

## Second round of TEFA “voucher” awards announced

By Lynette Sowell  
The Belton Journal

The families of a total of 95,600 Texas students received notification that they have received “voucher” awards via the Texas Education Freedom Accounts program, the new statewide program that allows for parents to choose eligible schools in which to enroll their children, as opposed to their local school district.

Altogether, the 2025 Texas legislature allocated \$1 billion in state funding for the accounts, one of the most talked about pieces of legislation that became part of state politicians’ campaigns.

Statewide, 274,000 applications were submitted for the TEFA program.

Awards were announced in two “tiers,” with more than 42,600

students receiving award notices for Tier 1. This includes students qualifying disabilities in households at or below 500 percent of the federal poverty level, and their siblings.

The second round of awards went out last week, the week of May 4, with more than 53,000 students receiving notifications.

Tier 2 awards include students from households with incomes at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, or \$66,000 per year for a family of four.

Within Bell County, a total of 1,262 Killeen, 320 Belton, and 219 Temple area students received voucher awards in Tiers 1 and 2.

977 applicants were submitted from the Belton ISD area, with 261 of those applicants classified



as “prior public school” enrollment. This means for the 2024-2025 school year, those applicants were enrolled in public school.

The Temple ISD area had 541 total applicants; Salado ISD had 175 applicants, Academy ISD had 193. The Killeen ISD area saw 2,195 applicants.

It is not known how many of the total applicants in the Bell County area are on the waitlist.

Although a number was attached to each

school district, that number doesn’t mean it is the total number of students “leaving” a school district. The report from TEFA does include “prior public school” student classification, which means those students were enrolled in public school for the entire 2024-2025 school year.

Families who receive TEFA awards must confirm enrollment in a participating private school,

See TEFA, Page A3

## 73-year-old with no existing birth certificate faces travel obstacle

By Michele Weisman  
The Belton Journal

Johnny Ray Clayton and his wife Beth Clayton recently walked into the Belton Journal seeking to look at the paper’s archives from 1953, the year of Johnny Ray Clayton’s birth.

He and his wife are truck drivers, living in Arkansas. They were in the area and hoped to discover a printed record of his birth announcement.

Johnny Ray Clayton, born Jan. 18, 1953, has lived without his birth certificate his entire life, as has his twin sister, Connie Jay Clayton.

The twins come from a family of 11 children. The older relatives, direct witnesses to their birth, are passed away.

Wanting to take his wife on a cruise to the



BELTON JOURNAL/  
Susan Kolodziejczyk

Johnny Ray Clayton and his wife, Beth Clayton, stopped by the Belton Journal on their quest for evidence of his birth.

Caribbean, not having his birth certificate is the only thing stopping them.

Stamped across the birth certificates is the

See CLAYTON, Page A2

# Belton ISD celebrates record number of early college graduates



Courtesy Photo

A record number of students from Belton ISD receive their cords during a ceremony last Thursday at Temple College.

Special to the Journal

Belton ISD is celebrating a historic milestone as 29 students graduated with associate degrees from Temple College before earning their high school diplomas, the largest cohort of early college graduates in district history.

Students were recognized Tuesday, May 5, during Temple College’s Silver Cording Ceremony, which honors students completing associate degrees through the

Texas Bioscience Institute, a partnership program between Belton ISD and Temple College. Graduates completed rigorous college coursework while also fulfilling high school graduation requirements.

The district’s 2026 early college graduates represent all three Belton ISD high school campuses, including eight students from Belton High School, three students from Belton New Tech @Waskow and 18 students from Lake Belton High School.

“These students have demonstrated extraordinary

perseverance, discipline and commitment,” said Belton ISD Superintendent Dr. Malinda Golden. “What makes this accomplishment so special is that these students chose to challenge themselves far beyond the traditional high school experience. They balanced college coursework, high school responsibilities and their plans for the future with remarkable determination. They are walking across the graduation stage already equipped with college credentials, career-ready experience and the confidence to take their next step.”

Belton ISD’s graduation ceremonies are scheduled for Thursday, May 21, at 10 a.m. (LBHS); 2:00 p.m. (BHS); and 5:00 p.m. (BNTW) at the Cadence Bank Center in Belton.

The following students earned associate degrees through the Texas Bioscience Institute program:

### Belton High School

- Javier Enciso — Pre-Nursing
- Gracie Foxx — Pre-Nursing
- Shyan King — Allied Health
- Alexis Kley — Pre-Nursing
- Diego Olvera — Biology
- Montinezes Patterson — Biology
- Jonah Peredo — Biology
- Rey Sanchez — Pre-Nursing

See COLLEGE GRADS, Page A2

## Council receives ‘duck bucks’ for year’s work; approves mural

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

After a year of hard work serving Belton residents, City Council received its pay. But to spend their \$1 bill, members will first have to unfold their origami duck.

Council members are paid \$1 each year for the service to the community, and each year their pay comes in the shape of a ori-

gami animal.

On Tuesday evening, newly re-elected Council members John R Holmes Sr and Dave Covington were administered the oath of office for another three-year term, and Mayor David K Leigh and Mayor Pro Tem John R Holmes Sr was selected to serve one-year terms.

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Courtesy Photo

The new mural “Better Together” will be painted on the Lena Armstrong Public Library. The project is funded by the Leadership Belton group.

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# UMHB holds Spring 2026 Commencement

Special to the Journal

The University of Mary Hardin-Baylor held commencement services for the Spring 2026 semester on Saturday at Crusader Stadium.

This was the university's 170th graduating class, and an estimated 540 students were awarded degrees, including 386 baccalaureate degrees, 134 master's degrees, and 20 doctoral degrees.

UMHB President Dr. Randy O'Rear opened the ceremony by saying, "Tonight we are here to celebrate the members of the Class of 2026. Please join me in congratulating these graduates. Parents and family members, this is a big night for you, too, and we consider you part of our UMHB family. Thank you for entrusting your precious family members to us."

"In keeping with our tradition, before we move forward with the rest of the program, I want to share a few facts with you about this graduating class," he explained. "The majority of you are 22 years old. The youngest members of your class are only 20 years old (remarkably, there are 20 of you that are 20 years old – that's amazing!), and the

oldest graduate today is 60 years young. Of those receiving bachelor's degrees, 22 of you are graduating with a perfect 4.0, and 105 of you are the first in your family to graduate from college."

After recalling several experiences that made their time at UMHB special, Dr. O'Rear encouraged the graduates by saying, "Today, you are graduates. But more than that, you are builders of community. You have collected the things that truly matter – relationships, faith, and purpose." He concluded his speech with, "Today is not an ending. It is a new chapter in the story God is writing through your life. And if you know the Author of the story, you can walk forward with confidence knowing He has a perfect plan for you. Scripture reminds us in Jeremiah 29:11: 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.' Thanks to higher education, you are all much smarter now. But the world does not just need smarter people. It needs grounded people. Faithful people. Godly people who know who they are and whose they are. In other words, the world needs people like you."



Courtesy Photo

Graduates applaud and cheer during Saturday's Spring Commencement held at the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor.

Student recognitions during the ceremony included the Provost Medal for highest overall GPA, which was awarded to 22 students who each graduated with perfect 4.0 grade point averages: Raquel Baker of Killeen, Amanda

Baxter of Jarrell, Olivia Blank of Cuero, Tyler Bourland of Waco, Faith Clark of Bryan, Lexi Clements of Austin, Aleah Crouch of Pflugerville, Audrey Cum-

See **UMHB 2026**,  
Page A3

## Council previews longterm parks plan

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

If City Council gives its approval in upcoming weeks, the Belton parks system will receive massive upgrades over the next 10 years.

In Tuesday's workshop, Council received a preview of the proposed 2026-2036 Parks, Recreation, Trails & Open Space Master Plan — a 62-page document that includes Belton residents' ideas for improving local parks and trails.

"Our Parks Master Plan is still in draft form and was presented in a joint workshop between City Council and Parks Board for review and discussion Tuesday," said James Grant, director of

See **COUNCIL 2**,  
Page A4



Courtesy Photo

A child plays at Standpipe Park, which was opened in 2025. A new parks master plan was previewed Tuesday by City Council. If approved by Council, the plan will give Belton Parks & Recreation a guide for building and improving parklands between now and 2036

## College Grads - From Page A1

**Belton New Tech @Waskow**  
Annabel Ferniza — Biology  
Caleb Fry — Biology  
Lauren Orsag — Multi

**Lake Belton High School**  
Carmen Arias — Allied Health  
Elizabeth Baxter — Pre-Nursing  
Christian Benner — Engineering Technology  
Trijae Bilbo — Allied Health  
Aiden Bleth — Biology  
Joshua Bowen — Allied Health  
Bailey Caldwell — Allied Health  
Riley Capps — Biology  
Elise Clark — Biology  
Ariyanna Fisher — Biology  
Calvin Fong — Allied Health  
Lorelai Gonzales — Biology  
Elika Kiblinger — Allied Health  
Priscilla Meyer — Biology  
Demarcus Miller — Biology  
Marvin Morgenroth — Computer Information Systems  
Mariangel Noguera — Biology  
Shanyah Oliver — Pre-Nursing

Through the Texas Bioscience Institute program in partnership with Temple College, Belton ISD students have opportunities to graduate with college credits, industry certifications and hands-on experience that prepare them for success beyond high school.

## Clayton - From Page A1

**U.S., School Yearbooks, 1900-2016**

This Record	Your Tree
Name	
Connie Clayton	Connie CLAYTON

Courtesy Photo

Johnny Ray Clayton appears in an elementary class photo along with his twin sister, Connie.

word 'delay'. The cruise line will not accept this.

