

Faith, service and scholarship define Belton High’s top graduates of 2025



Valedictorian:
Julie He



Salutarian:
John Moehlenbrock

Special to the Journal

Belton ISD is proud to recognize Julie He as the valedictorian and John Zachary Moehlenbrock as the salutarian of Belton High School’s Class of 2025.

Both students exemplify the very best of Belton ISD—resilient, service-minded and deeply committed to excellence in academics and leadership.

Valedictorian: Julie He

Daughter of Linda Gao and Xiaolai He of Belton, Julie He has served as a tireless leader and compassionate peer throughout her years in Belton ISD. A graduate of Sparta Elementary, South Belton Middle School and Belton Middle School, Julie balanced a rigorous academic schedule while holding numerous leadership roles, including Student

Council President for three years and Varsity Tennis Captain for two.

Her journey with the Belton Tiger Tennis program is one of perseverance and growth. She entered the program as a sophomore, ranked last on the team, but quickly demonstrated an unmatched work ethic and passion to improve. With the encouragement and mentorship of Coaches James Stinson and Cory Smith, she steadily rose through the ranks—eventually earning a leadership role and becoming one of the program’s most trusted and respected teammates. Julie credits the tennis program with teaching her how to overcome setbacks, focus on what she can control, and carry those lessons into everyday life.

In addition to UIL Academics, Powerlifting, Partners PE, and Unified

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Lake Belton High celebrates class of 2025 valedictorian and salutarian



Valedictorian:
Bryce Fournier



Salutarian:
Megan Bansal

Special to the Journal

Belton ISD is proud to recognize Bryce Fournier and Megan Bansal as the valedictorian and salutarian, respectively, of the Lake Belton High School Class of 2025.

Both students joined the district in sixth grade and have made lasting impressions as leaders, scholars and well-rounded individuals deeply engaged in their school, church and community. As they prepare to graduate, they remain open to exploration—embracing college as a time to gain knowledge, broaden perspectives and grow into their future paths.

Valedictorian: Bryce Fournier

Bryce, the son of Cara and Richard Fournier of Temple, is a military-connected student who has experi-

enced life across multiple states before settling in Belton ISD. He attended North Belton Middle School prior to joining Lake Belton High School. His high school years were filled with academic rigor, service, and leadership through Boy Scouts, earning the rank of Eagle Scout, National Honor Society and active church involvement.

“Persevering through everything I did—that’s what I’m most proud of,” he shared. “There were times when classwork piled up and it felt overwhelming, but making it through those challenges was a great relief and a big confidence boost.”

Bryce says that moving frequently as a child helped shape his adaptability and resilience. “Every few

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Belton ISD honors Belton New Tech @Waskow’s top graduates



Valedictorian:
Chinonso Ogwudu



Salutarian:
Tran Le

Special to the Journal

Belton ISD is proud to announce Chinonso Ogwudu as the valedictorian and Tran Le as the salutarian for the Belton New Tech @Waskow High School Class of 2025.

These two remarkable students exemplify academic excellence, leadership and the core values of the Belton New Tech learning model.

Valedictorian:
Chinonso Ogwudu

Chinonso, the son of Uche

and Ugochukwu Ogwudu of Belton, is a standout leader on campus. He currently serves as president of the National Honor Society and is a member of the tennis team and robotics program. His talents in animation and art complement a well-rounded academic profile rooted in STEM. He strives to be seen as someone who is mature, responsible and an exemplary student.

He attended Sparta and Southwest Elementary Schools, as well as both Lake Belton Middle School and Belton Mid-

dle School, before joining Belton New Tech @Waskow High School.

Reflecting on his high school journey, Chinonso cites qualifying for the VEX Robotics international competition as one of his proudest accomplishments. “It was one of the hardest things I’ve ever done,” he said. His passion for science and technology was further ignited in AP Physics C with Mr. Ewan Thompson, whose mentorship

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Standpipe Park opens in Belton

By DANIEL MOCTEZUMA
The Belton Journal

Belton Area Chamber of Commerce members cut the ribbon to celebrate the completion of Standpipe Park, a \$1.5 million project supported by Texas Parks and Wildlife and local partners.

— BELTON JOURNAL/
DANIEL MOCTEZUMA



Belton held a dedication ceremony for Standpipe Park on Friday, May 16, celebrating the completion of a \$1.5 million public park built around the city’s historic 75-foot-tall water tower.

