said. "We were able to give her a cat box, litter, water and food bowls, toys and a cat carrier — everything she needed for that cat. She was just overwhelmed because she was just expecting to get her cat."

Marcy Russo, coordinator at the Humane Society, said she remembered finding an old German shepherd in someone's backyard and reuniting it with the owner.

"The lady who owned the shepherd had no home, no food or anything, so we were able to keep her dog her for awhile," Russo said.

She visited the front line of the accident, helping Daniela Ranzinger, a volunteer at the Humane Society and a 34-year West resident, take care of animals and pet owners.

Russo said one thing she heard from several owners is how they had wished they had microchipped their pet. She advises that all pet owners microchip their pet so that they are easily identified because "you never know what's going to happen."

And Russo said she didn't ex-

pect to be called at 4 a.m. to go help find and care for pets and other animals in West, but she said it was a way for her to give back to the community and help those people who had been devastated by the blast.

"If it were me in that, I would hope someone would be caring and love my animals as their own," Russo said. "These animals are like their children. It would be like if your son or daughter were missing. You'd be looking and you'd want someone to be a safeguard looking out for them. This was a way to make things a little bit better, letting them know their animals are taken care of."

Ranzinger, whose home was not affected by the fertilizer explosion, was on the scene helping people and animals within half an hour of the accident. She ended up helping for several days, looking for animals who were in hiding and shell-shocked.

"I felt that since I'm a volunteer with the Humane Society, the best way I could help the community was by taking care of their pets," Ranzinger said.

Ranzinger said she wished she could have seen more reunions between pets and pet owners. For those that weren't claimed or were surrendered to the shelter, Ranzinger said she made it a mission to get every sheltered West animal a home.

"That meant a lot to me because helping homeless animals is my passion," Ranzinger said. "Helping with the West animals that were homeless — no matter if it was for an hour or for several months — it felt right what I was doing."

Book to honor those who run into the fire, not away

BY REBECCA FLANNERY
REPORTER

On April 17, 2013, the fertilizer plant explosion in West killed 15 people — 12 of whom were first-response firefighters. Amber Adamson, part-time lecturer in the department of journalism, public relations and new media, wrote a book entitled "The Last Alarm," which compiled accounts from just under 50 responders from the plant explosion.

The book will be released the first week in May.

"There was a firefighter in full honor guard uniform standing on the railroad tracks out above the blast site before the bodies were recovered," Adamson said. "It was so powerful knowing that there was that immediate sense of respect and honor, and that followed them until they were laid to rest. That image struck me and I thought, 'Wouldn't it be so powerful to talk to someone in their shoes and understand what they're thinking what they're feeling and doing?'"

Adamson's husband and brother are firefighters in McLennan County and were both involved in the effort to help West recover from the explosion. Adamson relied

greatly on her connections to the fire department in order to write the accounts in the book.

"I knew that there were lots of stories being told," Adamson said. "But I thought that I had a unique perspective in that I could talk to first-responders who were there not only the night of the explosion, but hours after as they began to search and rescue and evacuate people to the hospital, all the way through to the process of honoring the fallen."

After Adamson came up with the idea to compile stories, Sharon Bracken, senior lecturer in the department of journalism, public relations and new media, helped turn the accounts into a book through her own publishing company.

They, along with former director of student publications Stephanie MacVeigh, spent a year getting the book to where it is now.

"We mapped out what needed to be



Adamson

range of participants from volunteers to those who attended the memorials and funerals.

"I don't think that we could ever understand the mentality of first-responders because they're a special group of people," Adamson said. "Even being a wife and a sister, I still don't understand why they run to the fire when the rest of us run the other way. Through this book I hope people get a glimpse of what it's like."

done," Bracken said. "That was doing the interviews, doing the research and gathering the information. From there we started outlining what we wanted the book to look like, and then Adamson started writing."

Adamson said the idea behind the book is to let the public see through the eyes of those who lived it, as well as to serve as a historical account of the explosion. Adamson interviewed a wide

Although the accounts all focus on the same event, each story is unique to the person who spoke with Adamson. The event that was nationally known is still so intimate to the small town of West, and the outpouring of honor and respect that was shown to the people is reflected in the book's accounts.

"Even being a wife and a sister, I still don't understand why they run to the fire when the rest of us run the other way. Through this book I hope people get a glimpse of what it's like."

Amber Adamson | author

"Everyone who was there felt honored to be there," Adamson said. "No one told me 'no' to being interviewed, but they all said 'but do you want to talk to me?' They didn't think anything they did was extraordinary — but everything they did

was extraordinary."

The book, will include the interviews Adamson conducted, photos that haven't yet been released to the public and a list of 140 fire departments responsible for helping with the disaster.

Some of the recordings from the interview will be preserved and made available to the public on record with The Texas Collection.

