



Nolan Creek Brewery wins gold at the 2026 Texas Craft Brewers Cup



Courtesy Photos

Above Left: Nolan Creek Brewery's gold medal awarded for winning "10 for 3" in the Belgian Abbey Ale category. **Above Right:** Kenna Calderon, Lorne Brockway, Matthew Moravec, Rob Williams, and Jackie Brockway celebrate Nolan Creek Brewery's win.

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Nolan Creek Brewery won gold at the fifth annual statewide Texas Craft Brewers Cup Awards for their ale named, *10 for 3*, in the Belgian Abbey Ale category. The awards ceremony was held on Saturday, Feb 21 in Austin.

Nolan Creek Brewery, turning four this Nov, had nine anonymized entries. Their gold placement, *10 for 3*, was named for ten percent alcohol by volume and their third anniversary.

The brewers were Matthew Moravec, lead brewer, and Rob Williams, assistant brewer. Josh Checki, a homebrewer, helped the day the ale was brewed.

Lorne Brockway and his wife, Jackie Brockway, are the owners of Nolan Creek Brewery. Lorne said, "We should do a shout-out to Bird Creek. They won Brewery of the Year" for the Under 620 bbl Group.

When Nolan Creek was announced as winning gold, Bird Creek Brewing and Bold Republic Brewing,

both from Temple, cheered the loudest. A tight-knit community, these breweries, and Southern Roots Brewing Company from Waco, stuck together as they experienced the event.

Nolan Creek Brewery, the day after the win Sunday the 22, invited their Mug Club to come for a free pint of beer to "help us celebrate the win," said Lorne.

"Josh's roll was we used his base recipe for the beer. He came in the day we brewed it to help. He is also

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BELTON JOURNAL/Shalee Corey-Wiech
Members of Chapter 3 of Sons of the Republic of Texas share stories of Texas independence.

Sons of the Republic of Texas celebrate 190 years of Texas independence

By Shalee Corey-Wiech
The Belton Journal

On Saturday, February 28, Chapter 3 of the Sons of the Republic of Texas met on the second floor at the Bell County Courthouse to celebrate 190 years of Texas independence and to honor the ancestors who lived in the Republic of Texas and fought at San Jacinto.

This event included a look back on the history of Texas and the events that led to an 18-minute battle and ultimately liberation from the governing Mexican dictator, Antonio López de Santa Anna.

At this meeting, members of the SRT remembered and celebrated the Declaration of Independence, which was signed on March 2nd in 1836 and led to Western advancement of the United States.

SRT members also listened to the readings of other relevant documents, like William B. Travis' letter, his cry for help from the Alamo, including his famous line "victory or death."

Present for this SRT meeting was the Salado Chorus Choir, who sang three songs: "Texas our Texas," "My Country Tis of Thee," and "America the Beautiful."

Afterward, members of the SRT each talked about their own ancestors and their legacies, honoring their contributions to their community and to Texas independence.

Robert Holt, president of the local SRT, explained that there are 60 SRT chapters in total, with the organization originally being formed in 1893. The SRT in the Temple/Belton area is named after George W. Tyler, who preserved a lot of the history of Bell County.

Holt said, "The mission is to support the objectives of the state SRT. Those are to educate and make the community aware of Texas history and honor our ancestors through events like today."

Robert Holt emphasized the importance of preserving history.

"There doesn't seem to be the energy and the excitement with the younger generation about history, and that's what we're trying to do in this chapter, is to bring in some of the younger folks, so that when we're to the point that we're unable to do this, they will take over in every chapter."

Morgan's Point man credits boxing program for saving his life

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

With his hands wrapped in red tape, David Calvillo works the circuit around Beat Down Boxing's ring, crashing heavy bags and speed bags, then focuses on a moving target — a small reflex bag. He awaits his turn sparring with trainer Rolando Urrea, owner of Beat Down Boxing in downtown Temple.

Calvillo and about 10 other "athletes" working out at Beat Down Boxing on Monday aren't training for a big fight night — instead they were giving Parkinson's disease a shot to the jaw.

Boxing and other intense exercises are known to slow the progression of Parkinson's disease and other movement disorders.

"We meet three days a week — Monday, Wednesday and Friday — and we go about an hour," said Urrea, trainer for the Bell County Area Parkinson's Support Group boxing program.

"I set a timer for two-minute rounds and one minute



BELTON JOURNAL/David Stone

David Calvillo of Morgan's Point Resort pounds a reflex bag during a Bell County Area Parkinson's Support group workout at Beat Down Boxing in downtown Temple. The group consists of Parkinson's patients from throughout the county.

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Bell County primary races see winners, runoff elections

By Lynette Sowell
The Belton Journal

The final unofficial results came in just after 11:30 p.m. on Tuesday, and about 21.69 percent of the county's 239,454 registered voters cast a vote in the primaries. A total of 51,930 ballots were cast in Bell County.

Several county races were decided on Tuesday for the Republican ticket, including that of Bell County judge.

Incumbent David Blackburn received 65.66% of the vote over challenger Ted Duffield, who received 34.34%. As there was no Demo-

cratic candidate in the primary, Blackburn will retain his seat and continue in office as of Jan. 1, 2027.

There were Republican candidates who ran unopposed for County Court at Law Judge Positions.

They included Paul Motz — Judge, County Court at Law No. 1; John Mischitain — Judge, County Clerk at Law No. 2; and John Gauntt Jr. — Judge, County Clerk at Law No. 3.

In the race for Bell County District Clerk, Lacey Martindale won over Pam Blair, 59.24% to 40.76%.

Shelley Coston ran unopposed for the posi-

tion of Bell County Clerk.

In the race for Bell County Treasurer, Adriane Hodges won after receiving 52.46% of the vote, and Gaylon Evans received 47.54%.

Bobby Whitson ran unopposed for County Commissioner Precinct 2, and Curtis Emmons ran unopposed for County Commissioner Precinct 4 on the Republican ticket.

The two will face Democratic winners (named below) in the November general election.

There were several Justice of the Peace races

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Council honors Sara Clark, BHS theatre troupe and local teens

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Assistant Belton City Clerk Sara Clark completed the Texas Municipal Clerks Certification Program and was awarded the Certificate of Graduation by the University of North Texas on Jan. 23.

This is the only university-level professional education program for city clerks and secretaries in Texas.

Clark was honored during last Tuesday's meeting of the Belton City Council.

Mayor David K Leigh was notified by letter of Clark's accomplishment.

The letter stated: "As an officer of the city, achieving. Certification confirms Sara's professional and personal commitment to her city by staying up to date on

laws affecting municipalities in Texas. The certification program offers training that results in increased personal awareness, flexibility and relevant knowledge necessary for more effective administration of local government."

Also at Tuesday's Council meeting, Belton High School's Theatre Troupe was honored with a proclamation declaring March as Theatre in Our Schools Month. Members of the troupe were present to accept the proclamation.

According to the proclamation, "Theatre education plays a vital role in the intellectual, social and emotional development of students by fostering creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication skills."

The proclamation also said Theatre in Schools Month is observed to recognize the importance of theatre education and to celebrate the positive impact of school-based theatre programs on students and the community.

City Council also heard a presentation by Youth Advisory Commission Chair Anahita Malhorta on the organization's fundraising and a proposal for a Community Teen Night event.

James Grant, Belton's Parks & Recreation director, said the Christmas on the Chisholm Trail popcorn fundraiser was organized and supported by Youth Advisory Board members with the goal of reinvesting proceeds into programs that benefit the community.

And, Grant said, the



Courtesy Photo

Assistant City Clerk Sara Clark receives recognition for her Texas Registered Municipal Clerk certification at a recent city council meeting

proposed Community Teen Night is intended to provide a safe, engaging recreational opportunity for local teens to support

youth engagement within the community.

The Teen Night would be mostly funded by proceeds from the pop-

corn fundraiser, which was about \$190. Additional funds would come from the Parks & Recreation budget.

Boxing - From Page A1

in between," Urrea said. "During the rest, we walk around the ring instead of just sitting down. We walk forward, backward and sideways."

The 11 stations include heavy bags of various sizes, an aqua bag, speed bags and a double-end reflex bag. Urrea pulls his students out of the rotation one at a time for individual training on focus mitts — large gloves similar to a catcher's mitt for stopping punches and developing punching accuracy.

Calvillo joined the boxing program when it started three years ago.

"I had been diagnosed with Parkinsons and I thought I needed to be doing something," he said. "I had a gym membership, but I wasn't going."

"I was living in Austin at the time — it was back in 2016 — and my wife and I went to play golf on a cool morning," he said. "I went to tee off, and she asked why my hands were shaking. That was my first sign of Parkinsons."

"I went to Scott & White in Round Rock and I was diagnosed."

The Calvillos moved to Morgan's Point Resort the

following year, and he became active in the Bell County Area Parkinson's Support group and later in the BAPS boxing program. He has high praise for Urrea's classes.

"I definitely have more stamina than before I started boxing," Calvillo said. "I have the will to do more things such as yard work and heavy lifting. I'm stronger than I've been in a long time, and I'm almost 81."

"I feel that BAPS boxing is going to extend my life," he added. "Every time I go I think I gain a few more weeks of living. Boxing gives me great balance — I've never fallen."

