

## Local business gives back during Random Acts of Kindness Week



Desmond Cook and Marquis Shaw clean windows together at the Dementia Enrichment Center in Belton on Feb. 4.

By Daniel Moctezuma  
The Belton Journal

In recognition of Random Acts of Kindness Week, Fish Window Cleaning, owned by Jack Williamson, provided complimentary window cleaning services at the Dementia Enrichment Center on Tuesday, Feb. 4 as a heartfelt

gesture to support the center's staff and participants.

For Williamson, the act of kindness was deeply personal.

"We discovered the center through our daughter, who works there," Williamson said. "My mother had dementia before she passed away, so we know firsthand how important it is for fami-

lies to have a safe, nurturing place for their loved ones."

Williamson and his crew spent the morning washing the center's windows, an effort that not only improved the facility's appearance but also brought joy

See **KINDNESS**,  
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## Students recognized with Congressional awards

By Daniel Moctezuma  
The Belton Journal

High school students from across Texas' 31st Congressional District were recognized for their achievements in career and technical education (CTE) at an awards ceremony hosted by U.S. Congressman John Carter on Saturday, Feb. 8, at Temple College.

"Anyone who has chosen a trade as their future has already chosen to be a winner," Carter said during his keynote address. He spoke about the demand for skilled workers in fields like construction, electrical work, and advanced manufacturing, mentioning the current shortage of tradespeople in the U.S.

The ceremony also featured remarks from Marie Alvarado, Carter's district director, and DeDe Griffith, Temple College's vice president of workforce development.

"These students represent the future of our economy and workforce," Alvarado said. "Their dedication to learning and innovation is truly an inspiration."

Griffith reflected on her own CTE experience in horticulture, noting how skills learned in these programs extend beyond specific trades. "You may not become a welder, but the leadership, focus, and problem-solving skills you gain are transferable to any job," she said.

The event honored 29 students from various school districts, with Anna Baez of Temple High School receiving the overall 2025 CTE Award. Baez, who is pursuing an audio-visual design pathway, discovered her interest in video editing through the program.

"I may not make it to Hollywood, but as my father always said to me, be someone," Baez said. "Famous or not, I want to make an impact, whether in a movie studio or on the world."

Other students recognized included Julia Broderick from Belton ISD, who developed a health records app called Archive, and Grant School from Killeen ISD, who plans to become a game warden with Texas Parks and Wildlife.

Several students from Belton ISD were honored for their achievements in CTE programs. Julia Broderick, a senior at Lake Belton High School, was recognized for her entrepreneurship pathway and her innovative app development project. Jazzell Jenkins and Matthew Antuna, also from Belton ISD, were acknowledged for their dedication to their respective CTE pathways.

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## Local breweries win state awards



Courtesy Photo

Bold Republic Brewing located in Temple won Silver for Grand Cru, and Gold MILF Stout.

Special to the Journal

The Texas Craft Brewers Guild awarded 90 medals to 55 small and independent breweries from across the Lone Star State in the nonprofit trade association's fourth annual statewide craft beer competition.

The best Texas craft beers in 30 medal categories covering 150+ different beer styles were awarded gold, silver, and bronze medals during an awards ceremony at the Texas Craft Brewers Guild's Annual Meeting at the Circuit of The Americas event center on Saturday, February 8.

Judging took place January 17-19 in Austin with 55 judges evaluating 931

anonymized entries from 162 breweries hailing from all different corners of the state. The Texas Craft Brewers Cup judging pool was composed of experienced brewing industry professionals and select members of the homebrewing community with extensive Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) judge experience.

"Every year, the Texas Craft Brewers Cup showcases the remarkable innovation and dedication to craftsmanship that Texas brewers pour into every batch," said Caroline Wallace, Executive Director of the Texas Craft Brewers Guild. "This competition not only spotlights the exceptional quality and diversity of Texas

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## City to purchase Miller Heights Elementary

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

The Belton City Council on Tuesday agreed to purchase Miller Heights Elementary School for \$750,000 plus closing costs and the cost of a survey of the property.

According to information provided by Matt Bates, assistant Belton city manager, the building will be used to provide space for the city's expanding services.

The city became aware in November that the

8.36 acre, 40,000-square-foot property was being prepared for sale by Belton Independent School District and took steps to purchase the school building for both intermediate and long-term needs. The city already owns about 3 acres adjoining the school property.

According to Bate's statement, the facility in southeast Belton could be used for public safety services and a police substation, which would improve response times and safety in the area.

Other uses could include storage, space for victim services, and room for the city's RU OK

program.

Future uses for the old school could include an emergency shelter and warming center for residents who are unsheltered.

Bate's report said the school's cafeteria and theater, plus a commercial-grade kitchen, would make an ideal location to quickly establish essential services for unsheltered residents in times of crisis.

The massive building offers many opportunities to accommodate the city's growing needs well

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## Students - From Page A1

demonstrating leadership and a strong commitment to their fields of study. The ceremony concluded with group photos of the award recipients and individual photo opportunities with Congressman Carter.



**BELTON JOURNAL/DANIEL MOCTEZUMA**

U.S. Congressman John Carter poses with award recipients Anna Baez, Paola De Lira, Lindsey Salinas, Grant Schoel, Isabella Waugh, and Sean Tascon during the TX-31 Congressional Career and Technical Education Awards ceremony at Temple College on Saturday.

## Kindness - From Page A1

to those inside.

"They loved seeing different faces, and they enjoyed watching people work since there are some things they can't do anymore," said Valerie Knapp, assistant director of the Dementia Enrichment Center. "We appreciate any help we can get to give them something fun to do or watch during the day."

The Dementia Enrichment Center, located in Belton, offers an adult day program, running Monday through Friday, designed to support individuals with dementia through cognitive-stimulating activities, arts and crafts, community outings, and social interaction. Participants benefit from a structured environment that focuses on maintaining cognitive functions and providing a sense

of purpose. The day program offers a variety of activities tailored to meet the needs of individuals at different stages of dementia, helping them stay engaged and socially connected.

"Our goal is to give them something special each day," Knapp said. "A lot of our participants have routines that don't change much, so when the community comes in, it really brightens their day."

In addition to its weekday program, the center provides free educational courses on Saturdays for families, caregivers, and anyone affected by dementia. Support groups are held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, offering resources and a space for caregivers to connect.

Knapp emphasized the value of community involvement in enriching the lives of the center's participants.

"Acts of kindness like this go a long way," Knapp said. "It gives them something new to see, changes up their routine, and brings smiles to their faces."

While the timing of the window cleaning coincided with Random Acts of Kindness Week, Williamson said it was more about the opportunity to give back.

"We were already in the process of setting it up, and it just happened to align with this time of year," he said. "For us, it's about expressing a sense of giving back, knowing what it's like to care for a loved one with dementia."

Fish Window Cleaning plans to continue supporting the center with regular services.

"Our team enjoys seeing the difference their work makes," Williamson said. "It's rewarding for them to know they're making a positive impact."

The Dementia Enrichment Center welcomes community support through volunteers, donations, and participation in their programs. More information can be found on their website at [dementiaec.com](http://dementiaec.com) or on their Facebook page. The center also maintains an Amazon wish list with specific items to support their enrichment activities, such as arts and crafts supplies, games, and party materials that help create engaging experiences for participants.

## Miller - From Page A1

into the future, and the existing layout is well-suited for adapting secure office and storage spaces.

"A dedicated public safety center would enhance crime prevention, improve emergency response times, and build community trust through outreach programs and engagement efforts," according to Bates' study.

"Repurposing the facility is a cost-effective solution that allows for multi-department collaboration, providing essential space for police, fire, EMS, and emergency operations. Additionally, the site offers potential for workforce training, and Belton's only warming/emergency shelter."

"The potential for a game-changing neighborhood park also reinforces that the city is not only investing in safety in the area, but also the quality of life for residents in the surrounding area," the statement said.

Also Tuesday, Council set a General Election for council-member places 5, 6 and 7 on May 3, and authorized an agreement with Belton ISD for conducting a location-only joint election. Voting equipment will be leased from the Bell County Elections Department.

Council adopted a resolution to nominate Freddy Robles, assistant director of Belton's public works, as the city's candidate for election to the Central Texas Water Supply Corporation's board of directors.

Scott Hodde, the director of public works, is currently

serving as the city's representative on the board. Hodde recommended Robles to assume this role representing the city on the board of directors.

Based on another recommendation by Hodde, Council authorized the city manager to execute a construction contract for the replacement of storm-damaged roofs at Harris Community Center, Fire Station No. 2 and the Belton PD Storage Buildings. According to a statement by Hodde, the roofs were damaged during 2024 storms.

"While the wind and hail damage did not compromise the structural integrity of the buildings, we took the necessary time to assess the scope of repairs needed," Hodde said in the statement. "Through this process, we worked with our insurance provider to secure insurance funding for the roof replacements."

TML Insurance reimbursed the city \$101,398.52 for the repairs.

Also Tuesday, Council OK'd a resolution authorizing the publication of Notice of Intention to Issue City of Belton Combination Tax & Limited Revenue Certificates of Obligation.

According to a statement by Mike Rodgers, Belton's director of finance, the 2025-29 Capital Improvements Program identifies nearly \$65 million of potential capital projects to be completed over the next five years.

The most significant of these projects is the expansion of the Temple-Belton Wastewater Treatment Plant. Belton's 25-percent share of the \$71.2 million project is \$17.8 million. Other projects include improving the city's lift station, Loop 121 utility relocation, a public safety center, and the purchase of an aerial apparatus for the Belton Fire Department.

Raymond Suarez, general manager of The Hop, gave an update on the transportation company's transition to a micro-transit system.

"In 2021, the majority of our routes were fixed routes and they were underperforming," Suarez said. "We were running one-hour frequencies, and the routes only ran in one direction. Folks using the system had no other form of transportation. The Hop was seen as a system for low-income people. It often took an hour to get where you were going ... just a lot of barriers."

Suarez said the new microtransit system works much like Uber or Lyft.

"We're covering more area than ever before," he said. "Wait times are up to 15 minutes instead of an hour. We have 11 vehicles working on Fort Cavazos, and we now provide 230,000 rides a year."

"We've been operating for five months and we've already seen ridership growth of 35 to 50 percent," he added.

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# OBITUARIES



## Voigtel

**Cheryl D. Voigtel**  
June 29, 1967 - February 7, 2025

Funeral services for Dr. Cheryl D. Voigtel, 57, of Belton, TX, will be held 10:00am, Saturday, February 15, 2025, at Dossman Funeral Home in Belton with Chase Bowers and Tom Bever officiating. Graveside service will follow at 1:30pm at Old Union Cemetery near Groesbeck with Dr. Stuart Cole officiating.

The family will receive friends for visitation Friday evening from 6:00-8:00pm at the Dossman Funeral Home Chapel.

Dr. Voigtel passed away Friday, February 7, 2025, in a Houston hospital.

Dr. Voigtel was born June 29, 1967, in Arlington, Texas. She was a proud graduate of Texas Tech University and Baylor College of Dentistry. She married Dr. Richard Voigtel on December 15, 1990, and they acquired the Dental Center of Belton in 1992. During those early years, she was the only female private practice dentist in Bell County. Dr. Cheryl was a fun, passionate friend, mother and wife with an unending love for her family, coworkers and friends.

A longtime member of Temple Bible Church, she possessed a deep faith in God and although her passing was unexpected, she was secure in her faith.

Preceded in death by her brother, Robert Doyle, Dr. Cheryl is survived by her husband of 34 years, Dr. Richard Voigtel, her two wonderful children, Mandy and Cooper Voigtel, and her beloved mother, Dana Sue Doyle.

Memorials may be made to the charity of your choice.

## Tubb

**David LaRon Tubb**  
October 30, 1950 - February 4, 2025

It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of David LaRon Tubb, a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and friend. LaRon was born on October 30, 1950, in Branson, Missouri, and left this world on February 4, 2025, in Harker Heights, Texas. He was 74 years old.

