

North Belton Middle School student's artwork goes to state

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

A sixth grader from North Belton Middle School, Kimberly Lezama, placed first in the local Belton Lions Club and at the Lions Club District level for the annual Lions Club International Peace Poster contest.

This year's 2025-2026 theme was "Together as One." This was the Belton Lions Club's first year to participate. Students 11- to 13-years-old compete to create the poster that best represents the Lions Club.

Keith Cook, a member of the Lions Club, contacted local middle school art teachers to see who wanted to involve their art students.

Art teacher and tennis coach, Nick Bottesini, at NBMS, responded that he would involve his students, ranging from sixth to eighth grade.

40 students from Bottesini's classes participated. Preparation began in early 2025, with contest rules and conditions needing to be strictly adhered to. Nov. 15 was the deadline for clubs to mail in

their top choice of the artist who best represented their club.

At a Belton Lions Club's regular meeting at Dead Fish Grill, the 40 posters were on display. The club decided to recognize Maddie Cooper with second place, and Eleanor Maxfield for third place.

Cook said, "It just so happened that the three best posters that the club voted on were in one sixth-grade class."

Lezama received \$200 from the Belton Lions Club, and all three of the top students were given a certificate recognizing their placement.

Of her poster, Lezama said, "I was thinking about cultural diffusion and how when one culture meets another, it creates fusion. If more people come together, it could create peace. I learned how to better apply shading and light. I really enjoy using watercolors and graphite, and my art style is usually more cartoon-inspired, but sometimes I like realism too."

Lezama's piece was sent to the Lions Club District level where 14 Lions Clubs participated.



Courtesy Photo

Keith Cook with the Belton Lions Club is shown with North Belton Middle School student Kimberly Lezama and her district-winning poster, and her teacher, Nick Bottesini, who encouraged his students to enter the Lions Club Peace Poster contest. Lezama's entry competed at the state level.

On Jan. 31, it was announced Lezama's entry also won the district level and her work was moved on to the Texas Lions Poster Competition level.

The Belton Lions Club presented Coach Bottesini with a framed piece about the competition, and he also received a \$20 gift card to Grand Avenue. "Be-

cause that's a lot of work on him to have to monitor that daily," Cook said.

Cook, on behalf of the club, had Lezama's poster printed and framed as a keepsake for her. The Belton Lions Club is considering participating in the International Peace Poster contest again next year.

Inaugural Bell County Alzheimer's Expo set for March 4

Special to the Journal

Community members, caregivers, healthcare professionals, and families affected by Alzheimer's disease are invited to attend the Bell County Alzheimer's Expo, taking place on Wednesday, March 4, from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG) in Belton.

The Alzheimer's Expo is a free, community-wide event designed to provide education, resources, and practical support to individuals and families navigating Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.

The event will feature expert presentations, community exhibitors, and opportunities to connect with local organizations dedicated to brain health, caregiving, and senior support services.

Originally launched in 2022 by Divine Home Care Services, the Alzheimer's Expo has evolved into a fundamental community resource for those impacted by this growing disease. What began as a local initiative in McLennan County has steadily expanded in reach and impact, drawing hundreds of participants annually and creating meaningful collaboration among healthcare providers, nonprofit organizations, caregivers, and families.

The expansion into Bell County marks an important milestone in extending access to education and support throughout Central Texas.

"Very excited about the way the Bell County community is embracing this initiative, and very grateful to our sponsors, exhibitors and participants, and to the extraordinary organizing team that is making the EXPO possible including George Losoya with CTCOG, Hailey Peek with Dementia Enrichment Center, Amanda Morales with Baylor Scott & White Health, and Matt Muñoz," said Eduardo Berdegué, principal at Divine Home Care and founder of the Alzheimer's EXPO.

Attendees can expect:

- 30 by-invitation-only relevant exhibitors
- seven breakout sessions in a variety of important topics
- four one-on-one stations for private consultations with a nurse, attorney, social worker, caregiver
- two interactive sessions including a Virtual Dementia Tour
- one panel discussion featuring the Caregiver Experience
- multiple connections

Alzheimer's disease continues to affect a growing number of families across Texas, placing emotional, physical, and financial strain on caregivers and loved ones. Events like the Bell County Alzheimer's Expo aim to bring clarity, connection, and hope to those navigating the journey.

To register and for additional information, including the full program, presenter lineup, and event sponsors, please visit: <https://divinehomecareservices.com/alzheimers-expo-bell/>.

The event is free and open to the public. Caregivers, family members, healthcare professionals, and community members are encouraged to register and to share the event information with others who may benefit.



Belton sales tax revenue dips

By Lynette Sowell
The Belton Journal

The City of Belton will be receiving a smaller sales tax check compared to February 2025, according to the monthly sales tax report released last week by Acting State Comptroller Kelly Hancock.

This month's check for Belton is \$934,545.92, which is 10.89 percent less than the \$1,047,756.20 the city received in February 2025.

So far for 2026, the city's sales tax revenue is down 6.48 percent compared to 2025. Last year at this time, it was up 2.84 percent.

Statewide, cities are seeing 2.9 percent more in sales tax revenue dis-

bursements compared to last February.

Altogether, cities will be receiving a total of \$963.4 million this month. Statewide, sales tax receipts are up 3.5 percent statewide for the year compared to 2025.

The February allocations are based on sales made in December by businesses that report tax monthly; October, November and December sales by quarterly filers;

and 2025 sales by businesses that report tax annually.

Morgan's Point Resort will receive \$49,776.68, up 4.82 percent. The City of Temple will receive \$3,980,077.51, down 4.8 percent compared to last February. Holland is receiving \$20,973.15, down 29.33 percent. Salado's revenue is also 22.45 percent less, at \$97,678.57.

In western Bell County, Killeen's month-

ly sales tax revenue check is \$3,639,732.30, down 4.99 percent from last February and down 2.58 percent overall for 2026.

Harker Heights sees a slight increase of 1.67 percent with its sales tax check totaling \$1,267,928.04. For 2026, Harker Heights' sales tax revenue is up 4.21 percent. The City of Nolanville is down 5.74 percent and will be receiving \$154,282.76.

Belton	\$934,545.92	down	10.89%
Harker Heights	\$1,267,928.04	up	1.67%
Holland	\$20,973.15	down	29.33%
Killeen	\$3,639,732.30	down	4.99%
Morgan's Point Resort	\$49,776.68	up	4.82%
Nolanville	\$154,282.76	down	5.74%
Salado	\$97,678.57	down	22.45%
Temple	\$3,980,077.51	down	4.8%

Resolution lets Belton seek membership into CT Water Alliance

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Belton City Council passed a resolution authorizing the submission of a membership application into the newly formed Central Texas Water Alliance, a regional water authority created to coordinate long-term water planning, infrastructure development and resource management across the area.

According to Assistant City

Manager Matt Bates, City Council applied for membership into the alliance back in September 2025, but the city was notified that CTWA requires a resolution authorizing the membership application. The resolution was passed last Tuesday.

"Staff has been notified that the CTWA requires a resolution of the City Council authorizing the membership application," Bates said. "In addition, the city is required to publish a notice of

intent to join the Central Texas Water Alliance, which will provide citizens with the information necessary to speak for or against membership."

A \$1,000 fee is due along with the application submission, and the annual cost of membership is \$5,000.

The resolution passed last week says the CTWA was established to promote regional collaboration among municipalities, water providers and other

governmental entities to address shared challenges related to water supply and demand, economic development, public health and safety, environmental protection and drought resilience.

Bates said growing population and continued development in Central Texas are placing increasing demands on existing water infrastructure and supply capacities.

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Patterson running for Justice of the Peace

Special to the Journal

As the race for Bell County Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1 moves forward, Patrick Patterson continues to engage with voters across Bell County, emphasizing his lifelong connection to the community, extensive county government experience, and commitment to fair, accessible, and compassionate justice.

A lifelong Belton resident, Patterson was raised in the very communities he now seeks to serve. His deep roots in Precinct 1 have given him a genuine understanding of the people, challenges, and values that define Bell County.

Patterson is a graduate of

Belton High School and the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, reflecting a long-standing investment in local institutions and a commitment to serving the community that helped shape him.

With 18 years of experience serving Bell County, Patterson brings firsthand knowledge of county operations, procedures, and the public service standards residents expect and deserve. His professional background provides a practical understanding of how county government functions and how the Justice of the Peace Court fits into the broader system.

Patterson's familiarity with court and county systems, in-



Patrick Patterson

cluding extensive experience working within the probation department. This positions him to step into the role of Justice of the Peace with a minimal learning curve. He is prepared

to serve effectively from day one while maintaining continuity, professionalism, and efficiency within the office.

"Justice of the Peace Court is often where people encounter the legal system at some of the most meaningful moments of their lives," Patterson said. "From joyful occasions like marriages, to difficult situations involving disputes, financial hardship, or the loss of a loved one, these moments deserve to be handled with care. My goal is to ensure every person who walks into the courtroom is met with fairness, clarity, and compassion."

Driven by a passion for public service, Patterson believes the role of Justice of the

Peace is not about being the loudest voice in the room, but about listening carefully, applying the law consistently, and treating every individual with dignity and respect especially during moments that matter most.

As the campaign continues, Patterson encourages residents of Precinct 1 to stay engaged, ask questions, and learn more about how the Justice of the Peace Court touches everyday lives and families across Bell County

For more information about Patrick Patterson and his campaign for Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1, visit www.patterson4jp1.com.

Students at Belton New Tech @Waskow volunteer

Special to the Journal

Students at Belton New Tech @Waskow dedicated Dec. 18, 2025, to meaningful service during their annual Purple Heart Servant Leadership Day, carrying forward a long-standing campus tradition rooted in compassion, leadership and community responsibility.

Throughout the day, students stepped away from their regular coursework to participate in hands-on service projects designed to meet real needs across the Belton community. One project took place in Michelle Ciccariello's classroom, where students created handmade hats and fidget items for veterans living at the Olin E. Teague Veterans' Medical Center domiciliary in Temple, many of whom are living with Alzheimer's disease and other cognitive conditions. Students continued working on these items over winter break, with the completed projects delivered in January to help provide comfort and support during the colder months.

