

WindSync quintet to perform Belton concert on March 3

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

WindSync, a vibrant wind quintet with a unique sound, will perform in Belton on Tuesday, March 3, at a 7 p.m. concert in the Baugh Performance Hall on the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor campus.

Tickets may be purchased at TicketReturn.com.

According to Kara LaMoure, bassoonist for the ensemble, WindSync's current tour features a repertoire that includes works by contemporary composers such as Nadia Boulanger.

"This spring we are touring works from our new album Nadia, which releases March 13," said LaMoure. "These include Etude No. 17 by Philip Glass and Three Pieces by Nadia Boulanger, transcribed from scores for keyboard and cello/piano by me."

"We also like to include a masterpiece of wind chamber music on every program, and to this end, we will perform Mozart's Serenade in C Minor," she said.

LaMoure said the album is a tribute to legendary composer, conductor, speaker and teacher Nadia Boulanger, a hidden architect of 20th-century American music who was, in fact, a Parisian woman.

"She was the teacher of Aaron Copland, Elliott Carter, Philip Glass, Astor Piazzolla, Quincy Jones, and many others," she said. "Nadia deliberately nurtured each student's unique voice, helping explain the stylistic diversity that de-



Courtesy Photo

Members of WindSync perform during a recent concert. The ensemble will be on stage at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor on March 3. The group sold out the Cultural Activities Center in Temple in 2023.

fines American music today ("E pluribus unum" in action!)."

"The album will be released during Women's History Month and the same week as International Women's Day (March 8)," LaMoure said.

WindSync includes Garrett Hudson on flute, Noah Kay on oboe, Graeme Johnson on clarinet, Anni Hochhalter on French horn and LaMoure on bassoon.

"This is my 10th year with WindSync," LaMoure said. "I began my musical journey playing piano when I was in kindergarten and I sang in children's choirs. Bassoon quickly became my primary instrument as a beginner in sixth-grade band class. It just felt like the right match."

"WindSync has a national tour—
See **WINDSYNC**
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Belton Area Chamber of Commerce holding annual awards banquet



File photo

A number of award winners will be announced and recognized at this year's Belton Area Chamber of Commerce Banquet set for Jan. 29. Pictured above is Karen Wheeler, last year's Ambassador of the Year.

Special to the Journal

The Belton Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Banquet is scheduled for Thursday, Jan. 29 at the Cadence Bank Center (formerly Bell County Expo).

Each year the Chamber Board of Directors selects individuals and businesses to honor for their leadership, service, and investment in the community.

The theme for this year's banquet is "Better Together" recognizing the legacy and importance of working together to build a better community. Tickets and table sponsorships are available by contacting the Chamber office or via the

Chamber website.

Randy Pittenger, Belton Chamber President/CEO said, "We are excited about recognizing outstanding servant leaders in our community at our awards banquet. This annual tradition of honoring and thanking those who step up and go the extra mile is important for our community. We encourage everyone to join us as we celebrate together."

In addition to recognizing outgoing and incoming board members, awards that will be announced at the banquet include the Beltonian Award, Citizen

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Courtesy Photo

Paetyn Beckendorf, 16, Miss SPJST 2025-2026, started her year-long campaign to fight hunger with a successful food drive.

Miss SPJST leads statewide effort to fight hunger through "Czech Off Hunger" campaign

Special to the Journal

Miss SPJST 2025-2026 Paetyn Beckendorf, 16, is leading a year-long campaign to fight hunger and inspire service across Texas.

Beckendorf launched "Czech Off Hunger" to help hungry families across Texas. She believes hunger continues long after the holiday season ends.

She began serving at the 5 Loaves and 2 Fish Food Pantry in Riesel as a seventh grader. That service then inspired her to continue her efforts in high school.

Earlier this year, she partnered with the pantry during the KWTX Food for Families drive. Her efforts raised 26,117.46 pounds of food.

KWTX was thankful and impressed with her service and interviewed her the morning of the event.

Her project now expands to SPJST District 2 and surrounding counties. She invited lodges in Bell, Blanco, Coryell, Falls, Gillespie, Kendall, Kerr, Lampasas, Llano, McCulloch, Mason, Menard, Milam, San Saba, Travis and Williamson counties to join her efforts.

She asked them to support Churches Touching Lives for Christ in Temple. Churches Touching Lives for Christ is a volunteer-run nonprofit providing food, clothing, hygiene items and basic support services.

The group operates the region's largest food pantry and serves thousands each month at 702 W. Avenue G.

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Belton population estimate climbs

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Population estimates for the City of Belton have climbed every year since the 2020 Census and the numbers likely will continue upward through 2030.

This week, Belton City Council approved the Jan. 1, 2026, population estimate as 27,804, a 17.08 percent increase over the 2020 Census of 23,054. The 2025 estimate was 27,136.

The methodology used to calculate the January 2026 population includes data available from the U.S. Census Bureau, combined with local building permits data from Oct. 1, 2024, to Sept. 30, 2025.

More specifically, a total dwelling unit count, an occupied unit count, and an average persons per household multiplier was applied to determine the estimate.

The appropriate vacancy rate was also utilized from the 2020 Census.

According to information reviewed by City Council on Tuesday, Belton's population is projected to grow to 28,660 by January 2027 and 31,385 by 2030.

According to a resolution approved by Council and signed by Mayor David K Leigh, the city's housing unit count method estimated a total of 10,228 dwelling units,

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Belton ISD students take over the stage this spring

Special to the Journal

Belton Independent School District invites families, alumni and community members to experience a vibrant season of spring theatre productions, showcasing student talent, creativity and collaboration across three campuses.

From a beloved classic to bold comedy and whimsical musical storytelling, these performances highlight the depth of Belton ISD Fine Arts and the powerful role the arts play in student learning.

At Lake Belton High School, students will bring the timeless story of *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum to life in a large-scale, collaborative production involving more than 140 students on stage and behind the scenes. In

a special community connection, 22 elementary students will join the high school cast as Munchkins, creating a shared experience across grade levels.

Performances are scheduled for January 23 and 24 at 7:00 p.m. and January 25 at 2 p.m. at the Lake Belton High School Performing Arts Center, located at 9809 F.M. 2483 in Temple.

General admission tickets are \$15 and are available at LBHSTheatre905.ludus.com, with additional performances possible based on ticket demand.

Audiences looking for fast-paced comedy and over-the-top storytelling can enjoy the latest production from the Archimedes Theater Company at Belton New Tech @Waskow.

Students will present *The Bold*, *The Young*, and *The Murdered* by Don Zolidis, a melodra-



matic murder mystery filled with exaggerated twists, sharp humor and scenes that escalate quickly.

Performances will take place January 29 through 31 at 7 p.m. at the Pittenger Fine Arts Center, located at 400 North Wall Street in Belton.

Tickets are \$5 for students and \$10 for adults and are available at newtechtheater.ludus.com.

The season continues at Belton High School with *Seussical the Musical*, a colorful and energetic production that brings the imaginative world of Dr. Seuss to the stage.

Featuring 86 Belton High School fine arts students, the musical blends performance, technical theatre and live orchestra to tell a story centered on loyalty, responsibility and the belief that a person is a person no matter how small. Performances are scheduled

for February 6 and 7 at 7 p.m. and February 8 at 2 p.m. at the Belton High School Performing Arts Center, located at 600 Lake Road in Belton.

Tickets are \$10 and may be purchased online at BeltonTheatre.com, from cast members, or at the door.

Together, these productions spotlight the passion, creativity and hard work of Belton ISD students and educators, while showcasing the powerful role fine arts play in building confidence, collaboration and real-world skills. The community is invited to take a seat, cheer loud and support these student-led performances throughout the spring season.

Wrong-way driver on I-35 stopped by Belton police

By Lynette Sowell

The Belton Journal

A Belton police patrol car was totaled on the evening of Jan. 5 on I-35 when a Belton police officer stopped someone driving the wrong way.

The incident occurred near South Loop and Interstate 35 after the officer responded to a call of a motorist driving the wrong way on Interstate 35.

Belton officials said the officer didn't appear to have any injuries.

However, the vehicle didn't fare as well.

"We had a report come in about a driver driving on the wrong side of Interstate 35 south of town. It is a miracle someone didn't get hurt or killed. Driving on the wrong way on the interstate

is scary," said Belton Police Chief Larry Berg.

The Belton officer entered the interstate and approached the driver heading south near mile marker 287.

The driver was in the fast lane, and the officer used his vehicle to pin her against the wall, officials said.

He initiated the collision to stop the driver from taking off the entire left front wheel of the police cruiser.

"I tell people all the time the reality of it, we are committed to putting our lives on the line. It takes a special person to do that. It is another thing to put your life on the line for a total stranger," Chief Berg added.

No word if the driver of the vehicle had any injuries or was cited. The Texas Department of Public Safety was the lead agency in this incident.



Courtesy Photo

A Belton police officer used his vehicle to stop a wrong-way driver on Interstate 35 last Monday.

Banquet - From Page A1

of The Year, Ambassador of the Year, Business of the Year, Community Partner Awards, and some special award recognitions.

Outgoing board members Emilio

Perales with Vista Real Estate, Jordan Samfield with First Texas Bank, and Davy Villanueva with Extraco Banks will be recognized.

Incoming board members Antoi-

nette Bess with Extraco Banks, Mike Coe with Anchor Bay Packaging, and John O'Brien with Roam Roof & Solar will also be recognized.

Each year the board has a change in leadership recognized at the banquet, with Teri Champlin with Grandview Bank, 2025 Chair, passing the gavel to Scot Hrbacek with Edward Jones as the 2026 Board of Directors Chair.

The Beltonian Award is given annually in recognition of longtime achievement in volunteer service to the Belton community. That service could be for service in education, church, a service organization, youth programs, or any area that improves the quality of life in Belton. Recent past recipients include Danny Dossman, Joe Shepperd, Don Al Ringle, Dan and Kandy Kirkley, Marion Grayson, Roscoe Harrison, and Andy Davis.

The Citizen of the Year award is given to the person who made a significant volunteer contribution to the Belton community through Chamber related activities during the previous year. Recent past award winners include Emilio Perales, Terri Covington, DeShon Williams, Jordan Samfield, Misty Baker, Matt Bates, and Luke Potts.

The Ambassador of the Year is a peer recognition award for the Ambassador who stands out as an example of

exemplary service. Recent past recipients include Karen Wheeler, Meredith Duke, Lorna Brockett, Sandy Smith, Jeanne Giangacomo, Tracy Conoley, and Emily Kirkpatrick.

Business of the Year awards are given to businesses that have made a significant contribution to the community during the previous year. Criteria for selection include being an active Chamber member in good standing, a for-profit business, and demonstrated achievement in areas described in the Chamber mission and focus. For 2024, the Businesses of the Year included Level 3 Coworking and Event Center, KPA Engineers, and Emerson Construction.

Community Partner Awards are given in recognition of those who have had a significant impact on our community through partnership with the Chamber. For 2024, recognitions included Crossroads Church and KWTX Channel 10.

"The 2025 award winners will be announced at the January 29 Belton Chamber Awards Banquet," added Pittenger, "so please join us in honoring the recipients."

For more information about the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, go to www.beltonchamber.com or contact the Chamber at info@beltonchamber.com or 254-939-3551.



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OBITUARIES



Dale

Hilda Hood Dale
 August 14, 1932 - December 8, 2025

A memorial service for Hilda Hood Dale, 93, will be held Friday, January 16, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., at First Baptist Church Belton Worship Center. She passed away peacefully on December 8, 2025, at a local hospice house, surrounded by family and friends.

Hilda was born August 14, 1932, in New Brockton, AL, to James and Elie Hood. She graduated from high school in Brooksville, FL, and attended the University of Florida. She met her husband, GK Dale, when he served at MacDill AFB. They married in 1954 and moved to Texas in 1955. Supporting her husband and children, she lived in South Texas, Ontario, Canada, New York, Georgia, and Central Texas (since 1987). Everywhere she lived, Hilda formed friendships that lasted a lifetime. She filled her days with fun and service to others in the FBC Golden Age Club, The Thursday Club, the Temple Rhythm Rockers, and the UMHB adult swim group.