LaRon was the son of John and Rita Tubb, and he was preceded in death by his beloved parents and his cherished wife, Mary Ann Tubb. Though his physical presence will be deeply missed, his spirit and the many memories he created

will forever remain in the hearts of those who knew him.

On October 11, 1996, LaRon married the love of his life, and together they built a family filled with love, laughter, and music. He is survived by his children and grandchildren, including Kevin Davis, Lindsey Clark, Gabrielle Clark, Carson Davis, and Violet Davis. As well as his beloved siblings, Danny Tubb, Jayanna Corbin, Penny Morgan.

LaRon was a man of many talents and passions. He dedicated over 20 years to working at Texas Instruments, where his professionalism and commitment shone brightly. He also served as a legal secretary at Ed Laughlin's law firm. Showcasing his exceptional organizational skills and attention to detail. In his earlier days LaRon could be seen soaring the skies hang gliding. However, his greatest joy was music; LaRon's passion for the piano radiated so eminently every time he played.

He enjoyed and looked forward to playing for residents in the many retirement and nursing home communities. He loved to see the residents' faces light up as they would tap their feet and sway with the music. LaRon cherished his friends and the comradery he found with his band mates. He always felt privileged to share the stage with them.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, LaRon was deeply involved in his community. He was a proud member of the Soldiers of the Cowboy Fellowship Church, where he shared his faith and values with others. His loving, caring, and humble character touched the lives of many, and he was known for his ability to uplift those around him.

As we gather to celebrate LaRon's extraordinary life, we are reminded of the countless ways he enriched our lives with his kindness, love, and laughter. In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made to the Soldiers of the Cowboy Fellowship Church, an organization that was dear to LaRon's heart and reflects his spirit of giving. David LaRon Tubb will be remembered not only for his accomplishments and his unwavering dedication to his family but also for the love and joy he brought into the lives of everyone

he met. He leaves behind a legacy of love that will endure through the generations he touched.

## Johnston

**Shannon Marie Johnston**  
May 26, 1970 - February 6, 2025

Shannon Marie Johnston of Belton, Texas passed away in Killeen, Texas on February 6th, 2025.

Graveside services will be at 2 p.m. on Saturday, February 15th, 2025, at Austin Memorial Park Cemetery, Austin, TX. Visitation will be from 6-8 p.m. on Thursday, February 13th, 2025, at Dossman Funeral Home, Belton, Texas.

Shannon was born on May 26th, 1970, at Darnall Army Hospital, Ft. Hood, Texas to Randal and Mary Lynn Deorsam Johnston. She spent her early years in Austin where she graduated from Stephen F. Austin High School. Shannon made friends easily in her community and was a member of the wonderful Good Friends Social Club. She later moved to West Chester, PA where she lived with her sister, Randy Frink. There she worked at Bryan's House, a sheltered workshop, for several years and enjoyed music, dancing, horseback riding on the farm, RV road trips, and travel. She returned to Texas in her later years and, most recently, was a participant at the Dementia Enrichment Center in Belton. She enjoyed meeting new people and all of the activities and socialization the center offered her.

Shannon loved watching old TV shows and movies, her favorite TV show being Dukes of Hazzard. On a trip to South Carolina, she got to go to Cooter's where she met John Schneider (Bo) and Ben Jones (Cooter) and others. She liked to draw, color or work on puzzle books in her spare time and loved spending time with all the dogs that were in her life.

The family would like to thank all of the angels over the years who took Shannon under their wings and befriended and cared for her - Cindy Townsend, Hope Foster, Jessica Gambil, and more recently, Hailey Peek and her entire outstanding staff at the Dementia Enrichment Center and Heartprint Home, and Jenny Ruiz and her extraordinary family.

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Fact from Texas State Historical Association.

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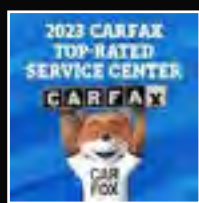
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## MPR council receives department year end reports

By David Tuma  
The Belton Journal

The Morgan's Point City Council called for a city-wide general election on May 3 of this year. Positions up for reelection are five council members and the mayor's position. Early election officers were approved for the election. Early voting is voting clerk Camille Bowser, and Deputy clerks Katrice Jackson and Nayda Santana. The officer to serve on Election Day is Presiding Judge, Sally Barron.

The council approved a change order concerning the groundwater storage

tank and pump station in the amount of a \$12,972 reduction in expenses. The total cost of the project is \$3,678,319.

The council accepted the resignation of Maria Carmen Garcia from the position of Assistant City Attorney/Municipal Prosecutor, and also accepted the resignations of Judy Dillon and Edward Cozart from the Parks and Recreation Committee.

Eric Seeliger and Rebecca Cooley resigned from the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Cary Erskine CPA, Director of Finance, is no longer with the City of MPR.



The council received the year-end reports from the department heads. The City Secretary provided an overview and focus on the office. Administrative Services is the front office at City Hall. There are 2,108 active utility customers. They approved 633 permits during the year. They plan on launching a fully automated online permit system.

The total number of calls the MPR Police Department received

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## Award - From Page A1

craft beer but also strengthens the bonds within our brewing community, encouraging a shared commitment to excellence and innovation."

The Texas Craft Brewers Guild is also

the organization behind the annual Texas Craft Brewers Festival in Austin, and the Texas Brewery Passport app which helps beer enthusiasts find and visit Guild member breweries across the state. The

Texas Craft Brewers Cup is another event that helps attract new fans and bring long-time beer lovers out to taprooms at a time when small and independent breweries have a lot to gain from the promotion of

Texas' highest-quality craft beers.

Bird Creek Brewing in Temple won Gold for I'm Cool Baby, Gold Ghost Beach, Bronze Alley Cat, Bronze Nerf Warz and Gold Lamborghini Truck.

## Obits - From Page A3

Our precious Shannon, the love you have brought, the lessons you have taught us, the joy you have given, and the sweet kindness you have shared, will be in our hearts forever. Our love for you is endless. Thank you for always doing the best you could with what you were given. Shannon is survived by her sisters Randy Frink of Belton, Texas and Sandy Slater and husband Mike also of Belton, Texas; nephews Chris Mack, and John Christensen and wife Denise, grandnephew Tanner and grandniece Haley; several first and second cousins, and the family dogs, Zoey Frink, Jasmine Mack, and Buddy Slater. Shannon is preceded in death by her parents and brother Rickey Lee Johnston.

## Martin

Virginia Jackson Martin  
April 24, 1947 —  
February 4, 2025

Virginia Rosamond Martin, lovingly known as "Grandmother Midland," was born on April 24, 1947, in Littlefield, Texas. She departed this life unexpectedly at her home on February 4, 2025, leaving behind a legacy of love, dedication, and strength. Virginia graduated from Snyder High School in 1965, where she showcased her musical talents by playing various instruments, including the flute, piano, and oboe, as part of the high school band. Virginia's career began as a bookkeeper for various oil companies, showcasing her strong work ethic and financial acumen. She

later transitioned to Dick Campbell Construction in Midland, Texas, where she worked diligently as a bookkeeper from 1995 until her retirement in 2021.

A graduate of Snyder High School, Virginia completed her education in 1965, where she showcased her musical talent by playing various instruments, including the flute, piano, and oboe, as part of the high school band. Her passion for music was just one facet of her vibrant character.

Virginia's life was marked by love and family. She attended Northside Baptist church services, where she met Sgt. Dennis Duke, an Air Force soldier. Their romance blossomed over Sunday dinners, and they married in 1965, welcoming two sons into the world while settling in

Midland. Unfortunately their marriage dissolved. Later, in August of 1983, Virginia met Larry Martin, and their love for each other was palpable. However, their time together was cut short when Larry passed away in January of 1984. Despite these challenges, Virginia demonstrated remarkable resilience, becoming self-sufficient and taking immense pride in her accomplishments.

She was memorable not only for her strong-willed and hardworking nature but also for her honesty. Virginia believed in keeping close ties to her friends, valuing quality over quantity. She was a devoted mother who instilled discipline in her two sons, Jeffery Duke and Ray Duke. Virginia took great pride in the fact that her sons followed in the family tradition by enlisting in the Navy. Virginia's community spirit shone brightly through her volunteer work with food banks, the American Red Cross, and her dedication to ensuring veterans were well cared for, reflecting her servant's heart. Her proudest accomplishments were undoubtedly the love she had for her family, which extended to her four grandchildren, Kellan, Daniela, Alexis, and Olivia Duke. Virginia found joy in sharing stories and pictures of her grandchildren, celebrating their milestones with an infectious pride that illuminated her spirit.

She is survived by her two sons, Jeffery Duke and Chelsea of Reagan, Texas, and Ray Duke and wife Elizabeth Sanchez of El Paso, Texas; her brother, Ricky and his wife Tracy Jackson of Midland, Texas; her sister, Pat Chandler; and her beloved chihuahua, Princess. Alongside them are her cherished grandchildren, Kellan, Daniela, Alexis, and Olivia Duke.

Virginia is preceded in death by her parents, James Melvin Jackson and Mary Georgia (Lahey) Jackson; her husband, Larry Martin; her brother, Frank Jackson; and her sister, Janelle Bourland, along with her husband, Elmer Bourland. A graveside service to celebrate Virginia's extraordinary life was held at Greathouse Cemetery in Temple, Texas, on

February 8, 2025, beginning at 10:00 AM. Her unexpected passing reminds us of the profound impact she had on the lives of those she loved and the community she served with so much dedication. Virginia Rosamond Martin will be remembered for her spirited personality, dedication to family, and unwavering strength that inspired all who knew her. In Lieu of flowers please consider making a memorial donation to help Unclaimed Veteran attn: Service Officer at VFW Post #1820. Arrangements are under the direction of Sabrina Young at Youngs Daughters Funeral Home and Bereavement Center.

## Marek

Marvin Marek  
July 30, 1942 —  
February 3, 2025

Marvin Marek spent his life with his hands in the dirt, on the tools of his trade, and in the service of others. Born to Frank and Dolphina Jezek Marek, he was one of ten siblings, with sisters Elsie, Dorothy, Margie, Linda, and Gladys and brothers Frank, Edwin, Johnny, and Daniel. He spent the majority of his life in the small Czech communities of East Bell County. His early life was as part of a sharecropper family, where he developed the unshakable work ethic that defined his entire life. He attended several community schools, including Rogers High School, before he went to work at Binswanger Glass in Waco. He also worked at the cotton gin in Cyclone and later worked at Ralph Wilson Plastics (Wilsonart) until retirement.

Marvin married Ann Tate in 1963, and together, they raised three sons, David, Rick, and Robert. In 1977, he married Mary Hightower Marek, with whom he welcomed a daughter, April, and a son, Randall. His love for his family was steady and practical—he taught by doing, by fixing, by building, and by showing up when it mattered most. Never one to sit idle, Marvin filled his retirement years with service and labor of a different kind. He was an active member of the community, serving on the board of directors

for the East Bell Water Supply Corporation, the Rogers Band Boosters, and the Seaton Cemetery Association. He could be found volunteering at local churches, working with the Rogers Athletic Boosters, or tending to his land, where he raised registered miniature donkeys and Boston Terriers.

He was a man who could build or repair just about anything—machines, tools, buildings, and contraptions of all sorts. But his true craft was found in the outdoors, where he spent hours hunting, fishing, and tending to his sprawling vegetable gardens and orchards. He also had a fondness for collecting and selling historical artifacts (junk), claiming he had an eye for hidden treasures—though his family might have had a different opinion on that.

Marvin is survived by his five children, David (Susie), Rick (April), Robert (Tammy), April (Ricky), and Randall (Lindsey), as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren: Tessa (Scott), Logan, Caleb, Ryan, Kaytlynn, Jaxson, Keagan, Adalynn, Olivia, Colson, Lindsey, Madi, Brycen, Natalie, Jakob, and Kaleb. He passed away surrounded by his children after a valiant battle with cancer, leaving behind a legacy of resilience, integrity, and quiet wisdom.

