

Belton ISD dedicates crosswalk to longtime crossing guard

Special to the Journal

Last Friday morning, Belton ISD officially dedicated the crosswalk at North Main Street and East 15th Avenue in honor of Leonard Wayne Harris, recognizing more than 19 years of faithful service as a crossing guard at Leon Heights Elementary School.

During a ceremony attended by district leaders, Leon Heights staff, fellow crossing guards from across the district and members of the Harris family, the Leonard Wayne Harris Crosswalk was formally unveiled as a permanent landmark on the campus.

For more than 19 years, Harris has stood at the intersection each morning and afternoon, ensuring the safe passage of thousands of students.



Courtesy Photo

Longtime Belton ISD crossing guard Leonard Wayne Harris is honored with the naming of a crosswalk at a ceremony last Friday.

Through Texas heatwaves, winter freezes and everything in between, he has served as a steady, trusted presence for Leon Heights families.

“Leonard is one of the first smiles our students see at the start of

the day and one of the last waves they receive before heading home,” Golden said. “He protects what matters most to our families. That daily consistency, that heart for service, is what truly defines a school community.”

Harris began serving Belton ISD in 2007 and has become a familiar and reassuring face to generations of students. Many parents who now drop off their own children once

See **CROSSWALK**, Page A3



File Photo

Shoppers converge on the courthouse square in downtown during a past Belton Market Days event. The spring market is set for this Saturday, April 18 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Spring Market Day set for Saturday

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

7,000 shoppers. “The city will block off parts of Central, East and Water streets for Spring Market Day,” said event organizer Leila Valchar, owner of My Giving Tree. “This event

Downtown Belton will soon be a sea of shoppers. Spring Market is this Saturday, April 18, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and the event will feature 81 vendors, 93 booths, two bands and more than

See **MARKET**, Page A2

Youth volunteer for One Community, One Day



BELTON JOURNAL/Shalee Corey-Wiebe

Belton’s Youth Advisory Commission gathered on Saturday to make an impact during One Community, One Day.

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe
The Belton Journal

On Saturday, April 11, the Belton Youth Advisory Commission hosted “One Community One Day” from 8 a.m. until noon.

Volunteers met outside the Harris Community Center and split into groups, separated by bandana color, before heading to 13 homes to rake leaves; clean gutters; and make small outdoor repairs, including fixing a mailbox.

Adam Wells, the Recreation Coordinator, said his favorite part about this annual event is, “giving back to our community.”

He said, “People look forward to this day, just because it is such a big day for our community, and a lot of the homeowners really enjoy it.”

Adam Trujillo with the City of Belton said, “My favorite part is working with the volunteers, offering them

something to actually go out and make a difference in the community. We got a lot of young volunteers, which is really fun, and it’s volunteered.”

After all of the volunteers took a photo together and packed the tools they needed, the groups split up into different cars and drove to their respective locations, quickly getting to work on this cool morning.

The first stop on the list for the green team was Miss Rosemary’s house. At 80 years old, Rosemary appreciated the volunteers handling things around the yard her husband used to do.

“They do such a good work with asking for nothing, and I’m very grateful—very, very grateful.”

Shyam Ramani said that this was his first year volunteering, and that he heard

See **YOUTH**, Page A3

Five Belton ISD campuses earn National Recognition

Special to the Journal



Courtesy Photo

Lakewood Elementary School is one of five Belton ISD campuses recognized nationally for their implementation of Capturing Kids’ Hearts.

Belton ISD is celebrating a milestone in its continued commitment to relationship-driven school culture, with four campuses recognized as Capturing Kids’ Hearts Rising Star schools and one campus earning National Showcase School honors.

The district’s Rising Star campuses include Belton Early Childhood School, Hubbard Branch Elementary, Leon Heights

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OBITUARIES

Isaac

Warren McKentley Isaac
August 5, 1953 - April 4, 2026

Warren McKentley Isaac, affectionately known as “Ike” and “Kenny,” passed away peacefully at his residence in Belton, Texas. He was born on August 5, 1953, in Belton, Texas, where he spent his entire life building deep roots and lasting relationships within his community.

Warren was the beloved son of the late Warren Isaac and Lillie Mae Isaac. In November of 1975, he was united in marriage to the love of his life, Margaret Isaac, in a heartfelt Thanksgiving Day ceremony held at his parents’ home. Together, they established a loving home centered around family.

Warren graduated from Belton High School in 1971 and remained a proud and loyal Belton Tiger throughout his life. He carried his faith in his own personal way, and his life reflected kindness, compassion, and a genuine care for others.

Warren worked hard throughout his life, holding several jobs, including his time at Bell County Juvenile Detention Center. His strong work ethic, dependability, and willingness to help others left a lasting impression on those around him.

Warren enjoyed spending his free time with family, playing games, watching sports, and supporting Belton High School athletics. He especially loved his grandchildren and was always ready to help others. His kindness, warmth, and compassion left a lasting impact on all who knew him.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his sister, Minnie Elaine Herring.

Warren’s love and legacy live on through his devoted wife, Margaret Isaac of Belton; his daughters, Sonia Rodriguez and Kendra Concepcion, both of Belton; his sons, Julian Ware and Warren Ware, both of Temple; his sister, Margaret Isaac Payne and niece, Lillie Payne, both of Dallas. He was especially proud of his 13 grandchildren and 26 great-grandchildren, and he leaves behind many extended family members and dear friends who will forever hold him in their hearts.

Warren’s kind heart, love for his family, and generous spirit touched so many lives. While he will be deeply missed, his memory will forever remain with those who loved him.

A memorial service will be held at Greater Zion Temple Church God in Christ on Saturday, April 18, 2026, at 11 o’clock a.m. Hewett-Arney Funeral Home of Temple is entrusted with the arrangements.

Commissioners nix plan to create hospital district

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

The Bell County Commissioners Court voted against calling for an election to establish a hospital district to manage indigent health-care funding.

Precinct 4 Commissioner Louis Minor proposed the district to handle rising health-care costs — which consumes about 8 percent of county revenue — but it failed to gain majority support.

Opponents preferred increasing direct county taxes to maintain control rather than allowing an independent taxing district to set rates up to \$0.75 per \$100 valuation.

Precinct 2 Commissioner Bobby Whitson said indigent care costs for the county — particularly for the jail — are growing, with about \$12 million being spent on these services.

Instead, Whitson suggested a direct county tax increase to retain local control, despite forfeiting access to state money reserved for hospital districts.

The Commissioners Court simply voted last week not to call for an election to establish a hospital district.

Minor said citizens had circulated a public petition requiring only 100 signatures to call an election, but the motion failed with only Minor’s support.

In other action, the Bell County Commissioners Court approved a five-year, 50 percent tax abatement on property for East Penn Manufacturing at 5101 Wendland Road within the 305-acre North Industrial Park in Temple. County incentives total about \$300,000 over five years and generates tax revenue from personal property.

East Penn makes batteries and supplies major retailers such as Wal-Mart and Duracell. The company leased a building before opening its current center in August 2022. That move created more than 260 jobs and was supported by a \$1.4 million Texas Enterprise Fund Grant.

The Court also: Authorized participation in a settlement agreement involving six opioid distributors. The agreement brings annual disbursements of several hundred thousand dollars to fund the Bell County drug court.

- A \$118,040 proposal for BLGY Architectural Services to deeply assess the condition of the four-story, 38,000-square-foot central jail facility.

- A \$58,500 security modification for the first floor and the historic courthouse courtroom, funded by capital improvement project funds.

- A \$10,000 contract amendment to MRB Group for the county engineer offices.

Crosswalk - From Page A1

crossed the street under his watch as elementary students themselves.

Leon Heights Elementary Principal Lexie Newberry said Mr. Harris is an essential part of the campus community.

“You can feel the difference Mr. Harris makes,” Newberry said.

“He greets students by name, celebrates their victories, notices when they are having a hard morning and makes sure they feel safe before they ever step inside the building. He is more than a crossing guard. He is part of the heart of this campus.”

The ceremony also recognized Rebecca Harris, Mr. Harris’s wife, who serves as Belton ISD’s district receptionist and is celebrating 25 years of service this year. Together, the Harrises represent more than four decades of dedication to the students, staff and

families of Belton ISD.

The newly designated Leonard Wayne Harris Crosswalk now stands as a permanent landmark on the Leon Heights campus, honoring a legacy of safety, kindness and unwavering dedication to Belton ISD students.

Youth - From Page A1

about this event through Y.A.C.

“I wanted to give back to our community, so that’s why I like this volunteer opportunity.”

Mathew Bates, who also volunteered last year, talked about his favorite part,

“I love talking to new people. Like it’s a new group every year that you get to talk to. I just like making people’s day, doing stuff that they might not be

able to do, and just watching them, like they’re always so happy at the very end of it.”

Dawn Orange from the Belton Area Chamber volunteered this year as well.

