

VIEW ONLINE



Belton ISD announces Valedictorians and Salutatorians for the Class of 2026

Special to the Journal

Belton ISD celebrates the valedictorians and salutatorians of the Class of 2026 from Belton High School, Lake Belton High School and Belton New Tech @Waskow.

These students have distinguished themselves through academic excellence, leadership, perseverance and involvement both inside and outside the classroom. Their stories reflect the dedication, growth and determination that define the graduating class across the district.

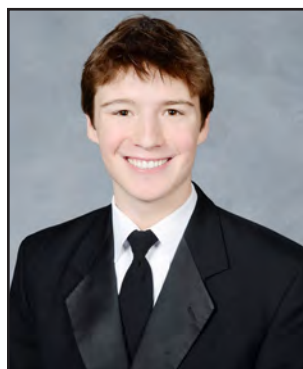
At Lake Belton High School, Taylor Rogers was named valedictorian and Dhruv Bhat was named salutatorian. Rogers, the child of Emily and Jimmy Frank Rogers of Belton, has been involved in student council, tennis, National Honor Society and University Interscholastic League academics throughout high school. Rogers plans to attend Texas A&M University and enter the honors engineering program before pursuing nuclear engineering and a future in research within the European Union.

“When I think about just the person I was four years ago, I think I’m just a completely different person now,” Rogers said. “I think a willingness to change and adapt is probably what got me this far.”

Bhat, the child of Sanjay and Nandita Bhat of Temple, participated in tennis, Health Occupations Students of America, National Honor Society, student council, University Interscholastic League academics and Future Farmers of America. A National Merit Finalist, Bhat plans to attend the University of Texas at Austin to study biology before pursuing medical school and a career in radiology.

“I think my counselors and parents deserve all of it,” Bhat said. “They really told me how to grow as a student and how to get up here.”

At Belton High School, Emma Flory was named valedictorian and Abby Idoux was named salutatorian. Flory, the child of Roger and Jennifer Flory of Temple, served as captain of the varsity basketball team while also participating in National Honor Society and student council.



Taylor Rogers Valedictorian



Emma Flory Valedictorian



Samantha McKenzie Valedictorian



Dhruv Bhat Salutatorian



Abby Idoux Salutatorian



Leland Moore Salutatorian

She also coached eighth-grade and freshman basketball teams. Flory plans to attend Tarleton State University to major in pre-health sciences before pursuing physician assistant school and a future career in dermatology or cosmetic medicine. “It’s really important to just trust yourself and trust the process,” Flory said. “The rankings are

going to fluctuate, but you just have to keep giving it your all.”

Idoux, the child of Teresa and John Idoux of Belton, lettered three years in varsity soccer while also participating in National Honor Society, Health Occupations Students of America and volunteer work through Angel’s Buddies. She plans to attend Trinity University to major in

biochemistry before attending medical school.

“I’d say just being confident in who you are and your abilities,” Idoux said. “Trust yourself and trust what you’ve done the past four years.”

At Belton New Tech @Waskow, Samantha McKenzie was named valedictorian and Leland Moore was named salutatorian. See CLASS OF 2026, Page A3

Walmart celebrates store updates with the community

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe
The Belton Journal

On Friday, the 15th at 10 a.m., members of the community gathered in the Walmart parking lot to celebrate their re-grand opening, including members of the Belton Chamber of Commerce, food vendors, and other organizations. The event started off with a prayer before store manager Rudy Garcia took the stage, thanking the Walmart team leads for their hard work and for helping bring this event together. Finally, several large checks were presented from Walmart to various local organizations, including but not limited to Jeffrey’s Tree, the Salvation Army, and the Ladies’ Auxiliary Club.

Finally, the Walmart team gathered on and around the stage as Rudy prepared to cut the ribbon. After a round of cheering and clapping, people broke away to check out Goya, Big Gun BBQ, B’s Treats and other vendors stationed outside, and also to take pictures with the Walmart and Reese’s mascots. Inside the front door was also a station for free cupcakes and ice cream.

Rudy talked a little about his favorite part of the whole event. “I think the biggest part for me is the people and my associates both being here. My associates



BELTON JOURNAL/Shalee Corey-Wiebe

Walmart Store Manager Rudy Garcia, Walmart employees, Belton Chamber and Community members celebrated the re-grand opening with a ribbon-cutting ceremony last Friday.

are enjoying the results of their work.” He said, “To see the community turn out, for me, is just overwhelming because I didn’t expect that many folks to be here, so it’s wonderful to see.”

Several Walmart employees gave special credit to Misty for helping bring this event together. Misty said her favorite part was, “just having everybody from the

community.”

Tavia and Giesela, also Walmart employees, agreed that the best part about the whole event was bringing the community together and getting to celebrate after working hard to have this event. Charlotte said, “It’s amazing and the customers are loving it. That’s what we did it for, to get a new change.”

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Lions Club raises funds with annual Stampede



BELTON JOURNAL/Aries Ramos
More than 120 riders participated in the annual Stampede on the Chisholm Trail bike race.

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

On a warm Saturday morning in Belton, cyclists from across the Lone Star State and beyond rolled in ready to ride for a reason.

The Belton Lions Club hosted its annual Stampede on the Chisholm Trail bike race on May 9, starting out at the Harris Community Center, where more than 120 riders gathered for a day of competition, community, and charitable purpose.

This year’s event featured two routes for riders to choose from, a 55-mile course and a more

demanding 62-mile course, giving participants of all skill levels a chance to take part in the ride.

Riders came from all corners of Texas and the event drew competitors from as far away as Florida and Hawaii.

The age range of participants was equally impressive, with riders spanning decades of experience, including one participant who completed the course at 80 years old.

Karen Stagner, who serves as both the Marketing lead and Secretary for the Belton Lions

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BHS Senior takes center stage on the road to Broadway

Special to the Journal

Belton High School senior Malachi Santana earned one of Central Texas musical theatre's highest honors May 6 at Bass Concert Hall, home of Broadway in Austin, winning Best Lead Performer Male at the 13th Annual Heller Awards for Young Artists for his performance in *Seussical*.

Hosted by Texas Performing Arts and co-produced by Impact Arts, the Heller Awards recognize excellence in high school musical theatre productions across Central Texas. The ceremony celebrated students from 40 high schools across 18 school districts and highlighted achievement in acting, music, design and technical theatre.

Belton High School also earned nominations in several categories, including:

Best Music Direction
Best Orchestra
Best Set Design — Emilee Whitt, senior
Best Featured Ensemble Performer — Makayla Pryce, sophomore
Best Lead Performer — Malachi Santana, senior

This year marked the first time Belton High School participated in the Heller Awards program.

With the win, Santana became eligible for consideration to represent the Heller Awards at the 17th Annual National High School Musical Theatre Awards, also known as the Jimmy Awards, on June 22, 2026, in New York City. The national competition showcases top high school musical theatre performers from regional programs across the country and is widely considered the highest honor in high school musical theatre.

"Malachi is incredibly hardworking and is always positive at rehearsals," said Melissa Stuhff, theatre director at Belton High School. "He is very talented but also very kind."

Stuhff said the recognition reflects the collaboration between Belton High School's theatre and choir programs and the commitment educators have to helping students succeed.

"Our theatre and choir programs work alongside each other to make our musical magical every year," Stuhff said. "This recognition reminds us that although we aren't a 'big city' school, we have incredible talent that can compete with students from much larger cities and districts."

Tonya Lovorn, choir director at Belton High School, said Santana's authenticity and willingness to grow make him stand out both on and off the stage.

"Malachi has an amazing work ethic and never accepts anything but the best from himself," Lovorn said. "He takes direction well and is never offended by criticism. He always sees it as a way to get better."

Lovorn said Santana's ability to connect with au-



Courtesy Photo

Belton High Senior Malachi Santana racked up awards and won the Best Lead Performer Male at the Heller Awards for Young Artists.

diences is what truly elevates his performances.

"He truly embodies the character of the music he's singing and the part he's playing," Lovorn said. "He is also just genuinely a wonderful person who is a joy to be around."

Santana said theatre has been part of his life since he was 4 years old, when he appeared as a shark in his first stage production of *Alice in Wonderland Jr.* Directed by his mother, Priscilla Santana, dean of music and fine arts at Temple College, the experience sparked a lifelong love for the stage. Since then, he has participated in more than 32 productions, including both onstage and technical theatre roles.

"Winning this award feels surreal," Santana said. "I was honestly just grateful to even be nominated because the level of talent at the Heller Awards is incredible. Being surrounded by students who work so hard and care so deeply about theatre was such a magical experience."