Mayor David K. Leigh opened the ceremony by reflecting on how the area had gone unnoticed for years and thanking those who helped bring the park to

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Leadership Belton enhances downtown with lamp post mount project

Special to the Journal

The Leadership Belton 2023/2024 Class is proud to announce the completion of its Lamp Post Mount Project, an initiative designed to enhance downtown signage capabilities. The project involved the installation of new lamp post banner mounts and the replacement of damaged ones around Downtown Belton.

This effort was spearheaded by members of the Leadership Belton 2023/2024 Class, including Katherine Mutchler, April Williams, Alicia Jallah, Kenna Brockway, and Tiffany Marek. The project was a collaborative endeavor between the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, the City of Belton, and the Bell County Museum.

More than \$23,826 was raised through donations and sponsorships. The sponsors

included the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, the Bell County Museum, City of Belton, and Extraco Banks.

The Bell County Museum played a vital role, recognizing the importance of expanded signage for downtown visibility. As a hub for local history, archaeology, and family-friendly activities, the museum regularly utilizes lamp post banners to promote its rotating exhibits and special events.

The City of Belton supported the project by funding the repainting of lamp posts and installation of the new mounts. Additional members of the Leadership Belton Class—Alexis Sarinana, Meredith Duke, Taylor Bean, Apple Fulton, Jennifer Hammonds, and David Borden—were also instrumental in making the project a success.

As of April 2025, the Downtown Lamp Post Mount Project has led to the

purchase of 72 new mounts and the repainting of 40 lamp posts. These upgrades not only enhance the look and feel of downtown Belton but allow for the promotion of community wide events and unique draws to Belton.

Leadership Belton is a 10-month program sponsored by the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce that provides opportunities for participants to learn about and engage in the community through site visits, meetings and presentations with community leaders, and working on project teams. Each year community projects are selected for participants to coordinate.

For more information about the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, visit the website at www.BeltonChamber.com, call 254-939-3551, or email info@beltonchamber.com.



Courtesy photo
Lamp posts in downtown Belton now bear 72 new banners as a result of the Leadership Belton class of 2023-2024.

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Track, Julie has made an impact beyond campus walls through her TikTok platform promoting positivity, mental health awareness, and a healthy lifestyle—amassing more than 180,000 followers. Her digital presence serves as an extension of her values, using her platform to encourage others, share life lessons, and remind her audience that resilience and kindness go hand in hand.

She credits her drive and determination to her parents, who immigrated to the U.S. with little but built a life defined by hope and perseverance. “No matter how dark it gets, the sun will always rise again,” Julie said. “I hope to leave behind a legacy of living in the moment, being involved and spreading kindness wherever I go.”

This fall, she will attend Texas Tech University to pursue an eight-year Bachelor of Science and Medical Degree through the Undergraduate Non-Traditional Diploma Scholars program, with the goal of becoming a pediatrician.

Salutatorian: John Zachary Moehlenbrock

The son of Shelly and Charlie Moehlenbrock of Nolanville, John Zachary Moehlenbrock has spent his years at Belton High School leading with heart, humility and purpose. A former student of Chisholm Trail Elementary and South Belton Middle School, Zachary’s journey has been grounded in faith and service to others.

John Zachary’s time at Belton High School is marked by a deep sense of purpose and a desire to serve others. Whether growing the Fellowship of Christian Athletes from a handful of students to more than 200 active participants or bringing energy to the student section as part of the spirited Bang Crew, he has led with humility and joy. A varsity cross-country co-captain, varsity track captain and active member of National Honor Society and Boy Scouts of America, John Zachary also devoted time to mentoring students at the Belton Hope House, a local after-school center. For his Eagle Scout project, he transformed the outdoor area into

an inclusive and creative space, adding murals, games, and a storage shed to enhance access and engagement. “It took months of planning and was one of my proudest accomplishments,” he shared. He describes the experience as a defining moment that reinforced the importance of service, community, and long-term impact.

Through challenges and choices, he has leaned on his faith and learned to embrace both patience and trust in timing—qualities he plans to carry with him into college and beyond. “I’ve learned the importance of finding balance, building community, and trusting God’s timing,” he said. “Belton High gave me the space to do all of that.”

He plans to attend the University of Tennessee, majoring in business with long-term goals of earning a Master of Business Administration—and perhaps one day becoming the commissioner of college football.

