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“YOUR SOURCE FOR EMPLOYEE INFORMATION”

Collin County Connection



History chests?

*Estella ALMENDAREZ and Larry JONES of Information Technology pause to look over the newly built chests in the courthouse hallway, which hold time capsules from 1979 unearthed by Facilities Maintenance after the county moved out of the old courthouse on McDonald Street. Facilities workers **Tim DOOLEY, Jason HOPPER and Lee PITTMAN and Don HARRIS** built the oak boxes. The time capsules are to be opened in 2029.*

It's time to lace up for the ...

8th Annual Walk Across Texas

By **Carrie T. BRAZEAL**

Dust off your walking shoes and get ready for the 8th annual Collin County Walk Across Texas. In 2009, county employees and their friends and family members -- as well as others -- walked, jogged, swam, and ran more than 68,000 miles in just eight weeks.

Along the way, they lost a few pounds, lowered their blood pressure, reduced their stress level and managed their diabetes better.

The 2009 team that walked the most miles, the **Mighty Ducks**, is getting geared up for 2010. The question is, though: Do you have what it takes to take them on?

Walk Across Texas is sponsored by the Extension Service and the Health Department. The program is simple: teams of eight pool their miles to see if they can walk the 800 miles across Texas in eight weeks. Team members do not work out together; in fact, they may not even know each other. Team members may be recruited from friends, co-workers, neighbors, family, and so on.

Each team needs a captain and a name.

Since teams from other companies may be participating in this event, all county teams should start with "CC" (for Collin County). Example: CC Athletes Feat. This will make it easier to track county teams.

The captain agrees to register the team and each member on-line. All team members report their weekly miles to their team captain, who logs it in. At the end of the eight weeks, team members complete a wrap-up form and the captain enters it.

Don't enjoy walking? No problem. All kinds of activities can be converted to miles on the new on-line equivalent chart. More details about weekly random drawings and other incentives will be announced soon.

Teams officially start on Sunday, Feb. 28 and end on Saturday, April 24. All teams should be registered on-line before Feb. 25.

Gather your team and email **Carrie BRAZEAL**. Team captains will receive more details, including the website and a chart listing possible activities. Don't have a team? Contact Carrie and you will be assigned to one. For more information call Ext. 4231.

County's IT dept. shares limelight at LA conference

Collin County recently won 2009 *Run Smarter* award for county government at the Laserfiche Institute Conference in Los Angeles last month. **Caren SKIPWORTH**, Information Technology director, gave the keynote address to about 1,200 professionals on the second day of the conference and talked about electronic content management (ECM) from an IT director's perspective. Records' **Margaret ANDERSON** also presented a work session discussing how Collin County is implementing Laserfiche into its own electronic records environment. Collin County also received recognition for its program and project in a Laserfiche white paper entitled "Enterprise Government Case Study, Collin County, Texas," published last October, and distributed at international and vendor association venues. Since the conference, our IT staff has had at least one request per week for information about the county's program, and advice on how to create a similar environment in other local governments.

Steff Samuson's journey: *In his own words*

Juvenile Probation staffers said goodbye to **Steff SAMUSON** on Dec. 3, 2009, when he passed away after battling cancer for almost four years. Steff was an adolescent counselor in the Plano unit who had been with the county for 11 years.

He cared deeply for the families with whom he worked and was a leader in the workplace. His humor, compassion and presence will truly be missed in the department. He is survived by his wife **Shannon** and son **Garrett**.

As Steff battled the illness, he kept his friends, family and co-workers apprised of developments through e-mail. Below, are some excerpts which his friends thought would give some insight into the type of man he was, and let Steff have the last say on how he fought the disease.

"I met with my oncologist yesterday, and, as usual, got good news and bad news. The good news is that my prostate is healthy. (I'm gonna think of last Thursday's session ... as preparation in case I ever get kidnapped by a UFO.) The bad news is that my cancer has clearly spread in my bones and in my lungs."

"[I'm about to describe my symptoms. Skip to the next paragraph to avoid being grossed out.] It's tolerable, but an-



noyngly distracting. My face looks awful to me, so I hide in my office with the subdued ambient lighting as much as possible, and resist the urge to scratch with a cheese grater. So far, only three clients and two co-workers have run screaming in fear."

"So far, it's another treatment that hurts me more than the disease. It jes don' seem raght."

"He suggested that we wait a few months and do more scans, then re-evaluate. I love it when a professional cutter says let's not cut on Steff."

"Yesterday I had a brain scan (MRI),

and I just got the call that my brain looks "normal". (Now I know that may surprise many of you, as it did me, but let's not quibble.)"

"My adolescent clients must just think it's adult onset acne, because none of them has said anything, and they're quick to point out (even ridicule) my flaws. I don't comment about their pimples; they don't mention mine."

