

# THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE

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## STAFF

Morgan McCutchen, Publisher/Editor  
Ashley McCutchen Braswell, Social Media Coordinator

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Per Year in Coke County ... \$35.00  
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# Death Notices

## Hendry

Virginia "Jinger" Wright Hendry went home to her Lord and Savior on November 15, 2023, at the age of 89.

Jinger's loving legacy will be continued forward by her son, Tommy; and daughters, Debby Bynum and Marion (Dale)

McIntyre.

Jiji (as she was called by them) is survived by grandchildren, Christy (Jack) Joyce, Stacy Mecke, Coke (Lindsey) Hendry, Shanna Bynum, Casey Bynum, Seth (Beth) Weddle and her great grandchildren, Sage and Jett Joyce, Sawyer Mecke, River and Olivia Hendry, Ava Schwiening, Savannah, Sinclair, and Sterling Weddle. Jinger also leaves behind her beloved sister, Margaret Blanek.

but neither is growing up without someone believing in you." --Ted Lasso, Episode 3 ("Trent Crimm: The Independent")

There's a saying that college football is a university's "front porch." Countless people drive by a house or business and see the front porch without knowing anything else about the place or the people inside. If you watch a random college football game, you know more about that random university than you did before. This can be an invitation to learn more. It can also become a problem: the high visibility gives people license to obsess over the front porch, adorning it majestically even as the rest of the structure collapses.

If college athletics are a front porch, then high school football is unquestionably the same for a town, perhaps moreso. The visibility and perils are quite similar, as put on display in H.G. Bissinger's 1990 bestselling book "Friday Night Lights: A Town, a Team, and a Dream," along with the film and television series that it spawned. I have had a complex relationship with high school football for most of my life. I enjoy watching it. I was terrible at playing it. I would have loved to not be terrible. I am troubled by the pressures it can place on players and coaches but I appreciate the positive impact that it can have on them. I see the peril of emphasizing football when it minimizes the accomplishments of other students. I see the manner in which football can unify a community with a common purpose that can boost shared morale.

Like much of life, it is complicated. Stamford is currently enjoying a memorable football season. Over the past 110 years, Bulldog football has had boom-bust cycles. There are some tough seasons on the ledger, but we also own six state championships and rank in the top 25 all-time in wins in Texas history (out of 1,500 schools playing football). Last Friday's 42-6 thumping of the Forsan Buffaloes brought home the first playoff victory since 2018. One of our town's most beloved coaches came out of retirement this summer to helm the program. He leads a coaching staff—some raised here, some new to town—that evokes memories of past state championships but is also

creating a new and unique set of community memories. The team is talented and fun to watch. The roster is bursting with students who are admirable role models for younger students. You WANT to see these kids succeed now and for the rest of their lives.

My experience is colored by a kindergartener enjoying her first season of pep rallies and wearing cheerleading uniforms to school, alongside a two year-old who shouts "GO BULLGOGS" with an intensity that suggests she might be a future linebacker. I do not know how this season will end, but that is not the point. My memory dates to about 1989 and with my bias acknowledged, this has been one of the more enjoyable seasons of my memory.

Which brings me to that opening Ted Lasso quote. A hostile English soccer journalist has just told new soccer manager Ted how much the soccer team means to the community and how that should weigh on his conscience. Ted responds by outlining a shocking coaching philosophy that looks past wins and losses. English football (soccer) is often compared to American college football. I think high school football is a better analogy. In both, a community lives and dies through the neighborhood team,

with all the positive and negative connotations that are implied by that. Good coaches can change lives in the manner that Ted Lasso describes. That influence can reverberate on the present and future of an entire community.

No spoilers, but throughout the tv show, the word "BELIEVE" has a particular importance. Ted believes in his players. He teaches the players to believe in themselves. As they do, they overcome some serious differences to uplift one another. In the same manner, a good high school football program can instill belief in and by the players, coaches, and community.

Football, like all human institutions, is flawed and subject to our own failings. When held with the proper perspective, it is a front porch that we can be proud to show to the world and encourage others to learn more about the place and its people. In doing so, it can also inspire that community to believe in themselves, in one another, and in the shared purpose of their place.

GO BULLGOGS!

James Decker is the Mayor of Stamford, Texas and the creator of the West of 98 website and the Rural Church and State and West of 98 podcasts. Contact James and subscribe to these essays at westof98.substack.com and subscribe to him wherever podcasts are found.

# UPCOMINGS!

## Filing period closes December 11

The filing period for public office candidates requesting a place on the 2024 Republican primary ballot, county chair filing, as well as the filing period for Republic Precinct Chairs closes Monday, December 11 at 6 pm.

Those interested in running for one of these positions may contact Coke County Republican Chair Deborah Bailey at (325) 277-9128.