Santana credited his directors, castmates and fellow performers across the region for helping make the experience unforgettable.

"The amount of talent at the Heller Awards was unbelievable," Santana said. "These are some of the most hardworking performers I've ever met, and it was inspiring to be surrounded by people who care so much about theatre and performing at such a high level."

"Belton ISD fine arts students continue to raise the bar with their talent, dedication and passion for

performance," said Belton ISD Fine Arts Director Keith Zuehlke. "To see our students recognized on a stage like the Heller Awards is incredibly exciting, and Malachi's accomplishment reflects not only his hard work but also the strength of the theatre program and the support behind the scenes from directors, musicians, technicians and fellow performers."

Both directors said Santana's future plans also highlight the impact fine arts programs can have on students regardless of their career paths.

"What this highlights is that we have a place for all kinds of students," Stuhff said. "BHS fine arts produces students who are ready to go out into the world with the tools needed to be successful in all fields."

Santana plans to study biology and pursue pre-med studies at the University of Texas at Austin after graduation, but he said theatre will always remain part of his life.

"I hope to continue theatre in some way while I'm in college," Santana said. "It's been such a big part of who I am growing up."

The Heller Awards program provides students opportunities to perform, receive mentorship from industry professionals and gain exposure to collegiate and professional theatre pathways. Santana's recognition places him among the top high school musical theatre performers in the region and shines a spotlight on the strength of Belton High School's fine arts programs.

Stampede - From Page A1

Club, has watched this event grow year after year and said the energy on race day never gets old.

"It's always exciting to see them come out and ride," Stagner said. "This event is probably my favorite event that we do throughout the year. Riders come from all over Texas as a matter of fact, Florida and Hawaii as well."

Last year's Stampede drew 117 riders. This year, that number climbed to 120. After completing their routes, riders were welcomed back to the Harris Community Center for a hot dog lunch, a well-earned meal after miles of open road.

For John Corsi, the club's

Membership Chair, the Stampede represents something bigger than just a bike race.

It is a reflection of the community the Lions Club works to serve every single day.

"My favorite things is just everybody coming together and pulling things together and just making it a magical day," Corsi said. "It's a great day that we get to do this and to raise money for organizations and it helps the community a lot."

Corsi also pointed to the row of sponsor names printed on the back of event shirts as proof of something he believes deeply about the City of Belton.

"That just says the strength of our community, that people

are willing to donate and to help, and that's why I love Belton," he said.

The funds raised through the Stampede go directly toward the many programs the Belton Lions Club supports throughout the year.

"One of the things that our club does that we really like is we support the Texas Lions Camp in the summer for kids with disabilities," said club president Keith Cook. "They get to go to the camp for free in Kerrville. Kids with diabetes, kids with physical disabilities, our club and clubs across the state of Texas help sponsor this camp for these kiddos. Also, our club provides free eye-

glasses and free eye exams to students that can't afford to buy their own glasses."

Beyond those programs, the Belton Lions Club provides two annual college scholarships for graduating seniors at Belton High School, maintains the Lions Pavilion and Playground for Children with Special Needs at Heritage Park, supports families of children with special needs during Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, partners with Belton ISD through their HEARTBEAT Angel Program, and hosts Pictures with Santa each holiday season for the special needs community. The club's reach across Belton and the surround-

ing Central Texas area is wide, and events like the Stampede on the Chisholm Trail are what make it all possible.

For anyone looking to get involved, Cook extended an open invitation to the entire community.

"We would like anyone to join and become a member of the Belton Lions Club," he said. "We meet every Thursday at noon at Dead Fish Grill. Guests are welcome to come eat a free meal, listen to a guest speaker, and learn about our club because the more members we can get, the better we can raise money and financially support the citizens of our community."

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OBITUARIES



Lawson

Joan Marie Riggio Lawson
August 27, 1934 – May 10, 2026

Joan Marie Riggio Lawson of Temple, TX, age 91, passed away peacefully in her home on May 10, 2026.

Joan was born August 27, 1934, in Pueblo, CO, to Frank and Josephine Riggio and a wonderful extended family of 4 grandparents, 13 aunts and uncles, and 27 first cousins! The first of two children, Joan was high-spirited and independent from day one. Her early education was in St. Mary's School of Pueblo before transferring to public education; graduating from Central High School in 1952.

At the age of 18, Joan met Army Corporal Warren Lawson at a dance hall in Pueblo. Before long, Joan could no longer resist the charms of the larger-than-life soldier-turned-water well driller from Texas. They conspired to elope, and the couple drove to Raton, NM,

where they wed on December 7, 1954. They enjoyed 43 wonderful years of marriage before Warren's passing in 1998.

The couple established their home on Lake Belton and were eager to start a family, welcoming their first daughter, Cheryl, into the world less than two years later. Within six years, they found themselves parents of five with the addition of son Gene, twin boys Frank and Bill, and daughter Lisa.

Joan was a wonderful mother who deeply loved and always prioritized her family. Despite her adage that the Lawsons were "family rich and cash poor," it never felt that way to her children. To make ends meet, Joan was a fierce refunder and couponer. She once bought every available copy of the Temple Daily Telegram to cut out that day's high-value coupon for diapers—gathering enough to last the entire childhood of her first-born grandchild with some to spare for the next.

Joan was introduced to her Christian faith during childhood, and, after she and Warren married, together they joined First Lutheran Church of Temple. Though she was not always able to "go to town" to attend services, Joan practiced her faith in many ways—including regularly tuning in to the broadcast ministry of Joyce Meyer.

Warren and Joan quickly became prominent fixtures within their small community of Moffat. Joan was well known at Moffat Elementary School where the Lawson kids provided, on average, 10% of the total enrollment. She was a member of the Central Texas Republican Women and Moffat Home Demonstration Club. Warren and Joan also shared a lofty goal to visit

every state in the U.S. and were able to cross off the entire Lower 48 together—all while driving.

Warren adored Joan and treated her like royalty—even going so far as to affectionately nickname her "Queenie." But perhaps her favorite name of all was "Wooie," as she was known to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Joan was preceded in death by her parents Frank and Josephine Riggio; husband Warren M. Lawson; father-in-law Warren P. Lawson; mother-in-law Minnie D. Lawson Evans; and sister-in-law Kay Riggio. She is survived by her brother Jack Riggio of Pueblo, CO; children Cheryl Traudt (Larry) of Waco, Warren "Gene" Lawson (Charmayne) of Temple, Frank Lawson of Temple, William "Bill" Lawson (Beth) of Lubbock, and Lisa Teeple (Alan) of Austin; 11 grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren; three nephews; and many beloved cousins, extended family members, and life-long friends.

A private graveside service officiated by pastor Brady Wayne Fox was held at Bellwood Memorial Park Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to the Moffat Volunteer Fire Department, Joyce Meyer Ministries, or Our Hospice House of Belton.

The family would like to extend a special thank you to the entire Amedisys Home Health Care Services team—especially nurse Whitney Holmes and aides Alexis Garcia and Shawnequa Edwards; as well as Baylor Scott & White physicians Adam Brown, D.O., and Paula Duran Sierra, M.D., for their compassionate care and true friendship.

Belton ISD launches Virtual Learning Academy



Special to the Journal

Belton ISD is expanding learning opportunities for students with the launch of the Virtual Learning Academy, a new pilot program for students in grades 9 through 12 beginning in the 2026-27 school year.

Created under new Texas state legislation (TEC Chapter 30B), the program will provide

families with flexible, personalized learning options designed to meet a variety of student needs and learning styles. Limited spaces are available, and the program is open to both in-district and out-of-district students.

Families participating in the Virtual Learning Academy pilot will have the ability to choose between two learning pathways: a hybrid option that

allows students to remain connected to their home campus and participate in extracurricular activities, or a fully immersive virtual experience completed entirely online.

Belton ISD Superintendent Dr. Malinda Golden said the academy reflects the district's continued commitment to creating innovative opportunities

See **VIRTUAL LEARNING**, Page A4

Class Of 2026 - From Page A1

torian. McKenzie, the child of Dr. Kristin Rooney and Neil McKenzie of Morgan's Point Resort, participated in varsity golf, varsity tennis, National Honor Society, the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council, Dragon Council and University Interscholastic League academics. She plans to attend the University of Texas at Austin to study sports business with a minor in biology before pursuing a career as an orthopedic surgeon.

"Try everything," McKenzie said. "It's helped me find things that I truly enjoy and helped me become a better athlete, a better leader and a more well-rounded person."