Hilda's faith, family, and friends were most important to her. Her life's journey reflected a can-do attitude, a quick sense of humor, and trust in her Lord. Her courage was especially evident in her final days.

She is preceded in death by her parents; her husband of 67 years, GK Dale; her sister, Maxine Mills; and her brother, Dupree Hood.

Those left to remember her enthusiasm for life include her children: Andrea Dale Potts (Terry), of Belton; Dr. Rhonda Dale Whitman (Brandon), of Austin; and Duane Dale (Dawn), of North Richland Hills. Also surviving her are her grandchildren: Dr. Rachel Potts Wood (Mack), Amy Potts Sailors (Alan), Jake Whitman (Preslee), Ben Whitman, Avery Dale, and Sam Dale. Great-grandchildren include Imogen Wood, Sawyer Whitman, Ruby Whitman, Vera Whitman, and Slayden Whitman. Also remembering her are her sister, Evann Overstreet (Bill), and her brother, Jack Hood

(Annette), as well as numerous nieces, nephews, and friends.

Many thanks to the staff of Stoney Brook of Belton, Vesper Medical Care, Gentiva Hospice, Our Hospice House, and many friends. Hilda's family will forever be grateful for such care and support. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to Our Hospice House—Belton.

Edmonds

Dale Charles Edmonds
 June 7, 1948 - December 17, 2025

Dale Charles Edmonds, a beloved husband, father, and grandfather, passed away peacefully on December 17, 2025, at the age of 77. He was born on June 7, 1948, in Menomonie, Wisconsin, and throughout his life, he exemplified kindness and warmth, touching the hearts of everyone who had the privilege to know him.

Dale served in the Navy during the Vietnam era on the USS Lexington and USS Roosevelt. Dale was very devoted to the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). He had 10 years of services to the VFW Post 1820 in Temple, Texas before he moved to Marshall, Texas.

Dale is survived by his devoted wife of 38 years, Nanette Edmonds. Together, they cultivated a nurturing and loving home that became a sanctuary for their family. His legacy continues through their three children: Kevin (Tammy) Edmonds, Stephanie (Michael) Edmonds, and Adam Edmonds. Dale was also known as the world's best Papa, a title he wore with pride as he cherished each moment spent with his grandchildren: Bethanie (John) deFoore, Megan (CJ) Anderson, Nathan (Jazmyn) Edmonds, Evelyn Edmonds, Amice Edmonds, Ellie, and Broxon; one brother Roger (Tina) Edmonds; one sister, Gloria Dutcher.

Dale was preceded in death by his parents, George Dunlop Edmonds and Alice Marie (Francis) Edmonds, and by his siblings, including four brothers, Bob Edmonds, James Edmonds, Wayne Edmonds, and Les Edmonds, as well as two sisters, the baby Edmonds and Ruth Kettner. Their memories and legacies live on in the stories and values that Dale instilled in his own family.

A Celebration of Life to honor Dale Charles was held on January 10, 2026, at

Young's Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center in Temple, Texas. The service began at 1:00 PM and concluded at 2:00 PM.

As we remember Dale, let us hold onto the love, laughter, and memories he shared so generously with us all. He went to be with the Lord and Savior, leaving behind a legacy of love and devotion that will forever be cherished.

Martin Jr

Cecil Martin Jr.
 December 27, 1973 — January 2, 2026

Cecil Martin Jr., affectionately known as "CJ," passed away unexpectedly in his home on Friday, January 2, 2026, at the age of 52. Born on December 27, 1973, in Corsicana, Texas, to Cecil Martin Sr. and Mary (Fimbres) Martin. CJ grew up with a passion for creativity and connection.

CJ was dedicated to his career, starting with Spec's in Corpus Christi before transferring to Temple, where he thrived as a Manager for nearly 15 years. His leadership and commitment endeared him to his colleagues and customers alike.

A talented artist, CJ expressed his creativity through various mediums. His personal clothing and shoes showcased his artistic flair, and his skills extended to paintings and drawings. He was noted for his significant mural displayed on a large building in Corpus Christi, a testament to his dedication to his craft. Beyond his artistic endeavors, CJ had a genuine love for his son, Cecil Rodriguez. Their bond was enriched by their shared enthusiasm for collecting Star Wars memorabilia, a passion that fueled many joyful moments together.

CJ was a vibrant personality, known for his infectious laughter and warm, welcoming hugs. He had an innate ability to engage with everyone around him, always ready to lift spirits with humor. His friendly demeanor made it easy for him to connect with people from all walks of life, embodying the belief that if someone wasn't busy, he would find them a task.

An alumnus of Temple High School, CJ enjoyed playing soccer and was recognized for his artistic talent even during his school years. His love for collecting extended beyond art; he was an avid fan of Pokémon games, baseball cards, and comic books. Additionally,

CJ cherished time spent fishing with his father, creating lasting memories on those adventures.

CJ leaves behind his loving parents, Cecil Martin Sr. and Maria "Mary" (Fimbres) Martin; his son, Cecil Rodriguez; his brother, Anthony Wayne Martin; and two grandchildren, Caden Leo Rodriguez and Emerson James Frost. He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Joe Angel Fimbres, Maria Plendo, Arthur Martin, and Mary Dorsett, as well as his son, Hayden Lee Martin.

CJ will be remembered for his creativity, humor, and the loving relationships he nurtured throughout his life. He will be dearly missed by all who knew him.

Visitation was held on Monday, January 12, 2026, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Young's Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center in Temple, Texas, followed by a Rosary from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM. The Funeral Service took place on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, at 10:00 AM, with burial at Hillcrest Cemetery at 11:30 PM.

Arrangements are under the direction of Sabrina Young at Young's Daughters Funeral Home and Bereavement Center in Temple, Texas.

Mathews

John Everett Mathews
 July 4, 1930 - January 1, 2026

John Everett Mathews, born on July 4, 1930, in Cuba, New York, passed away peacefully on Thursday, January 1, 2026, at Baylor Scott and White Hospital in Temple, Texas. He was 95 years old at the time of his passing. John led a life characterized by dedication, love, and a spirit of service that resonated deeply with all who knew him.

John's early years were spent working diligently on his family's farm near Mayville, New York, where he developed a strong work ethic that carried him throughout his life. Following his time on the farm, he worked in various roles at

his father's bakery and at local furniture companies before being inducted into the military. In addition to his role as a pilot, he served in additional military leadership roles as he and his family were stationed in many different places, beginning in San Antonio, Texas. The family lived in Louisiana, Japan, Georgia, Indiana, Panama, Virginia and finally, Central Texas.

During his second career, after retirement from the military, his professionalism and skills were notably recognized during a 20-year tenure with the Sears Service Center in Austin, where he attained a supervisory role to the repairmen and became director of the Parts Department for a number of years. He developed friendships with many of those working for him in the Parts Department and those repairmen in the field.

Getting an education was important to John, and he graduated from Mayville Central High School, where he fostered many friendships that would follow him throughout his life. He attended college briefly but took the path to the military to continue his education and become a pilot.

John was known for his engaging nature; he made

friends easily and was often characterized by his light-hearted teasing and outgoing personality. Those who had the pleasure of knowing him will remember him fondly for his ability to fix almost anything that needed repair and for his sense of humor and his relationship with his grandchildren. He enjoyed "stealing" his grandchildren's noses with his fingers. He loved spending special time entertaining his grandkids on the Sears tractor he had for tending the garden and beautiful yard at their home south of Austin.

John cherished his family above all, having met the love of his life, Agatha Marie (Fulmer) Mathews, at the Coburn Corners Church of Christ in St. Joe, Indiana. Their 70 years of marriage were a partnership built on love and mutual support, particularly during John's military career. Together, they constructed a nurturing family environment where their three children, Mark and his wife Floann Chapman, Deb Mathews-Budet and her husband Eduardo Budet, and Pam Mathews and her husband Randall Moore, thrived.

He was immensely proud of his grandchildren: Wesley Mathews, Madison

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A4
Thursday,
January 15, 2026

LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

The Cottage Vintage and Artisanal Shoppe opens downtown

By Michelle Rodriguez
The Belton Journal

The Cottage Vintage and Artisanal Shoppe opened in downtown Belton this past weekend with a soft opening on Friday from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. and grand opening on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The cottage is owned by Ashley Harvey and is located at 106 N. East St. next to East Street Barbershop.

"It's my passion. I love it. I believe in the rehoming of vintage goods. Our landfills are full. There's no reason to buy new items when we have stores of better quality, pricing, and a better life," said Harvey.

Her family just moved to Texas from North Carolina. Her husband is in the military and is from Texas originally.

"My love of thrift came from the shop that I opened straight out of high school. I had it for four years. I closed it because we moved to Georgia. That's where I really found my love for vintage. I was there for two years. I did booths in Georgia and Alabama," Harvey said. "I found my curated taste and when you walk in, I want it to feel like grandma's house. I love my grandmas. I'm close to both of them."

The Cottage aims to transport customers to a world where vintage charm meets artisanal craftsmanship. They offer a selection of curated vintage finds like clothes for women and men, crystals, pillows, purses, picture frames, and handmade goods like soaps and pastries. They have a DIY charm bracelet station and candle making station.

"I met my husband in North Carolina when I had my thrift store, and he's been a big part of it ever since. He's become an avid thrifter too and got his best friend into thrifting. Everyone around us has just embraced the art of secondhand love," said Harvey.

Harvey and her husband have a son named Jackson that is one-and-a-half years old.

"Ninety-nine percent of our son's clothes are also thrifted and secondhand. We are so glad to be in Texas close to family and with a great support system. We just love Belton and the people welcoming us with open arms," Harvey said.

The Cottage is open Wednesday thru Saturday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and closed Monday and Tuesday. Their ribbon cutting is coming soon



Courtesy Photo/Christopher Winston

Ashley Harvey, owner of The Cottage Vintage and Artisanal Shoppe is now open in downtown Belton. She had a soft opening and a grand opening this past weekend.

Stoney Brook team members recognized with Values in Action Award

Special to the Journal

Stoney Brook of Belton Assisted Living and Memory Care Community is proud to recognize team members Freddie Brown and Deanna Ledbetter as recipients of the 2025 Values in Action award.

This annual award, given by The Long Hill Company, which manages the community, honors the commitment of outstanding team members who put the company's mission and

values into action in exemplary ways. The award was presented at a recent community event with residents and staff.

"Our Stoney Brook community is truly blessed to have team members like Freddie and Deanna, who

genuinely care about creating a welcoming home for our residents and their guests," shared Executive Director Heather Zammat. "They treat everyone with respect and dignity, taking time to listen to our residents' stories, understand their needs and preferences, and communicate well with families. It's our pleasure to honor them with this Values in Action award."

Freddie Brown has been a member of the concierge team at Stoney Brook since March 2025, working at the community's front desk. Brown is



Courtesy Photo

Stoney Brook team members, Deanna Ledbetter and Freddie Brown, are honored with the 2025 Values in Action Award.

well known for creating a warm and friendly atmosphere for everyone who walks in the door. He takes great pride in ensuring the community looks its best and feels inviting and welcoming. His colleagues value his kind and helpful demeanor, noting that he is always willing to go out of his way to assist anyone and does so with a smile and a positive attitude each day.

"Freddie is such an important part of every prospective resident's journey," a coworker shared. "He understands the power of first impressions and greets everyone like family; everyone feels better after spending time with Freddie. He is a wonderful asset to Stoney Brook."

Deanna Ledbetter is a medical technician at Stoney Brook and has been a member of the team since January 2025. She is well respected by her colleagues for her depend-

able, kind, and patient nature. Often praised for her willingness to go the extra mile whenever needed, Deanna consistently follows through on requests, ensuring compliance, working late nights and early mornings, and doing whatever is asked of her. Her colleagues see her as a true example of a wonderful employee and resident advocate.