For eleventh-grade student Ryleigh Harvey, Purple Heart Day represents the heart of the New Tech culture.

"Purple Heart Day means prioritizing service to help the community and others," Harvey said. "Assignments and schoolwork are pushed to the side so we can focus on helping people. It shows that service is something we truly value here."

Harvey chose to participate in the crocheting project because it combined service with a personal passion.

"I learned to crochet in fifth grade and have loved it ever since," she said. "When I heard we could crochet to help seniors, I jumped at the opportunity. It makes me happy knowing I can help someone by doing something I enjoy."

Students say the experience helped them better understand leadership and sacrifice beyond the classroom.

"Serving others means sacrificing your time and effort to benefit someone else," Harvey said. "It helps you understand leadership by putting people's needs before your own and helping others succeed."

In addition to supporting veterans, students participated in a wide range of service projects throughout the day. These included pantry distribution and food packing, cleaning and organizing shared spaces, resetting classrooms and school grounds and assisting with park cleanups, including efforts at Heritage Park. Students also helped organize the Belton ISD Resource Center, cleaned and sanitized toys in play areas, organized clothing closets, hung banners in the annex and supported a Winter Wonderland experience for Belton Early Childhood students.

Other projects focused on creative and advocacy-



Courtesy Photo

Belton New Tech students volunteer to stock food pantry boxes as just one of the volunteer experiences for Purple Heart Servant Leadership Day.

based service. Students designed pet adoption posters, wrote letters for the Glamour Gals Foundation, and helped document service efforts through photos and video to support ongoing community outreach.

Service learning is deeply connected to the legacy of the school's namesake, Captain Henry T. Waskow, a Belton native and Purple Heart recipient remembered for his devotion to his soldiers and his inclusive leadership style.

"Service is an important part of New Tech's culture," said Tab Lloyd, a teacher at Belton New Tech @Waskow.

"Leadership is not about being out front or seeking recognition. It is about understanding people, meeting real needs and being willing to do the work that matters."

Michelle Ciccariello emphasized that service at New Tech is not treated as a single event but as an ongoing expectation.

"We were the nation's first Purple Heart School, and our dedication to service has always been a source of pride," Ciccariello said. "Repeated experiences like this teach students that helping others is the norm, not the exception. It becomes part of

who they are."

Ciccariello added that Captain Waskow was remembered for creating a family-like environment among his troops, welcoming newcomers and ensuring everyone felt valued.

"We reinforce that legacy by embracing a 'we are family' mindset," she said. "Strong communities grow when people care for one another. Our students learn that leadership means inclusion, compassion and giving back consistently."

Through Purple Heart Servant Leadership Day, students not only support

community partners but also develop empathy, teamwork and leadership skills that extend far beyond the classroom.

"Each time students serve, their perspective grows," Lloyd said. "They gain understanding, compassion and leadership skills that only come through real-world experience."

Belton New Tech @Waskow continues to honor Captain Waskow's legacy by ensuring service remains central to campus life, empowering students to lead with humility, purpose and heart.

Hilltop Recovery Ministries expands with inpatient care

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Hilltop Recovery Ministries (HRM), launched their inpatient Christian recovery center for marginalized women in 2025.

Addicted women who are homeless or are at risk are at the focus of Tanya Roper's efforts at HRM. Six women graduated the inpatient program and entered into their very own homes.

Roper, the executive director of HRM inherited the ministry in 2019 serving women in Bell County and beyond.

In 2019, her first client was a young woman "who had been kidnapped by her

boyfriend and held in a closet for three days."

Upon entering HRM, a sign over the hallway can be seen: "If you don't climb the mountain, you can't see the view."

HRM uses outreach, outpatient care, and inpatient care to help addicted, abused, and trafficked women heal.

Their outreach program seeks homeless women or those on the brink, hoping to gain their trust.

Recently approved as a warming facility, potential clients are able to see they are not in a lockdown facility.

Roper said, "They see **See RECOVERY,**
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Courtesy Photo

Clients at Hilltop Recovery Ministries gather for this month's marble ceremony, a monthly celebration of sobriety and a shared testimony of someone that has also walked a journey of sobriety. Pictured with them is Tanya Roper, Executive Director.

The Belton Journal (ISSN 1053-9131) is published every Thursday, 210 N. Penelope, Belton, TX 76513. Second Class periodical postage paid at Belton, TX. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Belton Journal P.O. Box 180 Belton, TX 76513

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Early voting continues through weekend, concludes Feb. 27

By Lynette Sowell
The Belton Journal

The March 3 primary elections are around the corner, and Bell County voters started heading to the polls on Tuesday for the Republican and Democratic primaries. On the first day of early voting, 2,347 voters made it to the polls. Polls are open 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. today and Friday. On Saturday, Feb. 21 polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., and on Sunday, Feb. 22 from noon until 6 p.m. Early voting continues Monday, Feb. 23 and ends on Friday, Feb. 27 with polls open from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. daily through the end of early voting. Sample ballots by precinct can be found at https://www.bellcountytexas.com/departments/elections/ballot_samples.php. Early Voting will be conducted in person at: Belton Annex, 550 East 2nd Ave. Morgan's Point Event Center, 60 Morgan's Point Blvd. Salado Annex, 11057 Event Dr., Salado Temple ISD Admin Building, 401 Santa Fe Way, Temple True Deliverance Ministry, 709 W. Dean Ave., Killeen Jackson Professional Learning Center, 902 Rev R A Abercrombie Dr., Killeen Senior Center @ Lions Club Park, 1700 E. Stan Schlueter Loop, Killeen Harker Heights Parks & Recreation Center, 307 Millers Crossing

For county offices, Republican Party candidates include County Judge - David Blackburn, Theodore "Ted" Duffield Judge, County Court at Law No. 1 - Paul Motz Judge, County Court at Law No. 2 - John Mischian Judge, County Court at Law No. 3 - John Gauntt, Jr District Clerk - Pam Blair, Lacey Martindale County Clerk - Shelley Coston County Treasurer - Gaylon Evans County Commissioner Precinct 2 - Bobby Whitson County Commissioner Precinct 4 - Curtis Emmons Justice of the Peace Precinct 1 - Joey Agee, Patrick "Pat" Patterson Justice of the Peace Precinct 2 - Gary D. Meyer, Richard Sapp, Buddy Schwab, Michael Tice Justice of the Peace Precinct 3, Place 2 - Larry Wilkey Justice of the Peace Precinct 4, Place 2 - Beatrice "Bea" Cox

For the Democratic Party, candidates include County Chair, Democratic Party - Brandy L. L. Byrd, Teresa "Tess" Griffin, Terry Mustapher County Commissioner Precinct 2 - Stacey L. Wilson County Commissioner Precinct 4 - Louie Minor, Ernest Wilkerson Justice of the Peace Precinct 4, Place 2 - Jessica A. Gonzalez, Nicola J. James, Latasha Carroway Quarles

For opposed races in which a candidate does not receive a 50-percent plus one majority vote, those races will be decided in a May 26 runoff election. For races which do not have a candidate running in the opposing party, the March 3 primary will be the deciding race for that position. Primary winners would then take office on Jan. 1, 2027. For county offices with candidates from Republican and Democratic parties, the winner will be determined in the Nov. 3 election.

BCHC to hear from director of Texas Brazos Trail region

Special to the Journal

The Bell County Historical Commission will meet on Monday Feb. 23, at 6 p.m. in the Commissioners' courtroom on the second floor of the old courthouse, located at 101 East Central Ave., Belton. There will be a short meeting

before the program.

The title of this month's presentation is "Trails, Tails and Tradition: European Migration & Stagecoach History."

The speaker is Pamela Anderson, Executive Director Texas Brazos Trail Region, Texas Heritage Trails, LLC.

Her program explores historic inns, European migration, and the lively festivals that celebrate our shared past.

The meeting is open to the public and all who are interested in history are encouraged to attend. For more information, call 254-493-1472.

Recovery - From Page A2

that we're not these things that they may have in their mind of what recovery looks like. With all that trauma, and trust and everything."

Their intensive outpatient program offers "case management, therapy, and life skills." Said Roper.

Then there is the inpatient care at the historic Cora Anderson Hospital, an African American hospital during segregation.

Here they hold six group sessions per day for the women. Sobriety is phase one. After 30 days of sobriety, if they choose,

they enter the second phase of the inpatient treatment.

Roper said, "They're looking for a place to feel safe and valued. They're really looking for change."

Roper added that clients are able to stay for six months, as they become self-sufficient.

"They're getting jobs, getting ready to get housing. We work on budgets, and they're responsible for paying a portion of their programming fees."

Roper and her team, through donations, grants, and volunteers, are able to serve each woman at less

than \$100 a day.

HRM has the capacity to host 10 women but they need a 10-12 passenger van in order to take in the additional women.

Roper said, "In a year, we've graduated six women, and when I say graduated, that means living independently in their own home, employed, and sober. We think we don't have time. We think it takes a lot of money, and yet it really doesn't. Don't discredit how you can be involved."

Bell County has a 14% higher than national average of women experiencing

homelessness. Addiction was cited as their biggest barrier to getting out of homelessness. The HRM website is www.HilltopRecoveryMinistries.org. Their Facebook page is www.facebook.com/HRMBelton.



OBITUARIES



Sandlin

Alice Joan Sandlin
May 28, 1935 -
February 7, 2026

Alice Joan Sandlin passed peacefully into her next life February 7, 2026 in her home at the age of 90. Her beloved husband of 71 years and cat "Baby" were by her side throughout her last days.

She is preceded in death by her son Jimmy, her parents John Henry Shine and Cora Ann Parker, brother Butch Shine. She is survived by her husband Barton Sandlin, son Johnny Sandlin and wife Candy, daughter Sally Borucki and husband Mike, 5 grandchildren, 7 great grandchildren, brothers Tom and George Shine. She was also blessed by numerous nieces, nephews, great nieces and great nephews.

