APRIL 4, 2019 · VOLUME 112 · ISSUE 25 · TCU360.COM

THE SKIFF

PAGE 2

ORGANIZATION HOPES TO RAISE AWARENESS FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

A STUDENT MEDIA PUBLICATION OF TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY FORT WORTH, TEXAS

HARD LOSS FOR HORNED FROGS

UT DEFEATS TCU IN NIT SEMIFINALS

PAGE 4

PHOTO BY CRISTIAN ARGUETASOTO

DAY OF VISIBILITY

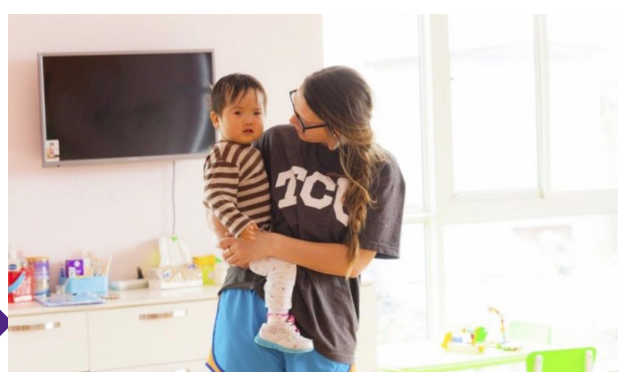
Fort Worth recognizes global transgender day of celebration

PAGE 5

DONATION DRIVE

Students create efforts to raise money for Chinese orphanages

PAGE 3



COMMUNITY

CASA seeks advocates for children

BY TAYLOR BOSER
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, TCU 360

Advocating for children in foster care allows volunteers from Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to stand up for a child who can't speak for themselves.

CASA are volunteers who get paired with a child in foster care and advocate for abused or neglected children, according to their website.

In 2018, 5,842 children in Tarrant County were victims of child abuse and neglect, and 685 of these children were removed from their homes and placed in foster care, according to their website.

CASA of Tarrant County had 481 volunteers that served a total of 1,155 children in 2018, according to their website.

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, and CASA of Tarrant County looks to bring more awareness to children in need.

Being a CASA volunteer requires a 12-18 month time commitment, the average length of a court case, according to Catelyn Devlin, CASA grant writer. She said those volunteering to be an advocate should honor that time commitment.

"We don't want another adult coming in and out of a child's life," Devlin said.

Volunteers spend 12-15 hours per month working as an advocate, according to their website.

Devlin said this could include attending parent-child visits, going to a foster home, going to the child's basketball game or art fair, visiting them at school, talking to their teachers and checking-in with their counselors.

CASA advocates receive training before being assigned to their first case. Training includes learning about courtroom procedures and the consequences of abuse and neglect, according to their website.

Peggy Conway, a volunteer advocate and TCU graduate, is working on her first case and said the training was "pretty intensive."

"We learn so much about how trauma impacts children, not just emotionally, but physically and in their development," she said.

Training can happen after work hours or on Saturdays, and there is some homework, Conway said. There is also on-going training for volunteers.

Abdel Casiano, a volunteer advocate and TCU graduate, became involved with CASA after interning with them. He is currently working on his third case.

He has worked with young children and teenagers, and he has learned that each situation needs its own approach.

"Between teenagers and young kids, it's definitely different," he said. "Often times, teenagers aren't getting adopted, so what happens is the name of the game becomes, well, how do we prepare them for adulthood?"

Working as a CASA volunteer with younger kids requires volunteers to focus on other goals.

"Our kids oftentimes have a better chance at getting adopted," Casiano said. "With our kids, the process becomes different, where a teenager is more vocal and will tell you how they feel, what is happening with a child, you have to really focus on body language and what they are saying with their faces, do they look healthy? Is everything okay?"

The advocates do not have to do everything on their own, though, as they each have a CASA supervisor to lean on if they are in need of help.

"I use my CASA supervisor on a regular basis, and I meet with that person at least once a month," Conway said.

Conway has seen the reward for the children from being a volunteer.

"Now they're in stable environments where they know their needs are going to be met, and their emotional needs are going to be met, and now they can blossom, where before that was not the case," she said. "You just see them grow and relax and be kids."

Casiano also emphasized how important it is to advocate for the children.

"If you probably add up all your Netflix time or time you spend on YouTube or Instagram or Facebook, like an hour gone, that's an hour you could've done a quick visit to a child placement center that has to be done every month or a quick phone call to the attorney that has to be done every three months," Casiano said.