Stoney Brook family member, Cassandra Matos, expressed her appreciation for Ledbetter and her relationship-centered approach.

"Deanna consistently goes above and beyond her job responsibilities, not only supporting residents, but also extending compassion and understanding to their families and caregivers," said Matos. "She takes the time to connect with residents on a per-

See AWARD,
Page A7

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Local Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Activities

January

01/15: Nonfiction Book Club, Meet & Greet	01/23: Trailblazers Walking Group
01/17: Exploring Wines	01/24: Jimmy's Egg
01/19: Snack Time Mah Jongg	01/26: Well Read Women, Monday Canasta
01/20: Bunco	01/27: Singing Bluebonnets
01/22: Mexican Train Dominoes	01/28: Fun Lunch

"To join or for more information, please call: Mary Pringle (760)265-5035 or email at: pringlem@msn.com. Visit the website: www.bellcountynewcomers.com."

Bell County Master Gardeners - Jan 15

Love roses? Join us for an informative and fun evening geared towards learning about rose care. Bell County Master Gardeners and Master Gardener Carol Morisset will teach you all about selecting, growing and caring for roses right here in Bell County. Whether you're planting your first rose or refining your rose care routine, this program will give you practical, local guidance you can use right away! Thursday, Jan 15, 6:00 p.m. at Bell County Extension Office- Learning Center 1605 N. Main Street, Belton. Please register at BCMGA1998@gmail.com.

Historic Escape Games - Jan 15

There has been a crime at the museum and it is up to you to find the culprit! You have 60 minutes to work together, solve the crime, and escape! There are 2 game times for the Murder Mystery game: 6:00pm and 7:15p.m. Tickets are \$12/person. Pre-registration is required. Games are private and limited to 8 guests (ages 13 years and older) of the same group per game time. Players under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult player. Registration is available on the museum website here: <https://www.bellcountymuseum.org/.../historic-escapes22222>

Baugh Center for the Visual Arts - Jan 12 - Feb 12

This collection of works highlights a year of dedicated portraiture resulting in a diverse selection of drawings and paintings. It includes energetic life drawings, often executed during collaborative sessions with students, which emphasize spontaneity and capturing immediate impressions. Complementing these are more intensive long form painted portraits, developed over multiple sittings in the studio. These focus on the subtle, untold narratives that emerge between artist and sitter, capturing not just a likeness, but the unique spirit and story of each individual. This exhibit will be on display January 12-February 12, 2026. Exhibitions are free and open to the public. Gallery Hours are Monday-Friday, 9AM-4PM. at 812 Shine St, Belton.

Bell County Master Gardeners - Jan 21

Join us for our next Herb Roundtable as we explore turmeric, its history, uses, growing considerations, and more. These roundtables are interactive, discussion-based sessions where everyone is encouraged to share and learn together. Bell County Extension Office- Learning Center, 1605 N. Main Street, Belton. No registration needed.

MPR Explorers @ The Point- Jan 29

The MPR Explorers (sponsored by the Mary Ruth Briggs Library) is holding their monthly "Conversation over Coffee" with entertainment by the Lake Belton High School Choir Show Ensemble. Join us for a discussion with the Friends of the Mary Ruth Briggs Library (non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization) and learn how you can help bring a stronger, more accessible library to life in Morgan's Point Resort, Garrett & Mic Hill Event Center 60 Morgan's Point Blvd., Morgan's Point Resort on Jan 29, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet both on TUESDAY, Jan. 13th and Jan. 27th at 6:30pm at the Temple VA Hospital. Use the entrance on the Valet parking side of the hospital and take the elevator to the 5th floor -Conference Room 5G31. Both care-givers, supporters and those suffering from mental illness are welcome to join us for mutual support and sharing of information. For more information, call 254-771-3638.

Bell Area Parkinson's Support group (BAPS-North) meets at CTCOG, 2180 N. Main St, Belton on the 2nd and 4th Fridays from 2:30-4:00 PM every month. All are welcome, and there is no membership cost. The Bell Area Parkinson's Support group (BAPS-West) meets at St. Andrews United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall, 206 W Fowler Ave, Killeen on the 1st and 3rd Fridays from 2:30-4:00 PM every month. For more information contact Gayle Shull at GayleInBelton@gmail.com or (254) 718-4197.

Marine Corp League will meet the third Tuesday of each month at VFW 3859. Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. and meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. 201 VFW Dr, Harker heights, Tx 76548. Email commandant@mcl1249tx.com for more information.

Aspen Hospice and Palliative Care Volunteers Needed Listed here are many ways you can help make a difference for our hospice patients. You can provide companionship, listen to music, read, reminisce, play games, cards, checkers, paint nails, apply makeup, curl hair or take them on walks. Please visit aspenhealthcare.net or call 512-856-5668 for more information.

Young's Daughters Funeral Home Dementia/Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group occurs weekly on Fridays from 6-7 p.m. This group allows your loved ones to join. Loved ones will be doing activities while the group of caregivers are joining together to better understand and learn tips and tricks for daily life. Young's Daughters Funeral and Bereavement Center is located at 4235 East Hwy 190 in Temple.

Bell County Historical Commission holds their meetings on the fourth Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the historical Bell County Court House, 101 E. Central Ave in Belton. Join us in our vision of preserving and promoting Bell County's rich historical heritage for current and future generations. We are dedicated to initiating and conducting programs that preserve and celebrate the county's historic cultural resources in alignment with state laws governing historical preservation in Texas. Our community resources consist of a research room, book repository, cemetery information, historical markers and monument records. Our services include information on historic preservation, educational programming, history community outreach and partnerships. We welcome you to join other history minded folks and get involved by serving on one of our committees that consist of preservation, cemetery, markers and education. To volunteer or for more information please visit historicalcommission@bellcounty.texas.gov, call 254-933-5917 or visit the office located in the

historic Bell County Courthouse, 101 E. Central Ave., RM 117.

Pistons on the Creek will meet every third Friday from 5:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. Come down to Nolan Creek and show off your rides. From classic to modern, muscle, rat rod, exotic, all automotive enthusiasts are welcome. Support our awesome downtown businesses and restaurants surrounded by live music, food, drinks and a great atmosphere.

Bell Fine Arts Visitors welcome Wednesday's from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 306 E 5th Ave in Belton. Majong games are available every Monday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Come join the fun and meet new folks. For more information text Jeanne at 409-313-0611.

Local chapter of the Crochet Guild of America meets from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Wednesdays at the Lena Armstrong Public Library, 301 E. First St., in Belton. The group is open to anyone interested in crochet. All skill levels are welcome. For information email Betty Reichert at bettyreichert@yahoo.com or Kathy Bement at katshookandneedle@gmail.com. Anyone interested in joining the local chapter of the Crochet Guild of America will also need to join the National Crochet Guild of America. Visit www.crochet.org for details.

Community Information

TAKE ME HOME PROGRAM The Belton Police Department is adopting the Take Me Home Program, aimed at helping individuals who need special assistance to return safely home after getting lost. The program is a database with photos and personal information to help police officers find someone who is lost or wandered away from home. Take Me Home is designed for individuals who may need additional aid including those with Dementia, Autism or specific mental health needs. It's free to register someone and the data is kept confidential to first responders. You can sign up a loved one here: www.beltontexas.gov/takemehome. Read more about the program here: https://www.beltontexas.gov/news_detail_T11_R1166.php.

Dial 988 for Mental Health Emergencies To help those contemplating suicide, press option 1 for assistance with military/veteran population.

Text-to-911 for speech/ hearing impaired, those unable to call or speak due to home invasion, abduction or domestic violence or physically incapable. Providing location, city name and nature of the emergency in the first message is imperative. For further education on this service, don't hesitate to call 254-933-5500.

Citizens Helping in Police Service (CHIPS)

are extra eyes and ears while in areas where large groups may gather. Contact the Belton Police Dept. to join.

Belton Citizens Police Academy meets Thursday nights to enhance police and community partnerships. Apply online to be a part of this exciting program.

Slam the Scam Throughout the year, we give you the tools to recognize scams and stop scammers from stealing your money and personal information. Share the information with your loved ones & Slam the Scam! Visit ssa.gov/scam for tips.

Dementia/Alzheimers Support Group- Young's Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center, 4235 E. US HWY 190 in Temple. Fridays from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., Join us for activities while caregivers discuss and help each other during this difficult time. Call Sabrina at 254-401-1302



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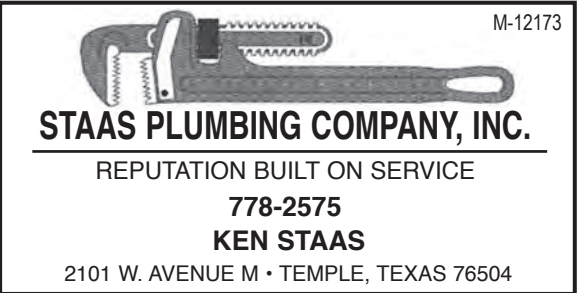
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- Belton Church of Christ**
3003 N. Main ~ 254.939.1816
- Belton Church of God in Christ**
1122 W. 2nd Ave. ~ 254.939.1697
- Belton First Assembly of God**
500 S. IH-35 ~ 254.933.2803
- Belton Lighthouse**
1001 NE Loop 121 ~ 254.654.7278
- Belton Nazarene Church**
1701 Sparta Rd ~ 254.939.3404
- Bethel A.M.E. Church**
401 S. Davis St. ~ 254.939.6090
- Central Texas Cathedral Worship Center**
700 S. Main Street ~ 254.831.3064
- Christ Bible Baptist Church**
1590 Jack Rabbit Rd ~ 254.939.9247
- Christ the King Catholic Church**
310 E. 24th Ave. ~ 254.939.0806
- Christian Tabernacle Church Apostolic UPC**
1010 S. Wall St. ~ 254.939.3464
- Cornerstone Community Church**
5081 Dog Ridge Rd ~ 254.721.8250
- Crossroads Church**
500 South I-35 ~ 254.939.2122
- Dominion Life Chapel**
105 Green Briar St. ~ 254.563.0472
- Elm Grove Baptist Church**
6388 Elm Grove Rd. ~ 254.933.8127

- Family Gospel Church**
2210 Holland Rd. ~ 254.721.0707
- Fellowship Baptist Church**
2025 Morgan's Point Rd ~ 254.780.2388
- First Baptist Church Belton**
506 N. Main St. ~ 254.933.3391
- First Mexican Baptist Church**
703 S. Wall St. ~ 254.939.6900
- First Presbyterian Church of Belton**
2500 Church Street ~ 254.939.2115
- First United Methodist Church**
205 E. 3rd Ave. ~ 254.939.5703
- Free Pentecostal Church of Jesus**
1111 Cacti Lane ~ 254.933.8201
- Freedom Bible Fellowship**
3087 W. Ave. D ~ 254.933-3310
- Holy Temple of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith**
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- Hope Community Church**
507 Mitchell St. ~ 254.933.8222
- Hope Tabernacle**
202 E. 1st Ave. ~ 254.933.8222
- Iglesia de Cristo**
3303 N. Main ~ 254.939.6910
- Keys Valley Baptist Church**
4393 W. US Hwy. 190 ~ 254.939.1650
- Lakeview Baptist Church**
7717 N Hwy. 317 ~ 254.780.1884
- Liberty Church**
302 E. Central Ave. ~ 254.933.7107
- Liberty in Christ Church**
2520 N. Main ~ 254.939.3337
- Miller Heights Baptist Church**
1400 S. Wall St. ~ 254.939.1835
- Ministerios Vida**
2020 S. IH-35 ~ 254.624.8015
- Mt. Zion United Methodist Church**
218 Alexander St. ~ 254.939.5621

