

- Warrants Served - 3
- Livestock Calls - 30
- Accidents - 3
- Accident Assist - 6
- Traffic Stops - 75
- Traffic Stops Resulting in Citations - 41
- Total inmates in contracted jail as of Monday, December 10, 2019:
- Males - 4
- Females - 2



Persistence

by James M. Decker

[Editor's Note: James Decker participated in the 5K at the Holly Jolly Christmas Classic held in Stamford on Saturday, December 7, 2019.]

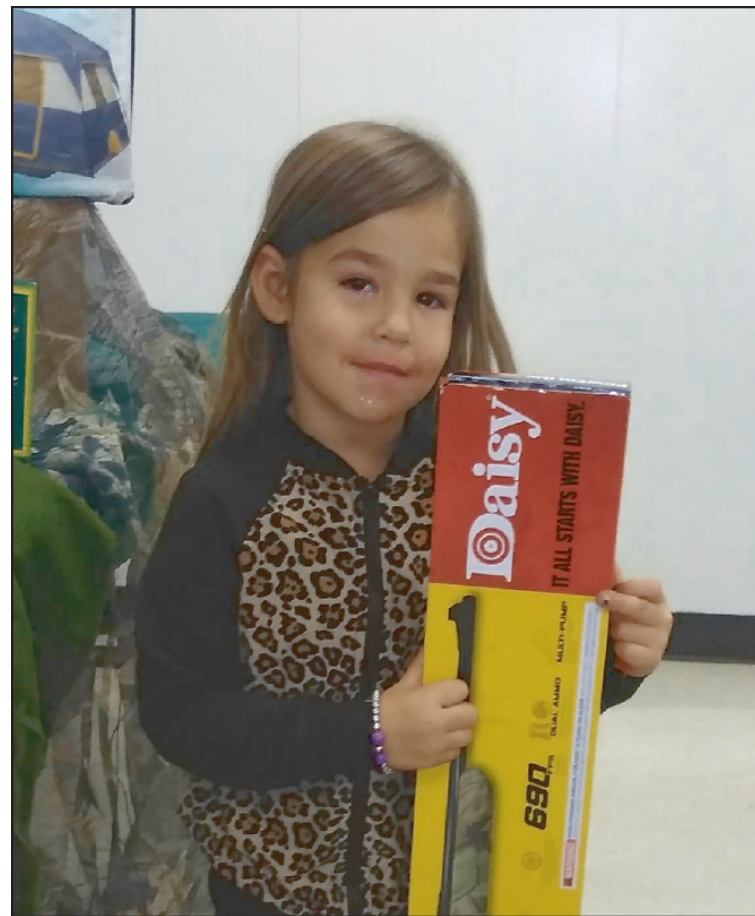
Let's first address the most important topic: I finished the 5K.

I walked more than I wanted. I'm sure that watching me wasn't always (ever?) pretty. It required a whole lot of music from the soundtracks of Top Gun, Rocky, and Rocky IV. It took me 45 minutes and 44 seconds to finish. But the Mayor's Santa Chase was a personal success. Sadly, I can't tell you whether the lead runners ever caught that Santa Claus fellow that they were chasing, because they quickly sprinted out of my sight and I never saw them again.

The Mayor's Santa Chase was also a community success, as was the rest of the inaugural Holly Jolly Christmas Classic. The weather was beautiful. The 5K had plenty of enthusiastic participants. The car show was bigger than anticipated. Most important for any community Christmas celebration, the children came out in droves to see Santa Claus. To be sure, there were things the organizers would change or tweak for future events. But those future events are what I want to talk about.

Over the years, in Stamford and elsewhere, I've seen several "one and done" community events. A group of enthusiastic volunteers start a new event. Turnout is smaller than hoped, the weather doesn't cooperate, or things don't go according to plan. The organizers get frustrated and a second event never occurs. Or perhaps an ongoing event begins to get a little tired and attendance drops off. The exhausted volunteers, who have organized the event for years, eventually just throw in the towel.