“As the Chamber always says, we’re always better together, and so different organizations, young, old, everybody coming together to make Belton a better place to live and have a business is always an important thing.”

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City calls for bids for low water crossing



Courtesy Photo

The Belton City Council will soon be considering bids to replace the low water crossing over Nolan Creek at Shirttail Bend.

Special to the Journal

Progress is being made on the East Central Avenue Bridge project to replace the low water crossing over Nolan Creek at Shirttail Bend in Belton. On Sunday, the City of Belton published a public notice that bids will be accepted through 10 a.m. May 5, 2026. Funding was authorized in February 2023. "As we monitor Nolan Creek during the latest spring rains over the weekend, we want to thank affected residents for the endurance essential in the delivery of this important project," said City Manager Sam Listi. "Following years of planning, and essential support from Congressman Carter and the City Council, this project will get underway soon." Belton Police closed the crossing Sunday afternoon when the bridge became impassable due to water and debris.

It's not uncommon for trees and brush to dam up the low water crossing and cause flooding during heavy rainstorms. In 2010, the flooding was so extensive that several residents had to be rescued from the area. The bridge replacement project will include bridge construction, retaining wall construction, street and sidewalk construction, waterline replacement, erosion control, and traffic control. The City Council will officially review bids at a regularly scheduled meeting and award the contract as soon as practical, subject to approval and authorization by the Texas Department of Transportation. A non-mandatory pre-bid conference for the project was held Tuesday, April 14, in the Harris Community Center in Belton, with all potential bidders being encouraged to attend.

Resource Expo held at community center

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe
The Belton Journal

On Tuesday, April 7th, the Bell County Committee for People with Disabilities held a Resource Expo at the Harris Community Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. It was open to the public for all disabilities and all ages.

There were a variety of different agencies for people of all backgrounds, ranging from healthcare, to job opportunities, to sports.

Some resources present were the Belton Senior Center, Texas Workforce, Belton Library, Arc of Bell County,

Texas Parasport, and Fearless Ventures.

Michelle Lammers, mother to four kids with disabilities and founder and president of Texas All Abilities Network, said, "There's a lot of events and a lot of agencies here to give a rounded experience to everybody that's looking for help. We are here to help provide those resources and connect the families to the agencies that can help them because everybody has a different road that they're travelling right now, and they might be in different levels of need."

Melissa Ingridola, Chair



BELTON JOURNAL/Shalee Corey-Wiebe
A lineup of local resources and organizations turned out for the Bell County Committee for People with Disabilities Resource Expo.

for the BCCPD, talked about the importance of making these resources more visible.

"Unless you're affected by a disability, I think you're unaware of what could possibly be out there. I don't even think it's in someone's mind. And at any moment, you could yourself become disabled, or you could have a family member that's disabled."

Cheryl Nelson, Vice Chair, pointed out that resources are not always all that easy to find.

"There are so many resources out there, and I don't think any one person knows

all of the resources that are available to them."

Fran Swanson, President CEO, emphasized that anyone can become disabled at any time and may need access to resources.

"There are those that find themselves in an accident, or life changes, and resources are all around, but (those affected) are new to the market," he said. "So it's important that we have these events, and also we have the services to let the community know, wherever you are, we

See EXPO,
Page A5

Bell County offering flag retirement program

Special to the Journal

On Tuesday, April 14, the Bell County Tax Assessor-Collector's Office announced a partnership with the National Association of Counties (NACo) to offer residents an official U.S. Flag Retirement Box.

Residents are invited to bring their faded, torn, or worn American flags to the Belton Vehicle Registration Office, located at 550 E. 2nd Ave. in Belton, to ensure they are retired in accordance with the U.S. Flag Code.

Once the box is full, office staff will coordinate with a local Veterans of Foreign Wars post to conduct a formal flag retirement ceremony.

"This program provides our community with a meaningful way to honor the American flag," Bell County Tax Assessor-Collector Shay Luedeke said, "The flag represents the values and freedoms we all share, and it deserves to be retired with dignity and respect. We're proud to partner with NACo and our local VFW to offer this service to the citizens of Bell

County."

The flag retirement box is available during normal business hours (Monday to Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) at the Belton Vehicle Registration Office.

It will be located behind the counter to ensure that it is not misused by mistake. This service is free and open to all residents.

For more information, please contact the Bell County Tax Assessor-Collector's Office at (254) 933-5318 or by email at <mailto:Vehicle.Registration@bellcounty.texas.gov>.

A box has been installed at the Bell County Tax Assessor-Collector's office in Belton, where residents can bring faded, torn, or worn American flags for proper disposal. The service is free.
— Courtesy Photo



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Belton - From Page A1

Elementary and Southwest Elementary. Lakewood Elementary was recognized as a National Showcase School, one of the highest honors awarded through Capturing Kids' Hearts. This prestigious recognition reflects sustained excellence in building a campus culture where students and staff feel safe, connected, empowered and deeply valued. The distinction highlights Lakewood's long-standing commitment to relationship-driven leadership and its exceptional work creating an environment where every student is supported to thrive.

These recognitions highlight Belton ISD's long-term investment in campus culture through Capturing Kids' Hearts, a framework focused on building trust, strengthening relationships and creating classroom environments where students

are empowered through shared responsibility, collaboration and leadership opportunities. The process also emphasizes a campus culture where staff members feel seen, heard and valued, with regular opportunities for affirmation, feedback and growth.

"Having four Rising Star schools and one National Showcase School recognized through Capturing Kids' Hearts is a powerful reflection of Belton ISD's commitment to building strong, relationship-driven campus cultures," said Gabi Niño, assistant superintendent of teaching and learning. "This recognition speaks to the intentional work of our campus leaders and teachers who create environments where students feel connected, supported and ready to learn each day. We are especially proud to see both newer campuses

and long-standing leaders in this work recognized, which shows the strength and sustainability of our districtwide commitment."

At Southwest Elementary, the Rising Star recognition reflects the early impact of intentional implementation and a strong focus on building meaningful connections among students, staff and families.

"Capturing Kids' Hearts remains a work in progress, but over the past year, our social contract has transitioned from a document on the wall to a living framework that truly guides how we treat one another," said Felicia Gibson, principal of Southwest Elementary. "The most meaningful growth has been in our students' increasing ability to self-manage. We are seeing them use the Four Questions to peer mediate, hold one another accountable and work through challenges together. By shifting away from a punitive focus and instead exploring the 'why' behind behaviors, we are empowering students to take ownership of both their actions and the resolution process."

At Hubbard Branch Elementary, Leon Heights Elementary and Belton Early Childhood School, the Rising Star distinction similarly reflects the thoughtful work happening across newer Capturing Kids' Hearts campuses as leaders and teachers build strong foundations for long-term

culture growth.

Lakewood Elementary's National Showcase distinction reflects years of consistent commitment to the Capturing Kids' Hearts process and a campus culture rooted in belonging, trust, student empowerment and shared success.

"Lakewood's excellence comes from consistent culture-building over time," said Holly Griffith, principal of Lakewood Elementary. "Our daily 'Tell Me Something Good' moments reflect a deep commitment to positivity and connection, while Capturing Kids' Hearts practices like affirmations and intentional relationship-building have created an environment where everyone feels valued. That work has transformed the daily experience for students and staff. Students now greet adults with eye contact, respond positively and engage in meaningful conversations in ways that were rare before. By prioritizing connection at the start and end of each day, we've built stronger relationships, and students truly feel respected, connected and excited to be at school."

Together, these recognitions reflect the strength of Belton ISD's districtwide culture work and the shared commitment across schools to ensure each and every student feels safe, connected, valued and ready to learn.



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Belton sees sales tax increase compared to April 2025

By Lynette Sowell
The Belton Journal

The office of Acting Texas State Comptroller Kelly Hancock's office released its monthly sales tax revenue report for April, and the City of Belton is seeing a higher disbursement in sales tax disbursement than this time last year.

Belton will receive \$739,439.21 for its monthly sales tax check, up 10.89 percent from April 2025. Belton's sales tax revenue is up 1.78 percent overall for 2026.

The revenue being distributed is from sales made by businesses during March 2026 who report monthly.

Texas cities are receiving an average of 9.3 percent more sales tax revenue compared

to April 2025.

Overall for Texas cities, sales tax receipts are up by 3.8 percent for 2026.

The City of Temple is receiving \$2,580,802.79, down 3.11 percent compared to April 2025.

Morgan's Point Resort will receive \$28,627.65, up 11.55 percent compared to last April.

Troy will receive \$84,242.73, up 2.28 percent compared to last April.

Over in Nolanville, sales tax revenue is up 1.25 percent compared to last April, with Nolanville to receive \$118,585.45. Nolanville's sales tax revenue is down 5.19 percent for 2026. Holland's revenue check is \$15,269.00 this month, up 76.24 percent compared to April 2025.