He believed in working hard, staying busy, and leaving things better than he found them—values he instilled in his children, not through words alone, but through action. He never sought recognition, only the satisfaction of a job well done and the knowledge that he had raised a family who would carry on his lessons. His was a life well lived—rooted in hard work, built on decency, and rich in love.

Visitation services were held at Young's Daughters Funeral Home located at 4235 E. US HWY 190 Temple, TX, from 12:00 - 2:00 pm on Saturday, February 8, 2025 then the graveside service followed at Seaton Cemetery commencing at 2:30 p.m. There will be no procession. Arrangements are under the direction of Sabrina Young at Young's Daughters Funeral Home and Bereavement Center

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# Little Joe to play at CAC

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

Tejano music icon and Temple native Little Joe Hernandez will be performing at the Cultural Activities Center on Saturday, Feb. 22, at 7 p.m. Tickets for the event are \$45 for adults and \$15 for students with a school ID, and they are available at [cacarts.org](http://cacarts.org).

Little Joe said this week that it will be great to play in Temple, where it all began.

"I got started playing little bars in and around Temple, especially black bars on the city's east side," he said. "I wasn't old enough to be there, but they let me play. I thought I'd perform until I was about 35...that came and went ... twice."

Yes, that was a long time ago — he now has been taking stages around the state, country and world for more than 63 years.

"I love it," he said with a chuckle. "I just love people

and entertainment."

While Joe may have slowed down a bit, he still performs about three shows every month.

"I can pick and choose my concerts," he said. "But I'm already booked through October of this year. I stay busy — it's good to stay active."

"I have a verbal agreement with Harrah's Casinos to perform at their venues," he said. "I will be playing Harrah's in Laughlin, Nevada, on Feb. 14 and 15. I'm doing that quite often. A lot of loyal fans can come see me. My two shows in Laughlin are sold out and the front row tickets are \$254 a seat. I'm grateful my fan-base is so supportive."

Joe said he continues to play new material, just not as much as earlier in his career.

"I'm working on some ideas," he said. "I'm slowly but surely moving forward. I will record at least one album in 2025."

So, what drives an aging



Courtesy Photo

Five-time Grammy award winner, Little Joe Hernandez, will be performing with his family for the first time at the Cultural Activities Center in Temple on February 22. Little Joe has been performing throughout the state and country for over 63 years.

superstar to keep going?

"It's the love of music," he said without hesitation. "It's such a wonderful feeling to entertain people and see

their joyful faces. They sing. They cry. They laugh. I get away with telling dumb jokes. The music and the connection I have with people drives

me to continue. I love to hear wonderful stories from my fans."

While Joe got his start in and around Temple, he says

he doesn't recall ever playing a concert at the Cultural Activities Center.

"I'm excited about the show," he said. "The family will be performing with me. When we set a date and agreed to play the CAC, I had an idea of how I would dress and even planned the first 15 minutes of the concert. I always prepare myself for a concert opening. I've done it my entire career — it's always the same but very different. It's very gratifying."

Little Joe is an 11-time Grammy nominated artist and five-time Grammy recipient. He won for best Mexican-American album, *Diez y Seis de Septiembre*, in 1991; best Tejano album, *Chicanisimo*, in 2005; best Tejano album, *Before The Next Teardrop Falls*, in 2007; and best Tejano album for *Recuerdos* in 2010. *Recuerdos* also won a Latin Grammy in 2011.

He also has won the Buddy Holly Award seven consecutive years.

## MPR - From Page A4

during the year was 13,473 with an average response time of 4:56 minutes. They added one new patrol vehicle in 2024 and started a drone program.

During the past year, there were 2,297 traffic stops with 743 citations issued. In 2024 miles patrolled were 143,364. House watches were 802. The MPR Dive Team was deployed three

times in 2024.

The average response time for the MPR Fire Department was 5:54 minutes. This number varied from 6:39 in 2022 to 5:17 in 2023. The department responded to 107 fires, 540 rescues and EMS, 36 hazardous conditions and 179 to assist the public, for a total of 914 calls for service. Public Works added a new employee,

purchased a 3500 Chevrolet, and re-plastered the swimming pool. The storm cleanup was a major undertaking during 2024. In storm cleanup Phase 1 was completed by contractors, Phase 2 was completed by city staff and Phase 3 is on hold. Area residents got out and helped each other after the May 22nd storm. City work crews worked throughout the night dealing with

downed trees and cleaning roadways.

Public Utilities added an Assistant Director to improve efficiency. The city went online with three new 1,500-gallon-per-minute water pumps and a 250,000-gallon water tank. Total water consumption by MPR during the year was 198,422,900 gallons. 153 water meters were installed or replaced.

# EDITORIAL

## Randomness to Fill Out the Week

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

I was in a takeout restaurant the other day and I placed my order. The young man asked me my name so they could call me when my order was ready. I told him, he proceeded to ask if I spelled my name with a "C" or a "K". Now I certainly appreciate him wanting to be accurate. However, if you are just going to yell out my name, there is very little, if any, difference between Mark with a "K" and Marc with a "C".

Speaking of which. When I was younger my best friend was named Marc, with a "C". We were both skinny little kids, we looked a lot alike, and were literally born within days of each other. We often told people that we were twins and our parents

named us both Mark, just one with a "C" and one with a "K". For a couple of young kids this was actually very creative, yet juvenile at the same time.

It is Girl Scout cookie time again. I like a couple of varieties of those cookies. However the boxes are getting smaller. Normally a single sleeve, or about half a box was a single serving for me. Now with the reduced size I am tempted to sneak into the second sleeve for my original serving. Of course this could be the master plan, those sneaky Girl Scouts have got us hooked on the cookies and now are tricking us into buying more to just satisfy our habits. (Seriously the Girl Scouts are a good charity to support and you get something

substantial in return for your donation.)

We have four major automakers in the US, although one technically is not an American company even though they make vehicles here in the states. Have you noticed the different commercials on TV, no matter which automaker is sponsoring the ad, they are number one in something. They have the number one selling model, or the next one has the number one spot for vehicles still on the road. I think I have seen an ad stating that this one manufacturer had the bestselling red sedan with leather seats but no sunroof yet had dual cup holders.

I think a bad career choice would be escalator repairman; "How much to

fix our broken escalator?"

"Well, I think it will cost \$1000 to repair it."

"OK, thank you for coming we can buy a sign that says 'Stairs This Way' for \$1.50."

Now on the flip side, elevator repairman would be a lot better; "How much to fix our broken elevator?"

"How many people are stranded inside?"

"There are four people stuck in the elevator right now!"

"OK, that will be our basic fee of \$1000, plus another \$20,000 up-charge."

"Fine, Fine, when can you get here?"

Have you noticed there are a few cars named after birds, Skylark for one. One of the most fa-

mous would be the Thunderbird. I think in honor of our state bird Chevrolet should make a car called the Mockingbird, of course it could look like another vehicle.

I have noticed that a lot of trucks on the road have a "Texas" edition. There are also a couple of other states probably known for rugged land and indicate a tough truck. I was thinking what if there was a "Rhode Island" edition truck. Would it be tiny and not capable of hauling anything substantial? Or maybe a "Boston" edition, however that one would just sound funny.

Did you ever notice that the smaller the size of the cord on your electronic devices, especially headphones, the more tightly

they become tangled? And just how does it get completely tied in a knot when all you do is put them on the table? I have a pair of outdoor shoes that come untied almost every time I wear them, why can't they make shoestrings out of the material they make tiny electronic cords from.

Bonus Footage; A guy hears his doorbell, he goes to the door and there is no one there. He hears a voice and looks down to see a snail. He picks the snail up and tosses it out in the yard, closes the door and goes back to his routine. About a week later the doorbell rings, he answers the door and again no one is there. He looks down to see the snail. The snail says, "Hey! What was that about?"

## Love 'n stuff

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

It's been said that Americans are going to spend billions on Valentine's Day.

I might be a self-confessed hopeless romantic, but that's a lot of money to spend on just one day.

What would you prefer, though? A dozen roses and a box of chocolate, or other simple acts of love throughout the rest of the year? How much does expressing true love really cost?

Years and years ago, before I fell in love with and married my husband, I was all for boycotting the day. It's a commercialized day that capitalizes on those who have "someone," while the rest of us (you know who you are) were left outside that rose petal-lined circle.

We singles dared not venture

out to restaurants or anywhere else that couples would go forth and celebrate. It reminded us of our alone-ness, that we lacked what other people had.

The idea of romantic love is nothing new.

Chaucer back in the Middle Ages referred to Valentines and the idea of "courtly" love, which had nothing to do with one's spouse, but instead focused on another who'd receive special tokens of affection, often sent in secret. You know, as when a knight wore his lady's "colors." That didn't mean they were a couple, and often she was already married to someone else.

Then came the 18th century and the explosion of the first Valentine's card market, which featured cards with verses you could send anonymously.

So now, we go into stores and have to negotiate carefully past displays that urge us to spend money. Chocolate dipped strawberries, cakes, cookies, flowers, champagne, wine, stuffed animals (destined for the thrift store donation pile someday).

It's far, far easier to play at romantic love than to nurture the real thing.

"Falling in love" is probably one of the easiest things in the world to do.

First there's eye contact, then a smile, then that spark of attraction. Those endorphins in our brains send our hearts soaring when the interest is mutual—yes, that's the falling in love part.

The feeling we get comes from a chemical in our bodies called oxytocin.

Why do we try to hold onto that feeling with flowers and chocolate?

There are a million little ways we can show love, all year round. The best part of that? Not feeling the need to go overboard with chocolates and flowers and stuff.

One of the most romantic movies is *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*. Toward the end of the movie, after Marian's been held captive by the sheriff, she says to Robin of Locksley, "You came for me... you're alive..."

He replies by saying, "I would die for you." (Swoon!)

Now, that's worth a whole lot more than roses and chocolate. That's the stuff of real love. You can't buy a self-sacrificing love in a store, for any price.

If you've found that type of love, you won't keep it with typical gifts, and if you're looking for that type of love, you won't earn it by those kinds of gifts either.



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**A6**  
Thursday,  
February 13, 2025

# LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

## Our Hospice House Hosts Open House Event

By Daniel Moctezuma  
The Belton Journal

Our Hospice House welcomed the community on February 7 during an open house from 3 to 7 p.m. at 5235 Tollbridge Road.

Founded in August 2023, Our Hospice House is a nonprofit organization that provides around-the-clock, family-style care for terminally ill guests at no cost. Since opening, the organization has served 99 guests and welcomed over 5,000 individuals, including family members, volunteers, hospice providers, and community supporters.

Executive Director Annie McCall, who has over 33 years of experience in long-term healthcare, said her decision to join the organization was based on recognizing a need in the community.

"I knew from my experiences in health care that there was a real need for people who either received a diagnosis towards end-of-life care and maybe couldn't afford a health care setting or remaining at home," McCall said. "This vision was absolutely a wonderful ministry to get involved in."

The nonprofit was inspired by the personal experiences of co-founders Dr. Jeff Bates and Jennifer Bates, RN, FNP, who both faced challenges caring for their fathers during their final days.

"A lot of times people don't realize what they need until they need it, or what they don't have until they don't have it," McCall said. "We needed to make a change. We needed to do something to make a difference."

Our Hospice House offers a peaceful environment where guests can receive care with dignity. To qualify, guests must be on service with a local hospice company and have a life expectancy of one month or less.

The facility includes three guest rooms, common living and dining areas, and outdoor garden spaces designed for both guests and their families.

McCall highlighted the importance of personalized care, noting that caregivers take time to learn about each guest's background to provide meaningful support.

"My caregivers have wonderful hearts and are really intuitive as far as getting to know the guests and their families," she said. "Were they educators? Farmers? Ranchers? Lawyers? We get to know their background so



BELTON JOURNAL/DANIEL MOCTEZUMA

Guests gather in the kitchen during the Our Hospice House Open House in Belton.

that we can really connect with them."