"I think it's a beautiful book," Bracken said. "It's telling stories of those who saw behind the yellow tape what happened that night. I think it's a great collection."

A portion of proceeds from the book sales will go to benefit the Texas Line of Duty Death Task Force. This volunteer group's website defines themselves as having "provided assistance to dozens of families and departments and consulted with hundreds of department around Texas and across the country"

Essentially, the group aids those who have served as well as their families and communities cope with situations like the West explosion.

"It's a big honor and big responsibility that they entrusted me with their stories," Adamson said. "I just want to be able to tell their stories as best as possible."

Diabetic heart attacks and strokes falling

By MIKE STOBBE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK — In the midst of the diabetes epidemic, a glimmer of good news: Heart attacks, strokes and other complications from the disease are plummeting.

Over the last two decades, the rates of heart attacks and strokes among diabetics fell by more than 60 percent, a new federal study shows.

The research also confirms earlier reports of drastic declines in diabetes-related kidney failure and amputations.

The drop is mainly attributed to better screening, medicines and care. The improvements came even as the number of U.S. adults with diabetes more than tripled in those 20 years.

"It is great news," said Dr. John Buse, a University of North Carolina diabetes specialist, of the drop in rates.

"The prognosis for folks with diabetes has improved dramatically over the last two decades, at least for those with good access to care," Buse said in an email. He was not involved in the study.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention research is reported in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine.

Diabetes is a disease in which sugar builds up in the blood. The most common form is tied to obesity, and the number of diabetics has ballooned with the rise in obesity. Today, roughly 1 in 10 U.S. adults has the disease, and it is the nation's seventh leading cause of death, according to the CDC.

The obese are already at higher risk for heart attacks and strokes. But diabetics seem to have more narrowing of their blood vessels — a condition that can further foster those problems.

In the 1990s, key studies showed that diabetics could keep their blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol under control.

The research suggested that vision and heart problems, leg and foot amputations and other diabetes complications were not necessarily inevitable.

Meanwhile, insurance programs expanded coverage of blood sugar monitors and diabetes treatment. Gradually, larger numbers of diabetics were diagnosed earlier and with milder disease.

For the new study, the CDC tallied



TED S. WARREN | ASSOCIATED PRESS

In this Friday, March 1, 2013 file photo, Chan Lai Ly, right, has his mouth examined by Honghue Duong, a physician's assistant, as part of a regular check-up related to his diabetes at International Community Health Services in Seattle. Over the last two decades, the rates of heart attacks and strokes among diabetics fell by more than 60 percent, a new federal study shows.

complication rates from 1990 to 2010 for diabetics ages 20 or older.

During that time, the heart attack rate fell 68 percent, from 141 to 45.5 per 10,000 diabetics, according to hospital records.

The decline was so great that, despite the growing ranks of diabetics, the actual number hospitalized with heart attacks dropped from more than 140,000 to about 136,000.

The stroke rate fell less dramatically — but still declined by more than half, finishing at 53 per 10,000. The heart attack and stroke rates for diabetics are essentially even now, lead author Edward Gregg noted.

The researchers saw declines in hearts attack and stroke rates for non-diabetics as well, but those improvements weren't nearly as big as they were for diabetics.

Amputation rates also fell by more than half. However, like strokes, the actual num-

ber increased over the two decades.

The growth in the number of diabetics "wiped out most of the gains" from the declining rates, so the number who ended up in the hospital for strokes or amputations swelled, said Dr. Robert Gabbay, of Boston's Joslin Diabetes Center.

The study also found that the rate of kidney failure dropped by 28 percent. But that wasn't true for all ages — the rate in those 65 and older actually increased, for reasons that aren't clear. That could be a sign diabetics are living longer — long enough to get kidney disease, Gregg speculated.

The researchers also looked at a less common complication, death caused by dangerous levels of blood sugar.

The rate of such deaths dropped by 64 percent; the numbers also declined by 18 percent. In 2010, those deaths totaled 2,361.

SAT from Page 1

own point of view on a specific issue.

Other changes to the SAT, first announced by the College Board last month, include making a computer-based version of the test an option, getting rid of the extra penalty for wrong answers, limiting the use of calculators to select sections and returning to a 1,600-point scale.

Another expectation: Each test will include a passage from the U.S. founding documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, or conversations they've inspired, the College Board has said.

To highlight that, one sample question released was adapted from a 1974 speech by Rep. Barbara Jordan, D-Texas, during the impeachment hearings of President Richard Nixon. Test takers must answer questions that best describe Jordan's stance and the main rhetorical effect of a part of the passage.

In the sample question pertaining to the U.S. traveler in India, the test taker must first determine what foreign exchange rate the traveler paid. Then, calculate charges on a prepaid card compared to a Traveler card.