A service celebrating her life will be at Cole Funeral home in McGregor on Friday, February 27, 2026 at 1:00 p.m. Visitation will be one hour prior to service.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to your favorite charity to honor her generous spirit.

The family wants to express gratitude to: Inez and all the Right At Home caregivers, AMR EMS, The Providence Hospice team especially Nurse Gay and Dr. Wesley, Respiratory Therapist Darla, Ascension Providence physicians, nurses and staff, Dr. Boles McGregor clinic, Dr. Klepper Waco Pulmonary clinic, Dr. Schoultz and nurse Judy Waco Cardiology for your dedication and care.

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Resolution - From Page A1

Participating in the alliance will ensure that Belton has representation in regional water-planning efforts, access to state and regional funding opportunities and the ability to collaborate with neighboring communities to proactively plan for future water needs. Also, Freddy Robles was appoint-

ed to be a candidate for election to the board of directors of the Central Texas Water Supply Corporation. Robles, Belton's assistant director of public works, is currently serving on the board, and Director of Public Works Scott Hodde recommends that Robles continue in this role.

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A4
Thursday,
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LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Belton resident builds future in nursing through Central Texas College

Special to the Journal

For Belton resident Josefa Taylor, becoming a registered nurse represents a continuation of service shaped by perseverance, adaptability and purpose.

After graduating from Central Texas College's Associate Degree Nursing program, Taylor is advancing her career through a graduate nurse residency while continuing her education toward a bachelor's degree.

"I have accepted a graduate nurse residency position in the Emergency Department at Seton Medical Center and am continuing my education at TAMUCT in the RN-BSN degree program," Taylor said.

Taylor said nursing allows her to serve others during moments of fear and uncertainty, combining clinical skill with compassion.

Nursing fulfills my desire to serve others by being present for people during some of the most

difficult moments of their lives," she said. "This position allows me to help people when they are frightened, vulnerable, and in need of both medical care and human connection, something I'm honored to provide in the Emergency Department."

Central Texas College provided the flexibility Taylor needed to continue her education while balancing work and family responsibilities.

"CTC afforded me the opportunity to continue working as an LVN while taking my prerequisites online prior to moving to Texas," she said. "Once I arrived in Texas, I was able to seamlessly continue my goal of graduating from the RN program and accomplish what was previously my short-term career goal."

Taylor's path to graduation unfolded during a period of major personal and professional transition, marked by uncertainty and limited access to educational opportunities.

"I separated from the Army, had my first child, and moved to a remote military base with my spouse at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic all while trying to find a college that I could take courses at to continue my nursing education,"



Courtesy photo

Belton resident Josefa Taylor completed her Associate Degree in Nursing and is working toward her bachelor's degree at TAMUCT in the RN-BSN degree program.

she said. "This proved difficult in a time of uncertainty and as waitlists grew, pushing my dreams further away."

Her momentum resumed when her spouse received orders to Fort Hood, prompting Taylor to search for nursing programs in the region. She said Central Texas College quickly emerged as the right fit.

"CTC's easy application process, Veteran Services Department, close

proximity to the base, and large catalogue of online courses made it very easy for me to apply and begin working towards my goals again," she said.

As an adult learner, Taylor views earning her associate degree as both practical and empowering.

"Getting my AAS in nursing as an adult learner is advantageous because it allows me to move forward in the field of nursing and increasing

my nursing knowledge allows me to improve my patient care," she said.

Taylor said she was surprised by the diversity of the nursing students in her classes, which strengthened her perspective as a nurse.

"I was surprised how many of the members of my cohort were also already healthcare workers, mothers, fathers, spouses, adult learners, and immigrants," she said. "I loved being in such a diverse

class because it gave me so much insight on various aspects of nursing care and barriers to care that deserve acknowledgment."

Reflecting on her journey, Taylor emphasized the importance of embracing every learning opportunity.

"If I could go back in time, I would tell myself to seize every opportunity to learn even if it's something you already know," she said.

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CLEANING & TAILORING

City's Finance Dept. wins award for budget process

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Belton's Finance Department has a long history of preparing award-winning budgets. On Tuesday night, City Council recognized the department for receiving the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 34th consecutive year.

In a December letter to Mike Rodgers, Belton's director of finance, from the Government Finance Officers Association in Chicago, Michele Levine wrote: "A panel of independent reviewers have completed their examination of your annual budget document for the period beginning October 2025. We are pleased to inform you that your budget document has been awarded the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award."

"This award is the highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting," Levine said. "Its attainment represents a significant achievement by your organization. In addition to receiving the award, your entity's budget received special recognition for strategic goals

& strategies and Capital program."

Included with the letter was an electronic award package containing:

Scores and Comments. Each entity submitting a budget to the program is provided with reviewers' scores for each of the categories on which the budget document was judged along with reviewers' confidential comments and suggestions for possible improvements to the budget document.

Budget Award. A camera-ready reproduction of the Award is included for inclusion in your next budget.

Certificate of Recognition. When a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award is granted to an entity, a Certificate of Recognition for Budget Presentation is also presented to the individual(s) or department designated as being primarily responsible for having achieved the award.

"We appreciate your participation in this program, and we sincerely hope that your example will encourage others in their efforts to achieve and maintain excellence in governmental budgeting," Levine said.

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Local Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Activities

February

02/19: Nonfiction Book Club, Couples Night, Meet & Greet
 02/21: Exploring Wine
 02/23: Well Read Women, Monday Canasta
 02/24: Singing Bluebonnets
 02/25: Fun Lunch
 02/26: Mexican Train Dominoes
 02/27: Trailblazers Walking Group
 02/28: Jimmy's Egg

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

Bell County Master Gardeners - Feb 12 & 18

Join us for our next Herb Roundtable as we explore Valerian, Ashwagandha and St. John's Wart. We will discuss its history, uses, growing considerations, and more. These roundtables are an interactive, discussion-based sessions where everyone is encouraged to share and learn together. Choose between two dates- February 12th, Thursday 6pm or February 18th, Wednesday 10am Bell County Extension Office- Learning Center, 1605 N. Main Street, Belton. No registration needed.

Bell County Museum Historic Escape Games - Mar 6

A robbery has been committed and we need your help to solve it! You have one hour to solve the crime and "escape" the museum. Bell County Museum - 201 N Main St, Belton Pre-registration is required and available online at bellcountymuseum.org. Call 254-933-5243 for more information.

Bell County Master Gardeners - Mar 7

Registration for the March 7th, 2026, Spring Garden Forum, "Gardens that Nourish" is now open! Join us Saturday, March 7th for a community gardening forum offering expert-led talks designed to inspire and inform Central Texas gardeners. Hear from an outstanding lineup of speakers Saturday, March 7, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Temple College Pavilion, 1903 S 1st St, Temple, TX Registraer at txmg.org.

SPJST Hosts Public 42 Domino Tournament - Mar 7

Compete in the Texas classic game of dominoes at the SPJST 42 Domino Tournament Saturday, March 7. All seasoned and new players are encouraged to join. The tournament offers a full day of friendly competition, prizes, and community fellowship. Held at the SPJST Home Office, 520 North Main Street, Temple, Texas, check-in runs from 8 to 8:45 a.m. Play time begins at 9 a.m. The tournament is open to players 16 and older. Registration is \$30 and includes admission, lunch, snacks, and refreshments. Seating is limited, with space available for 30 teams. This is a two-player format, and partners will be assigned if needed. Prizes will be awarded to the top teams. Registration is available online at spjst.org/tournaments. For more information, please call 254-773-1575, ext. 164, or email tammym@spjst.com

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet both on TUESDAY, Feb.10th and Feb. 24th at 6:30pm at the Temple VA Hospital. Use the entrance on the Valet parking side of the hospital and take the elevator to the 5th floor -Conference Room 5G31. Both care-givers, supporters and those suffering from mental illness are welcome to join us for mutual support and sharing of information. For more information, call 254-771-3638.

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

Marine Corp League will meet the third Tuesday of each mont at VFW 3859. Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. and metting will begin at 7:00 p.m. 201 VFW Dr, Harker heights, Tx 76548. Email commandant@mc11249tx.comfor more inforamtion.

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

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

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

that consist of preservation, cemetery, markers and education. To volunteer or for more information please visit historicalcommission@bellcounty.texas.gov, call 254-933-5917 or visit the office located in the historic Bell County Courthouse, 101 E. Central Ave., RM 117.

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

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

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

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.

Engage & Empower with BISSD 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.

Temple-Belton Ladies Lion Club Meeting Second and Fourth Monday of every month at 6:30 pm at the Belton V.F.W., 2311 S. Pearl St., Belton.

Community Information

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

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

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

Citizens Helping in Police Service (CHIPS) are extra eyes and ears while in areas where large groups may gather. Contact the Belton Police Dept. to join.

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

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

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

CRYPTO FUN

Solve the code to discover words related to the library. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 9 = E)

A. 11 10 15 9 20
Clue: No noise

B. 20 15 20 19 9
Clue: Book name

C. 6 10 20 25 14 8
Clue: Writer

D. 14 8 4 6 12 15 5 9 16
Clue: Made orderly

Answers: A. quiet B. title C. author D. organized

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to the library.

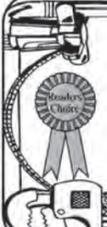
S B K O O

Answers: Books

GUESS WHO ?

I am a singer/actress born in California on February 20, 2003. My acting debut was a role based on a character from a book series I was introduced to as a child. Early in my career I starred in movies and in a Disney show before progressing to music. A song about driving propelled my fame.