Born in a Killeen hospital, his family then lived in Copperas Cove. He obtained a Texas driver's license in 1970 by showing his library card. He entered the Army in 1971 and served as a police officer for 15 years in the panhandle. He worries that not having his birth certificate will also keep him from collecting Social Security.

Each step Johnny Ray Clayton takes to obtain his birth certificate creates one more request from the government.

One request: Clayton was asked for a witness to his birth from someone who was older than him.

"I got my older sister to fill out a thing, saying that she knew where I was born. She was like 15 months old when I was born," Clayton explained.

Then he was asked to provide school records.

"I got my first-grade school record from Katy Texas, and they said they would accept

that. But then, when I sent it off, they said, 'Oh, well, we need you to jump through another hoop.' They wanted immunization records," said Clayton.

He requested these records through Bell County.

"I had no luck obtaining that," he said.

The next request brought him to Belton, to prove he was the person identified on the birth certificate. He was looking for an announcement of his birth.

The Belton Journal staff directed them to the Killeen Library, where his birth announcement was found in the online archived system.

However, the month and date of the paper shows but not the year. Also, the PDF of the paper sent to the Clayton's email will not print.

"This shouldn't be that hard for someone that actually was born in the US," said Clayton.

If anyone knows the Clayton family from the 1950s and can help him and his twin sister obtain a copy of their birth certificate without 'delay' stamped across it, please email Mr. Clayton at [blueknight1822@gmail.com](mailto:blueknight1822@gmail.com).

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

**Publisher:** David Tuma, [David@BeltonJournal.com](mailto:David@BeltonJournal.com); **Classifieds & Legals:** Elsie Wiley, [Legals@BeltonJournal.com](mailto:Legals@BeltonJournal.com); **Advertising:** Shanna Grote, [Marketing@BeltonJournal.com](mailto:Marketing@BeltonJournal.com), Randa Miller, [Sales@beltonjournal.com](mailto:Sales@beltonjournal.com); **News Editor:** Lynette Sowell, [News@BeltonJournal.com](mailto:News@BeltonJournal.com); **Sports Editor:** Clay Whittington, [Sports@BeltonJournal.com](mailto:Sports@BeltonJournal.com); **Sports Reporters:** Tony Adams, Aries Ramos **Graphic Artist:** Jason Bachie; **Creative Consultant:** Susan Kolodziejczyk;

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# OBITUARIES



## Holmes, Jr.

William "Bill" Nixon Holmes, Jr.  
December 28, 1937 – May 11, 2026

William Nixon Holmes, Jr. was born on December 28th 1937 in Chicago, Illinois to Dr. William Nixon Holmes, Sr and Ruth Beltz Holmes. He grew up in the Chicago suburb until he attended Texas Tech University. While attending Texas Tech Bill had a scholarship on the Texas Tech swim team, was an officer for Kappa Sigma Fraternity, and operated a student insurance business. He also met and fell in love with Janis Faye Jones of Groesbeck, Texas. He graduated from Texas Tech one day and married the love of his life Janis the next. They married on May 30, 1961, and enjoyed an amazing 65 years of marriage.

Working for Equitable Life took Bill and Janis to Midland where they began their family of four boys: William III, James Truett, John Robert, and David Coleman. Years later purchasing Janis' family feed and grain milling business brought them to Marlin, Tx. Always being drawn to serve, Bill ran and was elected to the Marlin City Council Mayor and later became a Municipi-

pal Judge. Over the years Bill was appointed to many roles, one of his proudest being Chairman of the Small Cities Advisory Committee of the National League of Cities in Washington D C advocating for small cities and speaking on their behalf. Bill loved community service and making the city that his family lived in better for all.

Bill began his Financial Advisory career with Rotan Mosley in Waco. The Holmes family moved to Belton in 1982 when Bill joined A. G. Edwards and Sons in Temple, Texas where he served as branch manager and guided clients for over 20 years. His love of serving continued in Belton on numerous boards and committees within Central Texas, but most notably Belton's City Council and Mayor. Even in his twilight, service of others remained paramount for Bill and Janis. Together they gave time, effort, and energy through the Texas Baptist Men and aided with disaster relief. Together serving, listening, and loving.

When not serving Bill and Janis loved to travel and see the country via their motor home. They traveled the US and Mexico and loved spending time together, seeing new things, making new friends along the way and always taking time on Sundays for church fellowship wherever they were.

The loudest laughs of joy, family, and friendship came from Bill and Janis' home with their loving family. Together they wanted to host every event, celebration, and mourn together when necessary. Bill's door was always open, and he was always excited to show his latest gadget or self-sustaining tool. Bill loved his family.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents, Dr. William N Holmes, and Ruth Belt Holmes and brother Robert Wendell Holmes.

Bill is survived by his wife, Janis Faye, married 65 years. Sons William Nixon III, Truett (Kelly), John (Beth), David (Kim), 8 grandchildren and 3 great grand-

children.

Funeral service is scheduled for May 18th, 2026 at 10 a.m. at Crotty Funeral Home in Belton.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Christian Farms Treehouse Temple, TX or Holmes Family nursing scholarship at UMHB Belton.

## Whitis

Howard Whitis  
October 26, 1938 – May 3, 2026

Howard Whitis, 87, of Belton entered heaven on Sunday, May 3, 2026, at Creekside Terrace Rehabilitation. His visitation took place on Monday, May 11, at 6-8 p.m. His service was held on Tuesday, May 12, at 10 a.m. Both took place at Dossman Funeral Home. Kenneth Durham officiated.

Mr. Whitis was born near Brookhaven, TX. to Jessie and Marjorie Whitis on October 26, 1938.

He graduated from Belton High School in 1955. On July 11, 1959, he married Jean Ketchum at First Baptist Church in Belton. He retired from Sears after 28 years and then retired from King's Daughters Hospital after 13 years.

Mr. Whitis enjoyed traveling with his wife. He was a member of The Golden Age Club of Belton, and they made several trips with the club, including three cruises. He was also a member of First Baptist Church of Belton. Mr. Whitis visited 45 states and 17 foreign countries. He officiated football and basketball in Central Texas for over 20 years.

Mr. Whitis is survived by two sons, Steven of New Braunfels, and Gary of Temple; two brothers, Dillard and Karolyn Whitis of Belton and Bob and Grace Whitis of Belton.

He is preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Jean Whitis; sister, Nelda Shipp and brother-in-law Lynn Shipp; and brother, Jack Whitis.

## UMHB 2026 - From Page A2

mins of Pflugerville, Maricella Findley of Temple, Graham Fortune of Temple, Kenna Fuqua of Houston, Jordan Iverson of Kingwood, Brooke Norman of Southlake, Miriam Odle of Woodway, Hannah Presley of Allen, Braxton Richardson of Temple, Leah Sheffield of Austin, Alexa Smith of Killeen, Ali Steadman of Round Rock, Courtney Stewart of Dripping Springs, Naysa Watson of Waxahachie, and Haley Wil-

son of Hutto.

Alondra Barajas of Waco, Daren Sandoval of Harker Heights, and Robert Seigle of Burke, VA were commissioned as military officers during the graduation ceremony, and Peyton Hoyt of Timnath, CO was the scripture reader. The university also recognized four students who have successfully completed all the Honors Program requirements, including a senior research project: Raquel

Baker of Killeen, Jordan Lefler of Natalia, Andrea Mendez of Temple, and Alexa Smith of Killeen.

The President's Award, presented to the graduating senior who has provided meritorious service to the university, particularly the senior class, was awarded to Cassidy Schnoor of Round Rock. She is a true example for the university and her peers, striving to represent Christ and UMHB. She was involved in

the Student Government Association, University Ambassadors, Young Conservatives of Texas, and was a Resident Assistant. The Loyalty Cup, awarded to the student most representative of the university's ideals, traditions, and spirit, was given to Paige Jones of Austin. She was actively involved in Welcome Week, Easter Pageant, Student Foundation, Campus Rec, and the Student Marketing Team.

## Council - From Page A1

Council received a presentation from Leadership Belton and authorizing the group to create mural at Lena Armstrong Public Library.

The Leadership Belton Group developed a project to beautify the east-facing wall of the library with a mural that celebrates Belton's story, landmarks, schools, military connection, natural beauty, and community pride.

The mural will be paired with community engagement (Belton Mural Scavenger Hunt) and through a community day during the painting of the mural.

A successful fundraising cam-

paign was undertaken, and the group's goal was met in April 2026, allowing them to go forward with an art proposal for the Library Mural. City staff were involved with the art concept by providing comments, suggestions, and guidance throughout the process.

Additionally, Leadership Belton is organizing a community day at the Lena Armstrong Public Library during the painting of the mural to connect with the community through a free event to celebrate the culmination of the project.

The painting of the mural will occur May 30 – 31 or June 6 – 7, de-

pending on the artist's availability.

Council considered appointments and reappointments to several boards and commissions.

The Ethics Commission will consist of Amanda Johnson, Dr. Jude Austin, Jon Glanzman, Brooks Morrow, Nicholas Rabroker, Mike Ratliff and Kim Preston.

Ty Taggart, Brandon Skaggs, Damon Gottschalk, Alton McCallum and Lisa Kamprath were reappointed to the Planning & Zoning Commission. Danisha Bucher was appointed as an alternate to the Bell County Public Health District Board.

## TEFA - From Page A1

select homeschool or other (which provides \$2,000 in funding), or opt out of the program by July 15.

According to the office of Acting Comptroller Kelly Hancock, as families make selections, opt out of the program

or resolve appeals, additional funding is likely to become available to students who are currently waitlisted.