"When I told (the doctor) how I spent my previous weekend canoeing down a swift river and capsized three times and gulped enough river water to keep me coughing about 30-40 minutes afterwards, he laughed and suggested that in the future I might want to wait a week to have my CT scan after I get river water in my lungs. (Maybe give the amoeba time to die.) He sees those spots as my lungs reacting to the river water."

"When you're standing in front of me, I notice when you roll your eyes and look repeatedly at your watch as I'm droning on in response to your polite, "Hey Steff, how's it going?" This way, everyone gets the same info (right or wrong), to read or not, at your convenience and discretion. Stay tuned."

-- **Steadfastly Stalwart Steff** (another S cubed)

We will miss you Steff.



30 years of Public Service

Justice of the Peace **Terry DOUGLAS**, Pct. 2 (left), shows his 30-year service pin to fellow JP **Paul RALEEH**, Pct. 1, after a presentation in Commissioners Court in mid-January. Judge Douglas is in his 5th term as a justice of the peace, but also worked here as a deputy constable and a Deputy Sheriff before being elected in 1990.

Parents can't hide their substance abuse from kids

By **Grace J. RAULSTON**

Back in November I was asked by one of our fine Collin County schools to tell a group of junior high children what I did for a living. I jumped at the opportunity. I brought the "drunk goggles" as many of the children called them and told them about my past experience working at a prison as a counselor and in general what I do to help others.

A few weeks after my presentation I received a stack of thank you letters from the students. I was surprised that they specifically mentioned various pieces of my presentation that they liked, mostly the G-rated prison stories. One letter in particular grabbed my heart, it read:

"Mrs. Raulston, I loved your job! That might be what I want to be when I grow up. Helping the community is awesome! My dad was a big alcoholic for a few years. Coming home late and drunk started to scare my step mom. We put him through rehab for a year and he graduated a day after my 10th birthday. Three weeks after that he started again. He is still drinking to the day, so we need help. I think we might send him to rehab again, or a counselor. You helped me with so much information I can give him. Thank you."

After reading this cry for help, I realized the importance in providing support services for families living through the addiction of a loved one. I searched my memory to try and recall the face of this girl, and remembered a young girl with straight, blonde hair and a pink barrette holding back one piece of hair from her large blue eyes.

She smiled for a moment and said, "Thank you. My dad use to drink alcohol but he stopped after he saw a counselor like you." She suddenly broke eye contact and walked away. I guess she said what she had to. I am not sure if this was the same girl, but the fact remains that these children experience this disease as well.

Out of curiosity, I ask adult clients if they are drinking or doing "other things" in front of their children. They usually tell me that they are not.

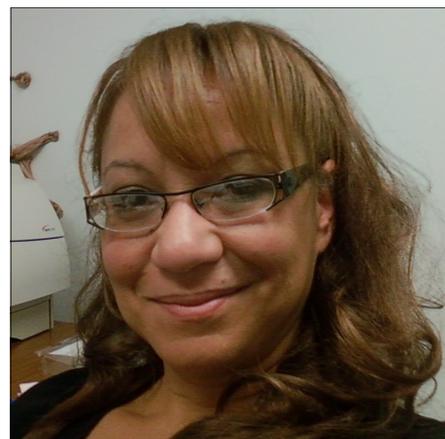
I have come to the conclusion that it wouldn't matter if they are hiding it from their children. Kids are way smarter than we give them credit for. You can't hide your intoxicated behavior from your children. You can't expose them to your disease without them experiencing hurt and disappointment.

It is my hope that all who read this beautiful child's letter offer a moment to send her a thought of hope, however you choose, either through prayer or a

passing thought. It is also my hope that you can hear the angelic voices around you above the chatter and laughter who tug on you for help because of your position.

This is one of our Collin County children who is not just a member of our community but a member of our family. She is just one of the thousands of casualties of addiction in our area.

Thanks to all the police officers, sheriff's officers, social workers, courts, judges, probation officers, school officials, and area counselors who provide support to the families affected by this disease.



Grace J. Raulston is a Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselor with Collin County's Substance Abuse Program.

Anniversaries/Retirements



▲ **Sarah DOUGLAS** (above) marked her 10-year anniversary with Justice Court 1 on Dec. 18, during a ceremony in the Justice Court Courtroom of Judge **Paul RALEEH**.

▶ (Upper right) County Clerk **Stacey KEMP** (left) hands **Charlene BROOKS** a retirement plaque in December after 8 years of service as a County Court at Law clerk.

▶ Juvenile Detention Officer **Bobby HOWELL** (below, left) received his 15 year-service pin in December from Superintendent **Danny MEEK**. Bobby serves as an Assistant Supervisor at the John R. Roach Juvenile Detention Center.