- New Life Fellowship**
706 E. 4th. ~ 254.939.8011
- Nolan Valley Baptist Church**
13206 W. FM 93 ~ 254.721.5998
- Pentecostal Church of Jesus Christ**
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- Redeemer Reformed Baptist Church**
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- Tapestry Community Church of Belton**
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- Temple Vision de lo Alto**
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- Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bell County**
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- Christ Episcopal Church and School**
300 N. Main St. ~ 254.773.1657
- Christian Life Church**
4343 West FM 93 ~ 254.939.2626
- Covenant Lutheran Church**
4202 Hickory Rd. ~ 254.733.7718
- Eighth Street Baptist Church**
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. ~ 254.773.2598
- First Baptist Church Temple**
8015 West Adams Ave. ~ 254.773.6866
- First Methodist Church Temple, GMC**
102 N. 2nd Temple. TX ~ 254.773.7992
- First Presbyterian Church Temple**
12 West French ~ 254.773.3407
- Foundation Church**
10751 W. Adams ~ 254.780.9673

- Grace Baptist Church**
740 Jayline Drive ~ 254.773.1401
- Grace Comm. Primitive Baptist Church**
3111 N. 3rd St ~ 254.774.8192
- Grace Presbyterian Church**
2401 S 57th ~ 254.773.2134
- Harvest Church**
2501 General Bruce Dr. ~ 254.780.3566
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- Leon Valley Church of Christ**
4404 Twin City Blvd. ~ 254.939.0682
- New Hope Church of God**
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- Oak Park United Methodist Church**
5505 South 31st St. ~ 254.773.3021
- St. Francis Episcopal Church & School**
5001 Hickory ~ 254.733.4255
- St. Luke's Catholic Church**
2807 Oakdale Dr. ~ 254.773.1561
- St. Mary's Catholic Church**
1018 S 7th St. ~ 254.773.4541
- Taylor's Valley Baptist Church**
2497 W. FM 93 ~ 254.939.0503
- Temple Bible Church**
3205 Oakview Drive ~ 254.778.3233
- Temple First Church of the Nazarene**
5000 S. 31st ~ 254.773.3744
- Unity Church of Temple**
318 N. 2nd ~ 254.770.0070
- Vineyard Christian Fellowship**
7425 W Adams Ave. ~ 254.778.2802
- Vista Community Church**
7051 Stonehollow Dr. ~ 254.774.7992
- Wildwood Baptist Church**
5195 Cedar Creek Rd. ~ 254.773.3177

Where Stones Speak and Saints Walked



John C. Perry

If you're dreaming of an overseas adventure this year or next, allow me to suggest a location, Rome. My wife and I first visited Italy in the fall of 2023, exploring the treasures of Rome, Florence, and Venice. Each city had its own magic, but Rome, awe, "Roma," it captured my heart in a way that no other place has. We loved it so much, we returned the following summer.

Now, I'll admit it, I'm a history junkie, and Rome is a feast for anyone who finds joy in the echoes of the past. To walk among ruins that are over 2,000 years old, structures that once hosted emperors, apostles, and gladiators, is nothing short of mind-blowing. In Texas, we marvel at buildings that are 200 years old. In Rome, that's considered modern.

I wanted to return in 2025, but that year marked the Jubilee, a sacred celebration held every 25 years. While spiritually significant, it also means many more tourists and much higher hotel prices. Now that it's over 2026 should be a good year to visit.

Rome is overflowing with sites that stir the soul and ignite the imagination. I couldn't possibly list them all here but let me highlight a few must-sees for my fellow history buffs.

The Roman Forum was once the beating heart of the Roman Empire. The Forum was a place of politics, commerce, and ceremony. Though much of it lies in ruin, its grandeur whispers through the stones. Over centuries, Romans repurposed its marble and columns to build churches and palaces. Many Catholic churches in Rome today are adorned with marble that once graced pagan temples.

As a Christian, I was deeply moved to stand where the Apostles Paul and Peter were imprisoned, Tullianum Prison, at the end of the Forum. Paul was likely executed there, and his tomb now rests nearby at the Basilica of St. Paul's Outside-the-Walls. Peter's tomb lies beneath the majestic St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City. These are sacred places that

connect faith and history in profound ways.

The Colosseum, though partially in ruins, still commands awe. This ancient arena once held over 50,000 spectators who came to witness gladiator battles, wild beast fights, and, tragically, public executions, including Christians who died for their faith. It's a sobering and powerful place.

Circus Maximus, just imagine standing in a colossal stadium which could seat a staggering 250,000 spectators, more than any modern stadium. In ancient Rome, this was the epicenter of excitement, where chariot races captivated crowds far more than gladiator battles ever did. Today, the ruins have transformed into a tranquil park and a concert venue.

The Pantheon was finished around 126 AD, this architectural

marvel was originally a temple to all Roman gods. It was later consecrated as a Christian church, which spared it from destruction. Its massive dome, still the largest unreinforced concrete dome in the world, leaves visitors speechless.

Rome is more than a city. It's a living museum, a spiritual crossroads, and a place where the past walks beside you. It's rightly called The Eternal City, and for good reason. If you go, prepare to be humbled, inspired, and forever changed.

John C. Perry is the Lay Leader with New Life Methodist Church. They meet every Sunday at 9 a.m. (Bible Study) and 10 a.m. (Worship Service) in the Salado Middle School at 1169 Williams Rd.



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Council - From Page A1

an occupancy rate of 91.7 percent and a per-person household size of 2.66 as of Jan. 1 of this year.

In other action, Council reappointed Marvin Bell to the Central Texas Housing Consortium board of directors. His current term expires Jan. 24 and he had expressed a desire to continue serving, according to City Clerk Amy Casey.

The reappointment was for another two-year term.

Council also acknowledged the conveyance of Bell County Justice Center Lot 2, Block A from the county for a future Belton fire station.

According to City Manager Sam Listi, the Bell County Commissioners Court has agreed to convey 1.725 acres of land to Belton for a future fire station site. The property is located on the east side of Loop 121, north of an extension of Auction Barn Road, at the entrance to the Bell County

Justice Center complex. T

The city prepared a one lot subdivision plat for the property, which has been signed by Judge Blackburn and recorded, along with a private access easement granted by Bell County to use its private drive, since the site will have no direct access to Loop 121.

“While there are no immediate plans for fire station construction, securing the site ensures Belton’s future fire station needs will be addressed,” Listi said. “Bell County has agreed to convey the site to the city without cost, recognizing a future fire station site here will provide mutual public safety and emergency service benefits to the County at the Justice Center Complex.”

Bell County commissioners voted unanimously to convey the property to Belton at a Dec. 15 meeting.

SPJST - From Page A1

Beckendorf hopes to positively impact at least one food pantry in each SPJST district.

“It may not be a lot, but it was more than before,” Beckendorf said. “It’s always the little things that count because they add up. One act of kindness inspires another.”

SPJST Director of Membership Engagement Frank Horak praised her leadership.

“We see a bright future for Paetyn,” Horak said. “She came with a plan before she ever walked on the stage as a candidate competing for the Miss SPJST Royalty Title. When Paetyn puts her mind to something you better move out of the way or join her because that’s a young lady who gets things done.”

Beckendorf earned the Miss SPJST title at the SPJST State Youth Showcase competition in Temple. Showcase fea-

tures youth contestants in arts, leadership and public speaking.

Only crowned royalty are eligible for the SPJST Royalty Scholarship. Students with the title complete a year-long service project before scholarship review.

If approved by SPJST leadership, Beckendorf will earn \$2,000 for college or vocational school. She hopes to study psychology or biblical counseling at Texas A&M or UMHB.

SPJST is a Texas-based fraternal benefit society founded in 1897. The organization provides life insurance, scholarships and community programs across the state.

Beckendorf hopes her campaign inspires Texans to take action.

“Hunger doesn’t take a holiday,” Beckendorf said. “We can always help someone.”

Award - From Page A4

sonal level, often sitting and conversing with them, ensuring they feel seen and valued as individuals.”

David Lawlor, President of The Long Hill Company, praised the recipients for their compassion and dedication to providing exceptional relationship-centered customer service.

“Caring for people is

more than just a job or a lesson to be taught. Every Values in Action recipient brings something special to the table each day—kindness, empathy, and a commitment to nurturing relationships. They help us create a welcoming home and community for those we serve, and we are so grateful for the gifts they share.”

To learn more about career opportunities at Stoney Brook or the community’s relationship-centered assisted living and memory care options, please contact Samantha O’Neil, Stoney Brook Director of Sales and Marketing, at 254-933-3800 or sonel@stoneybrookseniorliving.org.

Stoney Brook of Bel-

ton is an assisted living and memory care community offering a full range of lifestyle options for older adults, enabling them to live life to the fullest. The community is located at 500 River Fair Blvd.

To learn more about life at Stoney Brook, visit www.stoneybrookseniorliving.org or contact Samantha O’Neil at 254-

933-3800. Stoney Brook Senior Living is locally owned and is managed by the Long Hill company, a

subsidiary of Masonicare, a leading not-for-profit provider of senior living and healthcare services.

Obits - From Page A3

Mathews, Sumner Dreher, Audrey Moore, Nathan Moore, and Regina Budet-Cerda. John enjoyed sharing his passions with them, whether it was playing his baritone or cornet, working on his computer, or relishing ice cream stops on a pick-up at school. He was an avid reader of history throughout his adult life, especially American military history. Over his many years of travel abroad, he would return with currency from around the globe that his son kept together in an ongoing collection. Because his experience as a pilot was primarily in flying two types of aircraft, he collected models of each, displayed prominently in his home, along with a modest framed presentation of his military medals and rank.

John faced health difficulties due to exposure to Agent Orange during his military service in Vietnam, a reality that he approached with dignity and resilience. He was proud of his time in the military and valued the travels that accompanied his service, along with the

unwavering support of his beloved wife, Marie.

During his time in the U.S. Air Force, he received many military honors; the Distinguished Flying Cross (recognizing his acts of heroism & extraordinary actions in aerial flight), the USAF Distinguished Service Medal (for distinguished and exceptionally meritorious service to the United States), the USAF Air Medal (for acts of military heroism during aerial flight), the USAF Commendation Medal (for sustained acts of meritorious service), the Combat Readiness Medal, the USAF Good Conduct Medal, the Army Good Conduct Medal, the National Defense Medal, the Korean Service Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Force Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the USAF Reserve Medal, the RVN Gall Cross Medal, the UN Korean Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the ROK War Service Medal, along with a number of other military campaign ribbons and medals. Many of his medals were awarded to him more

than once and acknowledged with oak leaf clusters & star emblems.

He also had his command pilot wings and held the rank of Major.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Everett Stanley Mathews and Florence Mathews; his brother, James Mathews; and his sister, Jean Potter. John leaves behind a legacy of love, laughter, and treasured memories that will be remembered by all who were fortunate to have known him.

A special thank you to the staff on the 7th floor at the Baylor Scott and White North Tower, and especially Alesa the attendant for her compassionate care.

In addition, the family would like to thank Betsy Hurley, the nurse & caregiver that has provided excellent care and admiration, for both John & Marie, over the last 20+ months. She continues to provide care for Marie in their home in Temple.


A graveside service was on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at Hillcrest Cemetery in Temple at 10:00 AM, with Rev. William Sterling offici-

ating. John Everett Mathews will be dearly missed, but his spirit will certainly live on in the hearts of his family and friends.

In lieu of flowers please consider making a memorial donation to Wounded Warrior Project, the USO, St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital, the ASP-CA, or consider planting a tree in honor of Mr. Mathews.

Arrangements are made under the direction of Sabrina Young at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center.

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WindSync - From Page A1

ing career and also runs a concert series in our artistic hometown of Houston,” she added. “We don’t compose our own music. Instead, we curate and generate our own repertoire, either by arranging pre-existing works or commissioning composers to write for us. The result is a program that covers a lot of artistic ground and explores diverse sounds, but one that tells a unified and compelling story.”

“We keep a year-round schedule,” LaMoure said. “We’re thrilled to see our career grown and we always love introducing new fans to wind chamber music.”