Moore, the child of Jamie Mongillo of Temple and Earl Moore of Anderson, South Carolina, participated in varsity tennis, University Interscholastic League academics, the anti-bullying and safety committee,

National Honor Society and Hope Squad. Moore plans to attend Coastal Carolina University in South Carolina to study education with aspirations of becoming a teacher, tennis coach or sports manager.

"The main thing I try to do is give people the space to be themselves," Moore said. "I want underclassmen to know they're allowed to express themselves and care for each other."

Graduation ceremonies for Belton ISD's Class of 2026 will take place Thursday, May 21, at the Cadence Bank Center in Belton. Lake Belton High School will graduate at 10 a.m., Belton High School at 2 p.m. and Belton New Tech @Waskow at 5 p.m. Livestreams and additional graduation information are available at Belton ISD Graduation Information.

Medical Spa treatments in Belton, Best of Bell two years in a row

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Registered nurse and owner Kimberly Mandell brought Design Her Med-spa to downtown Belton.

Located first in Harker Heights, she received Best of Bell County in 2024 for the Med Spa category and in 2025 for the categories Lazer Hair Removal and Med Spa. Clientele from her original location have followed her to Belton.

Inspired when getting her undergraduate degree as a patient care coordi-

nator in Austin for Plastic Surgery and Dermatology, she's been in this industry for over 20 years. She describes the journey of opening her own Med Spa as a leap of faith after working at a Med Spa in Cedar Park.

Mandell knows her biggest compliments are Google reviews and repeat patient visits, but what she enjoys most is seeing the impact of her work on a client. When they are in her chair, there is an emotional component.

"I love the feeling

that they get afterwards. I've had patients cry in the chair. It's making them look good and feel good as well," said Mandell.

In the no-pressure consultation, Mandell gains an understanding of the client's concerns while teaching them about the procedure.

"I have a very light hand, and so having them just light up and feel good afterwards, it's a very rewarding feeling," said Mandell.

Mandell said some clients, male and female,

want to preserve where they are now while others

See **MEDICAL SPA**, Page A8

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Belton's FFA receives generous donation



BELTON JOURNAL/Shalee Corey-Wiebe

Belton FFA students receive a large donation from the Cody Johnson organization, COJO, and through the support of Schoepf's BBQ owners, Stacy and Ronnie Schoepf.

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe
The Belton Journal

A check of over \$40,000 from Cody Johnson's Championship Event (COJO) was presented to members of the Belton Future Farmers of America on Wednesday, May 13, at Schoepf's BBQ. Local students posed together with the big check in hand to celebrate the generous donation.

Ronnie Schoepf, owner of Schoepf's BBQ along with his wife Stacy Schoepf, worked with the organization to raise the funds for this donation. He said, "This will go to help the Belton FFA students

to go to different activities and to continue their learning and growth and involvement in the outdoors and the activities that surround the Future Farmers of America."

Jeff Heffernan, volunteer leader and agricultural leader with the FFA said, "Cody was an FFA member, and through his generosity, he's giving back to the program that he grew up with in high school." He said, "It's through COJO and Cody's involvement with FFA. It's his way of giving back, not to the Belton chapter, but the whole state."

Ronnie said about Cody, "He benefited from being a member of

FFA, learning about leadership and self-confidence, and believing in yourself, and learning skills, and what have you."

Ronnie brought up a major upcoming fundraiser for the FFA: the COJO Championship Event, which is scheduled for October 6th to 11th at the Cadence Bank Center. This team-roping event will support the state FFA, but specifically the Belton FFA, which will be volunteering for the event. The event will also include a dinner, a gala, and another fundraising activity. The winner of the rodeo event will receive a truck and trailer, along with a large cash prize.

Virtual Learning - From Page A3

that support students and families. "The Virtual Learning Academy is about providing flexibility while continuing to deliver high-quality instruction and meaningful student support," Golden said. "Every student's needs are different, and this program gives families another pathway to help students thrive academically while staying connected to their goals and future plans."

The Virtual Learning Academy will offer high school coursework aligned with state standards while providing students with flexible scheduling and learning environments. Families interested in the program are encouraged to carefully review eligibility require-

ments, family commitments, extra-curricular expectations and other important considerations before applying.

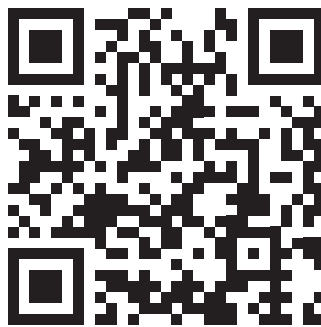
To help families learn more about the program, Belton ISD will host several virtual parent information sessions:

- May 20 at noon
- May 20 at 6 p.m.
- May 22 at noon (Spanish)
- May 27 at noon
- May 27 at 6 p.m. (Spanish)

Under Texas Education Agency requirements, student enrollment and funding for the program are contingent upon documented daily measurable progress and completion of 75,600 operational

minutes annually.

Additional information, including eligibility criteria, curriculum details, FAQs and the application form, is available at www.bisd.net/virtual.



Courtesy Photo

The City of Belton's Public Information Officer Paul Romer and Chief of Police Larry Berg have a light-hearted moment for Battle of the Badges, as part of the City's communications portfolio. The City is a finalist in three communications categories for the Texas Association of Municipal Information Officers.

City of Belton finalist for three communications awards

Special to the Journal

The City of Belton has been named a finalist in three categories for the 2026 TAMI Awards, a statewide program recognizing excellence in local government communications.

The Texas Association of Municipal Information Officers, or TAMIO, announced the finalists after receiving a record 711 entries from cities and public agencies across Texas.

Belton is a finalist in the following categories:

Best New Logo (population under 75,000): Polka on the Square

Photography - Multi-Image (population under 75,000): Main Street Spirit

Best Small Shop: A portfolio category for communications departments with 1-2 professionals on staff. Belton's entries in this category included the Battle of the Badges video campaign, Polka on the Square logo, an internal communications program for new employees called Belton 101, and a marketing campaign for Christmas on the Chisholm Trail.

The City submitted seven entries this year. The finalist selections reflect work completed across several departments, with staff providing photos, video, event information and project materials used in the submissions.

The TAMI Awards are presented annually by TAMIO, which supports public information and communications professionals who work in municipal government and related public agencies. The organization is affiliated with the Texas Municipal League.

Award winners will be announced Thursday, June 4, during the 2026 TAMIO Annual Conference in Austin.

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Jude Linson had his picture taken in front of the Belton Tiger at the Belton Journal offices on 2nd Ave after graduating from Belton Early Childhood School.



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Temple College celebrates 100th graduating class

Special to the Journal

Temple College proudly celebrates a historic milestone as it honors its 100th graduating class, marking a century of educational excellence, opportunity, and community impact. This year, over 1,000 students have successfully finished their educational paths, earning associate degrees, certificates, and industry certifications, and these graduates are ready to move on to the next phase of their bright futures.

This is a truly special occasion for Temple College and the Central Texas region, a day of celebration, recognition, and reflection. Since its founding in 1926, Temple College has remained steadfast in its mission to provide accessible, high-quality education. As the institution celebrates its 100th year, this graduating class embodies both a proud legacy and a bright future.

Graduates earned associate degrees, certificates, and industry credentials that prepare them for meaningful ca-



reers and continued academic success. Among the graduates are many dual credit students who earned associate degrees while still in high school. Legacy Early College High School in partnership with Taylor ISD and the Texas Bioscience Institute in partnership with 17 school districts are both celebrating 20 years of excellence this year, pro-

viding accelerated educational pathways for high school students to earn college degrees.

"This is a truly special moment in Temple College's history," said Dr. Christy Ponce, College President. "We are extremely proud of our 100th graduating class and excited to celebrate their accomplishments. These graduates have worked hard to achieve their goals and are now positioned for success, whether they enter the workforce or continue their education toward a bachelor's degree."

College leaders also expressed gratitude to the faculty, staff, families, and supporters who played an essential role in helping students graduate. "We're very proud of our graduates and are grateful to our faculty and staff who have helped students reach this incredible milestone," said Dr. Susan Guzman-Trevino, College Provost.

Since its founding in 1926, Temple College has remained steadfast in its mission to provide accessible, high-quality education. As the institution celebrates its 100th year, this graduating class embodies both a proud legacy and a bright future.

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A6
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LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Preschool Storytime is a favorite at Lena Armstrong Public Library

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe
The Belton Journal

On Thursday, May 14, families began to filter into the local library around 10 a.m. for their weekly “Preschool Storytime.” Kids played and colored together until Miss Faith sat down and prepared to read “Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!” As everyone settled in their seats or on the floor, kids began to engage with the story, occasionally chiming in with excited comments as Miss Faith read enthusiastically, pointing to the pictures in the book.

