

## Commissioners recognize Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month

Special to the Journal

On Monday, the Bell County Commissioners Court, led by County Judge David Blackburn, officially proclaimed April 2026 as Child Abuse Awareness and Prevention Month in Bell County.

The proclamation highlights the importance of protecting children from abuse and neglect, and acknowledges the role of community-wide efforts in ensuring the safety and well-being of every child.

“Child abuse and neglect affect every part of our community, and prevention requires all of us to take action,” said Kevin Kyle, Executive Director of CASA of Bell and Coryell Counties. “Our children are our most valuable resource, and we must work together to provide safe, stable, and nurturing environments where they



Courtesy Photo

**Back Row:** Bell County Commissioners Court – Russell Schneider, Bobby Whitson, Judge David Blackburn, Gregory Reynolds, Louie Minor; **Front Row:** Barbara Baber, Corinne Donnelly, Maddie Ramos, Denise Hanley, Kevin Kyle, Kevin Lee, Dessera Valenzuela, Nikita Morga, Alba Vilalta.

can thrive.”

In Federal fiscal year 2025, the Texas Department of Family & Protective Services confirmed 59,917 victims of child abuse or neglect, including nearly 1,000

children in Bell County. The proclamation emphasizes that prevention is the best defense for children and families and highlights the long-term social, emotional, and economic consequences of abuse and

neglect.

Court Appointed Special Advocates® (CASA) volunteers play a vital role in this effort. CASA volunteers are

See **AWARENESS**, Page A2



Courtesy photo/Camera Artistry Photography A bull rider hangs on during Saturday's Budweiser Bulls and Broncs at the Cadence Bank Center in the Equine Arena.

## Budweiser Bulls and Broncs rodeo carries on the cowboy tradition

By **Michelle Rodriguez**  
The Belton Journal

Rodeo enthusiasts gathered on Saturday for the Budweiser Bulls and Broncs brought to the community by Bullothon Promotions and Done Right Productions at the Cadence Bank Center in the Equine Arena.

The gates opened at 4 p.m. with the bull riding

starting at 6 p.m. Admission was free to the public.

“It was great. We had a great turnout. It was a packed house. We had 18 teams which equaled 36 bull riders. We had 12 ranch bronc riders, and 8 saddle bronc riders. Some were PRCA and some were PBR

See **RODEO**, Page A2

# Belton ISD Students Selected for Special Olympics Leadership Council

Special to the Journal

Two Belton ISD students are helping lead the way for inclusion across Texas after being selected to serve on the 2025–2026 Special Olympics Texas Regional Youth Leadership Council.

Bailey Schorn and Johnny White, both juniors at Lake Belton High School, were chosen as a unified pair to represent the Central Region, reflecting their commitment to building school communities where each and every student belongs.

As part of this honor, the pair was invited to present during a Special Olympics Texas event, where they also had the opportunity to introduce the organization's CEO, an experience that re-

flects both their leadership and the confidence others see in them.

The Regional Youth Leadership Council brings together students from across Texas who are passionate about advancing Unified Champion Schools initiatives, promoting inclusion and creating opportunities for students of all abilities to lead and succeed together.

For Bailey and Johnny, this work is already making an impact on their campus and beyond.

“Bailey and Johnny represent what inclusion looks like in action,” said Lauren Marx, Special Olympics coordinator for Belton ISD. “Through Unified programs, they are not only building friendships but also cre-

ating a culture where each and every student is seen, valued and given the opportunity to lead. Their selection to this council speaks to the difference they are already making in our schools.”

Belton ISD's continued partnership with Special Olympics Texas supports the district's commitment to ensuring each and every student has access to meaningful experiences that build confidence, leadership and connection.

As members of the Regional Youth Leadership Council, Bailey and Johnny will help inspire and empower students across the Central Region, proving that when inclusion is intentional, the impact reaches far beyond the classroom.



Courtesy Photo

Bailey Schorn and Johnny White, both juniors at Lake Belton High School, presented at a Special Olympics Texas event. The two have been selected to serve on the 2025–2026 Special Olympics Texas Regional Youth Leadership Council.

## Parks Master Plan includes indoor recreation facility study

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Courtesy Photo

Above is the Indoor Recreation Center in Orange, Texas. The Belton Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan includes a feasibility study on building such a facility in Belton.

By **David Stone**  
The Belton Journal

As part of the Parks, Recreation & Trails Master Plan being created by city to guide improvements and development for the next 10 years, the Belton Parks & Recreation Department has also created an Indoor Recreation Feasibility Study.

“More and improved indoor recreation has been frequently men-

tioned in our surveys and meetings to gather public opinion for the Master Plan,” said James Grant, director of Belton Parks & Recreation.

Grant said the purpose of the Feasibility Study was to identify the community's vision for indoor recreational space and determine the feasibility of constructing a facility.

According to the study, there are five types

of indoor recreation facilities:

**Recreation Center:**A building, room or other facility used for social or recreational activities.

**Field House:**A covered facility which generally includes field sports such as soccer, football and multi-use space.

**Multi-Purpose Courts Facility:**A small building or covered space devel-

See **PARKS**, Page A4

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BELTON JOURNAL/Shalee Corey-Wiebe  
TOP: Roman soldiers – UMHB students – escort Jesus along the path to the cross. ABOVE: Jesus, portrayed by a UMHB student, hangs on the cross between two fellow students portraying thieves.

# UMHB holds annual Easter Pageant

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe  
The Belton Journal

On April 1st, the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor had its annual Easter pageant, which depicted the powerful story of Jesus' death and resurrection. Three performances were put on throughout the day, starting at 12:30 p.m., 3:00 p.m., and 5:30 p.m.

The pageant was hosted outside, and on this sunny afternoon, all seats were taken. Many of the overflowing audience stood or sat in the grass, eager to witness the retelling of the Easter story.

Robed performers acted out various events throughout Jesus' life eventually leading up to the crucifixion, including interactions with His disciples, the people, and the Pharisees.

Coupled with visual performance were music and narration as the story progressed onto the moments right before the cross, including Judas' betrayal; the last supper, which was performed on the second floor of a small house built for the set; and Jesus' fervent prayer at Gethsemane.

Finally the time came when Judas arrived with a crowd to arrest Jesus. The Son of God was accused of blasphemy and presented to Pilate, who against his better judgment, released the criminal Barabbas and handed Jesus over to be crucified, according to the crowd's angry demands.

Jesus was flogged, and the crown of thorns was placed on his head. The crowd of performers gathered in front of the place

where Jesus was to be crucified as the Roman soldiers mounted up his cross. Jesus and the two criminals beside him stood on small platforms attached to the crosses and spread out their arms.

As the scene came to a close, Jesus' famous words were announced, "Father, into thy hands I entrust my spirit. It is finished."

They took Jesus to the left side of the set and put him in the tomb, rolling the stone in front. Before long, the angel came, standing on top of the tomb as the stone was rolled away. Out came Jesus, and the audience cheered.

Finally, after Mary and the other disciples had seen what had happened, the story concluded, and all of the actors came out for the final song.

## Submissions open through May 3 for Belton Waste Management scholarships

Special to the Journal

The submission period is open for high school seniors interested in competing for a City of Belton-Waste Management scholarship.

This year, a total of \$4,000 in scholarships will be distributed by the City of Belton and Waste Management, provided applicants meet all of the requirements.

The scholarship is open to graduating seniors living within the Belton-Waste Management service area,

which is comprised of addresses within the Belton city limits and Three Creeks.

Applicants may attend any area school. To verify eligibility, visit <https://belton.maps.arcgis.com/apps/lookup/index.html?appid=5c5cbe4389104f119fa8cbb93e7af4d> and type in your address. You are eligible if your address generates.

The Scholarship Application is available online.

Please submit completed applications with supporting documents electronically.

Contact Paul Romer, [promer@beltontx.gov](mailto:promer@beltontx.gov) or 254-933-5889, with any questions.

The application deadline is 5 p.m. on Sunday, May 3. Late applications will not be considered.



## Awareness - From Page A1

assigned by the court to speak up for a child's best interest, ensuring that every child has a voice in their case. Last year, 6,991 CASA volunteers advocated for 17,431 children across Texas, yet many children in foster care still lack a dedicated CASA volunteer to speak up for them.

"Through partnerships with Child Protective Services, Child Advocacy Centers, foster parents, educators, law enforcement, and other community organizations, we can make a real difference in the lives of children," Kyle add-

ed. "We encourage everyone in Bell County to join us in supporting children and families during this important month and beyond."

CASA of Bell and Coryell Counties continues to recruit volunteers to advocate for children in foster care, helping ensure that each child in our community has a safe and hopeful future.

For more information about CASA and ways to get involved, visit [casabellcoryell.org/](http://casabellcoryell.org/) volunteer.

## Rodeo - From Page A1

riders. Vendor space was full and the seats to watch the rodeo were full," said Curtis Ischy with Done Right Productions.

There was no short go. There were long rounds and teams. There was mutton busting for children aged four to seven with a weight limit of 56 pounds. They allowed 20 children to participate. That particular event was sponsored by Mike Seiler Insurance Agency.

"I've done this since 1985," said Seiler, who is President of Bell County Cowgirl and Cowboy Hall of Fame that carries on the heritage of the cowboy tradition. The best bull riders in the world were competing at the rodeo. There were 15 qualified riders. The mutton busting was run by the Bell County Cowgirl and Cowboy Hall of Fame."

Logan Harris took on a saddle bronc ride and Ayden Dale had the first qualified bull ride.

Lane Nobles became a Champion Bull Rider with

an impressive score of 87.75 on Bull Cha Ching from 4X Bucking Bulls. Second place was Guilherme Valerias with an 87.25 on Red Bull from Jeff Harris Bucking Bulls. There was a tie for third and fourth place with Adilson Junior with a score of 86 on Bull #1846 from Jeff Harris Bucking Bulls with Rafael Dos Santos also with a score of 86 on Switchblade from Dale Fults Bucking Bulls.

The Champion Bull Team was Burkham Bucking Bulls, followed by Wyloh Bucking Bulls and Mason Bucking Bulls in second and third, respectively. The High Point Bull was the 4M Ranch Bull #2121 scoring 22 points.

"In my opinion, all the riders are winners. A quality guy knows he can win on the bull he's riding. The boys I have are 17. They are state and high school champions," said Stock Contractor Danny Mason. "I also ride and raise bulls. There's not a secret to win. I go to win and the judg-

es keep score."

"In life, it's not about the wins that matter. It's how you take the losses that prepare you for how to act. It shouldn't define who you are," said Jeff Burkham with Burkham Bucking Bulls.