In addition to medical care, the organization works with hospice providers to offer emotional support through chaplains, pastors, and social workers.

"When a family is really struggling, we step in, and if more support is needed, we call in the hospice team," McCall said.

The nonprofit operates through donations from individuals, businesses, grants, and foundations, with an operational cost of about \$1,200 per day.

"The community plays a major role in supporting our

mission," McCall said. "We are totally supported by donors and grants. Bell County and surrounding communities have been very generous."

Our Hospice House is also starting a capital campaign to ensure long-term sustainability, with plans to serve over 60 guests annually in Central Texas.

For those interested in supporting the organization, volunteer opportunities include sitting with guests, administrative work, baking, gardening, and more.

For more information, visit [OurHospiceHouse.org](http://OurHospiceHouse.org) or call 254-500-7123.

## Belton-based Goat Shenanigans provides Valentine's Day visits to loved ones

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

A Belton woman is offering a unique option to traditional Valentine's gifts such as jewelry, chocolate and flowers. Whitney Beissner offers the gift of goats. Her company, Goat Shenanigans, will bring a baby goat for a visit with spouses, friends and children. "We do deliver baby goats to kids, but it's mostly adults," Whitney said with a smile. "We've delivered to offices and classrooms at schools." The goats are dressed in Valentine's attire, and those who order the goats

can also select options. "The goat can deliver flowers to someone, then they can feed the flowers to the goat," she said. "The goats also can deliver goat-shaped cookies and stuffed animals." Goat Shenanigans will be conducting Valentine's goat visits throughout Central Texas and beyond. "I have goats at farms in Belton, Leander and Lockhart, and our main farm is in San Antonio," she said. Whitney started the goat visits about five years ago, and they have become extremely popular. "Goat Shenanigans will do up to 200 goat visits during Valentine's weekend," she said. "And that number grows every year." Whitney was born and raised in Temple but a decision to pursue a career in education landed her smack-dab in the middle of New York City. That's not where she developed her love for goats. "I was living in a shared four-bedroom apartment," she said. "About six years ago I decided it was time to go. I wanted to move back to Texas and buy a ranch." Whitney found a piece of property near Lockhart, and it came stocked with barn cats, a few chickens, and yes, goats. Two years ago, she moved to a location in Belton. "I had no idea how to care for goats, but I fell in love with them and their antics immediately," she said. "I wanted to hang out with goats all day instead of going to my 9 to 5 job. That's when I decided I needed



Courtesy Photo

Belton business, Goat Shenanigans provides a unique Valentine "gift of goats" delivery for your loved one.

to start a business focused on these cute goats." So Whitney thought up a name — Goat Shenanigans — started a website, and began asking friends if they would like to have goats at their parties. They did, and business has boomed. Today, the business has 18 goats and they attend about a dozen of events every week.

Whitney started in 2019 by taking the baby animals to children's birthday parties, but today that's just a small portion of her business. "I still do a few birthday parties," she said with a chuckle, "but now most of the parties are for adults." Just as business started to boom, the COVID-19 pandemic caused demand to screech to a halt. But now the goat party business is baaaack with a twist. "I've expanded my offerings," Whitney said. "I originally thought the goats would be a side gig but this is

a lot of work. Goat Shenanigans is my full-time job." One of the goat-related activities that has become very popular is goat yoga. "It's a real thing in many parts of the country, so I decided to give it a try," she said. While it's fun to imagine the baby goats in a downward dog pose, it doesn't always work out that way. "People just like to hang out with the goats, even during a yoga class," Whitney said. "It's fun and relaxing, and there's usually wine involved." Baby goat cuddling has recently caught on big at Texas colleges and universities. "Yes, the goats have broken into the university world," Whitney said. "We do a lot of business with sorority houses, and the University of Texas, UT San Antonio and Texas A&M-San Antonio are all big customers. The schools hire me to bring in goats to relieve student stress."

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## Pick the perfect Valentine's Day flowers

Valentine's Day is steeped in tradition. Giving flowers is a popular tradition each February 14, and the National Retail Federation estimates that people spend around \$2.6 billion on flowers for Valentine's Day, when an estimated 250 million stems of flowers are sold globally. Valentine's Day is the most lucrative day for florists, with the red rose the most popular flower given on this day for lovebirds.

Just because millions of roses are prepared in advance of Valentine's Day sales doesn't mean this is the type of flower that one has to choose for a bouquet or arrangement. A surprise bouquet can feature unique blooms. Here are tips to give the perfect bouquet to the person who claims your heart.

- Identify your loved one's favorite colors and flowers. Understanding your partner's floral preferences is the first step in choosing a Valentine's Day arrangement. Many have a favorite flower type or color, and everyone's isn't necessarily a red rose. Some people love bright daffodils, while others like exotic lilies. Pay attention to these likes to select flowers that will delight your partner.
- Select fresh flowers. When buying flowers in

person, make sure they are fresh by gently feeling the part of the petal that meets the stem. If this part is firm, then the flower is fresh.

- Opt for neutral tones. If you're unsure of which flowers to buy, stick with varieties in white and soft, neutral tones. This will lend a more romantic vibe to the bouquet. Bright, high-contrast florals may come off as tacky unless you can guarantee that the person prefers them.
- Keep allergies in mind. Valentine's Day should be about offering love, not a case of the sniffles. If the person in your life suffers from floral allergies, avoid certain blooms, like sunflowers, chrysanthemums and hyacinths, suggests Funny How Flowers Do That, a United Kingdom-based flower company. Tulips, irises and hydrangea are less likely to cause an allergic reaction.
- Order early. Time is of the essence when getting flowers for Valentine's Day. Florists may rush or have fewer flowers to work with as Valentine's Day draws closer. Ordering well in advance means you'll get your desired arrangement.

Choosing flowers comes down to a few simple steps to offer a gift of love on Valentine's Day.

person, make sure they are fresh by gently feeling the part of the petal that meets the stem. If this part is firm, then the flower is fresh.

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# Songs from the Heart

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

Love songs. They make us laugh. They make us cry. They bring back faded memories of past romances, and they hold the magic, the promise and the hope of present and future relationships.

During this annual week of love, we explore some of the most popular romance songs of our time and hear firsthand why they are important to some of our friends and neighbors.

One of the greatest romantic songs ever, Love of a Lifetime, actually has a tight local connection. The song was produced by David Prater, a former Bell County resident who used to bang the skins behind guitar legend David Zyck.

After touring with acts such as Santana, Patty LaBelle and Night Ranger, Prater became a producer and his work with Firehouse resulted in one of the biggest "love" hits of the 1980s.

Gayle Shull said her favorite love song is Soldier Boy by the Shirelles, and the song has a deep meaning for her.

"On Dec. 1, 1969, I listened to a news broadcast of the birthdays drawn in the military draft lottery," she said. "My paper and pencil were ready to copy down the birthdays selected. 'Sept. 14, April 14, Dec. ....' was all I noted when I realized my boyfriend's birthday had been selected first."

"My parents let me call Charlie at work even though it was a long-distance call," Shull recalled. "That night, I heard Soldier Boy on the radio. I had heard it many times, but this time it had a much deeper meaning for me."

"My first love was headed to the Army," Shull said. "We married after Charlie returned from two tours in Vietnam and I graduated from college. In May, we will celebrate 50 years of marriage."

Beverly Benton said she has a couple of favorite love songs.

"I've always really liked Tunnel of Love by Bruce Springsteen and Romeo & Juliet by Dire Straits," she said. "My creative writing teacher used to tell us that everything has been done, so we

need to find a way to say it again in our own way. He said to tell a story from our own points of view and to find examples in music of how an artist did that. That song was my favorite example."

Laura Burgoon Smith said her favorite is Making Memories of Us by Keith Urban.

"My husband sang it to me at karaoke before we were married," Smith said. "That was 17 years ago."

Susan Kolodziejczyk said her favorite love song is Carrying Your Love With Me by George Strait.

"I actually did a tribute to my husband several years ago using the titles of George Strait songs because he's one of our favorites," she said. "I have a special 40 year anniversary coming up next week so I might do another tribute."

Other's naming favorite love songs included:

Liz Kleine: I Just Called to Say I Love You by Stevie Wonder.

Kristina Andrade Eutsler: Thank You by Led Zeppelin. "It's just a beautiful song to express your thankfulness in a relationship. I was going to walk down the aisle to the instrumental part of it."

Robyn Skrhak: Let's Get it On by Marvin Gaye.

Cyndi Torres Martinez: I Love The Way You Love Me by John Michael Montgomery. "His son, Walker Montgomery, redid this song recently. It's a beautiful country song."

Jeff Wesney: Velvet by Stoney Larue.

Taura Lucinda Pool: Lost in Love by Air Supply. "It was popular when my husband and I were first married. That's how we felt — lost in love."

Richard Sepulvado: After All This Time by Rodney Crowell.

Stacey Vance: I Can't Tell You Why by The Eagles.

Cori Burk: Perfect by Ed Sheehan. It's a beautiful love song that reminds me of the love of my life.

Cinnamon Russo: Love Theme from Romeo and Juliet. "I think it's a beautiful song. I was listening to this when I was just 5 years old, over and over. I would listen to the whole album."

# What's your favorite love song?

Here's a few recommendations from Belton-area folks

## Holly's picks

When it comes to love songs, Central Texas vocalist and former The Voice star Holly Tucker is an expert. She's sang more than a few over the years.

"I think the greatest love songs are honest, real, passionate and full of truth," she said. "They also have unique and soulful melodies to match the lyrics."

"But the real test of a great song — love song or otherwise — is timelessness. Does it stand the test of time? Does it continue to relate and ring true, generation to generation, without getting old or tired?"

Holly gave it some thought, then sent us her list of love songs that meet that criteria:

- From This Moment On - Shania Twain
- Strawberry Wine - Deana Carter
- I Will Always Love You - Dolly Parton (Whitney Houston)
- Tennessee Whiskey - Chris Stapleton
- Bless The Broken Road - Rascal Flatts
- When You Say Nothing At All - Keith Whitley
- I Swear - John Michael Montgomery
- Die A Happy Man - Thomas Rhett
- Forever and Ever, Amen - Randy Travis
- I Cross My Heart - George Strait
- You're Still The One - Shania Twain
- Unchained Melody - The Righteous Brothers
- At Last - Etta James
- When A Man Loves A Woman - Percy Sledge
- All of Me - John Legend
- To Make You Feel My Love - Garth Brooks



# Happy Valentine's Day

Help this heart find its other half!

### Just for Laughs

What did the octopus say to their valentine?

I want to hold your hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand!

Why are roses so popular on Valentine's Day?

They're sentimental!

What did the magnet say to the refrigerator?

I'm very attracted to you!

Why did the monkeys get married?

They were bananas about each other!

Spelling Scramble

Unscramble these love-ly letters!

DUIPC	
ADYCN	
TREHAS	
CERNOMA	
RWOAR	

ANSWERS: cupid, candy, hearts, romance, arrow



## Belton takes boys' basketball Crosstown Rivalry game over Lake Belton

By **Tony Adams**  
*The Belton Journal*

The Crosstown Rivalry between Belton and Lake Belton is still young and trending upward.

For the boys' basketball programs of Belton and Lake Belton, there is plenty of mutual respect and a ton of heart.

With the Tigers still battling to keep in second place in District 16-5A, and injury-riddled Broncos looking to battle to the finish line, the two squads met up Friday night at Tiger Gym.

The Tigers created separation in the second quarter, having held the Broncos without a field goal for a prolonged stretch in the second quarter to defeat the Broncos,

61-50.

"We were able to find a way to win, and have a lot of work to do," Belton head coach Phil McCaslin said. "We are still at the time of year where we are working our way toward to playoffs. I know that our record is great, but the most important thing is that we are operating at a high level right now."

"I am so proud of my kids," Lake Belton head coach Zane Johnston said. "They played hard. They didn't make shots tonight when they needed to make shots. We were too sloppy early."