Miss Faith also read “Little Green Donkey,” and led the kids in a couple of playful songs about eating their vegetables.

Once they finished reading and singing their songs, which lasted about 20 minutes in total, the kids went back to playing, and Miss Faith talked a little about how much she enjoys interacting with the kids and parents.

She said, “I love seeing all the regulars that come in. They always have such a big smile on their face, and I just love seeing them every week.”

Lena Armstrong Library also offers “Baby Time” on Tuesdays, and “Toddler

Time” on Wednesdays, both at 10 a.m.

Lauren Gommert, library coordinator and leader of “Toddler Time,” talked about how these weekly story times help children develop reading skills for the future.

“All of them really serve the same purpose, which is to help introduce kids to pre-literacy skills, which are skills they will need to become readers later in life, and then also just to build a positive connection between reading and fun so it’s not something that they’re worried or nervous about later in life.”

Gommert also talked about the socialization aspect these story times offer.

“And then it’s also a great opportunity for families to come together, make friends with other families that have children in the same age range, and just socialize and become part of the community.”

Gommert added that the kids’ room will be remodeled soon to cater more to kids age zero to three years old.

“We’re going to have a special designated area with toys that are specifically designed to promote development in that age group on up to pre-K.”



BELTON JOURNAL/Shalee Corey-Wiebe

Storytime entertains youngsters with books suited to their age at the Lena Armstrong Public Library.

Young entrepreneur creates mobile car detailing service in Bell County

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Entrepreneur by age 16, Drew Montano has two and a half years of experience detailing vehicles in Bell County with Drew’s Detailing Services. Graduating high school in June, his business model that comes to the client, focusing on building quality relationships with customers.

“I’ve always had a love for cars and trucks. My dad got me into them when I was a little kid. I already had everything I needed to get started, and I just kind of took it from there,” said Montano.

He confidently calls himself a perfectionist, detailing his customers’ vehicles as he does his

personal vehicle.

“I go the extra mile to make sure everything is as clean and looking as good as it can be,” said Montano.

Drew’s Detailing Services offers exterior detailed cleaning with additional options like headlight and taillight restoration. For the interior, an additional option is applying leather seat conditioner. The full list of services and pricing is on his Instagram page.

A mobile business, Montano comes to you; the Texas weather sets his work hours.

“I like to get everything done in the morning. With it getting hot, it’s hard to keep water spots off the vehicles during the afternoon,” said Montano,

adding that, “we require water and electric.”

He tries to keep a balance between work and time with family and friends. His family has been supportive.

Montano said his family has been amazing and they’ve helped him tremendously.

Homeschooled, Montano started dirt bike riding at age five and raced between the ages of thirteen and seventeen.

“I raced motocross for five years and got really good at it and I kept getting injured. I figured it was time to find something different,” said Montano.

He stopped racing at the beginning of 2026 and is graduating from iUniversity Prep Virtual Academy. “I get to work with so many cool cars and trucks. I really don’t have a favorite. I dare to say my personal favorite is probably washing my own truck, because it has my business all over



Courtesy Photo

A finished product of Drew’s Detailing Services, showcasing his passion for perfection and his logo.

it,” said Montano. “I’ve learned that if I can just put my mind to something and stick with it, it usually

works out, and that’s what I’m choosing to do,” said Montano.

For inquiries about

Drew’s Detailing Services, call 505-796-2278 or visit the Instagram page at dds_mobiledetailing221.

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The Power of the Overlooked



John C. Perry

My granddaughter Hannah plays softball for the University of the Ozarks, and recently her team traveled to Abilene for the NCAA Division III Southern Collegiate Athletic Conference (SCAC) tournament. Now, if you had listened to the preseason predictions, you would have thought they were headed there only to enjoy the West Texas sun-

shine. They were picked to finish last or next to last in the conference. Not "near the bottom." Not "middle of the pack." At the bottom.

And to be honest, their regular season didn't do much to change anyone's mind. They had their share of struggles. But something happened in those final weeks. They won their last three conference games and slipped into the SCAC tournament as the fifth seed.

The tournament was double elimination over three days, and most folks assumed Ozarks would be packing up early. But somebody forgot to tell those young ladies. They came out swinging, literally and figuratively, and played with a fire one rarely sees. They beat the #4 seed. Then the #3 seed. Then the #2 seed. They did that, all in one day! One by one, they

knocked off every high-ranked team in their path.

By the end, this "bottom" team found themselves in the championship game facing Texas Lutheran University, the #5 ranked team in the entire nation. They didn't win the title, but I have never been prouder of a group of athletes. They were exhausted, bruised, sunburned, and running on sheer willpower, but they never quit. They were the perfect example of how heart, grit, and determination can carry an underdog farther than anyone expects.

Watching them made me think. Have you ever been an underdog? I know I have more times than I can count. Sometimes I did rise to the occasion. Other times I let the voices around me (and the voice inside me) convince me I wasn't good enough.

The Bible is full of underdogs. David, a shepherd boy, facing a giant warrior. Joseph, betrayed by his own brothers and sold into slavery, rising to become second in command of Egypt. Esther, a young Jewish orphan with no power or position, becoming the very person God used to save her people.

How did all these unlikely people prevail? How did they rise when everything around them said they shouldn't?

Scripture gives us the answer: "With God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

God often calls the very people the world calls "underdogs," not because they're strong, but because He is. When the world sees "not enough," God sees, "more than enough." When others overlook someone, God looks

right at them. When people say, "You can't," God says, "Watch what I can do through you."

The truth is, God has always delighted in using ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. He equips those He calls. He strengthens those who feel weak. He lifts up those who feel overlooked. And He still does it today.

So, if you feel like an underdog right now, outmatched, underestimated, or running uphill, take heart. You're in good company. And with God's help, you may just surprise everyone, including yourself.

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.

CTC recognizes six Belton graduates



Courtesy Photo

Central Texas College Chancellor Dr. Michele J. Carter presents Belton residents with their diplomas during the Spring Commencement Ceremony at Cadence Bank Center in Belton. LEFT TO RIGHT: Arianna Lee Mickleberry, Destiny McNeill Bethea, Lisa Babb-Frazier, Luciano Figueroa.

By Wendy Sledd
Special to the Journal

Central Texas College honored six graduates from Belton during its Spring 2026 Commencement Ceremony, scheduled for Friday, May 8, at the Cadence Bank Center in Belton.

The ceremony honored nearly 1,000 graduates overall, celebrating students who earned associate degrees and workforce certificates aligned with Central Texas's regional employment needs.

Six graduates from Belton completed programs supporting high-demand

fields such as healthcare, business, technology, and public service, industries that are critical to the continued growth and stability of Bell County and the surrounding region.

"This commencement celebrates more than achievement. It reflects the resilience of our graduates and the future they are ready to lead," said Chancellor Dr. Michele J. Carter. "As we mark 60 years of serving our community, we take great pride in preparing students who are entering the workforce with the skills, determination, and vision to drive innovation and strengthen

Belton students who graduated from Central Texas College are listed below along with their respective degrees.

- Associate of Arts**
- Luciano Figueroa
- Destiny McNeill Bethea
- Arianna Mickleberry
- Associate of Applied Science**
- Lisa Babb-Frazier
- Eric Branuelas
- Certificate of Completion**
- Vanessa Harrison

the future of Central Texas."

CTC's Spring Commencement highlighted the college's mission to provide accessible, affordable, and

career-focused education that supports economic mobility while meeting the evolving workforce demands of Central Texas.

Medical Spa - From Page A3

want to stop looking tired and gain a fresh look.

A proponent of client education and safety, Mandell stresses to only go to medical professionals.

"Always make sure that you're going to somebody who's medically trained, because it is a medical procedure. I've had a few girls in a chair who went to somebody, and I try to fix the work that was done by somebody injecting out of their house," said Mandell.

She also cautions clients to take baby steps with aesthetics, comparing it to running a marathon rather than sprinting. Mandell says to ease into medical spa treatment with an open mind to suggestions and encourages the client to decide which first step to take.

"I'm available, not just for injecting, but if you ever have questions. I'd love to educate," said Mandell.

On July 16, Mandell said, a Sculptra Lunch and Learn will be held to educate guests. It is an informative session on one of the spa treatments. Call the office to register.