The U.S. Army First Cavalry Division Horse Detachment put on a demonstration and ceremony.

The event was sponsored by Budweiser Jack Hilliard Distributing, Central Texas Auction Services, and Parkway Real Estates.

"It's a good rodeo because there's a lot of riders. My niece told me about it. She saw it on the internet and saw that it was free," said spectator Roy Evans, from Temple.

There was an after-party at Bo's Barn in Temple that featured live country music by Texas Double Shot, dancing, and an opportunity to unwind and celebrate the spirit of the evening with fellow rodeo attendees.

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Solve the code to discover words related to driving.  
Each number corresponds to a letter.  
(Hint: 15 = E)

**A. 20 1 14 20 8 2 22**  
Clue: Road

**B. 3 15 20 1 18 21 15**  
Clue: Car or truck

**C. 19 1 14 20 16 19 15 15 1 7 14**  
Clue: Enjoying the view

**D. 18 11 12 1 19 15**  
Clue: Maintain set speed

Answers: A. highway B. vehicle C. sightseeing D. cruise




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## OBITUARIES



### Parker

**Michael Roy Parker**

**August 24, 1950 – April 4, 2026**

Michael Roy Parker, 75, of Belton, Texas passed away peacefully at his home on Saturday, April 4, 2026.

Funeral services for Mike, or Pop as most knew him, will be held on Saturday, April 11, 2026 at 11:00 a.m. at Dossman Funeral Home in Belton with Pastor Matt Thrasher officiating. Burial will be private.

Mike was born on August 24, 1950 at Sewell-Long Hospital in Belton to the late Dee Davis and Clara Elizabeth (Dunn) Parker. He began living in the area that is now the Stillhouse Hollow Dam and Reservoir until the construction of the lake forced his family to move. The family relocated to Salado for a short time before eventually moving Belton where Mike attended Belton schools. He was a gifted baseball player and was a proud member of the Marching 100 where he played trumpet. After high school, he accepted a music scholarship to the University of North Texas in Denton. In 1970, Mike left Denton, moved back to Belton, and enlisted in the Army National Guard where he served for 7 years. He married his long-time girlfriend Sarah (Sally) Heard on May 30, 1970 at the First United Methodist Church in Belton. They were married for almost 55 years before Sally passed away in 2025.

Mr. Parker began working for Belton Sand & Gravel around 1970 and soon after moved over to the ready-mix concrete division with Cen-Tex Ready Mix. This would be the beginning of a 54-year career in the concrete industry in and around the Central Texas area where he managed multiple operations over the years. In 1995, Mike, Dick Prater, and Mike's oldest son Chris Parker would form Belcrete Ready Mix in Belton. Pop finally retired in December 2024 to spend time with Sally as her health declined.

Mike was preceded in death by his parents; his wife Sally, and brothers Billy Dee Parker and Kenneth Parker. He is survived by his son Chris Parker of Moody; son Ben Parker of Belton; daughter Rachel Parker of Salado, and son Eric O'Braden of Belton. Also surviving are grandchildren Emily Hohertz; Taylor Keaton; Michael Parker; Gavin Humphries; Logan Parker; Parker Humphries, and Matthew Parker, as well as great-granddaughter Kodi Keaton, and step-grandchildren Riley Lawhon and Logan Lawhon.

A visitation will be held on Friday, April 10, 2026 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. at Dossman Funeral Home in Belton.



### Wilson

**Dorothy E. Wilson**

**February 8, 1958 – April 2, 2026**

Dorothy E. Wilson, 70, of Belton, passed away on Thursday, April 2, 2026. A visitation will be held on Thursday, April 9, 6-8 p.m. Services will be the following day, Friday, April 10, at 10 a.m. Both will be held at Dossman Funeral Home. Burial will follow at McDowell Cemetery in Belton. Dorothy was born on February 8, 1956, to Marshall Napoleon Montgomery and Hazel Margrete Montgomery, in Taylor, TX. Mrs. Wilson loved to sew and spend time with her family. Especially her grandchildren. She had her two fur babies, Roxy and Diamond, who she loved to spoil. She also wanted to go fishing anytime she could. If someone went without her, they would hear about it! Jesus was number one in her life. When she could, she attended Amity Brush Arbor Church. She is preceded in death by her husband, Delmas Karron "D.K." Wilson; two brothers, Charlie Montgomery and JR Montgomery; one sister, Martha Miller; and one great grandchild, Serenity Taylor.

She is survived by two sons, Marshall Wilson and wife Michelle, Walter Watkins and wife Margaret; one daughter, Dellaina Coakwell and husband Michael; two brothers, Raymond Montgomery and Howard Montgomery; five sisters, Sallie Dean, Dessie VanHouten, Bessie Maynard, Betty Harper, and Kathy Swiger; eleven grandchildren, Austin Wilson, Dillon Wilson, Vince Wilson, Dustin Taylor, Marcy Coakwell, Doree Coakwell, Katarina Coakwell, Curtis Watkins, Matthew Watkins, Darin Watkins, Sierra Watkins; and 13 great-grandchildren, Hazel Wilson, Maybriehg Wilson, Austin Wilson, Jr., Lillie Wilson, Tate Wilson, Asheron Taylor, Rowdie Blaise, Carter Watkins, Elias Watkins, Elizabeth Watkins, JR Taylor, and Jagger Watkins one of the two on the way.

### Thomas

**William Thomas**

**November 23, 1951 — March 29, 2026**

William Thomas, affectionately known as Bill, passed away peacefully on March 29, 2026, in Temple, Texas. Born on November 23, 1951, in Waco, Texas, Bill led a life marked by dedication, service, and a love for the simple joys that defined his character.

A proud veteran, Bill served honorably in the United

States Marine Corps from 1971 until 1975. Following his military service, he committed himself to the community as a Correction Officer at the Marlin Detention Center, where his steadfast presence was a testament to his strong sense of duty.

Bill's educational journey began in New Braunfels, Texas, where he graduated from Canyon High School in May 1970. Beyond his professional career and military service, he nurtured a passion for gardening, tractors, and fishing—a pastime he cherished whenever time permitted. He was also an avid reader, particularly fond of the Louis L'Amour books, which he enjoyed deeply.

He was known for his steadfast personality, always standing firm in his convictions. Even if he was wrong, Bill believed he was right, a trait that endeared him to many who appreciated his spirited nature and his willingness to agree to disagree.

Bill is survived by his beloved sons, Jon Thomas and his wife Tina Thomas, and Chris Thomas, as well as one sister, Edna Clark, and her husband John Clark. He also leaves behind a brother-in-law, Rodrick Allen, known affectionately as "Hot Rod," and three cherished grandchildren: Coral Thomas, Alex Thomas, and Shaw Thomas. Their love and presence will undoubtedly continue to be a source of comfort and strength to his memory.

He was preceded in death by his devoted wife, Carol Sue Thomas; his parents, John Eldon Thomas and Evelyn Edna Laxson; and his sister, Elaine Allen.

Visitation to honor Bill's life will be held on April 14, 2026, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Young's Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center, located at 4235 E. US Hwy 190, Temple, TX 76501. Following the visitation, a burial service will take place at 2:00 PM at the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery, 11463 TX-195, Killeen, TX 76542.

As we bid farewell to William "Bill" Thomas, we remember a man whose life touched those around him with sincerity, dedication, and a unique spirit. His legacy will live on in the hearts of those who knew and loved him, a tribute to a life well-lived.



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## MPR city election voting starts April 20

**By David Stone**  
*The Belton Journal*

Morgan's Point Resort will be hosting its City Elections starting April 20 at the Garrett & Mic Hill Event Center, located at 60 Morgan's Point Blvd., according to Shahdhiah R Valentin, director of MPR's Administrative Services.

"During the first week, we will have early voting on April 20, 22, 23 and 24 from 7 a.m. through 4 p.m.," Valentin said. "On April 27 and 28,

voting will be 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Election Day is May 2 and votes may be cast from 7 to 7."

"We will not be having elections on Tuesday, April 21 — that is San Jacinto Day, which is a legal holiday," she added. "This impacts all elections being held at the end of April for the entire state of Texas."

Morgan's Point Resort will be filling three City Council seats during the election. The seats up for election will serve 2-year terms.

Candidates who have filed for the MPR Council seats are Dorothy Allyn, Bruce Leonhardt, Louis Guillard III, Melanie Bohler, Samuel L Pallin and Sarah Steers. Pallin, Allyn and Leonhardt are incumbents.

The MPR early voting clerk is Kelli Mero-lillo and deputy clerks are Valentin and Amanda Dominguez. The presiding judge on Election Day will be Sally Barron.

Ballot positions for the upcoming election were drawn on Feb. 20,

and the three incumbents will occupy the last three slots on the ballot.

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## Application period now open for 4th of July parade

By Lynette Sowell  
The Belton Journal

Applications are now being accepted for Belton's annual 4th of July Parade.

The parade theme this year is "Celebrating 250 Years of America."

Registration fees are as follows:

For-Profit Organization (Chamber Member) - \$100

For-Profit Organization (Non-Chamber Member: Includes Chamber membership dues for one year for 1-10 full-time employees) - \$350

Non-Profit Organization (Must submit a 501(c)3 letter to qualify for this pricing) - \$50

All Other (Car Clubs, Youth Sports Teams, Clubs, Candidates & Individuals) - \$50

Categories include:

Equestrian  
Float & Vehicle Group  
Marching Group  
Walking Group  
Car Group

Applications can be submitted online, and applicants can review and download the forms via the registration

page and the confirmation email.

The link can be accessed at <https://business.beltonchamber.com/events/details/2026-parade-application-19935>.

A group representative must attend one of the Parade Safety meetings to be held at the Pittenger Fine Arts Center, 400 N Wall St. in Belton.

The dates and times are:  
Saturday, June 20, 10-11 a.m.  
Wednesday, June 24, 6-7 p.m.

The deadline to submit parade applications is June 17.

Those who have questions or would like a physical copy of the application should contact Katherine Mutchler with the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, at 254-939-3551.



## Parks - From Page A1

oped for indoor athletic purposes, typically a multi-purpose sports court usable for basketball, volleyball, tennis and pickleball.

**Senior Center:**An indoor facility where older residents can socialize, develop skills and engage in recreational activities. While similar to a Recreation Center, the primary difference is the demographics served and the type of amenities available.

**Multi-Generational Center:**An indoor facility which serves a wide range of community members and could be developed with several facilities.