"I go three times a week, and on Monday and Friday we box with bags and spar with the trainer," he said. "On Wednesday, we work out on cardio equipment such as the elliptical and lift some weights. We do exercises inside the boxing ring — if you fall on the ring mat, you bounce back up. It sure beats falling on the concrete floor."

BAPS boxing is \$200 a month, but there is a program that pays \$130 of that, making it much more affordable.

"It's such a great program," Calvillo said. "I wish everyone with Parkinson's would take advantage. I love the classes, especially sparring with Rolando. Plus, I've met

a lot of good people through the program and the gym."

Gayle Shull, coordinator for the local Parkinson's support group, said the organization began discussing the need for a local boxing program in 2022.

"Mary Jane Berry, who operates a boxing program in Georgetown, contacted me about assessing the need for a similar program in Bell County," Shull said. "She had been getting requests from Parkinson's patients in Temple and Killeen. We had some folks who were interested in the program."

Shull contacted Urrea, and the longtime trainer jumped at the opportunity.

"I love helping people," he said. "I worked with a man with Parkinson's back in 2015 and it really helped him. I could see the improvement over the weeks."

Urrea, who generally trains young fighters in the evening, was glad to open three days a week to work with Parkinson's sufferers.

"Like I said, I love helping people. If I could take some of their pain away, I'd do it in a minute. It just breaks my heart — I'll give them 100 percent, and if it helps them feel better it's well worth it."

Brewery - From Page A1

a home-brewer," said Kenna Calderon, the Brockway's daughter and third partner who runs the taproom and social media.

Williams began crafting beer while serving in Germany in 2007.

"It was interesting to pay attention at all the local breweries. And really started to enjoy the hobby. It was fascinating to me. I retired in 2022 from the army ended up working here," said Williams.

Moravec said, "It was a hobby. In the industry, a lot of people; it starts as a hobby. And yeah, when about the time that the brewery opened, I was looking for work and serendipity. And so now I don't homebrew anymore."

Having nine entries, the brewers are looking at improvements.

"Our favorite part of the celebration is looking at the tasting notes on the beers


that didn't win. It's so rewarding to bring great craft beer right here to a small town and Central Texas. That's what we're looking to do for the next year, is even make it better," Williams said.

Moravec said, "Most of our recognition is simply from the people who come in and enjoy the environment and enjoy the beer. But yes, having some of that outside recognition is nice."

Moravec said, "It's a very friendly competition, but it is intensely a competition."

The Texas Craft Brewers Cup awarded 90 medals to 56 breweries from across the state. Judging occurred Feb 6 through the 8. 142 breweries provided 930 entries. There were 30 medal categories for over 150 beer styles. Review all the results at [texascraftbrewersguild.org/cup/](https://www.texascraftbrewersguild.org/cup/).

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Two popular restaurants burn

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Heavy fire and smoke damage were reported at two area restaurants last week — Taqueria Mexicano Grille No. 2 at 1704 SW Dodgen Loop in Temple and Miller's Smokehouse in downtown Belton.

The Taqueria Mexicano fire was reported "Sunday morning" at 1:02a.m., and upon arrival Temple Fire & Rescue firefighters found heavy smoke and flames coming from the restaurant.

First crews to the scene began extinguishing efforts, according to Santos Soto, Temple Fire & Rescue's public information officer.

"The restaurant was closed at the time, and no occupants were inside the building at the time of the fire," Soto said. "No

injuries were reported."

The fire was extinguished at 3:40 a.m.

Temple Fire & Rescue responded with nine apparatus and 21 firefighters, he said. Temple Police and EMS also were on the scene.

Miller's Smokehouse sustained major smoke and fire damage after a fire broke out early Saturday morning.

According to the Belton Fire Department, the fire started in the restaurant's kitchen about 2:45 a.m. The exact cause of the blaze remains under investigation.

No injuries were reported as a result of the fire.

According to Miller's Facebook page, the restaurant will remain closed for the time being. The page said they will keep the public updated on when the restaurant will reopen. The page also said the owners are thankful for the support they have received..



DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME BEGINS

March 8, 2026

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Commissioners extend burn ban

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

The Bell County Commissioner's Court unanimously voted Monday to extend the current ban on outdoor burning in unincorporated areas of Bell County until March 16.

The action was recommended by County Judge David Blackburn following discussion with Emergency Management Coordinator Bob Reinhard.

Precinct 2 Commissioner Bobby Whitson serves as a volunteer fireman in Salado, and he agreed that current conditions pose a significant risk for grassfires.

Last week, 36 grass fires were reported across Bell County, 10 more than the previous week. Additionally, the county's average Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) has increased each day over the last week. It reached 338 on Sunday.

The Keetch-Byram Drought Index is a tool used to estimate how likely wildfires are in an area. It measures how much moisture is in the ground by weighing ongoing dry conditions against recent rainfall.

The index runs from 0 to 800, with lower numbers showing moist soil and little fire risk, and higher numbers showing very dry conditions and a much greater fire danger.

Conditions ripe for wildfires have prompted Blackburn to issue two emergency burn bans since January.

"The decision to issue an emergency burn ban order is based on several factors, including a state-generated drought index measure for our county," Blackburn said. "I also consider the actual conditions on the ground here in Bell County."

"We have seen a significant increase in the number of grass fires across the county this year," the county judge added. "That, along with recommendations from our Emergency Management office, were persuasive enough for me to issue the burn ban orders."

"There is some rain in the forecast for later this week," Whitson said. "If we get that, Judge Blackburn can always lift the ban before our next meeting on March 16."

Violations of the Burn Ban constitute a Class C misdemeanor, which is punishable by a \$500 fine.



Courtesy Photo

For the 3rd year in a row, Belton New Tech @Waskow has been named to the 2025 AP School Honor Roll, recognizing the campus's continued commitment to expanding access to Advanced Placement coursework and strengthening college readiness.

Belton New Tech @Waskow named to AP Honor Roll

Special to the Journal

Belton ISD is proud to announce that Belton New Tech @Waskow has been named to the 2025 AP School Honor Roll for the third consecutive year, recognizing the campus's continued commitment to expanding access to Advanced Placement coursework and strengthening college readiness.

The AP School Honor Roll, awarded by the College Board, recognizes schools that demonstrate outstanding efforts to welcome more students into AP courses and support them on the path to college success. Schools earning this distinction show measurable progress in building a strong college-going culture while increasing participation and performance in Advanced Placement programs.

"Being recognized on the AP School Honor Roll for

the third consecutive year reflects the dedication of our teachers and the determination of our students," said Dr. Kim Winters, principal of Belton New Tech @Waskow. "We are intentional about creating opportunities for all students to challenge themselves academically, and this honor affirms the strong college-going culture we continue to build on our campus."

Research shows that students who take AP courses and exams are more likely to attend college and graduate on time. Students who earn college credit through AP coursework can accelerate their path to graduation and build confidence for future academic success.

Belton ISD congratulates the students, staff and dedicated AP educators at Belton New Tech @Waskow for their continued commitment to excellence.

Results - From Page A1

on the ticket, and some ran unopposed.

Larry Wilkey ran for Justice of the Peace Precinct 3, Place 2; and Beatrice "Bea" Cox ran unopposed for Justice of the Peace Precinct 4, Place 2.

In the race for Justice of the Peace Precinct 1, Pat Patterson won with 56.15% of the vote over Joey Agee, who received 43.85%.

A runoff election will be held in May for Justice of the Peace Precinct 2 position.

There were four candidates for that position, and Richard Sapp received 42.50% of the vote, and Mi-

chael Tice received 39.6%. The two will be on the ballot again in May for the runoff. Other candidates included Buddy Schwab, 11.96%; and Gary Meyer, 5.95%.

On the Democratic ticket, Stacey Wilson ran unopposed for County Commissioner Precinct 2. She will face Republican candidate Bobby Whitson in the November general election.

In the race for County Commissioner Precinct 4, Ernest Wilkerson came out ahead over Louie Minor, 64.67% to 35.33%. Wilkerson will face Republican Curtis Emmons in the No-

ember election.

For Justice of the Peace Precinct 4, Place 2, there will be a May runoff election between LaTasha Carroway Quarles (38.87%) and Jessica Gonzales (33.34%). Niccola James received 27.79% of the votes. The winner will face Republican candidates Beatrice "Bea" Cox in November.

In the race for Bell County's Democratic party chair, Tess Griffin ran in a three-way race and won with 57.87% of the vote over Brandy Byrd (26.61%) and Terry Mustapher (15.53%).

According to Bell County Public Information

OBITUARIES



Knight

Nancy Jane Moore Knight
March 8, 1949 - September 27, 2025

A Memorial Service for Nancy Jane Moore Knight was held at the Northside Church of Christ, Sunday, March 1 at 4 p.m. The service took place in the fellowship room.

Nancy was a public-school teacher for 22 years having taught 3rd grade in Kenedy, Texas from 1987 to 1993. She completed her teaching career in Belton at the Southwest Elementary school as a Kindergarten teacher from 1993 until 2009. Nancy was a Bible school teacher from 1968 until 2024, serving at each of the congregations where she attended. Her true love was teaching babies in Cradle Roll class. She taught that class at the Northside congregation in Temple from 1993 through 2024.