When we imagine community events, we dream big. We want to see huge crowds. We want tons of vendors making money hand over fist. We want our activities filled to capacity. We want people coming from out of town to spend money with our businesses. We want the sponsoring



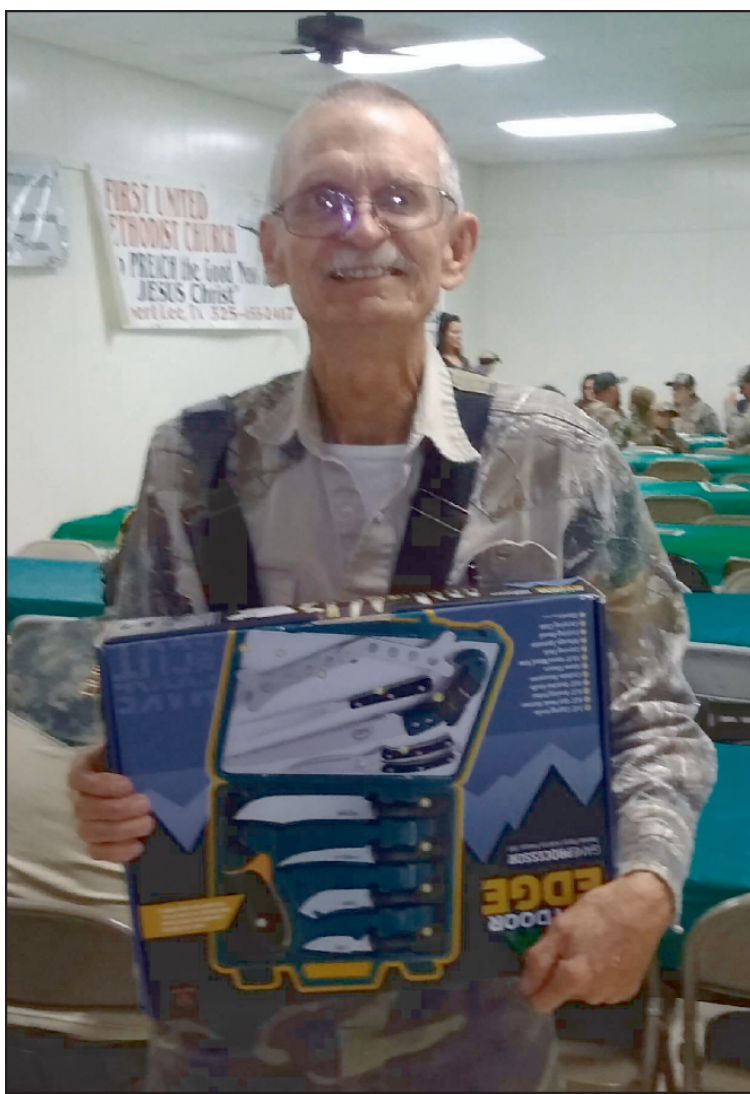
Drawing Winners! These were just two of the drawing winners from the 30th Annual Bob Wrinkle Memorial Hunters Barbecue held on Saturday, November 2, 2019, in Robert Lee. See the next page of this issue of The Observer/Enterprise to see more drawing winners.

organization to fill its coffers with money so it can grow its activities. We see the best and biggest events in our town or other area towns and we want to replicate that level of success immediately. Then, if it doesn't happen right off the bat, sometimes we question the validity of our idea. If it was wasn't a success the first time, there must be something wrong. Was our idea actually any good? Should we try something else instead? Do community events even work in our small towns anymore?

I've said this about other topics of rural revitalization, but it warrants mentioning here too: Rome wasn't built in a day. We look longingly at those successful events, but were THEY a success the first year? It's a safe

bet that they weren't. And if they were, it might have been an unusual set of circumstances that cannot be replicated. Most successful events begin as a good idea and start small. They grow thanks to persistent, talented organizers who eventually find the right formula, then they blossom. Even then, there will be dips. Attendance might plateau. The weather might occasionally be miserable. Different marketing tactics might be needed as time goes on. That "right formula" might need tweaking as populations change and tastes shift. But a good event, led by persistent, organized, passionate leaders, can still work in our towns.

I feel confident that the 2019



Holly Jolly Christmas Classic won't be a "one and done" affair. If you are organizing an event in your town, don't let it be a "one and done" either. Even if you aren't satisfied with the results, don't let that stop you. If certain things didn't work, identify them and adjust as necessary. Identify what did work and expand on that. Above all else, keep plugging away. I've witnessed a number of rural revitalization successes that wouldn't exist if the leaders stopped at the first sign of

adversity. Whether we're talking about an individual community event or community leadership at large, persistence can go a long way. May we all keep going, until we find that right formula.

And oh yeah, speaking of persistence: this won't be my last 5K, either.

James Decker is a lawyer, farmer, and mayor in Stamford, Texas, and the creator of the forthcoming "West of 98" podcast and website. He may be contacted through Facebook at [facebook.com/james.decker](https://www.facebook.com/james.decker).

FREE CHRISTMAS DINNER

December 25, 11 am to 1 pm
or until we run out

We will not take reservations.

Plates will be served on a first come, first served basis. Drive through, to go plates only.

We will only give out plates to those present in the vehicle.

Meal to include ham, mashed potatoes, gravy, dressing, green bean casserole, and a roll.

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