According to the study, other communities with a population similar to Belton provide an indoor recreation center for every 27,517 residents; a community center for every 29,445 residents, a senior center for every 34,058 residents, a competitive swimming pool for every 36,979 residents, an outdoor basketball court for every 17,569 residents, a pickleball court for every 12,237 residents, and a tennis court for every 8,761 residents.

Belton has a senior center but falls short of other facilities.

"Belton residents have voiced the desire for the city to develop an Indoor Recreational Center," Grant said.

According to the study, such a facility likely would be 35,000 to 45,000 square feet and include three or four multi-use sports courts, a multi-purpose meeting room and an indoor walking/

running track.

Grant said the city identified about 10 sites for a potential Indoor Recreational Center. The sites were reviewed and narrowed to five for further study — Chisholm Trail Park, Heritage Park, Liberty Park, Miller Heights Public Safety Center and undeveloped location near Cadence Bank Center.

"We analyzed project sites based on criteria, including property ownership, acreage, presence of utilities and a floodplain, topography and land use," Grant said.

The Feasibility Study identified good, better and best locations. Chisholm Trail Park was the "good" location, Heritage Park was "better" and Liberty Park was the "best."

According to the study, Liberty Park is the most centrally located of the three, and it is easily accessible and has the highest nearby population. Its playground may need to be relocated.

Heritage is the most utilized of the three locations, and it is primarily undeveloped. Practice fields would likely need to be relocated.

Chisholm Trail Park is already utilized for athletics, and it would provide an opportunity to partner with Belton ISD. However, multi-use fields would need to be relocated and the park already experiences traffic issues. Also, existing parking needs would need to be addressed.

## Local banks warn of scams

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

At least two Belton banks are warning customers about the latest fraud attacks, including several that use Artificial Intelligence to contact people by phone, email and social media.

First State Bank sent out an email warning last week about several scams in the area "that may impact you, your family or your friends."

"There is an increase in fraudulent phone calls where scammers are posing as the bank's fraud or wire department," the email stated.

"These callers may try to create urgency and ask for sensitive information, such as account details, online banking credentials, or debit/credit card numbers. It is important to remember that a bank will never contact you by phone, email, or text message to request this type of information."

"Do not trust your caller ID," the email continued. "It is extremely easy for fraudsters to spoof a phone number in an attempt to appear to be from your bank."

"Your security is extremely important to us. Please protect yourself, if you aren't sure who you are talking with, hang up immediately and call your local banking center."

Mariah Madewell, First State Bank Security Act officer, said scams are affecting the banking industry as a whole and are not something First State Bank is experiencing uniquely.

"We invite anyone who thinks they might be affected by a scam to come in to our banking centers, even if they aren't a customer, and we can help them determine if it's fraud," Madewell said. "We can help with the next steps."

The Belton bank can be reached at (254) 939-3701, and Texas State Bank's customer numbers are (512) 882-0818 or (254) 441-3720.

First State Bank will hold a fraud seminar on June 4 at 10 a.m. at the FSB branch in Killeen, 3514 S. WS Young Dr.

According to Madewell, thousands of Americans are contacted by scammers every day via email, text or phone.

Many people simply hang up or do not respond to the email or text messages, she said. However, when a consumer does connect with a scammer, the four P's of Phishing are applied:

**Pretend** – The fraudster pretends to be an accredited business (Amazon or Microsoft), an employee of their financial institution, or a government official.

**Problem/Prize** – The fraudster will make a claim explaining that the consumer has unusual activity on an account or transaction or they won a prize or are inheriting from a relative.

**Pressure** – The fraudster applies pressure by stating they need to send money to protect their funds and not get arrested, before the inheritance can be released. The fraudster maintains phone contact with the customer as they drive to the bank. They reiterated the importance of sending the money now. The consumer is also instructed on what to tell the bank if it questions the transaction, whether that involves withdrawing cash, conducting a wire transfer, or purchasing a cashier's check.

**Pay** – The pay out looks different based on the scam. In most cases, a consumer is asked to purchase gift cards, perform a wire transfer, purchase a cashier's check, or withdraw cash that can then be given to someone, placed in a crypto ATM, or placed in a package and mailed.

Consumers that receive a call from someone claiming to be with their bank and requesting personal information like PINs, passwords, or social security numbers should hang up and call their local bank branch immediately. Consumers lost \$16 billion to scammers in 2024.

Texell Credit Union is hosting a Financial Scams Seminar with the Temple Police Department on Thursday, April 23, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at their West Temple headquarters, 7083 Members Parkway.

The seminar will cost \$5 a person to support the Texell Serves Foundation. The event will include a meal and will focus on identifying current fraud trends and protecting accounts.

Attendees should register at [Texell.org/Events](https://www.texell.org/Events).

The Texell Credit Union in Belton is located at 416 Lake Road and their phone number is (254) 773-1604.

Here are some fraud prevention tips provided by Texell:

**Verify Identity:** Do not trust caller ID; scammers can impersonate "Texell Credit Union." Hang up and call (254) 773-1604 directly.

**Avoid Public Wi-Fi:** Hackers can steal data on unsecured networks.

**Use 2FA:** Set up two-factor authentication (2FA), preferably via email rather than SMS to avoid SIM swap scams.

**AI Awareness:** Be skeptical of phone calls or messages from known contacts, as scammers are using AI to mimic voices and create convincing fake messages.

According to Eva Valesquez, CEO of the Identity Theft Resource Center, financial-relief scams likely will become more prevalent in the 2026 economy. Potential scams could include bogus health insurance to phony job offers and tariff-relief schemes.

"People will be looking for ways to alleviate their burdens," Valesquez said. "So when they get a (message) that says, 'Hey, apply here, just send us this information,' and it's all of your personal information, including your checking account, I think they'll be vulnerable to that."

Fraud is rampant. Since 2020, the number of adults 60 and older who reported a loss of \$10,000 or more from impostor scams more than quadrupled in 2024, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC).

Reported losses of \$100,000 or more jumped from \$55 million to \$445 million during that same period, but because fraud is known to be vastly underreported, the actual numbers are surely far higher. And AI's growing ubiquity will only worsen the problem in 2026, Valesquez added.

Here are some additional tips provided by Chase Bank in Temple:

Scammers impersonate banks and claim your account is at risk. Reputable banks will never ask you to move money to resolve fraud.

Scammers can make caller ID, emails and texts display as messages from your bank or other businesses. If you are ever unsure, end the conversation and reach out to the company directly through their official website.

Scammers may urge you to distrust bank employees, but neither your bank nor the police will ask you to help in a sting operation.

Treat Zelle, checks, wires, cashier's checks, gift cards, transfers and crypto like cash. Once scammers get the money, you probably won't get it back.

Scammers are advertising on social media and social marketplaces. Whenever possible, shop through official websites and be cautious of deals that seem too good to be true before sending any money.

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# Lisa Copeland keynote speaker for CTRW



**Lisa Copeland**

*Special to the Journal*

The Central Texas Republican Women are holding their annual CTRW Scholarship Endowment Foundation & Teacher Appreciation Luncheon, featuring special guest speaker

Lisa Copeland.

The event will be hosted at the Harris Community Center, 401 N. Alexander Street, Belton on Monday, April 20, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Reservations are required by April 14, and luncheon tickets are \$20 if paying by cash, or \$22 via card.

Email [rsvpctrw@gmail.com](mailto:rsvpctrw@gmail.com) to pay at the door with cash or check, or pay by credit card at [www.ctrw-pac.com](http://www.ctrw-pac.com).

Lisa Copeland is an

entrepreneur, bestselling author, and high-impact keynote speaker known for her bold message of “Crushing Mediocrity.”

With decades of front-line success in sales, leadership, and entrepreneurship, she has delivered keynotes to more than one-hundred Fortune 100 and Fortune 500 companies worldwide, challenging audiences to reject average thinking and build winning, world-class cultures.

As the founder of The Lioness Movement,

a global sisterhood empowering women to rise in faith, build wealth, and lead with purpose, Lisa is passionate about helping others step into their God-given authority. Through her businesses, mentorship programs, and Rise & Roar Mastermind, she has coached thousands of professionals to achieve financial freedom and lasting success.

Doors for the luncheon open at 11 a.m. for networking with the lunch and meeting called to order at

11:30 a.m. The lunch menu includes beef bourguignon, mashed potatoes, green beans, salad, roll, dessert, iced tea, and water. All Republicans are invited.

The Kitty Pope and Sonny Pope Scholarships will be bestowed to two Bell County high school scholars.

This will be the last presentation from the CTRW Scholarship Endowment Foundation, Inc., closing the books on these yearly awards. The Scholarship Program will

come under the direction of Central Texas Republican Women, and in 2027, the Foundation will be dissolved.

In addition to the CTRW Scholarship Endowment Foundation presentation, two area Public School teachers will be recognized and honored for their dedicated work in the classroom. Teacher Appreciation recognition is part of the CTRW Literacy Committee initiative, chaired by Maria Alicia Martinez.

# Community meetings help city get public opinions about parks

**By David Stone**

*The Belton Journal*

More than 90 percent of Beltonians think parks are well worth the cost to taxpayers and should be improved, according to James Grant, director of Parks & Recreation.

Local residents have responded by survey and by attending Parks & Recreation Master Plan community meetings. Many attended such a meeting on Tuesday evening.

“The city of Belton is developing our 2026-2036 Parks, Recreation & Trails Open Space Master Plan,” Grant said following Tuesday’s meeting. “Over the past six months, we have gathered input from residents, stakeholders and staff to understand community needs and priorities.”

“Tuesday’s open house was one of our community’s opportunities to provide feedback on the Master Plan’s recommendations and offer additional comments,” he said.

Here are some of the results from the months of gathering community ideas and thoughts regarding the Master Plan:

91 percent of survey respondents think the role of Parks & Recreation facilities are more important today than 10 years ago;

84 percent said they would support a bond for parkland acquisition, development and improve-

ments;

76 percent believe it is important to have a park within walking distance of their home.