In the sample question related to a political candidate, the test taker must first determine from a table which age group had the greatest number of people reporting they had voted. Then, compare the table to another survey to determine which of four statements about voter turnout is correct.

Cynthia Schmeiser, the College Board's chief of assessment, told reporters that reasoning is still an im-

portant component of the SAT, but it will be done in "applied contexts." She said there will be commonalities between the redesigned SAT and the Common Core standards being rolled out in most states, which emphasize critical thinking in English and math in the K-12 setting.

"What we're doing here is trying to distinguish the SAT in many important ways from the current SAT and frankly from other admissions exams to provide the why and the what are the fewer more important things that students need in order to be ready for college and to succeed in college," Schmeiser said.

The College Board said the sample questions are in draft form and subject to change.

"It is our goal that every student who takes the test will be well informed and will know exactly what to expect on the day of the test," Schmeiser and College Board President David Coleman said in a letter posted online.

The SAT was last upgraded in 2005, when analogy questions were removed and the essay portion was added.

Once the predominant college admissions exam, the SAT has been overtaken in popularity by the ACT.

The ACT, which already offers an optional essay, announced last year that it would begin making computer-based testing available. It said Monday that about 4,000 high school students had taken a digital version of the ACT two days earlier as part of a pilot.

RECYCLE from Page 1

some of its significantly larger competitors such as University of Kansas and West Virginia University. Nationally, Baylor ranked 88 out of 336 participating schools in the Gorilla competition.

Waste Minimization calculates the average amount of waste produced by each student. In this category of competition, Baylor ranked 74 out of 149 universities nation-wide.

This year, Baylor improved on its 2013 ranking in all three categories of competition. Last year, Baylor ranked 213 out of 363 participating schools

in Per Capita Classic, 128 out of 364 in Gorilla, and 78 out of 167 in Waste Minimization.

Gettman attributes the unprecedented success of the recycling program in part to the emphasis his department put on advertising for recycling this semester. He said he looks forward to applying the strategies that grew the recycling program, like increased campus advertising, to other sustainable areas of focus, like the energy program, Gettman said.

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Photos and story by Richard Hirst

“A typical day starts out with there is nothing typical about a day,” Manda Butler said.

Working from the Cameron Park Zoo petting zoo 17 years ago, Butler is now the mammal animal care manager. The day starts at 8 a.m. sharp, and Butler begins work by talking with the other handlers about things going on at the zoo. Her day includes anything from caring for the animals, doing paper work or answering emails.

“I am also the one that over sees all the training of the staff in the area,” Butler said.

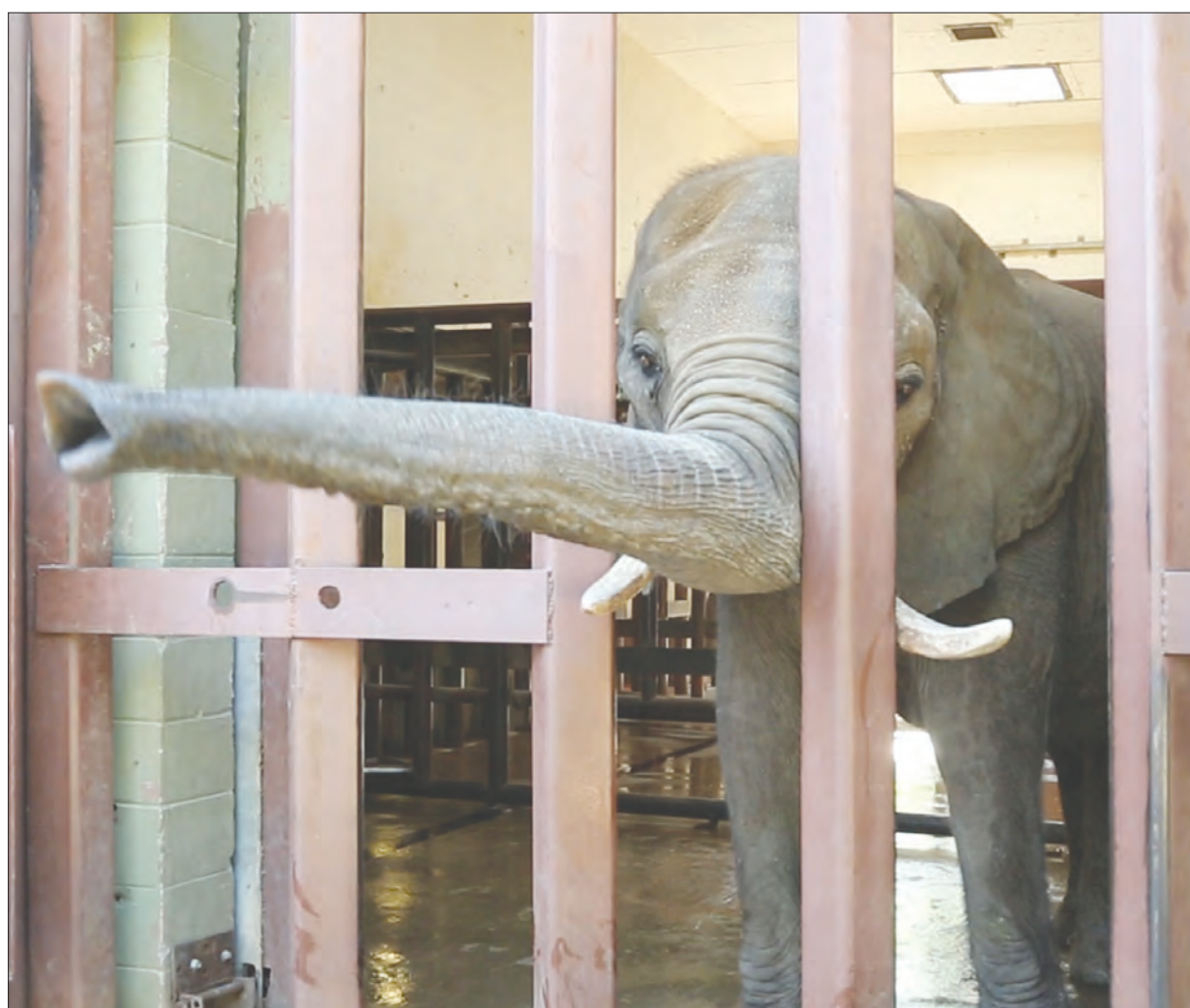
Butler has been overseeing Luke Thorneburg on the big cats now for 14 days of the 15-day training program. The program includes five days of the trainee shadowing a handler, five days of the trainee working with strict supervision and five days of the trainee working under a handler with little of no help.