Memorial suggestions:

Christian Homes and Family Services, 1202 Estates Drive, Abilene, Tx 79602 Nancy and Darrell adopted both their children from Christian Homes.

Manuelito Navajo Children's Home, Inc. PO Box 58, Gallup, NM 87305.

Nancy made several mission trips to Manuelito.

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A4
Thursday,
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LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

The Overlook, a growing venue at Dead Fish Grill

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

The Dead Fish Grill has offered a banquet room and an outside venue for years, but a recent expansion of The Overlook venue deserves a look.

Locals are invited to stop by, when a private event is not being held, to see their new stage, expanded dance and game floor, and the outdoor firepit.

These improvements, made mid-2025, transformed outdoor events from the ability to serve 50 people to being able to serve between 250 and 300 guests. The indoor banquet room remains the same and seats between 75 and 85 guests, depending on the event.

The Overlook Venue provides a view of beautiful Belton Lake and trees that dot its gated outdoor patio. The backdrop of the lake lends atmosphere for a rehearsal dinner, wedding, birthday party, class

reunion, corporate event, or a night out at one of the live music nights provided by The Dead Fish Grill.

Details include outdoor courtyard lighting and lights on the stage.

Jasmine Hurtado, event coordinator, explained that when the outdoor space on weekends is not booked, they work to schedule bands and concerts open to the public.

Dead Fish Grill at The Overlook will continue to have dueling pianos, as they did the Sunday after Valentine's Day.

They occasionally have wine dinners that begin outside with appetizers, and then move into the banquet room for the second course. They are looking to expand beyond Friday and Saturday band entertainment to include Thursdays and Wednesdays once they get more attendees on the weekends.

"Coming here soon, we're going to be add-



BELTON JOURNAL/Michele Weisman

A view of the new fire pit at the Overlook at Dead Fish Grill at Belton Lake.

ing a bridal suite, bars, and a restroom outside in The Overlook. Hopefully that'll be finished by the start or at summertime," said Hurtado.

This past weekend at The Overlook, live music and a crawfish boil started at 5 p.m.

To view upcoming events or inquire about

booking The Overlook for an event, visit www.deadfishgrill-beltontx.com.

To inquire about renting the indoor banquet space and or the outdoor

space, email Jasmine Hurtado, event coordinator, or Kyle Gaines, assistant banquet coordinator at banquet@deadfishgrill.com.



BELTON JOURNAL/Shalee Corey-Wiebe

Members of Belton's First United Methodist Church serve up chili and enchiladas last Friday to raise funds for local projects such as Project Celebration, for graduating seniors.

FUMMC holds annual chili fundraiser

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe
The Belton Journal

On February 27, Belton First United Methodist Church had its annual Chili and Enchilada Day.

They served chili, gumbo, and enchiladas for lunch and for supper. The event was put on by Methodist Men, and was done to support their ministries, like College Lunch and Belton ISD's Project Celebration.

Several church members and volunteers had something to say about the benefit this event has on the community, especially toward the youth.

Reverend Patrick Hoffman said, "What I really appreciate about it is, not only do we get the chance to feed our community for relatively inexpensive meals, but then also the funds go to support the missions and ministries of the church, specifically through the United Methodist Men, who have a commitment to doing good in the community and supporting things like our college lunch, which feeds around 200 students every week."

Jack Sims, who helped make the 650 enchiladas and 60 pounds of chili for the event, talked a bit about one of the ministries this event supports.

See FUMC,
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Bejar guest speaker at CTRW March meeting

Special to the Journal

The Central Texas Republican Women's March Networking Lunch Meeting will be held on Monday, March 16, at the Harris Community Center at 401 N. Alexander St. in Belton.

The Club is pleased to host Rafael Bejar, Texas Public Policy Foundation Outreach Director as the featured Guest Speaker with a topic: "Securing Texas: The 90th Legislative Session & the Future of Border Policy."

The lunch menu includes roasted chicken, roasted potatoes, broccoli, salad, roll, dessert, iced tea, and water. Cost is \$20 per person. Please RSVP by Tuesday, March 10. Email at rsvpctrw@gmail.com to pay at the door with cash or check, or pay by credit card at www.ctrw-pac.com.

Doors open at 11 a.m. for networking, with lunch and the meeting called to order at 11:30 a.m. All Republicans are invited.

Rafael Bejar joined the Foundation in January 2017, bringing more than 30 years of experience advancing democracy and accountable government at every level.



Rafael Bejar

A Corpus Christi native, he has served with the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners, as Press Secretary to a member of Congress, and as National Hispanic Coalitions Director for the Republican National Committee.

He also worked internationally with the International Republican Institute in Peru and Mongolia, and most recently served as Texas Regional Director for The LIBRE Institute, promoting initiatives including school choice.

Bejar earned a Master's in Political Management from The George Washington University Graduate School of Political Management, where he also taught coalition building as an adjunct professor.



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THE BELTON JOURNAL
Since 1866

Trusler named Bell County grant administrator



Rachel Trusler

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Rachel Trusler was named Bell County's new grant administrator during last Monday's Commissioners Court Workshop.

She was introduced by Kylie Brooks, director of administrative services. The grant administrator position became open after Brooks was promoted to her current position in December.

"With a wealth of technical knowledge in local government and

the grant lifecycle, Rachel is an excellent addition to the Bell County team," Brooks said. "Rachel is a passionate public servant, who is eager to continue the work of expanding and enhancing County services through grant funding."

Trusler started work the prior week, but last Monday marked her first Commissioners Court meeting.

"I am honored and excited to serve as grant administrator for Bell County," she said. "I'm committed to building on the strong grant work already underway and expanding fund-

ing opportunities for the County."

Trusler earned a bachelor's degree in political science and government from Texas A&M University. She was also awarded a Master of Public Administration degree from A&M's Bush School of Government and Public Service.

Following graduation, she has served for nearly two years as a development associate at Down Home Ranch, a non-profit offering housing and programming to teens and adults with special needs.

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Chief Berg presents 2025 PD report

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Belton Police Chief Larry Berg presented his department's 2025 Annual Report and Racial Profiling Report during the Feb. last Tuesday's City Council meeting.

The annual report includes information on police operations, criminal activity and community outreach.

The report outlined Belton PD's Cultivate a Safe Environment Program. Highlights include:

- Launch a Kiddo Card program to provide parents with information and a photo of their child to present to authorities if the kid gets lost.

- Implement a city disaster drill
- Establish a Task Force officer with the FBI
- Expand SWAT team capabilities
- Reorganize the Explorer program
- Transition to Red Dot Sight pistol platforms
- Focus code compliance on high-crime areas of Belton

The top 10 calls for police service are:

- Traffic stops
- 911 calls
- Citizen contacts
- Reckless driver
- Suspicious activities
- Traffic accidents
- Welfare concerns
- Alarms

- Meet with complainants
- Disabled vehicles

Belton police responded to 42,089 calls in 2025, compared to 34,964 in 2024, 34,008 in 2023, 34,676 in 2022 and 33,450 in 2021.

More than 400 major crimes were committed in Belton during 2025 including one murder, 31 sexual assaults, 4 robberies, 32 aggravated assaults, 13 burglaries of a residence, 28 burglaries of a business, 274 theft/larceny, and 31 auto thefts/unauthorized use of a motor vehicle.

Belton PD arrested 1,336 people in 2025 on 1,663 criminal charges. That includes 186 felony charges and 1,558 misdemeanor charges. Police issued 2,614 citations and 8,412 warnings during the year.

The department responded to 1,726 traffic crashes in 2025, including 443 non-injury accidents, 158 injury accidents and four fatalities.

Belton PD made 11,355 traffic stops during 2025 — 4,433 were females and 6,922 were males. Fifty-six of the stops involved Alaskan or American Indian drivers, 171 were Asian or Pacific Islander, 1,893 were Black, 2,988 were Hispanic, and 6,247 were White.

The top reasons for traffic stops were moving violations (6,029), pre-existing knowledge (135), traffic violations (5,066), violation of traffic law (125).

The total budget in 2025 for the Belton PD was \$7.77 million and personnel costs were more than \$6 million.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1996



HAPPY TO BE HERE

by David Tuma

David Tuma begins his 30-year run with The Belton Journal

Congratulations and Happy Anniversary TUMA!

FUMC - From Page A4

"Project Celebration is a graduation event that's a safe place for kids to celebrate graduation without alcohol and drugs," said Sims. "We've been doing (Chili and Enchilada Day) for 35 or 40 years. If we've saved one kid, then that's benefited families and the community and, you know, it's a good place to gather and have fellowship, too."

Jay Taggart said that one of his favorite parts about the event is how Project Celebration supports all three local high schools.

"I served on the school board for 12 years, and I know

how important it is for the community to support the school district financially. And so we're able to do that because of the generosity of not only our church family, but the community."

Reverend Patrick Hoffman also talked about his favorite part about Chili/Enchilada Day.

"On the one hand, it's the banana pudding that is already gone. I didn't get a chance to get any this time. But on the other hand, it's the opportunity we have to feed our neighbors and to do good in the broader community."

GUESS WHO?

I am the most decorated figure skater in United States history. I've held 43 different championship titles and I am a two-time Olympic medalist. From 2022 to 2025, I served as the U.S. Ambassador to Belize.