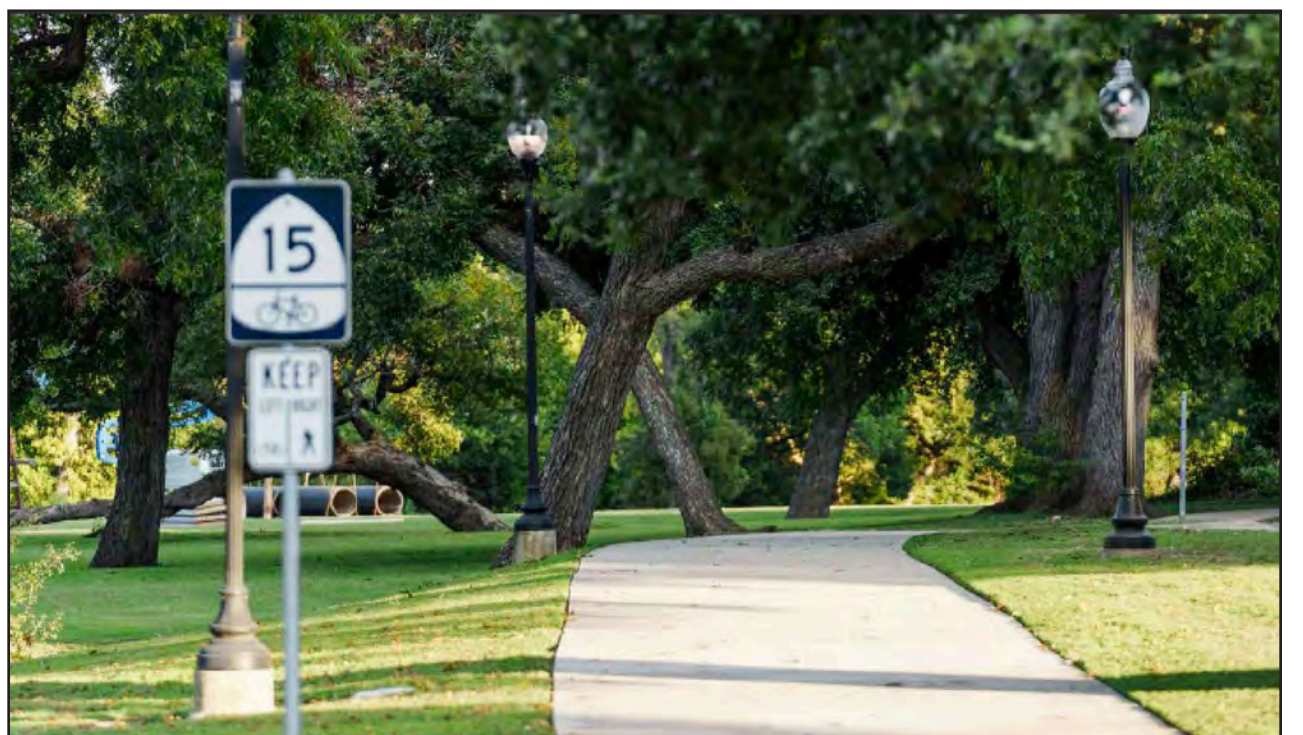
Suggestions for new or improved parks include more playgrounds, trails, pavilions and shade structures, sports and practice fields, indoor recreation, and site furnishings such as benches, picnic tables and grilling stations.

Residents also suggested that the city improve park signage, splash pads, community pools and river access, Grant said. Multipurpose sports courts for basketball, tennis and volleyball, as well as dog park improvements and skate park facilities, also were mentioned.

“The plan will propose improvements over the next 10 years to best satisfy or fulfill the recreational needs of Belton,” Grant said. “It will provide the city with guidance for decision-making and budgeting when it comes to park projects.”

More than half of Belton residents who responded to the survey or attended the community meetings said they visit a local park at least once a month. Many of those said they go to Belton parks weekly.

The most popular Belton park — according to those surveyed — was Heritage Park, followed closely by Chisholm Trail Park, Yettie Polk Park, Nolan Creek Hike & Bike



*Courtesy Photo*

Belton’s Parks & Recreation Department has hosted public meetings and conducted surveys to get public input of parks, recreation and trail improvements for the city. A park’s Master Plan is expected to be completed and presented to the Parks Board on May 4 and could be adopted as soon as May 12, according to Parks & Recreation Director James Grant.

Trail, Miller Springs and Harris Community Park.


Of those who don’t regularly visit Belton parks, the lack of shade and restrooms were cited as the main reasons for staying away.



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A6  
Thursday,  
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# LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

## Bell County Coffee Community gets caffeinated on Saturday mornings

By Michelle Rodriguez  
The Belton Journal

Coffee enthusiasts gathered at Muscovy Coffee Roasters this past Saturday morning.

JT Grimm started the group, Bell County Coffee Community, to bring people from the community together.

"Four years ago, I thought about it when I walked into bakeries and McDonald's in the mornings. The farmers would talk about the week's struggles and victories. I thought it would be nice for people to uncork and relax and to have some BS time. It's very informal and laidback," said Grimm.

The group met at Muscovy in Belton; however, they meet at different coffee shops every week in Belton, Temple, and Salado.

Some shops they recently visited include Atrium Coffee in Belton, Black Rifle Coffee Company in Temple, 1914 Coffee House in Temple, and Greenfield Coffee Cocktails Barrels Brew in Salado.

The group also met at the Belton VFW. It's not a coffee shop; however, the Belton VFW serves coffee and breakfast on the first Saturday of the month in the mornings

from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. They serve eggs, potatoes, sausage, bacon, and biscuits and gravy. For drinks they offer coffee, water, and juice.

"Come meet some new people, share some laughs, and support independent coffee shops without an agenda. It's just a chance to let off a little steam and share your experiences, and also shout out the great service you receive from the local baristas," said Grimm.

Grimm started the Facebook group Bell County Coffee Community in January. Check the Facebook group to see where they will be next..

"We have been going for a while now and we love it. We feel cheated when we don't get to go. I love that, 'there is no hidden agenda, just great people coming together for community,' as JT says. It was so nice to be at Muscovy this morning. A true example of supporting our community," said Sandy Smith.

Muscovy just opened their new coffee shop in Belton recently. The menu consists of American coffee, cappuccino, brisket and cheese kolache, bacon and egg tacos, and cinnamon rolls.

"I think it's a great way to get together over coffee with like-minded individuals



Courtesy photo

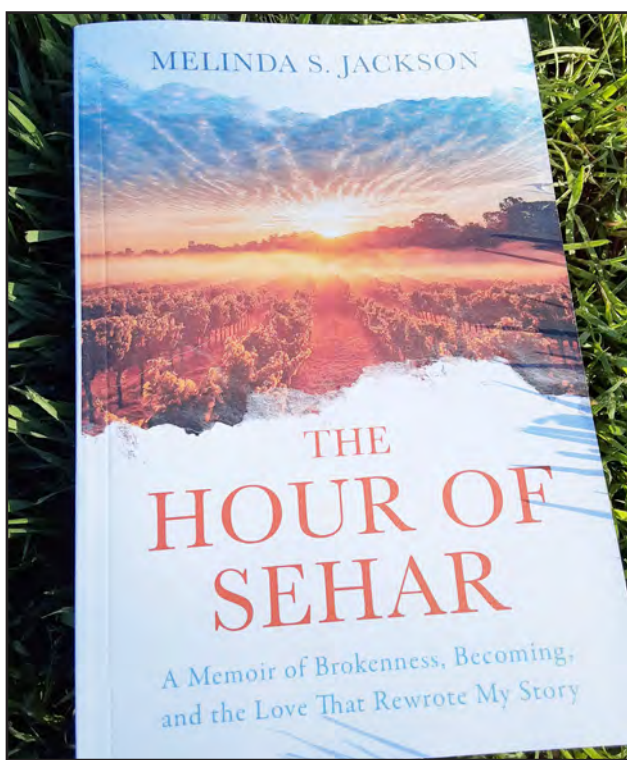
Bell County Coffee Community met on Saturday at Muscovy in Belton. The informal group gathers at different coffee shops in the local area.

who have great ideas and bigger dreams. We've bounced a lot of ideas and dreams off each other and some of them we've even followed through on! When I invite people over to that group, it's a bunch of people solving the world's problems," said

Buddy Schwab.

"It's a very nice place. I was surprised of how packed it was. It's a big space at Muscovy. The coffee group goes around to different coffee places. We have conversations and coffee," said Ron Ducharme.

## Local woman to hold book signing at Blackbird Books & Spirits



Courtesy Photo

Melinda Jackson will be signing copies of her memoir, "The Hour of Sehar," at Blackbird Books & Spirits on Saturday, April 18.

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe  
The Belton Journal

There will be a book signing at Blackbird Books & Spirits on Saturday, April 18 for Melinda Jackson's memoir, The Hour of Sehar, a story that covers the traumatic events of her past while offering a message of faith and hope for the future.

In her memoir, Jackson opens up about the trials she experienced in her childhood and during her time in the military, as well as the dysfunction she experienced in her close relationships due to her past.

Melinda emphasized the word "sehar," which means the moment of darkness right before the sun rises in the morning.

"You see a peek of it, just the sun breaking by the horizon. But when you look around, everything still looks dark. Your circumstances haven't changed, but it's like that hope and that new beginning. You know it's coming," Jackson said.

Her hope for her memoir is that it connects with people who are going through similar experiences.

"People suffer the way I did too silently, and quietly keep up appearances. And so we've got a community full of really hurt people that are really good at pretending that everything's okay," she said.

She talked about her 10 years of experience as a counterintelligence special agent and how that made it

easier to hide her problems from others.

"It's called elicitation, and I was really good at it. And that kind of translated to, 'if I can put on this persona that's so acceptable and true to someone that they're willing to give national level secrets to me, then I can do that to anybody.'"

For Jackson, finally being open and sharing her experiences has been a relief.

"It didn't change the reality or the consequences that I'm living now for some of the choices I made. So on the outside, things kind of look the same, but I don't carry that shame and guilt like I did before."

She mentioned how it felt to finally write it all down.

"I just felt like someone was peeling chunks off me."

Now, looking back at her life, she can pinpoint moments where God was working during those times of darkness, even if she didn't realize it at the time. She recalled her eighth birthday when her parents had left her and her older sister alone without food, and someone from the food bank had left a cake and gifts for her at the door.

She said, "I just remember seeing my name written out, and it made me feel so seen. And Jesus didn't appear and deliver that box, but that was God reaching out to a little girl who didn't know Him."

## Blackburn lifts burn ban

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

Recent rainfall has dampened risks of wildfires, prompting Bell County Judge David Blackburn to immediately lift the county-wide burn ban as of April 2.

Even with the burn ban lifted, Blackburn urged residents in unincorporated areas of Bell County to report outdoor burning by calling the Burn Ban Hotline at (254) 933-5555.

Calling the hotline provides guidance on state regulations and helps prevent unnecessary emergency dispatching of local fire de-

partments to planned, controlled burns.

Although the burn ban has been lifted, Bell County has an index value of 465 on the Keetch-Byram Drought Index, a tool used to estimate how likely wildfires are in an area. It measures how much moisture is in the ground by weighing ongoing dry conditions against recent rainfall.

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

Bell County's Emergency Management Coordinator Bob Reinhard said there are steps residents can take to deter wildfires on

their property.