To find out more information on becoming a volunteer, you can attend a one-hour informational session or visit their website.

PHOTO FROM CATELYN DEVLIN
Catelyn Devlin is a CASA grant writer and TCU graduate.

PHOTO FROM PEGGY CONWAY
Peggy Conway is a CASA volunteer advocate and a TCU graduate.

PHOTO FROM ABDEL CASINO
Abdel Casiano is a volunteer advocate and a TCU graduate.

The Skiff

TCU Box 298050
Fort Worth, TX 76129
360@tcu360.com
Phone (817) 257-3600
Fax (817) 257-7133

Editor RICHARD EDGEMON

Design Editor
Jenna Dukes
Associate Editor
Drew Mitchell

Advertising Manager
Dorothy Anderson
Business Manager
Leah Griffin

Director of Student Media
Jean Marie Brown

Chair, Department of Journalism
Uche Onyebadi, Ph. D

Distribution: Newspapers are available free on campus and surrounding locations, limit one per person. Additional copies are $.50 and are available at the Skiff office.
The Skiff is an official student publication of Texas Christian University, produced by students of TCU and sponsored by the TCU Department of Journalism.
It operates under the policies of the Student Media Committee.
The Skiff is published Thursdays during fall and spring semesters except finals week and holidays.

COPYRIGHT All rights for the entire contents of this newspaper shall be the property of the Student Media.No part thereof may be reproduced or aired without prior consent of the Student Media Director. The Skiff does not assume liability for any product and services advertised herein.
Liability for misprints due to our error is limited to the cost of the advertising.

The Skiff
Circulation: 2000
Subscriptions: 817-257-6274
Rates are $30 per semester.

Moudy Building South
News Room, Room 212

COMMUNITY

Donation drive aims to help orphanages in China

BY TAYLOR BRUMBAUGH
STAFF WRITER, TCU 360

Students and advisors heading to China this summer are going to have to pack light and tight.

Although each can bring two suitcases, one will likely be filled with donated items for more than 300 children in orphan care centers.

TCU's Child Development in China program Donations is accepting donations until April 26 on the Amazon Wish List to help The Karyn Purvis Institute of Child Development and Show Hope.

"Clothing items are more fun to buy," said Sarah Cronin, an education team member and study abroad advisor. "However, some of the non-clothing items such as bandages and toothpaste are needed more."

"There are 17 students going on the trip and three advisors," Cronin said. "Our hope is to fill 20 suitcases to the brim."

The donations will be delivered to Maria's Big House of Hope, the orphan center, where they will stay for two weeks.

They use the connection principal of physical interaction and connection such as play, eye contact and cuddling to let at-risk children know they are special and valued. Students on the trip are child development majors or minors who learned this principle in Trusted Based Relations Intervention, KPCID's main program.

The main goal is to "live-action demonstrate the connection principle for the care centers' staff, and for the students to gain some hands-on experience," said Ashley West, an education team member, who went last year.

According to Child & Youth Services, TBRI is "a therapeutic model that trains caregivers to provide effective support and treatment for at-risk children."

Along with visiting various care centers, students get an exciting glimpse of China's culture by visiting the Great Wall, Terracotta Warriors, Shaolin Temple and Chinese acrobats.

"A lot of the children we see have special or medical needs, and it can be emotionally draining being around that environment for long periods of time," said Cronin. "These activities allow the students to relieve some of the heavier emotions after visits to the care centers."

PHOTO COURTESY OF HILLIARY CHEATHAM.
TCU student, Merrill Douglass, and Ellis, a child under the care of Show Hope, practice the connecting principle during story time.

CLASSES ARE CANCELED
SO YOU CAN ATTEND THE

Convocation OF
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

hosted by TCU JOHN V. ROACH HONORS COLLEGE

THURS., APRIL 11TH, 11:00 AM
ED LANDRETH AUDITORIUM

featuring keynote speaker
DR. MARION NESTLE, PhD, MPH
NUTRITION RESEARCHER & AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR

LEARN MORE: HONORS.TCU.EDU/CONVOCATION

SPORTS

Men's basketball scores season-low in NIT semifinals loss to Texas

BY GARRETT PODELL
MANAGING EDITOR, TCU 360

TCU men's basketball's 2018-2019 season went out in crushing defeat as they lost to the Texas Longhorns Tuesday night in the NIT semifinals at Madison Square Garden, 58-44.