The Tier 2 awards were determined by random lottery, as required by state law. The lottery

process established the order in which eligible students receive awards or will eventually move from the waitlist as funding becomes available.

Parents also have 30 days after notification to appeal their child's fund-

ing amount, application priority or ineligibility. If an appeal is successful, the student will receive an award or be placed on the waitlist according to the lottery results.

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# Local LOSS team recommends suicide prevention resources

By Michele Weisman  
The Belton Journal

The classic film, *It's a Wonderful Life*, depicts a man named George Bailey, who thinks his family and community would be better off if he were dead. Revealing some of the symptoms of suicidal ideation, but not all, we see how he goes from disappointment to hopelessness and finally takes a step toward death by suicide.

The deep, hidden struggle, believable and relatable for many, is shared with the audience. There are local resources for individuals having thoughts of dying by suicide to get help before acting on those thoughts.

James (Randy) Dixon, MSCJ, is a program specialist for the LOSS Team, through Central Counties Services, and shared about symptoms of suicidal ideation and where to get help. People can recognize signs in themselves or others, and know help is a call away.

Dixon pointed out a list

of symptoms to help identify if there is a need for help; however, it's not an exhaustive list of symptoms.

Signs in children and adolescents can include emotional symptoms such as low self-esteem, self-hatred, persistent sadness, feeling worthless, or frequent crying.

Behavioral symptoms can include withdrawal from friends, peers, and family; risk-taking behavior such as reckless driving and substance use; giving away favorite possessions; and self-harming behaviors.

Verbal symptoms may include saying they want to die or disappear, expressing feelings of being trapped, bullied, or isolation.

Situational symptoms include bullying, online or in social settings like school, stress about academics or the future, and parental dynamics.

For parents, Dixon said it's important to take talk of suicide seriously.

"Parents are afraid that if you talk about suicide, it's going to put the idea there," Dixon said. "That's not true. Research shows that's absolutely false. If you talk about it, it gives people time to think about it. To not do it. If you can delay somebody from dying for 10 minutes, they have 10 minutes to think about what they want to do."

The following are some signs of adult thinking about suicide.

Emotional symptoms can include extreme mood swings, emotional numbness, or detachment, feeling of worthlessness, guilt, or being a burden to others.

Behavioral symptoms can include changes in eating habits, neglecting personal hygiene or appearance, withdrawing from family and friends.

Verbal symptoms may include saying they are a burden, others would be better without them, expressing feelings of unbearable pain

or suffering.

Situational symptoms include recent job loss, divorce, or financial problems; having chronic pain or a serious illness.

Veterans, first responders, nurses, and doctors, construction and agricultural workers have a higher risk of suicidal ideation due to PTSD experienced in their field.

Surviving abuse or any number of traumatic situations which create unexpected results can cause PTSD for people not in those high-risk jobs.

For those who may identify a symptom or multiple symptoms in themselves or an adolescent child, resources are available today, such as:

Call the suicide hotline at 988.

Text the crisis hotline at 741-741.

Call the Central Counties Mental Health Authority crisis hotline at 800-888-4036.



Courtesy Photo

Mr. Jason Harris, public author of the book *GOOD GRIEF*, speaks to the LOSS Team at a recent training.

Contact medical coverage to see what resources they cover.

Also, Dixon recommends telling a trusted family member or friend about these symptoms. Talking about the symptoms and solutions with others and talk-

ing about suicidal ideation saves lives.

This article is part one of three about suicide prevention. The symptoms were provided by the LOSS Team at [centralcountiesservices.org](http://centralcountiesservices.org).

# BISD superintendent selected for Google & GSV Ed Leader Fellowship

Special to the Journal

Belton Independent School District announced last week that Superintendent Dr. Malinda Golden has been selected as a member of the 2026-2027 Google & GSV Ed Leader Fellowship.

Dr. Golden is one of a select group of K-12 executive leaders across North America have been chosen for this program, which focuses on the intersection of technology, innovation, and systemic educational change.

The fellowship, a joint initiative between Google for Education and Global Silicon Valley (GSV), serves as a year-long incubator for "architects of transformation." Fellows are tasked with designing and executing a "Transformational Opportunity" project—an initiative tailored to address a specific chal-

lenge within their home district while creating a scalable model for the global education community.

"Dr. Golden's selection for this fellowship is a testament to her visionary leadership and her unwavering commitment to the students of Belton ISD," said Manuel Alcozer, president of the Belton ISD Board of Trustees. "Our board has always prioritized innovation and the preparation of our students for a rapidly changing world. Having our superintendent at the table with the brightest minds in global education and technology ensures that Belton ISD remains at the forefront of instructional excellence."

Throughout the program, Dr. Golden will have access to exclusive seminars, executive coaching, and the cutting-edge technological resources

of Google. The fellowship will allow her to collaborate with other high-level change agents to tackle critical, systems-level challenges such as the ethical integration of AI in the classroom and the development of personalized learning pathways.

"I am incredibly honored to join this cohort of innovative leaders," said Golden. "This fellowship isn't just about professional growth; it's about bringing world-class insights and tools back to support our classrooms in Belton. My focus will be on leveraging these resources to further our strategic plan, ensuring every learner in our district is empowered to pursue their dreams and enrich their communities through the smart, human-centered use of technology."

Dr. Golden's participation in the



Dr. Malinda Golden

fellowship begins this summer, with the work of her "Transformational Opportunity" project expected to roll out in phases over the upcoming academic year.

# Voting for County runoff elections starts Monday

By Lynette Sowell  
The Belton Journal

Several Bell County races were decided in the March primary, but some races will see their end with the upcoming May 26 runoff election.

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

There were four candidates for that position, and Richard Sapp received 42.50% of the vote, and Michael Tice received 39.6%. The two will be on the ballot again for the runoff.

For Justice of the Peace Precinct 4, Place 2, there is a runoff election between LaTasha Carroway Quarles (38.87%) and Jessica Gonzales

(33.34%). The winner will face Republican candidates Beatrice "Bea" Cox in November.

Next week, May 18-22, early voting will take place from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. at the Belton Annex, 550 E. 2nd Ave.; Morgan's Point Event Center, 60 Morgan's Point Blvd.; Salado Annex, 11057 Event Dr.; Tem-

ple ISD Admin Building, 401 Santa Fe Way; Harker Heights Parks & Recreation Center, 307 Millers Crossing; Jackson Professional Learning Center, 902 Rev R A Ambercrombie Dr.; Killeen Senior Center @ Lions Club Park, 1700 E. Stan Schleuter Loop; True Deliverance Ministries, 709 W. Dean Ave., Killeen.

# Coyote Flats event raises funds for non-profits with chili cook-off

By Shalee-Corey Wiebe  
The Belton Journal

On May 2nd, First Presbyterian Church hosted "Coyote Flats," a chili cook-off and pioneer-themed event, free and open to the community. The band, "The Setting Sons," who mainly plays country, bluegrass, and gospel music at

assisted living facilities, played live music outside while the teams cooked.

The three teams who competed in the chili cook-off were The Red Hot Chili Peppers, who won first place for the best chili and the best name; The Chili Clan, who won for crowd favorite; and No Squirrel in My Soup. Winners received a knife as a prize.

Inside were model trains and a silent auction. The funds for the auction went to support the Body of Christ Community Clinic, a medical and dental center that provides for people who are uninsured, as well as Helping Hands. Various crafts were also stationed in different

See **CHILI**,  
Page A8

## Council 2 - From Page A2

Belton Parks & Recreation.

"The draft plan will go on to the Parks Board and ultimately to City Council for adoption in June," Grant added.

Belton's 2026-2036 Parks, Recreation, Trails & Open Space Master Plan includes seven major sections, including an introduction, inventory of the existing park system, findings from the community feedback, goals and objectives, a needs analysis, recommendations, and an overall schedule for recommended projects.

Parks & Recreation master plans are crucial documents that help cities plan for future park investments.

Belton City Council adopted the previous master plan in 2022 and the Parks and Recreation Department has successfully accomplished nearly everything proposed in that document.

Parks and recreational facilities play important roles in Belton, and contribute to the high quality-of-life that residents want and expect from the city. Belton has an extensive park system, including 22 city-owned parks and trails. The city developed this plan to ensure Belton continues to strategically reinvest to ensure the recreational needs of the community continue to be met.

Belton's current parks system is comprised of 22 neighborhood, com-

munity, and special-use parks and trails, encompasses nearly 263 acres — 258 of which are developed for recreational purposes.

With approximately 258 acres of developed parkland, the city provides nearly 9 acres of developed parkland per 1,000 residents. Belton is aligned with other similar communities throughout the U.S. that generally average at about 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

After speaking with residents at events and through surveys, the city developed a list of 20 new amenities to prioritize between 2026 and 2036. The list, in order of priority, includes playgrounds, trails, an indoor recreation center, shade structures, pavilions, practice fields, restrooms, site furniture (benches, picnic tables and grilling stations), sports fields, multipurpose sports courts (basketball, tennis, pickleball and volleyball), and signage.

Also: aquatic recreation (splash pads, pools, river access), skate park, amphitheaters, concessions, disc golf courses, native landscaping, public art, dog parks and community gardens.

If approved by Council, master plan construction would begin this year, according to the plan's implementation timeline, and several projects will be implemented every year until 2036.

4 - Day

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# Belton's sales tax outpacing state average

By Lynette Sowell  
The Belton Journal

The office of Texas State Comptroller Glenn Hegar's office released its monthly sales tax revenue report for May, and the City of Belton is seeing an increase in sales tax revenue.

