



## The Albany News

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 Oldest journalistic venture west of the Brazos

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## EDITORIAL

### Making Cancer History

Occasionally, just once in a blue moon, someone comes up with an idea that really, really works...a concept that does the job it was originally intended to do.

Thirty-one years ago, when Albany native Henry Musselman suggested a West Texas polo match, staged out in the middle of nowhere, to raise funding for M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, he probably didn't realize just how well it was going to work.

Now, three decades and \$5.7 million later, Polo on the Prairie is an institution, at least in the minds of all those who support M.D. Anderson and the work that is done there.

Every spring, about 1,000 people point their SUVs and pickups toward the Musselman Brothers Lazy 3 Ranch northeast of Albany and spend an afternoon or evening having some West Texas fun for a good cause. Sure, the event has been expanded since that first year. There are more polo teams involved, more big name bands and country stars, more food, more fireworks. But the cause is the same.

And because it's bigger and better, it naturally takes more work to pull it off. A whole year's worth of work...Kudos!

### Busy Time

Albany is sending 17 athletes including a couple of alternates to the regional track meet this weekend, competing in four relays and 11 individual events. Obviously, many are doubling up. The meet starts Friday in Odessa and continues throughout the day on Saturday.

And as the paper goes to press, two athletes are competing in the regional golf tournament, also in Odessa.

Others are involved in baseball and softball, with playoff games scheduled over the next week. They're also getting ready for the sports banquet, academic banquet, and LOTS of senior activities.

Overall, this is a hectic time of the year for local students. They are competing in numerous events, usually several at the same time, and are pulled in what seems to be a dozen different directions. But they continue to give each activity their best effort, as if it were the only one they were involved with.

We wish our young people the best in all endeavors as they finish up district competition and some of them move into higher levels. We are proud of your accomplishments and the way you represent our community.

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# In Albany, you can have surprise guests...

On Monday morning after exercise class, I pulled into my driveway. I glanced over across the street and had to take a second look. There, roaming around the yard, was a medium size hog. He was grazing, just enjoying himself on a beautiful spring day.

Living across from the high school and just down the road from the ag barn, there are times when you do have some unexpected visitors. I called the school and reported the truant hog. Ann Riley informed me that Mr. Beard was already on patrol looking for the escapee.

It seems the hog had already visited



Bobbie Cauble

the grade school. I guess he wanted to check it out – you know, just take a tour of the town. After all, he's already seen the high school, nothing new about that. That's old news.

He crossed Main Street and without the aid of a crossing guard. Pretty smart hog, I think.

Now, he was under a carport, in the shade munching on some flowers. I called again to let the patrol know his exact location. (I know what you are thinking..... "She's acting like Barney Fife.") Within a few minutes, Mr. Beard and his assistant ended the hog's tour of town. It was fun to watch. The young man help guide the "escapee" back down the road to his home at the ag barn.

Several years ago, I opened my door to

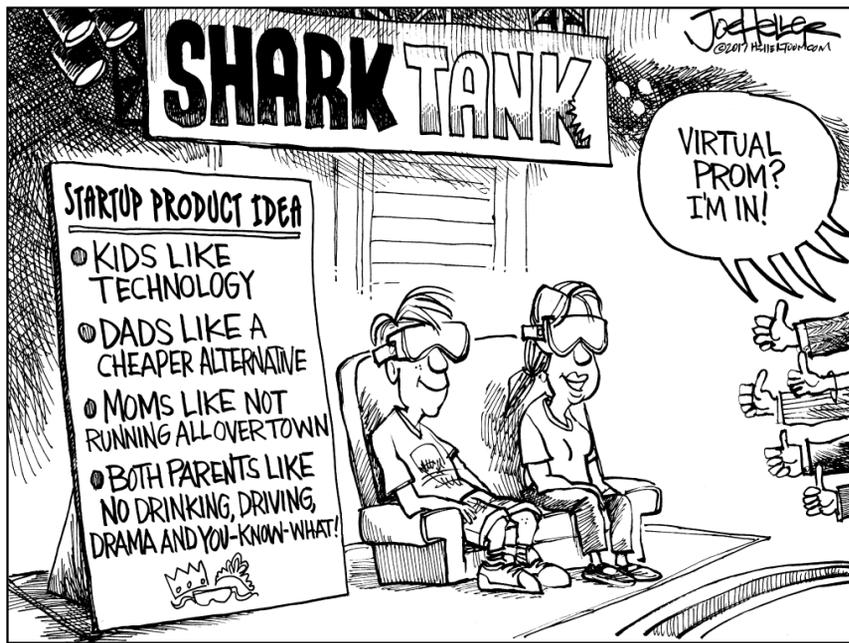
see several goats grazing on my yard. I called Mr. Beard, but I can say I did wait for a little while before calling. After all, those goats were doing a pretty good job of mowing my grass at no charge. What a deal.