"As I told our guys tonight, I wanted them to focus on our 23 wins this year and how they battled through a lot of adversity, playing through most of the conference with seven guys, sometimes six guys, and coming up with 23 wins," TCU head coach Jamie Dixon said. "So I want them to remember that."

The Horned Frogs' 44 points were their fewest this season, eight lower than the 52 points they scored on March 4 in a home loss against Kansas State. Twenty-eight percent shooting from the field and 19% from beyond the arc doomed them, as they lost to the Longhorns despite out-rebounding Texas by six.

"This obviously was not our best performance, and I'm disappointed in how we played," Dixon said. "We really wanted to make it the focus about one game, this game, not about the last two, but I don't know if that was the right approach. Offensively, I did not see this coming, I just don't know why we just looked so out of rhythm."

The Horned Frogs did not remotely resemble the squad that swept the regular season series with the Longhorns.

Texas throttled TCU in the first half, limiting the Horned Frogs to 17 points, their lowest point total of any half under Dixon.

"At times we overpassed and then at times we didn't pass, and it just was a bad combination," Dixon said. "If you pass up open shots, that's bad offense, too, and that's where I thought we found ourselves a lot of times. They were rotating very well, so they had something to do with it but we just didn't have the ability to knock down the shots in rhythm or make the right pass in rhythm that we had been doing and been doing a pretty good job of it."

In the first half, the Horned Frogs were 0-6 from the three-point line, shot 28% as a team and turned the ball over six times while dishing out only one assist.

"Give Texas credit: they were more physical than they were and more active, and they did a really good a good job guarding our penetration to keep us out of the paint," Dixon said.

TCU emerged with an early three-point edge, 8-5, but a 7-0 run from Longhorn point guard Kerwin Roach ripped the game away from the Horned Frogs and they would never get it back.

TCU guard Desmond Bane, who had given the Longhorns trouble all season, appeared to be poised to heat up as he had in the two regular-season match-ups after hitting back-to-back jumpers that trimmed the Longhorn lead to two, 16-14.

Bane scored a game-high 17 points in the win over Texas in Fort Worth Jan. 23, and he totaled a career-high 34 points in the March 9 match-up in Austin. Tuesday he scored just 11 points on 5-14 shooting.

However, Texas counterpunched. The Longhorns finished the half on a 15-2 run as freshman point guard Kendric Davis runner in traffic with 5:13 to go was the last shot TCU made from the floor during that stretch.

Roach led all players with 14 points in the first 20 minutes on 6-8 shooting. He didn't play in the second contest between the two rivals on March 9 as he was serving a suspension for a violation of team rules. Roach finished the semifinal match with a game-high 22 points.

"They were a different team and as far as watching them play, they had been shooting the ball better and more threes, and you know, one of their guys was out in an earlier match-up," Dixon said. "Roach didn't play in the the second game against us. Obviously had 22, so that's a big dip."

The second half didn't start much better for TCU as they trailed by 13, 36-23, five minutes in. However, Bane scored the next five points, including the Horned Frogs' first made three-pointer.

An RJ Nembhard three-pointer after a Longhorn lay-up cut the Texas lead to seven, 38-31, with 11:41 to go. The Horned Frogs' defensive improvement fueled the push as TCU forced four Texas turnovers in a three-minute span. This entire stretch that allowed TCU to get back in the game came with Davis running the show instead of the starting point guard Alex Robinson.

After a put-back from forward Kouat Noi had the Horned Frogs down just five, a couple missed shots and a turnover led to three lay-ups from Roach and Longhorn center Dylan Osetkowski, leaving the Horned Frogs down double-digits once again, 44-33.

After Robinson knocked down TCU's third three-pointer in 17 tries to get back within eight, 44-36, Texas went on a 6-0 run capped by guard Matt Coleman's three-pointer to give themselves a 50-36 lead with 4:30 to go, putting the final nail in TCU's season.

"Yeah, the loss -- it really hurt, obviously, but I'm just proud of our guys," Robinson said. "We fought hard all season. I thought we fought hard this game."

PHOTO BY CRISTIAN ARGUETASOTO

TCU guard Alex Robinson attempts a drive to the rim against Texas in the NIT semifinals.

COMMUNITY

Fort Worth holds its first transgender day of visibility observance

BY GRACE TOUPS
EDITOR, THE 109

Jake Ballinger is used to living in the shadow.

Although he transitioned as a female to male transgender nine years ago, it's only been in the last three months that he's publicly lived his true identity.