Answer: Olivia Rodrigo



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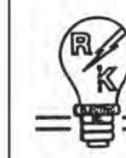


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 - Belton Lighthouse 1001 NE Loop 121 ~ 254.654.7278
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 - Bethel A.M.E. Church 401 S. Davis St. ~ 254.939.6090
 - Central Texas Cathedral Worship Center 700 S. Main Street ~ 254.831.3064
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 - Christ the King Catholic Church 310 E. 24th Ave. ~ 254.939.0806
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 - Cornerstone Community Church 5081 Dog Ridge Rd ~ 254.721.8250
 - Crossroads Church 500 South I-35 ~ 254.939.2122
 - Dominion Life Chapel 105 Green Briar St. ~ 254.563.0472
 - Elm Grove Baptist Church 6388 Elm Grove Rd. ~ 254.933.8127
 - Family Gospel Church 2210 Holland Rd. ~ 254.721.0707
 - Fellowship Baptist Church 2025 Morgan's Point Rd ~ 254.780.2388
 - First Baptist Church Belton 506 N. Main St. ~ 254.933.3391
 - First Mexican Baptist Church 703 S. Wall St. ~ 254.939.6900
 - First Presbyterian Church of Belton 2500 Church Street ~ 254.939.2115
 - First United Methodist Church 205 E. 3rd Ave. ~ 254.939.5703
 - Free Pentecostal Church of Jesus 1111 Cacti Lane ~ 254.933.8201
 - Freedom Bible Fellowship 3087 W. Ave. D ~ 254.933-3310
 - Holy Temple of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith 519 S. Pearl St. ~ 254.613.4591
 - Hope Community Church 507 Mitchell St. ~ 254.933.8222
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 - Liberty in Christ Church 2520 N. Main ~ 254.939.3337
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 - Vista Community Church 7051 Stonchollow Dr. ~ 254.774.7992
 - Wildwood Baptist Church 5195 Cedar Creek Rd. ~ 254.773.3177

The Power of a Changed Heart



John C. Perry

To me, one of the most remarkable figures in all of Scripture is the Apostle Paul. His life reads like a dramatic novel, full of twists, redemption, and relentless purpose, and yet it offers timeless lessons for us today.

We first know him as Saul of Tarsus, born around the same time as Jesus in what is now Turkey. Saul

was both a devout Jew and a Roman citizen, a rare combination that gave him influence in two worlds. Trained under some of the most respected rabbis in Jerusalem, he became fiercely committed to Jewish law. So committed, in fact, that he became one of the early church's greatest enemies. By his own admission, he persecuted Christians "beyond measure."

And then came the road to Damascus.

On that fateful journey, Saul was struck blind and fell to the ground. A voice thundered, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" Bewildered, he asked who was speaking. The answer changed everything: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." Led into the city, Saul spent days praying,

wrestling with the truth. His sight was restored and he was baptized, he was no longer Saul the persecutor, he was Paul, the disciple.

From that moment forward, Paul became one of the greatest champions of the Gospel. He was a bold witness, spreading the Good News of Jesus. Paul traveled nearly 10,000 miles across the Roman Empire, by foot, by ship, through danger and hardship, planting churches and proclaiming Christ. His message was radical, the love of Jesus was not just for the Jews, but for everyone willing to hear. Few others did more to spread Christianity across the known world.

Paul's boldness eventually brought him into conflict with both Jewish leaders and Roman author-

ities. As a Roman citizen, he demanded trial in Rome, where he was ultimately executed. Yet even facing death, his words inspire us still: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith." (2 Timothy 4:7)

What can we learn from Paul's extraordinary life?

We learned through Paul that it is never too late. Paul reminds us that no past is too dark for Christ's light. He went from persecutor to preacher, proving that God's grace transforms anyone willing to receive it.

Paul lived with a servant's heart. He urged believers to "value others above yourselves" (Philippians 2:3-4). His life was a testimony to putting others first.

Paul found joy in Christ, no

matter the circumstance. Even in prison, Paul shared the Gospel with guards. Even facing execution, he rejoiced, knowing he would be with his Savior. His words in Philippians 1:21 capture it perfectly, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."

Paul's story is not just history, but rather it is a challenge to each of us. A challenge to witness boldly, serve humbly, and rejoice always in Christ our Lord and Savior. His life reminds us that faith is not about perfection, but transformation. And that transformation is available to each of us, right here, right now.

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



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Notable quotes from American presidents

Americans will celebrate the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the United States throughout 2026. Many a notable leader has influenced the country in its 250-year history, and the following are some notable quotes from American presidents over the course of the nation's history.

- "If we can but prevent the government from wasting the labors of the people, under the pretense of taking care of them, they must become happy."
- Thomas Jefferson, 1802

- "Peace is the best time for improvement and preparation of every kind; it is in peace that our commerce flourishes most, that taxes are most easily paid, and that the revenue is most productive."
- James Monroe, 1817

- "Officeholders are the agents of the people, not their masters."
- Grover Cleveland, 1886

- "In the history of mankind, many republics have risen, have flourished for a less or greater time, and then have fallen because their citizens lost the power of governing themselves and thereby governing their state; and in no way has this loss of power been so often and so clearly shown as in the tendency to turn the government into a government primarily for the benefit of one class instead of a government for the benefit of the people as a whole."
- Theodore Roosevelt, 1903

- "Governments do not make ideals, but ideals make governments."
- Calvin Coolidge, 1926

- "No government is perfect. One of the chief virtues of democracy, however, is that its defects are always visible and under democratic processes can be pointed out and corrected."
- Harry S. Truman, 1947

- "Mankind must put an end to war — or war will put an end to mankind."
- John F. Kennedy, 1961

- "A president's hardest task is not to do what is right, but to know what is right."
- Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965

- "American has never been united by blood or birth or soil. We are bound by ideals that move us beyond our backgrounds, lift us above our interests and teach us what it means to be citizens."
- George W. Bush, 2001

- "Change will not come if we wait for some other person, or if we wait for some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek."
- Barack Obama, 2008 (delivered while campaigning for president in an election Obama ultimately won)

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Cross town matchup leaves Belton and Lake Belton tied

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

Friday night felt like the postseason arrived early as Lake Belton and Belton met under the lights at Wilson-Kerzee Field with district positioning on the line.

Both programs entered the matchup level in the standings, aware that the outcome would shape the race heading into the final stretch of the first round.

Lake Belton generated several threatening moments, particularly as the match moved into its final stages.

In the closing minutes, the Broncos pushed numbers forward and applied

steady pressure in search of a breakthrough.

However, Belton's defensive shape held strong, disrupting runs and closing down shooting lanes before a decisive strike could develop.

On the other end, Belton produced quality chances of its own, finding stretches of rhythm and controlling portions of play. The Lady Tigers controlled many possessions and remained organized defensively when Lake Belton increased the tempo. The midfield battle proved especially critical, with both teams fighting to dictate the pace and limit transition opportunities.

A major factor in the stalemate

was the defensive execution from both squads. Lake Belton's back line worked together in front of their goalkeeper, who delivered a confident performance between the posts. Belton's defense answered with tough defense, stepping up in key moments to prevent second chance opportunities and maintain structure.

As the final whistle sounded, the scoreboard reflected what the match had been from start to finish, evenly matched.

The 0-0 result was less about missed opportunities and more about defensive discipline and competitive focus.

For Lake Belton, the draw keeps

them unbeaten in district competition, maintaining momentum as they prepare for their next road test.

For Belton, the result secures a valuable point and keeps them firmly in contention as district play continues.

With both teams still very much in the hunt, this rivalry meeting may prove to be a pivotal chapter in a tightly contested season.

If Friday night was any indication, the district race is far from decided. Both programs showed they have the structure and the determination required for a deep postseason push. As the first round winds down, expect the intensity to only increase.

Joshua Mann tapped as newest Head Football coach for Tigers

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

It was difficult, but Joshua Mann knows he made the right decision.

For almost two decades, the veteran head football coach made Leander his home, overseeing Rouse's program from the first day the school opened. During the span, he won plenty of games and celebrated multiple championships.

He also raised a family.

Entrenched within the community, Mann saw his children grow within the city limits while also creating lifelong friendships with other residents.

Recently, however, change was calling the coach, and he accepted a new challenge, becoming the Tigers' head coach following the retirement of Brett Sniffin.

In the days since his milestone decision, which altered both his professional and personal lifestyle, Mann admits to having no regrets.

"Being here has been truly amazing," he said. "It has been beyond my expectations of anything I could have imagined or thought it would be like. The people, the community and the staff members

have all been outstanding, and most importantly, the student-athletes are phenomenal already.

"I'm just excited to get to work with all these people every day."

The feeling should be mutual.

As the Raiders' inaugural head coach since its start in 2008, Mann developed the team into one of the area's premier squads.

Rouse, which was recognized as a University Interscholastic League program in 2010, produced an overall record of 91-89-1 through its first 16 seasons, collecting consecutive district titles in 2020 and 2021. In the playoffs, the Raiders were 13-9 in nine appearances, reaching the Class 4A, Division I state semifinals in 2012.

The success helped Rouse earn a trio of top-25 finishes in the Lone Star Cup, which recognizes excellence at schools across both athletics and academics, and he has received several coach-of-the-year awards from various publications.

Now, he looks to transfer his philosophy to Belton, and on the football field, Mann feels the process was already underway prior to his arrival.

"I'm already at a huge advantage," Mann said.

"I believe there are three 'Es,' and that is effort, enthusiasm and execution, and the kids are in control of all three. These guys are already at a level where their effort is high, so my goal is just to take it a little higher.

"They've got the enthusiasm, and they want to work together as a family, so we just need to perfect our execution for my system that I'm bringing in. Knowing that I'm not going to have to start at step one, though, was part of my draw to Belton."

The Tigers went 35-32 under Sniffin, reaching the playoffs five consecutive seasons to set a new school record, and they captured district titles in 2022 and 2023.

Mann's arrival coincides with the UIL's biennial realignment, which kept the Tigers in District 8-5A, Division II along with two-time defending league champion Brenham, Killeen Ellison, Waco, Waco University and Bryan Rudder.

The setup is slightly different from Mann's prior seven-team district, leaving one less district game than Rouse played during the previous two seasons, but as expect-

See **MANN**,
Page B3

Lady Broncos victorious in one sided showing of Bi-district basketball playoff

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Lady Broncos spent all season earning their state ranking. Monday, they proved it was deserved.

After dominating the competition throughout its schedule, losing just one game and earning an undefeated District 16-5A championship, No. 4 Lake Belton took its first step toward a state title, and it was impressive.