Hours are by appointment only. Visit Design Her Medspa's website at www.designhermedspa.com to book a consultation or appointment. Call (254) 581-6790 with questions or to schedule an appointment. She invites you to ask about Botox parties. Her suite is located down the hall, at 208 E. Central Avenue.



Courtesy Photo

Registered nurse and owner Kimberly Mandell of Design Her Medspa has moved to downtown Belton and will be hosting a Sculptra Lunch and Learn on July 16.

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Pair of Tigers medal at state meet

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Christian Porter's career is complete. After a stellar start to his time on the varsity roster, the sprinter placed fifth in the 400-meter run at last year's University Interscholastic League Class 5A Track & Field State Meet, but Porter wanted more.

Admittedly, a battle with food poisoning hampered his abilities at the event, leaving him feeling unsatisfied entering his senior year.

Friday, however, all such sentiments went away.

In his return appearance at Austin's Mike A. Myers Stadium, Porter achieved a longtime goal by winning the 400 state championship in photo finish, and the emotions were overwhelming.

"I don't even know how to explain that moment," he said. "It just meant everything. It took so long for my name to pop up on the scoreboard, because they weren't sure who won."

"Once my name came up in first place, the adrenaline spiked, and I was just so happy."

Porter posted a time of 47.25 seconds to edge out Mansfield Timberview's Brandon Gilmore (2nd, 47.27) and El Paso Hanks' Ky-Ri Bonner (3rd, 47.32).

The outcome followed a seventh-place showing in the 100, which was unexpected as Porter was announced as a replacement just two hours before the starting pistol fired for the race.

He was not the only Belton athlete to return home with a medal, though.

Graham Chambley, a junior, made a successful debut at state.

Entering as the Region II champion in the 110 hurdles with a time of 14.07, Chambley recorded a personal-best outing of 13.79 to claim the runner-up spot.

Now, he is already preparing to improve on the title.

"The main goal is to return next year and win gold," Chambley said. "That is the end goal, and along the way, I want to set new personal records. All of that starts today."

"I am already working for that today, because it is not something I can just assume is a given. It is achievable, but I have to put in



Courtesy Photo

Belton Tigers Christian Porter and Graham Chambley receive medals at the state track meet.

the work."

Lake Belton was also represented in two events at state.

Broncos junior Ji'yson Sherman tallied a mark of 48 feet, 8½ inches in the triple jump to place fourth berth in the trio of Liberty Hill's D.J. Seaborn (51-0¼), Keller Fossil Ridge's Caleb Woodard (2nd, 49-6¼) and Comal Pieper's Michael Ajagbe (3rd, 49-1¼).

Additionally, the quartet of Kayden Bridges, Prince Moore, Zion Harness and Kendrick Jones Jr. was seventh in the 1,600 relay, crossing the finish line in 3:17.48.

For some, the trip marked the end of their high school careers, while others are afforded additional opportunities to return, but each has already established a legacy.

Porter has established himself as the Ti-

gers' gold standard in the 400, and for years to come there will be athletes at the school who will turn to him as an example of how to be successful in the event.

It is admittedly an honor.

"Honestly," Porter said, "that is just really cool to think about, and I have thought about it. I just hope I can uphold my name and that standard in my college career."

Sherwood inducted into Belton Wall of Honor



Courtesy Photo

Kegan Sherwood displays his entry into the Wall of Honor

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Throughout his career with the Tigers, Kegan Sherwood made an impact. Saturday morning, he literally left his mark.

Following three seasons on the varsity roster, the utility player departed Belton as one of the most versatile players in school history.

Less than two years after graduating, however, he returned to cement his legacy by being inducted into the Belton High School Athletic Wall of Honor — a privilege

reserved for only the elite.

Recently, revered athletes including basketball standouts T.J. Johnson and Trap Johnson, football players John Roach and Logan Hall, soccer players Mallory Bankhead, Abby Cargile, Paige Nunes and Edgar Soto, baseball player Brady Shedrick and track & field stand-out Ayanna Jones have been enshrined.

Now, Sherwood's name permanently resides alongside, and it is easy to see why.

As a senior in 2024, he constructed a memorable season culminating with the

titles of Texas High School Coaches Association Class 5A Utility Player of the Year and 10-5A, Division II All-District Special Teams Player of the Year.

Along the way, he helped the Tigers claim a fourth consecutive playoff berth.

He blocked five kicks and a pair of punts, amassed 285 return yards and was responsible for 10 tackles on kickoff coverage.

Additionally, Sherwood accounted for 81 tackles, two interceptions and a fumble recovery touchdown as a safety. The score occurred on

a 49-yard run that essentially secured a 29-23 late-season win versus Waco.

He finished the year with three games consisting of at least 10 tackles and had four tackles for a loss.

Then, on offense, he carried the ball 25 times for 142 yards and four touchdowns.

Sherwood's efforts drew the attention of Mississippi, and he earned a spot on the team as a walk-on. As a freshman, the Rebels advanced to the semifinals of the NCAA College Football Playoff, falling to Miami 31-27.

Tigers softball wraps up for the season

By: Arias Ramos
The Belton Journal

For the Belton Tigers softball program, the 2026 season will be remembered as one that reminded this community what Tiger softball is all about.

From the grind of a long regular season to a postseason run that etched their names into program history, the Tigers gave their fans plenty to be proud of from start to finish.

Belton closed out the regular season with a record of 23-18-1, a mark that reflected the competitive nature of their schedule. District play was where the Tigers truly found their stride, going 8-3 to claim a second-place finish and secure their spot in the postseason.

It was not always a smooth road, but

this group proved time and again that they could rise to the moment when it mattered most.

When the playoffs arrived, the Tigers did not waste any time making their presence known.

In the first round, Belton squared off against Crandall in what turned into a hard fought, three game series. The Tigers refused to wilt under the pressure of a decisive third game, finding a way to close out the series and advance.

The area round brought a matchup with Poteet, and the Tigers answered the challenge in dominant fashion. Belton swept the series in two games, playing some of their best softball of the season and sending a clear message that they were not just happy to be in the bracket but they were there to make a run. The offense showed

up, the defense held firm, and the Tigers moved on with confidence.

Standing between Belton and the regional final were the Hallsville Lady Bobcats, and it was there that the Tigers' remarkable postseason journey came to an end. Hallsville took the series in two games, ending the run. The loss stings, as every season ending defeat does, but it cannot diminish what this team accomplished over the course of the year.


What makes this season truly special is the ground these Tigers broke. For the first time since 2019, Belton softball reached the regional semifinals. That is not just a statistic it is a statement about where this program is headed and the standard this group of young women set for every Tiger team that follows them.

The 2026 Belton Tigers finished 23-

18-1, won a district title, and made a deep playoff run that captured the hearts of a community. That is a good season by any measure. More importantly, it is a foundation. The Tigers are back, and the future in Belton has never looked brighter.



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Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Tigers will host their three-day Play Maker Camp beginning Tuesday.

The football skills camp will be conducted at Belton's practice fields from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. each day, and it is open to all incoming fourth- through ninth-graders.

To register, visit HomeTownTicketing.com.

BELTON VOLLEYBALL

The Lady Tigers will hold a player/parent meeting May 29 at 5 p.m. inside the school's gymnasium.

The meeting will address multiple topics, including tryouts, summer workouts and regular season expectations.

All players who anticipate participating in the volleyball program and their parents should plan to attend.

For more information, contact Belton head coach Ha-leigh Johnson at Haleigh.Johnson@BISD.net.

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.

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.

For more information, BeltonTigers.com or LakeBeltonAthletics.com.

Belton Lake Stillhouse

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

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



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Broncos' run for state championship comes to an end

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Lake Belton finally met its match.

Following another stellar season that concluded with the Broncos celebrating a fourth consecutive District 16-5A championship, the campaign concluded at the hands of Melissa.

The Cardinals cruised in the Region II-6A finals with a one-sided sweep of Lake Belton.

After earning a 10-2 victory in the opener at Red Oak, Melissa eliminated the Broncos in Game 2, winning 9-1.

Lake Belton surrendered four

unanswered runs through Game 1's first three innings before responding with a run in the top of the fourth inning, but it was not enough.

The Cardinals added a run in the fifth inning, and after the Broncos scored again in the sixth inning, Melissa ended any hope of a rally with a five-run bottom of the sixth inning.

Colby Anthony (2 for 2, RBI, run scored), R.J. Hunt (RBI), Landon Willey (run scored) and D.J. Lavallee combined for Lake Belton's five hits in the loss.

In the second game, the Cardinals exploded for six runs in the top of the third inning to claim complete control and propel them to the series win.