The City of Belton will receive \$933,762.07 for its monthly sales tax check, up 7.31 percent from May 2025. Belton's sales tax revenue is up 2.99 percent overall for 2026.

The May sales tax report is for sales made in March 2026 by businesses that report tax monthly, and quarterly filers who reported for January, February, and March 2026.

Texas cities' sales tax revenue is up by 6.1 percent compared to May 2025.

For Texas cities overall, the year-to-date average is up 4.3 percent.

The City of Temple is receiving \$3,597,102.51, up 5.05 percent compared to May 2025.

Morgan's Point Resort will receive \$38,706.52, down 5.68 percent compared to last May.

Troy will receive \$110,332.22, up 15.47 percent compared to last May.

Over in Nolanville, sales tax revenue is down 2.74 percent compared to last May, with Nolanville to receive \$143,601.66. Nolanville's sales tax revenue is down 4.66 percent for 2026. Holland's revenue check is \$18,780.60 this month, up 25.03 percent compared to May 2025.

Salado sees an increase of 7.16 percent this month and will receive \$96,324.27.

May sales tax payments to area cities

Belton	up	7.31%	\$933,762.07
Harker Heights	up	13.06%	\$1,260,486.14
Holland	up	25.03%	\$18,780.66
Killeen	down	2.8%	\$3,349,927.31
Morgan's Point Resort	down	5.68%	\$38,706.52
Nolanville	down	2.74%	\$143,601.66
Salado	up	7.16%	\$96,324.27
Temple	up	5.05%	\$3,597,102.51
Troy	up	15.47%	\$110,332.22

Percentages reflect a monthly increase or decrease compared to May 2025

Killeen will be receiving \$3,349,927.31, down 2.8 percent from last May, and the city is down 0.65 percent for the year compared to 2025.

Harker Heights sees an increase in

sales tax revenue, up 13.06 percent this month compared to last May, and will receive \$1,260,486.14. For 2026, Harker Heights' sales tax revenue is up 3.43 percent.

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# LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

## Hellyeah! global cantina opening soon in Belton



Courtesy Photo/Priscilla Z. Linneman

ABOVE LEFT: Hellyeah! is set to have a ribbon cutting on Thursday, May 21. It is located on Main Street in downtown Belton. ABOVE RIGHT: Hellyeah!, features a courtyard with a global cantina.

By Michele Weisman  
The Belton Journal

The Belton Historic District has a new neighbor, Hellyeah!, bringing a global cantina style of dining to Belton, but according to the tagline, it's too cool for most grandmothers. She'd approve of the hospitality, though. "I've always had this fantasy of owning a restaurant. I love to cook. We love to host and we love to make people feel welcome," said Michael E. Linnemann. He and his wife, Priscilla Z. Linnemann are combining their passions for food and a welcoming people by opening their global cantina where food is made from scratch and specialty cocktails are made.

"If you love good dining, if you love fresh food, if you love food that's actually scratch-made, if you like curated cocktails that are at an affordable price," said Linnemann. Hellyeah! will be open seven days a week, open late most nights and until midnight on Fridays and Saturdays. In their courtyard is an outdoor bar where weekends will have live music and DJs. A few weeks after their opening, they will be offering brunch on Saturdays and Sundays. Reservations can be made on the app, Open Table for bar dining, the dining room, or semi-private dining for a party of eight to ten. "Anybody who loves really good food, wants to

have a really good time, enjoys a delicious drink, and isn't too stuffy, come and have your Hellyeah! moment," said Linnemann. The historic interior stone walls and rafters are a feature they wanted to preserve and revitalize for their patrons. Self-proclaimed foodies, the Linnemanns hired consultants, a restaurant manager with experience in New York and Austin and a head chef with over 25 years of experience. The establishment is located at 206 E Central Avenue in Belton, with a ribbon-cutting set for Thursday, May 21 at 4 p.m. Visit their website at [www.hellyeahbelton.com](http://www.hellyeahbelton.com).

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## Spring Fiesta raises funds for the community

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe  
The Belton Journal

Christ the King Catholic Church had its annual Spring Fiesta on May 2nd from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., which included a salsa contest and a "Loteria," or Mexican bingo. Bags of prizes lined one side of the room, and people grabbed food and sat at the fun, decorated tables as they waited for the game to start. Nine tables lining the walls signed up for the salsa competition, with each competitor having multiple salsas to compete in different categories. Secret judges decided on who won for each type of salsa. Krista Kaulfus said, "I love the salsa contest. I love seeing how much creativity everyone has put into it and how excited they are to share their recipes, and just the community. It's just always so joyful to get everyone in a room together, sharing a meal. There's just so many fruits of the Spirit that come from gathering like that. So that's part of why we do it, because we are all one body in Christ, and so when we gather, you really feel the spirit of that." Severiana (or Sevi) Long said that around 200 people usually come to the event. "It's just a fun night. You know, it's something different. It's not something that

a lot of people do in the area." Her favorite part about the Spring Fiesta was getting to talk to everyone. "I just enjoy the interactions with the people. It gives my heart joy to see people smile, and it makes me feel good to know that I've brought some fun into somebody else's life." Mary Helen Aldana said, "We have so much fun playing bingo. Nobody knows who's going to win, and then they just yell it out." Richard Liverani and Georgette Gibson, who were selling raffle tickets for the go-cart, talked about their favorite part about being involved in events like Spring Fiesta, and church events in general. Liverani said, "All during the year we're doing things, different things, and helping people. And we do the food bank, and it's just very rewarding, because you get a good feeling that you're helping people and you're doing things for your community." Gibson said she enjoyed "just interacting with all the people. We have such a good time." Peter Macias said, "It's about bringing people together, in communion and fellowship. It's about raising the money that we need so we can make a difference in the community. That's what this is about."

## Diversion Center reduces burden for mental health on jails, hospitals

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

The Bell County Diversion Center has been open 18 months. While the facility is far from capacity, it is keeping a growing number of "clients" out of jails and hospitals. According to Bell County Judge David Blackburn, the Diversion Center diverts some individuals arrested on low-level offenses out of the criminal justice system and into mental health

care. The Bell County Diversion Center officially opened on Nov. 26, 2024, providing around-the-clock mental-health-crisis support and care. Located at 2400 Piazza Drive in Belton, the Center is an alternative to jail or hospitals for people in crisis. The 16-bed facility — designed for voluntary, short-term stays — aims to See DIVERSION CENTER, Page A8

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## The Man Who Tried to Wash Away History



**John C. Perry**

I am finishing up a book on Pontius Pilate, which I have been working on for months. My 75,000-word manuscript is currently being edited, before I submit it to a publisher.

He has been an interesting study for me, Pontius Pilate, his name has been spoken by Christians more than almost any other name in history. It has been repeated literally billions of

times across two thousand years. Our church utters his name every Sunday in the Apostle's Creed.

In the Apostle's Creed, only four names are stated, Mary, Jesus, God, and Pilate, no prophets, no Judean kings. Pilate's name has literally been uttered more than all the Roman emperors combined.

Pilate was not an emperor, but rather just a middle-level Roman prefect (governor). But his name is forever tied to the most important moment in human history. That alone should make us pause.

Christians have never quite known what to do with him. Today some see Pilate as a villain, the man who condemned Jesus. Others see him as a weak, conflicted official caught between politics and con-

science. The Gospels paint him as a reluctant judge, troubled, hesitant, trying to avoid the decision he ultimately made. He even washed his hands in front of the crowd, as if water could cleanse such a guilty conscience.

But whether we view him with sympathy or suspicion, one truth remains, Pilate knew the right thing to do, and he did not do it. That is why his name endures.

Pilate had absolute obedience to Rome. Jesus had absolute obedience to His Father. Pilate had soldiers, authority, and the power of the Roman empire behind him. Jesus had only His words, and yet those words outlasted every empire that ever marched across the earth.

Pilate questioned Jesus. He examined Him. He declared Him

innocent not once, but three times. He knew the truth. He recognized it when he heard it. And still, he surrendered to the pressure of the crowd and the Jewish hierarchy.

It was not ignorance that condemned Jesus. It was fear. It was pressure. It was the desire to keep the peace, to keep his position, to avoid trouble with Rome.

And that is where Pilate becomes uncomfortably close to us.

Most of us will never stand in judgment over another person's life. But all of us face moments when we know what is right, and still we hesitate. We know the truth, but we fear the consequences. We know the moral path, but we often choose the easier one. We symbolically wash our hands and tell ourselves it wasn't really our

decision. Pilate reminds us that knowledge is not enough. It is not what we know that shapes our lives. It is what we do.

His name is remembered not because he was powerful, but because he stood at a crossroads and chose the wrong road. And so, the question comes to each of us, quietly but persistently: What will you do when your Pilate moment arrives? My prayer is that we become less like Pilate, and more like our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

*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.*

## Diversion Center - From Page A6

provide treatment and connect individuals with community resources.

"We're not full — we have four or five clients on a given day," Blackburn said. "It's a good start. Before we opened, we visited other Diversion Centers around the state. Every few months, we visit with other Diversion Centers to see what's going on in their facilities. We started small and will build up to our 16-client capacity."

"That was our intentional strategy, and we set stringent criteria about who is eligible for the Center," Blackburn said. "We want to treat folks

who need help without straining our resources. I think capacity will increase."

Blackburn said Bell County contracts with Central Counties Services to provide employees for the Diversion Center. Right now, about 16 people work there, and they are specially trained in mental health care.