Playing in the Division I bracket, the Lady Broncos traveled to Waco Midway to open their playoff run against Midlothian and delivered a one-sided showing as they never trailed en route to a 65-41 victory.

Lake Belton led 30-8 following the first quarter, and the Lady Panthers could not recover.

Junior point guard Aniya Taylor recorded 12 of her game-high 16 points in the second half, and the performance was complemented by four more double-digit scorers.

Alexa King, a sophomore guard, finished with 14 points, while junior teammate Gemma Pierce had a dozen points. Additionally, freshman small forward Olivia Dann and sophomore guard Erica Taylor each scored 10 points for the Lady Broncos.

The outcome sets up a second-round

See **LAKE**,
Page B3

Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Melissa Farmer made history over the weekend.

In her first season as a member of the Lady Tigers' wrestling roster, the junior excelled, earning a berth at the University Interscholastic League Class 5A Wrestling State Championships, where she capitalized on the opportunity.

Farmer finished fifth in the 235 weight class, marking the first time Belton has ever

landed on the medal stand at state.

Farmer suffered a pinfall loss in the opening round to eventual state champion Alyciana Rogers — a junior from Liberty Hill — but she responded with three consecutive wins before a defeat sent her to the fifth-place match.

The final outcome against Canyon sophomore Josselin Large was decided by pinfall in 1 minute, 43 seconds.

Along the way, Farmer defeated Midlothian Heritage junior Kendall Jones, who was the state runner-up last year.



Belton resident, a BMX pioneer

Special to the Journal

Alma Jo Barrera is a trailblazing figure in BMX Freestyle, recognized as one of the first female riders to make her mark in the sport during the early 1980s.

Raised in Corpus Christi, she grew up riding to the Bayfront with friends, honing tricks, sharing Big Gulps, and occasionally helping shrimp boats clean nets for fish — a reflection of her humble beginnings.

Her competitive career with the American Freestyle Association (AFA) saw her compete against male riders, often placing well, with a standout second-place finish in the 19 & Over Intermediate Flatland class at a major 1987 event, celebrated in American Freestyler magazine.

Barrera's skill earned sponsorships from S&M (Steve & Mike), Vision Street Wear, Visage Bikes and Fanta, leading to appearances at iconic events like the Mountain Dew Classic in Portland, Oregon, and the Veldrome in West Covina, California, where she placed second again, mastering new tricks at the famed Spaghetti Bowl.

She contributed to a Fanta commercial

shoot and talked about new and innovative bike designs, including a lightning bolt on the bottom tube.

Was it her idea or was it already in the books? ... We may never know, potentially influencing the CW Phase 1.

During a GT show in Corpus Christi, Josh White dubbed her "Rad Mom," marking her rising prominence.

Facing personal challenges — losing her parents in 1984 and becoming a teen mom at 15 — Barrera found support from friends' families, with her son Lee riding on the pegs during local adventures.

Transitioning to adulthood, she served in the United States Army through multiple deployments, retiring with a successful career.

Despite battling PTSD, maintaining and riding her bikes — preserved through moves — reconnected her to carefree childhood days.

Her emotional response to BMX's debut at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, reflecting her pioneering role, fuels her hope to inspire girls and women to embrace the sport and discover its peace and happiness.

Belton and the Eagles, who have reached the Division II state semifinals in each of the last three seasons, will be joined by Killeen Chaparral (7-3) and the fourth-place Trojans (5-5).

Lake Belton and Waco (1-9) rounded out the league standings.

The Tigers will open their playoff run either Monday or Tuesday against either Ennis or Crandall.

See **BRIEFS**,
Page B3



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Belton Lake: Stillhouse

FAIR. Water normal stain; 51 degrees; 0.78 feet above pool. The warming trend and solar input on cloudless days has stabilized the water temperature around 50 degrees. This paired with the day length has drawn white bass and shad to the main Leon River and Cowhouse Creek channels. These fish are suspended and are able to be caught via a deadstick tactic with jighead and 3 inch or smaller soft plastic tied to hang horizontally. The use of a thumper will draw fish, and Garmin LiveScope will clearly show both fish and your presentation. When fish move in from the left or right of the screen, adjust your depth to be right in front of them as they pass beneath, then, ever so slowly raise the bait and watch for a follow. Misses are common, but stick with it and you will connect. There are also plenty of bottom-oriented white bass on deep topography. These fish are very responsive to snap-jigging with the white, 5/8 ounce Bladed Hazy Eye Slab with stinger hook. The trick is adding an intentional pause after the jigging stroke, and making sure the jigging stroke ends with the slab about 6 inches off bottom. Numbers of keeper largemouth bass are falling to this deep, snap-jigging approach as well. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Catfish are excellent. The steady cold fronts have increased activity for larger trophy sized bluecatfish. Eater size catfish have slowed, but can still be caught using small fresh cut bait. Deep river channels and sand flats have been productive in 35-55 feet of water. Report by Brian Worley, B&S Catfishing.

FAIR. Water stained; 54 degrees; 1.61 feet above pool. The warming trend and solar input on cloudless days has stabilized the water temperature around 50 degrees. This paired with the day length has drawn white bass and shad to the Lampasas River channel. These fish are suspended and are able to be caught via a deadstick tactic with jighead and 3 inch or smaller soft plastic tied to hang horizontally. The use of a thumper will draw fish, and Garmin LiveScope will clearly show both fish and your presentation. When fish move in from the left or right of the screen, adjust your depth to be right in front of them as they pass beneath, then, ever so slowly raise the bait and watch for a follow. Misses are common, but stick with it and you will connect. There are also plenty of bottom-oriented white bass on deep topography. These fish are very responsive to snap-jigging with the white, 5/8 ounce Bladed Hazy Eye Slab with stinger hook. The trick is adding an intentional pause after the jigging stroke, and making sure the jigging stroke ends with the slab about 6 inches off bottom. Numbers of keeper largemouth bass are falling to this deep, snap-jigging approach as well. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service.

Lake Belton Girls win team powerlifting title

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The postseason has arrived, and Lake Belton appears ready.

In their final meets of the regular-season schedule, the Broncos and Lady Broncos traveled to the Temple Invitational last week, and numerous lifters

returned home with medals.

Equally important, Lake Belton emerged with the girls team title.

Paced by five first-place finishes, the Lady Broncos (1st, 60) cruised to the championship, beating second-place Belton (28) by 32 points.

Along the way, Lake Belton standouts Jaya

Lisenbe and Moriah Rydberg were named top overall lifters for their respective combined weight classes.

Rydberg won the 114 division by combining a 260-pound squat, 155 bench press and 265 deadlift for a 680 total, while Lisenbe's 365-240-335-940 showing won the 220 title.

Gold medals were also earned by Catalina Esquivel (105, 195-125-215-535), Nani Rubio (123, 290-120-315-725) and Aralina Acosta (181, 300-170-315-785), while teammates Shekayla Munoz (2nd, 123, 240-150-225-615), Emyle Love (2nd, 132, 245-140-280-665), Analicia Diaz (2nd, 148, 275-155-335-765), Macie Solis (3rd, 114, 230-140-245-615) and Baylie Anderson (3rd, 242, 195-110-245-550) completed the Lady Broncos' top-three outings.

The Lady Tigers were guided by Riley Lawhon (165, 255-155-255-665), Anahi Perez (198, 300-185-345-830) and Byonka Donaldson (242+, 245-210-345-980), who each placed first. Ciaran Messersmith (132, 200-135-240-575) was third.

Waco University (3rd, 22) and Copperas Cove (4th, 18) followed in the final standings.

Lake Belton also found success in the boys division, where it placed second (45) with just three points fewer than champion Waco (48).

Weight-class winners were Wesley Bradley (165, 445-245-375-1,065), Matthew Jackson (181, 450-340-440-1,230), Hunter Loraus (220, 550-355-485-1,390) and Evan Lazott (275, 520-400-500-1,420).

Also landing on the medal stand for the Broncos were Jax Holliman (2nd,

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See **POWERLIFTING**, Page B3

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Lake - From Page B1

encounter with either Seagoville (22-12) or Dallas White (12-22) either tonight, Friday or Saturday.

Lake Belton (34-1) will not play a state-ranked opponent until potentially facing No. 24 Texarkana Texas (21-3) in the third round.

No. 8 Prosper Walnut Grove (29-5) also resides in Region II.

LADY TIGERS

Belton's turnaround season came to a close Tuesday evening at May-

pearl, where No. 20 Midlothian Heritage earned a 50-34 victory.

The Lady Jaguars posted the game's first six points and never eased up en route to reaching the Class 5A, Division II second round.

By the conclusion of the first quarter, the lead expanded to 15-8, and Heritage owned a 27-13 halftime advantage closing the period with a 7-1 outburst.

The Lady Tigers were within seven points, 32-25, to begin the fourth

quarter as sophomore Laila Koonce-Huston scored six of her team's 12 points in the period, but it was not enough.

Heritage (29-7) scored six unanswered points to begin the final quarter.

The defeat concluded Belton's first playoff appearance since 2022, and it ended the careers of seniors Ke'Ara Shanks and Emma Flory, who helped the Lady Tigers produce a 17-18 overall record.

Briefs - From Page B1

SOFTBALL

The Lady Broncos and Lady Tigers will look to continue their strong starts to the season at weekend tournaments.

Lake Belton will travel to Dripping Springs, while Belton will take part in the three-day Round Rock tournament. Both events begin today.

Then, on Tuesday, the Lady Broncos travel to Hutto for a 7 p.m. start, and the Lady Tigers host Salado at 7 p.m.

Both teams opened their tournament schedules at the three-day NFCA Leadoff Classic at College Station, where Belton finished with a 2-4 record, defeating Robinson 13-0 and Coppell 7-1. The Lady Tigers lost to Clear Springs (10-0), Humble Kingwood Park (5-3), Leander Rouse (6-4) and Lexington (6-3).

The Lady Broncos won four of five games before inclement weather prevented them from concluding the tournament.