The game was tight in the first quarter, with both teams having missed early shots and forced turnovers. When the dust settled on the opening quarter, the Tigers led the

Broncos 12-9.

Belton began to hit outside shots to start the second quarter, and Lake did their best to keep up. The Tigers outscored the Broncos 19-12 in the second period, and led at the halftime break, 31-21.

"I thought Daniel (Briscoe) was good on the glass for us," McCaslin said. "He had double-digit rebounds. We limited the Broncos to one shot, which is what we had been talking about, and not letting them get multiple opportunities."

"We committed 12 turnovers in the first half," Johnston said. "You cannot do that against good teams. We only committed five in the second half. It was the difference in the game. We gave them a 10-point cushion, just like we did last game. They

are a hard team to come back from. They make shots, and some timely ones.

Lake pushed Belton in the third period, having outscored the Tigers 14-11, and was within seven points at the start of the fourth period, 42-35.

"Our third quarter was real sloppy," McCaslin said. "I thought we played a good last 4-to-5 minutes, and got stops where we needed to."

"We have some gritty kids, and they are competitors," Johnston said. "Nelson Hayes playing on a severely injured knee playing the way that he played. Kendrick Jones playing on an injured knee. We have

See **BELTON**,  
Page B3

## BISD scores top finishers in regional swimming and diving championships

By **Aries Ramos**  
*The Belton Journal*

The Lake Belton Broncos and Belton Tigers performed strongly at the Region 6-5A Swimming & Diving Championships. Both teams secured top finishes, and several athletes qualified for the UIL State Meet.

Lake Belton showcased incredible talent with standout performances from the girls' and boys' teams. Christine Kim led the way, finishing second in the 50-yard and 100-yard freestyle events, earning her a place at the state competition. Freshman Gweneth Clark also contributed with a seventh-place finish in the 200-yard freestyle.

Relay teams played a crucial role in the Broncos' success. The girls' 400-yard freestyle relay, featuring Kim, Clark, Elizabeth Simeroth, and Brooke Phillips, placed fifth overall. On the boys' side, the 200-yard freestyle relay team, consisting of David Stewart III, Conner Florea, Kieran Scott, and Joshua Naumann, finished in the top six.

Individually, several swimmers reached the finals. Florea and Scott advanced in the 100-yard butterfly, while Firkins earned a personal best in the 100-yard backstroke. The boys' 200-yard medley relay team also delivered a solid

See **SWIMMING**,  
Page B3

## Wrestling wraps season with trip to Regionals

By **Aries Ramos**  
*The Belton Journal*

The Belton Tigers and Lake Belton Broncos wrestling teams wrapped up their inaugural seasons with strong regional performances, establishing a solid foundation for the future of their programs.

Both teams saw multiple athletes qualify for the regional tournament, proving that wrestling has found a home in the Belton community.

Six Tigers wrestlers battled their way to regionals, showcasing their dedication and effort throughout the sea-

son. Izaiah Avila (215), Jacob U'ren (126), Chase Colbath (113), Eli Idoux (120), Jamie Martins (132), and Mallory Brasher (145) made history as Belton's first-ever regional qualifiers. Each showed hard work and determination in their matches, taking on tough competition and proudly representing their school.

On Day 2 of regionals, Avila, U'ren, and Colbath remained in the fight for a potential state qualification. Despite the pressure of competing at such a high level, they held their own, pushing themselves against some

of the best wrestlers in the region. Their performances highlighted the Tigers' competitive spirit and set a high standard for future Belton wrestlers.

Lake Belton also made a strong statement in its first season, sending eight wrestlers to regionals. Anna Huffman led the way, who dominated the 165-pound weight class, and claimed the district championship. Her performance throughout the season helped pave the way for her teammates, proving that the Broncos

See **WRESTLING**,  
Page B2

## Sign 'em up! Belton ISD athletes sign letters of intent

By **Tony Adams**  
*Belton Journal*

Belton and Lake High School buzzed last Wednesday afternoon, as National Letter of Intent signing day arrived.

The Tigers athletic program celebrated seven student-athletes that committed to continuing their sport and pursuing a college degree.

Tiger Tennis standout Masyn Knight elected to study locally and join the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor Crusaders.

Belton Baseball had two of their team members commit to play at the next level, as Cole Haisler committed to play baseball

for the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor and Austin Wood committed to play baseball for Blackburn University in Carlinville, Illinois.

Lady Tiger Soccer had two of its standouts commit to play collegiate soccer, as Tori Lucksinger will join the Tarleton State University women's soccer team in Stephenville, and Bella Stermer committed to join Nebraska Wesleyan University women's soccer team in Lincoln.

Lady Tiger Volleyball standout Maycen Doskocil will be spiking the ball around in East Texas as she committed to Texas A&M University - Texarkana.

There may not be much water in West

Texas, but there is a pool awaiting Tiger Swimmer Mackenzie Gingerich as she will join the swimming program at University of Texas - Permian Basin in Odessa.

The Lake Belton Broncos athletic program celebrated several of their student-athletes having committed to the collegiate ranks for athletics and academics.

Bronco Football had four of its members commit to play football for the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor. Wide receiver Zach Dodd, center Brett Harmon, quarterback/wide receiver Chance Scott, and lineman Tucker Schwartz will be joining the Crusaders, which has Bronco alumni Ty Legg and

Adam Walden.

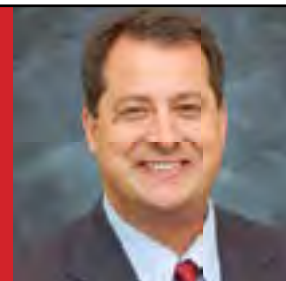
Lake Belton also had one of its members commit to play college up north, as offensive lineman Caleb Loper will join Northwestern State's football team in Wichita Falls.


Lady Bronco Golf landed a collegiate golfer, as Kat Moore committed to play golf at Ottawa University in Ottawa, Arizona.

Finally, Bronco Baseball had two commitments, middle infielder Cameron Bartz will join the Temple College Leopards and utility player Cooper Mees will join the Ranger College Rangers baseball team.



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# Lake Belton eliminated from playoffs following loss to Red Oak

By Tony Adams  
Belton Journal

The Lake Belton girls' basketball team entered the Texas UIL 5A-1 Playoffs on Tuesday against a veteran Red Oak Hawks squad.

The Broncos worked hard for 32 minutes, gave their heart and left everything on Hewitt Midway's Panther Gymnasium floor.

Red Oak had all the right answers and established a post game that the Broncos contained for a good amount of time, but the Hawks were persistent and pulled away for a 66-42 win.

The Broncos season ended at 14-20 with a bi-district final appearance.

"Respectfully, Red Oak is a great team with lots of experience," Lake Belton head coach Tiffany Barnes said. "This is not their first rodeo here. We knew that coming in. Being inexperienced, I am not mad at all. We were able to make it to this position, and they are still hungry. It puts us in a better spot for next season."

Lake scored first when Amara Sanchez put a shot up in the paint 53 seconds into the contest.

Following a pair of in-lane jumpers from Kierstyn Totten, Ariella Polley tied the game with a 5:04



to go in the opening quarter.

Kenedi Griffin hit a runner in the lane 16 seconds before Layla King hit a three-pointer to give Lake a 7-6 lead with 4:02 to go in the quarter, which forced Red Oak to take a timeout.

Polley and Anjelle Kerr collided at half-court having chased down a loose ball. Both left the court under their own power and re-entered the game in the second quarter.

Red Oak's 13-5 run to end the first quarter established a 19-12 advantage, headed into the second.

The Broncos were held to three field goals in the second quarter, as the Hawks began to turn up to pressure in the mid-court. Lake returned the same pressure, as the Broncos held Red Oak to two points over the first 4:23 of the second period.

"We were trying to slow the transition game down," Barnes said.

"But Red Oak is big. Bigger than we are. We just couldn't get it shut down consistently."

The Hawks outscored the Broncos in the final stretch of the first half, 12-4, and led Lake Belton had halftime, 33-21.

Polley's three-pointer from the right elbow of the arc cut the Broncos' deficit to nine points 26 seconds into the second half.

Red Oak went on to close the

third quarter at a 17-8 clip and led by 18 points at the start of the fourth, 50-32.

The Hawks outscored the Broncos in the fourth quarter, 16-10, as the Broncos continued to push forward though the game was out of reach.

Totten led all scorers with 22 points for Red Oak. Journee Hodges added 19, and Kenedi Griffin chipped in 11.

"Our game plan was to stop number three (Hodges), number 20 (Totten), and 24 (Ariana Warren). We did not succeed at that," Barnes said. "We wanted to slow their transition game down. We did that, but could not do it the entire game."

Polley led the Broncos with 14 points, and Natalie Maldonado chipped in nine.

At the beginning of the season, Barnes' knew that the pre-district and district schedules would set the Broncos for a game like this. Keep in mind, the Broncos had two returning players, and were playing with two seniors, three juniors, two sophomores, and four freshmen.

"If we did not have those preseason games early in the season, we definitely would not be in the position where we are now

# Belton Lady Tigers earn 2-1 win over Lake Belton on soccer pitch

By Aries Ramos  
The Belton Journal

The Belton Lady Tigers secured a hard-fought 2-1 victory over the Lake Belton Lady Broncos in a tightly contested district matchup on Friday night. Behind a dominant performance from Kiersten Rowland, who netted both goals for Belton, and play-making from Ava Itz, the Tigers held off a determined Lake Belton squad.

Rowland put Belton on the scoreboard early, capitalizing on a well-placed assist from Itz to give the Tigers a 1-0 lead. However, the Lady Broncos responded quickly. Parker Ling delivered a pinpoint pass to Teagen Pettijohn, who found herself in a one-on-one situation and calmly finished to equalize the match.

Lake Belton's momentum was short-lived, as Belton answered back almost immediately. Itz once again set up Rowland for the game-winner, securing the victory for the Tigers.

Lake Belton head coach Jamie Tibbetts praised her team's effort and fight despite the loss.

"I thought the girls played very well Friday and didn't ever back down, even after going down 1-0 and then getting scored on the right after tying the game," Tibbetts said. "We knew Belton would shoot from outside, and the girls did very well stepping to the outside shot."

Defender Allyson McClanahan  
See **SOCCER**,  
Page B3

# Wrestling - From Page B1

had contenders ready to compete at a high level.

Lorelai Scallorn (3rd at 235), Scarlett Laydon-Williams (4th at 145), and Kameryn Vaden (4th at 185) all earned regional berths, showcasing the depth of the Broncos' girls' team. Avery Ricks (5th at 138) also contributed, earning a spot as a regional alternate.

On the boys' side, Jacob Johnson (285) de-

livered one of the tournament's biggest moments, placing second after upsetting the top seed in the second round. Travellis Harrison Jr. (190) also impacted, securing a third-place finish and a regional berth. Joey Casmus (5th at 150) fought hard in his first varsity tournament, earning a spot as a regional alternate.

While neither team

had a state qualifier in its first season, the Tigers and Broncos' regional success signals a bright future for wrestling in Belton. The athletes' hard work laid the groundwork for future classes, proving that the sport is here to stay. As the Tigers and Broncos continue to build their programs, their inaugural season will be remembered as the beginning of something special.

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## San Antonio Caballeros to hold tryouts for inaugural draft

Special to The Journal

**San Antonio, TX |** San Antonio Caballeros head coach Hal Mumme along with offensive coordinator Stan Bedwell and defensive coordinator Tom Mason will be evaluating players for the future of the San Antonio Caballeros in the International Football Alliance, Saturday Feb. 15 on the main field of Somerset High School in San Antonio.

Camp is open to the first 100 participants who register online at [www.ifa.football/san-antonio-tryout](http://www.ifa.football/san-antonio-tryout). Tryouts run from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. with official training camp invites delivered following tryouts.

President and Head Coach Hal Mumme expressed enthusiasm about the upcoming tryouts, stating, "The tryouts represent a crucial step in identifying

talent for our team. We are eager to see athletes bring their best efforts and showcase their skills."