When my grandkids come to visit, the first place they want to go is to "THE FARM." That's what they call the ag barn. They're city kids. They love to look at all of the animals. They don't even mind the strong odor that is there on a hot summer day. It's always an adventure for them.

I wish they could have been here today. They would have loved seeing the "escapee truant touring hog."

I hope he didn't get detention for bad behavior.

## You, me & everyday life



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# Albany woman benefits from local access to care

*[EDITOR'S NOTE: José E. Camacho is Executive Director/General Counsel for the Texas Association of Community Health Centers.]*

In a time of uncertainty for health care in the United States, let's take a moment to list the fundamental areas on which we should be able to agree. Let's use these centerpiece points as a way to move forward in productive dialogue and policymaking. After all, too many people's lives and livelihoods depend on us to put aside our differences and successfully accomplish this.

What does this mean? The Institute of Medicine defines access to care as "the timely use of personal health services to achieve the best health outcomes." This translates into being able to find a medical provider who understands your needs and offers appointments for the care you need, when you need it, and in a location you can get to.

Community health centers are the very definition of access to care, serving more than 24 million people nationwide, including over 1.2 million Texans. It's a health care system that's proven to be successful over five decades.

With more than 450 in Texas, health centers offer quality, cost-effective services such as medical, dental, behavioral health and pharmacy. They provide care regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

Elsie Byrne is 100 years old, and thanks to the health care she's received through ResourceCare near her home in Albany, Texas,

she's still going strong. "When Elsie started visiting Resource Care to utilize our medical services and support from our case management team, our mission was to do everything we could to help her sustainability and to remain in her home as she continued to age," said Program Director Mindy Ary of ResourceCare. "The team was able to help her in many different ways to make that possible."

They ensured that she was enrolled with Medicaid Qualified Medicare Beneficiary (MQMB) and food stamps as well as receiving home health services. Transports to her specialists in Abilene – a 70-mile round trip – were provided by the case management team at ResourceCare.

Legally blind, Elsie sees her eye doctor on a regular basis and requires numerous visits to her dermatologist to treat her Melanoma.

Elsie now spends much of her time in her front yard clearing out weeds and enjoying the beautiful sunshine. She continues to live her life in her own home that she has had for many years. Elsie's story has a happy ending, but there are countless uninsured Texans who may not have health care access or coverage.

"With the help of ResourceCare and the many services we are able to provide, Elsie Byrne at 100 years of age remains independent and loving the life she has been given," added Ary. "In a small town like Albany, with the closest hospital being 35 miles away, we feel this is a huge accomplishment."

## Be our guest

Primary and preventive services are the foundation for access to care, but truly sustainable access to care must include health care coverage, i.e. insurance. Insurance can mean the difference between life and death, or financial security and financial ruin.

The benefits of coverage outweigh the costs. Children with health insurance miss fewer days of school and their parents miss fewer days of work taking care of them. As an employer, insured employees miss less work – boosting productivity.

"Elsie receives health care here with her Medicare/Medicaid coverage," said Ary. "For prescriptions she is on the RX Assistance program for her day-to-day needs, and anything prescribed outside of those, we pay for out of the Emergency Assistance program we started at ResourceCare."