This tiger is one of the three female tigers Manda Butler takes care of.



Left: Luke Thorneburg hauls hay for the elephants. This task must be performed daily.

Right: The elephant waits inside a zoo facility before its bath.



The elephants are rewarded with treats when they do something correct. The handlers can have them move in various different ways in order to care for them such as lift their foot for inspection.

Despite crowding concern Made in America continues

By SOUMYA KARLAMANGLA
LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES — Rapper Jay Z's Made in America music festival is coming to downtown L.A.'s Grand Park despite concern from one City Council member that the influx of thousands of people attending multiple stages with access to beer could create a "nightmare."

The rapper joined L.A. Mayor Eric Garcetti on the steps of City Hall on Wednesday to make the announcement, saying two years ago, "This was a dream."

He also called Garcetti an "incredible mayor," noting he "pulled this thing together in record time."

The Budweiser Made in America festival had drawn opposition from those worried about multiple street closures that will be in place for days to accommodate the crowds.

No music lineup was announced at the news conference, but big acts including Phoenix, Macklemore & Ryan Lewis and Jay Z's wife, Beyonce, have appeared at what's billed as a festival "curated" by Jay Z.

The prospect of a major con-

cert drawing as many as 50,000 people to the heart of downtown had raised red flags for Councilman Jose Huizar, who warned about the street closures and beer sales and their effects on residents. Last month, he introduced a council motion saying no permits should be provided for the event until questions are answered about its effects on the surrounding neighborhood.

But Garcetti said the festival will be a boon to the city and its economy.

"Los Angeles is the perfect place, the perfect West Coast home for Made in America," he said.

He noted the festival, which will run Labor Day weekend Aug. 30 and 31, will "shine a spotlight on Grand Park" and celebrate the "best neighborhood anywhere in America."

However, Huizar's pokesman, Rick Coca, said in an email Tuesday his office had questions over whether the festival is the best use for Grand Park, "the so-called 'people's' park."

"If it is, what is the public, that is the city and downtown Los Angeles community getting in re-

turn?" Coca said.

But Jay Z said he was happy the festival will be "in the middle of the city" where everyone can access it easily. "It's inclusion, it's not exclusive."

L.A. County Supervisor Gloria Molina, who spoke Wednesday, said she knows people have had concerns about the location, but is confident the organizations in charge can handle it.

"I'm very, very proud of everything we've been doing at Grand Park," she said.

Grand Park has grown increasingly popular as a venue since it opened in 2012.

A Fourth of July fireworks event last year drew 12,000 people.

Months later, a New Year's Eve party drew twice as many visitors and was hailed by organizers as a huge success.

The Labor Day weekend event will run alongside the original Budweiser Made in America festival in Philadelphia, according to Live Nation. Tickets went on sale Wednesday.

"Los Angeles has 99 problems, but Jay Z and Made in America is not one," Molina said.