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- Lakeview Baptist Church**
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Knocking on Old Doors Again



John C. Perry

There has been a lot of discussion lately about social media, new laws, proposed bans for children, and even lawsuits here in the United States. It raises a fair question: is social media a blessing, or is it a curse?

Like most things in life, it depends on how we use it. Anything taken to excess can become harm-

ful, but used wisely, it can also be a tool for connection and encouragement. I personally enjoy Facebook. Through it, I've reconnected with friends from every chapter of my life, people I never thought I would hear from again.

My earliest childhood years were spent in Atlanta, Georgia. Directly across the street lived the Presley family with four kids, Gene, John Neal, Mary Sue, and Cathy. Cathy and Mary Sue were close to my age, and the three of us became inseparable. Back then, children played outside until daylight disappeared, and we certainly made the most of it. We explored, imagined, and created our own little world right there in the neighborhood.

The Presleys were like family to us. I felt so at home in their house that I would walk right in without knocking. Eventually my mother had to sit me down and explain that even with close friends, you knock first and wait to be invited in. It was a lesson in manners I never forgot.

When I was eleven, my family moved to Texas, and we had to say goodbye to the Presleys. We visited Georgia a couple of years later and looked them up, but after that, life moved on and we lost touch. Over the years I often wondered what became of them.

Many decades later, after joining Facebook, I decided to search for them. I found someone in Georgia who might have been

Cathy. I sent a message, hoping I wasn't mistaken. To my delight, it was her. Cathy helped me reconnect with Mary Sue as well, and we've stayed in touch ever since. A few years ago, my wife and I traveled to Georgia and were able to visit both of them in person. After so many years, seeing them again was a true blessing.

So, while social media certainly has its problems, I can't dismiss it entirely. It allowed me to reconnect with dear friends I thought were lost to time. It reminded me that good things can still come from modern tools, if we choose to use them well.

Life is like that. God gives us many gifts in this world, and each one can be used for good or mis-

used for harm. The choice is ours. I'm reminded of 1 Corinthians 12:4-7: "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them . . . Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

The gift of life, and everything in it, is from God. Our task is to use those gifts for good. Social media is no different. It can lift us up or tear us down. It can reconnect or divide. In the end, it comes down to how we choose to use it.

Choose wisely, my friends.

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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7 signs of spring allergies

Few things are more deflating than finally venturing outdoors after a long winter of cabin fever, only to find that blooming trees and flowers start wreaking havoc with your personal health.

Spring allergies, also known as allergic rhinitis, occur when the body's immune system overreacts to indoor or outdoor allergens, such as tree and grass pollen, mold and dust. According to the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, approximately 25.7 percent of adults and 18.9 percent of children in the United States suffer from seasonal allergies. Allergic rhinitis accounts for an estimated \$16 billion in annual health care costs and is a leading cause of reduced productivity while at work.

Identifying the symptoms of allergies is key to distinguishing them from a cold or another infection and to ensuring fast relief. Spring allergies typically peak from March to May and may even continue into July. Physicians will look for specific physical markers to confirm allergies.

1. Sneezing: Sneezing can occur in rapid-fire patterns, known as paroxysmal sneezing, especially after spending time outdoors. These intense episodes can be tied to allergies or be symptomatic of another condition, says the National Institutes of Health.

2. Itchy, watery eyes: Allergic conjunctivitis is the medical term for this condition, which is a hallmark of spring allergies. Eyes will appear red, feel gritty or drip clear fluid.

3. Nasal congestion/runny nose: A thin, clear discharge typically is a sign of allergies, whereas any mucus that is thick, yellow or green could indicate an infection. Constant upward rubbing of the nose from allergies (called the allergic salute) often causes a permanent transverse nasal crease at the junction of the nose tip and the bridge, says Healthline.

4. Itchy throat and ears: Pollen may cause a scratchy or tingly sensation in the throat and in the ear canals. Medical professionals warn that chronic inflammation from allergies is a primary risk factor for secondary bacterial infections that can occur in the sinuses and ears. Eustachian tube dysfunction occurs when fluid builds up behind the eardrum because the eustachian tubes become blocked or don't open properly to let fluid drain to the nose and throat, says the Cleveland Clinic. Pressure imbalances, muffled hearing, popping sounds, and even pain can occur.

5. "Allergic shiners": Nasal congestion can cause swelling and increased blood ves-

sels to the small veins in the infraorbital area, causing dark, bluish circles under the eyes called periorbital hyperpigmentation, says the Center for Orofacial Myology. This makes allergy sufferers appear as though they have two black eyes.

6. Cough: Post-nasal drip occurs when mucus drips down the back of the throat from the nose. This can cause a persistent, dry cough that's often worse at night. Post-nasal drip also may result in a sore throat and a "cobblestone" appearance in the back of the throat that's visible during a medical exam.

7. Fatigue: Insufficient rest due to allergy-related discomfort can cause those with spring allergies to feel fatigued. The constant immune system response to allergies also can lead to daytime tiredness and lack of focus.

Allergic rhinitis is a problem for millions of people each spring. A combination of avoiding triggers and using allergy medications can help calm any symptoms that crop up.



Math Blocks

Fill in the missing blocks with numbers between 0-20.
The numbers in each row add up to the totals on the right.
The numbers in each column add up to the totals on the bottom.

	3		9
19		20	57
	15	14	45
37	36	38	

14	15	16
20	18	19
4	3	2

Solution

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1766: Antonio de Ulloa, the first Spanish governor of Louisiana, arrives in New Orleans.

1953: Joseph Stalin dies in Moscow.

2021: Pope Francis begins an historical visit to Iraq during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Craft FACT:

This craft involving yarn gets its name from a French term meaning "small hook."

Answer: Crochet

Get Scrambled

Unscramble the words to determine the phrase.

BBYA LBKNATE

Answer: Baby blanket

NEW WORD

CHAIN

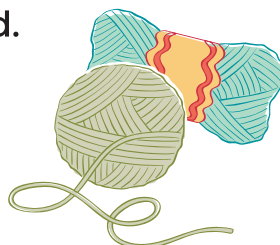
the starting stitches of crochet

How they say that in...

- English:** Blanket
- Spanish:** Manta
- Italian:** Coperta
- French:** Couverture
- German:** Decke

Did You Know?

In crochet, the thickness of the yarn should coordinate to the gauge of the crochet hook being used.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Crochet project

Johnson Wildflower Center reveals 2026 Texas bloom forecast

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Native plant experts at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin predict a varied season for blooms in Central Texas this spring, due to uneven rainfall across the Southwest and ongoing drought in several regions.

The Center also announced this year's Wildflower of the Year as the Carolina jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*), a perennial evergreen vine with profuse, showy yellow flowers.

"In a state as geographically vast and varied as Texas, it's rare that we can make a forecast that suits the whole state," said Andrea DeLong-Amaya, the Center's horticulture educator. "We have wild fluctuations in weather and lots of microclimate scenarios, and this year's bloom season will be just as varied as that."

"We've all seen spots where plants seem to be thriving in an otherwise not-so-hospitable landscape, said Kyle Cheesborough, the Center's new director of gardens and collections.

"This could be the result of microclimates created via irrigation practices, ambient heat from hardscapes, and other cultural maintenance practices," he said. "For similar reasons, we can also think of most residential gardens as microclimates, because each homeowner does things a bit differently, whether it's how often they irrigate or how much tree cover their yard has. The same things happen in nature and impact blooming plants."

If early spring bloomers are a little more sparse, later spring and summer flowers have more room to flourish. Later-in-the-season wildflowers, like firewheel (*Gaillardia pulchella*) or purple horsemint (*Monarda citriodora*), could show up stronger this year, if spring brings wetter weather.

Additionally, the tough, woody Carolina jessamine – the Wildflower of the Year – is already putting on a spectacular show both visually and fragrantly, showcasing how species often left out of the 'wildflower' conversation can be more consistent in their spring performance.

"We may just have to look a little harder for bluebonnets on the side of the road this year in many locales," adds DeLong-Amaya. "We're hopeful for more spring rain to bring out the later-blooming flowers. Bluebonnets are great, but the show gets even better as the spring season progresses."

But, according to DeLong-Amaya there's one fail-safe way to get those annual bluebonnet photos – visit the Wildflower Center.

Within the season, visitors to the Wildflower Center always will find beautiful displays of blooms. Staff, including professional horticulturists and a large team of



Courtesy Photo

A field of bluebonnets are in bloom near Austin during a past spring season. This year's wildflower crop in Texas is expected to be varied, with a dazzling show forecast for late spring.

hands-on volunteers, work tirelessly throughout the year to cultivate native Texas plants and encourage maximum flowers.

Overall, though, there's no need for panic, says DeLong-Amaya. "I've never seen a year where nothing is blooming. That just doesn't happen. We can always expect some spring wildflowers."

Also, the Carolina jessamine vine reaches up to 20 feet long and can serve as an ornamental evergreen screen in the landscape, with the bonus of robust, showy yellow

blossoms. The plant is a low-maintenance, dependable garden performer.

Wildflower Center staff chose Carolina jessamine as the Wildflower of the Year because of its sweet fragrance, adaptability to various soils and light conditions, and its vital role in providing food for essential pollinators and its ability to bloom off and on throughout the growing season.

For more information about this wildflower season, visit the Wildflower Center's Texas Wildflower Central webpage: www.wildflower.org.

