

they slow down, we line up the next set of racers. The prevailing sentiment dubbed the 2024 race the best TCR Matched Horse Races thus far. The credit for that goes to the cumulative effort of eight years of work and a whole host of volunteers who worked hard to make it possible.

Berry's quintessential example of local culture is "sitting till bedtime," when neighbors would visit one another, sitting on someone's porch or perhaps in their den, sharing stories about each other, their ancestors, and their place. The children sat and listened to the stories and then told them as they got older, unwittingly continuing the oral tradition of preserving local culture. We don't do enough sitting till bedtime these days, thanks to that "culture" on those televisions and computer screens, among other distractions and exhaustions of modern day life. We should consider doing more of it. Sitting around talking about pop culture can be exhausting, at least for me. But sitting around and telling/listening to stories about family and community heritage? Give it a try. Even if you don't think you know much, you might be surprised how much you do know and how enriching those conversations might be. You learn more about who you are, who your friends are, and why it all matters.

We should consider renewing more forms of local culture, too. Starting an old-timey horse race is a little bit of that. Even though our ancestors did not pass on the culture of horse racing through those oral stories here in Stamford, I feel like they'd be no less proud of us. The competitive spirit of frontier cowboys and cavalry officers remains on display in the form of barrel racers, calf ropers, and ranch cowboys with fast horses sprinting down a track on a hot Saturday afternoon in Stamford, Texas. Some memorable stories have arisen from the first eight years of the Matched Horse Races. Re-telling those stories is our own way of preserving and perpetuating that local culture. It is important, even if we sometimes just think it is a funny anecdote. Our ancestors told funny anecdotes too. They mattered. They told about the people and who they were. When we tell our own memorable stories, we do the same thing. Next year's Matched Horse Races promise to be bigger and better, further building a new bit of fertile soil in the local culture of Stamford.

A community cannot exist on the fertile soil of horse racing alone, but it sure doesn't hurt.

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**State Convention!**

Robert Lee High School FFA traveled to Houston last week to attend the 2024 Texas State FFA Convention. The students attending had the opportunity to hear musician Granger Smith speak, as well as network with other FFA members from across the state. Rhett Rangel (bottom photo) and Denver O'Dell also received their Lonestar Degrees. Coke County's own Colorado River Band (right photo) also took the stage to play for those in attendance. Band members include (from left to right) Rhett Rangel, Kaylee Pentecost, and Wyatt Bosworth.

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**Stuff from the Pastor**

With all the terrible activities of last week I think my 'Stuff' needs to start with a prayer today. If this is something you are in favor of, then follow along, and if you are not so inclined, catch up at the channel change. Mighty one, I ask for healing of our nation and its population. I ask for clarity for the vision of our leaders and may their eyes be upon for our nation and not upon personal agendas. I ask for clear heads to prevail and to lead us forward to becoming the nation we once were. May we be unified and fortified to regain our status on the world stage. I ask for comfort for those who are hurting and for strength to do



what will be necessary to climb from the valley we are experiencing. May we, as a nation, grow and move forward as a unified nation. In all that is holy we ask these things. Amen. Channel change. With the fractured state of our nation I think 'Stuff' needs some brevity and jocularity today. I say, as difficult as times are now, humor is a tool to help us deal with hard times. Humor may help you catch your breath and help you focus on the big picture, and not be consumed by the minutia of the moment. I find humor in the social networks and the images they present. Who does not chuckle when they watch a daddy change his first dirty diaper?

(Continued on next page)