April sales tax payments to area cities		
Belton	\$739,439.21	up 10.89%
Harker Heights	\$853,877.14	up 2.45%
Holland	\$15,269.00	up 76.24%
Killeen	\$2,680,201.77	up 5.38%
Morgan's Point Resort	\$28,627.65	up 11.55%
Nolanville	\$118,585.45	up 1.25%
Salado	\$65,945.34	up 8.27%
Temple	\$2,580,802.79	down 3.11%
Troy	\$84,242.73	up 2.82%

Percentages reflect a monthly increase or decrease compared to April 2025

Salado sees an increase of 8.27 percent this month, and will receive \$65,945.34.

The City of Killeen will receive \$2,680,201.77, up 5.38 percent compared to last April.

Harker Heights sees an increase, up 2.45 percent this month compared to last April, and will receive \$853,877.140. For 2026, Harker Heights' sales tax revenue is up by 0.60 percent.

Animal Shelter slashes kill rate

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

The Bell County Animal Shelter has slashed its euthanasia rate for the first quarter of 2026 compared to the same time frame last year.

"During the first quarter of 2025, the shelter euthanized a total of 139 animals," said Lt. Jared Alton, director of the Animal Shelter. "In the first quarter of 2026, we have cut that number to 70. The shelter staff is working hard to increase our live-release rate."

During January, February and March, 568 animals were brought into the shelter, and 458 animals were either adopted out, reclaimed by the owner or transferred to another shelter, according to Alton.

"The Bell County Animal Shelter takes in all animals found throughout unincorporated areas of the county," Alton said. "Those animals include dogs, cats, snakes, ferrets, guinea pigs, cows, horses, pigs, goats. Etc."

"Basically, if it can be owned by a person, we will take it if it's found at large."

"To give an example, in January 2026 we averaged 15 cats in our care each day and 34 dogs a day," Alton said. "In April 2026, we are averaging 25 cats in our care each day and 48 dogs each day. In June of 2024 we were caring for approximately 96 dogs each day."

"We do expect to see an increase in our animals per day in the coming months as we are entering puppy and kitten season," he said.

"We have 48 dog kennels in our dog run, and I am comfortable with placing two dogs in half of those kennels to make our capacity 72," he continued. "We have a total of 52 cat cages."

Growth in the number of animals in the shelter means a greater need for donated food, toys, and blankets.

"We love to take donations and we ac-

cept almost anything," Alton said. "The items we use the most are bleach, Dawn dish soap, paper towels and newspapers. We accept all kinds of food, while we feed our animals Purina Dog Chow or Cat Chow, we accept anything."

"Some food items are placed in our food pantry while some wet dog and cat foods will be used to feed the animals. We accept blankets and towels, especially in the cold months. We will take kennels, beds, leashes, collars, treats, basically anything that can be used to care for the animals."

"We accept donations at the shelter, or you can reach out to the good people at Rescue Magazine and make a donation at one of their many donation drives," Alton said. "They are often found outside one of the local Wal-Mart stores on weekends."

"Monetary donations are great, also," Alton said. "They allow us to make emergency purchases when we get a random animal in the shelter that needs special food or housing that we do not keep on hand."

"We had a chinchilla back in 2023," he added. "I am not sure what a chinchilla's diet consists of, but I am sure it's not something we keep on hand. Monetary donations can be made in person at the shelter or mailed to the shelter. We accept cash and check donations."

The future of the Bell County Animal Shelter is a bit foggy.

"There is some uncertainty right now as to whether the shelter will remain under the Sheriff's Office or if another department or organization will take over the day-to-day operations of the shelter," Alton said.

"Because of this, my long-term plans for the shelter are not clear. As I await a decision from the County Commissioners, I am focused on short-term goals."

"I am working with my Facility Manager,

Kyli Higdon, to continue improving our live release rate and reduce our euthanasia rate. I am also working to update and modernize our

policies and procedures to ensure they are sustainable for the future of the shelter, regardless of who is in charge."

Expo - From Page A4

want to support you."

Judy Morales talked about how her son, Rusty, inspired progress in developing resources locally for others with disabilities.

"He passed away in 2009, and so for 31 years,

he really overcame a lot of things, and we were so thankful. We started organizing locally, and then we connected with the Governor's Committee and the Temple Committee. And then, we went to talk to Judge Garth, and he

allowed us to expand it to the Bell County Committee," she said. "We're just thankful that we're still here to honor him, but also honor others who have overcome so many different obstacles and their disabilities.

Vandalism forces City to rebuild Heritage Park field

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Damage to the multi-purpose field at Heritage Park will cost the city \$124,371 to rebuild.

The damage resulted from a motorist driving onto the playing surface and doing "doughnuts" in the grass. Both the turf and the underlying infrastructure were heav-

ily damaged, showing rutting, soil compaction,

See **REBUILD**,
Page A8



Courtesy Photo

Paragon Sports has been hired to rebuild a multi-purpose field at Heritage Park after vandals drove a vehicle on the turf, damaging underlying infrastructure.

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LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Financial planner adds piloting to skillset



Scot Hrbacek

By Michelle Rodriguez
The Belton Journal

Scot Hrbacek is a certified financial planner with Edward Jones, located at 3011 N. Main St., Ste. C. Hrbacek volunteers with community organizations like the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Belton, Belton Rotary and Foster Love Bell County. He recently became chairman of the board of directors for the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce. He's served on the board many years.

Added to all of that, he recently got his pilot license.

"I've been flying a long time. I fly for business to Dallas, Houston, and Florida and for fun trips to visit family in Dallas, Huntsville, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Oklahoma," said Hrbacek.

Hrbacek is originally from the Lewisville area. The U.S. Air Force retiree served for about 31 years and retired as a Chief Master Sergeant in Logistics and Air Drop out of the Fort Worth Joint Reserve Base.

"Belton is a growing community, in a good way. It's nice to have career after career especially in this community. So many people have been helpful throughout the years. The Belton Area Chamber of

Commerce is good at encouraging, making it welcoming to do business, and making more of a sense of cooperation than competition. I would describe it as 'better together' like Randy says and help each other succeed. We will all do better," said Hrbacek.

"Scot is very giving. He's on the board of Foster Love Bell County. He's a chairman on the board of directors for the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce," said Senior Branch Office Administrator for Edward Jones, Sandy Smith.

Hrbacek met his wife Jill at UMHB. She works for Baylor Scott & White McLane Children's in the emergency room. Their youngest son just graduated from Sam Houston State University. Their eldest son is a CPA and daughter is a graphic artist in Dallas.

"I enjoy serving places where I feel I can do some good. I'm new to the board of Foster Love Bell County. I'm still figuring it out. We are foster parents ourselves. We adopted our youngest son out of the foster care system," said Hrbacek.

"Scot Hrbacek is a true example of servant leadership on our board. His heart for foster children and families is evident in everything he does, and his commitment

to giving back to the community goes far beyond words. Scot brings not only compassion, but also exceptional financial expertise that strengthens our mission and ensures we can serve with excellence. His impact is both deeply felt and truly invaluable said," Joy Sexton, executive director of Foster Love Bell County.

Hrbacek participated in a past Leadership Belton session, and their project was the City of Belton sign.

"I've been on the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce Board for six years. This is my first year as chairman. The board gets together once a month to help decide what's important, help new businesses get established, succeed, and be involved in the community," Hrbacek said.

"Scot is a respected servant leader in our community. We have especially appreciated his leadership on our board of directors, where he is currently serving as our chairman. Our board has also benefited from Scot's experience in financial planning as we have developed a solid financial plan for long term stability for the Chamber," said President and CEO of the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce Randy Pittenger.

Different cultures mingle at the Rooted and Rhythm festival at UMHB

By Michelle Rodriguez
The Belton Journal

University of Mary Harden-Baylor Kingdom Diversity held a multicultural festival called Rooted and Rhythm on Friday from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and invited students, alumni and the community to join.

The event was held in the McLane Hall at the Bawcom Student Union building, second floor. The evening was filled with cultural exhibits, global cuisine, art, and live performances.

The Kingdom Diversity office enhances the culture of UMHB by creating

a sense of belonging that holds Genesis 1:27 (Imago Dei) as its primary focus: "So God created mankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them."

There were live performances from the Quality Line Dancers Group from Killeen, and also a pacific islander dance group. They played live music featuring drummers. They taught the audience dances and words from their language like how to say, "Hi, aloha!"

"It was great! It was nice to support the missionaries that had tables showcasing different countries and try the different foods," said UMHB student

Lauren Lucky.

The countries represented at the festival were Haiti, South America, Mexico, Central America, the United Kingdom, and Japan.

At the Haitian table there were some artifacts from Haitian street vendors.

"These are photos from my orphanage," said UMHB student Wilson Gunther.

At the South American table there were artifacts on display, as well.

"The Incas used these when the Spanish came into the country," said Katia Hill. Hill and her daughter UMHB student, Penelope Hill sat at the table and talked about the artifacts.

At the United Kingdom table students served snickerdoodle and peanut butter chocolate chip cookies, and cinnamon roll apple pie.