Saturday affords the opportunity to showcase player skills in front of the Caballeros coaching staff as well as a live audience. Players who receive an invite to training camp will be refunded their registration fees and entered into the inaugural draft.

"This is more than just a tryout; it's an opportunity to join a team that embodies the spirit and pride of San Antonio on an international stage," remarked Coach Mumme. "We encourage all eligible players to register and seize this chance to make football history with us."

The Inaugural Draft

for the IFA is set for the weekend of March 21-22 in Huntsville, AL. It will be eight rounds total,

with rounds 1-3 focused solely on International and Dual Citizens. Rounds 4-8 will focus on United States-born citizens. Rounds one through three will be held March 21, and rounds four through eight will be March 22. Complete draft information is available at [www.ifa.football/draft](http://www.ifa.football/draft)

Each team will pick from a pool of players compiled by the IFA Player Personnel Dept. Our draft pool will consist of recent college graduates, and professional players who have accepted the draft pool invite, and with experience in other professional football leagues.

The mission of the

International Football Alliance is to bridge the gap in international professional football by delivering the highest level of American Football within the strategic locations of Mexico and the United States. The IFL is implementing NFL-based standard rules of play and creating a true international alliance.

Together with team ownership, it's players and fans, we will work to build a unified and solid football ecosystem to grow American football in a league without borders.

The IFA on-field games will be dynamic, entertaining, and fan-friendly. Professional coaches who have coached professional football at a high level. NFL, CFL, XFL, and USFL.

To register and more information, please visit: <https://www.ifa.football/san-antonio-tryout>



## FISHING REPORT



**Belton**



**Stillhouse**

**FAIR.** Water stained; 45 degrees; 2.49 feet below pool. The cold snap cooled Lake Belton down even further from 51 degrees to the mid 40s. Fish are still using the same locations as before the cold, but the fish are now moving more slowly, chasing shorter distances, and require a change in tactics and more importantly, a change in expectations. Catch rates will fall as the water temperature falls. Those whites and hybrids on bottom features are best targeted with a white Bladed Hazy Eye Slab in 3/4-ounce. Drop the lure to bottom and then slowly lift it upwards 4-6 feet while observing on 2D or forward facing sonar for a follow, or snap-jig with it. To catch fish seen on side-imaging, cast a 1/2 ounce jighead with white curl-tail grub and work it back with a sawtooth retrieve. Those whites and hybrids which are suspended and roaming after shad are best targeted using a deadstick tactic with a 1 1/2 ounce or heavier jighead and 2-3.5 inch soft plastic fluke-style bodies oriented horizontally. Again 2D or forward facing sonar will help anglers position the bait just inches above these fish. Fish will rise and strike once; a solid, instant hookset is a must. Rods with extra fast tips will help with all of these tactics. Birds will continue to be helpful in finding both kinds of white bass and hybrid. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Catfish are fair. Blue catfish can be found along river ledges in 10 to 20 ft of water. Trolling at slower speeds with fresh cut shad has worked best.

**FAIR.** Water stained; 45 degrees; 2.72 feet below pool. The cold snap cooled Lake Belton down even further from 51 degrees to the mid 40s. Fish are still using the same locations as before the cold, but the fish are now moving more slowly, chasing shorter distances, and require a change in tactics and more importantly, a change in expectations. Catch rates will fall as the water temperature falls. Those whites and hybrids on bottom features are best targeted with a white Bladed Hazy Eye Slab in 3/4-ounce. Drop the lure to bottom and then slowly lift it upwards 4-6 feet while observing on 2D or forward facing sonar for a follow, or snap-jig with it. To catch fish seen on side-imaging, cast a 1/2 ounce jighead with white curl-tail grub and work it back with a sawtooth retrieve. Those whites and hybrids which are suspended and roaming after shad are best targeted using a deadstick tactic with a 1 1/2 ounce or heavier jighead and 2-3 inch soft plastic fluke-style bodies oriented horizontally. Again 2D or forward facing sonar will help anglers position the bait just inches above these fish. Fish will rise and strike once; a solid, instant hookset is a must. Rods with extra fast tips will help with all of these tactics. Birds will continue to be helpful in finding both kinds of white bass and hybrid. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service.

## Swimming - From Page B1

ninth-place finish.

Lake Belton secured seventh place in the girls' and boys' team standings thanks to multiple state qualifiers and strong team performances.

The Belton Tigers also had a strong showing, with the girls' team finishing fourth overall—its highest placement ever at this regional meet. Lili Nelson led the charge, earning a state berth after finishing second in the 500-yard freestyle and third in the 200-yard freestyle.

Addison Richardson made history for the boys' team by winning the 500-yard freestyle, securing an automatic spot at state. He also placed eighth in the 200-yard freestyle, adding points to Belton's total.

Other notable performances included Zee Gingerich, who placed fifth in the 50-yard and 100-yard freestyle events; Olivia Brillhart, who finished eighth in the 50-yard freestyle and 100-yard backstroke; and Kirra Martin, who earned a top-eight

finish in the 200-yard individual medley.

The Tigers also excelled in relays, with the girls' 200-yard freestyle and 400-yard freestyle relay teams finishing third and fourth, respectively. These teams secured state call-ups, ensuring Belton's presence at the UIL Championships.

With strong individual and relay performances, the Tigers' girls' team finished among the top four schools, while the boys placed 12th.

Both programs now

turn their attention to the UIL State Championships, where multiple swimmers will compete against the top athletes in Texas. Christine Kim, Gweneth Clark, Elizabeth Simeroth, and Brooke Phillips will represent the Broncos for Lake Belton. At the same time, Belton's Lili Nelson, Addison Richardson, and multiple relay swimmers will compete for state recognition.

With momentum from regionals, both teams aim to close out their seasons

## Soccer - From Page B2

played a key role for the Lady Broncos. Her aggressive defensive effort helped shift momentum toward Lake Belton and gave them opportunities to push forward offensively.

"Parker Ling's assist to Teagen Pettijohn was a perfect ball to set Teagen up in

a 1v1 situation, which she did an outstanding job finishing on to tie the match," Tibbetts added.

Tibbetts emphasized the need to generate more offensive chances in future matches.

"We need to be able to create more offensive oppor-

tunities to gain more chances on goal," she said. "However, I was very proud of our girls on Friday and how they played for all 80 minutes."

With the win, Belton strengthens its position in district play up 2-0, while Lake Belton looks to bounce back and sharpen its at-

tacking play in upcoming matches.

## Belton - From Page B1

kids banged up, up and down the lineup. My heart breaks for them, and they haven't been able to get over the hump."

The teams combined for 34 points in the final period, with Belton having emerged with the 11-point win.

"I thought Ty (Johnston) was great at getting to the rim," McCaslin said. "He keeps finding ways to make big plays for us. But we have to get better, and we have a long way to go."

Belton improved to 27-6 overall, and 7-2 in district play, a game behind University for second place in the district. The two teams play on Tuesday night.

"We have to take what we learned tonight, and get ready for Waco U," McCaslin said. "It will be a battle."

Lake Belton dropped to 14-18 overall, and 1-8 in district action. The Broncos host No. 5 Killeen Ellison in their final game of the season.

"Hats off to Lake," McCaslin said. "The way that they competed was awesome. Hats off to Nelson (Hayes) for battling back from his injury in his senior year and found



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### Women caregivers face financial challenges

**Scot Hrbacek, CFP®** Financial Advisor

If you're a woman who provides care for children and elderly parents, you may face some financial challenges. How can you meet them?

It's a serious issue. Nearly half of women in the so-called "sandwich generation" say caregiving duties have caused them financial stress, according to a survey by Edward Jones and research firms NEXT360 and Morning Consult.

To help address this problem, you may need to take several steps.

First, try to define your financial goals and create a strategy for meeting them. You may want to get help from a financial professional.

Also, contribute monthly as much as you can afford to your 401(k), IRA or similar plan.

Here's another suggestion: Don't rush into taking Social Security early. If you can afford to wait until your full retirement age of 67, your benefits can be larger.

One final thought: Keep your finances separate from those of your parents. If your accounts get tangled up with theirs, you could end up paying for expenses that your parents can afford.

Caregiving can be financially taxing on caregivers. But by taking the appropriate steps, you may be able to help reduce some of the stress involved.


*This Article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor*



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02.06,02.13 PD

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### LEGALS

**APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION**  
for an original Package Store Permit



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REALTOR®  
254-541-1100

**LAURA GOLDEN-LUEDEKE**  
REALTOR®  
254-760-8447

## GIVE US A CALL!

**SALADO** - Discover elegance and comfort in this meticulously crafted 3389 sqft custom-built home. With 4 bedrooms and 3 baths, the spacious interior offers a seamless flow between its open-concept living spaces. Modern amenities and luxurious finishes grace every corner, while the serene backyard oasis provides a perfect retreat. This residence harmoniously combines architectural sophistication with contemporary living, promising a lifestyle of refined beauty.

**ACREAGE** From the Starry Nights to the City Lights this one-of-a-kind Texas Ranch is under 30 minutes to Waco & 1.5 hrs to Austin! Approx 29 acres with views over Leon River/Lake Belton! 3,000+ square ft custom home you must see to appreciate. Enjoy the fabulous chef's kitchen and large family room both with panoramic views. Take family game night to a whole new level with wet bar and full bath with separate entrance for possible future pool. Huge covered back porch to see the magnificent Texas night sky and enjoy cool nights by the custom fireplace. Everything is bigger and better in Texas and it is clear to see why when you see this amazing ranch!

**NEW CONSTRUCTION!** Beautiful rock and brick home situated on 1/2 acre in the newly developed Deer Grove subdivision in Belton ISD. The open floor plan features 3 bedrooms and 2 bath, a pop-up ceiling in the family room as well as a corner fireplace as a focal point. Large open kitchen with beautiful cabinets and granite! A formal dining and breakfast area plus office. A generous master suite with large walk in closet as well as nice sized secondary bedrooms. Large covered porch, perfect for relaxing or entertaining with your friends and family. As if that is not enough - the home has been pre-wired for a home generator.

**SALADO** -- \*\*Sellers are offering a 2-year home warranty to include pool and septic coverage!\*\* Beautiful custom home with pool to cool off in the Texas summer heat and an oversized backyard to enjoy! This home is located in Salado ISD - features a split floorplan with 4 bedrooms (2 secondary are oversized), 3 bath, formal dining and eat-in breakfast area with luxury vinyl flooring throughout. The kitchen is open to the breakfast and living areas making it great for entertaining. Oversized, insulated garage. All interior walls insulated for sound and exterior walls are fully insulated making this very energy efficient! Great location with easy access to I-35, Belton, Temple, and Austin.

**BELTON ISD** - Charming home with a nice front porch, 2 bedrooms, one bath and lots of storage. Living area could be used as a meeting room. Lot features a beautiful mature tree in the front yard, fully fenced yard, and several out buildings. Excellent location with many possibilities! Adjacent properties are also listed for sale and could make this an amazing commercial property

**THE ESCARPMENT** is a legendary neighborhood, and the perfect setting for this gorgeous residence. Just minutes from Stillhouse Hollow Lake, this gated home sits on over an acre and includes a sparkling pool, garden area and a 30x40 building that is insulated. Enjoy the abundance of windows throughout the home and especially in the breakfast area while watching nature. A gourmet island kitchen is a chef's dream with a loads of countertop space with attached breakfast area. The master suite is an exceptional space with room to make a sitting area and you can enjoy the sunroom just off the suite. The property has beautiful shaded areas, native Texas plants and fruit trees to enjoy throughout the year. As a bonus enjoy the wildlife that passes by in the extended yard outside the fence.

Exceptional property featuring a 3800+ sqft home sitting on 84 fully fenced AG exempt acres with stock tank and views for miles!