Led by home runs from Addison Sims and Avery Park, Lake Belton

defeated Lake Ridge to open the event before beating Willis 1-0 and Argyle 8-4. After falling to Montgomery 5-1, the Lady Broncos bounced back with a 3-1 win against Tomball, which ended early due to rain.

Following the tournament, Lilliana Herrera helped Lake Belton defeat Fredericksburg 4-1 on Monday. Herrera allowed just three hits and struck out a dozen batters in seven innings.

BASEBALL

The Broncos return to action today, opening play at the Round Rock/Liberty Hill tournament. They are set to play Round Rock Cedar Ridge, San Antonio Churchill and Liberty Hill Legacy Ranch.

Then, on Saturday, Lake Belton will host Rockwall-Heath and Liberty Hill at 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., respectively.

Belton travels to Pflugerville Connally tonight after beating Leander Glenn 7-4 in their home opener Monday.

Habt Childers allowed three hits

and one run as the starting pitcher before being relieved by Billy Young and Pecos Smith.

Offensively, Cason Morton went 2-for-3 with three RBIs as the team amassed nine hits.

TRACK & FIELD

The Lady Broncos opened their season at the Lake Travis Invitational, where they finished fifth behind a trio of first-place showings.

In the sprint medley relay, the quartet of Aleya Russell, Moriah Rydberg, Bella Garcia and Lucy Loa delivered a gold-medal time of 4 minutes, 25.45 seconds, and the showing was complemented by wins in the 400-meter relay and Swedish relay.

Kaleileana Cress, Nylah Berriar, Russell and Garcia combined for a winning time of 47.87 in the 400 relay, while Ty'anah Debose, Russell, Garcia and Berriar won the Swedish relay in 2:18.97.

The Lady Broncos will look to build on the showing in Bastrop Saturday.

Powerlifting - From Page B2

148, 410-265-450-1,125), Colton Crocker (2nd, 308, 520-315-560-1,395), Prince Kabuya (3rd, 181, 440-300-430-1,170) and Kaleb Truelove (3rd, 308, 550-325-485-1,360).

Copperas Cove was third (40) and Waco University was fourth (20).

Behind bronze-medal showings from Jorge Guardiola (3rd, 148, 415-235-405-1,055) and Keaton Richardson (3rd, 275, 400-215-430-1,045), the Tigers were sixth, scoring 13 points.

Now, both Belton and Lake Belton turn their full

attention toward the regional meets. The girls meet will be held March 7 at Del Valle, while the boys meet is set for March 14 at Joshua.

Before then, however, there are opportunities to improve.

Lake Belton hosts

a last-chance qualifying meet today, where lifters can attempt to earn a spot at the regional meet by achieving qualifying totals.

Mann - From Page B1

ed, he is embracing the change.

"It is a smaller district," Mann said, "and there is not a lot of room for error. We have to capi-

talize on opportunities to win when we have them.

For me, though, it always starts with Week 1 — that is the most important game on the schedule because

that is the only game we get to play that week.

"I'm really excited for August even though I'm not ready yet. I just can't wait to see what we can



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This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.
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POSSESSION BY COTENANT HEIR

TO: ALL HEIRS OF FRANK QUINTEROS, SR., deceased Property: Being Lot Three (3), in Block One (1), of the H. A. Brocker Subdivision of Blocks Five (5), and Seven (7) and part of Block Three (3) of Highland Addition to the City of Temple, Bell County, Texas, according to the map or plat thereof of record in Volume 621, Pages 241 et seq. Of the Deed records of Bell County, Texas. Name of cotenant heir claiming full title by adverse possession: Mary Quinteros Muriel. Name of owner under whom cotenant claims possession Frank Quinteros Sr., deceased. Notice is hereby given to all heirs of Frank Quinteros, Sr. that Mary Quinteros Muriel claims the above described Property by her adverse possession of the Property in accordance with the provisions of Section 16.0265 of the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code.

The date the affidavit of adverse possession was filed in the Bell County Real Property Records is January 30, 2026.

DATED this 30th day of January, 2026.

By: Pat McGowan, Attorney for Mary Quinteros Muriel Attorney at Law, 2584 Blue Meadow Drive, Temple, Texas 76502, 254-778-8934, patriciafmcgowan@gmail.com, State Bar No: 13641900

02.05,12,19,26

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION – CIVIL CAUSE NO. 26DCV358644

To UNKNOWN HEIRS OF CARMEN GOMEZ, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF SAMUEL LOPEZ, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF RICHARD LOPEZ, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF RUDY LOPEZ, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF MARY MORALES SOTA, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF JOHNNY LOPEZ, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF YOLANDA GOMEZ, AND UNKOWN HEIRS OF CHRISTINA GREESON

Greetings:

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the PLAINTIFF RAMONA MENDOZA'S ORIGINAL PETITION FOR PARTITION OF REAL ESTATE at or before 10 o'clock AM of the first Monday after the expiration of 42 days from the date of issuance of this Citation, the same being Monday, at or before 10 o'clock AM, before the Honorable 146th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas. Said PLAINTIFF RAMONA MENDOZA'S ORIGINAL PETITION FOR PARTITION OF REAL ESTATE was filed in said court on January 05, 2026.

The file number of said suit being No.

26DCV358644. The names of the parties in said suit are:

RAMONA MENDOZA VS. UNKNOWN HEIRS OF CARMEN GOMEZ, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF SAMUEL LOPEZ, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF RICHARD LOPEZ, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF RUDY LOPEZ, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF MARY MORALES SOTA, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF JOHNNY LOPEZ, UNKNOWN HEIRS OF YOLANDA GOMEZ, and UNKNOWN HEIRS OF CHRISTINA GREESON

The nature of said suit being substantially as follows, to wit:

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LEGALS

26DCV358644, styled Ramona Mendoza v. Unknown Heirs of Carmen Gomez, Unknown Heirs of Samuel Lopez, Unknown Heirs of Richard Lopez, Unknown Heirs of Rudy Lopez, Unknown Heirs of Mary Morales Sota, Unknown Heirs of Johnny Lopez, Unknown Heirs of Yolanda Gomez, and Unknown Heirs of Christina Greeson. The subject of this suit is the partition and determination of ownership interest in the following real property located in Bell County, Texas, and more commonly known as 1010 E Ave O Belton, TX 76513:

Lot Number Eleven (11) in Block Two-B (2-B) of the Replat of Lots 7 through 12, inclusive, Block 2-B, Lots 2 through 8, inclusive, Block 2-A of Highland Oaks, First Addition and Lots 1 and 2, Block 3 of Highland Oaks Addition to the City of Belton, in Bell County, Texas, according to the replat in Map Volume 3, Page H-6, of the Plat Records of Bell County, Texas.

This was issued at the request of attorney: RICHARD D. WILSON, HARRELL STOEBNER & VILLANUEVA PC ,2106 BIRD CREEK DRIVE, TEMPLE TX 76502.

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 AM on Monday next following the expiration of forty two days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. In addition to filing a written answer with the clerk, you may be required to make initial disclosures to the other parties of this suit. These disclosures generally must be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more at TexasLawHelp.org.

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office in Belton, Texas, on January 22, 2026.

Joanna Staton District Clerk Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, Texas 76513

By: Misty Cortez Deputy Clerk
01.29, 02.05,02.12,02.19

CITATION BY PUBLICATION

THE STATE OF TEXAS COUNTY OF BELL

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: "You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 am on the Monday next following the expiration of 42 days after the date this citation was issued, a default judgment may be taken against you." To: UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF ROSA VANHORN A/K/A ROSA VAN HORN, DECEASED YOU ARE HEREBY COMMANDED to appear before the 169TH Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas in the Courthouse in the City of Bell, Texas at or before 10:00 o'clock A.M. Monday, the 16th day of March, 2026, being the Monday next after the expiration of forty-two days after this citation is issued, and you are hereby required then and there to appear and file written answer to the Petition, filed in said Court on October 17, 2025, in suit numbered 25DCV357042 on the docket of said court, wherein Mill City Mortgage Loan Trust 2019-GS1, Plaintiff, v. David Vanhorn a/k/a David Van Horn and Rosa Vanhorn a/k/a Rosa Van Horn and The Heirs at Law of Rosa Vanhorn a/k/a Rosa Van Horn, Deceased, Defendants.

The Petition seeks an order to foreclose the lien on the property and assert a claim to the property located at 4457 West Drive, Belton, TX 76513 and legally described as: Being All That Certain Tract Of Land Containing 0.435 Acre, Being The East One-Half (E 1/2) Of Lots 3 And 4, Block 3, Lakewood Terrace, A Subdivision In Bell County, Texas, According To The Map Or Plat Of Record In Cabinet A, Slide 135-C, Plat Records Of Bell County, Texas, And Being The Same Tract Of Land Conveyed To David And Rosa Van Horn In A Deed Recorded In Volume 3202, Page 350, Official Public Records Of Real Property, Bell County, Texas, And Being More Particularly Described As Follows:

Beginning At A 3/4 Inch Iron Pipe Found At The Northeast Corner Of Said Lot 4, Being On The South Right-Of-Way Line Of West Drive And On The West Right-Of-Way Line Of Lakewood Lane, A Gravel Road, For The Northeast Corner Of The Herein Described Tract; Thence South 19 Degrees 12 Minutes West - 160.06 Feet (Bearing Base)

Along The West Right-Of-Way Line Of Said Lakewood Lane, To A 1/2 Inch Iron Rod Found At The Northeast Corner Of Lot 2; Thence North 70 Degrees 57 Minutes 15 Seconds West - 118.45 Feet Along The North Line Of Said Lot 2, To A 1/2 Inch Iron Rod Set At The Southeast Corner Of A Tract Of Land Conveyed As The

LEGALS

Fourth Tract To Ii & L Properties In A Deed Recorded In Volume 3049, Page 196, Official Public Records Of Real Property, Bell County, Texas; Thence North 19 Degrees 13 Minutes East - 160.19 Feet (Record 159.95 Feet) Along The East Line Of Said H & L Properties Tract, To A 1/2 Inch Iron Rod Set On The South Right-Of-Way Line Of Said West Drive, Being The North Line Of Said Lot 4, For The Northwest Corner Of The Herein Described Tract; Thence South 70 Degrees 53 Minutes 24 Seconds East - 118.40 Feet (Record South 71 Degrees East) Along The South Line Of Said Right-Of-Way, To The Point Of Beginning And Containing 0.435 Acre Of Land

Note: The Company Does Not Represent That The Above Acreage Or square footage calculations are correct.