"Make sure grass around homes are kept cut, and do not allow clutter or trash to build up," Reinhard said. "If a fire were to start, tall grass and trash will ignite very quickly and act as fuel for that fire to grow at a very rapid pace."

"Please check the Bell County website (www.bellcountytexas.com) to ensure we are not under a burn ban," he continued. "That information stays up to date on the Bell County main web page."

"Use good judgement and common sense," Reinhard said. "Understand what the weather forecast is or will be for the next

few days and adjust accordingly as we move through the spring and summer months."

"If you need to burn trash, or a small pile of brush (with no burn ban in place), make sure the fire is small and manageable, make sure you have a sufficient water supply to keep the area around the fire wet and cool, ensure that you're far enough away from structures, and create an area around the fire that does not allow for the fire to spread."

"Again, good judgement to know when it's best to burn, along with common sense to burn in a safe manner will go a long way," Reinhard said.

## Belton PD hosting Youth Police Academy

Special to the Journal

The Belton Police Department will host the Youth Police Academy for middle school students from 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. on June 15-19.

The one-week summer program will teach students about the criminal justice system and help them understand how the Belton Police Department works.

Scheduled activities include squad car tours, mock building searches, mock traffic stops, criminal investigations, fingerprinting, and a K-9 demonstration.

The program is open to incoming sixth- through eighth-grade students, or youth ages 11-14. Eligible attendees must be in good standing with their school and never have been charged with a crime.

Cost is \$50, which includes activities, a t-shirt, lunches, drinks, and snacks.

Applications are available from any Belton school resource officer or the Belton Police Department, 711 E. 2nd Ave.

Applications and registration fee must be received by May 15.

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## The Church Began with an Empty Tomb



**John C. Perry**

I hope each of you had a joyful and meaningful Easter, a day filled with hope and gratitude.

In the days after Easter, I often reflect on the heart of the Christian message, the resurrection of Jesus. And every so often, I'm reminded that even within the wider Christian family, there are voices who speak

of the resurrection as symbolic rather than literal. Those conversations aren't new; they've surfaced in every generation. But when I return to Scripture, I'm struck again by how central the resurrection was to the earliest believers. Paul put it best in 1 Corinthians 15:14: "And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith."

Paul doesn't soften his words. He doesn't call the resurrection a metaphor or a poetic expression of hope. He calls it the center of the Christian faith. Without the resurrection, the cross becomes just another tragic death. Without it, forgiveness is uncertain, hope is fragile, and faith becomes little more than wishful thinking. But because Christ has been raised, everything Paul

preached, and everything we believe, stands on solid ground.

A few verses later, Paul adds, "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins." The New Testament echoes this truth throughout. Peter writes that God has given us "a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Paul tells the Romans that Jesus "was raised to life for our justification." And in Romans 10:9, he ties the resurrection directly to salvation: "If you believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

The early Christians didn't treat the resurrection as optional. They literally staked their lives, their hope, and their future on the conviction that Jesus truly rose from the grave.

And because they believed Christ had been raised, they believed they too would be raised into heaven. That hope carried them through suffering and hardship with a courage that still inspires us today.

Perhaps the greatest testimony to the truth of the resurrection is not found in arguments, but in the lives of the men and women who first proclaimed it. These were ordinary people, fishermen, tax collectors, tentmakers, who had nothing to gain and everything to lose by insisting that Jesus had risen. Many paid for that conviction with their lives. People do not willingly die for a metaphor. They do so because they are convinced that what they have seen is true.

Easter is more than a date on

the calendar. It is the declaration that death does not have the final word, that sin does not have the final claim, and that despair does not have the final voice. The resurrection is God's great "Yes" to a world full of "No."

As we move through this post-Easter season, may we hold fast to the truth Paul proclaimed so boldly: Christ has been raised. Our faith is not in vain. Our hope is not empty. And because He lives, we can face whatever comes with confidence and joy.

*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.*

# 2026 Bell County Small Grains Field Day

Special to the Journal

The Bell County Extension Office will host the Bell County Small Grains Field Day on Thursday, April 23, at the Blackland Research & Extension Center, 808 E. Blackland Rd. Temple.

Registration takes place at 8 a.m. at the USDA-ARS Administration Building, with breakfast provided by Texas Wheat Producers.

The goal of this event is to improve small grain

production in Central Texas. The program will begin promptly at 8:30 a.m. with an update from Texas Wheat Producers Followed by a Statewide Small Grains Overview and Preliminary 2025 Agronomic Trial Results by Dr. Brandon Gerrish, Extension State Small Grain Specialist.

Following Dr. Gerrish will be a Small Grains Commodity Market Update and Outlook from Dr. Mark Welch, Extension Economist for Grain Marketing.

An IPM Update and Small Grains Insect Scouting

Report will be given by Extension Program Specialist-IPM, Tyler Mays.

Updates from the Bell County FSA and our program sponsors will wrap up the morning indoor portion of the program, and we will move outside for a walking tour of the wheat variety plots with Dr. Gerrish and Chad Hajda.

The cost is \$10, and this program will offer 2 TDA CEU's 1-IPM & 1-General for licensed applicators.

Please RSVP by calling the Bell County Extension Office at (254) 933-5305.

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**Michele Weisman**  
*The Belton Journal*

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## Lady Tigers claim District golf title, Lake Belton defends individual title

By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

The Lady Tigers did it again. For the second consecutive season, Belton easily captured the District 16-5A girls team title, winning by more than 100 strokes, but another local standout repeated as well.

In the boys district tournament, Lake Belton senior Jackson Null defended his individual championship, while leading the Broncos to their second first-place finish in three seasons.

Now, both schools have the opportunity for even more success.

All four of the Belton ISD's programs earned berths to the upcoming Region II tournament along with claiming two of the four individual spots in a pair of dominant district performances.

At Waco's Cottonwood Creek Golf Course, the Lady Tigers cruised in a weather-shortened event that concluded early on its second and final day.

With a field-low 136, Belton junior Anya Jinadatha and senior teammate Annaleigh Holliday (2nd, 144) occupied the top two spots on the leaderboard, beating out Chaparral junior Caoimhe Gormley (3rd, 147), who claimed one of the individual berths to regionals.

Abby Beck (4th, 152), a junior, sophomore Isha Jinadatha (5th, 156) and junior MacKenzie McGarry (7th,

161) accounted for the remainder of the Lady Tigers' total.

Lake Belton was second (697) thanks in part to top-10 finishes from junior Lyliana Gonzalez (8th, 166) and senior Suellen Tillis (10th, 174). Kayle Carubelli (12th, 177), Lillie Mikes (13th, 180) and Hayleigh McConnell (22nd, 207) completed the quintet.

This is the squad's sixth consecutive trip to regionals.

Waco University (3rd, 780) and the Lady Broncos' second team (4th, 822) finished the top four. Lake Belton's score was generated by freshmen Emory Jolivet (17th, 193), Kaylee Holler (19th, 198) and Emily McMillon (25th, 220) and junior Araceli Young (23rd, 211).

Competing as an individual, Belton junior Ella Hice advanced to regionals with a sixth-place score of 160.

Ella Bralley, a freshman, and junior Betsy Bralley also played as individuals for the Lady Tigers, posting totals of 166 and 194, respectively.

In the boys division, Lake Belton easily earned the team title with a two-round total of 630 behind Null, who was one of six Broncos among the top seven of the 33-man field.

Playing at Stonetree Golf Club, Null shot a 150 to beat out senior Owen Babcock (2nd, 158), who guided the Tigers to second (688).

The remainder of Lake Belton's score was produced by seniors Miles Parker (3rd, 159), Gavin Kerr (4th, 160) and Brayden Hoff (5th, 164) and freshman Carter Johnson (6th, 172).

Babcock's outing was complemented by freshman Bennett Boland (8th, 175), senior Bryson Necessary (10th, 176), junior Wyatt McLean (11th, 179) and sophomore Cooper McDonald (12th, 185) as Belton reached the regional tournament for the 19th consecutive year.

Making the district's showing even more impressive was the fact the Tigers' second squad was fourth (781), and the Broncos' second team was third (734) thanks in part to freshman Jacob Sullivan (7th, 173), who advances to regionals as a medalist.

He will be joined by Ellison sophomore Robert Phipps. His eighth-place score of 175 garnered the final individual berth.

The Eagles were fifth (856).

Jackson Dolotina (12th, 185), Kaiden Beaty (16th, 187), Levi Tarrence-Crotty (19th, 193) and Landon Casperson (22nd, 196) joined Sullivan on Lake Belton's second squad, and Kai Scarlett (12th, 185), Brody Mavis (18th, 192), Reid Erskine (21st, 195), Jacob Flores (24th, 210) and Kypston Barrett (27th, 214) comprised Belton's second team.

The two-day Region II tournaments will be held at Pottsboro's Tanglewood Golf Course, where the top three teams and top three individuals not on a qualifying team advance to the University Interscholastic League State Tournament.

The boys will compete beginning April 13, while the girls start April 15.



## Tigers 7-on-7 squads building community sup-

By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

Soon, the Tigers will begin preparations for the upcoming football season. The players, however, are already hard at work.

While some are daydreaming about throwing touchdowns, making game-saving tackles or kicking the go-ahead field goal under the fabled Friday Night Lights, multiple members of Belton's 7-on-7 team are instead focusing on giving back.

In coordination with Woodland Cottages — a retirement community in Belton — the Tigers recently volunteered their time by playing an adapted version of volleyball with the establishment's residents.

Utilizing a lowered net, seated players on both sides would hit a large balloon back and forth as they attempted to score points in a similar fashion to the traditional sport.

Woodland Cottages' Hit Squad emerged as the winners, but the outcome had little significance.

Along with the competitive aspect, the fellowship between the generations makes the gathering meaningful for all involved, according to Woodland Cottages assistant director Melissa Cole.

"We were absolutely blown away by how special the event turned out," she said. "You could see right away that both our residents and the Belton High School football team truly enjoyed themselves. There was so much laughter, friendly competition and genuine connection happening in the room."

"Watching all those conversations and interactions was truly special."

The Bridge Builders program provides the avenue for extremely busy student-athletes responsible for early morning practices, late-night studying and a full day in between, and in addition to the camaraderie, by donating their time toward community service,

the Tigers are able to establish hours that can be utilized when filling out college applications, allowing them to complement their athletic and academic skills and help round out a complete resume.

Lake Belton is also involved with the program, which is poised to grow in upcoming months.