“Chamber music is fun! It’s a conversation in music, there for all to observe. Part of WindSync’s performance style that really highlights this is that we memorize a portion of every concert. Without music stands to play to (or hide behind when convenient!), we share every single gesture with each other and with the audience.”

“For the Belton concert, we will not be playing any instruments besides the ones that we trained for, but newcomers to the wind instruments are often surprised to learn that when each of us studies our instrument, we are actually learning a family of instruments. So our oboist Noah, for instance, will perform part of the concert on the English horn — a deeper and lower sounding member of the oboe family — and our clarinetist Graeme routinely switches between two clarinets, pitched in A and B-flat.”

“Perhaps relatable to a lot of people in Central Texas, we wind musicians are all just overgrown band kids,” LaMoure said with a laugh.

“Two members of WindSync (myself and Graeme) actually went to high school in DFW and remember those formative experiences like marching band and football games fondly,” she said. “I like to think we carry a little bit of the showmanship and creativity of those days with us, while sharing a piece of the transcendent artistry that we love about the chamber music world.”



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Boys basketball enter district play with playoff aspirations

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Following weeks of preparation, everything is now on the line.

For the next month, Belton and Lake Belton will be battling to qualify for the playoffs and every outcome will be critical, including the upcoming league openers.

The Tigers and Broncos each begin navigating their 10-game District 16-5A schedules Friday, when Belton travels to Killeen Chaparral and Lake Belton hosts Waco.

Based on nondistrict competition, the Tigers and Broncos are among the field's favorites with overall records of 20-4 and 19-5, respectively.

Belton brings a three-game winning streak into district thanks in part to key contributors Ty Johnson, a junior forward, junior guards Abram Knight and Luke Munden, senior guard Jay'dn Loggins and senior small forward Noah Childers.

The Tigers are averaging 74.25 points.

Lake Belton also has multiple weapons at its disposal, including junior

guard Michael Lockett and senior guard Dezmin Ravizee, who combined to account for 55 of the Broncos' 76 points in a five-point win at Gatesville on Friday to conclude nondistrict play.

Junior guard Allen Muchunu, senior guard Ameer Williams and junior center Jackson Striegler will also play instrumental roles as Lake Belton attempts to return to the postseason for the first time since 2022.

Belton has not missed the playoffs since 2020.

Although Belton ISD's teams appear poised to contend for the district

championship, a talented crop of opponents will not make it easy.

KILLEEN ELLISON (13-10)

The Eagles have been the area's premier team for more than a decade now, but they have struggled this year following the departure of a dominant class.

Regardless of its record, Ellison knows how to win when it matters, advancing to the state semifinals in each of the last three years with two appear-

See **BOYS**,
Page B2

No. 4 Lake Belton gallops back from nine down, outlasts Belton, 54-50



By Tony Adams
The Belton Journal

The Belton Tigers girls' and Lake Belton Broncos girls' basketball teams renewed the Crosstown Rivalry Friday night at Tiger Gymnasium to start District 16-5A action.

The Tigers gave the Broncos adversity throughout the contest and gave No. 4 Lake Belton their best shot. Down by nine points with just over five minutes to go in the third quarter, the Broncos went on an 17-5 run to close the quarter to set up an exciting fourth quarter on their way to a 54-50 triumph.

"I am very proud of the team," Belton head coach Anne-Marie Stark said. "We executed the game plan and stayed in it. We proved we belonged in the gym, and they believe that now."

Both teams employed suffocating defenses in the first quarter, as Belton mustered early baskets from Emma Harvey and Emma Flory to take a 4-0 lead. Alexa King scored Lake's first basket with 2:48 in the quarter. Laila Koonce-Huston scored the final basket of the quarter for Belton, as the Tigers led at the end of the first period, 6-2.

"We had a gameplan, and they bought in," Stark said. "We had an electric practice and they executed. I was surprised, but I was excited to see the preparation come to life."

"It was not anything we were seeing," Lake Belton head coach Tiffney Barnes

said. "We got the open shots we wanted, they just weren't falling for us and our cleanup crew was not getting the second chance shots."

Aniya Taylor jumpstarted Lake's offense in the second quarter with a jumper 18 seconds in, which triggered a 14-10 period as the Broncos and Tigers were tied at 16-16 at halftime.

"We know our identity and in the first half of the game, we were not displaying our identity," Barnes said. "Our kids will always work hard, I will never take that away from them, we just needed to adjust our mental game." Ke'Ara Shanks hit a field goal and Harvey drilled a free throw to start an 11-2 run over the first 2:52 of the quarter to give Belton a 27-18 lead with 5:08 left in the period.

"I know that the game is a game of runs," Stark said. "We got ours, and we knew that theirs was coming. That's why I called a timeout and I thought they responded very well when it happened."

Lake, unfazed by the deficit, responded with 17-5 run over the final 4:31 of the quarter. Aniya Taylor, Erica Taylor, and Gemma Pierce highlighted the run with three-pointers, and Alexa King drilled a field goal at the buzzer to give the Broncos a 35-32 lead going into the fourth quarter.

"We just needed a reminder of who we are and how hard we work to be where

See **BISD**,
Page B3

Lake Belton successful in tourney play prepare for district portion of schedule

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

The Belton Independent School District boys soccer programs at Lake Belton High School and Belton High School have shown growth early in the season through tournament play. Both programs traveled outside their home fields to test themselves against quality opponents, gaining experience that will shape their performance moving forward.

The Lake Belton Broncos competed in the Central Texas Showcase held in Waco, Texas, where they faced a demanding schedule over several days. The Broncos finished the event with a solid two wins and one loss, a record that reflects their ability to compete at a high level against diverse competition. Lake Belton opened the tournament with an impressive shutout victory over Burleson, controlling the match on both ends of the field and setting a confident tone. The following day presented a tougher challenge, as the Broncos were

edged in a close contest against Taylor, a match that came down to the wire. Despite the setback, Lake Belton responded well in their final match, securing a hard fought win against Polytechnic to close the showcase on a positive note.

One of the most encouraging aspects of Lake Belton's performance was the variety of players contributing offensively. Multiple goal scorers stepped up throughout the tournament, demonstrating that the team does not rely on a single offensive threat. This balance makes the Broncos difficult to defend and speaks to the program's emphasis on teamwork and player development. With momentum from the showcase, Lake Belton now turns its attention to the Mustang Cup in Grapevine, where they will face another slate of strong opponents.

Meanwhile, the Belton High Tigers took part in the Grizzly Classic hosted at Leander Glenn, where they competed in

See **SOCCER**,
Page B2



No. 4 Lake Belton girls' basketball survives scare against Belton, recovers to down Ellison

By Tony Adams
Belton Journal

The Lake Belton Broncos find ways to win.

They recovered from nine points down to upend their BISD rival Belton Tigers 54-50.

It was a tough first eight minutes for the Tigers, as they scored two points in the first quarter.

Sophomores Erica Taylor and Alexa King each had 12 points, Layla King had 11 points, and Gemma Pierce had seven points and seven steals.

"We just needed a reminder of who we are and how hard we work to be where we are," Lake Belton head coach Tiffney Barnes said. "This group play this game for each other. Everyone genuinely love one another and we just needed to be reminded of all of that. It's way more than just basketball"

Going into Tuesday night's game against Ellison, the Broncos needed a solid

effort from team, both offensively and defensively.

They got both, with a solid effort on both ends as the Broncos upended the Eagles, 51-33.

The Broncos got a big offensive jump from Pierce with five first-quarter points, as Lake led at the end of the first quarter, 16-9.

Lake outscored the Eagles in the second period, 12-7, and took a 28-16 advantage into the locker room.

A 14-6 stretch in the third quarter opened a 20-point lead for the Broncos at the end of the period, 42-22.

Lake opened the lead to 25 points with 5:44 left in the game, as Barnes was able to flex her bench to give reserves well-deserved playing time.

Erica Taylor led the Broncos with 14 points. Alexa King added eight points, and Pierce finished with seven.

Lake Belton will have a pair of road games this week, as they travel to Waco High on Friday and Killeen Chaparral on Tuesday.

Belton ISD Girls soccer busy with tournament play

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

The BISD girls soccer programs at Lake Belton High School and Belton High School continue to build momentum as the season progresses. Both teams are embracing opportunities to test themselves against strong opponents,

gain valuable experience, and sharpen their performance ahead of district action.

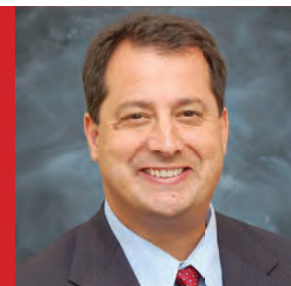
The Lake Belton Lady Broncos competed in the Midway Classic this past weekend, a tournament known for featuring some of the strongest programs in the state. Facing elite competition throughout the


event, the Lady Broncos finished the weekend with two impressive victories while also gaining insight from a challenging loss. The tournament opened with a matchup against a highly ranked Plano West squad. Lake Belton rose to the challenge, delivering

See **DISTRICT**,
Page B3



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Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Lake Belton's wrestling team traveled to Comal Davenport on Saturday to take part in the Alpha Wolf Tournament, where both the Broncos and Lady Broncos delivered top-three finishes.

Tanner Wentz was third in the 126-pound weight class, winning multiple matches by pinball while advancing through the consolation bracket after a loss in the semifinals.

At 144, Austin Carrillo was also third with three

pinfalls.

Carl Huffman (138), Cayden Allison (150) and Cameron Adams (132) were also responsible for collecting points

For the Lady Broncos, Lorelai Scallorn delivered the top showing, placing third at 235. She had two one-sided wins and earned 18 points.

Additionally, Michelle Hoffman (140) was third, matching the outing from teammate Anna Huffman (170), who had three pinfalls.

Alayna Royals and Kameryn Vaden also earned points.

mitted to begin Jan. 24. Games are allowed starting Feb. 9.

The Lady Broncos will host four scrimmages against Georgetown (Jan. 27), Waco Midway (Jan. 30), College Station (Feb. 2) and Salado (Feb. 6).

Then, their season will begin Feb. 19 with a trip to Georgetown.

The Lady Tigers' first game is set for Feb. 10, when they play at Killeen Shoemaker.

District 16-5A play begins March 17, when the Lady Broncos host Waco University and Belton plays at Waco.

Belton Lake: Stillhouse

FAIR. Water stained; 76 degrees; 0.26 feet above pool. White bass fishing is good and getting stronger with each passing cold front as the water cools through the 70s. Fish are gathering in large schools and using bottom features in 32-42 feet of water most of the morning and in the late afternoons after feeding briefly in shallow water right around sunrise. The MAL Lure, original or heavy, and with either a white tail or chartreuse tail is a good lure to have on the rods right now. Once a school of fish is found on sonar use your trolling motor to stay on top of them, then drop the lure to bottom and crank it up fast enough to ensure the blade starts spinning and stays spinning. Observe fish reaction using live imaging sonar or 2D sonar. Once the fish settle down and no longer chase, move on and look for the next school. No bird activity, and very limited topwater activity typically with cloud cover just after sunrise. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Unseasonably warm conditions have bass holding in a summer pattern. The most consistent bite is coming from nomadic schools chasing shad, best located with forward-facing sonar. Weightless soft plastic jerkbaits and mid-strolling presentations are producing steady action. A few scattered fish can still be caught around submerged vegetation and shoreline cover, but those bites have been less consistent.

FAIR. Water stained; 70 degrees; 0.59 feet above pool. We are at peak fall fishing conditions now for white bass and hybrid striped bass. The fishing is excellent and will likely stay this way until the water temperature a below 60 de-grees in a few weeks. The only thing that could make this better is the arrival of our migratory, fish-eating birds like gulls and terns. A few are present, but so far have been unhelpful locating fish. Sonar remains the staple for finding fish in 30-35 feet around sunrise and sunset, then 35-52 feet the rest of the day. The MAL Dense worked vertically by cranking it upward through the lower third of the water column assisted by viewing this on Garmin LiveScope is my go-to tactic. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Fall conditions have bass scattered, making it difficult to find big groups or consistent patterns. Large schools of nomadic bass are roaming the main lake chasing shad. Bass fishing is fair utilizing forward-facing sonar and mid-strolling small minnow-style soft plastics. For bigger bites, fish a football jig along steeper rocky shorelines. Report by Ander Meine, Bassquatch Fishing.