Offensively, Melissa (25-10) connected for a pair of two-run doubles during the outburst.

Logan Winkler had an RBI double to send teammate Travis Moore across home plate in the bottom of the inning, but the Cardinals rebounded with two runs in the fourth and another in the fifth.

Melissa combined for 19 hits in the series. The Broncos finished Game 2 with four hits thanks to Easton Robertson (2 for 2), Winkler and Willey.

With the wins, the Cardinals advance to face McKinney North for the regional championship.

The defeat gave Lake Belton an overall record of 28-10-3 for the season.

Belton ISD Softball All-District Team Recap

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Lady Broncos and Lady Tigers finished atop the league standings, and it is easy to see why.

After weeks of competition, Lake Belton emerged with another championship and Belton sat in a second-place tie before each embarked on playoff paths that did not end until the third round.

Both programs accomplished a lot collectively, but recently, multiple players were honored for their individual efforts, including a pair standouts who received the loftiest accolade possible.

Lady Tigers sophomore pitcher Tara Stone and Lady Broncos junior shortstop Analicia Diaz shared the title of 16-5A All-District Most Valuable Player after guiding their respective squads.

En route to an undefeated district record, Diaz recorded a .729 batting average with 17 hits, 14 runs scored, 11 RBIs and seven stolen bases, while Stone broke the school's home

run record in addition to being the team's defensive anchor on the mound.

The awards, however, were only the beginning of Belton ISD's recognition.

Lake Belton and Belton essentially swept the superlatives, collecting at least a share of all but one of the eight accolades.

Lady Broncos junior Isabell Magana was named offensive player of the year. She had 27 stolen bases, 22 runs scored, 14 hits and eight RBIs.

Additionally, Lake Belton's Natalie Hosch and Lilliana Herrera were named co-pitchers of the year, while teammates Madison Naser and Maliyah Gooden were named co-catcher of the year and utility player of the year, respectively.

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, Lake Belton head coach Kelsie McEachern was named coach of the year, and Belton junior infielder Reagan Stuart was named the defensive player of the year.

The remaining superlatives were given to Killeen Chaparral catcher Koran Rivera (newcomer of the year) and Waco University's Isabella Franco, who split the title of catcher of the year with Naser.

Belton also placed Iris Molina, Andalyn Logan and Anessa Ortiz on the first team, while teammates Jonna Hollingsworth, Presli Thompson and Hanna Wheeler landed on the second team.

Lauren Vazquez and Aubrey Lynch were honorable mentions for the Lady Tigers.



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Ten financial steps to take before and after your wedding day

Scot Hrbacek, CFP® Financial Advisor

Getting married is a huge decision. And it comes with a financial to-do list that's arguably more important than choosing a venue or a cake.

Here are three financial steps to take before your wedding:

First, share your income, spending habits, savings and any debts, like student loans or credit cards. Remember, your partner's debt can become yours after marriage.

Next, decide if you'll combine all your accounts, keep everything separate or land somewhere in between.

Finally, discuss your financial goals. Make lists of your short,

medium and long-term dreams and find common ground.

After you're married, here are three more actions:

One: Update your employer benefits, like health insurance, usually required within 30 days of getting married.

Two: Review and possibly change the beneficiaries on checking, savings and investment accounts as well as your retirement plans and insurance policies.

And three: Update your tax withholding to reflect your new status.

Honest conversations and careful planning can help you build a financial foundation as strong as your relationship.

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

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

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LEGALS

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 4th 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 4th 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 WANDA LEE WILLIAMS KELLEY SHELTON, Deceased, were issued on May 11, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00192, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: RONALD LEE SHELTON.

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: Jim Thigpen Attorney at Law, PO Box 428 ,TEMPLE, TX 76503
SIGNED on May 14, 2026.

Jim Thigpen Attorney for RONALD LEE SHELTON, State Bar No.: 19837300, PO Box 428 TEMPLE, TX 76503, Telephone: (254) 773-1663, Facsimile: (254) 773-2574 ,Email: jim.thigpen@linzythigpen.com
05.21

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of HARRY SAMUEL LAWRENCE, Deceased, were issued on May 7, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00155, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: DONNA LAWRENCE.

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 HARRY SAMUEL LAWRENCE, c/o: DONNA LAWRENCE, 4709 Calle Secoya St., Temple, Texas 76502

DATED May 8th, 2026.

KAREN M. VILLANUEVA, State Bar No.: 24102608, Telephone: (254) 771-185,5 Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: karen@templelawoffice.com
05.21

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION – CIVIL CAUSE NO. 26DCV361378

To UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF WILLIAM THOMAS CRUMLEY SR., DECEASED UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF ALICE CRUMLEY, DECEASED

Greetings:

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the ORIGINAL PETITION 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 was filed in said court on April 29, 2026.

The file number of said suit being No. 26DCV361378. The names of the parties in said suit are:

FREEDOM MORTGAGE CORPORATION VS. SHIANCA LATOSHA TAYLOR, BONNIE TAYLOR, JR, DIANA TURNER-ROBERT, UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF ALICE CRUMLEY, DECEASED, UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF WILLIAM THOMAS CRUMLEY SR., DECEASED

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

THIS PROCEEDING CONCERNS THE FORECLOSURE OF A LIEN ON THE FOLLOWING REAL PROPERTY AND IMPROVEMENTS COMMONLY KNOWN AS 2402 LAKE RD., KILLEEN, TX 76543, AND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED AS LOT 10, BLOCK 9, KIRBY CREEK VILLAGE, SECTION IV, AN ADDITION TO THE CITY OF GRAND PRAIRIE, DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED IN VOLUME 97120, PAGE 256, MAP RECORDS OF DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS.

This was issued at the request of attorney: TENIA OUELLETTE TROMBERG MILLER MORRIS & PARTNERS 6080 TENNYSON PKWY STE 100 PLANO TX 75024.

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 13, 2026.

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

By: M Cortez , Deputy Clerk
05.21, 05.28, 06.04,06.11

NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS AGAINST THE ESTATE OF CHARLES PATTON DAVIS, JR., DECEASED

NOTICE is hereby given that original Letters of Testamentary were issued on May 11, 2026 in a proceeding styled Estate of Charles Patton Davis, Jr., Deceased, in Cause Number 26CPB00215, pending in the County Court At Law #1 of Bell County, Texas.

Claims may be presented in care of the attorney for the Independent Executrix, addressed as follows: Hazel Donnette Medcalf

Davis Independent Executrix of the Estate of Charles Patton Davis, Jr., Deceased, c/o Burk Roberts, Roberts & Roberts, L.L.P., 2501 East Elms Rd., Ste. A ,Killeen, Texas 76542-3023 All persons having claims against this estate, which is currently being administered, are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

Signed on May 12, 2026.

Roberts & Roberts, L.L.P., Attorneys for Hazel Donnette Medcalf Davis

By: Burk Roberts 05.21

NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING

LEGALS

CLAIMS AGAINST THE ESTATE OF VERNA JUANICE KILLPATRICK AKA JUANICE KILLPATRICK, DECEASED

NOTICE is hereby given that original Letters of Testamentary were issued on May 11, 2026 in a proceeding styled Estate of Verna Juanice Killpatrick aka Juanice Killpatrick, Deceased, in Cause Number 26CPB00200, pending in the County Court At Law #1 of Bell County, Texas. Claims may be presented in care of the attorney for the Independent Executrix, addressed as follows:

Patricia Susan Johnston Independent Executrix of the Estate of Verna Juanice Killpatrick, Deceased

c/o Burk Roberts, Roberts & Roberts, L.L.P., 2501 East Elms Rd., Ste. A, Killeen, Texas 76542-3023

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

Signed on May 12, 2026.

Roberts & Roberts, L.L.P., Attorneys for Patricia Susan Johnston

By: Burk Roberts
05.21

CITATION BY PUBLICATION THE STATE OF TEXAS

To all persons interested in the Estate of Bruce Oliver Davidson, Deceased, Cause No. 25CPB00695, in County Court at Law #1 of Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, Texas 76513. Kathi Marie Davidson, Applicant, in the above numbered and entitled estate, filed on November 12, 2025, an Application to Determine Heirship and for Letters of Independent Administration - Intestate of the said estate and requests that the said Court determine who are the heirs and only heirs of the said Bruce Oliver Davidson, Deceased, and their respective shares and interest in such estate. Said application may be heard at 10:00 o'clock a.m. on or after the first Monday next after the expiration of ten days from the date of publication of this citation, at the Bell County Justice Center in Belton, Bell County, Texas.