The Spanish Club had a table representing Puerto Rico and served pastellos with cheese and pastellos with steak filling, and maduros.

The Japan table displayed different types of origami shaped in hearts, frogs, and birds at their table. There was a poster display of photos of Okinawan foods like goya champuru which is bitter melon stir fried with tofu, spam, and egg; and jyushi which is Okinawan style mixed rice. There was a map of the

Okinawan islands, photos of the Shuri Castle in Shuri, Naha, and photos of instruments, and clothing.

The country of Guatemala was represented by the student's serving food and drinks. They served pupusas, tamales, and rellenitos, a dessert filled with sweet beans. They had pineapple, cantaloupe, and watermelon drinks called aguas.

There was a Rio Grande Valley table fundraiser selling t-shirts and snacks like fresas con crema which translates in English to strawberries with cream, a Mexican dessert topped with coconut flakes, strawberry syrup, and whipped cream; and different flavor paletas, which translates in English to popsicles. The flavors were mango, strawberry, coconut, and pineapple.

There was an African American culture table that displayed photos of prominent African Americans like Martin Luther King, Jr., George Washington Carver, Katherine Johnston, and Maya Angelou.

The next UMHB Kingdom Diversity event will be on April 20 at 5 p.m. at the Quad. It will be an Asian American/Pacific Islanders Celebration called One Night, Many Shores featuring Cha Community food trucks, live performances, and cultural activities.

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BELTON JOURNAL/Michelle Rodriguez
The Pacific Islanders group dancers performed at University of Mary Hardin-Baylor Kingdom Diversity multicultural festival "Rooted and Rhythm" last Friday.

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The Copilot We All Need



John C. Perry

My 6-year-old Dell laptop had been limping along for weeks. It crashed multiple times, refused to re-boot, and eventually launched itself into Dell Diagnostics, which cheerfully informed me, "Your system cannot be repaired."
Most people would rush to Best Buy. I reached for Microsoft Copilot

on my cell phone. A couple of hours of troubleshooting later, commands, prompts, and more patience than I thought I had. Copilot helped me repair a corrupted boot file and brought the old machine back to life.
Fastforward a week. Same problem, different cause. Back to Copilot. Step by step, it guided me through another fix. A few days later, it happened again. And once again, Copilot got me running.
At that point, Copilot and I had a little heart-to-heart, or should I say machinetoman conversation. It didn't mince words: "John, your Dell just ain't what it used to be." Fair enough. So, I asked Copilot to help me choose a new laptop. It asked what I use it for, what I wanted to spend, and then gave me several

options, none of them Microsoft laptops, which honestly impressed me.
It even told me, "When you get the new one, let me know and I'll walk you through the setup." And it did. With the new laptop it helped me avoid making some key start up mistakes, by fully explaining the consequences of the options I was selecting. After all that, I can honestly say: if you're facing tech trouble, ask Copilot first. For me it was a real lifesaver.
All of this got me thinking. We all need a copilot in life. Technology can help with laptops, but life throws curveballs that no software can fix, loss, fear, uncertainty, challenges we never saw coming. So where do we turn?
If you're a Christian, you al-

ready have a built in Copilot, far greater than anything Microsoft could ever design. When Jesus is in your heart, you have someone who guides, strengthens, and walks with you through every step and every trial.
Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight." God isn't just our Copilot, He's the One steering, even when we can't see the road ahead.
And in John 10:11, Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." A shepherd leads, protects, and directs. That's what Christ does for us, guiding us toward eternal life.

Technology, as I learned, can be wonderful. Copilot helped me resurrect a dying laptop more than once. But as helpful as it is, there is a far greater power at work in our lives. If you haven't yet turned your life over to Christ, I encourage you to take that step and let Jesus be your Copilot.
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.
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.

Rebuild - From Page A5

grading issues, and drainage problems.

According to James Grant, director of Belton's Parks & Recreation Department, the area now needs substantial repairs.

On Tuesday, City Council authorized City Manager Sam Listi to execute an agreement with Paragon Sports Contractors to rebuild the multi-purpose field,

Paragon's quote includes:

Playing surface preparation: Lay-out and grading of a 94,000-square-foot playing area.

Grass & Rootzone Removal: Re-

moval of 94,000 square feet of existing grass and rootzone material.

Grading & Drainage: Tilling, laser grading for proper slope drainage, rolling, and compacting.

Irrigation System: Repair and installation of irrigation system and heads.

Sod Installation: Placement of 78,500 sq. ft. of TifTuf Bermudagrass.

Site Clean-up: Restoration of the area upon completion.

All funding for the rebuild is provided through an approved insurance claim.



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Lake Belton softball claims 16-5A championship

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

The Lake Belton Broncos didn't just win a district championship Friday they announced themselves in emphatic fashion, rolling past the Ellison Eagles 16-1 to claim the 16-5A crown while simultaneously celebrating a milestone that made the moment even sweeter.

The victory marked career win No. 100 for head coach Kelsie McEachern, a benchmark that her players made sure she reached in style.

Lake Belton wasted no time sending a message. The Broncos erupted for 10 runs in the opening inning, putting the game essentially out of reach before the Eagles had a chance to settle in. Walks to Brysen Gott, Alaysha Williams, and Maliyah Gooden got things started and immediately put runs on the board. Avery Park followed with a two-run triple to blow the frame open, and the hits kept coming from there. Analicia Diaz added an RBI single and later scored on a tag up. Madison Perkins drove in a run with a triple of her own, and Gott punctuated the inning with a two run double to cap a historic first frame.

If there was any doubt the Broncos were done scoring, the second inning erased it. Lake Belton tacked on five more runs on four hits to push the lead to 15 before Ellison had found its footing. Addison Sims ignited the second surge with a triple, Isabell Magana followed with a two-run triple, and Gott added a sacrifice fly. Nani Rubio rounded out the inning with an RBI single to keep the pressure relentless.

Sims would add one more run to the board in the third on her second triple of the afternoon this one a shot down the left field line giving Lake Belton its 16th and final run of the day.

In the circle, Jackson was every bit as efficient as the offense was explosive. She held Ellison to three hits and a single run across three innings of work, striking out four while walking just one and earning the win in comfortable fashion.

The Broncos' baserunning was equally relentless. Magana and Gooden each swiped four bags, while Diaz and Perkins also added stolen bases. Natalie Hosch and Gott contributed doubles, and Madison Naser was hit by a pitch in a Lake Belton lineup that

See **CHAMPIONS**,
Page B2

McEachern reaches 100 wins, Broncos clinch District 16-6A title

By Tony Adams
The Belton Journal

The Lake Belton Broncos hosted the Killeen Ellison Eagles at Bronco Diamond in search of their sixth consecutive district title.

Senior Addison Sims and junior Brysen Gott each drove in three runs and Isabell Magana and Avery Park drove in two runs as the Broncos run-ruled the Eagles in three innings, 16-1.

The win was 100th in the tenure of Kelsie McEachern, having reached the milestone in just 115 games in two-and-a-half seasons (.870 winning percentage). It also clinched Lake's sixth consecutive district champion-

ship, extended her district winning streak to 32 games, and the program's district winning streak to 66 without a loss.

"We challenged ourselves early on, and we were in some competitive tournaments and games," McEachern said. "That is what has pushed us to prepare for district. Our district has been competitive as well and we've had some tight games. I think all of that is preparing us for the third season: the playoffs."

While the coaching staff (Rachel Ripley, Jeremiah Adams, and Stephanie Quigley) have worked hard with the team this season, the history of Bronco Softball has not been void of effort, especially in the past two sea-

sons where Lake made a State Semifinal appearance in 2024 and Region II Final appearance in 2025 that included an upset shutout of Class 5A No. 1 and MaxPreps national No. 1 Melissa.

"We have had some hardworking and hungry players here at Lake," McEachern said. "Year one we had some pop and pitchers that were going places," McEachern said. "So, that was more strategy. Year two in the circle, we had a developed pitcher, and the hitters were more contact style and played good defense. This year, we can run! We've never had that here and we're playing to our

See **100**,
Page B2

Lake Baseball celebrates Senior Night with romp over Waco

By Tony Adams
The Belton Journal

On Friday evening, Lake Belton Baseball celebrated Senior Night in front of a packed house at Bronco Park.

The program celebrated the players and their families for their contributions and dedication to Lake Belton High School Athletics.

Seniors celebrated were AJ Peters, DJ Lavalee, Zavian Rodriguez, RJ Hunt, Maverik Maddux, Jonathan Russell, Landon Willey, Brock Winkler, Braxtan Cope and the late Sean McCallum.

On the field, Maddux allowed two hits and a walk over five innings,

while having struck out 12 Waco Lions on night where the rain came and went on a couple of occasions as the Broncos run-ruled the Lions, 17-2.

"It was a great win for the seniors on Senior Night," Lake Belton head coach Chris Peacock said. "It was a big win for us heading into the series against Chaparral."

