

eventually gave POINT the green light. Official resistance only seemed to encourage the men, he says. "Once they'd decided they were going to do it," Jarvis says, "all there really was for me to do was figure out how to make it successful and safe."

Five climbers—originally six, but John Galland fell ill and wasn't able to join—set off on July 12. The difficulty became apparent immediately. The trail crosses an arroyo before it begins to rise, and wheelchairs tipped and toppled on the creekbed's loose stones. Later that day, Powers developed muscle spasms and had to turn back. Another climber, Bobby Leyes, reached his limit the next day.

By the third day, only three climbers remained—Rogers, Kiley, and Moss, a Vietnam veteran who'd lost his legs in combat. Their companions' departures humbled the trio. "When it got down to Dave and Joe and me, we spoke about it," Rogers says. "We said, 'This is it. It's us. And we are going to make it to the top.'"

Kiley was in the lead. Rogers, the only one with climbing experience, guided from the rear. The going was grueling as they inched up the steep, exposed, and rugged trail. When the way became impassable by chair, they would sit on the path and, with ropes, pull their wheelchairs uphill with their teeth. As a double amputee, Moss could more easily move in and out of his chair, and he would leap to the ground to push or pull a companion over an obstacle. "It was the most difficult mobility I've ever faced," Kiley says. "Just in terms of physical exertion, it's in a world of its own."

Low dams on the trail became ordeals. The climbers teetered over them, next to cliffs that dropped thousands of feet to the desert floor. "There were close calls," Rogers says. "There were times up there where we were walking a really narrow

line, in terms of safety and making it."

The climbers didn't want support. They refused assistance and carried all their gear except water, which Jarvis insisted a support team provide. Jarvis, along with his wife, Paula, visited them each day. Paula brought baked goods and, on one occasion, a six-pack of beer. Rogers and Kiley say those beers were the best of their lives.

While they didn't know it, the climbers were drawing widespread media attention with news outlets across the country tracking their progress. "I was getting phone calls from my relatives saying, 'Hey, I'm reading about your boyfriend!'" Baumann Powers says. "It reached so many more people than Shorty was expecting, and of course that brought him joy. He was making his point."

The climbers experienced more than one false summit—a demoralizing phenomenon every hiker knows, of cresting a high point only to discover the goal remains far above and out of sight. But at dusk on the fifth day, the summit of Guadalupe Peak, 8,751 feet above sea level, came into view. The sense of triumph was overwhelming, Rogers says. The climbers pushed themselves, and their chairs, up the final incline, where a support team waited with champagne.

After five exhausting days on the mountain, the men spent a quiet night on the peak and the next morning flew back to the trailhead on an Army chopper. Reunited with their supporters, the climbers basked in their accomplishment. Carlsbad, New Mexico, was holding a rodeo, and the climbers were invited as honored guests. Then, the group received a call from President Ronald Reagan. Kiley says it was the only time he saw Powers at a loss for words.

The experience altered the trajectory of their lives. Rogers left a path in engineering for a PhD in recreational therapy instead, building a program at Indiana State University



Bronte ISD Kindergarten Graduation

centered on sports and the outdoors for people with disabilities. Kiley was already a recreational therapist, but the climb changed his focus. "I knew exactly what I was going to do when I got back," he says. "This kind of outdoor experience, though not as extreme, was going to be part of what we provided." Kiley went on to have a singular athletic career, winning 13 Paralympic medals and earning induction into the Olympic and Paralympic Hall of Fame in 2022. With Powers at the helm, POINT pioneered new programming—fishing tournaments, hunting trips, and sports events for people with disabilities.

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 established new accessibility requirements for public facilities, including national parks. The POINT climb loomed large as the ADA was implemented, influencing park-service leadership "in ensuring we met both the letter and intent of the law," Jarvis says.

While the climbers struggled on the mountain, a team member at the trailhead invited Jarvis to tour the park's campground—in a wheelchair.

It was a revelation, showing Jarvis the obstacles in this place meant to serve "all people." Jarvis carried that experience into his park service leadership—he went on to serve eight years as National Park Service director in the Obama administration—where he made accessibility a lodestar. "I think this is one of those lynchpin events that changed a lot of perspectives," Jarvis says. "They were there to prove something. They showed that it wasn't a disability, but a different ability."

The nonprofit organization POINT was renamed Turning POINT in the 1990s, and it expanded its scope to include not only paraplegics, but also others with physical challenges. The organization's mission remains unchanged: to support people with disabilities in developing confidence and community, through outdoor activities. One marquee event is Shorty's Big Bass Battle, a fishing tournament named for founder Michael "Shorty" Powers, which is held each spring at Caddo Lake. Turning POINT also sponsors camping, boating, trap-shooting, and hand-cycling events both at Caddo Lake and in Dallas.

This article also appeared online at texashighways.com.

On This Day in Texas History June 9, 1894

On this day in 1894, a water-well contractor accidentally discovered the Corsicana oilfield, the first in Texas to produce oil and gas in significant quantities, while seeking a new water source for the city of Corsicana. Civic leaders of Corsicana needed a dependable water supply to promote commercial development. They contracted with the American Well and Prospecting Company to drill three water wells. The drillers took the first well to a depth of 1,027 feet, where they encountered oil. The first modern refinery in Texas, operated by the J. S. Cullinan Company, opened at the field in 1898. During its first century of operation, the field produced about 44 million barrels of oil; annual production peaked in 1900 at more than 839,000 barrels. The Corsicana field established the potential for commercial oil production in Texas; the industry has had incalculable effects on the state's subsequent development, public revenue, and culture.

ENTERPRISE
Serving Coke County

Vol. 132, No. 27 Friday, January 20, 2023

Joke County Water Supply Corporation awarded grant

The Texas Water Development Board approved a \$500,000 grant to the Joke County Water Supply Corporation on December 15. The grant is for the construction of a new water treatment plant in Joke County. The grant will be used to purchase and install a new water treatment plant. The grant will also be used to pay for the construction of a new water treatment plant. The grant will also be used to pay for the construction of a new water treatment plant.

SPECIAL OIL & GAS SECTION

Warrior Rig Southeast of Robert Lee

By Michael McChesney, Publisher

Many Coke County citizens view the oil boom generally with a mix of hope and concern. The oil boom has brought many jobs to the county, but it has also brought a lot of environmental damage. The oil boom has brought many jobs to the county, but it has also brought a lot of environmental damage. The oil boom has brought many jobs to the county, but it has also brought a lot of environmental damage.

SPECIAL GOVERNMENT SECTION

Coke County covers 928 square miles on the Edwards Plateau in west central Texas. The county was founded in 1880 and named for Richard Coke, the 15th governor of Texas. As of the 2010 census, its population was 1,328.

THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE
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Vol. 132, No. 28 Friday, December 22, 2022

Year in Review

2022 was a year of challenges and triumphs. We look back on the events that shaped our community and the people who made a difference.

Letters Inside

Read the letters from our readers and share your thoughts on the issues that matter to you.

Week at a Glance

Local events, sports, and community news for the week of December 22-28, 2022.

2019 Year in Review Issue

Look back on the events of 2019, from the challenges we faced to the triumphs we achieved.

Saluting the Blackwell High School Class of 2020

Congratulations to the graduates of Blackwell High School for their hard work and achievements.

Confirmed Cases of Covid-19 in Texas

Update on the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Texas and the impact on the state.

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Vol. 132, No. 43 Friday, May 15, 2020

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