And from **Community Supervision & Corrections**:

Adrienne BROWN, Assistant Director, Bloomdale Courthouse, 25 years;

Courtney BURRAGE, Supervision Officer, Plano Office, 10 years;

Carmen MORAN, Supervision Officer, Plano Office, 10 years;

Terri KLEIN, Caseworker, University Drive Courts Facility, 5 years.

CSCD also recently welcomed a new community supervision officer to its Plano staff: **Ammon CONYER**. He interned with this department in 2006 before getting his degree in Criminal Justice from the University of North Texas, and previously worked for Dallas County CSCD. Ammon is a native Texan, enjoys all sports, is a huge Dallas Maverick's fan, and keeps busy playing softball with a city league, and basketball with a church league.



One last accolade from a 30-year career

Becky **JAMES** received the 2009 Texas AgriLife Extension Superior Service Award – County Office Support in early January. This award is the highest honor conferred by the Extension service to faculty and staff who have excelled in job performance in their area of responsibility. Nominees are selected for this award by co-workers and peers on the Extension Honor Awards committee, and the Extension administration. We want to congratulate Becky for her great work and her years of service at the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and Collin County. Becky retired from the county in September, after 30 years service.

-- Sheila **NELSON**



Detention Officer saves co-worker in choking incident

Juvenile Detention Officer **Richard USREY** (far left) received a Lifesaver Award in January for his quick action and valiant efforts to save the life of another Officer.

On Christmas Day, Officer Usrey and Officer **Sheri MALONE** were in the break room area having lunch, when Officer Malone began to choke on a piece of food. Officer Usrey jumped into action and began lifesaving techniques that dislodged the piece of food by performing abdominal thrusts on Officer Malone, a technique that all Officers receive training on annually.

We are certainly thankful for Officer Usrey's quick thinking and calm approach in dealing with this life-threatening situation. He is to be commended! Officer Usrey has been employed as a Juvenile Detention Officer since 2001.



2009 Employee of the Year

Congratulations to Sheriff's Office receptionist **Kim FLETCHER**, who was named "Employee of the Year" for 2009. Sheriff **Terry BOX** made the announcement and presented the award in December. As receptionist, Kim is normally the first person with whom the public comes in contact. With more than 20 years of experience with the Collin County Sheriff's Office, Kim handles each encounter with professionalism and pride. Visitors and callers alike are greeted with her gracious smile and her eagerness to provide whatever assistance may be needed. It comes as no surprise to those who know her well that she was selected for this honor.

Meals on Wheels receives help

Volunteers from the Collin County Sheriff's Office and Collin County Sheriff's Office Citizens Sheriff Academy took hot meals to people in Collin County who otherwise would not have had a meal for Thanksgiving Day this year. The meals were donated by **Poor Richard's Café** of Plano and were delivered by 10 teams of volunteers. A total of 58 meals were distributed throughout rural Collin County, making this the second year that the Sheriff's Office was involved in the volunteer effort. Other volunteers included city police agencies, whose officers helped deliver meals within the cities of McKinney, Allen, Plano and Frisco. What a great way to kick off the holiday season by extending a helping hand to the citizens of Collin County.

A Fond Farewell to Larry Smart

Congratulations and best wishes to **Lt. Larry SMART** who was honored with a retirement reception in late December. Sheriff Box highlighted his entire law enforcement career including his 22 years of service with the Collin County Sheriff's Office. Attending the reception were a host of friends and Sheriff's Office employees. County Commissioner **Joe JAYNES** was a special guest who presented Lt. Smart a proclamation from Commissioners' Court declaring December 30th as *Lt. Larry Smart Day in Collin County* -- and on each Dec. 30th thereafter!



20 Years of Service

Congratulations to **Capt. Charles ADAMS** who recently celebrated 20 Years of dedicated service with the Collin County Sheriff's Office and was presented a Twenty Year Plaque by Sheriff Box.



Dep. Merritt given Life-Saving award

Sheriff Box recently presented **Dep. Robert MERRITT** with a Life Saving Award for rescuing an elderly man who had fallen outside of his home. Deputy Merritt discovered the man while on patrol on a cold November night. The 85-year-old man had stumbled while gathering firewood and fell under his truck. He was unable to get up and had been on the ground for several hours crying out for help. Deputy Merritt arrived on the scene just in time to offer life-saving assistance. Thanks to Deputy Merritt's quick actions, the man was rescued and received immediate medical treatment.



(Continued on page 7)



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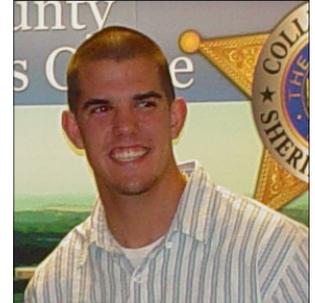
Andrew Hawkes promoted to Lt.