Lake scored five times in the first, six in the second, one in the third, and five in the fourth.

Waco was able to pick up their lone two runs in the fourth inning.

Cope went 3-for-3 with three RBI, Russell and Easton Robertson added

See **LAKE**,
Page B3



Belton ISD to have strong showing at regional track meet

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Corsicana will play host to the area track meet Friday, and plenty of Belton ISD standouts will be competing.

With their seasons hanging in the balance, athletes descended on Tiger Field last week, where only the top four finishers in each event advanced and kept their hopes of state championships alive.

Collectively, no team had more success than the Lady Broncos, who emerged with the girls team title behind multiple impressive in-

dividual outings.

Lake Belton competitors qualified in a variety of events as they helped the Lady Broncos amass 213 points — more than 40 points ahead of their closest competitor.

Berrian won the 400-meter run in 57.85 seconds and was fourth (25.85) in the 200, finishing less than second behind winner Garcia (25.17). Garcia was also third (12.25) in the 100, while Kelley was first (16.59) in the 100 hurdles and fourth (48.01) in the 300 hurdles

Additionally, teammates Moriah Rydberg, a senior,

won the 300 hurdles in 46.27, and sophomore Camryn Mikulas was third (47.90).

Kelley also placed fourth in the high jump, clearing 5 feet, 0 inches.

The Lady Broncos also excelled in the distance running events, claiming three of the top four spots in the 1,600 and 3,200.

Alexa King, a sophomore, was first (5:43.35) in the 1,600, and she was followed by freshman Keira Dzenowski (2nd, 5:47.71) and sophomore Lucy Loa (3rd, 5:50.33), and in the 3,200, Dzenowski (1st,

12:35.97), junior Sarah Gray (2nd, 12:59.11) and junior Madelyn Rivas (3rd, 13:11.70) occupied the top three spots in the 3,200.

Alexa King, a sophomore, won the 800 in 2:27.82, while Rivas was third (2:31.25).

The Lady Broncos also advanced in all three relays, placing second (47.49) in the 400 relay, second (4:09.88) in the 1,600 relay and third (1:45.65) in the 800 relay.

In field events, Lake Belton sophomore Camryn Mikulas (2nd, triple jump, 36-7/8), sophomore Ayaana

Omisola (3rd, long jump, 15-9), junior Avelyn Ponce (3rd, pole vault, 7-6), junior Isalei Simpson (3rd, shot put, 33-10) and Dzenowski (4th, pole vault, 7-0) also qualified for area.

Killeen Chapparral (2nd, 170.3), Belton (3rd, 79), Killeen Ellison (4th, 78.3), Waco (5th, 36.3) and Waco University (6th, 36) completed the standings.

Area qualifiers for the Lady Tigers are sophomore Tara Stone (1st, discus, 117-1; 4th, shot put, 33-0), junior Kiara King (1st, high jump, 5-8; 3rd, 100 hurdles, 17.30),

senior Laila Page (1st, pole vault, 10-0; 4th, 400, 1:00.90; 4th, triple jump, 36-2/4), sophomore Jada Gage (4th, long jump, 15-8/4) and junior Melissa Farmer (2nd, shot put, 33-10).

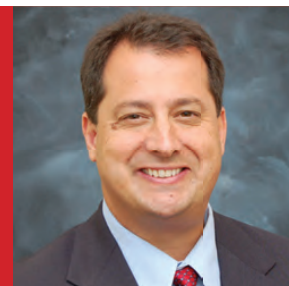
Belton was also third (4:12.45) in the 1,600 relay.


In the boys division, Chaparral claimed the team title with 152 points, beating out Ellison (2nd, 143), Belton (3rd, 128), Lake Belton (4th, 106), Waco (5th, 44) and University (6th, 42).

See **TRACK**,
Page B3



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Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Belton will hold a meeting for all incoming freshmen football on Tuesday at 6 p.m. inside the school's field house.

It is open to all players and parents and will cover topics including program expectations, summer schedules, equipment, staff introductions and there will be a question-and-answer session.

Belton Lake: Stillhouse

FAIR. Water normal stain; 60 degrees; 0.87 feet below pool. It is a "tale of two fisheries" right now for Lake Belton white bass. There are fish steadily making their way up the Leon River to spawn, and there are fish still residing in the main lake. Both have their pros and cons. The river fishery is best on the weekdays and during poor weather when fishing pressure is minimized, otherwise, expect plenty of company. Trolling crankbaits which imitate medium-sized threadfin shad, like the Bomber 5A, or the Storm Smash Shad will put fish in the boat slowly but steadily. If you closely watch side-imaging, you will likely spot migrating schools which can be cast to to put bonus fish in the boat. Horsehead-style jigs with an under-spin in white and chartreuse less than 2 inches long do well. Back on the main lake the deep, lethargic fish which have been present but difficult to goad into biting are now much more aggressive. Look in 35 feet or less along the old Leon River channel or Cowhouse Creek channel during bright conditions, and as shallow as 12-14 feet at first light, last light, and under cloud cover. The Mini White Bass Alabama rig with white paddle tails less than 3 inches long or MAL Originals get the job done when retrieved with a sawtooth retrieve. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Catfish are excellent in 10-25 feet of water. Slow drifting with suspended baits around points and river channels has worked best for blue catfish. Flathead catfish are slow, but have been caught near structure and rock piles with live perch and shad. Channel catfish are fair and have been caught in shallow water around timber using punch bait. Report by Brian Worley, B&S Catfishing.

FAIR. Water stained; 60 degrees; 1.90 feet below pool. It is a "tale of two fisheries" right now for Stillhouse white bass. There are fish steadily making their way up the Lampasas River to spawn, and there are fish still residing in the main lake. Both have their pros and cons. The river fishery is best on the weekdays and during poor weather when fishing pressure is minimized, otherwise, expect plenty of company in tight quarters. Trolling crankbaits which imitate medium-sized threadfin shad, like the Bomber 5A, or the Storm Smash Shad will put fish in the boat slowly but steadily. If you closely watch side-imaging, you will likely spot migrating schools which can be cast to to put bonus fish in the boat. Horsehead-style jigs with an underpin in white and chartreuse less than 2 inch long do well. Back on the main lake the deep, lethargic fish which have been present but difficult to goad into biting are now much more aggressive. Look in 35 feet or less along the old Lampasas River channel during bright conditions, and as shallow as 12-14 feet at first light, last light, and under cloud cover. The mini white bass Alabama rig with white paddle tails less than 3 inches long or MAL Originals get the job done when retrieved with a sawtooth retrieve. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service.

PHYSICALS

Lake Belton will be hosting a free clinic offering ninth- and 11th-graders athletic physicals April 29, beginning at 5 p.m.

Participants must have a completed medical history form signed by a parent or guardian in order to take part.

STRENGTH & CONDITIONING

Belton's summer strength and conditioning program begins June 1 and will be open to all middle school and high school athletes.

On the available dates throughout June and July, high school boys will begin two-hour sessions at 8 a.m., while middle school boys start at 7 a.m.

Regardless of school, all girls will begin each day at 9 a.m.

For more information, visit BeltonTigers.com.

Tigers claim win over Ellison, sights set on playoff berth with Friday win

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Tigers can clinch a playoff spot Friday with a win at Killeen Ellison, and the odds are in their favor following a dominant showing Tuesday versus the visiting Eagles.

In the series opener, Bel-

ton was never challenged, immediately jumping out to an advantage before cruising to a 15-0 victory.

Along the way, the Tigers stole a whopping 12 bases.

Belton only needed five innings to achieve the feat, scoring eight runs in the final inning.

With the victory, the Tigers sit in a third-place tie with Killeen Chaparral in the District 16-5A standings, owning identical 4-3 records.

Fifth-place Ellison is now 2-5 with three games remaining in the regular-season schedule.

Waco (0-7) is in last place, while Lake Belton (6-

1) and Waco University (5-2) sit atop the field.

The showing comes on the heels of a 4-3 win against the Bobcats.

Nash Jordan delivered a RBI double in the seventh inning to produce the go-ahead

See **BASEBALL**, Page B3

Lady Tigers fall to University, 3-1

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

A delayed start hurt the Lady Tigers Friday night.

After a lightning delay pushed the first pitch back more than an hour, the Tigers never quite found their rhythm, falling to Waco University 3-1 in a game where the offense struggled to generate any consistent threat. Belton managed just four hits on the night, leaving the Tigers unable to overcome a University squad that made the most of its opportunities.

Reagan Stuart took the ball to start things in the circle, working five innings and keeping the Tigers within striking distance while surrendering five hits and recording four strikeouts. Tara Stone came on

in the sixth and continued to compete, adding two more strikeouts and allowing just one hit in her two innings of work. The pitching gave Belton a chance the bats just couldn't answer.

It was the kind of night where everything felt slightly off, and the extended delay before first pitch did the Tigers no favors in terms of momentum and rhythm. Belton now turns the page quickly with a home date looming and a chance to get right in front of their own crowd.

