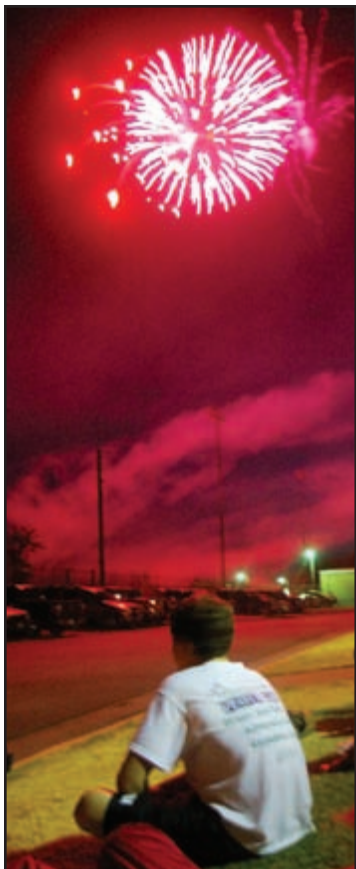


Leon County celebrates America's birthday

Photos by Vanessa Goodwyn and Sherry Matney — more on page 3A



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Buffalo volunteer firemen enter the Buffalo Flower Basket about 12:30 p.m. on Friday, July 3. The fire apparently started in a window air conditioner and caused extensive damage to the business. photo by Mac Shadix

Manhunt ends with escapee in (fish) tank

by Vanessa Goodwyn

A traffic stop on I-45 Friday morning escalated into a much more serious situation for a Beaumont man traveling through our county. The man chose to evade arrest and a three-hour manhunt followed. The suspect was ultimately apprehended by a Leon County resident.

DPS Trooper Rick Pringle stopped Fernando Zamora, age 26, at 7:30 a.m. for erratic driving on northbound I-45 at the 170 Mile Marker between Buffalo and Centerville. The man was determined to be under the influence and Trooper Pringle arrested him for DWI, handcuffed him and seat-belted him into the patrol car. The vehicle, a 1/2-ton Chevy pickup, was identified as a stolen vehicle out of Beaumont. While the officer was investigating the

vehicle, the suspect worked his handcuffs around in front of his body and escaped from the patrol car. He ran across the southbound freeway and headed into the woods.

Backup was called for and Buffalo and Jewett police officers responded, as well as Leon County Sheriff's Department personnel. Jewett's Chief of Police Larry Whittington brought his canine partner, Lector, who caught a track early but lost it as the

day grew hotter. TDC dogs and horses were called in and a search ensued in the area for several hours, then was moved farther south.

The suspect, apparently thinking "the coast was clear", came out of hiding and proceeded on foot across the Overton Fisheries property, on the service road just south of Smith's Crossing. Owner Todd Overton explained, "I was in the office and through the window

saw this guy by one of our trucks. I speak Spanish so I got to talking to him, distracted him and put him in a choke hold. We (Overton and employee Clint Koch) put him in a dry fishtank and held him at gunpoint until the cops showed up." (Apparently the HANDCUFFS were a dead giveaway...)

In addition to Friday's charges, the suspect had two warrants out of Tarrant County.

Going, going, GONE



Suzanna Miller and Carl Nelson -- still friends after the trim!

Van 'Go' photo

The Perfect Tomato

By Sherry Matney

One of the joys of living in a small community is to be able to participate in activities that are seldom heard of in the big cities. Such is the Perfect Tomato Contest. Last week, tomato guru Novalene Thurston contacted me and asked if I would judge the contest which would be part of the Leon County Home and

Garden Fair to be held at the First United Methodist Church on Saturday, July 4.

Novalene assured me the task would not be difficult and that there would be no hard feelings held against me by the participants who did not take home a ribbon. Feeling somewhat apprehensive, I agreed to assume the role of judge.

The premise was to give

gardeners the same type of tomato plant at the same time and the tomato entered in the contest must come from that plant. The type of tomato was "Early Girl" and many plants were given away. However, at the time of judging only three brave souls had submitted an entry, and all of those were Master Gardeners.

Carole Huebner, Jeff Miller and Novalene Thurston were the three eager contestants. The suspense grew in the Fellowship Hall of FUMC as Novalene brought out the score sheet, knife and plate. And then the judging began.

The first element to judge was size, next color and flaws, then inside appearance, and finally taste. Although all three tomatoes were pretty, one was obviously larger than the others. The inside was surprisingly different and there was a distinct difference in taste.

Bottom line, Carole Huebner came in first with Jeff Miller and Novalene Thurston tying for second place. As far as I could tell, no friendships were lost by the experience.



Sherry Matney getting a taste of "The Perfect Tomato". Sherry's Shots



Dad Ricky Nelson didn't try to hide his delight as Suzanna Miller cut off 10"+ of Carl Nelson's hair, which will be donated to Locks of Love, a charity which makes wigs for cancer victims. Van 'Go' photo

by Vanessa Goodwyn

Buffalo's favorite seven-foot redhead, Carl Nelson, shed his shoulder-length curls on Monday morning. Nelson had waited until his hair reached the 10-inch length requirement to be donated to Locks of Love, so his shaggy mane was saved to make wigs for cancer victims who have lost their hair during chemotherapy.

Suzanna Miller of Oakwood's Beauty Cottage was given the dubious honor of parting Carl and his hair. Miller and the Nelsons go to church together and she has been the only one to trim his leonine mane in recent years. "He quit going to Randy (Bumpurs), 'cos Randy wanted to chop it all off," remarked Carl's dad, Ricky Nelson, who was on hand for the haircut on Monday and appeared downright giddy as Miller made the first whack. "I don't want to do this, Carl!" the salon owner protested -- but she did. Also present was Carl's sister Erin, who covered her eyes during the process but later assured her brother that he was a handsome as ever -- and not nearly as scary!