## Youth Ministry to be held every Wednesday

The Coke County Youth Ministry is holding gatherings each Wednesday evening from 5:30 pm until 7:30 pm at the Rec Hall in Robert Lee. The event will include great food, amazing testimonies, uplifting praise and worship, transformational bible studies,

and fun activities.

For more information, call/text Amber Bosworth at (325) 450-3005 or Inga Elliott at (325) 453-1137.

## RLISD to host music program

Robert Lee ISD will host a holiday music program on Wednesday, December 13, at 6 pm.

For more information, contact Amber Bosworth at amber.bosworth@rlisd.net or (325) 453-4555.

## End of Year Party slated for December 30

A Eve of New Year's Eve Party will be held on Saturday, December 30, from 8 am until midnight at the Robert Lee Rec Hall. Music will be provided by Coke County's own Backroads West and the event is BYOB (please also bring a snack to share).

be the best versions of themselves on and off the field. And it ain't always easy, Trent,

# Area Churches

## Invite You to Worship

### Bronte

#### Bronte Church of Christ

PO Box 346  
118 S. Jefferson • Bronte  
Sun. 10 am & 6 pm, Wed. 7 pm

#### Central Baptist Church

324 S. Franklin • Bronte  
(325) 473-4811

Dale Patterson, Pastor

Sun. 10 am Sunday School  
11 am & 5 pm Worship

#### First Baptist Church

424 S. Washington • Bronte  
(325) 473-2331

firstbronte@gmail.com

Pastor George Cooper  
Sunday 9:45 am Sunday School,  
10:30 am Worship

Wednesday 6 pm - 8 pm  
Children and Youth

#### Bronte Methodist Church

Corner of Washington & Holmes  
Bronte • (325) 650-4836

Pastor Keith Fletcher

Sun. 10:00 am Sunday School  
11:00 am Worship

#### St. James Catholic Church

215 N. Washington, Bronte  
(325) 365-2687

Rev. Timothy Hayter, Pastor  
Sunday Bilingual Mass 8 am

#### 4C Cowboy Church

Drawer R • Bronte • (325) 895-4080  
Robert Lemmond, Pastor

Sunday, 10:30 am - Texas Theater  
Wednesday Bible Study 6 pm -  
4C Feedlot Youth Building

### Coke County

#### Pecan Baptist

PO Box 542 • 12 miles West of  
Robert Lee on Sterling City Hwy  
(325) 453-2065, Bill Hood, Pastor

www.pecanbaptistchurchrl.com  
Sun. 10 am, Sunday School  
11 am & 7 pm, Worship

8 am, Sunday School  
11 am & 7 pm, Worship

11 am & 7 pm, Worship

11 am & 7 pm, Worship

11 am & 7 pm, Worship

11 am & 7 pm, Worship

11 am & 7 pm, Worship

### Robert Lee

#### Bible Baptist Church

PO Box 938 • 9th & Austin  
Sunday 10 am Sunday School,  
11 am and 5 pm Worship,

Wed 5 pm Bible Study

#### Emmanuel Pentecostal

PO Box 794 • 1004 Hillcrest  
Pastor Brantly Robertson  
(972) 841-2009

Sundays 10 am, Wednesdays 7 pm

#### First Methodist Church

PO Box 144 • 9th & Chadbourne  
Pastor Gary Karschner  
Robert Lee • (325) 453-2417

Sun. 11 am Worship,

#### Iglesia Bautista Betel

101 Houston • Robert Lee

Sun. 9:45 am • Sunday School  
11 am Service • Bible Study Wed. 6 pm

#### Southside Church of Christ

PO Box 698 • 8th & Houston  
Robert Lee (325) 453-2176

Sun. 10 am, Sunday School  
11 am Worship

Wed. 6 pm, Worship

#### Northside Church of Christ

PO Box 508

9th & Chadbourne • Robert Lee  
(325) 453-2685, (325) 763-2118  
or (325) 473-1053

Services: Sun. 10 am

#### Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church

601 W. 10th, Robert Lee  
(325) 365-2687

Rev. Timothy Hayter, Pastor  
Saturday Vigil Mass 6 pm

#### Robert Lee Baptist Church

PO Box 493 • 22 W. 11th  
(325) 453-2724

Chris Walls, Pastor

Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School  
11 am Worship

Wed. 6:30 pm, Prayer Meeting

#### Victory Assembly of God

(325) 453-2208, PO Box 638  
202 E. 6th Street, Robert Lee

Rev. Rocky Youngblood, Pastor  
Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School  
10:45 am & 6 pm, Worship

Wed. 6 pm, Bible Study

# Make your financial future a priority.



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## Considering the Front Porch

By James M. Decker

"Now, I'm gonna say this again just so you didn't think it was a mistake the first time I said it. For me, success is not about the wins and losses. It's about helping these young fellas