City anticipates continued closure of portion of South Penelope

By Lynette Sowell
The Belton Journal

Belton's Public Works Director, Scott Hodde, released an update on the status of the closure of South Penelope Street since Saturday, Feb. 28.

"South Penelope Street north and south-bound between Central Avenue and E. 1st Avenue has been closed since Saturday, February 28, due to a structure fire at Miller's BBQ located at 300 E. Central Avenue," said Hodde.

"As many of you are aware, the city was already in the process of

reconstructing sidewalks along S. Penelope Street, which had this section of street closed northbound between Central Avenue and E. 1st Avenue for construction.

"Due to the unfortunate fire and the associated concerns with existing construction, we anticipate this stretch of roadway will now be completely closed in both directions for approximately two weeks."

Hodde said the City of Belton will provide an update within one week, in order to reassess the situation and determine whether the closure can

be lifted or if an extended timeframe will be necessary.

Hodde submitted a map that shows that traffic needing to access businesses within the yellow-shaded area may do so from East 1st Avenue to allow those businesses to continue operating as normal.

"We understand this closure will impact traffic flow and nearby businesses. Please know that we are working diligently to reopen the roadway as soon as possible," Hodde said. "Feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have."



A map of South Penelope Street shows the street closure that has been in effect since Saturday, Feb. 28.

– Courtesy Graphic, City of Belton

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Six Lady Broncos named to 16-5A All District basketball

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Lady Broncos just constructed the best showing in school history, and they are poised to potentially repeat the feat.

Lake Belton established itself as one of the state's top teams during the 2025-26 season, winning 33 of 34 games, earning an undefeated league championship and rising to No. 4 in the state rankings.

It is easy to see why.

The 16-5A All-District Team was recently revealed, and six Lady Broncos

landed on the list. Equally important, all of them are set to return, including the league's most valuable player.

Junior point guard Aniya Taylor emerged with the most prestigious honor, producing a team-high 15.3 points per game during Lake Belton's perfect 10-0 district run to go along with 3.9 rebounds, 3.1 steals and 1.9 assists.

The Lady Broncos received two more superlatives as well.

Freshman small forward Olivia Dann was named newcomer of the year following a 7.7-point, 6.0-rebound, 1.2-steal, 1.2-block and 0.9-assist per-game average debut, and Tiffney Barnes

was named head coach of the year.

Additionally, sophomore guards Alexa King and Erica Taylor were placed on the first team, while junior shooting guard Gemma Pierce and sophomore shooting guard Layla King were second-team selections.

During district, Alexa King followed Taylor in scoring, averaging 14.8 points, and Erica Taylor was the team's top rebounder with 6.8, including 2.1 offensive, per game.

The Lady Tigers were also represented after returning to the playoffs for the first time since 2022.

Sophomore guard Isabella Warner averaged a team-high 18.7 points to go with

4.6 rebounds, 2.6 steals, 1.6 assists and 0.8 blocks per game in league play.

Second-team representatives for Belton were senior guard Emma Flory and sophomore post Emma Harvey.

The Belton ISD programs also combined to account for four honorable mentions in Lady Broncos senior Ariella Polley and junior Danika Kelley and Lady Tigers senior Ke'Ara Shanks and sophomore Laila Huston.

Rounding out the superlatives, Waco junior Shamiah Taylor was named offensive player of the year and Killeen Chaparral junior Tori Hines was named defensive player of the year.



Belton, Lake play hard at Central Texas Turf Wars

By Tony Adams
The Belton Journal

The Central Texas Turf Wars Tournament is one of the fastest growing tourneys in the state which has attracted many powerful teams from the Class 3A through Class 6A classifications over the past few years.

The Belton Tigers and Lake Belton Broncos joined the tournament and have made it one of the competitive staples of their non-district schedules.

Here are the daily results from the CTTW action:

Thursday Feb. 26

Troy 6, Belton 4 (five innings)

Andalyn Logan clubbed a two-run double, Tara Stone add-

See **SOFTBALL**,

Page B3



West Mesquite ends Tigers playoff run

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Tigers' season came to a heartbreaking conclusion last week in the area round of the playoffs.

On the heels of a 72-61 victory against Midlothian to open the Class 5A, Division II postseason, Belton was poised to

return to the third round for the second time in three years, but West Mesquite would not allow it.

Despite holding an 18-point advantage late in the third quarter, it was not enough as the Wranglers rallied, connecting

See **BASKETBALL**,
Page B2

Tigers successful at Big Red Relays

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

In their final home meet, Christian Porter and Laila Page put on a show.

Belton hosted the annual Denise Petter Big Red Relays on Saturday, and the event served as one last opportunity for the pair of standout seniors to compete at Tiger Field.

They capitalized.

Page emerged with three gold medals around her neck, while Porter earned two first-place finishes to go with a third-place outing.

Porter, a sprinter, won the 100-meter dash in 10.88 seconds and completed the 200 with a top time of 21.83. Furthermore, he teamed up with Graham Chambley, Azian Wilkinson and Anthony Anderson to collect a bronze medal in the 400 relay. The quartet finished in 41.78.

En route to her trio of wins, Page excelled on the track and in the field, winning the 200 (26.10), triple jump (36 feet, 8¼ inches) and pole vault (10-1).

They were not the only ones to excel at the meet, though.

Tara Stone, a sophomore, also yielded a gold medal with a 120-3 discus

throw, while junior teammate Melissa Farmer was second (33-6) in the shot put for the Lady Tigers.

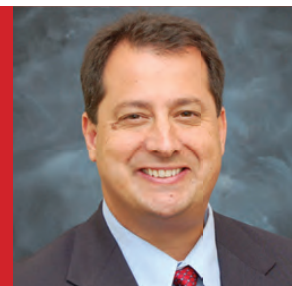
For the Tigers, Chambley, a junior, won the 110 hurdles (14.66) and was second in the 300 hurdles (40.37), while sophomore David McCallum (2nd, 400, 50.81) and junior Ben Gutierrez (3rd, shot put, 40-7) also medaled.

As a team, the Tigers were third with 78 points, finishing behind champion Killeen Harker Heights (195) and

See **RELAYS**,
Page B2



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Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Tigers competed against 21 other teams at last weekend's Waco ISD Heart of Texas Match Play Championship held at Cottonwood Creek Golf Club, where they

won their division. Belton defeated Weatherford in the semifinals before beating Copperas Cove for the title. The Tigers won 3-2. Owen Babcock and Bryson Necessary, who are seniors, junior Wyatt McLean, sophomore Cooper McDonald and freshman Bennett Boland represented Bel-

ton. Additionally, in the White division, the Tigers' second team of juniors Reid Erskine and Zane Trusky, sophomores Kypton Barrett and Jacob Flores and freshmen Brody Mavis and Zach Avery beat Temple and Waco Midway to take the championship.

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. he 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.

Relays - From Page B1

runner-up Georgetown East View (174). Additional top-five finishers for Belton included junior Alexander Matos (5th, 110 hurdles, 16.30), junior Javid Planz (5th, shot put, 38-7½) Anderson (5th, 100, 11.21) and Belton's 1,600 relay team of Torian Plummer, Anthony Garcia, Jayden Trevino and William Yeaman, who combined for a fifth-place time of 3:39.47. The Broncos followed at fourth (74) in the final standings thanks in part to the 400 relay team of Zion Harness, Kendrick Jones Jr., Noah Stevens and Christian Onchweri, who won the event in 41.54, and sophomore Prince Moore,

who won the 400 in 50.10. The outings were complemented by junior Ji'yson Sherman (2nd, triple jump, 44-2¾), freshman Drew Houston (3rd, pole vault, 12-6) and the 1,600 relay quartet of Cooper Schels, DeAndre Griffith, Robert Thomas and Moore. They were third (3:27.28). In the girls division, the Lady Tigers delivered a fifth-place showing, scoring 60 points as junior Ste'kayla Mauga (4th, 200, 26.94) complemented the team's first- and second-place outings. Lake Belton was seventh (26). Freshman leaper Alexis Walker

delivered the Lady Broncos' best performance, posting a 15-5 long jump, while sophomores Lucy Loa (800, 2:28.73) and Camryn Mikulas (triple jump, 35-0) were each fourth. East View scored 177 points to claim the team title, beating out Temple (2nd, 147), Leander (3rd, 93) and Harker Heights (4th, 63). The Tigers and Lady Tigers will return to action Saturday, when they travel to Copperas Cove for the annual Bulldawg Relays, while Lake Belton competes at the Bluebonnet Invitational at College Station on Friday.