"The reason that I was staying stealthy was for the safety of my family, and I clung to it like it was the Holy Grail," Ballinger said. "It hurt me, it hurt my relationships with friends, it hurt my family. It took me losing these things to realize there needed to be a change in my life."

As an organizer of Fort Worth's Transgender Day of Visibility, Ballinger wants more people to feel free to be who they are.

The Day of Visibility is held each year on March 31 to celebrate transgender people around the globe and their courage to live openly and authentically, while also raising awareness around the discrimination they face.

Transgender is an umbrella term for persons whose gender identity, gender expression or behavior do not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth, according to the American Psychological Association.

Normalizing how people view transgenders in the world is Ballinger's biggest objective; he wants the community to understand that transgender people are human beings that deserve the same rights non-transgender people have.

"The whole basis is not just to be visible to cis-genders," Ballinger said, "but to help all of our brothers and sisters understand that we need to be normalized and visible."

The event was held at Celebration Community Church in Fort Worth and included a moderated panel of representatives of the female to male (FTM), male to female (MTF), non-binary/gender-fluid and significant others, family, friends and allies (SOFFA) hosted a Q&A panel. Finnigan Jones, executive director and co-founder of TransCendence International, Inc., opened and closed the presentation.

"It feeds my soul knowing that what we are doing can help other trans individuals be true to who they are, so the ones who are just discovering who they are can see they are not alone and that there are people just like them out there willing to help them," co-organizer Cason Esquivel said.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CASON ESQUIVEL

"Ignorance can only be dissolved through our willingness to educate. With this panel we strive to educate our community on the "T" in the LGBTQ+ and all who identify under the "T" umbrella," said co-organizer Cason Esquivel.

Horoscope

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

for Thursday, April 4, 2019:

This year, you often come off far more assertive than you think you do. Take a risk. If you've weighed the pros and cons of a situation, you'll make a good decision. If single, you draw many admirers. Others feel your magnetism and energy. You have your pick of your admirers. If you're attached, you and your partner often disagree. Respect your differences, and agree to disagree.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)
★★★★★ You say what's on your mind. Don't push another person too far. You could be surprised by how he or she reacts. You could walk through this person's reaction. You might find that this person is more easygoing than you anticipated. Tonight: Be spontaneous.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)
★★★ Gather more information. There's a lot going on behind the scenes that you prefer to ignore. You could find that the cost of a project or daily activity might be escalating before your very eyes. Tonight: Keep a secret just that.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20)
★★★★ You always exhibit energy and personality. At this point, you could be feistier than you have been in the recent past. Try not to fly off the handle. Use your insightful sarcasm effectively. Tonight: Choose your company and place.

CANCER (June 21-July 22)
★★★★ Take your place in the limelight. Others seek you out and want your feedback. You might not realize how angry you are about a personal matter. Keep the restraint that you've had until now. Your anger could be more challenging than you initially thought. Tonight: To the wee hours.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)
★★★★★ You could be debating whether taking the lead on a matter that you feel strongly about is worthwhile. A friend cheers you on. Plunge in, knowing that this action works for you. Clear out a misunderstanding, but don't lose sight of the big picture. Tonight: Where your friends are.

