

OPINION/EDITORIAL



Memories, moments & Sweetheart's Day

Maybe it is the fact that I am getting older. But lately I have been pondering some of the 'perfect' moments in my life.

A few are 'frozen in amber' with crystal clarity in my memory. Most include my sweetheart. Church camp at the Christian Youth Foundation (Disciples Crossing) in Athens is where quite a few of those memories spring eternal.

There is the afternoon at the lake's spillway that included a bottle of Herbal Essence shampoo, a gaggle of friends and a whole lot of laughter...and gritty, but sweet smelling hair. There was the mud fight in the rain that created a mud pit and teenage hysteria. There was the night we girls serenaded the boys...and as we sang the "Sweetheart Tree's" line about "great blossoms of white will burst into sight when you kiss the right sweetheart there"...big magnolia blossoms fell from the roof of the boys' dorm at my feet.

Yep, there was a 6'3" skinny, shaggy boy from Longview who dropped those flowers at my feet. There was the first very brief kiss, more a peck actually, when we were 13, behind my Mom's car as he put my luggage in the trunk...and I cried all the way home.

The first time that shaggy kid proposed to me was on the diving board by the lake on a beautiful June night. The moon was shining behind the huge cross making an image that I will never forget on that still, still lake. I was 17 and too young to accept, but my heart was nearly bursting.

Governor gives lawmakers list of emergency items to tackle

AUSTIN — Gov. Greg Abbott named as his emergency priorities education reform, teacher pay, school safety, property tax reform, mental health services and disaster response in his Feb. 5 "State of the State" address to a joint session of the Texas Legislature.

The House and Senate may schedule committee hearings on bills related to items on the governor's priority list before the 60th day of the legislative session, which hits on March 8. Consideration of all other legislation must wait until after that date, except for House Bill 2 and Senate Bill 2 — the state budget — which is already in the works.

Abbott gave lawmakers something to cheer about when he said, "When you combine our legislative accomplishments with our record-breaking prosperity, you have elevated Texas to rarified status and I am proud to tell you that the state of Texas has never been better."

Abbott touched on a number of other issues that need attention and funding, such as Hurricane Harvey recovery and disaster readiness, law enforcement and public safety, border security, mental health and services for military veterans.

In a news release, Abbott pointed out that half of the issues on his list "deal directly with public education, more if you count property tax reform, which is inextricably linked with school finance."

Tax panel receives input

The Senate Property Tax Committee on Feb. 6 held its first public hearing of the 86th session of the Texas Legislature to consider SB 2, a proposal to cap local property tax growth at 2.5 percent for most taxing entities and automatic ratification elections if an entity wishes to exceed the cap. There is an exemption in the bill for entities that take in less than \$15 million in revenue per annum.

"We're going to solve this problem," said Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston, author of the bill. "We're going to be here until we do." Bettencourt said property tax bills have pushed many homeowners out of their neighborhoods and kept many others from buying homes, and passing a state law to lower the rollback rate is a way to change what is happening locally.

Much of the testimony given by panel after panel of witnesses in the three-hour hearing was in favor of the cap. Testimony given in opposition to setting the cap at 2.5 percent mostly focused on the potential of negative outcomes the low cap might cause, such as cut-backs in needed services and a reduction in local control.

Hegar distributes revenue

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar on Feb. 6 announced he would send cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts \$953.9 million in local sales tax allocations for February.

The amount is 4.6 percent more than the amount returned to governmental bodies in February 2018.

These allocations are based on sales made in December by businesses that report tax monthly; October, November and December sales by quarterly filers; and 2018 sales by businesses that report tax annually.

Revenue total increases

Comptroller Hegar on Feb. 4 announced state sales tax revenue totaled \$2.8 billion in January, an amount 6 percent greater than the total reported in January 2018.

Suzanne Bardwell



After a year and a half I did. Accept. And then the perfect moments multiplied exponentially.

Of course, if I so chose I could recall the darker moments of growth, loss and hurt. But why would anyone want to darken their memories by fixating on those moments that occur in every single life and relationship. That is what true love is about. Looking for the best and seeing it even on those days when you really, really just want to run away.

The day our son was born, I remember the one tear that trailed down the side of his face as he held his perfect baby for the first time. The Cub Scout soapbox car and rubber band rocket races, Dad & Lad, teaching Josh how to fix what is broken, including hearts. And almost always offering the wisest of wisdom.

Over the years there have been so many more magical moments than disappointing ones. My bank of memories overflows with my sweetheart's generosity, tender care and, yes, even his nagging, nagging, nagging for me to take better care of myself. Ditto darling!

Now we are together almost 24-7 and the mundane and routine is the order of our days. Deadlines dictate our lives. Exhaustion often overrules everything else.

But, my treasure box is still filled with his love letters from across the years.

His hand in mine still means something. And Valentine's Day or not, he will always be my sweetheart.

For that I thank God every single day for His plan that put two kids together, to grow up together, to work together and to grow old together.

That is better than diamonds and roses.

That kind of love is what makes life worth living and love worth remembering.