Julie and John Zachary are recognized for leaving behind a legacy rooted in faith, friendship, and inclusivity—shaped by their servant leadership and dedication to others. Their compassion especially shines through in their involvement with students with special needs, including their work in Partners PE and Partners Art. Both credit their success to the people and faith that guided them—supportive families, close friends, and trusted mentors. John Zachary specifically acknowledges educators Pamela Rodriguez and Trey Bledsoe for their guidance, and both students expressed deep appreciation for the steady, student-centered leadership of Principal Claudia Knox.

“She truly embodies what it means to be a Tiger,” Julie said. John Zachary echoed the sentiment, sharing that Principal Knox “embodies the Tiger culture” and is “the best person to be the face of our franchise,” praising her for embracing campus traditions and leading with authenticity.

As they prepare to cross the stage at graduation, their reflections are clear: Treasure your community. Embrace the moment. Trust the process. And don’t be afraid to lead with your heart.

LBHS - From Page A1

years it felt like a whole new world and that shaped how I see myself—not just from Texas, but from all the places I’ve lived.”

He found inspiration in his junior year, taking calculus, physics and chemistry—core courses that sparked his passion for engineering. After graduation, Bryce will attend Texas A&M University to study nuclear engineering in the university’s honors program, with aspirations to explore research in nuclear power.

He expressed gratitude to his family and teachers who supported him along the way and encourages his peers to “persevere and push through—because even if it’s hard now, you’ll thank yourself later.”

Salutatorian: Megan Bansal

Megan, the daughter of Manisha and Mohit Bansal of Belton, attended both Lake Belton Middle School and North Belton Middle School before joining Lake Belton High School. Known for her curiosity, compassion and commitment to learning, Megan is active in National Honor Society, Business Professionals of America, student council, Health Occupations Students of America and Girl Scouts, while also playing tennis and practicing piano and guitar.

Her proudest achievements aren’t tied to one moment, but rather the accumulation of “a lot of little accomplishments and successes” along the way—culminating recently with her acceptance to college. Megan has also navigated personal growth, working through imposter syndrome and learning to value her voice and achievements.

“I used to only feel confident about my appearance and how social I was—but not my accomplishments,” she said. “Through social triumphs and challenges, I’ve learned so much and come to really appreciate what I do.”

A pivotal moment came in her sophomore year when she took Ms. Christine Wolff’s psychology class. “She made learning fun and interactive. Even students who didn’t think they enjoyed learning found themselves loving that class.”

Following graduation, Megan will attend the University of Texas at Austin, where she plans to major in biology and pursue the Plan II Honors program with pre-med intentions. Still, she’s leaving room for discovery—drawn also to philosophy, writing and the broader college experience.

Her advice to others? “Never let anyone tell you what you can or can’t do. You know your capabilities—chase your dreams, and you’ll get there.”

Belton ISD congratulates Bryce Fournier and Megan Bansal for their academic accomplishments, personal growth and commitment to excellence. These outstanding students reflect the heart of Lake Belton High School and the bright future that lies ahead.

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OBITUARIES



Garner
Nancy A. Garner
August 8, 1930 –
May 16, 2025

Nancy A. Garner of Belton, Texas, passed away Friday, May 16, after a brief illness at the age of 94.

Nancy was born Aug. 8, 1930, in a San Antonio hospital to Buford L. Wilson and Ivey Belle (Peel) Wilson, who lived in the South Texas farming community of Yancey south of Hondo in Medina County.

She married Walter L. “Bill” Garner of Belton in 1948 and made her home as a young bride in Bell County. They were married for 63 years, until her husband’s death on Sept. 2, 2011. He retired from the Bell County Road Department and was in the road construction business for many years.

She was a devoted daughter, wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. She was known as “Aunt Nancy” to her many Wilson and Garner relatives and as “Nana” to her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

She never met a stranger and was blessed with an indomitable spirit and a kind heart.

She was preceded in death by her loving daughter, Anne Garner Young, who died from a long battle with cancer Aug. 27, 2019. She is survived by her son, Wilson Lynn Garner, and his wife, Nancy; her son-in-law, Robert N. Young and her two grandsons: Nathan Young and his wife Jennifer and great-grandson Rob; and Zachary Young and his wife Shelley and great-grandchildren Wyatt and Paisley.

Nancy was a longtime member of the First United Methodist Church of Belton, where she enjoyed serving in many capacities and deepened her faith over many decades. She mentored young children in the Belton school reading programs for many years.