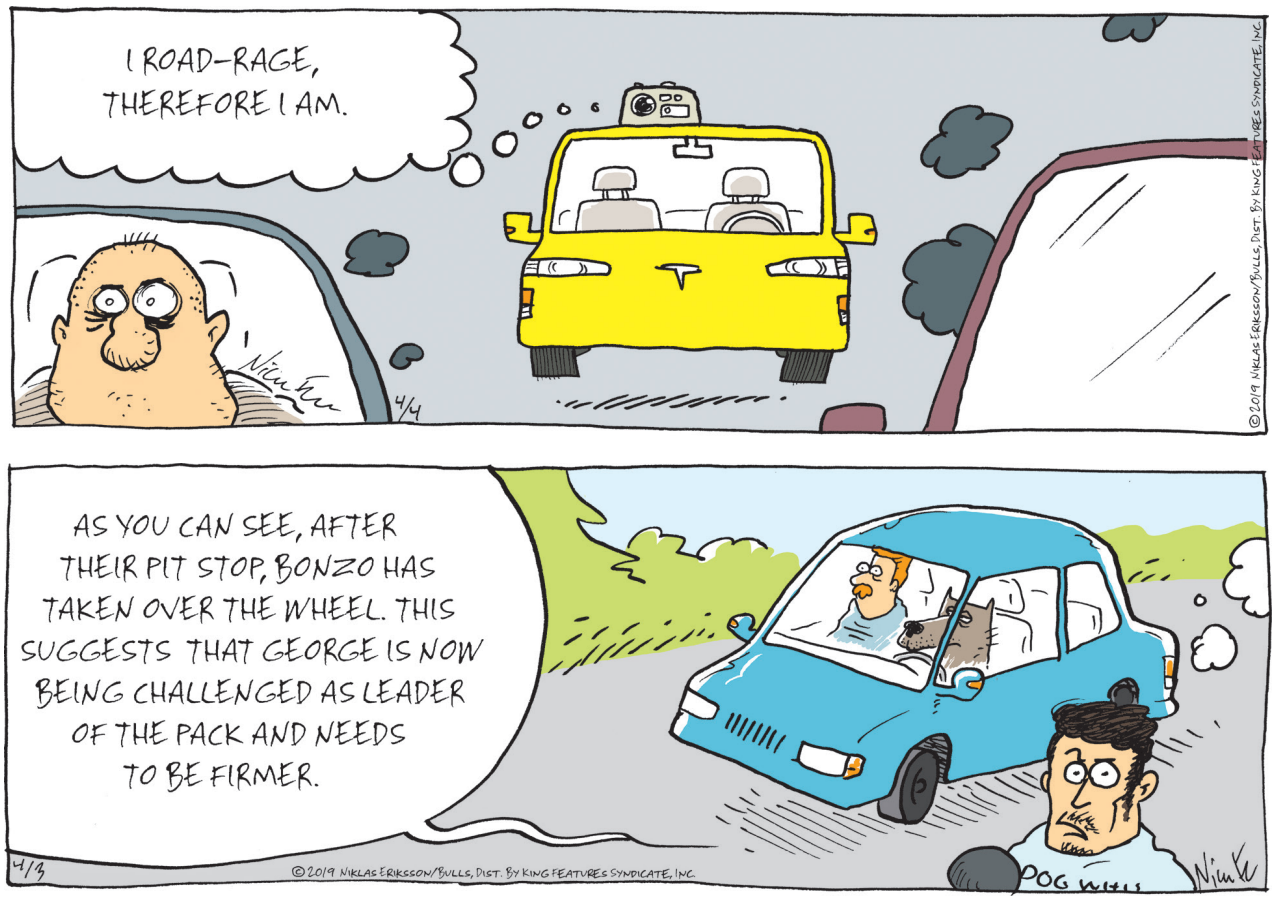
VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)
★★★ You could feel pressured by a boss or authority figure who wants what he or she wants. One-on-one relating proves more effective in clearing out a misunderstanding. Your sense of direction helps forge an agreement with a partner. Tonight: Be part of a team.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22)
★★★★ Defer to an assertive associate or friend. This person has good ideas, but won't tolerate others playing devil's advocate. Try to grasp where others come from. You'll have a way of understanding some of the hot ideas kicking around. Tonight: Meet a friend for dinner.

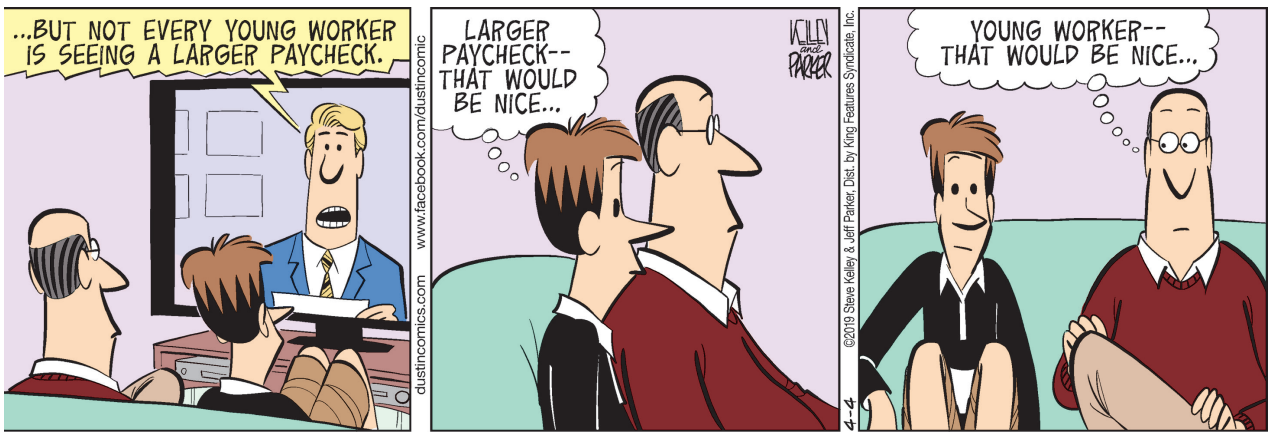
SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21)
★★★ Your effectiveness could be tested. You might not know which is the best way to proceed. You're smart enough to be able to test out different theories or explanations. Direct your energy toward the person who can make a difference. Tonight: Share with a key loved one.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)
★★★★ Another person charges toward you and has an idea that works for them. Your way to get past a problem with this person will be to acknowledge how the approach works for the party in question; also, state your case. Tonight: Let the other party decide.