All persons interested in said estate are hereby cited to appear before said Honorable Court on or before above-mentioned time and place by filing a written answer contesting such application should they desire to do so. If this citation is not served within 90 days after the date of its issuance, it shall be returned unserved.

05.21pd

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION – DIVORCE CAUSE NO. 25DFAM352620

To: OGHENECHUKO EJEFIAVWO
Greetings:

You are hereby commanded to appear before the 478th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas, by filling a written answer to the ORIGINAL PETITION FOR DIVORCE at or before 10:00 A.M. of the Monday next after the expiration of 20 days after the date of service hereof, a copy of which accompanies this citation, in cause number 25DFAM352620, styled

In the Matter of the Marriage of SOMEE JUNG and OGHENECHUKO EJEFIAVWO filed in said court on , and the nature of which suit is a request to Divorce: No Children.

The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgement or decree in the child's/children's interest which will be upon 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/children's adoption.

The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgement or decree dissolving the marriage and providing for the division of property which will be binding on you.

This was issued at the request of attorney: OLIVER F MINTZ LAW OFFICE OF M BRYON BARNHILL PLLC 501A E MAIN ST GATESVILLE TX 76528.

NOTICE TO Defendant: You have been sued.

LEGALS

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 twenty 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.

Witness, Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas.

Issued and given under my hand and the seal of said Court at office in Belton, Texas on May 12, 2026.

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

By: M Cortez Deputy
05.21

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of JIMMY WRIGHT GARNER, Deceased, were issued on May 5, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00250, pending in the County Court of Bell County, Texas, to: CADENCE BANK.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within 120 days of this notice. c/o: CADENCE BANK C/o KELLI VECERA, 901 S. Mopac Expwy, Bldg II, Ste 355, Austin, Texas 78746 SIGNED On May 10.2026

P. James Rainey Attorney for CADENCE BANK, State Bar No.: 00791473, 3809 West Waco Drive, Waco, Texas 76710, Telephone: (254) 752-8644, Facsimile: (254) 752-8624, Email: raineylegal@yahoo.com
05.21

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is given that original Letters of Administration for the Estate of DAVID LYNNE RHINE were issued on March 30, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00778, pending in the County Court at Law Number 1 of Bell County, Texas, to BRANDON LEE HEAD.

All persons having claims against the estate, which is presently being administered, are required to submit them, within the time and manner prescribed by law, and before the estate is closed, addressed as follows: c/o BRANDON LEE HEAD, 3411 Imperial Drive, Gatesville, Texas 76528

Dated May 15th 2026

BRETT H. PRITCHARD Attorney for Administrator of the Estate of DAVID LYNNE RHINE
05.21

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of DEBORAH LEE WEICHT were issued on April 23, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00606, pending in the County Court at Law Number 1 of Bell County, Texas, to TIMOTHY M. WEICHT.

All persons having claims against the estate, which is presently being administered, are required to submit them, within the time and manner prescribed by law, and before the estate is closed, addressed as follows: c/o TIMOTHY M. WEICHT, 200 Tripp Trail, Denton, Texas 76207

Dated May 15, 2026

BRETT H. PRITCHARD Attorney for Executor of the Estate of DEBORAH LEE WEICHT
05.21

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of KLARA M. RADFORD a.k.a. KLARA MARIE RADFORD, Deceased, were issued on April 23, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00177, pending in the County Court of Bell County, Texas, to: CHARLES E. RADFORD.

All persons having claims against this Estate

LEGALS

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: Mary Wiley Attorney at Law 100 W. Central Texas Expressway, Suite 306 Harker Heights, Texas 76548

DATED the 15th day of May 2026

MARY WILEY Attorney for CHARLES E. RADFORD, State Bar No.: 24032669, 100 W. Central Texas Expressway, Suite 306, Harker Heights, Texas 76548, Telephone: (254) 634-6969 ,Facsimile: (254) 634-6587, E-mail: mary@lindleylawoffices.com

05.21

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 26CPB00310

To: Unknown Heirs

SANDRA BELL, Applicant, on May 14, 2026, filed an application for independent administration, for letters of administration and application to determine heirship in a proceeding styled: CHANDA JANEL BELL, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00310 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas.

The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be May 21, 2026, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.

All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it.

Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.

The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: JIM THIGPEN, PO BOX 428, TEMPLE, TX 76503

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

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on May 15, 2026.

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

By: Erika DeCasas Deputy
05.21

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of KATHY DENISE SMITH, Deceased, were issued on April 23, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00207, pending in County Court No. 1, Bell County, Texas, to: DARNELL SMITH.

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: Mary Wiley Attorney at Law 100 W. Central Texas Expressway, Suite 306 Harker Heights, Texas 76548

DATED the 12th day of May 2026.

MARY WILEY Attorney for DARNELL SMITH, State Bar No.: 24032669, 100 W. Central Texas Expressway, Suite 306, Harker Heights, Texas 76548, Telephone: (254) 634-6969, Facsimile: (254) 634-6587, E-mail: mary@lindleylawoffices.com

05.21

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EDITORIAL

Oh, the places you'll go!

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

This is a big week for our graduating seniors as they say goodbye to their childhood school days.

Some graduates might have a good idea of what they're going to "be."

Some have no clue, and that's okay, too.

I was there once, with plenty of ideas of what I was going to "be."

But I think it's a good idea for grads to know a few things about who they are already. Because no matter what you say you want to "be," life will happen.

It's awfully easy to start thinking ahead to the future, glowing with promise, the yellow brick road that will take you to the Emerald City of having "arrived" and being "successful."

You'll see tough times ahead, worse than any dark forest your yellow brick road goes through. Flying monkeys can be scary. There may be a wicked witch (or two).

A field of poppies that might look and smell pretty can sidetrack you from your goal. Those are people or situations that seem nice but will hurt you in the long run.

"Nice is different than good." So watch out for

them because, yep, it's going to get tough, no matter what you set out to "be."

Grads, even if you don't know what you'd like to do, you already *are* a lot of things that can help—or hinder—your journey. The choice is up to you.

You are full of promise and potential. A promise is something that will eventually happen. Potential is the capacity to reach something not attained...yet.

You are your own worst enemy, or have the ability to be.

This is something we don't outgrow. We have the ability to sabotage even the brightest possibilities. Sometimes, the bad things that happen are the result of our own bad choices.

But be a lifelong learner – we can learn from mistakes.

You are talented and gifted, even if a teacher or test never ever gave you that distinction.

So what if you're not in the top 10 percent. Maybe you didn't get a scholarship. Maybe you've barely made it to the stage.

You already have natural gifts and talents and skills, many of which can't be judged by numbers. Take time to discover them, develop them, and follow

your passion.

You are allowed to change your mind about what you'd like to do.

Maybe you go to college and start out as a business major and you absolutely hate it. Well, change it to something else. Most people don't have the same career for 20 years or more.

You are allowed to make mistakes.

Try not to make the same mistake more than once (or twice). We are all works in progress, no matter how successful we look like.

You are a small fish in a big, big pond.

I don't care if you were the best and biggest fish in your school and everyone knows your name. The world in general isn't very impressed with another big fish in the world's pond. There are millions, just like you. Be teachable, be willing to say you're wrong, and be willing to listen and put your ego to the side for a few minutes.

You are already into your future. Enjoy the ride. Have a little fun and try something new. You have people cheering for you.

As Dr. Seuss said, "Oh, the places you'll go!"

Clip. Clop.

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

Once upon a time, legendary movie director Alfred Hitchcock did an experiment involving two short film clips.

In the first clip, a man (played by Hitchcock himself if memory serves) steps outside of his townhouse when something catches his attention. The clip cuts to a small park across the street from his townhouse, where a modestly dressed woman in her early twenties is sitting on a blanket and attempting to spoon-feed an infant. The clip then cuts back to the man, who cracks a wry smile.

In the second clip, a man (still Hitchcock) steps outside of his townhouse when something catches his attention. The clip cuts to a small park across the street from his townhouse, where a twenty-something young woman in a two-piece swimsuit is sprawled out on a blanket attempting to sunbathe. The clip then cuts back to the man, who cracks a wry smile.

Yes, both of the above paragraphs were very suspiciously similar. In fact, as Hitchcock himself noted, the footage of the man – both him stepping out of his townhouse and of him smiling – was the same footage across both clips. In fact, I think it was even the same actress and the same blanket as well. The only differences between the two clips were what she was doing and what she was wearing.

