

Jack Wilson

for
Hood County Commissioner, Pct. 3



Early Voting: June 29 - July 10
Run Off: July 14

Pd. Pol. Adv. by Jack Wilson, Treasurer Jack Wilson

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THEY ENDURED

Graduation ends bizarre spring for Class of 2020



ROGER ENLOW | HOOD COUNTY NEWS

Granbury High School seniors breathed a collective sigh of relief Thursday evening when they finally received their diplomas after a wild year. The COVID-19 pandemic closed schools all over

the country, with students missing out on traditional springtime events such as prom, academic, athletic and music events. Graduation was held in Pirate Stadium, the first since 1996.

'Ready to rock and roll' Chamber looks to hold 4th of July parade, festival after all

BY KATHY CRUZ
HOOD COUNTY NEWS

The chamber's popular 4th of July parade and festival on the square are back on, but on a smaller scale and as long as the Commissioners Court approves.

The Granbury City Council gave the request unanimous approval at its regular meeting Tuesday night.

Permission from the county will be needed as well because the courthouse parking lot, which is used by vendors and entertainers, is county property.

Chamber president and CEO Mike Scott said Wednesday that the request would be on Tuesday's Commissioners Court agenda. He said that he had received "positive indications for approval."

Precinct 4 Commissioner Dave Eagle spoke at the City Council meeting in support of the holiday weekend event.

Scott canceled the parade and festival portion of the chamber's Old-Fashioned 4th of July celebration on May 19 due to concerns



Scott

about the spread of COVID-19. He said he made the decision after consulting with city and county leaders and

Hood County Public Health Authority Dr. David Blocker.

The Fireworks Spectacular portion of the event was not canceled since fireworks are shot over Lake Granbury and those watching from various locations in the county can take responsibility for their own social distancing.

While health concerns remain, there has been increasing unrest among the public after weeks of government-imposed restrictions that began in March.

The chamber's cancellation of the highly attended 4th of July celebration brought angry reactions on social media, although some people expressed appreciation that the chamber placed public safety over economic gain.

The tourist-drawing event brings thousands to Gran-

bury's square and historic district and pumps several million dollars into the local economy, according to Scott and Visit Granbury Executive Director Tammy Dooley. That is especially true when the 4th of July falls on a Saturday, as it does this year.

This summer's scaled-down celebration will be intended only for locals. Dooley told the council that even though Visit Granbury has far-reaching capabilities for promoting events, the organization will not attempt to attract out-of-towners for the event.

Scott said that the parade route will remain the same, with floats leaving the Granbury High School parking lot, traveling down Pearl Street, turning left onto Crockett Street, then left on Bridge Street. However, there will be 50-60 floats and vehicles instead of the usual 120.

There will be fewer vendors, too, and they will be locals.

Scott said that efforts will be made to encourage attendees to choose a parade-

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INSIDIOUS:

CHILD ABUSE FESTERS UNSEEN IN HOOD COUNTY

'Predators do not look like scary people'

How to spot red flags

BY CHRISTINE DORAN
HOOD COUNTY NEWS

No town, city or county is immune to it; it's found within the homes of neighbors, friends, family; just below the surface in unexpected places, child abuse hides.

Child abuse often goes undiscovered; it's not always outwardly visible on victims, and perpetrators are often the least-suspected people, according to Traci Cooper, community education coordinator at Paluxy River Children's Advocacy Center.

"Over 90% of the time, victims know, love and trust their abusers - and their family does," she said. "So it's not somebody that picks somebody off the side of the road, usually. I mean, those things happen, and we hear about them on the news, so it's easy to think, 'Oh, that's what it mainly is.' But it's really not. It's somebody who's close to the family - it's somebody who is family."

Sexual abusers use grooming techniques to build the community's trust, according to Cooper.

"Grooming is the process during which a child sexual offender draws a child in by gaining his or her trust in order to sexually abuse the child and maintain secrecy," she said in an email. "The offender may also groom the

FINAL REPORT: How it hides

For weeks, Hood County News interviewed local officials and nonprofits about the sinister presence of child abuse in Hood County.