Carpe Diem by Niklas Eriksson



Dustin by Steve Kelley and Jeff Parker



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)
★★★★★ You could decide to head in a new direction. You have all the energy that you need to pursue a goal. If anyone blocks you, you're likely to lose your temper. Use care around your home, investments and a personal matter. Tonight: Indulge in a favorite game.

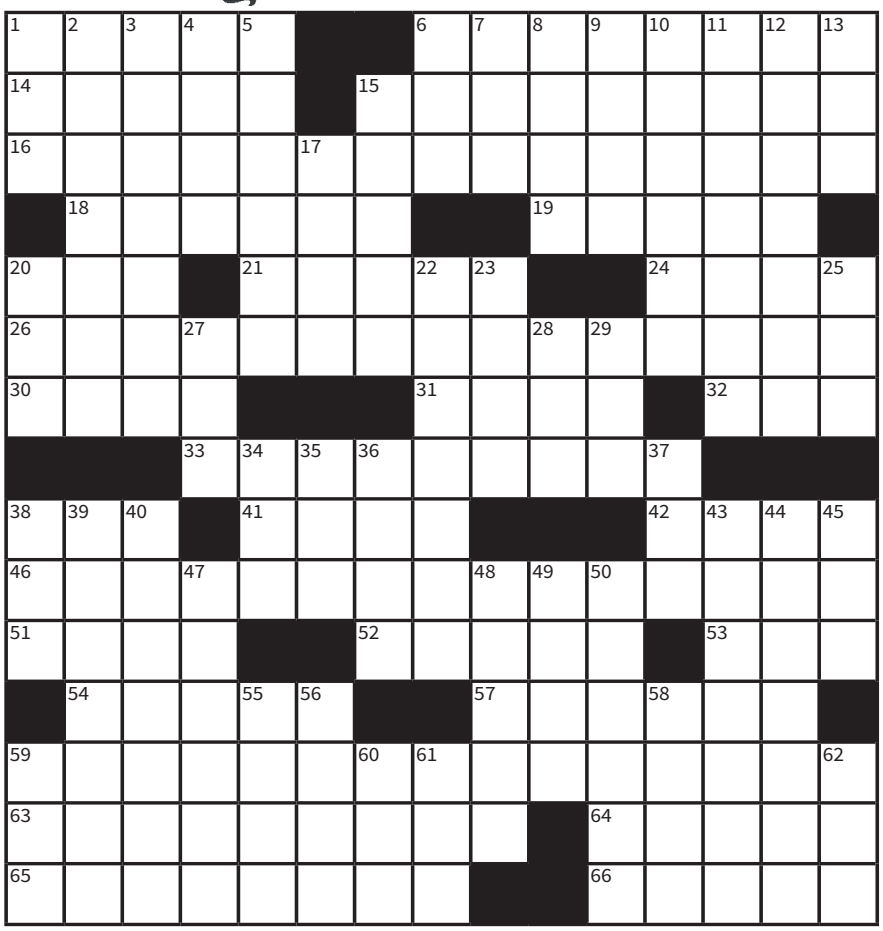
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)
★★★★ You see a situation far differently from those around you. You're willing to take a stand and manage a loved one or child with wit and emotion. Good feelings and caring flow back and forth. Your sense of caring and general friendship draws others. Tonight: At a favorite spot.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)
★★★ Stay in touch with your spending. It easily can get out of hand. Financial isssues could cause a problem with a personal or domestic matter. Once you loosen the reins on your checkbook, you might go overboard. Tonight: Keep your budget.