Basketball - From Page B1

on a go-ahead basket with 16 seconds remaining in regulation, and the Tigers could not respond. Mesquite eliminated Belton with a 70-68 victory at Hillsboro High School after winning last year's area-round encounter by a single point, 48-47. The comeback spoiled a 23-point performance from junior swingman Noah Childers, which was complemented by sophomore point guard Luke

ditionally, sophomore forward Ty Johnson, and Abran Knight scored nine points apiece. With the defeat, the Tigers finished the season 29-7 after earning a share of the District 16-5A championship. Equally important, however, the outcome concluded the careers of six seniors as Jay'dn Loggins, Daniel Briscoe, Keyshawn Coles, Asa Thomas, Jayden Holt and Childers are all set

Earlier in the week, Belton advanced to the area round by defeating Midlothian 72-61 behind a 19-point performance from Loggins, a junior forward. The Tigers held a 19-point advantage early in the fourth quarter and appeared set to cruise to the bi-district championship, but Midlothian pulled within five points, 61-56, with less than two minutes remaining in regulation. The Panthers, howev-

Along with Loggins' outing, Childers scored 14 points with eight coming in the fourth quarter to help halt Midlothian's rally. Complementing Loggins and Childers, Munden and Johnson finished with 14 points and 13 points, respectively. The 29-win campaign ties Belton's second-best season in recent history. After winning just a dozen games in 2018-19, the Tigers began steadily improving their record, accounting for 22 and 18 victories in the ensuing seasons. Then, in 2022, Belton achieved a 29-win showing, and it has not eased up since, producing 27-9 and 30-7 records in the final two years with Jason Fossett serving as head coach. Now, in the first two seasons under head coach Phil McCaslin, the Tigers have a 28- and 29-win showings.

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Softball - From Page B1

ed an RBI double, and Hanna Wheeler added an RBI ground in the bottom of the first inning for a solid offensive start for the Tigers.

The Trojanettes scored four runs over the next four innings before time limit cut the game to five innings.

Stone struck out eight batters and walked five in four innings of work.

Belton 6, Cibolo Steele 4

Down 1-0 in the bottom of the first, the Tigers pounced on Knights' pitching for five runs. An RBI double by Reagan Stuart, Stone added an RBI single, Anessa Ortiz reached on an error that scored Stone, and Reagan Ford doubled home Ortiz and Lauren Vazquez.

In the bottom of the sixth, Vazquez RBI ground out gave the Tigers an insurance run.

Stone led the Tigers with two hits in the team's seven-hit output.

Stuart picked up the complete game victory in the circle. She allowed three earned runs, scattered nine hits, struck out four and walked one.

Leander 7, Lake Belton 2

The Broncos and Lions were tied 2-2 in the top of fourth when Leander struck for two runs and added three insurance runs in the top of the sixth.

Izzy Magana collected two of Lake's seven hits and added an RBI.

Natalie Hosch pitched four innings, allowed three earned runs on eight hits. Kayleigh Jackson pitched two innings, allowed three unearned runs, walked two and struck out one.

Lake Belton 7, Brock 3 (six innings)

The Broncos led 2-0 and then trailed 3-2 before Avery Park's three-run homer busted a windshield in the parking lot and gave Lake the lead for good in the bottom of the fifth.

Park had two hits and four RBI, and Maliyah Gooden had two hits and scored twice.

Liliana Herrera pitched four innings, allowed one earned run on three hits, struck out six and walked two. Jackson picked up the win in relief, having struck out one in an inning.

Friday

Goose Creek Memorial 8, Belton 6
Stone hit a solo homer in the first inning and added a two-run homer in the fifth inning as part of a four-run rally. However, Patriots' four-run rallies in the third and fifth innings were too much to overcome.

Stone led the Tigers with three hits, three RBI, and three runs scored. Iris Molina added two hits, as Belton produced 11 hits in the game.

Leander Glenn 2, Belton 2 (six innings)

A pitcher's duel between Stone and Glenn's Brooke Cantu went six innings. It took a two-run rally in the bottom of the sixth by Glenn to notch a 2-2 tie.

Jonna Hollingsworth reached base on an error that scored Wheeler and Molina's RBI walk scored Vazquez for the Tigers two runs in the contest.

Stone pitched six innings, allowed two unearned runs on one hit, struck out 11 and walked two.

Lake Belton 15, Cibolo Steele 0 (three innings)

The Broncos scored five runs in the first and ten runs in the second, as Lake clubbed 11 hits and drew eight walks in three innings.

Gooden, Analicia Diaz, and Madison Perkins each had two hits, while Park and Gooden each scored three times to lead the Broncos.

Herrera pitched two innings for the win, allowed one hit and a walk, while having struck out three. Hosch added an inning of relief and allowed two hits.

5A No. 13 Liberty Hill 9, Lake Belton 8 (six innings)

The Broncos led 3-1 in the top of the third on a double by Brysen Gott and two-run single off the bat of Madison Naser.

The Panthers responded to tie in the bottom of the third and took the lead in the bottom of the fourth with five runs.

Lake tied the game in the top of the sixth. Alaysha Williams homered, Magana scored on a fielder's choice, Parked singled home Gooden, and Naser's two-run single scored Gott and Alexis Walker to tie the game 8-8.

Three pitches into the bottom of the sixth with time expired, Hadley McBeath homered for the Liberty Hill walk-off win.

Naser had two hits and four RBI, and Magana and Gooden scored twice for Lake.

Saturday Midland Legacy 9, Belton 6 (six innings)

Logan's two-run homer in the first gave the Tigers an early 2-0 lead, but Legacy scored three runs in the second, two in the fourth and one in the fifth to build a margin that Belton could not recover from.

Hollingsworth was hit by a pitch that forced home a run and Molina added a double play flyout that scored another run for the last play off the game.

Vazquez had two of Belton's eight hits in the game.

Georgetown 6, Belton 0 (5 1/2 innings)

The Tigers collected seven hits over six trips to the plate but could not push a run across against the Eagles.

Stone pitched her way out of a couple of jams in the game. However, Emma Miloch's grand slam in the bottom of the fourth put the game out of reach.

Stone pitched four innings and allowed six runs (just one earned) on five hits, struck out three and walked three.

Lake Belton 14, 4A Lampasas 4 (four innings)

Before the Broncos could blink, a grand slam homer by Lampasas catcher Madison Magilke put Lake down 4-0 in the top of the first.

That put the Broncos in immediate 212 mode as they scored single runs in the first and second, eight runs in the third, and four runs in the fourth to run-rule the Badgers.

Gott's sacrifice fly in the first put Lake on the board, and Addison Sims' safety squeeze bunt scored KK Travis in the second.

Gott singled home Magana to start the third-inning rally, Diaz added an RBI, single, Naser's groundout scored Park, Sims' single scored Diaz, Williams doubled home Sims, and Gooden's bases-clearing triple put the Broncos in front 10-4.

Williams bases-loaded hit-by-pitch forced home Nani Rubio to start the scored in the fourth. Perkins drew a bases-loaded walk, Magana's groundout scored Sims, and Aria Newman's bases-loaded walk forced home Williams to end the game.

Gooden drove home three runs, and Gott and Williams added two for Lake. Gooden also had two hits, and nine different Broncos had a hit each.

Hosch picked up the complete game win. She pitched four innings, allowed four runs on five hits, struck five, and walked one.

Lake Belton 12, Leander Glenn 4 (five innings)

The Broncos set the tone for the game having scored eight runs in their opening at-bat and cruised to an eight-run win.

Gott started the scoring with a two-run double, Naser's bases-loaded walk forced home Travis, Sims' bases-loaded hit-by-pitch scored Park, and Williams' grand slam gave the Broncos an early eight-run cushion.

Gooden's RBI single and Rubio's RBI double gave Lake a 10-1 lead in the top of the third.

Following two runs in the bottom of the fourth, Williams answered with a solo homer and Gott added an RBI single in the fifth to push the advantage back to eight runs.

Williams had two homers and five RBI to lead the Broncos. Gott added three RBI and two hits. Gooden had a three-hit outing to aid the Broncos' tenth attack.

Herrera picked up the win in the circle, as she pitched two innings, allowed an unearned run on one hit, walked one and struck out one. Jackson pitched three innings of relief, allowed three unearned runs on three hits, and struck out two.

This week

Lake Belton (15-5) – The Broncos will play at Troy on Tuesday and against China Spring on Friday before a week between games.

Belton (9-10-1) – The Tigers will travel to Gatesville on Tuesday and Caldwell on Friday before hosting McGregor next Tuesday.



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

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THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 26CPB00057

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
DEVIN LOVATO, Applicant, on January 28, 2026, filed an APPLICATION TO DETERMINE HEIRSHIP AND FOR LETTERS OF INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION - INTESTATE in a proceeding styled: MARY DELORES PARROTT, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00057 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 March 05, 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: ANDREW THOMPSON, 206 LAKE ROAD BELTON TX 76513

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

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on February 27, 2026. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513

By: Lillian Phillips Deputy
03.05

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Administration for the Estate of ROBERT MATTHEW ENO, Deceased, were issued on February 3, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00422, pending in the County Court-At-Law: Number one, BELL County, Texas, to: CYNTHIA DIANE ENO.

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: JAY R. BEATTY Attorney at Law, 3106 South W.S. Young Drive Building D, Suite 401, KILLEEN, TX 76542

DATED the 24th day of February, 2026
JAY R. BEATTY, State Bar No.: 01992450, 3106 South W.S. Young Drive Building D, Suite 40,1 KILLEEN, TX 76542, Telephone: (254) 526-3024, Facsimile: (254) 526-2545, E-mail: jbeatty@mbaattorneys.com Attorney for Cynthia Diane Eno 03.05

LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of JAMES ALAN McNEILL, Deceased, were issued on February 23, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00071, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: REBECCA SUE McNEILL. 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: REBECCA SUE McNEILL, 8148 Pritchard Rd., Temple, Texas 76501
SIGNED on February 26, 2026.