Not all Texans are as lucky as Elsie. As the population ages, some may end up in the emergency room and may never find their medical home. Hospital emergency rooms do not and should not constitute access to primary and preventive health care and will never be a substitute for health insurance coverage.

Whether we call it the Affordable Care Act or A Better Way, let's all work together to reach these goals for the good of families, for the good of businesses, for the good of communities, and for the good of the economy.

Increasing the number of people who are insured and who have access to care is an insurance policy for both the Texas and American economies.

# Cruisers justify good times under the sun

The number of folks who enjoy cruising is growing markedly each year, and many serious cruisers will head for a cruise port at the drop of a hat – and they'll provide the hat. Some provide the most obscure reasons to justify another vacation on the high seas. Sorta like imbibers who – before bending

elbows – drag out the old line about it being five o'clock somewhere. (This excuse ranks ahead of the one about drinking "for health reasons.")

Count us among that group – the cruise bunch – who figure there's a cruise ship somewhere going, well, somewhere. After all, the vessel and its ports of call grab our attention, sometimes without much thought about the miles required to get there (Despite current examples to the contrary, we've never found the skies to be anything but friendly, and further enticements include "transFARent" plane tickets.)

Failure to recognize fetching locales is a monumental mistake for several reasons. For one, it's a simple matter to add days and call it a "cruise/land vacation." For two – and it's a big TWO – arriving early can assure leisurely boarding while others sometimes battle weather delays and travel hang-ups.

There's a reason Florida was, is and likely always will be best known for cruising. More than three-fourths of its state boundaries are bordered by water, and its tropical weather

is favorable to cruising a high percentage of the time.

Truth to tell, it might be justifiably called "the cruise state," but legislators chose "the sunshine state." No matter.

We went on a "just because" cruise recently from the Port of Miami, adding a couple of days for a visit to Miami Beach. Our time there was more than "sun-splashed." It was "sun-drenched" – daytime temps in the 70s and a few digits short of 70 degrees at night.

During this visit, we mostly "people-watched" on Ocean Drive. The world strolled, jogged, and rolled passed, on both two and four-wheeled vehicles, and albeit rarely, three-wheeled conveyances were spotted.

Tourists thrilled in the near-perfect weather setting, as did the locals, many of whom have "why-get-in-a-hurry?" countenances. For the latter, it's another day in paradise. When the sun doesn't beam down on a precise schedule, they're apt to report it missing, with Old Sol pictures appearing on milk cartons within days.

My wife marveled at stretches of giant ivy, seemingly flourishing with little attention. Huge blossoms of this and that also dominated.

Diners took meals at sidewalk cafes that stretch for blocks. There, they enjoy not only their food, but also an endless parade of both strollers and vehicles.

We lodged at the Victor Hotel, a Miami

Beach landmark. Constructed in 1936, it was extensively renovated recently and continues to be one of the most popular hostels. (Its founding date provided a trivial side note. The Victor was serving America one year before my discovery of America.)

Guests who swear they'd ride bikes if available are brought up short. Turns out, they are offered by the hotel without

charge. I had straddled a bike and was set to pedal before remembering my plan to get my exercise serving as a pallbearer for my friends who jog.

The Victor's lobby is filled with objets d'art, including an oft-photographed lifelike giant pheasant.

We were but a stone's throw from Miami Beach, and my throwing ability is pretty much what it never was. Tourists mingled with hundreds of families gathered in great numbers to enjoy their Sunday afternoon. Sand volleyball courts stretched as far as eye could see. Children splashed in the surf. Folks of all ages lined up to exercise on parallel bars; others tossed Frisbees and flew kites.

On Ocean Drive, the parade sometimes stopped completely, particularly when shiny antique cars drew much attention.

Strolling down the sidewalk was a man with a python draped around his neck. At that time, Brenda and I opted to cross the street. The sun beamed down there, too.

## The Idle American