FROM KING FEATURES SYNDICATE, 300 W. 57th STREET, 15th FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10019 CUSTOMER SERVICE: (800) 708-7311 EXT. 236 JACQUELINE BIGAR'S STARS FOR RELEASE THURSDAY, April 4, 2019 BY JACQUELINE BIGAR
Note: Bigar's Stars is based on the degree of your sun at birth. The sign name is simply a label astrologers put on a set of degrees for convenience. For best results, readers should refer to the dates following each sign.
Jacqueline Bigar is on the Internet at www.jacquelinebigar.com. (c) 2017 by King Features Syndicate Inc.

The New York Times

Edited by Will Shortz



PUZZLE BY RANDOLPH ROSS

ACROSS

1 Crowd on the move
6 Valuable paper
14 Crossing the keel
15 It holds water
16 Blue jays
18 “Watch out!”
19 Game with 501 points
20 ___ plate
21 Temple title
24 Bygone compacts
26 Honey bees
30 “I can see clearly now”
31 Second-largest moon of Saturn
32 Alternative to AOL
33 Dry eyes
38 Abbr. at a tire shop
41 To boot
42 Autobahn auto
46 High seas
51 Candy bar with chocolate and caramel around a wafer
52 Tributary of the Rio Grande
53 Gandhi and others, for short
54 Much of the back of a baseball card
57 Follower of debate in the General Assembly, in brief
59 Green peas
63 AA and AAA
64 Farm refrain
65 Parts of tourist guides
66 Jobs at a body shop

DOWN

1 Leon Uris novel, with “The”
2 Shortest Old Testament book
3 Smooths over
4 Very, informally
5 Albert Einstein, notably
6 ‘L’ train overseer, for short
7 Caterer’s container
8 Funny Foxx
9 Indian chief
10 Surface
11 Thunder, but not Lightning
12 Bleeps
13 QB’s accumulation: Abbr.
15 Nikola Tesla’s countrymen
17 ___ miss
20 Not yet on the sched.
22 Without exception
23 Like a crisp picture, say
25 Private info, for short
27 “There but for the grace of God ___”
28 Opus ___
29 Kick out for good
34 Real heel
35 Seat of White Pine County, Nev.
36 “Now!”
37 China’s Chiang ___-shek
38 Election fig.
39 Unlikely source of a silk purse
40 Mirror
43 Lots of
44 Teacher’s punishment
45 Magazine no.
47 Tough-to-win horse racing bet
48 Certain intimate apparel sizes
49 Traffic director
50 Got back (to)
55 Abound
56 Tegan and ___ (pop duo)
58 Andy Taylor’s kid on old TV
59 Keglers’ org.
60 Quick drink
61 Paris’s Jardin ___ Tuileries
62 Kind of pad

Sudoku

							4	7
4			6	5	2			8
				3		9		
2	6			1				
		1				3		
				9			5	1
		6		7				
7			5	6	1			9
5	8							

DIRECTIONS

Fill in the grid so that every 3x3 box, row. and column contains the digits 1 through 9 without repeating numbers.

SOLUTION FROM 3/28

3	6	7	5	8	2	1	4	9
2	9	4	7	6	1	3	8	5
8	1	5	4	3	9	7	2	6
6	3	8	9	4	7	2	5	1
4	7	2	8	1	5	6	9	3
1	5	9	6	2	3	4	7	8
7	8	1	2	9	6	5	3	4
9	2	6	3	5	4	8	1	7
5	4	3	1	7	8	9	6	2

TCU Trivia

Anniversary: Which noted athiest, whose actions sparked the 1963 decision to ban bible reading in public schools, spoke on campus in April 1972?

SOLUTION FROM 3/28

TCU TRIVIA ANSWER

Madalyn Murray O’Hair

Friends, family motivate L.J. Collier toreach his NFL Draft potential

BY ROBBIE VAGILO
MANAGING EDITOR, TCU 360

No one from Munday, Texas has ever made it to the NFL. Former TCU defensive end L.J. Collier has the chance to change that trend in April.

Coming from a town with a population of just under 1,300 people and only one blinking stoplight, Collier's used this opportunity to put his hometown on his back and make a name for himself.

"My hometown is riding with me, and I appreciate that a lot," he said. "I wear my heart on my sleeve and carry myself the way that I do because a lot of people here came from big-time schools, so I worked really hard to prove that you can play with the best, no matter where you come from."

His successes at TCU have even created collegiate rivalries in Munday. Originally an area with a huge Texas Tech fan base, Collier has made the color purple a little more common.

"There's actually a lot of rivalries," his geometry teacher-turned-mother figure Christel Shahan said. "I go into the classrooms and we've got some second graders that have had beef whether TCU or Tech is better. They idolize him."