"The partnership we've started is definitely something we plan to continue," Cole said. "While we'll likely have another volleyball game, we're excited to expand into other activities like dance lessons, lawn tournaments, including corn hole, and other fun activities. Our goal is to create meaningful intergenerational connections where our residents and these young men can build relationships and share experiences."

"We eventually want this to grow and expand to reach other senior communities and involve more student athletes."

## Belton Soccer programs combine for impressive All District selections

By Aries Ramos  
The Belton Journal

The District 16-5A girls soccer all-district honors are in, and both Belton ISD programs walked away with plenty to celebrate.

The Lake Belton Lady Broncos and Belton Lady Tigers combined for an impressive collection of superlatives and all-district selections that reflected strong seasons for both programs.

Lake Belton led the way in superlatives,

with sophomore Evelyn Bragewitz earning Offensive MVP honors after a standout season that established her as one of the district's most dangerous attacking threats a remarkable achievement for a second year player.

Senior Clara Hill added to the Broncos' superlative haul by being named Utility Player of the Year, recognizing her versatility and ability to contribute in multiple capacities throughout the

See **GIRLS**,  
Page B3

## Lake Belton's Boone named Co District Defensive MVP

By Aries Ramos  
The Belton Journal

When the District 16-5A boys soccer all-district honors were announced, Belton ISD programs made their presence felt in a big way, with the Lake Belton Broncos and Belton Tigers combining for some of the league's top individual accolades.

Lake Belton led the way with 12 total honorees, headlined by a pair of superlatives.

Senior Jacob Boone earned Co-District Defensive MVP recognition after anchoring the Broncos' back line throughout the season, a performance strong enough to also land him a spot on the all-district first team. Boone's combination of physicality, leadership and consistency made him one of the most impactful defenders in the district.

See **BOYS**,  
Page B3

## Lake Belton survives Tiger rally

By Aries Ramos  
The Belton Journal

In a back-and-forth District 16-5A rivalry game that came down to the final out, the Lake Belton Broncos survived a late Belton rally to escape with a 6-5 victory Tuesday, keeping their undefeated district record intact with the tying run on base when the final out came.

Neither team could break through early, as Belton's Tara Stone and Lake Belton's Natalie Hosch traded zeros in a tense first inning. Stone retired the Broncos in order to open the game, and the Tigers were unable to capitalize after Stone herself drew a leadoff intentional walk in the bottom half

stranded at second when Bronco center fielder Madison Perkins made a diving catch on a Reagan Stuart liner to kill the rally.

Lake Belton struck first in the second when Addison Sims laced a two out double to score Analicia Diaz and give the Broncos a 1-0 advantage. Hosch kept it there, retiring the Tigers in order in the bottom half to preserve the lead heading into the third.

The Broncos added to their cushion in the top of the third when Izzy Magana reached on an error, stole third and came around to score on another miscue, pushing the lead to 2-0. But Belton responded emphatically in the bottom of the frame. The Tigers plated three

runs to seize the lead, with Iris Molina delivering the big blow a two RBI base hit through the right side of the infield. Molina then came around to score herself on an Andilyn Logan single, capping the three run inning and giving Belton a 3-2 edge.

The lead didn't last. Lake Belton reclaimed control in the fourth behind a double from Avery Park to lead off, followed by RBI base hits from Diaz and Alaysha Williams to push the Broncos back in front 4-3. The Tigers had chances to respond but left two runners in scoring position without bringing one home.


See **SOFTBALL**,  
Page B2





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### Softball - From Page B1

keeping the deficit at one heading into the fifth.

Magana led off the fifth with a single for the Broncos but didn't factor into the scoring. Lake Belton then broke the game open in the sixth, as Diaz tripled and scored on an RBI hit by Madison

Naser, and Nani Rubio followed with a base hit to score courtesy runner Alexis Walker, stretching the lead to 6-3.

Belton refused to go quietly. Stone stepped into the circle and drilled a two run home run over the right field fence in

the bottom of the sixth her first swing attempt of the series to pull the Tigers within one at 6-5 and force a pitching change, with Lilliana Herrera taking over in the circle for Lake Belton.

Herrera retired the Broncos in the seventh, setting the stage for a dramatic final half inning. The Tigers pushed the tying run to third base with the game on the line, but Herrera and the Broncos held firm to preserve the 6-5 victory and keep Lake Belton's district record spotless.

Diaz, Williams, Naser and Rubio paced the Lake Belton offense, while Stone's resilience agave Belton every chance to pull off the comeback.



## 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 underpin 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.

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**Boys** - From Page B1

Joining Boone on the first team were Roman Manriquez, Logan Dlouhy and Santana Herrera — a quartet of selections that underscored the depth Lake Belton possessed across the field.

Herrera added to his first-team recognition by being named co-District Newcomer of the Year, a remarkable achievement for a player in his first year making a significant varsity impact. His emergence gave the Broncos another dynamic piece in their attack.

The Lake Belton recognition didn't stop there. Zane Fitzwater, Aiden Lassich and Kai Zuniga each earned second-team all-district honors, further reflecting the Broncos' overall roster quality.

Robert Klotz, Shua Clark and Jack McCullagh rounded out Lake

Belton's representation with honorable mention selections, bringing the program's total to 12 recognized players a testament to what the Broncos had been building all year.

Belton was no slouch in the honors department either, with the Tigers picking up three notable superlatives of their own.

Morgan Pascoe shared the co-District Defensive MVP award alongside Boone, giving Belton a player who matched up with anyone in the district on the defensive end. It was a fitting honor for a player who helped the Tigers establish themselves as one of the league's more difficult teams to score against.

Daniel Arroyo earned the Goalkeeper MVP award, cement-

ing his status as one of the premier stoppers in 16-5A. A reliable presence between the posts all season, Arroyo's ability to make big saves in crucial moments gave Belton a firm foundation to build from on defense.

Rounding out Belton's superlative haul was Fabricio Lara, who joined Herrera as a co-Newcomer of the Year honoree. Like Herrera, Lara made an immediate impression in his first significant varsity role, signaling that the Tigers have talent ready to step into bigger positions moving forward.

Combined, the two Belton ISD programs collected five district superlatives and 15 total all-district recognitions, marking a strong showing for the area as the soccer season draws to a close.



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

**Edward Jones**

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Member SIPC

**Girls** - From Page B1

season.

Six Lady Broncos earned first-team all-district recognition, led by Bragewitz and Hill alongside seniors Mikaela Ebberts, Kate Henn and Madison Weber, as well as junior Elizabeth Gudgen.

The group of four seniors brings significant experience and leadership to a first team that Lake Belton stacked with playmakers across multiple positions.

Five more Lady Broncos landed on the second team in juniors Allyson McClanahan and Audrey Mughelli, Harper Fryar, sophomore Teagan Pettijohn and freshman Ariah Vail the latter showing that Lake Belton's pipeline of talent runs deep with underclassmen already earning district recognition.

Belton's haul was equally impressive, particularly on the defensive end. The Lady Tigers allowed

just three goals in district play a number that speaks for itself and the all-district committee took notice.

Junior Katie Herrera was named Defensive Player of the Year after anchoring Belton's stingy defensive unit all season, while senior Destiny Schutz earned co-Midfielder of the Year honors, recognizing her as one of the district's premier players in the middle of the field.

Seven Lady Tigers earned first-team all-district spots: Schutz, Herrera, seniors Abby Idoux, Ayvah Powell and Destiny Schutz, junior Karington Kopriva, sophomore Adriana Jaimes and junior Lauren McKinney a loaded first-team contingent that reflects how balanced Belton was across the roster.

Five more landed on the second team in junior Sydnee Lewis,

seniors Makenzie Albrycht and Grace Landen, sophomore Michaela Dvonch and junior Penelope Vizcarra, while seniors Destiny Mendez and Mya Williams, sophomore Alisa Jackson and sophomore Amaya Williams each earned honorable mention recognition.

Combined, the two programs accounted for two district superlatives, a massive collection of first and second-team selections and honorable mentions that stretched across all class years from freshmen to seniors.

For Belton in particular, surrendering just three goals in district play sets a standard that will be hard to top, and the Lady Tigers' defensive identity clearly carried them through league play.

For Lake Belton, an Offensive MVP in just a sophomore signals that the Lady Broncos' best days may still be ahead.

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## LEGALS

### THE FOLLOWING VEHICLE IS BEING STORE AT TRIPLE NICKEL TOWING

1976 CHEVROLET MALIBU, VIN: 1D37V6R486462, NO PLATES, Vehicle Abandoned at 3700 Bacon Ranch Rd., Unit A, Killeen, TX, 76542, Vehicle is being stored at 3700 Bacon Ranch Rd., Unit C, Killeen, TX, 76542 at Triple Nickel Towing 04.09,04.30

### THE FOLLOWING VEHICLE IS BEING STORE AT TRIPLE NICKEL TOWING

1949 CHRYSLER NEW YORKER, VIN: C39-52823, NO PLATES Vehicle Abandoned at 3700 Bacon Ranch Rd., Unit A, Killeen, TX, 76542 Vehicle is being stored at 3700 Bacon Ranch Rd., Unit C, Killeen, TX, 76542 at Triple Nickel Towing 04.09,04.30

### THE FOLLOWING VEHICLE IS BEING STORE AT TRIPLE NICKEL TOWING

1988 SUZUKI SAMURAI, VIN: JS4JC51C5J420, NO PLATES Vehicle Abandoned at 3700 Bacon Ranch Rd., Unit A, Killeen, TX, 76542 Vehicle is being stored at 3700 Bacon Ranch Rd., Unit C, Killeen, TX, 76542 at Triple Nickel Towing 04.09,04.30

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

To: Jamal Reese, 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 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 March 26, 2006, against Taylor Brantley and Jamal Reese, Respondent(s), numbered 25DFAM354419, and entitled "In the Interest of AMIYA BRANTLEY, also known as AMIYA BRANTLEY-REESE, 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:

AMIYA BRANTLEY, also known as AMIYA BRANTLEY-REESE, DOB: March 4, 2021, Place of birth:

Unknown

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 Susan Parker, 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 2nd day of April 2026.

Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas

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## LEGALS

1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, TX 76513  
BY C Rodriguez Deputy 04.09

### THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 26CPB00197

To: Unknown Heirs

MATTHEW P. FITZSIMMONS, Applicant, on April 01, 2026, filed an application for independent administration and letters of administration and application to determine heirship in a proceeding styled: ROBERT LEE FITZSIMMONS, JR, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00197 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 09, 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: JEFFREY THIGPEN ,PO BOX 428 , TEMPLE TX, 76503

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 01, 2026.