"The average stay at the Diversion Center is about four days, then they are released," he said. "Most of the clients have multiple issues such as homelessness and substance abuse. The Diversion Center often helps find a place for clients to go once released. We try to build a network of partners."

Right now, Diversion Center clients are from Bell County, but Blackburn said that could change in the future.

"I can envision a day when the Center might become regional in nature," he said. "We want to take care of local residents first, but if we have empty beds, we might consider clients from elsewhere."

The Bell County Diversion Center provides a "bridge facility" for men-

tal health triage and crisis residential services, helping to reduce the burden of mental illness on law enforcement and hospitals. Individuals receive health and psychiatric assessments, individual and group programming, and assistance with connecting to long-term care, housing and social supports.

Admissions are voluntary, for adults over 18, and usually for those not deemed a threat to themselves or others.

The project is a collaborative effort between Bell County, Central Counties Services, Baylor Scott & White Health, and AdventHealth Central Texas.

The facility, formerly the Luvida Memory Care building, was funded in part by a \$1.6 million federal grant.

"Our goal is to identify individuals with mental illness, substance abuse issues, and intellectual and developmental disabilities who otherwise would be taking up jail cells or hospital beds," Blackburn said. "We want to connect them with the care they need."

## Chili - From Page A4

rooms inside, including corn-husk dolls, crocheting, quilting, and painting.

Jessica Wilds, one of the leaders of the Central Texas Celtic Community, said, "It's nice to have people from different churches getting together."

Her favorite part about Coyote Flats was the fellowship and "just having a chance to be with people."

Pam Winters, the planner, said, "The amount of congregation who stepped up to do all of this, it's been amazing."

Kathy Reverend Vineyard talked about how the idea for a "frontier town experience" came to her, and how their church community had been planning to do Coyote Flats for several months now, each coming up with their own creative ideas for the event.

She credited Sam Wilds, also a leader of the Central Texas Celtic Community, for coming up with the idea for the chili cook-off. Reverend Vineyard her favorite part about the whole event was connecting with the community and "just greeting people, seeing visitors come in."



**BELTON JOURNAL/Shalee Corey-Wiebe**  
Chili cook-off winners receive certificates at First Presbyterian Church's Coyote Flats.

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# Business Showcase

## Summer events at the Bell County Museum

### Bell County Museum

**Across the Ocean:  
An Asian-Pacific Islander Cultural Fair**



Visit the museum to learn more about the cultures of Asia and the Pacific Islands! There will be crafts, games, Japanese calligraphy demonstrations, and performances of traditional dances and music.

**Date: May 30, 2026**

**Time: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

Chamorro dance performances: 11:15am & 12:30pm  
Japanese dance performance: 11:45am-12:15pm



201 N. Main St. Belton  
BellCountyMuseum.Org

**By Michele Weisman**  
The Belton Journal

The Bell County Museum's mission is "to engage and educate the community by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the prehistoric and historic heritage of Bell County." Entry is free to view the past through permanent and current exhibits.

Summer classes and other family-friendly events are listed on the museum's website. Many require pre-registration and have a fee.

Upcoming events at the museum are the Historic Escape Games Zombie Apocalypse May 15, Tiny Thinkers May 20, Across the Ocean, May 30, Let's Dance, Sing, And Paint, June 20, Teen Investigation June 23 through June 26, Summer Fun for Early Learners July 7 through July 10,

EA Limmer Jr. Summer Camp - Junior Historians, July 14 through July 17, and EA Limmer Summer Camp - STEAM, July 21 through July 23.

The 1904 Historic Carnegie Library, called Discover Bell County, displays land, agriculture, ranching, transportation, industry, education, and culture. Exploring the past is an adventure with historical photos and interactive displays. Archaeological work depicts human life at the Gault Site from thousands of years ago.

Little River Log Cabin, built in the 1850s, displays original logs and stones, seen in a smaller version of the original. Come in and imagine what life must have been like in the reconstructed cabin that originates from the Little River/Academy area. The largest display of mustache teacups in the United States is at the museum, made popular in the second half of the 1800s. Stop by and find the left-handed teacup.

The museum has an in-house only research library. See staff for assistance. Research materials cover topic such as the Chisholm Trail, Bell County family and genealogy, historic map reproductions, Salado history, Sanctified Sisters of Belton, and Bell County cemeteries.

The Bell County Museum was founded on April 25, 1988 by the Bell County Commissioners Court as part of the county government. The museum is housed in the beautifully restored 1905 Belton Carnegie Library building, which is a recorded Texas Historical Landmark and listed in the National Register of Historical Places.

Stop by and visit the museum located at 201 N. Main Street in Belton. For more information or to find out about volunteer opportunities, please call (254) 933-5243 or visit the museum website at bellcountymuseum.org.

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## Belton ISD to have strong showing at State Track and Field championships

By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

Belton ISD has an opportunity to earn four state championships Friday.

After an impressive performance at the Region II-5A meet, where the Broncos emerged third in the final team standings, Lake Belton and Belton will each be represented in two events at the University Interscholastic League Track & Field State Meet.

Held at Austin's Mike A. Myers Stadium, Tigers senior Christian Porter and junior Graham Chambley along with Broncos junior Ji'yson Sherman and their 1,600-meter relay team will be among the competitors.

Chambley enters as the field-favorite in the 110-meter hurdles after claiming the regional gold medal with a time of 14.04 seconds. The time is slightly faster than Nacogdoches sophomore Braylon Horton, who qualified with a 14.07.

The race is set to start at 5:45 p.m. He will be joined at state by Porter, who was second (47.61) in the 400. He enters as the fifth seed in the event after placing eighth at last year's state meet.

Mansfield Timberview senior Brandon Gilmore has the top seed time of 46.25 for the 7 p.m. race.

At 8:45 p.m., the Broncos' 1,600 relay quartet of freshman K.J. Bridges, sophomore Prince Moore, junior Zion

Harness and senior Kendrick Jones Jr., who won the regional championship in 3:16.88, receive their opportunity to shine.

They are eighth in the nine-team field. Texas City tops the group with a qualifying time of 3:10.42.

Sherman completes Belton ISD's state representatives thanks to a second-place triple jump measuring 46 feet, 3¾ inches, which seeds him seventh at state.

Comal Pieper senior Michael Aja-gbe (49-10) is the favorite to win the event. It is set to start at 2:45 p.m.

Both programs have found success at the meet in recent years.

In 2022, Ayanna Jones won the girls long jump state championship for

Belton before brother Kendrick Jones Jr. followed with consecutive 200 gold medals and a long jump championship.

Last year, Lady Broncos pole vaulter Abigail Rydberg was the event's runner-up.



## Lady Broncos fall in regional semifinals



By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

The Lady Broncos' season recently ended with disappointment and motivation.

After sweeping West Mesquite en route to returning to the Class 5A, Division regional semifinals, another stellar Lake Belton campaign came to a close last week.

In the series opener, the Lady Broncos pulled off a stunning comeback to take a 1-0 lead, but it would not hold as the Lady Wildcats advanced with a Game 3 victory

two days later.

Despite the defeat, there was plenty of reason to celebrate.

Lake Belton concluded the season with a 32-8 overall record and another undefeated District 16 championship and multiple individual league accolades.

Almost every player on the roster was recognized on the all-district team, including several superlative recipients.

Analia Diaz was named co-most valuable player after delivering 17 hits, 14 runs, 11 RBIs and .729 batting average, while teammate Isabell Magana was named offensive player of the year. She had 27 stolen bases, 22 runs scored, 14 hits and eight RBIs.

Additionally, Natalie Hosch and Lilliana Herrera were named co-pitchers of the year, Madison Naser was named co-catcher of the year, and Maliyah Gooden was named both utility player of the year and defensive player of the year.

Hosch (26 strikeouts) and Herrera (16

strikeouts) each went 4-0 on the mound, while Naser never allowed a passed ball. Gooden posted a .522 batting average, 16 runs scored, a dozen hits and six RBIs to go along with her defensive effort.

Furthermore, Bryson Gott, Addison Sims, Alaysha Williams and Avery Park landed on the first team, while Briley Updyke, Madison Perkins and Nani Rubio were second-team selections. Kayleigh Jackson, Aria Newman and Alexis Walker were honorable mentions.

Rounding out the list, head coach Kelsie McEachern was named coach of the year.

Together, the group produced a rally that will be remembered for seasons to come.

Playing at Red Oak, Lake Belton trailed Walnut Grove 4-0 after allowing two unanswered runs in the first and third innings. The Lady Broncos spent the next several innings attempting to come back, and in the seventh inning, they did.

Lake Belton posted four runs in the final inning of regulation before tacking on the game-winner in the eighth inning.

Diaz and Park each had a double in the 5-4 win, while Perkins hit a triple, and Magana stole a pair of bases. On the mound, Hosch earned the victory in relief, giving up a single hit in two innings of work.

In total, the Lady Broncos had 11 of the game's 21 hits.

They could not build on the performance, though, as the Lady Wildcats rebounded with a 2-1 win in Game 2, when they limited Lake Belton to just four hits and responded to their sixth-inning run with two runs in the top of the seventh inning.

Walnut Grove won the deciding game 6-1 to advance to the regional final.

The defeat ended the high school careers of Hosch and Sims, who will graduate prior to the Lady Broncos' jump to Class 6A for at least the next two seasons.

## Academy ISD Announces Head Volleyball Coach

Special to the Journal

Academy ISD has officially announced that Elizabeth "Liz" Boyer will take the helm of the Academy High School volleyball program for the 2026-2027 season. Currently serving as a teacher and coach at Academy Middle School, Boyer's move to the high school ranks marks a meaningful homecoming for the district standout, who is a proud alumna of Academy High School.