LAKE BELTON GIRLS BASKETBALL

The Lady Broncos will host Court Side Connections — a special skills clinic — on Wednesday from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Lake Belton gymnasium.

The event is intended to help young players grow on the court while also strengthening their bonds with parents.

It is free for all girls in second through sixth grade and one adult.

Led by members of the Lady Broncos' coaching staff, the clinic will focus on simple and effective drills that can be done at home, proving development does not need to be expensive. There is also an emphasis on creativity and accessibility, allowing drills to be created using everyday items from around the house along with a parent.

Spots are limited, so early enrollment is encouraged.

For more information, visit LakeBeltonAthletics.com.

SOFTBALL

Practices for the upcoming season recently began for both Lake Belton and Belton with scrimmages per-

BASEBALL

Practices for the upcoming season begin Friday for both Lake Belton and Belton with scrimmages permitted to begin Jan. 31. Games are allowed starting Feb. 16.

The Broncos will take part in scrimmages against visiting China Spring (Jan. 31), Temple (Jan. 31) and Buda Johnson (Feb. 3) before scrimmaging at Leander Rouse against the host Raiders and Round Rock McNeil on Feb. 7. Lake Belton closes its preseason with scrimmages at Round Rock Cedar Ridge (Feb. 10) and versus Austin Westwood (Feb. 13).

Then, the Broncos' season will begin Feb. 19 with another trip to Cedar Ridge.

The Tigers have an intrasquad scrimmage set for Jan. 24 before scrimmages at Bastrop (Jan. 31), versus Georgetown East View (Feb. 3), Troy and Little River Academy (Feb. 6), Hutto (Feb. 10), at Round Rock Stony Point (Feb. 13) and versus Leander Glenn (Feb. 16).

Belton's first game is set for Feb. 19, when it travels to compete in the three-day Pflugerville ISD tournament.

District 16-5A play begins March 24, when the the Broncos travel to Belton for the first game of the series, which moves to Lake Belton on March 27.

Soccer - From Page B1

three matches that tested the team. The Tigers opened the tournament with a tightly contested draw against Leander. Their second match was a strong bounce back performance, as Belton secured a convincing win over Marshall. In that game, the Tigers displayed efficient attacking play and solid teamwork, with multiple players contributing goals and assists.

The final match of the tournament proved to be a learning opportunity, as Belton fell to Cornerstone despite continued effort. Even in defeat, the Tigers identified posi-

tives to build on, including improved ball movement and chemistry among players. The coaching staff emphasized that the tournament helped reveal both strengths and areas needing improvement, which is a critical step in long-term success.

As both Lake Belton and Belton High move forward, the focus shifts to recovery, preparation, and continued growth. Tournament experiences like these help define team identity and prepare players for the challenges of district play.

Boys - From Page B1

ances in the state title game.

Senior point guard Sean Parks is the Eagles' catalyst on both ends of the floor.

KILLEEN CHAPARRAL (18-6)

No squad enters district competition with more momentum than the Bobcats, who have won seven consecutive games since falling to Class 6A Killeen Harker Heights by a point, 65-64, in overtime on Dec. 19. Prior to the defeat, Chaparral won six of seven contests.

Carlos Robinson, a forward, is one of only two seniors on the roster, but multiple juniors, including guards Curtis Watson-Davis and

Demoni Mayes are factors on the floor.

The Bobcats defeated the Broncos in both encounters last year, but they also lost both games to Belton.

WACO UNIVERSITY (13-6)

Like Ellison, the Trojans, who have spent much of the past two seasons in the state rankings, are contending with the departure of talents responsible for much of their recent success.

Nevertheless, University is finding its stride at the right time.

The Trojans split their first eight games but have gone 9-2 since and have only suffered a single loss since Dec. 19, but their 55.4 points-

per-game average will need to improve in order to contend with the league's other high-scoring squads.

WACO (8-14)

District success has eluded the Lions since 2019, when they last made the playoffs with a fourth-place showing. In the years since, Waco has earned a total of seven league wins.

Last season, the Lions' lone district victory occurred against Lake Belton.

While history is not on Waco's side, the roster possess five seniors who are not going to let their careers end without a fight, so teams cannot afford to let their guard down versus the Lions.

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District - From Page B1

a disciplined defensive performance while capitalizing on counterattacking opportunities to earn a hard fought win that immediately set the tone for the weekend.

The second match brought a different kind of test, as the Lady Broncos faced a Byron Nelson team with exceptional pace and attacking pressure. Although the result did not fall in their favor, the game served as an important measuring stick. Competing against such a fast and precise opponent highlighted the level of intensity required at the highest level of postseason soccer. Rather than letting the setback define the weekend, Lake Belton responded with focus in their final match.

In their closing contest against Shadow Creek, a team known for speed

and physical play, the Lady Broncos controlled the match from the opening minutes. A strong defensive effort paired with efficient finishing resulted in a decisive shutout victory. Throughout the tournament, several players made significant contributions, both offensively and defensively, while the goalkeeping unit played a crucial role in keeping the team competitive against elite attacks.

Meanwhile, the Belton High Lady Tigers are preparing for a busy weekend as they travel to Georgetown to compete in the Governor's Cup. The multi day tournament will test the Tigers' endurance, organization, and adaptability, with games scheduled across Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Traveling and competing on a structured schedule requires discipline, preparation, and strong team chemistry, all of which the Tigers have

been emphasizing in training.

This tournament presents Belton with an opportunity to establish rhythm, evaluate lineups, and gain experience against a variety of opponents. Early season tournaments such as this are essential for identifying strengths while also revealing areas that need refinement. As the Lady Tigers take the field, the focus remains on consistent effort, recovery between matches, and executing team principles under tournament conditions.

Together, the Lake Belton and Belton High girls soccer teams continue to represent Belton ISD. Through challenging tournaments and focused preparation, both programs are laying the foundation for growth and success as the season moves forward.

BISD - From Page B1

we are," Barnes said. "This group plays this game for each other. Everyone genuinely loves one another and we just needed to be reminded of all of that. It's way more than just basketball."

The Broncos continued their momentum into the fourth quarter, as they opened the period on a 12-5 stretch in the opening 5:25, as Lake led 47-37.

"A quarter like that is

what makes the game of women's basketball fun to be a part of," Barnes said. "Lessons being taught and learned. Mental toughness comes to play et cetera."

Isabella Warner scored 12 points down the stretch for the Tigers as they pulled to within three points late but could not find the equalizer late as the Broncos won by four.

"It's very important, to start off strong and con-

tinue to grow stronger," Barnes said. "Every game is important, no one or team should ever be taken for granted."

Harvey played a sensational game in the paint, as she frustrated Broncos' rebounding and distractions in the lane.

"What's really cool is that she doesn't have the 1,000-point goal. In her sights, she has the 500-

bound goal," Stark said. "She knows that the points mark is not part of her role. She is there to serve her team, and it's a role she takes very seriously."

Warner set up her shots on the run, especially during the stretch run in the fourth quarter to try to get the Tigers closer to the Broncos.

"She commanded the game," Stark said. "She was the quarterback of the offense. She handled the pressure of the expectations well. She did not succumb to the pressure and stuck to the game plan. That kid has grown so much, and I cannot wait to see her continue to grow."



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Scot Hrbacek, CFP® Financial Advisor

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Social Security rules are complex, but the decisions you make today can shape decades of retirement. Talk with a financial advisor to make the most of your benefit.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor. Edward Jones, Member SIPC

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BEVERAGE COMMISSION**
for a Wine and Malt Beverage
Retail Dealer's On-Premise Permit
by L & S Gaines Enterprises LLC
Db
Expo Quik Stop to be located at
308 W Loop 121, Belton, Bell Co.,
Texas. Members of said LLC are
Robert Gaines – Member and Shelia
Gaines – Member
01.08,01.15

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Notice is hereby given that origi-
nal Letters Testamentary for the
Estate of LAURA JANETTE
YAMASE Deceased, were issued
on December 22, 2025, in Cause
No. 25CPB00721, pending in the
County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell
County, Texas, to: SHELBY S.
YAMASE.
All persons having claims against
this Estate which is currently being
administered are required to present
them to the undersigned within the
time and in the manner prescribed
by law.
c/o: DANIEL A. CORBIN Attorney
at Law, 603 North 8th
Street, Killeen, TX 76541
DATED the 9th day of Jan., 2026.
CORBIN & CLAPPER, PC, 603
North 8th Street, Killeen, TX 76541,

LEGALS

Tel: (254) 526-4523, Fax: (254)
526-6711
By: ASHLEY CLAPPER, DANIEL
A. CORBIN, State Bar No.
04814300, ASHLEY CLAPPER,
State Bar No. 24076317, Legal@
CorbinLegalTeam.com Attorney for
SHELBY S. YAMASE
01.15

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Notice is hereby given that original
Letters of Administration for the
Estate of ANTHONY ISMAEL
DUPERON LAHOZ, Deceased,
were issued on November 5, 2025,
in Cause No. 25CPB00313, pending
in the County Court at Law No. 1 of
Bell County, Texas, to: ROBERTO
DUPERON.
All persons having claims against
this Estate which is currently being
administered are required to present
them to the undersigned within the
time and in the manner prescribed
by law.
c/o: DANIEL A. CORBIN Attorney
at Law ,603 North 8th
Street, Killeen, TX 76541
DATED the 8th day of
January, 2026.
CORBIN & CLAPPER, PC, 603
North 8th Street, Killeen, TX 76541,
Tel: (254) 526-4523 ,
Fax: (254) 526-6711
By: ASHLEY CLAPPER, DANIEL
A. CORBIN, State Bar No.
04814300, ASHLEY CLAPPER,
State Bar No. 24076317, Legal@
CorbinLegalTeam.com, Attorney for
ROBERTO DUPERON 01.15

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
Notice is hereby given that origi-
nal Letters Testamentary for the
Estate of EDITH LORRAINE
HOLMAN, Deceased, were issued

LEGALS

on November 21, 2025, in Cause
No. 25CPB00665, pending in the
County Court at Law No. 1 of
Bell County, Texas, to: ROBERT
HOLMAN.
All persons having claims against
this Estate which is currently being
administered are required to present
them to the undersigned within the
time and in the manner prescribed
by law. c/o: ESTATE OF EDITH
LORRAINE HOLMAN, ROBERT
HOLMAN, 3077 Camelot Lane,
Belton, Texas 76513
DATED the 7th day of January,
2026
KAREN M. VILLANUEVA, State
Bar No.: 24102608, Telephone:
(254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254)
771-2082, E-mail: karen@templela-
woffice.com
01.15

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION –
CIVIL
CAUSE NO. 25DCV353583**
To: SHONDRAEUS KNIGHT
AND NATASHA KNIGHT
Greetings:
You are hereby commanded to
appear by filing a written answer
to the PLAINTIFF'S ORIGINAL
PETITION at or before 10 o'clock
AM of the first Monday after the
expiration of 42 days from the date
of issuance of this Citation, the
same being Monday, at or before 10
o'clock AM, before the Honorable
146th Judicial District Court, Bell
County, Texas to be held at the Bell
County District Courts Building in
Belton, Texas. Said PLAINTIFF'S
ORIGINAL PETITION was filed in
said court on May 01, 2025.
The file number of said suit being
No. 25DCV353583. The names of
the parties in said suit are:

LEGALS

M&T BANK VS. SHONDRAEUS
KNIGHT,NATASHA
KNIGHT,MIDLAND FUNDING
LLC,DOES 1 THROUGH 10 AND
ROES BUSINESS ENTITIES 1
THROUGH 10, INCLUSIVE
The nature of said suit being sub-
stantially as follows, to wit:
Service of the Plaintiff's
Original Petition upon defen-
dants SHONDRAEUS KNIGHT,
NATASHA KNIGHT and
DOES 1 THROUGH 10 AND
ROES BUSINESS ENTITIES 1
THROUGH 10, INCLUSIVE as a
potential party in interest.
This was issued at the request
of attorney: WILLIAM G
MALCOLM, 2112 BUSINESS
CENTER DRIVE SECOND
FLOOR, IRVINE CA 92612.
NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: You
have been sued. You may employ
an attorney. If you or your attorney
do not file a written answer with
the clerk who issued this citation by
10:00 AM on Monday next follow-
ing the expiration of forty two days
after you were served this citation
and petition, a default judgment may
be taken against you. In addition
to filing a written answer with the
clerk, you may be required to make
initial disclosures to the other parties
of this suit. These disclosures gen-
erally must be made no later than
30 days after you file your answer
with the clerk. Find out more at
TexasLawHelp.org.
Issued and given under my hand
and seal of said Court at office in
Belton, Texas, on January 13, 2026.
Joanna Staton District Clerk Bell
County, Texas, 1201 Huey
Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, Texas
76513
By: Misti Cortez Deputy Clerk
01.15,22,29,02.05

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Pursuant to Texas Health & Safety Code 775.015, the County Clerk of Bell
County, Texas hereby provides notice of a public hearing to be held on the
creation of the proposed Bell County Emergency Services District No. 3.
**This public hearing will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 20,
2026, at the Bell County Historic Courthouse, 2nd Floor Courtroom, at
101 E. Central Avenue in Belton, Texas.** Each person who has an interest
in the creation of the district may attend the hearing and present grounds
for or against the creation of the district.