AC/DC guitarist Angus Young performs one of the group's songs on Dec. 18, 2008, at Time Warner Cable Arena in Charlotte, N.C.

AC/DC not disbanding, but illness makes future uncertain

By RANDY LEWIS
LOS ANGELES TIMES VIA
McCLATCHY TRIBUNE

AC/DC lead singer Brian Johnson has told a British newspaper that rumors of the band's impending breakup are only that.

"We are definitely getting together in May in Vancouver," Johnson told the U.K.'s Telegraph. "We're going to pick up some guitars, have a plonk, and see if anybody has got any tunes or ideas. If anything happens, we'll record it."

Reports that the long-running Australian rock band would be calling it quits revolved around news that guitarist Malcom Young, lead guitarist Angus Young's older brother, is seriously ill.

In the interview with the

Telegraph, Johnson did confirm that one of the band's members has "a debilitating illness" that could affect how AC/DC moves forward.

"I wouldn't like to say anything either way about the future," Johnson said. "I'm not ruling anything out. One of the boys has a debilitating illness, but I don't want to say too much about it. He is very proud and private, a wonderful chap. We've been pals for 35 years and I look up to him very much."

The band subsequently released a statement identifying that band member as Malcolm Young, 61.

"After 40 years of life dedicated to AC/DC, guitarist and founding member Malcolm Young is taking a break from the band due to ill health," the

statement said. "Malcolm would like to thank the group's diehard legions of fans worldwide for their never-ending love and support."

Johnson also told the Telegraph, "AC/DC is such a tight family. We've stuck to our guns through the Eighties and Nineties when people were saying we should change our clothes and our style. But we didn't and people got it that we are the real deal."

American hip-hop artists reached out.

Several world tours followed. And across the region young Palestinians started dressing in baggy clothes and picking up mikes.

Today there are dozens of Palestinian rap groups inside Israel and in the West Bank and Gaza.



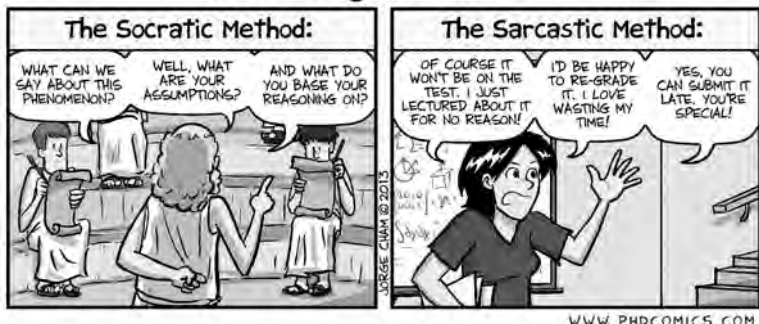
PHIL MASTURZO | AKRON BEACON JOURNAL VIA McCLATCHY TRIBUNE

"Egg"-citing Decorating

Vera Kap melts wax layers to reveal the colors underneath. Kap creates elaborately decorated Easter eggs using an old Ukrainian method at her home in Akron, Ohio, on April 1.

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Across

- Monarchy
- Many a class reunion tune
- "Captain Phillips" actor Hanks
- ink
- Fishing spots
- Title heartbreaker in a Three Dog Night song
- "Tyke's dinnertime perch
- "I'm not a crook" monogram
- Rogue
- Plowing measure
- Ad Council ad, briefly
- Unfair deception
- Energetic
- Obvious joy
- "Spider-Man" trilogy director Sam
- Feel sorry about
- Quipster
- Insignificant amount
- Weekend TV fare for nearly 40 yrs.
- Reading after resetting
- "Roots" hero ___ Kinte
- Scandinavian port
- Comeback
- Numero uno
- Used to be
- Lover of Euridice, in a Monteverdi work
- Decide not to ride
- Cambridge sch.
- Try, or a hint to the first words of the answers to starred clues
- Rocks found in bars
- Software buyers
- Kevin of "Cry Freedom"
- Audio receiver
- Tag cry
- Loosened

Down

- Cage component
- Ambient music innovator
- Worship
- Brainy Simpson
- Yoga class supply
- Onetime rival of Sally Jessy
- Stocking thread

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| 67 | | | | | | | | 68 | | | | 69 | |

- Mark of concern
- Roth ___
- Collection of heir pieces?
- Country singer Gibbs
- Ancient Mexican tribe known for carved stone heads
- Capital WSW of Moscow
- "_ homo"
- Style reportedly named for Ivy League oarsmen
- Western chum
- Lasting marks
- Hot-and-cold fits
- Working class Roman
- Collapse inward
- Sundial hour
- Greek consonant
- "Don't tell me, don't tell me!"
- Neon swimmer
- Court plea, briefly

- Multi-cell creature?
- Commonly four-stringed instrument
- Bits of ankle art, say
- Former Japanese military ruler
- Horseradish, e.g.
- Pal, slangily
- Novelist Jong
- "... happily ever ..."
- Oteri of 42-Across
- Lift
- Knockoff
- Land surrounded by agua
- Prefix with metric
- Doc who administers a PET scan?
- United
- English poet Hughes

Equestrian braces for NCEA title meet

By CAROLINE LINDSTROM
REPORTER

The Baylor equestrian team kicks off the NCEA National Championships as the No. 6 seed, today through Saturday at the Extraco Events Coliseum in Waco.