We wrote a four-part series. Part One: A survivor's heart-breaking story and the impacts of COVID-19 on child abuse.

Part Two: The effects of child abuse long-term and the differing likelihood that abuse will be reported, depending on the type of abuse (physical, sexual or emotional/neglect).

Part Three: The child abuse reports in Hood County and one nonprofit's role in fighting against it.

Final part: Signs of child abuse and what makes an abuser.

But what can you do to fight child abuse?

"Report."

That's the No. 1 solution, according to every child abuse professional interviewed.

Each Hood County resident, each Texan, is responsible for the safety of children. Every person in Texas is a mandated reporter.

Through vigilance in the community, Hood County residents can battle the horrors of child abuse, one report at a time.

parents by persuading them of his or her trustworthiness with children."

Red flags of predators range from seeking time alone with the child (such as bringing the child to events without additional supervision) to excessive gift-giving. See accompanying list of potential grooming behaviors.

Because of their careful process for building trust, sexual predators blend in, Cooper explained.

"Predators do not look like scary people," she said. "They look like anyone, and they usually work very hard to gain the trust of the child and the community in order to be able to do that... And it could be a teacher; it could be a coach; it could be family; it could be anybody. And it's not usually the scary guy with the trench coat on the playground."

Because of this dynamic, kids often don't report sexual abuse, according to Cooper.

"This is somebody they know, trust and love," she said. "And they don't want that person to be in trouble. They just want it to stop. Or they believe that it's their fault."

(See full story about child abuse reports in last Saturday's issue).
It can be difficult to spot

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COURTESY

CUNNING CHARACTERS: Child abusers are often unsuspected; they look like anyone else, and they often work tirelessly to cover their tracks, according to child abuse professionals. Sexual predators use grooming techniques to convince families and children that they are trustworthy.

Warning signs of abuse and grooming

Some of the signs that a child might be a victim of abuse, according to Traci Cooper, community education coordinator for Paluxy River Children's Advocacy Center, are:

1. Unexplained injuries.
2. Changes in behavior.
3. Returning to earlier behaviors.
4. Fear of certain places or people.
5. Changes in eating.
6. Changes in sleeping.
7. Changes in school performance and attendance.
8. Lack of personal care or hygiene.
9. Risk-taking behaviors.
10. Inappropriate sexual behaviors.

Grooming behaviors, according to Cooper, may include:

1. Showing special treatment to the child.
2. Buying gifts or giving money.
3. Making excuses to be alone with the child.
4. Tickling or wrestling - they are trying to desensitize the child to touch.
5. Touching, whether appropriate or inappropriate.
6. Viewing children nude or exposing the child to nudity.
7. Telling the child about his or her sexual activity with others.
8. Creating a peer relationship with the child.
9. Showing pornography.

NOTE: These lists do not include all warning signs of abuse or all grooming behaviors, but some of the more common ones.

More indicators of abuse can be found on the Paluxy River Children's Advocacy Center website, www.paluxy-rivercac.org

Local officials and nonprofit leaders urge Hood County residents to continue to learn about warning signs of abuse and how to respond when child abuse is suspected.

If you or someone you know may be a victim of child abuse, call the child abuse hotline: 1-800-252-5400 or report online at www.txabusehotline.org.

Surprise streaker crashes graduation ceremony

BY CHRISTINE DORAN
HOOD COUNTY NEWS

Granbury High School's graduation was unusual this year, but not just because of COVID-19.

An unidentified man, naked ex-

cept for a tight pair of black briefs, a full face mask and running shoes, streaked through the football field Thursday night, raising his fist in the air champion-style and high-fiving graduating seniors.

Although he hasn't been identi-

fied, one young woman present at the graduation said he was once a student at GHS and graduated four years ago; she didn't recall his name.

His odd mid-evening jog came just after speakers finished, and just before the seniors turned their tassels.

Not a soul moved to stop him, according to one onlooker, who said his unexpected shenanigans lightened the mood.

According to security, the streaker vanished as quickly as he arrived.

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