A petition for the creation of an emergency services district has been filed
with the County Clerk of Bell County, Texas and the creation of an emer-
gency service district is proposed.

The district is to be created and is to operate under Article III, Section 48-
of the Texas Constitution, as proposed by S.J.R. No. 27, Acts of the 70th
Legislature, Regular Session, 1987, and adopted by the voters at an elec-
tion held November 3, 1987.

The name of the proposed district is **Bell County Emergency Services
District No. 3.** It is to be created and is to operate under Article III, Sec-
tion 48-e, Texas Constitution, and Chapter 775, Texas Health and Safety
Code, for the provision of fire suppression and medical response in re-
sponse to an emergency situation in accordance with the authority granted
to emergency service districts under Chapter 775 of the Texas Health and
Safety Code.

The district's boundary map is attached hereto, and incorporated herein for
all purposes as Exhibit A. Upon request, the metes and bounds are avail-
able for public viewing in the County County Clerk's office during regular
business hours and on the public notices page of our website at [https://
www.bellcountytexas.com/publicnotice_list.php](https://www.bellcountytexas.com/publicnotice_list.php).



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Communities In Schools celebrates record-breaking school supply campaign with H-E-B

Special to the Journal

Communities In Schools of Greater Central Texas (CIS) recently celebrated the successful conclusion of its 2025 school supply fundraising partnership with H-E-B. During the month-long partnership, \$47,037 was raised to support students in the CIS program in Killeen, Copperas Cove, Temple, Salado and Jarrell. This year's total represented an increase of nearly \$11,280 from the previous year.

While the campaign was conducted during the summer months, the impact extended far beyond the start of the school year. School supplies are needed year-round as students continue to replace worn materials and take on new coursework throughout the academic year.

"School supply needs don't end once the first bell rings in August," said Michael Dewees, executive director of the local CIS organization. "Thanks to the generosity of our community and our continued partnership with H-E-B, we can respond to student needs in the middle of the school year as well as during the final

weeks when support is just as critical."

Through customer donations at checkout which included rounding up purchases or contributing set amounts, H-E-B shoppers transformed everyday transactions into meaningful support for students. The funds raised by H-E-B have been combined with other back-



to-school contributions to ensure all CIS students have the necessary supplies throughout the school year regardless of their economic situation.

"We are incredibly thankful to the community for showing up for our students," said Dewees. "The growing commitment from the community helps ensure stu-

dents have the resources they need to stay engaged and succeed in school."

Locally, CIS serves 58 campuses and provides one-on-one support to more than 6,100 students. Funds raised through the H-E-B campaign directly support the CIS mission to surround students with a community of support, empower them to stay in school and achieve in life.

"Each donation, regardless of the amount, helped remove barriers to learning and sent a powerful message to students," said Dewees. "We are truly grateful to H-E-B for its continued partnership and every customer who chose to donate. This generosity is an indication of the community's investment in student success and will make a huge difference every day."

Anyone wishing to contribute can either visit the CIS office or mail a donation to Communities In Schools, 4520 E Central Texas Expressway, Suite 106, Killeen, 76543. Secure online donations can be made or more information on how to support local CIS students can be found at www.cis-tx.org.

CTRW winds down busy holiday volunteer season

Special to the Journal

The Christmas season was busy for Central Texas Republican Women, as they worked on a Caring for America project with the local nonprofit Jeffrey's Tree to provide children with toys, clothing, and necessities, including hygiene products, blankets, and beds.

At the November 10 meeting, Central Texas RW invited the local nonprofit Jeffrey's Tree, Inc., which serves children across Central Texas, to share its work.

Jeffrey's Tree Founder and Marine Veteran Dagne Ameigh shared the organization's story and mission, which is named after her son, who



Courtesy Photo

Members of the distribution team prepare for giving toys to local families during the Christmas season.

would use his own school lunch money to help kids in need. Sadly, her son passed away, and Dagne carried on the selfless

legacy of her son, and the non-profit Jeffrey's Tree was born.

Additionally, Club members were invited to

donate toys, and the toy box overflowed.

Following Dagne Ameigh's presentation, CTRW Caring for Amer-

ica Chair Kathy Ruiz and President Janet Brown presented Jeffrey's Tree with a \$500 check to help kick off their December Christmas initiative.

And, at the December 8 Central Texas RW meeting, the Club Executive Board presented Jeffrey's Tree with a \$300 donation in the name of President Janet Brown, to honor her lifelong mission to be a voice for children, especially those who have been abused or trafficked.

Throughout November and December, countless Central Texas RW members volunteered at Jeffrey's Tree warehouse to help fill Christmas wishes (boxes) for over 560 local kids. Mem-

bers traveled to fill and distribute boxes at area schools.

Jeffrey's Tree will soon have Club members serve on the Board as the ministry grows and seeks more interested community members at www.jeffreystree.org.

The year-round effort at Jeffrey's Tree helps ensure that vulnerable children and families feel the love, security, and warmth of a responsive community. Membership with Central Texas RW is open for 2026. As a member, you can help with projects like Caring for America, where Club members can join hands with the community, because we are better together.

The HOP launches major microtransit expansion and service updates

Special to the Journal

The HOP is starting the new year with microtransit expansions in four cities, anchored by growing demand in its microtransit program.

Effective Jan. 1, riders across Belton, Temple, Killeen, and Harker Heights gained access to expanded service zones designed to better connect residents with schools, neighborhoods, parks, and destinations throughout each city.

As flexible, on-demand transit continues to grow in popularity, The HOP's expanded microtransit service gives riders more convenient options than ever before.

To celebrate, riders can try one microtransit ride at no cost using the promo code RIDEHOP26, which provides \$4 in ride credit, or the equivalent of one round trip. The promo code is valid Jan. 1-31, 2026, and available for one use per rider account.

"Our goal is to create

a network that adapts to the needs of our riders," said Raymond Suarez. "These expansions strengthen connections to schools, neighborhoods, and community destinations, and they reflect our commitment to improving mobility across the region."

In Belton, the expanded zone further strengthens connections to community destinations, faith centers, and key commercial areas.

In Temple, the enlarged service area reaches additional schools, apartment communities, and parks.

In Killeen, the microtransit zone expanded to serve more residential neighborhoods and school campuses, improving access for families and students. Harker Heights riders have benefited from broader coverage across the city.

As part of the Temple updates, the Temple City Hall mobility hub for the Urban Regional Commuter closed. Riders can now make transfers and connec-

tions at the Santa Fe Mobility Hub, located at 201 Santa Fe Way, just north of the Chamber of Commerce building.

While microtransit is growing across the region, The HOP discontinued microtransit service in Salado.

Riders in that area continue to have access to transit options through The HOP's Bell County Rural Demand Response service.

In addition to microtransit expansions, The HOP implemented a minor schedule adjustment to its Urban Commuter service to improve reliability during peak travel periods. Updated schedules can be found at <https://takethehop.com/urban-regional-commuter>.

Riders are encouraged to learn more about the service changes by visiting <https://takethehop.com/service-announcements>.

To download The HOP mobile app and redeem the RIDEHOP26 promo code, visit: <https://takethehop.com/download-our-mobile-app>.

Spring registration now open for UMHB Arts Academy

Special to the Journal

The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor (UMHB) has announced that registration is now open for the spring 2026 semester at the UMHB Arts Academy.

Participants of all ages and skill levels in music, theatre, and dance can discover the joy of the arts at the UMHB Arts Academy.

Classes include instrumental and vocal lessons,

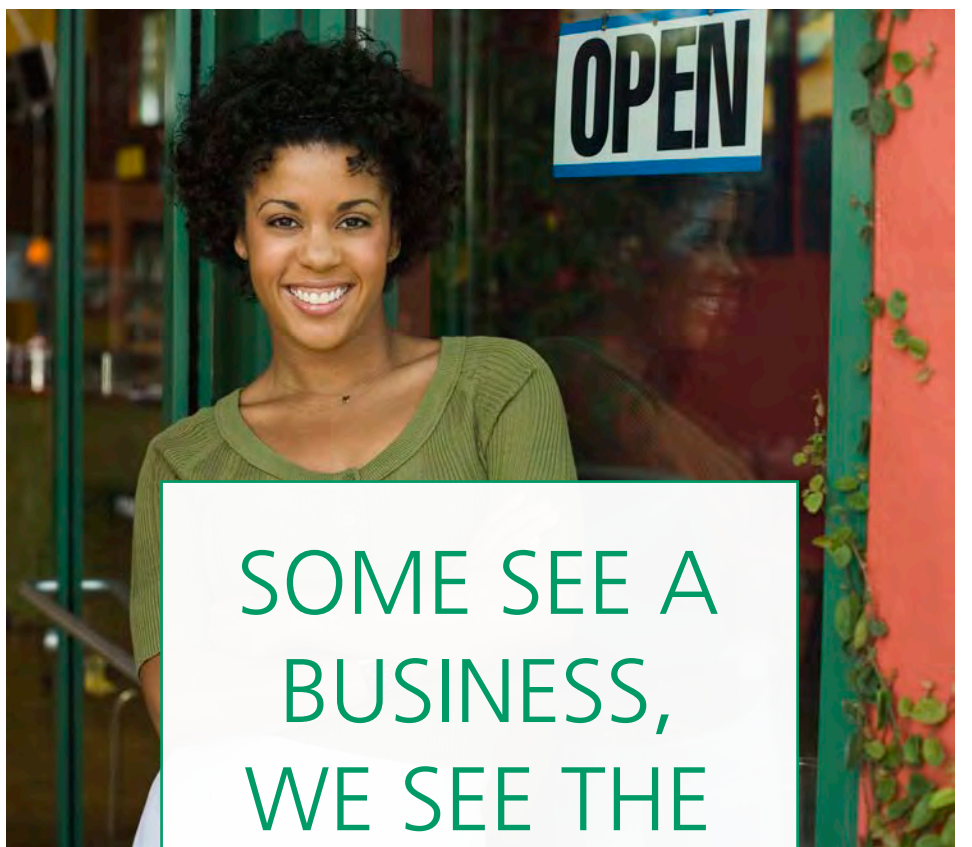
musical theatre, dance, and early childhood groups. With expert instructors, supportive programs, and a welcoming environment, the Arts Academy is a place to build confidence and learn new skills.