That chance came Tuesday, and the Tigers made the most of it.

Belton wasted little time getting the home crowd into it, plating a run in the first inning and adding another in the second to build an early 2-0 cushion against the Killeen Chaparral Lobos.

The Tigers continued to apply pressure in the third, breaking the game open with a four run frame that pushed the lead to 6-0 and took the wind out of Chaparral's sails.

Any remaining doubt was erased in the fifth. Belton added five more runs to put the finishing touches on a dominant 12-0 run rule victory the kind of complete, wire to wire performance the Tigers needed after the frustration of Friday night.

The bounce back win was exactly what Belton was looking for heading into the stretch run of the district season, with the Tigers showing they have the firepower to put teams away in a hurry when the offense is clicking on all cylinders.

Champions - From Page B1

found every way possible to do damage.

With the district title secured and

the playoff field now taking shape, Lake Belton shifts its focus forward quickly.

The Broncos head to Waco on Tuesday

for a road district matchup, a chance to keep the momentum rolling as postseason play draws closer.

100 - From Page B1

strengths. Every year has been a different strength. It makes us diverse and hard to plan for.

With the bi-district round a couple of weeks

away, the competition will ramp up. So will the temperatures and humidity. McEachern and her staff

are already game planning for the game within the

game.

"Starting on Monday, we are starting their conditions. They are getting their bodies ready now for playing in a series

and playing in the heat," McEachern said. "That's the biggest key. We will continue to practice hard that way the games are easier.

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Track - From Page B1

Tigers senior Christian Porter earned gold medals in the 100 (10.65), 400 (47.54) and long jump (21-3½). He edged out junior teammate Amani House (2nd, 21-3) in the long jump.

The pair will be joined at area, where the top four finishes advance to the upcoming regional meet, by teammates Graham Chambley (1st, 110 hurdles, 14.48; 4th, 300 hurdles, 41.78) Wyatt Potts (3rd, 1,600, 4:45.48), Jayden Trevino (4th, 200, 22.33; 4th, 3,200,

10:28.62), Amani House (2nd, 300 hurdles, 41.55; 4th, 110 hurdles, 15.96), Alexander Matos (3rd, 300 hurdles, 41.76), J'areus Mitchell (3rd, high jump, 6-0), Cason Morton (4th, high jump, 6-0), Luke Roberts (2nd, pole vault, 13-0) and Oakley Torres (4th, discus, 121-11).

Lake Belton's qualifiers are junior Noah Stevens (1st, 300 hurdles, 41.07), junior Zion Harness (3rd, 100, 11.02), senior Kendrick Jones Jr. (2nd, 400, 49.35), sophomore Prince Moore (4th,

400, 50.20), junior Ji'yson Sherman (2nd, triple jump, 42-5¼), junior Allen Muchunu (3rd, triple jump, 42-4½), freshman Drew Houston (4th, pole vault, 12-0) and junior Isaiah Fulk (2nd, discus, 140-5).

In relays, the Broncos advanced in the 1,600 relay (1st, 3:23.36) and 400 relay (2nd, 41.37), while the Tigers (3rd, 400 relay, 41.55; 3rd, 1,600 relay, 3:27.88) also qualified in each race.

Baseball - From Page B2

run in a 3-3 contest.

With the win, Belton split its series against Chaparral, rebounding from a 15-4 loss earlier in the week.

Regardless of Friday's outcome, the Tigers will play a nondistrict game against Killeen Harker Heights at home on Saturday. First pitch is scheduled for

1 p.m.

Then, Belton closes its league schedule with a series against Waco, traveling for a 7 p.m. start on Tuesday

Lake - From Page B1

two RBI, and Rodriguez and Willey added two hits in the 13-hit Bronco attack.

On Tuesday, the Broncos took on the Chaparral Bobcats to start their home-and-home District 16-5A series in Killeen.

Lake jumped out to a seven-run lead early, but Chaparral roared back to force extra innings.

RJ Hunt scored on Zavian Rodriguez's single, Landon Willey drove Rodriguez home on a sacrifice fly, and Logan Winkler homered in the top of the first to give Lake a 3-0 lead. Rodriguez drove home

Travis Moore on a single in the top of the second. The Broncos added a two-run triple from Colby Anthony and RBI single from Easton Robertson to extend Lake's advantage to 7-0.

After a three-run rally by Chaparral in the bottom of the third, Braxtan Cope scored on DJ Lavallee's fielder's choice in the top of the fourth.

The Broncos extended their lead in the top of the fifth on Rodriguez's RBI double.

Rene Pagan's solo homer and Sebastian Romero's RBI double in the bottom of the fifth

pulled the Bobcats back to within four runs, 9-5.

M Schubert's RBI single scored Blake Belliveau in the bottom of the sixth to cut the margin to three. P Chu's hit a two-run double and scored on an error to tie the game at 9-9.

Lake's offense emerged in the eighth inning for FIVE runs. Anthony sacrifice was bobbled in top of the eighth inning, which scored Lavallee to give Lake the lead. Hunt singled in Anthony, Willey drew a bases-loaded walk that scored Brock Winkler, Logan Winkler drove home Rodriguez and Hunt to put

the Broncos up, 14-9.

Anthony pitched around a single and a walk in the bottom of the eighth and induced a pop out and line out to lock up the five-run win for the Broncos.

Lake Belton banged out 12 hits, led by Hunt and Rodriguez with three hits apiece. Rodriguez and Logan Winkler led the Broncos with two RBI.

Gavin Carpenter got the start, allowed three runs, three hits, three walks, and struck out five in three innings. Willey pitched two innings, allowed three earned runs on two hits, three walks, and two strikeouts. Anthony picked up the win in relief, allowed one earned run on four hits, struck out two, and walked one.

Lake Belton will host Chapparral on Friday at Bronco Park.



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A SEP IRA is simple, low-maintenance and lets you vary contributions each year. An owner-only 401(k)

A financial advisor can help you compare these choices and select the best fit for your business and your retirement goals.

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

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LEGALS

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 25CPB00773**

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
JANA BRODEUR, Applicant, on December 19, 2025, filed an Application to Determine Heirship in a proceeding styled: BECKY MCENTIRE, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00773 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 April 16, 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: BOBBY BARINA 2207 BIRDCREEK DRIVE TEMPLE TX 76502

LEGALS

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 April 09, 2026
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas PO Box 480 1201 Huey Road Belton, TX 76513
By: Lillian Phillips Deputy
04.16

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION-PARENT
AND CHILD**

To: Ronald Sharp, any Unknown Father and All Whom It May Concern, Respondents, in the hereinafter-styled and numbered cause:
You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of 20 days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. The First Amended Petition of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, was filed in the 146th Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas, on December 18, 2025, against Jodie Lowe and Ronald Sharp, Respondent(s), numbered 25DFAM354672, and entitled "In the Interest of VALKYRIE YOUNG, minor child." The suit requests to terminate the parent-child relationships and/or to appoint a managing conservator of the child. The date and place of birth of the child who is the subject of the suit is: VALKYRIE YOUNG, DOB: April 7, 2025, Place of birth: Texas
The court has authority in this suit to render an order in the child's interest that will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child's adoption. The name and address of the attorney for plaintiff is Ryan Smith, Bell County Attorney's Office, P.O. Box 1127, Belton, TX 76513
Issued and given under my hand and seal of the Court at Belton, Texas, this the 9th day of

LEGALS

April 2026
Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, TX 76513
By: C. Rodriguez Deputy.
04.16

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Administration for the Estate of FRANK EDWARD GANSEL, Deceased, were issued on April 8, 2026, in Cause No. 23CPB00675, pending in the County Court-At-Law: Number one, Bell County, Texas, to: MELISSA GUZMAN.
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 8th day of April 2026
JAY R. BEATTY State Bar No.: 01992450 3106 South W.S. Young Drive Building D, Suite 401 KILLEEN, TX 76542 Telephone: (254) 526-3024 Facsimile: (254) 526-2545
E-mail: jbeatty@mbaattorneys.com Attorney for Melissa Guzman
04.16

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 26CPB00212**

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
PATRICK PRIMO ICKERODT, Applicant, on April 08, 2026, filed an Application to Determine Heirship in a proceeding styled: GISELA GARCIA, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00212 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 April 16, 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: JOHN ERIC STOEENBERGER, 2106 BIRD CREEK DRIVE, TEMPLE TX 76502

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 April 08, 2026.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513

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Local Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Activities April

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04/18: Exploring Wines	04/24: Trailblazers Walking Group
04/20: Snack Time Mah Jongg	04/25: Jimmy's Egg
04/21: Bunco	04/27: Well Read Women, Monday Canasta
04/22: Fun Lunch, Bunco	04/28: Singing Bluebonnets

**"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."

AS+K and Safety Planning Suicide Prevention Training - Apr 24

Central Counties Services and CTCOG will be sponsoring AS+K and Safety Planning Suicide Prevention Training on Friday, April 10 and again on April 24. The class will run from 8:30 AM to Noon on both dates. These are identical one-day sessions offered twice to accommodate those who may have scheduling conflicts. This FREE, evidence-based training is one of the most effective tools available to help prevent suicide and address this silent epidemic in our communities. To register, please visit Eventbrite or text 254-718-3563 with your name and the date you would like to attend.