GIVEN UNDER MY HAND AND SEAL OF SAID COURT at Bell, Texas this 29 day of JANUARY 2026

M. Cortez District Clerk Signature & Seal

Issued at the request of: LOGS Legal Group LLP - Counsel for Plaintiff Address: 13105 Northwest Freeway, Suite 960, Houston, TX 77040 (Clerk info) This document not prepared by the Bell County District Clerk
02.05,12,19,22

APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION

for the Wine and Malt Beverage Retailer's Permit (BG) by FMG14 Restaurant Inc dba El Green Chile to be located at 12219 FM 2305, Belton Tx 76513 in Bell County Texas. Officer of said Corporation is Maria Luna (President and Secretary)
02.12,02.19

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Guardianship of BILLIE DAWN GILLELAND, an Incapacitated Person, were issued on February 9, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00653, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: LACY ANN STUTZER. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: ESTATE OF BILLIE DAWN GILLELAND, c/o LACY ANN STUTZER, GUARDIAN, 3396 Rockcut Road, Kettle Falls, WA , 99141

DATED the 10th day of Feb., 2026

J. ERIC STOEBNER, State Bar No.: 24046919, 2106 Bird Creek Drive, Temple, TX 76502, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254), 771-2082 E-mail: eric@templawoffice.com
02.19

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 25CPB00200

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS MATTHEW J BOGER, Applicant, on March 24, 2025, filed an APPLICATION TO DETERMINE HEIRSHIP & APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATOR in a proceeding styled: JAMES C BOGER, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00200 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 19, 2026, 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: David B Nelson , 5592 Davis Blvd #200, North Richland Hills, TX 76180

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 10, 2026. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County,

LEGALS

Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513
 By: Erika DeCasas Deputy
 02.19

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of TYLER WILLIAM SMITH, Deceased, were issued on February 5, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00020, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: REBECCA DIANE HILLSMITH.
 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 TYLER WILLIAM SMITH, c/o: REBECCA DIANE HILL-SMITH, 7142 FM 1123 Belton, Texas 76513
 DATED February 10, 2026.
 KAREN M. VILLANUEVA, State Bar No.: 24102608, 2106 Bird Creek Drive, Temple, TX 76502, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: karen@templalawoffice.com

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of LaVerne Ely, a/k/a Lottie LaVerne Ely, Deceased, were granted on January 20, 2026, in Docket No. 25CPB00785, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: Janet Michel Jeanes Luckey.
 Claims may be presented in care of the attorney for the Estate, addressed as follows: Scofield & Scofield, P.C., 1411 West Avenue, Suite 200, Austin, Texas 78701-1537.
 All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.
 DATED the 11th day of February, 2026.
 Scofield & Scofield, P.C. Attorneys for the Estate By: /s/ Brian Andrews
 02.19

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
 CITATION BY PUBLICATION
 CASE NUMBER 26CPB00084**

To: LIVING RELATIVES OTHER
 BETSY HURLEY, Applicant, on February 10, 2026, filed an APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT OF PERMANENT GUARDIAN OF PERSON AND ESTATE in a proceeding styled: Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00084 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas.
 The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the

LEGALS

day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be February 23, 2026, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.

All people interested in the aforesaid state are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answering 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 applicants is:
 MARY WILEY, 100 W CENTRAL TEXAS EXPRESSWAY, SUITE 306., HARKER HEIGHTS TX 76548

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 11, 2026.
 Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513
 By: Anna Morse Deputy
 02.19

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
 CITATION BY PUBLICATION
 CASE NUMBER 26CPB00092**

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
 GARY L. ENGLAND, Applicant, on February 12, 2026, filed an APPLICATION TO DECLARE HEIRSHIP AND FOR INTESTATE INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION BY AGREEMENT AND FOR ISSUANCE OF LETTERS OF INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION in a proceeding styled: PATRICK ENGLAND A/K/A WILLIAM PATRICK ENGLAND, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00092 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 19, 2026, 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

LEGALS

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: BURK ROBERTS, 2501 E ELMS RD STE A, 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 12, 2026.
 Shelley Coston, County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513
 By: Lillian Phillips Deputy
 02.19

NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS AGAINST THE ESTATE OF ROBERT J. FIGUEREDO, SR., DECEASED

NOTICE is hereby given that original Letters of Testamentary were issued on February 11, 2026 in a proceeding styled Estate of Robert J. Figueredo, Sr.. Deceased, in Cause Number 25CPB00750. pending in the County Court At Law #1 of Bell County. Texas.

Claims may be presented in care of the attorney for the Independent Executor, addressed as follows; Robert J. Figueredo. Jr. Independent Executor of the Estate of Robert J. Figueredo. Sr.. Deceased c/o Burk Roberts, Roberts & Roberts. L.L.P., 2501 East Elms Rd.. Ste. A, Killeen. Texas 76542-3023

All persons having claims against this estate, which is currently being administered, are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.
 Signed on February 12th 2026.

Roberts & Roberts. L.L.P.. Attorneys for Robert J. Figueredo. Jr.
 By: Burk Roberts

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 02.19

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 What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming,
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 O'er the ramparts we watched were so gallantly streaming?
 And the rocket's red glare,
 the bombs bursting in air,
 Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there,
 O say does that star-spangled banner yet wave
 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?**

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EDITORIAL

Prejudice ain't pretty

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

My encounter with the ugly beast of prejudice was brief, swift and later chalked up to a bit of life experience. I guess you could say prejudice and I cracked heads.

It was the whole M word that caused a bit of trouble, as in M for media. It was assumed that I was the enemy, I was prejudged that I'd get a quote wrong and was waved away because of previous encounters with someone who wasn't me. Ouch. I never claimed to be perfect, but almost always I have good intentions.

It rattled me a little, much like when you bonk your head on the door frame of a car. You stand there, shaking your head, not believing you'd walked right into it. And so I did. I stood there, dumbfounded.

I didn't even get to say, "Give me a chance. Help me get it right." Nope, I turned around and skulked away as my brain rattled inside my head.

I share this with you not because I'm looking for sympathy. Being misunderstood has become part of

the job. Most of us have to learn to deal with being misunderstood. That's life. Plus, I don't live with prejudice every day. Or if I have, I'm oblivious of the fact.

How many times, though, do we fall into the ugly aspect of prejudice? Start filling in the ugly blanks for the following: Fat people are _____. People with a certain ethnic/racial background are _____. Preachers are _____.

We start assuming we know how someone is because of previous encounters or what we've seen or heard. People are pre-judged and judgment calls are made based on zero personal experience with that specific individual. There is an exception to every rule, and who made the rule anyway? Maybe we should throw out whatever unforgiving rule that we measure someone by.

Allow yourself to believe that a fat person can be neat, someone of a certain ethnic/racial background can be hardworking, and a preacher can be a generous,

honest person. No, they're not perfect, but they all deserve to have the preconceived notions thrown out.

Perhaps someone has some preconceived notions about you. They've prejudged you based on your family, your friends, your occupation, your gender. Fill in your own blank. Turn the tables on yourself and imagine what it would be like if someone prejudged you. Or maybe you've been a real victim of prejudice, passed up for that job or promotion, having your motives doubted or your work ethic challenged wrongly.

What a perfect time to suspend those judgment calls. You might be surprised at the outcome when you do. I know I've had happy surprises from people that I, um, made an early judgment call on that I shouldn't have. After that incident, I also know I'll remember that knock to the head I felt when someone prejudged me and I'll reserve any judgment calls until later.

An Angelic Wrestler

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

As I've mentioned before, I'm on the official Discord server for Checkmate Creative, an indie software company that makes a family of app games centered around professional wrestling. For obvious reasons, just about everyone who is on that server is either a fan of professional wrestling, a fan of the games, someone who works for Checkmate, or a combination thereof. As I've also mentioned before, sometimes the conversations there take odd turns, like the time we got to talking about chess.

Well, not long ago as I type this "chess" and "pro wrestling" combined once more.

At the time, I had recently been reminded of Maurice Tillet, a professional wrestler known as "The French Angel". Tillet, as a wrestler, was very much "larger than life" in the sense that he had a medical condition known as acromegaly. While many people with acromegaly grow to great size (like fellow French professional wrestler Andre Roussimoff, better known as Andre The Giant), Tillet was of relatively average height for his era; what set him apart, however, was that it led to his having a very husky build, abnormally large hands, and a large head with somewhat exaggerated facial features.

Initially Tillet (who would eventually speak over a dozen languages fluently) considered a career in the legal field, and even obtained a law degree, but became concerned that his large size and deep voice would have a negative impact on his career. Instead, after a stint in the French navy, Tillet became a professional wrestler. Tillet would train and wrestle in both France and England, but World War II would cause him to relocate to the United States. Once stateside, he soon made a name for himself as an unstoppable force, eventually holding one major promotion's championship for a span of approximately two full years. Even though his health would start to deteriorate due to the effects of his acromegaly, he would still be such a presence that an artist made a series of busts depicting him.

Tillet would eventually pass away in 1954, but his legacy lives on. In particular, the character model for the title character from the long-running "Shrek" animated franchise was derived in part from Tillet. He also stands as another real-life titan, someone who honed mind and body to truly remarkable degree.

So where does chess come in?

I first learned about Tillet from the Travel Channel

series "Mysteries At The Museum", a show which goes to different museums, points out various items they have on display, and gives the stories behind those items.

Now, you're probably thinking that the episode in question depicted one of the busts that was created. Well, it did, but that wasn't the focus. No, the focus was an electronic chess game.