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

By: Erika DeCasas Deputy 04.09

### THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 26CPB00065

To: JOSEPH DOTY

ANGELA DIANE CHANDLER, Applicant, on February 02, 2026, filed an Application to Probate Will not Produced in Court and for Issuance of Letters Testamentary in a proceeding styled: BARBARA PERNITZA DOTY, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00065 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 09, 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: KAREN VILLANUEVA , 2106 BIRD CREEK DR, 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 01, 2026.

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

By: Lillian Phillips Deputy 04.09

### THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 25CPB00754

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS

EXTRACO BANKS, N.A., Applicant, on March 31, 2026, filed an Application to Convert Temporary Administration to Permanent and Determination of Heirship in a proceeding styled: RICHARD EARL STEPHENSON, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00754 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 09, 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

## LEGALS

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: P. JAMES RAINEY; 3809 WEST WACO DRIVE, WACO, TX 76710

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 01, 2026.

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

By: Lillian Phillips Deputy 04.09

### THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 26CPB00191

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS OF ERNEST DUNCAN CANTRILL

TIFFANY BURLESON, Applicant, on March 31, 2026, filed an Application to Probate Will and for Issuance of Letters of Administration in a proceeding styled: ERNEST DUNCAN CANTRILL, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00191 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 09, 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: MARY WILEY 100 W CENTRAL TEXAS EXPRESSWAY SUITE 306 HARKER HEIGHTS TX 76548

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

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on March 31, 2026.

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

By: Lillian Phillips Deputy 04.09

### THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 26CPB00196

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS OF LINDA GAIL CANTRILL

TIFFANY BURLESON, Applicant, on March 31, 2026, filed an Application to Probate Will and for Issuance of Letters of Administration in a proceeding styled: LINDA CANTRILL A/K/A LINDA GAIL CANTRILL, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00196 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 09, 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: MARY WILEY, 100 W CENTRAL TEXAS EXPRESSWAY SUITE 306, HARKER HEIGHTS TX 76548

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

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on March 31, 2026.

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

By: Lillian Phillips Deputy , 04.09



## Local Activities & Events

### Newcomers Club Activities

#### April

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 04/09: Mexican Train Dominoes,<br>Couples Night Out | 04/21: Bunco                              |
| 04/10: TGIF Lunch                                   | 04/22: Fun Lunch, Bunco                   |
| 04/13: Bookworms                                    | 04/23: Mexican Train Dominoes             |
| 04/14: Singing Bluebonnets                          | 04/24: Trailblazers Walking Group         |
| 04/16: Nonfiction Book Club,<br>Meet & Greet        | 04/25: Jimmy's Egg                        |
| 04/18: Exploring Wines                              | 04/27: Well Read Women,<br>Monday Canasta |
| 04/20: Snack Time Mah Jongg                         | 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](http://www.bellcountynewcomers.com)."**

#### Bell County Master Gardener - Apr 9 or 15

Curious about growing and using herbs in Central Texas? Join the Bell County Master Gardeners Herb Study Group for a series of free, roundtable-style classes. These are free and open to the public, perfect for beginners and seasoned gardeners alike! Learn about Dill, Sage and Yarrow in these April classes. 2 options to choose from: April 9th 6:00 p.m. -7:00 p.m. or April 15th 10-11:30 am. Both are the same class, just two different options to fit your schedule. County Extension Office- Learning Center, 1605 N. Main Street, Belton. No registration needed!

#### AS+K and Safety Planning Suicide Prevention Training - Apr 10 and 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.

#### Roses for Hoses - Apr 11

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Morgan's Point Resort Volunteer Fire Department will be hosting the Roses for Hoses 5K Run & Walk on Saturday, April 11, at Oakmont Park, located at the end of Tanyard Road. The event begins at 8:30 a.m., and the run is part of the Centex Race Series. Attendees are encouraged to dress in a costume. Roses for Hoses supports the fire department and local outreach projects. For more information email Karen Stagner at [kastagne@att.net](mailto:kastagne@att.net).

#### 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](mailto: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@mc11249tx.com](mailto:commandant@mc11249tx.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](http://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 outreach and partnerships. We welcome you to join other history minded folks and get involved by serving on one of our committees that consist of preservation, cemetery, markers and education. To volunteer or for more information please visit [historicalcommission@bellcounty.texas.gov](mailto: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](mailto:bettyreichert@yahoo.com) or Kathy Bement at [katshookandneedle@gmail.com](mailto:katshookandneedle@gmail.com). Anyone interested in joining the local chapter of the Crochet Guild of America will also need to join the National Crochet Guild of America. Visit [www.crochet.org](http://www.crochet.org) for details.

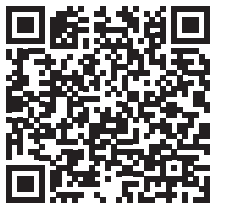
**Bell County Texas Democratic Women** holds their monthly meeting on the third Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Belton AgriLife Center, 1605 N Main in Belton. Join us to hear from local and state candidates and about important issues and events. This is open to the public.

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

**Engage & Empower with 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](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](http://www.beltontexas.gov/take-me-home). Read more about the program here: [https://www.beltontexas.gov/news\\_detail\\_T11\\_R1166.php](https://www.beltontexas.gov/news_detail_T11_R1166.php).



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

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

#### Citizens Helping in Police Service (CHIPS)

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

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

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

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

### STAY CONNECTED: STAY INFORMED

GOT A LOCAL EVENT, CHURCH GATHERING, OR MEETING?  
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# EDITORIAL

## You wouldn't believe what I heard

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

Sometimes the “juiciest” conversations start with that phrase.

However, it's my belief that the news shouldn't. It's great to share new information, but if I had a dollar for every “tidbit” that came my way that wasn't *exactly* how the sharer gave me the information, I'd have a nice little nest egg to enhance my 401K.

I mentioned in a previous column the story of a shooting that took place in the DFW area, after a man believed Facebook rumors that a certain person was the one who shot and killed his brother. This man believed the rumors to be true, and in turn shot and killed that certain person. Over something that wasn't true.

While most of us would say we'd never think of doing such a thing – how many times do we believe what someone tells us at face value? Not family or friends, but mere strangers who write statements online?

I've read another real-life news story, this one in California, where a Sonoma woman with thousands of Instagram followers shared about an attempted “kidnapping” of her two children at a craft store. She described a Hispanic couple whom she said had gone as far as to grab her stroller in which one of her children rode.

But on review of the store video, the Hispanic couple she

told a story about were seen simply shopping to buy a baby Jesus for their Christmas collection.

The couple was understandably shocked that this woman, with whom they'd had no interaction, would accuse them of such a thing.

And the Sonoma woman? No explanation from either her or her attorney as to what was behind her videos and story, which brought her a LOT of attention.

The couple were cleared by police of any wrongdoing.

The Sonoma woman faced two misdemeanor charges along with possibly six months in jail, for lying to a police dispatcher and for making a false report to a police officer. Her videos went viral and caught the attention of authorities in that area.

This leads me to my point: hearsay isn't news.

But how many of us believe what we hear or read, such as in the case of the Sonoma woman, who told her ‘followers’ a very convincing story that was false?

Or, what about a ‘story’ we hear from someone or read online, that isn't exactly false, but other details are left out?

Once upon a time, I was contacted by a grandmother with a sad story. Her daughter's family had a potbellied pig, and they weren't allowed to keep it in the city limits and were told they had to get rid of it because of the city ordinance. However,

it was a dear family pet and provided much emotional support to her very young granddaughter, who had severe medical issues. She was upset and outraged that they were being asked to get rid of the animal. She wanted the news to focus on that particular aspect of the story. The pig was an emotional support animal, she said, and therefore should be able to keep it.

But, I wondered, was the pig an ‘actual’ emotional support animal? There's a certificate process to go through, that isn't complicated nor that expensive.

No, the family didn't have a certificate for the pig.

I asked if they were going to take the steps to have that done.

Well, they were going to look into it, I was told.

The last I had heard, the family decided to move out of town.

End of story. No news story there.

Bring your story, but bring what you have to back it up. Sometimes, the story isn't over yet, such as with court cases. Because the court of public opinion is not always right, nor does that particular court receive or listen to all sides of the story. Such as Sonoma woman, who made up a story entirely.

Do you need to vent? Do it in the right way. That's what letters to the editor are made for. It's a shame far too few people make use of them.

## Lettuce Consider

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

Back when I was growing up, I would frequently see the local schools list their upcoming lunch menus in the local newspapers. The idea behind this was that parents would be informed of what their kids were eating. In reality, however, any parent who didn't read between the lines was setting themselves up for disappointment.

For example, sometimes the menu would indicate that on a particular day a particular school would serve hamburgers, and that the side dishes would include a salad and cheese. If you fixated on the hamburger and dismissed the other two as being healthier options to balance it out, then you fell for the deception the schools were putting on. You see, that “salad” was simply a smattering of lettuce, tomatoes, and onion slices, while the cheese was literally just a single slice of American cheese that was still in the plastic.

That's right, the school was \*actually\*

serving cheeseburgers, which were partially “deconstructed” (yes foodies, it was a thing before it was a thing) in order to satisfy then-current federal requirements regarding nutrition while also making it seem like the meals were healthier than they actually were. Most kids who took school lunches figured it out pretty quickly, and enjoyed the contraband meal. The parents? Not a clue.

I've reached the stage in my life to where I'm getting constant reminders about what I should or shouldn't be eating, and my stomach is slowly starting to agree. As a result, I've been having to try and pay more attention to what's out there, including the various diet options. And let's just say, folks, that I am not impressed.

Such-and-such fad diet that's popular among celebrities and influencers? All too often that diet is so expensive you'd \*need\* the bank account of a celebrity or influencer to af-

ford it. And even then, there's no guarantee it's actually healthy in the long run.

Going 100% free of meat and dairy? Take a look at how heavily processed a lot of the substitute products are. Then remember how nut products and soy are among the top food allergens yet are also among the top protein sources \*in\* these heavily processed substitute products.

Eating a purely “local” diet? Not only is that a great way to wind up with a nutritional deficiency if done wrong, local ordinances can potentially restrict your ability to hunt for your meat protein. Plus, whatever you're hunting – like wild boar or alligators (both invasive species in many parts of Texas) – might be trying to hunt you as well.

Et cetera.

Folks, if you're going to start “eating healthier”, the first thing you need to do is talk with a licensed medical professional, then pos-

sibly a certified trainer as well. From there, you need to trust common sense instead of the weekly fad. Seek a variety of foods instead of limiting yourself to a few favorite items. Favor fresher foods over more processed foods whenever plausible. Consider your portion sizes. Learn how to read nutrition labels. And most importantly, recognize that different people have different dietary needs or restrictions (for example, I find dried fruit to be easier on my stomach than fresh fruit), so one-size-fits-all “solutions” may not work for you.