Texas law requires all real estate licensees to give the following information about brokerage services to prospective buyers, tenants, sellers and landlords.  
<http://liabs.govcov.com/Laura.pdf>

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### LEGALS

(P) for BEST LIKE GROUP, LLC. dba KC LIQUOR SHOP 2 at 3002A LAKE ROAD, KILLEEN, BELL COUNTY, TEXAS, 76543. DATTA BAHADUR KC (Manager) 02.06, 02.13 pd

#### THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 25CPB00080

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS  
DAVID SCOTT KOMANDOSKY and JOSEPH MARION KOMANDOSKY, Applicants, on February 07, 2025, filed an application for independent administration and letters of administration and application to determine heirship in a proceeding styled: THERESA LORRAINE LOGAN, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00080 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas.

The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be February 13, 2025, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas. All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it.

Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.

The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: NEALE POTTS, PO BOX 969, BELTON TX 76513

The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication.

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on February 07, 2025, Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513

By: Sophia Nieto Deputy  
02.13

#### THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 24CPB00154

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS  
JULIA CACERES HERNANDEZ, Applicant, on March 12, 2024, filed an Application to Probate as a Muniment of Title of Will



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### LEGALS

More Than Four Years After the Decedent's Death in a proceeding styled: HERIBERTO MONTES-DE LEON, Deceased, and bearing the number 24CPB00154 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas.

The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be February 13, 2025, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas. All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it.

Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.

The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: JAY R. BEATTY, 3106 SOUTH WS YOUNG DR BLDG D #401, KILLEEN TX 76542

The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication.

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on February 07, 2025, Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 79513

By: Lillian Phillips Deputy  
02.13

#### NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS AND PROVISIONS OF THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CODE

that Topsy Tios LLC dba B-Town Burgers & More has filed application for Mixed Beverage and Food & Beverage Certificate. Said business to be conducted at 508 Sparta Rd, Belton, Bell County, TX 76513. Topsy Tios LLC dba B-Town Burgers & More Elieser Escobedo, Manger. 02.13,02.20

#### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of WESLEY DALE PULLIN, Deceased, were issued on January 31, 2025, in Cause No. 25CPB00006, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: GEORGE KENNETH GRUBER.

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.

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**LEGALS**

c/o: GEORGE KENNETH GRUBER, 4708 Thorntree Dr., Plano, Texas 75024  
 DATED the 5TH day of February, 2025.  
 /s/James O. Cure, James O. Cure Attorney for GEORGE KENNETH GRUBER, State Bar No.: 05252800, 2584 Blue Meadow Dr., Temple, TX 76502, Telephone: (254) 778-8934, Facsimile: (254) 773-2477  
 02.13

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of BETTY JEAN HALL, Deceased, were issued on January 31, 2025, in Cause No. 25CPB00014, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: FRANCES SUSAN CLAYTON.  
 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. ESTATE OF BETTY JEAN HALL c/o: FRANCES SUSAN CLAYTON, 5812 Sawyer Ln, Temple, Texas 76502  
 DATED February 4, 2025.  
 KAREN M. VILLANUEVA, State Bar No.: 24102608, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: [karen@templelawoffice.com](mailto:karen@templelawoffice.com)  
 02.13

**LEGALS**

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of MARIO VELEZ, SR., Deceased, were issued on January 31, 2025, in Cause No. 25CPB00027, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: GUSTAVO VELEZ.  
 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. ESTATE OF MARIO VELEZ, SR., c/o: GUSTAVO VELEZ, 5316 Saunter Lane Bulverde, Texas 78163  
 DATED February 4, 2025.  
 KAREN M. VILLANUEVA, State Bar No.: 24102608, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: [karen@templelawoffice.com](mailto:karen@templelawoffice.com)  
 02.13

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of STEVEN W. WOOD, Deceased, were issued on January 31, 2025, in Cause No. 25CPB00012, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: JULIE LANHAM.  
 All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned

**LEGALS**

within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. ESTATE OF STEVEN W. WOOD c/o: JULIE LANHAM, 404 Pondalily, Academy, Texas 76554  
 DATED February 4, 2025.  
 KAREN M. VILLANUEVA, State Bar No.: 24102608, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: [karen@templelawoffice.com](mailto:karen@templelawoffice.com)  
 02.13

**NOTICE TO CREDITORS**

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Independent Administration for the Estate of JAMES DAVID WILSON, Deceased, were issued on January 29, 2025, in Cause No. 24CPB00677, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: NICHOLAS W. HOWELL.  
 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. ESTATE OF JAMES DAVID WILSON c/o: NICHOLAS W. HOWELL, 943 Jones Street, Berkeley, California 84710  
 DATED February 3, 2025.  
 KAREN M. VILLANUEVA, State Bar No.: 24102608, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: [karen@templelawoffice.com](mailto:karen@templelawoffice.com)  
 02.13

# EDITORIAL

## Grab a Book! Boost Your Social Skills

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

Do you remember those elementary school days when you were issued a blank list and encouraged to fill it up with titles of books you've read? You might have even been rewarded with cool prizes like funky shaped pencil erasers or sparkly stickers. And if you really worked hard, you might even get to attend a pizza party. Turns out, your teachers were onto something. Not only is reading a great way to learn new information, it's an excellent social-skills booster. Or fiction reading is, anyway.  
 Interestingly, our brains don't know the difference between real-life experiences and reading about them. Fiction books are like high-tech reality simulations. They let us go deep into the minds, thoughts, and emotions of the characters, allowing us to understand the way others think and feel even if their backgrounds and points of view are far different from our own.  
 Research shows that those who read fiction have more empathy. This is particularly true for readers of literary fiction, which deals more with a character's thoughts, emotions, and personal growth, as opposed to genre fiction which is more action driven, or nonfiction which is often more focused

on facts. This increased empathy trickles into our relationships, resulting in improved interactions.  
 Here are a few ways reading helps improve our social skills and relationships:  
 Empathy: Reading lets us live, for a moment, in our character's skin. We take a deep-dive their joys, fears, and failures, which creates a strong baseline for understanding what the people around us might be feeling.  
 Rehearsal: Studies show that our brains light up in the same ways whether we're reading about an experience or living it. When we read, it allows us to approach similar real-life situations as if they're not brand-new. We feel more confident and prepared. For example, if we've never met a person with a specific disability or difference, but we've read about a character with similar challenges, we'll know better how to interact with that person.  
 Openness: Even if a person has lived in the same small town their whole life, reading fosters a readiness to try new things. Readers are exposed to and mentally role-play a broad array of experiences, causing the brain to feel more relaxed at the idea of trying something strange and different.

Communication skills: Not only does reading improve our vocabulary, it also helps us pick up on subtle cues given through body language as we sort out what's happening in our character's world. This improves the way we communicate with others, because we learn to pick up on those hints others give us, both consciously and subconsciously.  
 Problem solving: When reading, we problem-solve along with the characters. This gives us a chance to work out our own brain muscles, so we'll be ready when we need to do it for ourselves.  
 Clearly, reading offers more than just improved test scores. Fiction readers can use what they mentally experience to improve their communications skills and relationships. This can lead to less stress and an overall calmer, more serene existence. So, what are you waiting for? Grab a book, a snack, and your favorite drink, and go live the adventure of a lifetime, right on your couch.

*"Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it." Revelation 1:3*

## Obligatory Seasonal Article

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

There are those for whom Valentine's Day is a day of happiness. They have a significant other to spend the day with. Or if they don't, then they have firm plans to be with someone or something whose company they enjoy. Regardless, they greet the hearts, flowers, cards, and other things that they give and receive as if it was another Christmas. Lucky them.  
 Then there are those for whom Valentine's Day is anything but a day of happiness. These people are alone on Valentine's Day, and it is \*not\* by choice. Some are separated from their loved ones because of work, school, illness, or even death. Others don't have anyone special to spend the day with, often through no fault of their own, and may (metaphorically speaking) have even had their hearts ripped out previously. For them, the day is nothing more than a bad reminder of what they don't have, and what they're afraid they may never have again. The sight of other people in love further despairs them. And all the trinkets that go with the day? Only if they buy them themselves.  
 As you can imagine, this column is for and about this second group.  
 It's all too common for people who don't have anyone on Valentine's Day to spend the day locked away indoors by themselves. After all, the logic goes, if they don't have anything or anyone special on this day, then why bother going anywhere? Meanwhile, others may not have a choice in the matter, as their circumstances (such as hospitalization) may prevent them from going anywhere.

Staying isolated, however, is one of the worst things that can happen. Not only does it shut them out from social experiences that could improve their circumstances, it also leaves them with time on their hands to dwell on – and thus mentally reinforce – their situation.  
 If you find yourself in this situation, then there are ways around it you may be able to do. If you are obligated to be indoors, then don't let the time go to waste. Finish that book you've been trying to finish. Catch up on your Netflix queue. Discover a new hobby. Don't just sit around counting flowers on the wall. But if you can get out, get out. Yes, you can treat yourself to a movie and/or a meal. But you can also go for a walk. Or volunteer. In fact, if you do volunteer, you might wind up helping others who are just like you, people who for one reason or another are alone on Valentine's Day.  
 And if you know someone who is in this situation? Granted, it all depends upon the specific circumstances of the individual, but one of the best things you can probably do is be a friend. Do try to understand them. Don't try to "fix" them unless you're a qualified expert. Do make it a point to talk to them. Don't let things drag down too far into depression about what and why. Do motivate them to keep going. Don't be pushy or insistent. Do try to find a balance between constructive criticism (if warranted) and harmful criticism. Don't put yourself out on a limb or try to "save" them. And so on.  
 Yes, the holidays can be stressful for people. This is especially the case when a

person feels pressured or even compelled to participate when it isn't how they're actually feeling. And they can even am-

plify the feelings of being alone. But there's a difference between being alone and being lonely. You just have to find it.

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## Local Activities & Events

### Newcomers Club Activities

#### January

1/20 Snack Time Mahjong  
1/21 Bunco  
1/22 Fun Lunch  
1/25 Jimmy's Egg  
1/27 Well Read Women; Crochet and Knit; Monday Canasta  
1/28 Singing Bluebonnets

#### February

2/14: TGIF  
2/15: Exploring Wines  
2/17: Snack Time MahJongg  
2/18: Bunco

2/19: Popcorn Bridge  
2/20: Nonfiction Book Club; Meet & Greet Coffee  
2/21: Trail Blazers Walking Group  
2/22: Jimmy's Egg  
2/24: Well -Read Women; Monday Canasta  
2/25: Singing Bluebonnets  
2/26: 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.

**CAC announces 2025 concert lineups**  
*Here's a look at the 2025 Texas Music Series:*

**LITTLE JOE HERNANDEZ Y LA FAMILIA — Feb. 22**  
Temple legend and five-time Grammy winner Little Joe Hernandez y La Familia is one of the most popular Tex-Mex bands in the industry. Described as the King of Brown Sound, Little Joe helped pioneer Tejano music, a mix of traditional norteno music and country, blues and rock styles.

**THE TEXAS TENORS — March 30**  
Emmy award-winning classical crossover, the trio was formed in 2009 by country singer JC Fisher, pop singer Marcus Collins and opera singer John Hagen. They were a top four finalist in the fourth season of America's Got Talent, making them the highest-ranking vocal group in the show's history.

**SHAWN COLVIN — May 16**  
In the 30 years since the release of her debut album, Colvin has won three Grammy Awards, released 13 albums, written a critically-acclaimed memoir, maintained a non-stop national and international touring schedule, appeared on countless TV and radio shows, had her songs featured in major movies, and created a remarkable canon of work.

**RUTHIE FOSTER JAZZ BAND — July 12**  
With five Grammy nominations to her name, Ruthie Foster stands as a testament to the power of authenticity and resilience in music. Her soulful melodies, heartfelt lyrics and an unwavering commitment to her art inspire audiences and fellow musicians as she continues to carve a path uniquely her own.

**AN CLIBURN FINALIST CLAYTON STEPHENSON — Oct. 18**  
American pianist Clayton Stephenson's love for music is immediately apparent in his joyous charisma onstage, expressive power and natural ease at the instrument.

**ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL — Nov. 8**  
Founded in 1970, Asleep at the Wheel has been part of the American roots music landscape for more than 50 years.

**SHINYRIBS — Dec. 6**  
Shinyribs, a regular visitor to the CAC, defies genres as a melting pot of Texas blues, New Orleans funk, horn-driven Memphis soul, country twang, border music, big band swing and roots-rock. The 2025 CTOS Classic Music Series includes four big shows.

The Cultural Activities Center in Temple has announced lineups for its two premier music series, and visiting bands will include Los Lonely Boys, Asleep at the Wheel and the wildly popular Shinyribs. 2025 will usher in new music in both the Texas Music Series and the Central Texas Orchestral Society's Classical Music Series. Some old friends will be making return engagements in Temple, and many new performers also will be playing the CAC stage. For more information, please visit <https://www.cacarts.org/events>. Be on the lookout for the full 2025 Texas Music Series lineup in next week's edition of the newspaper.

**The Bell County Master Gardeners and Troy Chamber of Commerce Lunch and Learn presents "Roses in the Landscape"**, Friday, February 14 from 12 to 1 P.M. at the Troy Community Center, 201 E. Main St., Troy. Certified Master Gardener's Carol Morisette and Jan Upchurch will discuss types of roses, when to plant, prune, how to propagate and perform maintenance. They will also discuss Rosette disease. The class limit is 50. Register at [KTB Troy@gmail.com](mailto:KTB Troy@gmail.com) or contact Gaby Warlick at 254-400-7345. Please bring your own lunch and drink of your choice.

**The Belton MKT Depot & Katy Building will be holding a Galentine's Day Market** on Friday, February 14 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Grab your besties and joins us for a one-of-a-kind Galentine's Day Market! Expect an afternoon of shopping, dining and best of all a puppy costume contest!

**Celebrate Valentine's Day in Style at Grand Avenue Theater** by enjoying a romantic evening with: A delicious dinner featuring 'Marry Me' Chicken or Vegetarian options, wine and dessert, a 7 p.m. showing of How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days \$70 per couple – includes dinner, wine, and a large combo for two! Don't wait! RSVP by 2:00 PM on February 14 to reserve your seats. Visit [www.grandavenue theater.com](http://www.grandavenue theater.com) for reservations.

**Vista Community Church** will be holding a life skills class on Saturday, February 15 at 9 a.m. and invites anyone who would like to learn how to change a tire. This would be great for teenagers but are welcoming everyone to attend.

**The Bell County Master Gardener Association** is hosting a free monthly seminar "Landscaping with Drought Tolerant Native Plants" on Thursday, February 20 from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Texas Agrilife Extension Office, BCMGA Learning Center, 1605 N. Main St., Belton. Certified Master Gardener, Barbara Ishikawa and Natalie McAnerney will discuss how to best use native drought tolerant plants in your landscaping that grow well in Central Texas. They will provide a list of native plants that grow well in Central Texas. The class limit is 50. Please register at [bcmgaspeakers@gmail.com](mailto:bcmgaspeakers@gmail.com)

**Please join us for the 49th TABA Home and Garden show** on Friday, February 21-23 at the Cadance Bank Center in Belton as we bring you new features for exhibitors and attendees alike. The Temple Area Builders Association Home and Garden Show gives local and national companies the ability to highlight their services and unique products to a captive, motivated audience. Come check out the largest Home & Garden show in Central Texas with 125 exhibitors taking up 75,000 square feet of exhibit space! With everything from home builders, landscapers, plants and healthy and beauty products. Admission: Adult (single day) - \$7 cash (additional fees with credit card payment) Children (12 & under) - Free For more information, call 254-773-0445.

**Ladies Auxiliary M.P.R.V.F.D. presents Roses for Hoses** on Saturday, April 12 at 8:30 a.m. at the Oakmont Park in Morgans Point Resort. A 5K run and walk, part of the Centex race series formerly known as Cops Vs. Robbers. Dress in costume or come as you are. The event supports the fire department and community outreach projects.

**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](http://aspenhealthcare.net) or call 512-856-5668 for more information.

**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 come 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](mailto:historicalcommission@bellcounty.texas.gov), call 254-933-5917 or go by their 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 th 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](mailto:bettyreichert@yahoo.com) or Kathy Bement at [katshookandneedle@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.crochet.org) for details.

**Bell County Texas Democratic Women** holds their monthly meeting on the third Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Belton AgriLife Center, 1605 N Main in Belton. Join us to hear from local and state candidates and about important issues and events. This is open to the public.

**Leadership Belton** is an excellent source for learning leadership skills. This 10-month program focuses on three key elements: community awareness training, leadership training, and team building. Do you have someone ready to take the next step to become a leader? If so, Leadership Belton is here to make that difference. For more information on how to participate, contact the chamber at 254-939-3551 or e-mail at [info@beltonchamber.com](mailto:info@beltonchamber.com).

**Engage & Empower with BISD** Belton ISD believes the learning experiences of our students are enhanced through the engagement of our community. We invite parents and community members to get involved in our schools. Register as a volunteer with our new volunteer and partnership system at the following link: [https://beltonisd.ezcommunicator.net/edu/beltonisd/login\\_form.aspx?app=0](https://beltonisd.ezcommunicator.net/edu/beltonisd/login_form.aspx?app=0).

**Temple-Belton Ladies Lion Club Meeting** 3/24 at 6:30 pm at the VFW, 2311 S Pearl St. in Belton.

### ANIME SUNIK

A is the premier Anime Convention for Central Texas! It will be held at the Cadance Bank Center on Saturday, February 15-16 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Brought to you by the same team behind Bell County Comic Con, Anime Sunika features Anime, Manga, Sneakers, Music, Collectibles, and an Asian Food Festival! Family-friendly event, perfect for fans of all ages.



## 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](http://www.beltontexas.gov/takemehome). Read more about the program here: [https://www.beltontexas.gov/news\\_detail\\_T11\\_R1166.php](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](http://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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321 N. Penelope ~ 254.939.WORD

**Anchor of Hope Fellowship**  
5700 F.M. 439 ~ 254.721.6514

**Belton Christian Church**  
9425 W FM ~ 436 254.939.1172

**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 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 Christian Church of Belton**  
306 E. 5th Fecbelton.com

**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**  
308 W. Ave. D ~ 254.933.3310

**Holy Temple of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.**  
519 S. Pearl St. ~ 254.613.4591

**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

**Immanuel Prince of Peace Lutheran Church**  
1215 S. Wall St. ~ 254.939.0824

**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**  
117 N. Birdwell St. ~ 254.939.0822

**Redeemer Reformed Baptist**  
505 E. Ave C. www.RRBC1689.com

**Temple Vision de lo Alto**  
4357 Orchard Hill ~ 254.563.1231

**Trinity Full Gospel**  
810 East 2nd Ave. ~ 254.939.7673

**Unitarian Universalist Fellowship**  
1726 Morgan's Point Rd. ~ 254.778.8034

**TEMPLE**

**1st Christian Church of Temple**  
300 N 5th St ~ (254) 773-9061

**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

**First Baptist Church**  
8015 West Adams Ave. ~ 254.773.6866

**First Methodist Church GMC**  
102 N. 2nd Temple. TX ~ 254.773.7992

**First Presbyterian Church Temple**  
12 West French ~ 254.773.3407

**Foundation Church**  
10701 W. Adams ~ 254.780.9673

**Grace Baptist Church**  
740 Jayline Drive ~ 254.773.1401

**Grace Comm. Primitive Baptist**  
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

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**  
2109 W. Ave H ~ 254.773.3898

**Leon Valley Church of Christ**  
4404 Twin City Blvd. ~ 254.939.0682

**New Hope Church of God**  
2005 W. Ave D., Suite D. ~ 254.742.2181

**St. Francis Episcopal & 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

**First Church of the Nazarene**  
5000 S. 31st ~ 254.773.3744

**The Redeemed Christian Church of God Salvation Center**  
405 Van Dyke Drive, Suite 403A ~ 469-348-1475

**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. Sundays 8:30, 10, 11:30 a.m., 5 p.m.  
www.thevista.tv ~ 254.774.7992

**Wildwood Baptist Church**  
5195 Cedar Creek Rd. ~ 254.773.3177

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# Record number of babies born locally in 2024

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

Although the birth rate in the US dropped during 2024, a record number of babies were born locally.

According to Christy Millweard, a public and media relations specialist for Baylor Scott & White Health, the BSW Medical Center in Temple had a record number of babies born this past year.

"In 2024, there were close to 3,400 babies born at the Temple hospital," Millweard said. "In

looking at the past five years, the number has increased steadily each year."

In 2019, there were 2,601 babies born at the hospital, and that jumped to 2,725 in 2020, 2,810 in 2021, 2,926 in 2022, 2,969 in 2023 and 3,368 last year.

"The labor and delivery team is grateful to serve the area and thankful to be part of the first moments of these little ones' lives," Millweard added.



Nationwide, the 2024 birthrate in the US was 12.2 births per 1,000 people, according to the National Center for Health Statistics. That is a 0.12 percent decline from 2023. 2024 babies are part of Generation Alpha, the youngest generation to date.

According to The Baby Center, popular names for babies born in 2024 include Noah, Liam, and Oliver for boys,

and Olivia, Amelia, and Emma for girls. Names ending with "-lee" or "-lyn" for girls, and "E" names for boys were also popular.

The birth rate for women aged 20-24 dropped to a record low of 60.4 births per 1,000, while the birth rate for women aged 25-29 increased slightly to 93.4 per 1,000.

The National Center for Disease & Prevention reports that 2024 marks the second consecutive year of birth-rate decline in America.

## BUSINESS SHOWCASE

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Director of Operations

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English Maids has been a long-standing dependable and trustworthy business offering residential cleaning services to Belton and the Central Texas communities for over a decade. The business was started by Kay English out of her home in Waco in 2006, and her daughter, Lauren English-Thurman joined the business in 2009. The company then expanded from Waco to serve surrounding communities, including Belton, Salado and Temple. The mother-daughter team focuses on providing the best service for residential and commercial cleaning, offering weekly, bi-weekly and monthly cleaning.

"During COVID, it was really important because a lot of people were trying to keep their house

clean and sanitized," said Lauren English-Thurman. "Our motto is a clean home is a healthy home."

Every home is cleaned and disinfected during every visit, she added. English-Thurman said that some of their customers utilize their services because they physically cannot clean or do it themselves.

"I get the most joy when we can go in and help them, and then they're so appreciative because it helps their overall quality of life to have a clean home," Thurman-English added. "And it definitely helps the busy moms working and things like that, but I find the most satisfaction when I can help somebody that would not otherwise be able to do it." The company employs around 10 to

12 employees at each of its offices, in both Waco and Belton. Each employee is well-trained, screened and has passed a background check. They are also insured, bonded and carry workers' compensation.

"I think what sets us apart is we're family owned and operated," English-Thurman said. "We pay special attention to detail. I talk to our customers on a regular basis, build a relationship with them, so that we can customize their cleaning."

English Maids is a member of The Cleaning For a Reason Foundation and offers free cleanings to women receiving cancer treatment. For more information, visit [www.englishmaids.biz](http://www.englishmaids.biz) or call 254-231-0583.

### TINY THINKERS



There will be a special reading of *There's a Map on My Lap* followed by crafts and activities. Activities include making robot maps, community helper puppets, and more!



**Feb 19**  
**10 AM - 11 AM**



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### WORDS

- ALGINATE
- AMALGAM
- BRUSH
- CAVITY
- CHECKUP
- CLEANING
- CROWN
- CURING LIGHT
- DAM
- ELEVATOR
- EXPLORER
- EXTRACTION
- FILLINGS
- FLUORIDE
- GLOVES
- IMAGES
- MASK
- MIRROR
- PANORAMIC
- RESIN
- SEALANT
- SPRAY
- SUCTION
- XRAYS

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.