/s/James O. Cure ,James O. Cure Attorney for REBECCA SUE McNEILL, State Bar No.: 05252800, 2584 Blue Meadow Dr., Temple, TX 76502 ,Telephone: (254) 778-8934, Facsimile: (254) 773-2477, Email: jocure@cureandfrancis.net
03.05

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 26CPB00125

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
JILL MAGEE, Applicant, on February 25, 2026, filed an APPLICATION FOR INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION AND LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION AND APPLICATION TO DETERMINE HEIRSHIP in a proceeding styled: TERRANCE EDWIN MAGEE, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00125 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 March 05, 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: ASHLEY S. CLAPPER, CORBIN & CLAPPER PC, 603 N 8TH ST, KILLEEN, TX 76541

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 26, 2026. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road ,Belton, TX 76513

By: Erika DeCasas Deputy
03.05

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 26CPB00118

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
PEARLIE GROSS, Applicant, on February 25, 2026, filed an APPLICATION TO DETERMINE HEIRSHIP & FOR LETTERS OF INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION in a proceeding styled: LYNN HOLLINGSWORTH GROSS, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00118 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 March 05, 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.

LEGALS

The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: MARCUS BEAUDIN, 2109 S CLEAR CREEK RD, KILLEEN, TX 76549

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 25, 2026. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road ,Belton, TX 76513

By: Erika DeCasas Deputy
03.05

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is given that original Letters of Administration for the Estate of LAFERN FISHER were issued on December 10, 2025, in Docket No. 25CPB00363, pending in the Statutory Probate Court Number 1 of Bell County, Texas, to Briana Fisher.

All persons having claims against the estate, which is presently being administered, are required to submit them, within the time and manner prescribed by law, and before the estate is closed, addressed as follows: c/o Briana Fisher 3626, N. Hall St., Suite 610, Dallas, Texas 75219

Dated: February 25, 2026

/s/ Candice P. Haley, Candice P. Haley Attorney for Administrator of the Estate of LAFERN FISHER
03.05

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Willis Michael Beard were issued on February 5th, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00015, pending in the County Court at Law Number 1 of Bell County, Texas, to Tonya Jones.

All persons having claims against the estate, which is presently being administered, are required to submit them, within the time and manner prescribed by law, and before the estate is closed, addressed as follows: c/o Tonya Jones, 1005 ALDEN DR ,Austin, Texas 78758-7401

Dated: 27th day of February, 2026

/s/ Andrew Thompson, Andrew Thompson Attorney for Executor of the Estate of Willis Michael Beard
03.05

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of William Don McCroan were issued on February 9, 2026, in Cause No. 24CPB00794 pending in the County Court At Law Number 1 of Bell County, Texas, to Margaret McCroan.

All persons having claims against the estate, which is presently being administered, are required to submit them, within the time and manner prescribed by law, and before the estate is closed, addressed as follows: c/o Margaret McCroan,601 Quail Valley Dr, Georgetown, TX 78626

Dated February 24, 2026

/s/ Margaret McCroan, Margaret McCroan

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of DONALD JAMES HARMON, Deceased, were issued on February 23, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00010 pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: KRIS ANN BYRD. 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: KRIS ANN BYRD, 111 E. Stacie Rd, Harker Heights, Texas 76548 2026. DATED the 24th day of February, 2026 James Rainey Attorney for KRIS ANN BYRD, State Bar No.: 00791473, 3809 West Waco Drive , Waco, Texas 76710, Telephone: (254) 752-8644, Facsimile: (254) 752-8624, Email: James@raineyandrainey.com
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Local Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Activities

March

03/04: Monthly Luncheon	& Greet
03/09: Bookworms	03/21: Exploring Wines
03/10: Singing Bluebonnets	03/23: Well Read Women,
03/12: Mexican Train Dominoes,	Monday Canasta
Couples Night Out	03/24: Singing Bluebonnets
03/13: TGIF Lunch	03/25: Fun Lunch
03/16: Snack Time Mah Jongg	03/26: Mexican Train Dominoes
03/17: Bunco	03/27: Trailblazers Walking Group
03/19: Nonfiction Book Club, Meet	03/28: 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 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 Register 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.

0.5K Hop, Skip, and Sip - March 14

Get ready to Hop, Skip, and Sip with us at Nolan Creek Brewery's 4th annual (POINT) 0.5k on March 14th, 2026, at 2 PM! Check-in starts at 1 PM at The Gin/Scores complex, 219 S East St, Belton. The "race" begins at 2 pm and is a whopping 3 blocks to Nolan Creek Brewery, 206 N Penelope St, Belton — run, walk, skip, or dance your way to the finish line! Your ticket includes a FREE BEER, T-shirt, souvenir cup, and surprise goodies! Then, celebrate at our big after-party with live music, green beer, and good times at the brewery. Register by March 8th to guarantee your T-shirt size! For anyone who registers on or after March 9th, we'll do our best, but sizes may vary. Thanks for understanding as we gear up for this epic event! Register at facebook.com/nolancreekbrewery or call call 254-613-4190 for more information.

MPR Explorers - Mar 26

MPR Explorers invites residents to its monthly gathering featuring a musical performance by the Lake Belton High School Choir Show Ensemble, followed by a meet-and-greet with the Directors of the Friends of the Mary Ruth Briggs Library. The program highlights local talent and strengthens community connections as MPR continues building momentum for events and programs that benefit residents of all ages. Thursday, March 26, social at 10:00 a.m.; program concludes at 11:30 a.m. at Garrett & Mic Hill Event Center, 60 Morgan's Point Blvd.

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

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

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

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

Young's Daughters Funeral Home Dementia/Alzheimer's Care-giver 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 BISD Belton ISD believes the learning experiences of our students are enhanced through the engagement of our community. We invite parents and community members to get involved in our schools. Register as a volunteer with our new volunteer and partnership system at the following link: https://beltonisd.ezcommunicator.net/edu/beltonisd/login_form.aspx?app=0.

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

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EDITORIAL

Genuine connections

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

Little kids make friends so easily. Life for them is simple. One afternoon at the playground on the swings in elementary school can bond them tighter than Superglue. It's just not fair.

Those were the days – we rode miles and miles on our bikes, “raced” our dogs, climbed trees, threw crabapples at the bats flying above the treetops at night. We thought the connections would last forever. And then, they don't. We get older, and it gets complicated.

People drag insecurities and issues into the mix along with expectations, and there can be a mess. Even knowing how to communicate effectively with another person is a skill some people just aren't very good at.

Now, with the digital age firmly part of many people's lives, it is possible for us to think we “connect” with people and yet may still feel disconnected – even lonely.

Former U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy declared a national loneliness and social isolation epidemic throughout the country.

Dr. Murthy said that “One in two adults in America are living with measurable levels of loneliness, but the numbers are even higher among young people.”

What's happened to us? He said – and I agree – We don't gather for dinner with friends or neighbors like we

used to. Also, the smartphones in our hands and other online interactions can take away from in-person interactions.

Some of us go to the grocery store less than we used to. Are we getting lazier? Are we trading convenience and losing real connection in the process? I won't even address the ease of using a tablet as a babysitter – some children don't know how to interact in person, in restaurants for example, anymore. Yes, it is hard when they are toddlers, especially – they are ‘wild cards’ with their behavior and yes, it is hard to know when they will/won't have a meltdown. Yet somewhere along the way, many of us have lost the ability to really talk to and connect with each other. It worries me that some of our children and grandchildren are not learning it, either.

But back to Dr. Murthy and real connections. He noted that over the past 50 years or so, people are participating less in groups that helped keep us together, civic clubs, sports leagues, churches, and more.

With a heavy reliance on “digital” connections, it seems it is harder to create genuine connections that transfer or translate to in-person. I think a digital connection isn't completely bad, but making a genuine connection can be clunky sometimes, at best.

Take dating sites, for example. (Yikes.) People may state they are looking for something real, drama-free, laid back, genuineness. Some may ultimately find “the one” for them in a sea of strangers and photos and some named expectations (no Crocs wearers) and others that are unnamed. I believe “drama” occurs between people when there are unmet or unshared expectations.

We also live in a perpetually distracted digital world that will take our time and attention from what is real. How can we connect when we are distracted?

Dr. Murthy suggests we be more intentional with our “real” connections. He recommended the “5 for 5 Connection Challenge.” Over the course of 5 days, take 5 actions: Call someone, express gratitude, ask for help (ouch!), offer support to someone. Call a friend to check on them. Reach out by phone. Contact an old friend, a new friend, a friend from church, a colleague. Maybe make it a point to meet up for lunch, play board games on a Saturday night, or you name it.

I believe that while having digital options is a great tool – we start to slip up on being intentional when we allow it to claim our attention away from what is real, right in front of us.

Demon With A Degree

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

In his circa 2001 autobiography “KISS And Make Up”, KISS co-founder Gene Simmons talks about the day he decided to tell his mother that he wanted to be a rock musician.

Gene was born in Haifa, Israel, but came to New York City as a young boy. When his parents separated, his mother decided to immigrate so that he could grow up near some of her extended family. Money was tight when he was growing up, and so it was constantly on his mother's mind. It was perhaps because of this that when he announced his intentions, she declared that her support for his pursuits would come under one condition: that he first go to college and get a degree.