"I think if you take the top six teams, you could throw them up in the air and they would land differently any day," head coach Ellen White said. "So can Baylor do it, but it has to be all put together at the right time."

This championship includes the top 12 overall NCEA teams, and for the first time will be determined by a combined score of the hunter seat and western disciplines.

Previous national titles were awarded to the winners of both the hunter seat and western disciplines. Baylor took home the national title in 2011 for the hunter seat.

"I really like it with the two combined because it will bring the two teams together, and help with unity and camaraderie," first team All-American senior Bryn Lindley said.

White said it will be nice to have both scores combined because that is normal for the team.

The Bears will first take on the No. 11 seed, Tennessee-Martin, who they beat 11-5 earlier this season. The winner of this matchup will face No. 3 Georgia.

"We beat them handily in the beginning of the season, but they have had all season to practice and this is championships so anything can happen," White said.

She said every team has one side that is more dominant than the other. She said the goal is to be more strong than they are weak on both sides of the team.

"I think we can really do it because we definitely have the talent and team spirit to get a national championship," Lindley said.

No. 1 South Carolina, No. 2 Oklahoma State, No. 3 Georgia and No. 4 Auburn have byes and will not compete today.

The winner of Baylor and UT Martin will face Georgia in the quarterfinals Friday.

Today, No. 8 Fresno State and No. 9 TCU will compete to face South Carolina, No. 5 Kansas State and No. 12 Texas A&M square off with the winner facing Auburn, and No. 7 New Mexico State faces No. 10 SMU to see who advances to face Oklahoma State.

All quarterfinals meets will be held today, with the semi-finals and the championship round taking place Saturday.

"I think we can be ranked No. 1 coming out of this and that's all I really care about, so I don't really care how we are ranked going into it," White said.

Admission is free and open to the public, and the Extraco Events Center is located at 4601 Bosque Blvd.

Zsiga steps up to help lead men's tennis Q&A



CARLYE THORNTON | LARIAT PHOTOGRAPHER

Junior Mate Zsiga aims to return a shot in Baylor's 7-0 victory against Texas Tech on April 5 at the Hurd Tennis Center. The men's tennis team is ranked No. 6 and is 21-5 overall and 4-1 in the Big 12 Conference.

By RYAN HANNEGAN
REPORTER

The No. 7 Baylor men's tennis team is 19-4 on the season. The Bears have had a successful season, thus far boasting a 13-4 record against nationally ranked teams.

Junior Mate Zsiga has played in a variety of positions for the Bears, filling in anywhere from the No. 2 spot to the No. 5 position in the lineup. Despite being moved around most of the season, Zsiga has been a consistent contributor, helping the Bears to

a 23-12 record and a seven-match winning streak.

Q: How did you get your start in tennis?

A: Well, my family is really tennis based. My parents, my brother, they have all played tennis. My dad was my coach when I was 2 years old. That's pretty much how I got a tennis racket in my hand. Growing up, when my brother got done with practice, then it was my turn.

I played other sports, but tennis was always my main focus because my dad was the coach. He coached for about 30 years or so and he taught me everything

that I know about tennis. I can tell I am playing a lot like he did, probably because he taught me so much. I was also really lucky that I had my brother to play with. It was really good for me and my development. Another thing that really helped me along in my development was that my parents were smart players. They taught me all the little things like how to stay composed after a tough loss on the court. I believe I was really successful at the junior level because they taught me how to think through every situation and overcome difficulties during the match.

I have my family to thank for my base and everything I have right now. They are the reason I am here and gave me the opportunity to accomplish what I am right now. When I came over to America, I know I was really immature and still trying to find my way in the game, so Coach [Matt] Knoll was a big help in that he and the training staff just helped me get stronger and more physically ready to go out there and play this game.

Q: Growing up, who were the tennis players that you idolized and looked up to?

A: Definitely (Roger) Federer. I think what he does on the court is just unbelievable and he is just the tennis player that everyone looks at and tries to learn from. But you do have to look at the game style and for me, I don't play like Federer. I just do a different thing completely. Two players that I can say play similar to me are Fernando Verdasco, who was a lefty Spanish guy who I certainly say I play like.

