

Bronte Hardware store under new ownership

In operation for over 100 years and a fixture in the community, Bronte Hardware has undergone a change in ownership. Harley Blackburn of Horseshoe Bay, Texas, is now the new proud owner. Blackburn’s Ranch and Hardware Supply, a family-owned and operated business, is the new name for our local Hardware store. Harley Blackburn is a Texas native, and Marine Corp Veteran. His primary business as a General Contractor and Developer in Austin, Texas, as well as a local Bronte rancher, with his family values and extensive business and construction experience, Harley has big plans for the future of Blackburn’s Ranch and Hardware Supply. “As a fellow family-owned and operated company, we can promise to maintain the Bronte’s feel,” said Blackburn’s Ranch

and Hardware Supply president and owner, Harley Blackburn. “It is our goal to be the choice for customers in not only Bronte but throughout Coke County seeking expertise, exceptional customer service and a vast product selection with all of your ranch and hardware needs.” The change of location to the hardware store is the first step to the vast improvements planned. The Blackburn’s have purchased the current property on Main Street and have also purchased the building on South State Street, which was known as The Rusty Bell. They will be renovating the State Street property to provide a much larger facility. The new space will allow the Blackburn’s to expand the inventory to include all your Ranch and Hardware needs. Renovations and the big move scheduled by March 2022.



Rendering of new hardware store

Opie Blackburn, the son of Harley Backburn, will be the new General Manager. He will operate and maintain Blackburn’s Ranch and Hardware Supply. Opie has a personality to love, and extensive knowledge of what Ranchers,

Homeowners and Businesses need to operate. Making sure the Hardware Store is stocked with the needs of Coke County and keeping customers happy is his main goal. Harley and Opie look forward to becoming an integral part of

Bronte and the Bronte Family. “We are excited to bring Blackburn’s Ranch and Hardware Supply to Bronte and Coke County. We have big dreams and a strong backbone. Making this Hardware Store a staple for our family and our Bronte family is our goal”



Words of 2022

By James M. Decker This week’s essay has been a challenge. I started two different essays, both with two pages of handwritten notes on my yellow pad. I scrapped them both. I just did not like where they were headed. Maybe I will come back to them one day. I guess it depends on whether those topics recapture me and take me to a satisfactory place. Recently, I read an author’s commentary on a particularly good work of fiction and he discussed how the characters took him where they wanted to go, not necessarily where he expected. That may sound ridiculous, since he created the characters, but if you’ve ever gotten really wrapped up in a writing project, you understand a little. Sometimes, writing takes you places more than you take it. Years ago, I read some of the late Larry McMurtry’s comments on the controversial death of Augustus McCrae near the end of “Lonesome Dove.” People asked why he killed off such an iconic character. McMurtry commented that Gus should’ve known better than to go charging over a hill in dangerous country like he did. That comment annoyed me at the time. Now? I get it. In a work that powerful, McMurtry ceded control of the narrative to the characters long before Gus got himself killed. You probably didn’t sign up to read my amateur literary criticism, so I digress. Last week, I wrote about the importance of a fresh start with a new year.

Like I wrote, I am not big on New Year’s resolutions or the pressures associated with them. When we start off a year with bold goals that will be difficult to achieve, we often set ourselves up for failure and feelings of insecurity and unworthiness. On the other hand, I like something else that I have seen people discuss for self-improvement in a new year. That is choosing a specific word or a group of words to focus on. It is a method to sharpen our focus on a specific topic without setting an arbitrary standard or creating unnecessary pressure in life. My brain moves like a band of rabid squirrels chasing a pile of acorns rolling down a hill while fighting off a hungry band of grackles, so it is no surprise that I have more than a few words to focus on for 2022. One important word is “PLACE.” This is no surprise. I spend a lot of time thinking and writing about place, especially a specific place in Stamford and a general place in rural America. My reading in recent years has been heavily focused on the topic as well. Place, however, is not merely an inanimate object. A person can dedicate all their time to restoring a place, but if they do not consider the relationship between a place and its people, they will just create a beautiful wilderness. Assuming that is not your goal (in some cases it may be), people are an essential consideration of a place. I just finished a fantastic book called

“Driftless”(which merits its own future essay) about a fictional rural community set in the Driftless Area of southwest Wisconsin. That community was a collection of fascinating, relatable characters, but the place itself was a character too. The place shaped so much of the decision-making, ambitions, and lifestyles of the people who lived there. As we work on revitalizing our rural communities, it is vital that we consider the relationship between the people and the place. A few years ago, a guest on my friend Ed Roberson’s “Mountain and Prairie” podcast used a line that has resonated with me ever since: “people will not fight for something they do not love.” Our people often have a complicated relationship with our place. If they have not found a reason to love it, they are unlikely to care about its success in the future. In 2022, I have a lot of place-oriented thoughts, but one important consideration is finding ways to connect our people to their place and breaking down the barriers that prevent them from having that connection. If you have a word to focus on for 2022, what is it? *James Decker is the Mayor of Stamford, Texas and the creator of the West of 98 website and podcast. Contact James and subscribe to these essays at westof98.substack.com and subscribe to West of 98 wherever podcasts are found.*

Ranchers should prepare now for 2023 animal antibiotic guidelines

By Jennifer Whitlock Field Editor Texas Farm Bureau The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released new antibiotic guidance pertaining to animal drugs containing medically-important antimicrobials for use in companion and food production animals that are currently approved for over-the-counter (OTC) marketing. Under the guidance, FDA stated several antibiotics familiar to ranchers and other livestock owners will no longer be available OTC. The intent of the new antibiotic guidance is to ensure animal drugs that contain antimicrobials important for humans are not being overused or used incorrectly, said Texas Farm Bureau (TFB) Associate Director of Commodity and Regulatory Activities Tracy Tomascik. “There are many antibiotics used in both human and animal medicine, and there’s concern that overuse or misuse of those medicines can contribute to antimicrobial resistance,” he said. “FDA has been updating its antimicrobial medication guidelines for several years now. This is the latest update in a string of changes to the way ranchers can access medication for livestock use.”

OTC antibiotics used in animal feed and drinking water moved to Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) or prescription status in 2017, when the FDA first enacted VFDs for closer veterinarian oversight of antimicrobial use in food animals. But a few antibiotics remained available OTC in the form of injectables, intramammary tubes and boluses, according to Tomascik. Cephapirin and cephapirin benzathine, gentamicin, lincomycin, oxytetracycline, penicillin G procaine and benzathine, sulfadimethoxine, sulfamethazine and tylosin are currently available mainly as injectables but with a few intramammary tubes and boluses, he said. By June 11, 2023, labels of those remaining OTC antibiotics will be required to read: “Caution: Federal law restricts this drug to use by or on the order of a licensed veterinarian.” “What this means for ranchers is that they will need a veterinarian-client-patient relationship, or VCPR, in place to access those antibiotics after June 2023,” he said. “That doesn’t mean they’ll have to buy those antibiotics from their veterinarian, but they will need a prescription from the veterinarian to purchase them.”

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