MPR Explorers@ The Point - Apr 30

The MPR Explorers will host Michele Weisman, an MPR resident, author, and member of the local small-business community. Weisman also reports for the Belton Journal, a regional newspaper serving Belton and nearby areas. She will present "My Life as a Newspaper Reporter," sharing how she entered the field, prepares for assigned stories, and how reporting differs from writing a book. April 30, 10:00 am. - 11:30 a.m. at Sol de Jalisco, 101 Morgan's Point Blvd, Morgan's Point Resort. Open to the community; guests purchase their own meal

Mary Ruth Briggs Library Open House — May 2

A family-friendly Cinco de Mayo Open House featuring a 10:30 a.m. performance by the Lake Belton High School Performance Choir, a kids' craft table, and an interactive "Imagine the Possibilities" community idea board — all designed to welcome residents into the one-room Mary Ruth Briggs Library, introduce the new Friends group, and invite the community to help shape a vibrant, creative future for Morgan's Point Resort, 8 Morgan's Point Blvd, May 2, 10:00 a.m. to noon. For more information email library@mprtx.us.

The Murph Challenge - May 23

Honoring the legacy of Michael P. Murphy. Step up to the Murph Challenge and test what you are truly capable of. One mile run, 100 pull-ups, 200 push-ups, 300 air squats, and another one mile run at Chupacabra Strength & Conditioning. For more information call 254-228-5771.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet both on TUESDAY, April 14th and April 28th at 6:30pm at the Temple VA Hospital. Use the entrance on the Valet parking side of the hospital and take the elevator to the 5th floor -Conference Room 5G31. Both care-givers, supporters and those suffering from mental illness are welcome to join us for mutual support and sharing of information. For more information, call 254-771-3638.

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.

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 aspenshospice.net or call 512-856-5668 for more information.

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

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

reach and partnerships. We welcome you to join other history minded folks and get involved by serving on one of our committees that consist of preservation, cemetery, markers and education. To volunteer or for more information please visit historicalcommission@bellcounty.texas.gov, call 254-933-5917 or visit the office located in the historic Bell County Courthouse, 101 E. Central Ave., RM 117.

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

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

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

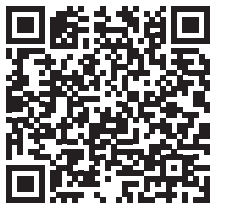
Bell County Texas Democratic Women holds their monthly meeting on the third Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Belton AgriLife Center, 1605 N Main in Belton. Join us to hear from local and state candidates and about important issues and events. This is open to the public.

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

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

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/take-me-home. 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

Explain it to me – using words

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

I wrote a column about how pictures can add much to a news story, and that pictures are a fun part of the event, especially if you can't be there.

But let's look at the other side of this coin and how news and stories are much more than just pictures with headlines.

Long ago, before the written word as we know it, people would communicate with pictures.

I would venture to ask, are we regressing back to that form of communication?

The trouble with pictures is, our brains fill in the blanks and sometimes we're not right. We can make a wrong assumption. Or we have questions that we want answered, that a picture can't answer for us.

I've noticed that our society is still very visual. We see an interesting picture online with a headline, but do we click on the link? Or do we just make assumptions based on the headline? That's why sometimes it's called click bait – the media knows this is what makes readers read. Or should. A headline should grab your attention, and it should make you pause for

a moment. You should go, "Hmm. . . I need to find out more about that."

But do we really try to find out more about "that" and read what goes along with it?

Case in point: I will share a photo via social media along with a link and a headline that invites the reader to explore more. The idea is, the reader should click on the link and find out more. But, are we really reading? Do we look at a headline, look at a picture, and then keep going? Often, more information that answers questions raised by the headline is provided in an article. That's why it's called a news article. The article details are important because they answer questions (or should).

Are we as a society becoming less inquisitive to the point that we won't look for information? We will ask someone "out there" for an answer, but will we look for ourselves? This is why we as a newspaper share links. It begs the reader to read more. I like to say that people who read articles are often those who like to research.

Do they teach research in school these days? Do they teach how to find information for something other than asking a friend or posing a question on social media?

Some individuals will post comments, asking questions about a headline that an article will answer (if they would only read it). And then, the reasonable reader will comment, "Well, if you read the article, you will see that it says (the answer to your question)."

Often, if you ask a question on social media, the answers you receive can vary greatly. Some will be the same period. Some will be wrong. Some will only be partially correct.

Yes, I love pictures, but the growing "dumbing down" of a society where many can't or won't look beyond a headline to learn more – even about something as simple as a community event – is concerning.

Here's to the curious ones, the readers, the ones who will seek answers for themselves instead of having social media do the mental "heavy lifting" for them.

Orange Cat Stories #2

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

For those who have never had cats, there's something you should know.

Cats are natural mimics. Many cats instinctively "chatter" when hunting as a means of attempting a bird call to lure prey in. All cats, meanwhile, have a vocal range that overlaps human vocal range, which is why their meows, needy cries, and other vocalizations can sound so similar to a human infant's vocalizations. Smarter cats, especially cats that have lived among humans long enough, will start to recognize what specific human words and gestures mean and what is expected when they happen. Put it all together, and, as I noted in "Luck Of The Orange-Ish", a small percentage of cats will succeed in being able to "speak" a few words of the language their human speaks.

Now, I've lived with, raised, and otherwise been around cats continuously

since 1990. The big orange boy who was the subject of that other column was the first and so far only cat I've encountered in person who could in fact "speak" English. That's how rare it is to actually encounter a cat who is capable of doing so. Even our current fluffy boy, a full-blown Maine Coon, one of the smartest breeds of cat there is, hasn't figured out how to do more than infant-like shrill howls despite being smart enough to realize that if he stands under a dripping bathtub faucet before grooming himself he'll get better results. I recall a *very* old episode of "America's Funniest Home Videos" having footage of a black cat quite literally screaming "No!" as its human tried to bathe it, and that's the only other cat that comes to mind as having been able to "speak".

...So I think you can imagine, then, how disconcerting it can be to encounter

a kitty who is able to actually "speak" to you.

The denomination I belong to has the members themselves conduct visitation. That is, two members of a given congregation will be paired together and given a list of other members to visit monthly. In a functional congregation, everyone will be paired with someone else to go conduct visitation, and everyone will have a pair of individuals assigned to visit them.

Once upon a time, one of the people assigned to visit with us was a very shy, somewhat slight of stature, and very mild-mannered individual. I don't remember the details, but for some reason he wound up coming to visit us by himself one day. As I noted, if the big orange boy wanted to wander around the back yard, he'd come up to one of us and say "out now" – pronounced "owwt noww" – as his way of ask-

ing for us to open the sliding glass door to the back yard. Well, on this day, big orange boy decided that he wanted out while this other member of the congregation was over visiting. Thus, he walked up to my mom and, as per the normal routine, asked permission.

Cue our visitor stumbling over a few words as he tried to process the concept of a talking cat, at which point mom tried to explain that this was, incredibly, quite normal. Our visitor promptly came to the conclusion that he needed to leave the premises with all speed. Not only did he never again come over to the house, if memory serves we had a different pair of individuals scheduled to meet with us starting the very next month.

Then again, we did wake up one morning to discover this cat "reading" an issue of "Popular Science" magazine...

Randomness

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

How about this joke: There are three types of people, those that are good at math and those that are not.

I often see how people can be grouped together by various characteristics.

Let's say we have a task to do, and we need a fairly good sized container filled with water from a garden hose. Here is how that breaks down.

The first person will stand there watching the water until the container is right at the top then shut the faucet off, not wasting or spilling any water.

The next person will turn down the faucet until the water is just barely flowing, then get on their phone.

Another will start the flow of water then clean the faucet and the area around them as they wait for the container to be filled.

The last type will start the water then wander off looking for something else to do, returning in about an hour after the water has been overflowing

for quite some time. Oblivious to the waste.

There are probably some variations on those personality types, but overall this is typical of what I have seen.

Did you know that a common name for an outdoor water faucet is a "hose bib"? Mention that to your uncle the plumber at the next family reunion for a surprised look.

Another area of observations that I have made of various traits is a "four way" stop, using stop signs (and loosely including traffic circles as well).

You have the extra polite driver that will let everyone go before them as a courtesy.

Then there is the confused driver that will let the driver facing them, traveling the opposite way, get through the intersection before they take off. This delays the cross traffic which now has to wait on another driver, and hopefully we don't have a "confused" driver in this group.

We have a "creeper" that never comes to a complete stop and just messes up the flow of the movement through the intersection.