As Hitchcock noted, however, the average person would, if they didn't realize the two clips used the same footage, have vastly different reactions to seeing both clips. With the first one, someone would see him smiling at the mother & infant and most likely regard the man as being kindly. With the second one, however, someone would see him smiling at the sunbather and most likely regard the man with contempt for whatever they presumed was crossing his mind.

In the world of news media, you'll sometimes hear the saying "Content is king, but context is God". This is because, as noted from the above experiment, there are often situations where the same facts, the same bit of information, the same news, can be spun in many different ways based on the narrative a person wishes to portray. What do I mean?

For example, suppose one headline declared that a particular new medicine had a 98% success rate in medical trials. Now suppose another headline declared that the new medicine had a 2% failure rate. "Per cent" means "per 100", and $98 + 2 = 100$. A person who is thinking so logically would thus deduce that both headlines mean the exact same thing: out of every 100 people who are given that medication, 98 will receive some level of treatment, but it will be ineffective in the other two. However, given that news

these days comes often comes even faster than a galloping horse, there's pressure to *not* stop and process these things logically because so many other stories are developing.

Note that this is just the news. Rumors and scuttlebutt fly even faster. It's true the internet has contributed greatly to this speed of travel, but even before the first telegraph wires were strung misinformation, often of a deliberate kind, flew fast and free, hence the adage about a lie being halfway around the world before the truth could put its boots on.

What Hitchcock was trying to demonstrate in terms of cinematography holds so very, very true for information at large: the context something is presented in can change how we perceive it. Remember this when you hear something that doesn't quite sound right and then check things out from a different angle.

Not so Mad Cow

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnost

Recently I was having a discussion with a gentleman about some ill cows. I was a bit of a third party to the issue, and honestly my knowledge of cattle issues would fit in a shot glass. I have been around cattle, just never on a level that I was able to gather the important information about what makes a cow feel bad.

My experience was a bit on the light side. I spent some summers with my uncle that had a few head. We mostly drove around in the pickup and looked for the missing cow, which seemed to happen every few days. As I got older and more responsible I helped a family friend with his cattle. This older gentleman had quite a few head of cattle in the "bottom".

Now to explain what a "bottom" is to the non-Texans or the city-slickers in the audience, "the bottom" is short for River Bottom. That is the wide part around the river that only has water in it after a heavy rain. Anyone that builds anything in the "bottom" is just asking to have their structure washed away when the next big Texas rain hits. The bottom is a good place for things to grow, grass for the cattle, and vegetation to harbor other animals, that sort of thing. As long as there is no real rain in the forecast, it is a good spot for raising the cattle, they are happy and have plenty to eat.

Let me go back a bit to also explain the "older gentleman" description of the family friend. I helped him with the cattle, not because he was "old" and couldn't do it himself,

it was because some of the tasks needed two bodies. This "gentleman" was something else, he was tough as nails, and any other Texas Cowboy cliché you can come up with. He was not the thin dried up old cowboy that seems so stereotypical in movies and such. He was a big guy and strong. And the thing that impressed me as a young man, he was not scared of much, if anything.

One thing about this river bottom was that it had the grass for the cattle, and also a great place for snakes, specifically rattlesnakes. We worked the cattle on horseback, so we were well above the snakes. However my friend regularly caught and killed rattlesnakes. He would cut the rattles off and in a display of his trophies he put them up for people to see. Throughout his old style rock house were displays of rattlesnake rattles, and not the cheesy tourist things you might find at some fancy rattlesnake roundup. These were rattles glued to a piece of painted plywood that was painted out in the garage out back.

Also living in the garage, well in a garage apartment was another older gentleman. He was slightly older than his "landlord", he was also a lot bigger. And when I say bigger, not because he ate a lot, he was a very large man, tall and in his youth probably a very striking figure of a man. He didn't get around as well any more. I was in my teens at the time, but a good estimate probably was that these men were probably in their 70's, or perhaps early 80's. Meaning that they

grew up when times were very different. My cattle rancher friend didn't talk a lot, especially about his early days. The more stationary friend seemed to like certain beverages and didn't mind telling stories. They weren't so fantastic and elaborate that they seemed like Texas tall tales, they were just stories of youth back in the early 1900's, when horseback was a valid way to get around. I found the stories of these days quite interesting, much like a real movie played out sitting under a huge old oak tree on summer evenings.

The days that I worked the cattle were not that exciting. I was the one that got up and down to open gates, the bob-wire* gates held shut with a ring of wire, so not the easiest things to handle. I also had to chase the obligatory stray calf that decided to take out on its own. Mostly it was just helping move the cattle when we needed to get them out of the bottom and to higher ground. I enjoyed being on horseback in such an interesting area for a day or two every few weeks. I learned that just because he was quiet as an older man doesn't mean he wasn't a character when he was younger. And anyone that had caught that many rattlesnakes in his lifetime is someone with a lot of inner strength.

* "bob-wire" is the accepted term for a type of fencing. I was not aware that the proper term was "barbed wire" until I was almost an adult and saw that printed in an official text book.

I'm Here

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

I am in a writing slump. This morning, I told myself that no matter what, I would sit down and write an article for you. The problem is, I have nothing important to say. I have nothing interesting to say. I have nothing remotely wise or witty or remarkable to say. I'm tempted to type "The End" and be done with it.

As a proud introvert, I'm not a fan of meaningless small talk, and trying to compose an article from a big, empty cloud of air seems like the same thing. I don't want to waste your time or mine, so why bother? And yet here I am, showing up, because as a writer, that's what I'm supposed to do. Even when I have nothing to offer.

As I type this, the irony isn't lost on me that showing up is really the point. Modern psychologists call it "being present." It's a skill that's rapidly disappearing in our cell phone, Instagram society. How many special moments have I missed because my face was in my phone? How many sunsets have gone unnoticed, and conversations gone unsaid, because I was too busy bingeing on digital junk food?

Too many, I'm sure.

When I think of the important people in my life, the ones who truly support me and make a difference, I don't value them because of what they do. I admire their skills, yes, but that's not what makes me love them. That's not what makes me need them.

The thing that stands out most about those people is that I can count on them to be there. They show up. They put down their phones for me. They listen. They care.

These are the friends that make time in their schedules to meet me for coffee, so we can talk about... nothing in particular.

These are the family members who check on me, not so they can market my product (though I have a marketing expert in my family) or diagnose my illness (I have an RN, too). These are people who get excited over a watercolor painting in my journal that will never be framed or shared beyond today, just because it brought me joy to paint it.

These are the people who are present.

When I think about my relationship with God, I could list a million things He adds to my life. He gives me wisdom and compassion, grace and peace and joy. But when I look back on my years, the thing that fills me with gratitude is this: He was there. Always.

He sat with me when I cried.

He stood by me against bullies.

He celebrated the births of my children.

His Holy Spirit never left me alone... not for a moment.

So here I am today, with nothing to offer you beyond my presence. It's not much. It's not brilliant or funny or useful. But, although I'm not physically with you as you read this, I want you to know I care enough to show up, even when I'm not at my best. Even when I don't have anything to add except my commitment to being there.

"I will never leave you; I will never abandon you." Hebrews 13:5



Local Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Activities

May

- 05/20: Popcorn Bridge
- 05/21: Meet & Greet, Nonfiction Book Club
- 05/22: Trailblazers Walking Group
- 05/25: Well Read Women, Monday Canasta
- 05/26: Singing Bluebonnets
- 05/24: Fun Lunch
- 05/28: Mexican Train Dominoe
- 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."

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, round-table-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

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

Marine Corp League will meet the third Tuesday of each month at VFW 3859. Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. and meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. 201 VFW Dr, Harker heights, Tx 76548. Email commandant@mc-11249tx.com for more information.

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

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

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

tion. To volunteer or for more information please visit historicalcommission@bellcounty.texas.gov, call 254-933-5917 or visit the office located in the historic Bell County Courthouse, 101 E. Central Ave., RM 117.

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 <https://txbcgs.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 or Kathy Bement at katshookandneedle@gmail.com. Anyone interested in joining the local chapter of the Crochet Guild of America will also need to join the National Crochet Guild of America. Visit www.crochet.org for details.

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

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

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

Community Information

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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
 OR CALL (254) 939-5754

IF WANT TO SPONSOR THIS PAGE
 EMAIL: **DAVID@BELTONJOURNAL.COM**



Courtesy Photos

TOP LEFT: BISD Delta Program graduates received their certificates at a special celebration last week. **TOP RIGHT:** Community Partners were celebrated at the BISD Delta Celebration. **ABOVE LEFT:** Delta students received special achievement awards at the BISD Delta Celebration. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Delta presents David Tuma of the Belton Journal with an appreciation community award

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