"No matter your age, it's never too early or too late to learn," said Grace Catherine, the Arts Academy director. "Don't wait to sign up, though. Spots are filling up fast!"

The UMHB Arts Academy exists to provide

quality, innovative arts instruction and experiences for all ages within a Christian environment, teaching skills and techniques that will enhance not only the lives of the students but also the quality of life within the community.

Spring classes begin on January 20. Enrollment is limited, and classes fill up quickly. Register today at www.umhb.edu/arts-academy or call 254-295-4686 for more information.



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EDITORIAL

A few choice words

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

“The difference between the almost right word and the right word is really a large matter. ’Tis the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning.”

So wrote Mark Twain. Writers have used this quote to describe the process of writing, with good reason.

Twain’s words are true in fiction and equally true in news writing.

With the English language being what it is, there are many words which are easy to use and/or misuse. Accept and except, for example. Or the use of its versus it’s, or they’re, their, there. Looking at those words used in context, it’s usually not hard to decipher the writer’s intent, even if the word is misused (although warning bells go off if you’re a member of the Grammar Police).

However, using almost-right words and right words have as much to do with their impact on a reader’s understanding of the written word, and even how they feel about what’s written.

When we read the news, we always carry our feelings along about the subject we’re reading about.

In its highest form, news is supposed to be unbi-

ased and informative, without the writer’s own opinions being inserted into the narrative.

It should speak for itself, leaving the reader to come away with their own opinions or feelings, and can even spur them to take action and get involved. Ideally. It’s a tricky dance.

Things can get trickier when writing about something as mundane as city budgets, for example. People can get very emotional about budgets and spending. If it’s tax dollars funding a budget, they can be either delighted, dismayed, disgusted, or depressed. It all depends on who you ask.

As an example, if I were to look at a city department’s budget from one year to the next, if next year’s funding is going to be less than the prior year, I could choose from a lineup of words to describe that change in funding.

I could simply write: *The projected budget is \$35,000 decreased from last year.* That’s kind of boring. It reads a little awkwardly, too.

Or I could write: *The projected budget for next year was slashed by \$35,000 compared to last year.*

That’s a bit more dramatic. That’ll sure make someone sit up and read.

But what does the word “slashed” mean? Slashed connotes a violent, forceful action. How about simply writing that the budget was cut? Chopped? Trimmed? Reduced?

If I was feeling especially outraged, I could write the budget was gutted, disemboweled? Yuck.

Does it matter how I, personally, feel about a department’s budget? Of course, how I feel matters! I, like all writers, carry around an opinion which I must put to the side.

When I write, it doesn’t or shouldn’t matter how I feel, personally. What should matter is getting the information out to readers that a particular budget is not going to receive as much funding as it did last year, \$35,000 less. How readers feel should be entirely up to them. It’s the job of the news to simply present the information and help get questions answered.

The lightning bug and lightning are two very different things, changed by three little letters making up one word.

Home Building

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

As I’ve mentioned before, I’ve been playing and running tabletop role-playing game campaigns off and on since 1990.

At present, I’m trying to assemble a campaign based on a game system in which the players will create characters that represent members of a military special forces / covert ops division. As part of it, I’m creating the fictional military base that the characters will call home, a fictional “adventure city” that will serve as the civilian home of said military base, and a number of littler communities that will round out the fictional county it’ll all take place in. I have chosen to make the county on the smaller side, about 60,000 people or so; this is just big enough that the players can have their characters find misadventure between missions but small enough that my autistic OCD doesn’t kick in & compel me to micromanage the snot out of everything.

While developing the setting out, I got to thinking. I’ve noticed that when I go to create “adventure cities” for gaming campaigns and fictional works set in the modern-day (yes, my batting average for getting my works of fic-

tion published is still hovering around .000; I might have to switch to doing copy writing as a would-be side hustle), I have a bad subconscious habit of incorporating a lot of my creature comforts into these locales. It’s as if a part of my brain is laying out these places with an eye to “If they were real, would I be able to relocate there without it significantly disrupting my current lifestyle?”. For example, I don’t get movie screeners, and so I go to the local movie theater like everyone else in order to see whatever new movie I intend to review; cue a multiplex of some kind usually making its way into whatever setting I create (in this case, die rolls based on criteria I laid out came back with an independently-owned six-screen venue).

This is what has me thinking. What do we each, as individuals, regard as necessities or creature comforts in our daily lives? What type of venues or retailers make us feel nice & cozy whenever they’re around? What name brands (both products and businesses) do we look for whenever we go somewhere we’ve never been before in order to make that transition or journey a bit easier? How greatly would

our routines be disrupted if they went away, or if we were to move some place else? I recall, for example, a rather bizarre Twitter exchange in which a comic book artist who lived in a major coastal city vowed that they could never leave their city because they didn’t want to lose their favorite bodega, the artist refusing to believe that convenience stores – as most people call them – exist throughout much of the nation.

What is it about a specific place that makes us want to call it “home” or leave it as fast as possible, makes us want to live there if we don’t already or makes us never want to live there in the first place?

With the new year upon us, now might be a good time for everyone to ask themselves those questions.

It would also be a good time to plan how we each can help support the small businesses, local community organizations, and other groups that are sincerely trying to make your home town feel like a true home town.

Yes, I said “find misadventure”. Never underestimate how often “Murphy’s Law” will supersede the rules of any given role-playing game, even house rules.

Random Thinks

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

Have you ever had a friend or neighbor that owns a Yorkie, or perhaps you own one yourself? The Yorkie has the same “bark” whether they are getting the “heck” beat out of them or barking at someone at the door!

The first time I heard the “door” bark I thought the owner was beating their dog, nope, just the same “yelp” for multiple expressions of notifications. Obviously, I wouldn’t beat any dog, well, unless it was gnawing on my leg, so I was a bit surprised when I first came across this trait. If you find yourself as a Yorkie owner and this describes your dog, you might want to put a disclaimer on your door, just so the random person ringing your doorbell doesn’t call the dog police on you. Heck just tape this part of my column to your door to explain things.

We have several types of animation for times when your computer (include tablets and phones here as well) is doing something that is going to take a few moments. You have the circling balls, or the round animation of “twinkies” going around in circles. Or the “untrue” status line when installing software. What about the person that designed and then got the “hourglass” approved as a valid “waiting” symbol. Did they have another thought behind that, something old and antiquated that no one uses in modern times, to show how long your device is taking to do whatever it is that it is doing.

I think we have gotten used to getting things right away, with minimal wait times, so when something does take longer than we think it does, we get upset. I can remember booting up the computer

for the day, often feeding it a disk or two to get it running, it was not connected to anything other than a power cord plugged into the wall. The internet, if you can call it that, was just something you used as needed, not staying connected all day long. If you did want to get online, you fired up a small device that made odd noises as it attempted to connect to a similar device in another town, no one really knows where. Often this didn’t take the first time, so you had to either let it try again, or go get a cup of coffee and give it another shot in a few minutes.

These days if your internet goes out at the house, your refrigerator can’t send a message to your phone that you are out of milk, so the next morning you pour a bowl full of Coco-puffs and have no milk for them!

And we are getting to the same point with coffee. We have these little pods which make a decent cup of coffee in just a minute or so. This is faster than going through a drive-thru window to get a cup. I like my coffee and have several ways to make different types, so I understand, some are quick and some take a bit of time and effort.

Fast coffee when I was a kid was a vending machine. These were common in hospitals and other places where the public might be waiting. While I wasn’t allowed to drink coffee my father did, so he would “buy” himself a cup of coffee and then get me a cup of hot chocolate. The problem was that the water used in these machines was scalding hot, I always tried to wait until it cooled a bit, but ended up scorching my tongue anyway. These machines were a bit enter-

taining as well as frustrating. You put in the coins, the safety door, which was clear, closed, a cup would drop down, or should. If no cup dropped down you watched your coffee squirt right into the little drain. About a third of the time the cup would come down but was not positioned well, you could open the safety door and hopefully poke the cup into the correct orientation before the coffee started. To a young child this was a very interesting machine, and probably fairly advanced for the time. I am sure my father was frustrated quite often when he didn’t get his coffee on the first try and had to go through this again. I was frustrated when I had to wait two days for my hot chocolate to cool off enough to drink.

I hope everyone has a week filled with minimal waiting!

Go outside! The benefits of spending time in nature

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

During the great Texas freeze of 2023, I nearly went bonkers. Normally, I’m an inside kind of girl. My dream job is one that would pay me to curl up in front of a roaring fire and read books. But after several days of nothing but sleet and ice, I needed some fresh air.

But my lack of coordination and my overwhelming sense of self-preservation kept me from venturing outdoors. I even sent CJ, my poodle, outside without me. He could scratch when he was ready to come back in. If he got lost in the blizzard, that was on him.

When the sun finally played peek-a-boo through the gray clouds, it didn’t take me long to strap on my (barely used) hiking boots and trudge outside. I had to stomp each step to get traction, but it was worth it to feel the sunshine on my face. I stayed outside for about twenty minutes. At that point, I felt relaxed. Rejuvenated. Ready to conquer mountains.

Preferably not icy ones.

My experience is not unique. Research reveals that time in nature, whether

in green spaces or blue (think water, sky), has a positive impact on both mental and physical health. What we see, hear, and experience affects the mood, nervous system, endocrine system, and immune system.

The opposite is also true. A lack of time spent in nature, or “nature deprivation” (often due to too much technology/screen time), is associated with higher rates of depression and anxiety. Some studies also show a correlation between more screen time and a lack of empathy and altruism. But it gets worse: a 2011 study associated greater screen time with a higher mortality rate, regardless of physical activity.

Why is time in nature so beneficial? The natural world can help us feel more grounded, more in tune with our parasympathetic nervous system. This causes us to feel more connected to the world around us, which in turn helps with stress management and overall wellbeing.

Time spent in nature reduces fear, stress and anger. It increases feelings of

pleasure. Exposure to the natural world affects physical health, too. It reduces blood pressure, regulates heart rate, decreases muscle tension, and decreases/regulates the production of stress hormones.

It also affects brain function! Students in schools with access to natural spaces tend to have higher scores than those who don’t. Adults assigned to public housing sectors with access to natural spaces showed better attention span and memory function than those without that access. There’s also a correlation between lower crime rates and access to natural spaces such as public parks.

The evidence shows it’s worth it to find ways to immerse yourself in nature. Here are some ideas to get started:

Aim for two hours a week. One study showed less than this has little effect, but two hours or more showed great benefits.

Head to a local park, beach, or other natural space.

Go for a long walk, or simply sit and read or listen to music.

Play the five senses game: Try to fo-

cus on five things you see, four things you hear, three things you feel, two things you smell, and one thing you taste.

When possible, bring plants and water features into your indoor space.

Use pictures of natural habitats as your screen saver. Frame nature pictures and add them to your workspace. (Studies show that viewing pictures of nature has positive effects on mental health.)

Remember, you don’t have to go on a grand adventure to reap the benefits of nature. Two hours a week is achieved with 15-20 minutes a day. Next time you’re feeling stressed or anxious, grab some sunscreen and a bottle of water and head outside. You may be surprised at how much better you feel when you come back.

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.”
~Psalm 19:1

Local Service Directory

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GO, USA!

While making your way through the maze, write down each letter you encounter along the correct path. These letters will spell out three words that pertain to the United States of America.

WORDS:

Solution:

Words:
 Independence
 Nation
 America

Start

Finish

Welcome to Belton, Texas



Courtesy Photo

The effort to expand the free holiday skating event in downtown Belton paid off in 2025 with 7,500 people using the rink over a span of 23 days, an impressive feat considering there was several nights with inclement weather--rain, wind, and cold. Visitors to the rink included Belton Christian Youth Center children, home school children, and staff, all of whom received separate special skating opportunities during the day before the rink opened for that evening. Superheroes associated with Bell County Comic Con and vendors also were seen at the rink. Part-time workers helped make this three-week event manageable for Parks staff, which is always busy in December.

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