Finally the driver that is well versed on the rules of the road and knows how to navigate these tricky intersections. They come to a complete stop, having scanned the other three drivers prior to stopping, they know who should go and in which order. They also know that if the "creeper" doesn't fully stop then they are not allowed to take their turn so will force the issue. Of course this sounds a bit aggressive, but it is not, if every driver approached the "four way" stop with good driving skills there would be less confusion, and everyone could be polite within the rules of intersection etiquette.

Could we develop a special Texas grass for our lawns that grows equally all year long, the same in the spring as it does during the dry months? That would be quite helpful for planning our

lawn care. In the spring we often finish cutting the lawn and look back at where we started and it seems like the grass already needs cutting. However, in the late summer the only reason you need to cut the grass once a month is because there is one spot that actually shoots up something that needs cutting.

Did you know that no matter how hard you try you cannot stack glass pans without making noise?

Have you noticed that when we get a food item that is popular then someone comes along and wants to super-size it? Perhaps I am not their target audience for the new portions. I often prefer the original food over whatever they have come up with later. Sometimes the old saying; If a little is good then more is better, is not that accurate. At times more is just more, and not really that good.

I hope everyone has a thought filled week, and watch those four-way stops and traffic circles. More on that later.

From Nuisance to Hero

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

Spring is in full bloom on our hilltop, and this afternoon I decided to cut some fresh flowers from our yard. I gathered pink and yellow and peach roses from the front of the house before heading to the back, Max beside me every step. You remember Max. A few months ago, I wrote about the kangaroo-sized dog I unwillingly inherited from my young adult child. He slobbers and drools. He tries to sit in my lap, uninvited. He gets hair all over my nice clothes.

Not much has changed in our situation. But today, a lot changed in my heart. Max is now my hero, and I'm not giving him back, ever.

As I rounded the corner toward the red-and-white roses, I nearly tripped over a rope. Odd, because Rick never leaves his stuff out. I stepped back to examine it closer... that rope was a six-foot-long snake, sunning in my yard like it was at a five-star resort.

At this point I scampered backward. Max followed me, wagging his tail like I was playing some kind of game.

"Max! Get the snake!" Max turned to look where I pointed, and suddenly he was on full alert. He approached the reptile and barked. The snake hissed and tried to strike,

but Max was too fast.

Of course, this happened when Rick was out of town, and his shovel was in the back of his truck. (I'm proud of myself for even looking for the shovel. That would not have happened a decade ago.) At this point, the snake slithered over to our garage door and tried to find a way into our house. I'm so glad the door was shut tight! Max stayed between me and the snake, barking a warning at the creature that said, "Try me. See what happens."

There was no rattle. I knew it was a chicken snake, but it certainly wasn't friendly. It gave up on the garage and slinked around the side of the house, up a support pole, and tried to slide through a vent. Praise God, the snake was too big. (I can't believe I just praised God for a big snake.)

This whole time, I had Rick on the phone, giving him the play-by-play. And this whole time, Max strategically positioned himself to protect me. I love that dog so much.

Rick called his Uncle Dwain for backup. I won't go into details... but within half an hour, that snake had gone wherever snakes go at the end of their journeys. I'm pretty sure it's not heaven. Especially after it tried to break into my house.

Max has been officially elevated from nuisance to hero. And I'm reminded of how quickly the tide can turn when we step fully into the roles God designed for us. How often do we seek approval from others, only to feel rejected and alone? How often do we tell ourselves we'll never fit in, never be successful? We all experience that at times. But the best remedy is to do exactly what Max did. Stop looking for others' approval and simply be who God intended us to be.

Yesterday, Max did what he was created to do... protect. Keep your eyes open for chances to be the person God created *you* to be. Maybe you're an encourager, and someone needs your kind words. Maybe you have the gift of service, and someone needs your help. Soon, you'll find opportunities to show your stuff. And when that happens, you'll feel your shoulders pull back and your head lift. You'll feel the satisfaction of being God's masterpiece, standing in the full acceptance of His love.

"But you, Oh Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head." Psalm 3:3

Holy Trinity Catholic High School to host Celtic Golf Tournament

Special to the Journal

Holy Trinity Catholic High School invites the Temple community and surrounding areas to take part in its annual Celtic Golf Tournament on May 11, at Sammons Golf Course, with a tee-time of 8:30 a.m.

This community-centered event offers a day

of golf, fellowship, and charitable giving in support of local students.

The tournament serves as a key fundraiser for Holy Trinity Catholic High School, with proceeds directly benefiting tuition assistance, student programs, and campus initiatives that enrich both the academic and spiritual lives of its stu-

dents.

Participants can register as individual golfers or teams, and local businesses are encouraged to get involved through sponsorship opportunities. Sponsors will receive recognition at the event and gain exposure to community members and supporters from across the region.

In addition to friendly competition on the course, the event will feature contests, prizes, and opportunities to connect with fellow community members. Golfers of all skill levels are welcome.

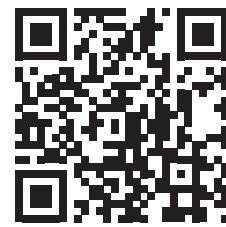
“This tournament is a great way for our community to come together while supporting the mission of our school,” said

Renee Morales, director of marketing at Holy Trinity Catholic High School. “We are grateful for the continued generosity of our local supporters who make opportunities like this possible for our students.”

Registration is now open, but spots are limited.

For more information

or to register, please visit: <https://give.hellofund.com/HTGolf2026>



Veterans invited to participate in the Voices of Veterans Oral History Program

Special to the Journal

Texas Land Commissioner and Veterans Land Board (VLB) Chairwoman Dawn Buckingham, M.D., issued a statewide call out for veterans to contact the Texas General Land Office (GLO) to share their unique stories

of service with the VLB through the GLO’s Voices of Veterans Oral History Program.

“As VLB Chairwoman, it is an honor to help serve our courageous Veterans by preserving and honoring their legacies through the Voices of Veterans oral history pro-

gram,” said Commissioner Buckingham. “This incredible program is made possible by the hard work of the VLB and GLO staff who record and archive these precious stories for future generations. As we near recording our 600th story of bravery and sacrifice, I encourage Veterans across the state to contact us and be a part of Texas history.”

The GLO’s Voices of Veterans Program records the stories of Texas Veterans through their time in service and after returning home from combat.

The stories are then permanently archived in

the Office of Veterans Records at the GLO, where they join the historical documents of other Texas heroes such as Sam Houston, Davy Crockett, Jim Bowie, and William Barret Travis.

To date, the Voices of Veterans Program has captured nearly 600 stories that are available to researchers, historians, genealogists, and the public.

These invaluable records inspire future generations and remind us of our Veterans’ sacrifices.

To listen to the archived stories of Veterans documented through the

GLO’s Voices of Veterans Oral History Program, visit: <https://www.glo.texas.gov/veterans/voices-veterans>.

Veterans interested in sharing their story with the Voices of Veterans Oral History Program are invited to complete the form online at <https://www.glo.texas.gov/veterans/voices-veterans/your-story>.

The Oral History Program coordinator, James Dillon, will contact those who complete the form to provide additional information and set up an interview.



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SCAN

UMHB invites community to attend annual spring musical this weekend

Special to the Journal

The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor’s (UMHB) College of Visual and Performing Arts is excited to present the spring musical, Little Women, in the Bough Performance Hall at the Sue & Frank Mayborn Performing Arts Center April 17 through April 19. Shows are at 7 p.m. on Friday, April 17, and Saturday, April 18, and at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, April 19.

This production is based on Louisa May Alcott’s classic novel about four sisters growing up in Civil War-era New England. Each young woman faces her own journey, shaped by ambition, love, loss, and the changing world around them. Jo dreams of becoming a writer and resists the pressures to conform. Meg desires a home and family of her own. Amy pursues beauty and success, and Beth provides a quiet strength that anchors them all. Little Women celebrates the dreams and resilience of young women determined to discover their purpose and place in the world, with warmth, wit, and wisdom.

“In an era when musicals typically rely on sensationalism or novelty for their ap-

peal, Little Women cuts against the grain and proves (as the book did when it was published in 1869) that true stories involving relatable characters and events have a special power to move the heart in profound ways,” said Dr. Stephen Ash, UMHB visiting professor and stage director. “Little Women leads us out of the hectic pace of modern life and invites us to dwell on things that matter deeply, including family, friendship, purpose, and passion. Our students have worked diligently and are thrilled to share this production!”

Tickets are \$16.50 each for adults, \$11.50 each for children ages 6-18, and free for children ages 5 and under and seniors ages 65 and older. Admission is also free for UMHB students, employees, and alumni with a valid Cru Card or Alumni card in person at the box office in the Sue & Frank Mayborn Performing Arts Center.

To learn more about the spring musical, visit www.umhb.edu/pac. To purchase tickets, please call the Sue & Frank Mayborn Performing Arts Center at 254-295-5999 or email pac@umhb.edu. Box office hours are noon to 4 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

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