The other one is David Ferrer, who is another guy from Spain who does a lot of the same things I do. Good returning, solid serving and just the ability to hang in there as long as possible, similar to (Rafael) Nadal. Even though his type of play is a little more extreme, I have a similar game style to him as well. All of those Spanish guys; I can say my game has some comparable attributes to them. Before I got here, I tried to look up as many players as I could. Just to see how they play, where they hit the ball and those kinds of things. I try to adjust some of those things to what best suits my game style. These two to three guys I can really look up to.

Q: As one of the upperclassmen, what would you say your role is to the team in general?

A: Yeah, I am an upperclassman now. I think it's good that we have a couple younger guys, but for the most part, we have a bunch of older guys. We have Tony (Lupieri), Diego (Galeano) and Michel (Dornbusch) plus me, so I would say we are more of an experienced team.

Q: How far do you think you guys can go this year?

A: I think we can go all the way; I just totally believe it. We have strengths at every position that's maybe even the best in the whole country. We won the Big 12 last year and obviously want to win it again. If we aren't able to do it again, I would look at this season as a failure. We are better than last year; even though the conference is also better, I still think we are the top team. Even though the rankings might not say that we are on top, I just believe in these guys and our abilities. As far as the NCAA's go, anything could happen. Over the past couple of years, we have had a couple of losses in the tournament, but we have learned from our mistakes, and we are ready to take on anyone that comes our way. This is a special group; I really believe that.

Honestly, what I try to do to help the team is to bring energy and emotion. I also think my role is

to show guys how it is done physically, how to fight for every point and things like that. I know when I go out there, I am not the best player most of the time, but what I try to always do is make sure that no one is going to outwork me. If I believe in one thing, it's hard work. There are always more talented players out there, but my mentality is going to be if you work hard, then hard work is going to pay off. Running, working out and playing tennis harder than anybody is the one thing I focus on. That's how I try to help the team and be an example to the other guys.

Q: You mentioned that you like to provide the team with energy. How do you think that helps the team not only on the court but also off of it?

A: One of the really big things for us is to always be positive on the court and I think that carries over to off the court as well. A lot of the emotion that individuals show on the court really carries over to their personality and how they act off the court. I mean this is our life and playing the game really shows how people are. It is an outlet for us to express ourselves and interact with other guys who love the same things that we do. It helps us to get to know each other better and how to handle our differences both on and off the court.

Q: How far do you think you guys can go this year?

A: I think we can go all the way; I just totally believe it. We have strengths at every position that's maybe even the best in the whole country. We won the Big 12 last year and obviously want to win it again. If we aren't able to do it again, I would look at this season as a failure. We are better than last year; even though the conference is also better, I still think we are the top team. Even though the rankings might not say that we are on top, I just believe in these guys and our abilities. As far as the NCAA's go, anything could happen. Over the past couple of years, we have had a couple of losses in the tournament, but we have learned from our mistakes, and we are ready to take on anyone that comes our way. This is a special group; I really believe that.

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No. 6 tennis beats UT to win Big 12 title

By JEFFREY SWINDOLL
SPORTS WRITER

The celebrations and Gatorade showers were in full force Wednesday night at Hurd Tennis Center. Baylor men's tennis clinched the school's 55th conference Big 12 title across all sports with a 5-2 win over the Texas Longhorns.

"A game against Texas is always special," Baylor No. 3 Diego Galeano said. "Even more if you have a Big 12 title on the line. Playing Texas is the best match of the year. These are the kind of matches we want to win, and this is kind of trophy of we wanted to win. So it's a big day for us."

The Bears got the start they wanted with a commanding 3-0 sweep of doubles competition before beginning the singles matches. Those victories set the tone for Baylor, giving the Bears the 1-0 lead to start off singles.

"The doubles play is really important," Baylor No. 4 Mate Zsiga said. "It's a huge difference to win three singles instead of four. We gained a lot of confidence because of that."

Baylor No. 2 Julian Lenz dominated his first set over No. 38 in the country Lloyd Glasspool 6-1. Lenz was not the only one to start off crushing his opponent in the first set.

All across the courts, the Bears won all their first sets except Baylor No. 1 Patrick Pradella, although even came so close to locking down the first set.

Pradella broke No. 19 in the country Hess-Olesen twice but let him back into the match after both breaks.

Pradella led 5-3 and Hess-Olesen stormed back to take the first set 7-6 with a 7-3 tie-breaker to stun Pradella.

Pradella went up 3-0 in the second set, but Hess-Olesen then

went on to claim 6 straight games to win the set 6-3 and the match.

Though Pradella fell, the rest of the Bears took care of business to clinch the Big 12 title before his match ended.

After Lenz took his second set, Baylor went up 2-0, only two more wins to knot up the win on the day.