And of course, try to move around and generally go about if possible. Your doctor and trainer will help you determine an appropriate level of activity given your personal circumstances. Even stretching throughout the day can help.

I wonder if any schools are still putting their menus in the newspapers anymore. Somehow, I doubt it.

## Mechanically Inclined

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Mangan

Recently I had some mechanical issues with a vehicle. Now a few years ago, when I was younger, I used to work on my rides all the time. I not only worked on them but did some “mechanicing” for other people. I have related a few stories about my flipping of cars (flipping as in making money and not the turning upside down “flipping”).

In those days there were few problems that couldn't be fixed under an old oak tree. I had a regular size toolbox, which I still have to this day. It had a good socket and wrench set contained within, and a couple other specialty tools. I could usually get most basic problems fixed with the items that I could easily lift in that toolbox. Cars then were made of steel and common U.S. Standard bolts, nothing odd or requiring something available in some obscure catalog.

If you open the hood on a new car today you see a much different sight. You usually see a big plastic cover with some logo or fancy numbers indicating a model and engine size.

What really should be printed on the cover is a warning telling you that if you take the cover off and do anything to the engine you are just going to cost yourself anywhere from \$200 to \$500 extra when you finally take it to a mechanic shop to get it fixed.

In the good old days you didn't have this fancy plastic cover. You had a breather sitting on top of a carburetor. Depending on the type of carburetor some of them were actually

very cool looking, perhaps even going to “sexy” looking.

A “double pumper” carburetor was the dream of many a hot-rodder, and of course the guy that owned the local gas station, because the name said it all. It pumped twice the gas of a regular “carb.” However a carburetor was something you could adjust or at least watch operate. There were parts that moved and things happened, they weren't hidden like some sort of modern engine magic. Often you could play with the ‘carb’ and get the engine running. You could give it gas, or increase the airflow, there was something you could see and manipulate.

These days almost everything is controlled by a computer, which can be a good thing. Cars today are very dependable, but when they do break down you can't fix them with your trusty, moderate sized toolbox that you carry around in the trunk or bed of the truck. You have to get the local qualified mechanic to hook up yet another computer to tell you what is wrong with the original computer. Once he finds the most likely problem it is just a matter of going to the friendly auto parts store and getting the proper part from a guy named Doyle and changing it out.

Yes, modern cars and trucks are quite dependable these days, but when they do break down it can cost quite a bit to get them up and going. On several occasions I fixed mine, or even a friend's car, on the side of the road with what I could carry

in my modest toolbox.

You do have to figure Murphy's Law into this as well. Your car rarely would stop in a convenient spot, or in perfect weather. I do wish we could combine some of the simplicity of the older engines with a bit of the modern technology for a useful and nostalgic motor for today's automobiles. I like to open my hood at times to just look at the big plastic mess hiding the cornucopia of modern gadgets attached to my engine. For the most part a car or truck should have the hood locked and only able to be opened by a qualified mechanic.

Nothing makes you feel more helpless than having your car fail on the side of the road and you opening the hood to be greeted with fancy lettering indicating what the engine should be, if it were running, and not seeing anything wrong or anything you can fix.

Luckily my recent experience worked out well for me. I wasn't stranded on the side of the road. I was able to get it to a shop. A few phone calls led us down the right path, a dealer only part had it up and running again. There were still a few special tools required to get it back to normal, something my old toolbox wouldn't have had anyway. I am happy with the dependability of modern vehicles. I just wish that repairs could be done on those Sunday afternoons under the old oak tree.

## Calamity Jane

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

I've decided to change my name to Calamity Jane. Or get a tattoo that says, “Walking Disaster.” Or both.

Just this morning, I bemoaned the fact that nothing exciting has happened to me lately. Which is nice in real-world time, but in writer-world, that translates to “I don't have anything interesting to write about.” Which led me to say a little prayer that I should have never, ever said. Ever.

“God, please give me something to write about today.”

Why would I ask for that? Plagiarism would have worked just as well, and the aftermath would have been a lot simpler to deal with.

It was, however, a real faith-builder. I can now tell you without hesitation that God always answers prayer. Yes He does. Just, not always in the way we'd like.

The day started out nice and simple and quiet and peaceful. I sat in my favorite recliner and wrote some, edited some, sipped my chai tea. Fed the chickens. Exercised. Worked some more. It was actually a pretty productive day, when I looked at the clock and realized Superman would be home in a couple of hours, and I hadn't even started dinner. Plus, I still needed to shower and change.

And that's when it gets complicated . . . or at least too complicated for my very simple mind. When will I learn to do one task at a time? Not two. Not seventeen. Just one.

I decided a bubble bath would be nice, so I turned on the water. Then I went to the kitchen to put the chicken on to boil. Home-

made chicken and dumplings for dinner . . . oh, yeah. That's when I realized I was out of the baking mix I like to use for the dumplings, so I decided to make them from scratch. Which meant I had to look on the internet for a recipe, which I found soon after I read the Yahoo news page.

Then I measured out the flour, baking soda and butter and mixed it all together. The chicken was done, so I removed it and yada, yada, you don't need to know the entire recipe. I'll skip a few bars and just say that by the time the dumplings were simmering, I remembered the bath I'd planned to take.

Now, I'm a city girl. I've never lived in a house where the tub didn't have an overflow drain . . . but guess what?

No overflow drain. By the time I got to my bedroom, I was sloshing. By the time I got to my bathroom, I was practically doing the sidestroke.

Being the quick thinker that I am, I shut off the water and opened the drain. Then I grabbed as many towels as I could and threw them on the floor. I might as well have thrown them in the Atlantic Ocean, for all the good it did. That's when I realized Superman would be home any minute, and I had to do something, fast. But what?

So I did what any level-headed, intelligent, independent woman would (not) do. I sloshed to the counter and carefully applied my makeup. Then I sloshed to the closet and put on the cute little exercise outfit—the one Superman always comments on. I

figured he was less likely to yell at me if I looked smokin' hot. Or in my case, simmering warm.

Now, Superman has never yelled at me, not once, that I can recall. He is a man of immense patience. But as I surveyed the damage, I figured there's a first time for everything. Visions of Ricky and Lucy Ricardo came to mind, and I practiced my cry face.

But do you know what that wonderful man did, when he saw the mess I'd made?

He shook his head, hugged me, and told me it was okay. Then he helped me clean it up.

Yep.

There's a whole lot more to this story, which I will save for my next article. But today, I was flooded with reminders that God is patient and compassionate and long-suffering. He doesn't get angry at my shortcomings . . . only at my defiance. When I do my best, get distracted and fall on my face, He just shakes his head, holds me in His arms, and pulls me back up. And then He helps me clean up the mess I've made.

Hopefully next time, He'll also remind me to turn off the water.

*“Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth.’” Exodus 34:6.*

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## 160 Years Strong: The Belton Journal's Local Business Directory Keeps Community at Heart

As the Belton Journal celebrates an incredible 160 years of serving the community—a legacy dating back to 1866—one section continues to stand as a powerful connector between neighbors and the businesses that keep Belton thriving: the Local Business Directory.

More than just a listing of names and phone numbers, the directory is a reflection of the people behind the storefronts. It highlights the hard work, dedication, and entrepreneurial spirit that define Belton. From family-owned restaurants and trusted service providers to new startups bringing fresh ideas to town, the directory brings them all together in one accessible place.

In an age dominated by online searches and big-box convenience, the Local Business Directory serves as a reminder of the value of keeping business local. Every dollar spent with a local business circulates back into the community—supporting jobs, schools, events, and growth right here at home. It's not just commerce; it's connection.

For readers, the directory is a reliable guide to discovering services and shops they may not have known existed. For business owners, it's an opportunity to be seen, to grow, and to build lasting relationships with customers who care about supporting their neighbors.

The Belton Journal has witnessed generations of change over the past 160 years, but one thing has remained constant: a commitment to community. The Local Business Directory embodies that mission, serving as both a resource and a celebration of local success.

As Belton continues to grow, this section of the paper stands as a bridge between tradition and progress—honoring the past while supporting the future. Because when local businesses succeed, Belton succeeds.

Here's to 160 years of stories, service, and supporting local—and to many more ahead.

# GUESS WHO ?

I am an actress born in California on April 9, 1990. My parents were both in the film industry and I made my acting debut in a Disney Channel film. I became known for playing a lead role in a saga about vampires and werewolves.

Answer: Kristen Stewart

# Animal FACT!

Many animals give birth during this season when the weather is warm and there is more food available.

Answer: Spring

# Czech brass legends bring Old-World energy to Central Texas for one night only

Special to the Journal

A legendary Czech brass band with roots dating to the 1860s will bring lively polkas, cultural heritage and a rare international performance to Temple on April 14.

The South Bohemian brass band Babouci will perform Tuesday, April 14, at the Cultural Activities Center (CAC) in Temple.

Doors open at 6 p.m., and the two-hour concert begins at 7 p.m.

Known as the oldest South Bohemian brass band, Babouci performs dechovka, a traditional Czech and Slovak music genre. There will be polkas, waltzes, and marches.

The ensemble blends live brass music, singing, and audience interaction to create an atmosphere resembling a festive European village celebration.

The SPJST Foundation proudly sponsors the event to bring a night of culture to Central Texas citizens. President Brian Vanicek invites the community to this one-night event.

"If you love great music, lively culture, and spending an evening with good people, this concert is for you," Vanicek said. "I hope you'll join us—and bring someone along to enjoy it with you."

Tickets are \$10 for adults, and children ages 12 and under receive free admission with a paid adult.

Guests may purchase tickets at the SPJST Home Office in Temple or visit [Eventbrite.com](http://Eventbrite.com) and search "Czech Heritage Museum."

"Proceeds benefit the Czech Heritage Museum and Genealogy Center of Temple," Vanicek said.



Courtesy Photo

The oldest South Bohemian brass band, Babouci, will have a concert for one night only on April 14 at the Cultural Activities Center in Temple. The band performs dechovka, a traditional Czech and Slovak music genre.

The museum is currently closed as it relocates from its French Avenue location to the SPJST Home Office.

However, the museum's mission to support local cultural preservation and educational programs about Czech heritage and Texas influence remains strong.

Vanicek hopes the performance introduces young-

er generation to polka music through an engaging, live cultural experience.

The CAC is located at 3011 North Third Street in Temple.

Experience the timeless spirit of Czechia. Join the SPJST Foundation for the music and rhythms that keep traditional alive across generations.

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