Under-recruited coming out of high school, TCU was Collier's only collegiate offer, but he said he's very lucky that he was able to play for head coach Gary Patterson.

"Getting to work with Coach P was an honor because I already knew what he could do," Collier said. "He told me when he came to my high school that he could make me into the best player possible, and I feel like he did that."

However, Collier did not start a single game for the Horned Frogs until his senior season, which is why he believes he "slipped under the rug."

He redshirted his freshman season on campus before playing in four games in 2015 and recording one tackle. He played in 13 games as a sophomore, totaling 21 tackles and 4.5 sacks.

In his junior season that was highlighted by a three-tackle and sack performance in the Alamo Bowl, Collier played in four games and recorded 18 tackles, 4.5 of which were for loss, four sacks and an interception.

Collier evolved from a reserve to an All-Big 12 selection his senior year with a career-high six sacks and 11.5 tackles for loss. Pro Football Focus graded him as the best edge rusher in the Big 12 last season.

"In the last six months since he's kind of blown up, his confidence has become better," Collier's girlfriend Samantha Lane said. "He's become more confident in his skills. Even in carrying himself he's become more confident. I've seen him become more well-rounded."

After using his senior year to boost his stock, Collier played in the Senior Bowl to get his name out there to NFL scouts and coaches.

"I knew that if I played hard, and just the way that my play and my style is, that someone would notice me," Collier said. "I've shown that at the Senior Bowl with the best of the best, the best offensive linemen in the country, I ran through them, I ran around them. I proved that I was athletic, I proved that I could drop and catch weighing 280 pounds."

And notice him they did. Collier said he has roughly 30 visits scheduled with professional teams. He had a workout with the Cardinals, has one with the Ravens Saturday morning and another with the Saints on Monday.

At the NFL Combine, he ran a 4.91-second 40-yard dash, recorded a vertical jump of 30 inches, a broad jump of 118 inches, a 25-rep bench press, a 7.71-second three-cone drill and a 4.78-second 20-yard shuttle run.

"Overall, I'm just taking it in and talking with teams," he said. "It's very humbling. I could just be where I'm not getting any attention at all because I was under-recruited and didn't get to play a lot, but you use that as motivation to keep grinding out and be very humble."

Collier credits his support system to get him to the brink of being drafted to play professional football: Lane, Shahan, his dad, his sister and cousins.

Collier's relationship with Shahan began when his coaches asked her to help him improve his ACT score, but once his mom passed away her role increased into more of a mother figure.

PHOTO BY CRISTIAN ARGUETASOTO

Collier sacks TTU quarterback. TCU vs TTU.

"She taught me geometry in high school, but she kinda just helped me through stuff, my ACT and all that," Collier said. "She's just been there to get me through things and talk about stuff like that. She's family now."

Shahan tries to go to all of the local football games to support Collier and continues to stay in touch with him daily.

Shahan described him as a "fun, loving, kind-hearted, caring guy. He never meets a stranger."

Lane said she's been the person for him that he can always come to when he needs something and Collier said she's helped him get through a lot in life.

"If he wants to be excited, we'll be excited together," she said. "If he wants to vent his frustrations, I'm going to listen. I've just been that person for him and we've been that person for each other. Whatever situation we're in, we're going to be whatever the other person needs."

Collier has a lot of strengths that could land him on an NFL roster in the early rounds of the upcoming NFL Draft. He's an aggressive defensive end with the acceleration to push offensive guards into the pocket. He has good hands and strikes with a quick extension to keep his frame upright.

"I've seen the potential from day one," Shahan said. "He saw the potential from day one. Not many people saw it, so I had to keep him on track to continue to see it, so it's exciting. It's very exciting. He's a big deal in our small town."

With the entire town of Monday behind him, Collier hopes to hear his name called in next month's draft, which begins April 25.

"I'm so excited," Lane said. "We're always like 'Where do you think we're going to end up? What city do you think we'll move to? What adventure will we start?' It's all an adventure and it's going to be exciting."

Following the panel discussion, there will be refreshments and an opportunity to meet the panelists. Representatives from Trans-Cendence International, Inc., Coalition for Aging LGBT, PFLAG and AARP will table the event and offer LGBTQ+ resources and information.

"The first thing we have to do is teach people," Ballinger said. "Once people have an understanding, then you have to become visible and try to get all of these other people visible, which is terrifying and difficult, but we have to start somewhere."