As he admits in his book, his mom was correct. He went to college, got a degree in communications, and this being the late 1960s / early 1970s a degree in communications was enough to open quite a few doors. Whereas most young and hungry musicians are literally hungry because they have trouble getting enough scheduled appearances to even buy food, his degree, combined with his incredibly fast typing speed, allowed him a series of relatively steady professional jobs. One

of these jobs was a position at *Vogue* magazine, where he was working when he first formed KISS; this gave him access to the office equipment, allowing him to draw up the official notices and legal documents that were critical to the band's early days.

Now, the degree alone didn't make him into the rock superstar we know him as. By his own admission it took a lot of hard work, a considerable amount of strategy (the way the band got signed is practically a master class in game theory), a clear vision, and a fair bit of risk on his part. But that degree gave him the safety net he needed to actually make it all happen.

Take a look at a lot of popular entertainers and you'll see that a great many of them have college degrees, trade certifications, military experience, or otherwise had something going above and beyond their aspirations.

Dolph Lundgren, for example, first came to the United States to *study*. He had been a commando in his home country's military, and was now pursuing a master's degree in chemical engineering when he chose

to study internationally. He got his degree, but was also convinced to try his luck in Hollywood. That's right: Dolph Lundgren's brain is as hardcore as his body.

Or we have novelty musician “Weird” Al Yankovic. Al graduated valedictorian at 16, majored in architecture, and got a job at the campus radio station... where he recorded his first official single in the men's room so that he could take advantage of the acoustics from all the tile. Cue a novelty song about bologna bringing home a fair bit of bacon.

Et cetera.

I want my younger readers to reflect on this as you plan out your futures. Yes, dream your dreams. But instead of just dreaming, figure out how to get to where you want to be and make concrete plans for making it happen. Along the way, plan on getting that education. Finish high school. Work with a counselor to figure where to go from there. Not only will you have a fallback plan, that education might just open doors you didn't expect to open up for you. And once those doors are open, put what you've got into keeping them open. That, folks, is how you succeed.

Random Ramblings for the Week

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

I hear some people trying to motivate others and saying, “Expect the unexpected”. Just what is that? If it is unexpected, then how do we know? Perhaps it would be like Bill Gates calling me up and telling me that since I have been a dedicated Microsoft user for all these years, he is going to share his fortune with me. Or maybe something like buying a lottery ticket and winning more than \$2. Or going to the larger department store in town and finding something made in the US, and not in China. Maybe I don't know what to expect, so I can't expect it.

Maybe this is like the Boy Scouts motto, “Be Prepared”. What if you prepare for the wrong thing? You bring a pocketknife and rope, only to need duct tape and wire. What happens if you prepare for

bears and end up running into a skunk?

Speaking of skunks, what isn't a dead skunk called a “stunk”?

Along the Murphy's Law sorta thing; Why do you only get stopped by a train when you are in a hurry? Why is it that you can walk all around your house and never hit any furniture, yet in the middle of the night you find a table leg with your toe? Why do people that live in a two-story house own a stair stepper?

Have you ever noticed how when you get to a hotel they have all the bathroom liquids that you will need, but they are all in the same gold bottle with silver lettering that is hard to read in normal light? Out of the four lights in the bathroom, two work, one is out completely and the other flickers on and

off. You can't read normal text much less these little bottles once you get in the shower. I swear one night I washed my hair with mouthwash. It didn't lather worth a darn, but my hair sure smelled good for a couple of days.

Have you noticed that celebrities that can't stay married more than a few months, want to give us political, economic and environmental advice?

Have you noticed that we have HD video of everything, football plays, NASCAR races, and any other sports with incredible detail, yet when someone robs a bank you can't tell if it is Sasquatch or some guy in a cap with sunglasses? For example this past football season they have tiny cameras in the pylons on the goal lines, with such detail that you could see the smile on the runner's

face, yet with the elaborate security systems in businesses you can't recognize the criminal.

If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around, and the tree falls on an endangered ‘one eyed, three toed, spotted salamander’ is there a tree hugger there to make a big deal about it?

In nature birds and beavers and the like all have instincts to build houses for themselves. This is just natural within them. How come people don't have that same instinct in us? Why don't we have a natural ability for carpentry? I mean people in big cities would be good at building multistory apartments, country folk would be good at ranch style homes, that makes sense to me.

I have a good idea for next season of NASCAR. Line up all

the cars, in no particular order, in a mall parking lot. Let the drivers drink all their Gatorade before the race, then find their car and drive a couple hundred miles with no breaks. They have to eat a couple of tacos while driving and drink super hot coffee. All this with normal stop lights and the moderately helpful traffic signs. It should be more interesting than going in circles for three hours.

I openly admit to using a GPS to tell me how to get places. I think they are great inventions, even if it isn't manly to depend on something and not rely on our natural ability to find things. What if I put in some exotic location, such as Paris or even Moscow, would the GPS get me there, or would it start to smoke and burn up?

Well that is a lot to ponder for the week.

The Watering Can

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

On my front porch, there's a broken watering can. I found it a while back in the depths of my husband's shop, in the corner of a dark shelf, hiding behind years of dust and neglect. He doesn't know where it came from. When I showed it to him, he just scratched his head, shrugged his shoulders, and said, “Toss it.”

But I didn't want to throw it out. It's pretty, even in its brokenness. The body is galvanized metal with a little daisy embossed on the side. It has two gold/brass-colored handles, one on the side (like a teapot) and another at the top, and a band of brass trim along the bottom. In the middle of one side, there's a small dent that makes it lean a little.

Once upon a time, it had a wide brass spout with lots of watering holes. That spout was inside the can, broken off about halfway down. Now there's just a narrow little opening to pour the water... but it still works.

I decided to keep it. I thought I could fix it, but I was wrong. Even so, it's still useful. And there's something about that dented body and broken spout that gives it a weathered, wise look. Somehow, I think it's even more interesting and lovely in its brokenness. So it sits on my porch, under a table, and I use it to water my plants.

I feel a kinship with that watering can.

I've been broken, too. And though

I've tried, I'm pretty sure I'll never return to my original state, at least not in this life. The dents and cracks and broken parts are here to stay. And they've made me wiser, more authentic.

That watering can was made to be filled with water, just as I was made to be filled with God's Spirit. We are both at our most useful, and yes, our most beautiful, when we are fulfilling our intended purpose. The watering can is just a vessel used to pour life into my plants. I'm just a vessel God wants to use to pour life into others.

I'm so glad God doesn't look at my brokenness and decide to toss me in the bin. The opposite is true...the more broken and humble I am, the closer He

comes to me. The more He fills me with His grace, His compassion, His kindness, His love. Then Hea lifts me up, takes me to where those qualities are needed, and pours that nourishment into the people who are thirsty for Him.

You see, He loves broken things. He has a way of taking our dents and bruises and turning them into something useful and lovely... of using our brokenness to heal those around us. In so doing, He makes our lives more beautiful than ever.

“All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the Lord. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.”
Isaiah 66:1-2

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Tips for a safe and fun spring break road trip

Arriving months after the holiday season and right around the end of winter, spring break comes at the perfect time for families and students. A winter spent largely indoors can excite anyone about the prospect of soaking up some sun from the comforts of a sandy beach, and millions will do whatever it takes to make such a trip possible.

Many spring breakers may fly to their destination, but that can be costly for families paying for multiple flights. Indeed, spring break can be one of the more costly times to travel by air, as it's considered a peak travel period. Families who want to get away but don't want to spend thousands of dollars on flights alone can take to the road and drive to their destinations. If a road trip is in the cards, families can consider these strategies to ensure a safe and fun excursion.

Have your vehicle fully serviced before your trip. Winter can be hard on a vehicle, particularly when a car is parked outside in locations

where harsh weather is the standard between December and March. A full checkup that tops off fluids, tests the brakes (and replaces them, if necessary), inflates the tires (and again, replaces them, if necessary), tests the battery, and checks headlights and wiper blades to ensure they're operating at peak capacity can prepare a vehicle for the journey to your spring break destination.

Make some pit stops along the way. If it's an especially long trip to your destination, extend your travels by a day or two and make an extra stop along your way to your destination and on your return home. Find a fun activity along the way, such as a trip to a local indoor water park or a must-see hiking spot, so everyone can spend a day moving around before getting back in the car.

Don't be a motorized martyr. When your ultimate destination is a warm, sun-soaked beach, it can be tempting to make the trip in a single day. But fatigued drivers are dangerous drivers, so it's best to

build in some time to take a break and even share driving duty with another licensed driver. Moms and dads can switch halfway through the trip. If you already know the trip will take multiple days on the road, then stop driving no later than sundown to ensure you and your fellow drivers get a good night's rest.

Line up some in-vehicle entertainment. A long road trip with young children will require some in-vehicle entertainment. Load up a tablet with movies to keep the kids occupied during the drive but also arrange for some non-device game play as well. A book of puzzles, a family sing-along, a round or two of I spy, the license plate game, and even some kid-friendly trivia can provide some fun distractions on the way to your destination.

The cost of air travel can be prohibitive for families looking to get away this spring break. Some simple strategies can make road trips a safe, fun and cost-effective means to getting away when school lets out this spring.



Welcome to Belton, Texas