OBITUARY

SUZANNE SHEPPERD MCINTOSH

Our beautiful Suzanne Shepperd McIntosh passed into the arms of our Savior on February 6, 2019. She had been surrounded lovingly by her family as she fought cancer courageously. Suzanne battled the way she did everything in her life, with class, with her humor intact, by putting her family first, and with her beautiful smile and sparkling eyes lighting up the room.



Suzanne was born to John Ben Shepperd and Mamie Strieber Shepperd as one of twin daughters, on September 2, 1948, in Longview. Her family lived in Gladewater when she and twin sister Marianne were born, later moving to Austin for several years, then to Odessa.

Suzanne was preceded in death by her father in 1990 and her mother in 2015, by her brother Johnny Shepperd, and her twin sister Marianne Shepperd Morse. She is survived by her husband Gary McIntosh, of Austin, daughters Marianne Parker (Scott) of Parker, Colorado, Lara Frankovitch (Joe) of Parker, Colorado, Miquele Dunkley (Mark) of Austin and sons Clint McCarver of Denver, Colorado, and Parker McIntosh (Kristal) and Brandon McIntosh, both of Austin. She and Gary have 11 grandchildren, Ryan Parker, Erin Parker, Trey Frankovitch, Jonah Frankovitch, Eli Frankovitch, Keaton McCarver, Caleb McIntosh, Jacob Dunkley, Garrett Dunkley, Parker Dunkley and Asher McIntosh. She is survived by her brother Al Shepperd (Honey) of San Antonio. Also many nieces, nephews, great nieces and nephews, who live in many states around the country, but all are loyal to their Texas roots.

In lieu of flowers, the family hopes that you will consider making a contribution to a worthy cause special to Suzanne. She was involved in these charities through fundraising, giving her time, and getting others involved.

The Presbyterian Mo Ranch Assembly in Hunt, Texas; Manos de Cristo for the underprivileged in Austin, Texas; the Gladewater Library; the Mamie S Shepperd Scholarship Fund, at the John Ben Shepperd Public Leadership Institute of the University of Texas-Permian Basin, in Odessa or CancerCare.org/copayfoundation.

Yet, beyond financial donations, we encourage everyone to "be like Suzanne" and shower a child with love and attention, start a conversation with a stranger, make plans with someone who needs a friend. Suzanne entertained everyone, making sure that whomever she was with had a special day, or special time. She was a very caring, considerate, loving mother and grandmother, but also as a friend to all with whom she came in contact.

Services, through Cook Walden Funeral Home, will include a memorial celebration of Suzanne's life on Monday, February 11, at 3 PM at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Austin, with a reception following. Burial will be at the family homestead in Gladewater on Tuesday afternoon.

Scholarships available for new Pharmacy Technician program beginning this month

Kilgore College has set aside scholarship dollars for individuals interested in beginning the new Pharmacy Technician Certificate program at KC.

Qualified students may receive up to \$1,000 in aid; however,

there are a limited number of scholarships available.

Seats are filling quickly for the program that begins Feb. 22 on the Kilgore campus.

To qualify for scholarship consideration, students must complete a scholarship application and demonstrate the ability to succeed academically with a satisfactory high school or college GPA.

The new Pharmacy Technician program at KC will provide students flexible, affordable classes to earn a certificate yielding job possibilities in drug stores, doctors' offices and grocery store pharmacies.

According to U.S. Department of Labor statistics, "Employment of pharmacy technicians is projected to grow 12 percent from 2016 to 2026, faster than the average for all occupations. Increased demand for prescription medications will lead to more demand for pharmaceutical services."

The program consists of four classes: Introduction to Pharmacy Structure, Mathematics and Law; Pharmacy Technician Practice in Community Setting; Applying Pharmacology to Technician Practice and Pharmacy Technician Clinical.

Tuition for the certificate program is \$1,842 (plus textbooks) which includes tuition, program screening fees, uniform, license, testing and certification fees.

The KC Bookstore is offering a bundled price of \$231 for all needed textbooks.

For more information on the scholarship opportunities or program information, email Lacy Crawford, instructor, at lcrawford@kilgore.edu or contact Gail Jackson at gjackson@kilgore.edu or 903-988-8645.

More information on the program is available at www.kilgore.edu/pharmacy-technology.

Ed Sterling Capital Highlights



Growth in sales tax collections was primarily due to continued strong spending in oil- and gas-related sectors. Collections from restaurants also grew, while those from retail trade were flat relative to a year ago, Hegar said.

Measles: new cases reported

Seven measles cases have been confirmed in Texas this year, according to information posted Feb. 7 by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

Measles is a contagious respiratory illness spread by contact with an infected person through coughing and sneezing.

Measles, a rash that begins as flat, red spots on the face, spreads down the neck and trunk to the rest of the body. Other symptoms include a high fever over 101 degrees, cough, runny nose and red, watery eyes. Anyone who believes they have measles should contact their health care provider as soon as possible, the DSHS said.

The DSHS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend children get a dose of measles vaccine at 12-15 months of age and again at 4-6 years. The measles vaccine is about 97 percent effective after two doses. Children too young to be vaccinated or who have only had one dose of vaccine are more likely to get infected.



A new Gladewater Museum exhibit celebrating Black History Month designed by museum docent Lois Reed with contributions on George Washington Carver from the collection of Jan Greenwood is now open for viewing. The museum is open on Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Photo By Suzanne Bardwell

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