Following right behind Lenz, Baylor No. 6 Michael Dornbusch won his match (6-3, 6-4), making it 3-0. It was only a matter of time before the postgame partying began for Baylor.

Zsiga had an emotional two sets against UT No. 4 George Goldhoff, but the emotion and fight would have a sweet-tasting payoff.

Zsiga had to come back in both sets after getting broken by Goldhoff twice.

Zsiga would have the last laugh though. After breaking Goldhoff twice in the second set, Zsiga served for the match, up 5-3.

It was match point at 40-30 and Zsiga knew exactly what he wanted to do to end the night — ace Goldhoff with a serve right on the "T." Zsiga did just that.

His first serve blazed past Goldhoff who stood flat-footed as he watched it pass by.

The vocal home crowd erupted, Zsiga dropped his racket to the floor and turned to the fans with his arms spread out.

The Big 12 title found its way to Waco for Baylor tennis yet again.

"It was just a great night," Baylor head coach Matt Knoll said. "It was a blast to be out here in front of a big crowd playing your rival with something on the line. It's a day that you circle on your calendar every year and to have it come off this way and to have the success we had is really special."

The Bears now have a couple days off in preparation for the Big 12 Tournament in Fort Worth next weekend.



CONSTANCE ATTON | LARIAT PHOTOGRAPHER

Sophomore Julian Lenz returns a shot in No. 6 Baylor's 5-2 victory over No. 7 Texas on Wednesday at the Hurd Tennis Center. Baylor men's tennis is 21-5 on the season. The Bears won the Big 12 Championship by winning the match. The Bears were perfect at home this season with a 15-0 record.

Baylor softball enters key series against OSU

By SHEHAN JEYARAJAH
SPORTS WRITER

After its tough 2-1 series loss to No. 12 Oklahoma this past weekend, Baylor softball moved itself behind the 8-ball when it comes to winning the Big 12 this season.

"I know we didn't come out and win the series, but I think the Sunday win was very important for us to give us the confidence we need going into the conference game," sophomore designated player Lindsey Hays said.

With the series loss in the back of their mind, Baylor travels to Oklahoma State (23-18, 4-9) to try and gain ground on the Sooners in the Big 12 standings.

Right fielder Kaitlyn Thumann has been dominant in 39 starts this season for the Bears. She leads the team with a .408 batting average and is third on the team with a .568 slugging percentage in 125 at-bats on the year.

Senior catcher Clare Hosack leads the team with a .660 slugging percentage to go along with nine homers and 34 RBIs in 2014.

Baylor's offense has been inconsistent at times, but they still hit a solid .306 on the season with an excellent team .468 slugging percentage.

Baylor has made its money in the bullpen this season. Sixth-year senior starter Whitney Canion has put together a masterful season and sits with a record of 17-7 and 1.46 ERA in 21 starts this season.

Alongside fellow starter Heather Stearns and reliever Liz Paul, the Bears have a combined team ERA of 1.52 and hold opponents to a batting average of only .191.

Junior outfielder Shelby Davis has led Oklahoma State with a .418 and 64 total hits on the season, 15 more than anyone else on the roster. OSU as a team hits .307 with a .404 slugging percentage in 41 games this season.

Senior right-hander Simone Freeman, a native of Sydney, Australia, has taken the brunt of the pitching duties for OSU this sea-



TRAVIS TAYLOR | LARIAT PHOTO EDITOR

Baylor sophomore infielder and catcher Robin Landrith slides safely into third base in Baylor's 6-1 win over Lamar on April 1 at Getterman Stadium.

son. In 29 starts, she has a record of 18-10 with a 1.96 ERA. Oklahoma State's pitching rotation holds opposing batters to a .221 batting average this season.

Oklahoma State heads into the weekend following a 1-2 series loss to Texas Tech in Lubbock over the past weekend, including being five inning run-ruled in Sunday's 11-3 loss to the Red Raiders.

The Cowgirls have a record of 3-7 in conference with the win against Tech and two against Iowa State.

"I know they have won a few games in conference, so it's going to be very important to go and get three wins this weekend," Hays said. "[This series is] important to stay in the race for the Big 12 Championship."

If the Bears manage to pull

off a three-game sweep, Baylor can improve to 7-3, which will do wonders when it comes to catching Oklahoma and Texas above of them in the standings.

"We still feel we have a shot at the Big 12 title and there's still a little bit of ball left to play," softball coach Glenn Moore said. "There's a lot of games left and injuries happen; a lot of things can change the course of this. If we start looking at postseason and don't take care of business now, we'll dig a deeper hole. We've got to take care of our business and hope things fall into place."

Baylor will play Oklahoma today, Friday and Saturday at Cowgirl Softball Stadium in Stillwater, Okla.

First pitch will be at 7 p.m., 6 p.m. and noon respectively.

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