Boyer returns to the Lady Bees' sideline with a championship pedigree spanning nearly two decades of coaching, including 15 years as a head volleyball coach. Her tenure at Belton ISD was highlighted by a 2022 District Championship and two District Coach of the Year honors, mirroring her success at Canton ISD, where she also secured two district titles and multiple Coach of the Year awards. Throughout her career, Boyer has become known not only for her ability to develop athletes and build competitive programs but also for her commitment to community involvement, founding youth "Little Spikers" programs and organizing charitable awareness games.

Academy ISD Athletic Director Steve Hoffman cited Boyer's professionalism and leadership style as key factors in the hire. "Coach Boyer brings a level of organization



and structure to the sport that is immediate and impactful," Hoffman said. "She has a unique ability to connect with her athletes and pull the absolute best out of her players, and we are thrilled to see that energy directed toward our high

school program."

The appointment represents a strong connection between the school's proud tradition and its future. Academy ISD Superintendent Darla Nolen noted that Boyer's history with the district—both as a student and as a teacher/coach—makes her an ideal fit to lead the next generation of athletes.

"Bringing an alumna in to lead our young women is a special opportunity for this district," said Nolen. "Coach Boyer understands the expectations of excellence within our program firsthand, and we look forward to her building upon that legacy on the court."

Boyer, a graduate of Howard Payne University, has been a staple in the Texas coaching community since 2007. Her appointment marks a new chapter for the Lady Bees, as the district looks to build on her proven track record of postseason success.

"I am deeply honored to lead the Lady Bees and give back to the community where it all began for me," Boyer said. "I am committed to building a program that honors that legacy through relentless hard work and a shared sense of purpose." She is supported by her husband, Brandon, and their three children: Dylan, Aydan, and Maddy. With her family by her side, Liz Boyer is ready to lead the Lady Bees forward.

## Broncos are still in the run for a division championship

By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

The Broncos are still alive.

After surviving a three-game series with Midlothian, Lake Belton did not need a deciding contest in the area round, sweeping Dallas White out of the Class 5A, Division I area round.

Behind standout Gavin Carpenter's nine-strikeout performance in the opener that propelled the Broncos to a 6-0 victory, the Broncos exploded for four runs in the sixth inning of Game 2 to secure the outcome.

R.J. Hunt was 2-for-3 hitting with a pair of runs scored, a double and an RBI as Lake Belton advanced with a 7-4 victory.

White led 3-0 following the second inning, but by the fourth inning, the score was tied 3-3. Then, two innings later, the Broncos' outburst proved to be too much.

The Longhorns rebounded with a run in the top of the seventh inning, but it did not spark a rally.

Lake Belton (24-8-3) finished with nine hits.

Along with Hunt, Zavian Rodriguez was 1 for 2 with a double, a run scored and an RBI, while Landon Wiley had three hits, 2 RBIs and a double. Colby Anthony was 1 for 3 with a double and a run scored.

On the mound, Maverik Maddux struck out five batters in five innings before Braxtan Cope earned the win.

Now, the Broncos travel to Red Oak for a third-round encounter with Melissa.

Game 1 is set for tonight at 7 p.m. with Game 2 scheduled for Friday at 7 p.m. If necessary, a deciding Game 3 would be held Saturday at noon.

The Cardinals enter with a 25-10-1 record after defeating Highland Park in two games.

The winner of the series advances to play either McKinney North or Ennis in the Region II final.

Behind a standout hitting showing from Travis Moore, Lake Belton beat the Panthers 5-2 in the opener, constructing a 4-0 lead by the conclusion of the third inning.

After reaching base on a triple, D.J. Lavallee recorded the first run moments later, and it was followed by a three-run third inning highlighted by Moore's two-RBI double. Moore was 2-3.

Midlothian responded with a pair of runs in the fourth inning, but it was not enough.

The Broncos finished with 10 hits as Hunt (2-4), Logan Winkler (RBI, double) and Anthony (2 RBIs, run scored) complemented Moore.

On the mound, Gavin Carpenter struck out seven runners before Cope closed the contest.

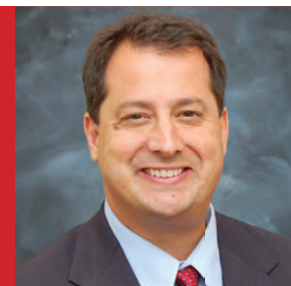
The Jaguars bounced back with a 3-1 victory in Game 2 despite a seven-strikeout performance from Maddux and Anthony's 2-3 showing at the plate.


Anthony produced again in the final game, striking out four batters in a 8-0 series-clinching victory. Furthermore, he had a pair of RBI offensively.

Lavallee was 2-2 with an RBI and a run scored, while Easton Robertson (2 RBIs, double), Cope (double, run scored), Rodriguez and Willey each had a hit.



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# Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

The annual Belton High School Athletics Wall of Honor induction ceremony will be held Saturday. The event is set to begin at 10 a.m. inside the gymnasium foyer.

Former football star Kegan Sherwood is the lone inductee in this year's class. The utility player for the Tigers is now a safety at Ole Miss.

A reception will be held at 9 a.m.



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

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



**BRONCOS BASKETBALL**

After spending the last two seasons at Killeen Harker Heights, Jason Fossett returns to Belton ISD, taking over as head boys basketball coach for the Broncos.

Fossett, who has amassed more than 500 career victories, spent six seasons at Belton before joining the Knights. Harker Heights won consecutive District 12-6A titles under his guidance, and he was named all-district coach of the year each season.

Fossett inherits the position from Zane Johnston. The only head coach in program history left to take the same role at Little River Academy.

**COMMUNITY SERVICE**

The Lady Broncos golf team recently traveled to Troy to partner with AMH — formerly Action Ministries Houston — to pack food for donations.

In approximately two hours, the players packed seven cases of food, which roughly equals 1,500 meals, which are used for backpack ministries, to fill food pantries, help elderly and ship for relief to areas affected by natural disasters.

**STRENGTH & CONDITIONING**

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

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

Regardless of school, all girls will begin each day at

9 a.m.

For more information, visit [BeltonTigers.com](http://BeltonTigers.com).

**SUMMER CAMPS**

Belton and Lake Belton will soon begin offering summer sports camps to area youth.

The camps will be available to boys and girls of all skill levels that are preparing to enter kindergarten through 12th grade, and they will be conducted at the respective campuses.

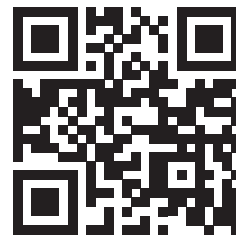
Led by team coaches, volleyball, basketball, softball, baseball, soccer and tennis camps will be available.

Dates and times will vary by sport.

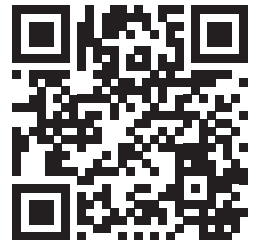
Registration is open at [events.hometownticketing.com/beltonisd](http://events.hometownticketing.com/beltonisd).

For more information, [BeltonTigers.com](http://BeltonTigers.com) or [LakeBeltonAthletics.com](http://LakeBeltonAthletics.com).

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*This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisor.  
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04.30-05.28

## LEGALS

### APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION

For a Wine Only Package Store Permit by SS1 King LLC DBA Daily Goods Food Mart to be located at 209 E Loop 121, Belton, Bell Co., Texas. Members of said LLC are Basanta Paudel – Member and Samjhana Baral – Member  
05.14,05.21

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

To: 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 Original Petition of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, was filed in the 146th Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas, on December 4, 2025, against Mahogany Williams and Unknown Father, Respondent(s), numbered 25DFAM358061, and entitled “In the Interest of AMELIO HICKS, 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: AMELIO HICKS, DOB: July 24, 2024, Place of birth: Illinois  
The court has authority in this suit to render an order in the child’s interest that will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child’s adoption. The name and address of the attorney for plaintiff is Ryan Smith, Bell County Attorney’s Office, P.O. Box 1127, Belton, TX 76513  
Issued and given under my hand and seal of the Court at Belton, Texas, this the 8th day of May 2026  
Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, TX 76513  
By: C Rodriguez Deputy.  
05.14

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of TRAVIS LEVONE WILLIAMS, Deceased, were issued on May 4, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00204,

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## LEGALS

pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: ROSITA TONI DOCKERY. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: ROSITA TONI DOCKERY, 2704 Bluebonnet Dr., Killeen, Texas 76549  
SIGNED on May 8, 2026.  
/s/James O. Cure, James O. Cure Attorney for ROSITA TONI DOCKERY, State Bar No.: 05252800, 2584 Blue Meadow Dr., Temple, TX 76502, Telephone: (254) 778-8934, Facsimile: (254) 773-2477 Email: jocure@cureandfrancis.net  
05.14

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of CHARLES TAYLOR CHAPMAN, Deceased, were issued on May 4, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00179, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: GENNA R. GENDRON. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: GENNA R. GENDRON, 1791 East FM 93, Temple, Texas 76502  
SIGNED on May 7, 2026.  
/s/James O. Cure, James O. Cure Attorney for GENNA R. GENDRON, State Bar No.: 05252800, 2584 Blue Meadow Dr., Temple, TX 76502, Telephone: (254) 778-8934, Facsimile: (254) 773-2477, Email: jocure@cureandfrancis.net

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of FRANCES STEWART, Deceased, were issued on May 5, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00652, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: ROBBY LEE STEWART. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. ESTATE OF FRANCES STEWART, c/o: ROBBY LEE STEWART, 401 SH-95, Little River Academy, TX 76554  
DATED the 7 day of May 2026.  
J. ERIC STOEBNER, State Bar No.: 24046919, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: Eric@templelawoffice.co  
05.14

### THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION – CIVIL CAUSE NO. 26DCV359702

To THE UNKOWN HEIRS OF ABDUL SHAHEED  
Greetings:  
You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the original petition for foreclosure at or before 10 o’clock AM of the first Monday after the expiration of 42 days from the date of issuance of this Citation, the same being Monday, at or before 10 o’clock AM, before the Honorable 169th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas. Said original petition for foreclosure was filed in said court on February 19, 2026.

