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Flu epidemic results in GISD sanitizing effort

By Suzanne Bardwell

With a flu tsunami sweeping East Texas that put the region in the news as leading the nation and state in confirmed cases, Gladewater ISD felt the impact choosing to close last Friday to sanitize buildings. Last Wednesday 43 employees were absent due to illness and on Thursday there were 39 absent with the district unable to secure enough substitute teacher to cover all the classes with absent instructors.

As of Feb. 1 through last Thursday an average of about 200 students were absent each day putting absences at about

10-12 percent of the student population.

"It is critical mass according to the state when a school district dips below 10 percent in attendance for both educational services and financially as the school's state funding is based on attendance," Asst. Supt. Cliff Lightfoot said. "On an average day we have about 97 percent attendance and that is always our goal or higher."

To stop the further spread of the illness district administrators decided to close the school on Friday for a thorough cleaning.

According to GISD Director of Food Services and Custodial

Services Darla Allen, the entire custodial, food services, transportation and maintenance crews along with Director of Maintenance Matt McIntosh were scouring every part of the district's "touchable surfaces".

"We are short two custodians but we have all hands on deck to ensure the buildings and buses are as sanitary as possible," Allen said while cleaning at the middle school. "My secretary Stephanie Tucker is even helping by sanitizing classrooms."

One of her GMS custodians, Stanley Walker, was under the weather himself but pushing

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Gladewater Middle School custodian Charles Price was hard at work Friday sanitizing classrooms to stop the spread of flu and viruses at the middle school. A little less than 60 GISD personnel worked from 6 a.m. until 1 p.m. fighting the flu virus by cleaning all "touchable surfaces." Photo By Suzanne Bardwell

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Mr. GHS with a smile that moves mountains

By Suzanne Bardwell

The 1,000 watt smile is what he is known for, his heart for others why he is loved and his example as a role model is why he is a leader. Gladewater High School senior Rashaud Johnson has high goals for his future, but the ones he has fulfilled in high school have already left an impact.

A proud Bear since first grade, the standout athlete has left his mark in football, baseball, track and powerlifting. But he is also a member of the National Honor Society, Vice President of the Spanish Club and a co-section leader in Band.

"Just being able to impact the kids under me in a huge way has been one of my greatest achievements," Rashaud said. "As an athlete, being able to push myself to my limits and beyond has been a personal achievement."

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Varsity Bear standout #9 Rashaud Johnson hugs the district championship trophy which was presented by GISD Superintendent Sedric Clark at the first playoff pep rally. #78 Jacob Rodriguez #1 sign was prophetic as the Bears beat the Hughes Springs Mavericks 35-21 to take the bi-district crown. The Bears went on to defeat Eustace for the area championship. Photo By Suzanne Bardwell

Rashaud Johnson
GHS Senior

What do you believe to be your greatest talents and strongest character traits?

"Strong minded, athletic, and, I care deeply for others get along with everyone."

What advice would you give your classmates and younger students to encourage them to be successful in life in the future?

"Always push hard and be the best person you can because you never know who you could impact or get blessings from."

If you had a motto you live by what would it be?

"Don't get in your own way, sit back, because God has a plan for you."

What books have impacted your life?

"Of Mice and Men" by John Steinbeck

Do you believe that Dr. Martin Luther King's "Dream" has been fulfilled?

"Yes, he believed that one day that Blacks would have strong leaders, rights and opportunities to become something special in the world. Now we have Barak and Michelle Obama and other successful role models. This is something he would be proud of."

Freeman picked to lead GPD

Gordon Freeman has been selected to lead the Gladewater Police Department.

"The application process for the chief of police revealed an excellent highly qualified group of 30 candidates to review," said Gladewater City Manager Ricky Tow. "The one chosen from this very qualified group rose to the top due to his experience and knowledge of over 30 years in law enforcement along with his connections in and around the counties that Gladewater sets in. We are glade to report that we have selected Mr. Gordon Freeman to be our next Gladewater Police Chief. Mr. Freeman will be starting officially February 25th."

Freeman graduated from Longview High School and earned his degree in Criminal justice from Kilgore College. He also served in the US Marine Corps.

Freeman replaces Rob Vine, who left for a similar chief's position in the City of Dayton.



Mr. GHS Rashaud Johnson and Miss GHS Katherine Watson were named at Saturday night's Spotlight on GHS. The coveted award is based on student and faculty vote, character and service. Other nominees were Chloe Chavers, Layla Wragg, Danny Badger and Neal Davis. Photo By Suzanne Bardwell

Celebrating Black History Month

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Dean's bill targets gaming rooms

By Phillip Williams

Acting at what Upshur County Sheriff Larry Webb said was the sheriff's request, State Rep. Jay Dean (R-Longview) announced last week he has introduced a bill which would allow the county commissioners court to regulate gaming rooms.



DEAN

Webb said that after Dean filed House Bill 1404, he wrote the legislator a letter for his reference saying the sheriff's office "has been receiving numerous complaints about game rooms operating in Upshur County. We understand that gambling, promoting gambling, possession of gambling devices and keeping a gambling place are illegal in the state of Texas and we investigate such incidents when they come to our attention."

"Our intention is to ask for and to give the citizens of Upshur County additional resources to deal with the ongoing problem," the sheriff's letter added. "I have had numerous conversations with citizens in the county and even school administrators in reference to the increased criminal activity they have seen associated with the increase of game rooms in their communities. Through our own investigations we have been able to confirm the

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USMC Major Ruth Kehoe presented GISD Athletic Director and Bear head football coach John Berry with the Semper Fi Coaching Award at the Glazier Football Clinic in Irving last Friday. Each year one coach is chosen from the greater Dallas/Ft. Worth area who models the Marine Corps leadership values of Honor, Courage and Commitment.

GHS Coach Berry receives "Semper Fi Coach Award"

John Berry, the athletic director/head football coach at Gladewater High School, received the prestigious "Semper Fi Coach Award" given by the U. S. Marines Corps and the Glazier Football Clinics.

In a ceremony on Friday evening at the Sheraton Hotel in Irving, TX, U. S. Marine Corps Major Ruth Kehoe presented Coach Berry with the "Semper Fi Coach Award."

Upon receiving the award, Berry said "This is quite an honor to be recognized by the United States Marine Corps with this award. In light of the nature of service that the U.S. Marines are committed to, receiving this is particularly humbling. Additionally, I would say that what I do every day is representative of the broader community of coaches in East Texas."

The award honors high school coaches who display faithfulness to the mission of their team and exemplify the Marine Standard of excellence in developing leaders. It recognizes a who lives out the Marine Corps motto: Semper Fidelis (Always Faithful), and who models the Marine Corps leadership values of Honor, Courage and Commitment.

The Semper Fi Coach is not necessarily selected for a winning record or championship titles, but rather for leaving a legacy of intentional leadership. The Semper Fi Coach is: A "Maker of Leaders." Teaches discipline, judgment and selflessness. The Semper Fi Coach is a "Winner of Battles." He perseveres through social, economic and environment challenges. The Semper Fi Coach is a "Developer

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