You see, Tillet was an avid chess player on top of everything else, possibly good enough to have been considered a chess master. There were a few people who he would routinely play against, and when Tillet died one of those individuals, still grieving Tillet's passing, bought that early electronic chess game as something to play against.

Cue that electronic chess game turning itself on one day, inviting Tillet's friend to play, and then using one of Tillet's more common strategies. This process of periodically turning itself on, inviting the friend to play, and then mimicking Tillet's play style would continue until the friend himself passed on, when the game would cease all such behavior. As of that episode's broadcast, no explanation was ever found.

Given that he went by the moniker of "The French Angel", however,...

Texas Things

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

Every so often I feel like I should write a column about things that are specific to Texas, you know, just in case someone has recently moved here from another state and they need a little help fitting in during a discussion. I, as a native Texan, feel it my obligation to help folks out at times, and also it just helps those "outsiders" do things the right way.

If you hear a Texan say they are "fixin'" to do something, that doesn't mean they are going to repair anything. The term "fixin'" is short for "I am about to...". As in, I am fixin' to go to the store, or, I am fixin' to fix breakfast. The proper spelling is "fixin'" with no "g" on the end. A more real-life example would be:

I'm fixin' to go to the store, you want me to get you a coke?

Yes!

What kind?

Dr Pepper!

Because in Texas "coke" is a generic term for soft drink. And before someone wants to question the reasoning behind that, Dr Pepper is actually the oldest of those drinks in the US, older than Coca-Cola by at least a year. And it was developed right here in Central Texas, Waco to be specific.

Now I am sure someone will question me on my knowledge of words and terms. My credentials are that I am a professional writer. Yes, I get paid for writing this every week. Technically when I drop my weekly column off at the newspaper office they give me a free Dr Pepper, but that is payment.

One thing that has been getting a bit more attention lately, in the form of memes. The correct pronunciation of Whataburger is actually just WaterBurger. I am not sure that anyone, including English majors, can actually pro-

nounce What-A-Burger all the way out, only the hired voice on the television commercials, but he is likely from New York. A good Texan is one that can say Waterburger and make that a single syllable word.

There is an entire etiquette around cowboy hats. A loose rule is straw hats are for summer, so after Easter and put them up after Labor Day. Of course summer doesn't always fit into those dates, so that is a bit flexible. White dress felt hats are permitted during the summer, however black felt hats are for winter, with the exception of formal events, weddings, funerals or any time when you have to wear a dress jacket. Always place a hat upside down, on the crown, like a bowl. Don't set it on the brim. And don't pick up or try someone else's hat on without getting permission, and don't do it even then.

We have all seen a cowboy movie or old western shows where cowboys are on a cattle drive and they have on felt hats. Felt hats serve a purpose, they are good for a lot of things, and yes you can fill them with water. However when you take off a felt hat your hair will look nothing like those cowboys in the movies. Most likely your hair will look like a possum dunked in a tub of water, multiply the dunked possum look by the number of days you were on the cattle drive. There is a reason that someone coined the term "hat hair", it was specifically for cowboy hats.

The seasons in Texas don't really follow the same calendar as other states, although this is probably true for a few states in the southwest. Of course we have summer, we know that when we see it coming. Then we have late summer, it is milder and more

pleasant, but we can have a few hot days. Then we have Texas winter, which is where we have our "perfect" weather days, those days when it is just right. Some years we go right back into summer, perhaps with a short rainy season. There might be a year or so when we get our rain all during the spring and summer, and then into late summer. At times we might get a few light rains but our year resembles the desert. Those are the years when you know which plants in your yard are native Texas plants, they are the ones that survive, and actually grow. Of course we have other years when there is nothing typical about our weather. As a native Texan I am rarely surprised by any weather that we get, mid-80s on Christmas day, snow in November, rain in August, that might actually be typical.

Unused resources

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

Several years ago, I hired a professional organizer. I'm not like all you perfectly left-brained, linear thinkers who have a place for everything and can find anything you want at a moment's notice. I'm more of piles and stacks kind of organizer. So a few years back, I saved up my Christmas and birthday money and got some help.

It proved to be the bargain of the century for me. My new friend didn't just help me stack things in boxes to hide in my garage. She talked to me, learned about my personality, and tried to figure out what organizing system would work for me.

For example, drawers don't work for me. In my brain, if I can't see it, it doesn't exist.

Our conversation went something like this:

Her: How do you find stuff?

Me: I dig through my piles until I find it.

Her: Why don't you use fold-

ers?

Me: I always put stuff in the wrong folder. Plus, I can't make the folders stand up like they're supposed to.

Her: Have you tried hanging folders?

Me: I loathe hanging folders. Stuff gets in between, where there's not an actual folder, and slides to the bottom, and I never see it again.

I was a challenge for her. But together, we came up with a plan that actually helped me. My stacks are smaller now, anyway.

One of the best things she taught me was to move all my handwritten addresses from my spiral-bound, polka-dotted address book to my computer. I'd had this program for years but never took the time to learn it. It had been there, waiting to be accessed, while I scrambled through that little alphabetized address book with all its mark-outs and changes, where things weren't really alphabetized because how do you really keep things

in ABC order in one of those books? "I'm sorry, Mr. Abdo. I can't add your name here. Mr. Applebaum is already in the system, and there's no room." Every time somebody moves or gets married, you've gotta buy a new book. It's a nightmare.

With my computer's address book, there are no scratch-outs. I just click on that person's name and edit the information. I don't even have to add new contacts in order. The computer automatically alphabetizes it for me.

I'd had that computer address book available to me for years before I actually used it. There's no telling how many wasted hours I spent, plodding through my little spiral scratch-out system, stressing because I couldn't find what I needed, when the perfect solution was right there.

God's Word is like that. It's filled with all the tools we need. His promises are like coupons we can cash in.

Feeling stressed or anxious? We can

find peace in His Word. Confused? Perplexed? In James 1, He promised wisdom to anyone who asks.

The more we study God's Word and apply it to our lives, the smoother our paths will be. Not that our lives will be perfect. But The Bible contains the tools we need to navigate our trouble spots.

Often, I treat God's Word like I treated my computer's contact program. I know it's there, but I don't use it. I muddle through life with my piles and stacks, stressed out and bogged down.

Starting now, I will be more efficient with my life. I'll read God's Word, search out His promises, and cash them in. After all, what good is it to have such a perfect resource available if we never actually use it?

"He is a faithful God, who keeps His promise and is merciful to thousands of generations of those who love Him and obey His commands,"
Deuteronomy 7:9.

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Welcome to Belton, Texas

What to look for in a second act

A fiftieth birthday is often viewed as a milestone moment in an individual's personal and professional life. Upon turning 50, some adults might have felt as though they could see the light at the end of their professional tunnel, but that that's not necessarily so in the modern era.

According to the Pew Research Center, the number of adults 65 and older who are still working has nearly doubled since the late 1980s. The researchers at Pew also note the rate of workers 75 and older who are still working has quadrupled since 1964. So while 50 might once have been viewed as an age when it's time to start thinking about a professional exit strategy, modern adults 50 and over may now be looking for a second act so they can keep working for decades to come.

No two professionals are the same, so what makes for an ideal second act for some might not do the same for others. Everyone must identify their own professional priorities, but the following are a handful of qualities to look for in your second act.

• **Transferability:** Professionals change careers for a wide range of reasons, including a desire to do something wholly different from their current job. But even if a chance to do something new is your primary motivation, it can be beneficial to find a second act where skills from your existing career transfer over. Transferability can help bridge the experience gap, making it easier to land a first job in a new field. Transferability also

can make the transition easier on you, as you're less likely to feel like you're starting at square one if you can utilize your existing reservoir of skills in your new job.

• **Flexibility:** Flexibility also can be useful when changing careers. Teaching is a flexible field that many established professionals look to when pondering a second act. If you prefer to try before you buy, then look for a flexible teaching position like an adjunct professor's role at a local college or consider substitute teaching. Flexibility also can pertain to where you work. Pew reports that one in four workers 55 and older teleworked in 2025, so if you're switching careers to spend more time at home and with your family, then a second act that offers the flexibility of remote working might be just what you need.

• **Opportunity:** If you aren't decided on what you'd like your second act to be, then researching growth fields that figure to offer plenty of opportunities can be a great place to start. Read up on burgeoning new fields or established professions experiencing staffing shortages. If you aspire to relocate to a locale that's more retiree-friendly, then look into places you're interested in and see which types of professional opportunities are available so you can continue to work as long as you'd like in your new home.

A second act that allows professionals to utilize their existing skills and offers plenty of flexibility and opportunity can be just what professionals need to make a successful transition to a new line of work.



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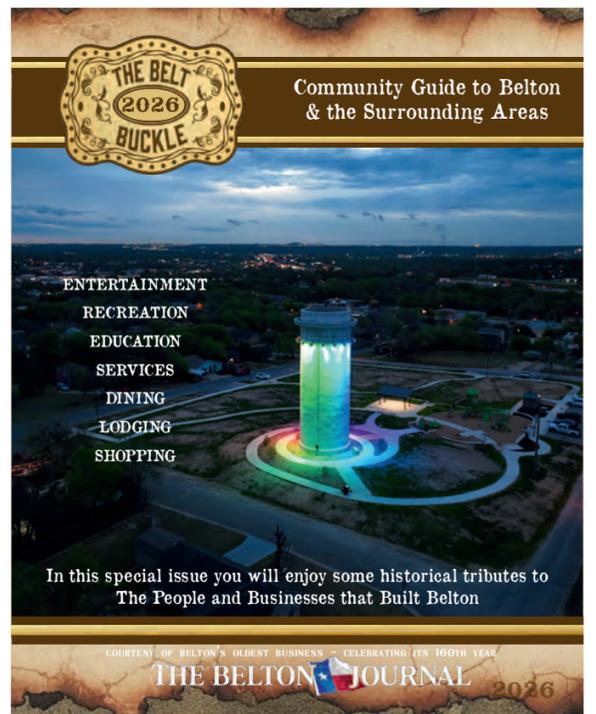
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