The file number of said suit being No. 26DCV359702. The names of the parties in said suit are:

BANK OF AMERICA, N.A. VS. SHIRLEY ANN GUNTHER, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THE UNKOWN HEIRS OF ABDUL SHAHEED

The nature of said suit being substantially as follows, to wit: Bank of America, N.A. (“Plaintiff”), its successors in interest or assigns, by and through its attorney of record, Bradley Conway of Marinosci Law Group, P.C., 16415 Addison Road, Suite 725, Addison, TX 75001, (972) 331-2300, brought suit against Shirley Ann Gunther, The unknown heirs at law of Abdul Shaheed, deceased, the United States of America on Behalf of the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development (“Defendants”), to enforce the Note on the property located at 1202 North 4th Street Killeen, TX 76543 (“Property”), and legally described as SEE EXHIBIT A

## LEGALS

This was issued at the request of attorney: BRADLEY CONWAY MARINOSCI LAW GROUP PC 16415 ADDISON ROAD SUITE 725 ADDISON TX 75001.

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

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office in Belton, Texas, on May 06, 2026.

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

EXHIBIT “A”, LEGAL DESCRIPTION for a tract of land in Bell County, Texas, part of the J. R. Smith Survey, Abstract No. 797 and being the same tract described as 0.145 acre in a deed to Centex Properties recorded in Volume 4614, Page 759 official Public records of Real Property of Bell County, Texas, and known as part of Lot 3, block 8, Scharbauer Addition recorded in Volume 86, Page 326, Deed records of Bell County, Texas. The Bearings and Distances shown herein are Existing Calls and Record Calls.

BEGINNING at a ½” iron rod found at the intersection of the north right of way line of Garrison Avenue and the east right of way line of North 4<sup>th</sup> Street being the southwest corner of Lot 3 and the southwest corner of the 0.145 acre tract for the southwest corner of this

THENCE, 17 deg. 04’ 56” E, 69.92 feet with the east right of way line of North 4<sup>th</sup> Street to a ½” iron rod found in concrete being the southwest corner of the Howard G. Fisher tract recorded in Volume 1148, page 237 and the northwest corner of the 0.145 acre tract, for the northwest corner of this.

THENCE S.71 deg. 16’ 22” E, 89.82 feet to a ½” iron rod found in the west line of the Jimmy & Janice Woodwall tract recorded in Volume 3442, Page 50 being the southwest corner of the Fisher tract and the northeast corner of the 0.145 acre tract for the northeast corner of this.

THENCE S. 16 deg. 56’ 25” W, 70.35 feet to a ½” iron rod found in the north right of way line of Garrison Avenue being the southwest corner of the Woodwall tract and the southeast corner of the 0.145 care tract for the southeast corner of this.

THENCE N. 71 deg. 00’ 00” W, 90.01 feet base bearing with north right of way line of Garrison Avenue to the place of beginning containing 0.145 acre of land according to my survey and my calculations.

The bearings of this Legal Description are based on the south line of the tract described as 0.145 acre in a Deed to Centex Properties recorded in Volume 4614, Page 759, Official Public Records of Real Property of Bell County, Texas.

By: M Cortez Deputy Clerk  
05.14,21,28,06.04

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of MARTHA PACE WATTS AKA MARTHA ED WATTS, Deceased, were issued on May 4, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00218, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: ASHLEY CLAPPER.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: ASHLEY CLAPPER Attorney at Law, 603 North 8th Street, Killeen, TX 76541  
DATED the 5th day of May 2026.

CORBIN & CLAPPER, PC, 603 North 8th Street, Killeen, TX 76541, Tel: (254) 526-4523, Fax: (254) 526-6711, By: ASHLEY CLAPPER, DANIEL A. CORBIN, State Bar No. 04814300, ASHLEY CLAPPER, State Bar No. 24076317, Legal@CorbinLegalTeam.com, Attorney for DENNIS HAYES LEE 05.14

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## MEDITATION

## WORD SEARCH

K	R	Y	T	I	M	I	N	A	U	Q	E	O	Q	B	H	L	U	K	A
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## WORDS

- ALIGNMENT
- AWARENESS
- BREATHWORK
- CHAKRA
- CLARITY
- COMPASSION
- ENLIGHTENMENT
- EQUANIMITY
- FOCUS
- GRATITUDE
- INTENTION
- MANTRA
- MINDFULNESS
- MUDRAS
- NIRVANA
- PRANAYAMA
- PRESENCE
- SAMADHI
- STILLNESS
- TRANSCENDENCE
- VIPASSANA
- VISUALIZATION
- ZAZEN
- ZEN

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

# EDITORIAL

## Sorry Terminator, you are out of a job

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

If you don't feel old now, you will when you realize that the movie "The Terminator" released in 1984. That was 42 years ago. I'll stop while you take a breath to process that.

It's the year 2029 when machines conquer the world, and the cyborg "Terminator" is sent back to 1984 (then present day) to kill Sarah Connor before she gives birth to a future leader that will help mankind conquer the machines they are battling in the 2020s.

Now, in the present, a mere three years from 2029, I have to say, sorry, Terminator. You are out of a job.

There has been no apocalyptic war between man and machines, with machines battling to dominate mankind.

There was no war, because we walked right into the machines as they arrived.

Machines pretty much run the world now, don't they?

Many of us carry one around in our hands or pockets all the time. It's the first thing some reach for in the morning or the last thing they look at before lights-out.

One online source (generated as an AI Overview, thank you) stated that as of April 2023, there were more mobile subscriptions than people in the world, with over 8.58 billion subscriptions compared to a global population of 7.95 billion in 2022.

According to a Pew research study, 97% of Americans own a cellphone of some kind, and 9 out of 10 own a smart-

phone. In 2011, the Pew Research Center's first survey of smartphone ownership showed that 35% owned a smartphone.

This isn't a rant against technology, but a look at how technology – machines – are shaping and controlling what we do.

For example, social media – which does have humans behind it (watch the documentary "The Social Network, if you haven't) operates with the help of a machine. It uses something called "the algorithm" that shows users what they want to see.

If you search for (or even talk about) conspiracy theories, you'll start seeing things about conspiracy theories in your news feed. The Algorithm – machine – shows you what it "thinks" you want to see.

For example, I started searching for kitchen cabinets on my phone. Lo and behold, my social media stream started filling with information and links on cabinets galore.

What a treasure trove of information!

The algorithm learns our habits, what we look for, what occupies our time – even what we talk about. This is a little convenient – my needs and wants are anticipated and verified – and a little scary.

Social media, particularly, can shape our habits before we realize it.

No, there is no apocalyptic takeover of mankind by machines – our new technology has already done that easily in the form of a "friendly" machine that is with us wherever we go.

Part of me is a little jealous of students have it particularly easy now when coming up with sources for research papers. Gone are the days of the card catalog, searching for a physical volume (or in the case of research papers, multiple volumes) that can provide the information a student needs to draft a research paper. No more trudging with a backpack containing index cards, pens, and a notebook across campus in the snow to spend a few hours among the book stacks. (Ask me how I know this.)

Now, students can lounge comfortably and hold a phone in one hand and take notes with the other. You can save everything to a file on your phone, then upload it to a cloud, open your laptop, access your cloud files, and write away, all without leaving the house.

While I love the convenience and accessibility of technology, it has come at a price.

How much are we letting machines think and do for us? What's the real cost of technology?

And now, with AI-generated information coming upon us from many directions, it is hard to tell what is real – and what has actually come from a real, human brain.

AI and what it is doing to our brains – that's a whole other column for another day.

## A Moving Summer

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

For many, summer is a season for fun, frolic, festivals, and a great many other things. (*How many other summer-related words can you think of that start with the letter "F", kids?*)

However, there are those for whom summer will bring upheaval.

You see, in the United States most school districts and even many colleges don't have classes for a 2 – 3 month period during summer. As a result, summer is a major period of time for people to relocate. This could be a younger individual going off to college, someone taking a job transfer (the United States military, in particular, usually prioritizes issuing transfer reassignments for the summer months), or even a person looking to start fresh in another city. Either way, moving is more than just getting on the highway and driving for a while.

Yes, people will need to arrange for

lodging during their travels and an actual residence upon arrival. Some people are fortunate enough to be able to arrange everything well before they head on out, or at least have begun the process; many US military bases, for example, provide on-base housing that a person can apply for. Others have to figure things out as they go.

Then of course there's the logistics of it all. There's the process of sorting through what physical goods (like furniture, clothing, entertainment media, and toys) that will be going on the next leg of life's journey and which will be divested. There's the process of determining whether to hire a moving company or to attempt the move oneself. There's the process of carefully managing one's food stores to ensure that little beyond snacks and such will be left to transport given the risk of spoilage. Et cetera.

But the most difficult part of moving

is often the mental and emotional part. This is where people rip up whatever metaphorical roots they've laid down, say goodbye to those they know and love, and leave the familiar in the rearview mirror as they head off to a largely unknown locale. Children and those who are neurodivergent will be especially affected by this and may have a particularly hard time adjusting. For those who have never experienced the sensation of doing any of this, fire up Phil Collins' "We Said Hello Goodbye".