Andrew HAWKES ▶ was recently promoted from Patrol Sergeant to Patrol Lieutenant. Sheriff Box presented Lt. Hawkes with his Lieutenant's Badge at a recent ceremony in his office.



SAT scholarship winner

Congratulations to **Thomas MATHEWS** ▶, the son of Detention Officer **Ernest MATHEWS**, who was recently awarded a \$500 SAT Scholarship from the Sheriff's Association of Texas. Thomas is currently a student at Texas A & M University of Corpus Christi, pursuing a degree in Sports Management.



All together, it's a long time with the county

Celebrating a combined service record of 60 years with the county in January are Public Works staff members **Ricky MELTON** (25 years), **Alan STEPHENS** (15 years), **Jon KLEINHEKSEL**, director, **Greg COUNTS** (10 years), and **Jeannine LANGLEY** (10 years).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Brittany JEFFCOAT, daughter of **Kathy SCHROEDER** (District Attorney's Office) graduated Cum Laude Saturday, Dec. 19, 2009, from Texas A & M University-Commerce, with a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work. Brittany was a member of Alpha Delta Mu, the Social Work Honor Society.

Lauren Ava LEVONIUS was born on Dec. 21, 2009. She was 6 lbs., 1/2 oz and 17.2 inches long. Lauren joins big brother **Brendan** and proud parents, **Crystal** (District Attorney's Office) and **Jeff LEVONIUS**.



FOR SALE

HOUSE: By owner: 3bd/3bath, 1955 sq. ft.; DR Horton "Cypress Grove" floorplan; Savannah Neighborhood; \$147,000. Contact Melissa. 682-597-0162.



FURNITURE: Beautiful Hooker Cherry Entertainment Center \$350 obo; beautiful cherry wood entertainment center; solid piece that came from a high-end furniture store. 60 inches tall, 60 inches wide, and 23 inches deep; 2 dove-tailed storage drawers that can hold a ton of CD's & DVD's. Please bring your own truck and strong arms. Call 469-233-9815.



MOBILE CAR WASH: Save time, money, and gas with our mobile service. Free pick-up and delivery for packages 4, 5 & 6. We use Detail Dude and Scentsy products exclusively. #1 Mobile Wash: exterior hand wash and dry, wheels cleaned and tires dressed, \$25. #2 Mobile Wash & Vac - #1, w/ vacuum, windows, door jambs, dash, console and cup holders: \$45. #3 Mobile Wash Plus - #2 w/ spray wax applied: \$65. #4 Wax Package - #3 w/ wax or sealant applied by hand or machine: \$125. #5 Shampoo Package - #3 w/ interior floors, mats, cloth seats and headliner shampooed; leather seats and door panels cleaned and conditioned: \$125. #6 Full Detail - #3 and #4 combined: \$200. Truck or SUV, add \$10. Call or email for an appt. 469-323-8985 or

mikesmobilemagic@att.net. Cash or check only. County employees receive 10% discount on any service.

STEREO: Kenwood Stereo System, comes with 7-channel receiver, an electronic equalizer, 6-disc changer, plus 1, and a dual-cassette deck (all remote controlled) with Bose 301 speakers, \$485. (903) 436-2928.

MAGAZINES: Four 12-twelve round magazines for Sig Sauer 226 (.40 cal.), \$17 each. (903) 436-2928.

VAN: 2005 Ford Freestar SES, 96,000 miles; very clean, never smoked in; always garaged. New tires in January 2009; 3rd-row seating, rear air, white with gray interior; AM/FM Radio with single CD; anti-lock brakes; dual front air bags; tinted windows; front wheel drive; floor mats; cruise control; rear defrost; passenger vanity mirror; intermittent wipers; tire pressure monitoring system; power door locks; keyless entry; child safety locks. Priced to sell. Contact **Carrie BRAZEAL**, 214-686-7138 or Clif at 214-287-4583.



CONVERTIBLE: 1971 VW Convertible. Replaced the tires, brakes, clutch, battery, shocks, bumpers, beauty rings, hubcaps and had some minor body repair done. Has an electronic ignition, installed in spring 2009. Bought it in 2001, and has been garage-kept and driven very little. Mileage: Approx. 124,000. \$9750. **Pam HUFFMAN**, 903-815-5849.



SCENTSY WICKLESS CANDLES: Great gift ideas or start a new business. This great product is also good for your office since there are no open flames. Go to my website at www.scentsy.com/jenniferbrooks. Order online or call in an order. **Jennifer BROOKS**, 469-323-4681.

WANTED: Running or non-running riding lawn mowers and tillers. Please call Chuck, 214-726-5780.