For those who are in this situation, time does march on. And it has marched on in more ways than one... especially when it comes to technology. Email, social media, and voice over internet allow us to keep in contact with people no matter how far apart we are. Apps and websites like iHeart and TuneIn allow us to stream radio stations

from far distant places, allowing us to learn

more about other regions while helping us stay grounded to where we've been. Individual television stations often have apps and websites of their own, allowing for the same level of connection, and sites like Wikipedia often have lists of radio and television stations in a given region we can use when we look for and through these apps. Many newspapers now offer digital subscriptions. And so forth.

These advances won't entirely remove the pain, but they can help make it a little easier while also helping to make the destination a little less mysterious and scary. And parents, while sorting things out, try to ensure that your kids will carry a few favorite things with them on the trip as a comfort and to help them establish the new normal once they arrive.

Trust me folks, I know a little about all of this...

## Customer Service, Again

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

If you have tried to call any customer service line in the past few years you know how hard it is to get to a real person. Now with AI (artificial intelligence, yeah right...) working better (sorta) you have yet another layer to get through before you can even start trying to resolve whatever it was that you called about.

I will give some of the systems credit for making this struggle a little better. They find your information based on your phone number, and this can cut out a bit of the extra work.

I called a financial institution the other day, needing to talk to a real person, I had to hang up and call back at least three times. I managed to get stuck in an endless loop where the machine asks questions and if you don't answer that precisely then you cannot proceed. I have no problem ending one call and starting over, I figure in the long run this evens out.

A bit of bright news this week. I had an exceptional call with a business. I had ordered an item through an online system. It arrived and was not correct. On the shipping label was the name of the company that fulfilled the order for the other company. I just called them directly. There was a short menu to get me to the right department. After that it was a real human! Yes, I was surprised as well. And on top of that every person that I spoke with was super friendly and very helpful, and I mean over and above helpful. This business is located in

the south, all the voices that I encountered were female, and had a pleasant accent. Now I know what some folks will think about that last statement. If you hear a man speaking with a country accent you think, redneck, good ol' boy, or something along those lines, and none of that is bad. However, if a pleasant female voice with that accent is on the other end of the phone call you picture one of the Hee-Haw Honeys, or Elly May. So after a few minutes my issue was resolved. Had I taken the proper channels of trying to correct the error by involving the online seller, I would probably still be lost in a maze of digital selections and looking at a dying battery on my phone.

This experience has restored a bit of faith in customer service as a whole. There are still companies that let people handle these calls and resolve them quickly and easily. I will certainly take the time to write a suitable rating for this business.

Often if I buy something online, I do try to read the ratings, especially if it is something that I am not familiar with, or an off brand.

Now with ratings, you have to sort through a lot to get what you want. Firstly, if a person is dissatisfied, they are more likely to leave a rating, and that will be negative. So probably a higher degree of negative ratings compared to actual positive experiences. If a consumer gets their item and it works, they

are happy and start enjoying it, not giving thought to stopping and posting a rating online. There is a factor in that as well. Often a negative rating comes from getting an item that doesn't work as soon as you unpack it. That is highly frustrating, but it is not that common, and I am sure the company will fix that concern as soon as you let them know. Then you get the negative ratings for size or wrong item, that is not always the fault of the company.

The negative ratings that I find the most odd are the ones that really have nothing to do with the product or how it works. One star - "the delivery person stepped on my tulips when they delivered the package"; "the item looked more violet in the picture than when I opened the box, it is almost purple"; "the item was supposed to be here yesterday and wasn't delivered until this morning". Those dilute the ratings. Of course if you see mostly low ratings for an item then you probably can trust those. I did find an interesting item with a fairly reasonable price, however almost all of the ratings stated that this item was not as described, so that was quite helpful.

I am not sure if anyone has rated me online, I guess I should take a look, just to make sure the mail carrier didn't step on anyone's petunias while delivering the paper.

## Unused Resources

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

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

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

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

Our conversation went something like this:

Her: How do you find stuff?

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

Her: Why don't you use folders?

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

Her: Have you tried hanging folders?

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

I was a challenge for her. But together, we came up

with a plan that actually helped me. My stacks are smaller now, anyway.

One of the best things she taught me was to move all my handwritten addresses from my spiral-bound, polka-dotted address book to my computer. I'd had this program for years but never took the time to learn it. It had been there, waiting to be accessed, while I scrambled through that little alphabetized address book with all its mark-outs and changes, where things weren't really alphabetized because how do you really keep things in ABC order in one of those books? "I'm sorry, Mr. Abdo. I can't add your name here. Mr. Applebaum is already in the system, and there's no room." Every time somebody moves or gets married, you've gotta buy a new book. It's a nightmare.

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

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

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

Feeling stressed or anxious? We can find peace in His Word. Confused? Perplexed? In James 1, He promised wisdom to anyone who asks.

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

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

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

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



## Local Activities & Events

### Newcomers Club Activities May

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 05/14: Mexican Train Dominoes, Couples Night Out | 05/22: Trailblazers Walking Group      |
| 05/18: Snack Time Mah Jongg                      | 05/25: Well Read Women, Monday Canasta |
| 05/19: Bunco                                     | 05/26: Singing Bluebonnets             |
| 05/20: Popcorn Bridge                            | 05/24: Fun Lunch                       |
| 05/21: Meet & Greet, Nonfiction Book Club        | 05/28: Mexican Train Dominoes          |
|  | 05/30: Jimmy's Egg                     |

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

**Visit the website: [www.bellcountynewcomers.com](http://www.bellcountynewcomers.com)."**

#### Bell County Master Gardener - May 20

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 Horseradish, Lovage and Mushrooms in these May sessions. May 20, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. at Bell County Extension Office- Learning Center, 1605 N. Main Street, Belton.

#### 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.

#### 2nd annual Temple Memorial Festival - May 24

More than just a festival. We are educating on Lupus. We are supporting the Marissa Lupus/Kidney Foundation at the Temple Santa Fe Plaza, 315 W Ave B, Temple, Noon to Midnight. 5K Walk begins at 9:00 a.m. For more information contact Raymond Saucedo at 254-624-8172.

#### MPR Explorers @ the Point - May 28

The Mary Ruth Briggs Library volunteers invite residents to the upcoming MPR Explorers @ The Point social, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., May 28 at Garrett & Mic Hill Event Center, 60 Morgan's Point Blvd. This month's gathering features Mayor Jimbo Snyder, who will join attendees for an informal conversation focused on community priorities, leadership transitions, and opportunities for resident engagement. The event is open to all ages, and light refreshments will be available. For more information visit [library@mprtx.us](http://library@mprtx.us)

#### 1st Annual Juneteenth parade Celebration & Heart of Texas Miss Juneteenth Scholarship Pageant - June 19

We are making HISTORY in Belton, Texas with the 1st Annual Juneteenth parade Celebration & Heart of Texas Miss Juneteenth Scholarship Pageant! This event is about honoring the TRUE meaning of Juneteenth—celebrating freedom, culture, and the strength of our community. In a city where this history has not always been fully recognized, we are creating a space to uplift, educate, and celebrate together. We need your support!

We are currently seeking: Parade entries (organizations, schools, dance teams, car clubs, etc.), Vendors (food trucks, small businesses, artisans, nonprofits), Pageant participants for the Heart of Texas Miss Juneteenth Scholarship Program, and Sponsors & community partners. Let's come together to rebuild, support Black-owned businesses, and create something powerful for future generations. For registration and inquiries call 254-534-2225.

**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@mcl1249tx.com](mailto:commandant@mcl1249tx.com) for more information.

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

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

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

**The Bell County Genealogical Society** meets the fourth Saturday of each month. The group offers free Genealogy Guidance. Members of the Bell County Genealogical Society will be present to help those with questions about researching their family trees. General meetings are held in Temple, Belton, Killeen, and Salado on a rotating basis. All meetings are open to the public. You do not have to be from Bell County or have ancestors from Bell County to participate. For locations and time of meetings visit our website at [txbegs.org/home/events/](http://txbegs.org/home/events/)

**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?  
TELL US AND KEEP EVERYONE IN THE LOOP.

EMAIL DETAILS TO:  
[NEWS@BELTONJOURNAL.COM](mailto:NEWS@BELTONJOURNAL.COM)  
OR CALL (254) 939-5754

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Courtesy Photo

The Central Texas Republican Women held the annual National Day of Prayer observance on Thursday, May 7, at the Bell County Courthouse.



Photo Credit: Christopher Winston

Families enjoyed a lot of fun and rich heritage at last weekend's Legends of the Chisholm Trail.

★ BULLOTHON PROMOTIONS PRESENTS ★

★ 6TH ANNUAL ★

# JOHNNY BOREN

MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

## BULL RIDING

★

### MAY 16



**BAD DOG**  
**RODEO ARENA**  
BELTON, TEXAS

**GET TICKETS NOW!**  
**SCAN OR CLICK**





**GATES OPEN**  
**4:00PM**



**EVENT STARTS**  
**6:00PM**

OR VISIT:  
[square.link/u/PokYBLyT](https://square.link/u/PokYBLyT)

**\$15**  
ADMISSION

KIDS UNDER 8  
**FREE!**

**AFTER THE EVENT PARTY**  
**@ BO'S BARN**  
*Live Country Music On Stage*

**TERRY HUGHES**  
AND  
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**Bo's BARN**  
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★ TEMPLE, TX ★

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