She was a graduate of Yancey High School. Her classmates continued to gather from across the state for annual reunions well into their golden years.

She was an accomplished pianist, learning early from her mother, who was pianist for the Yancey First United Methodist Church. In her later years, she looked forward to her monthly luncheons

with her lifelong circle of friends, many of whom took trips together across the country to Nashville, Branson and Hawaii.

She was a longtime member of United Methodist Women, serving in many leadership roles. She joined UMW in 1951 and retired from the board in 2018.

She enjoyed singing in the choir and being a “prayer warrior” on the prayer chain.

In remarks to the congregation, she gave witness to her faith: “Remember we make the church and this is God’s house. We are caretakers, after all, in the grand scheme of things. We’re only here for a short while. What will be written of our history? May it be we learned from our heritage, were good stewards, grew with grace in our faith, remembering those who will follow.”

A visitation was planned for Tuesday, May 20, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Dossman Funeral Home in Belton. A memorial service was held at the First United Methodist Church in Belton at 10 a.m. Wednesday May 21, followed by a reception. Burial will be in the North Belton Cemetery.

Memorials may be made to the First United Methodist Church of Belton, the North Belton Cemetery Association, the Belton High School Educational Foundation, or a charity of one’s choice.

Hebrews 11:1 Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see



Insall
Myrna Rae Insall
February 4, 1942 –
May 16, 2025

Myrna Rae “Honey” Insall, 84, of Belton, Texas passed away in Abilene, Texas on May 16, 2025. A Visitation is scheduled for Saturday, May 24th, from 1:00 P.M. to 2:00 P.M. at Dossman Funeral Home 2525 N. Main Street Belton, Texas 76513. Her Funeral will be held at 2:00 P.M. at Dossman Funeral Home in Belton, Texas. Burial will follow at Salado Cemetery in Salado, Texas.

Myrna was born on February 4, 1941 in Porterville, California to Rufus Ray Barton and Lola Blanch Barton. Myrna attended public school in Porterville, California, graduating from Porterville High

School. In 1958, she married Henry Wilson Barrett and together they had three children: Lori, Kelly, and David. They lived in California and Georgia before finally settling in Texas. In 1980, Myrna married Joe Douglas Insall. Myrna was a devoted mother and spouse. She was loving and welcoming to her entire family and all those around her.

Myrna had an extensive work career, working as a secretary and administrative assistant in many businesses and organizations. She was also a preschool teacher for some years. In addition, she owned her own antique business and was an antique dealer at Vintage Daze, an Antique Store in Belton, Texas. Myrna was also active in the establishment of The Downtown Belton Merchant Association. Myrna enjoyed traveling and loved her summer trips with Joe and friends to Colorado. Myrna was active in her community and always volunteered to help others. She loved spending time with family, grandchildren, and her great grandchildren. Myrna’s home was always open to anyone who stopped by to visit, enjoy a meal, or have a conversation.

Myrna was preceded in death by her parents, her sister Merle Chase, her daughter Lori Michell Barrett, her son David Wilson Barrett, and her step-son Leonard Insall. Myrna is survived by her husband Joe Insall of Belton, Texas, sister Patsy Ann Royster and husband Leo Royster, of Strathmore, California, daughter Kelly White and husband Judd White of Abilene, Texas, granddaughter Allison Smith and husband Juddson Smith of Abilene, Texas, granddaughter Amy Durham and husband Jackson Durham of Richland Hills, Texas, step-son Arnold “Pee wee” Insall and wife Carolyn Insall of Belton, Texas, step-son Kirby Insall and wife Tina Insall of Belton, Texas, grandson Austin Insall of Temple, Texas, grandson David Scott Insall and wife Abigail Insall of Georgetown, Texas as well as 5 great-grandchildren, Josiah, Ellie, and Jax Smith, Weldon Durham, and Colson Insall. She also has many nieces, nephews, cousins, and extended family.

Honorary Pallbearers for the Funeral will be Judd White, Juddson Smith, Jackson Durham, Arnold “Pee Wee” Insall, Josiah Smith, Jax Smith, and Weldon Durham.

Memorials can be made to a non-profit organization of your choosing.

A special thank you to Hendrick Hospice Care and the Wesley Court Skilled Nursing Staff

for all of their love, compassion, and expertise in assisting Myrna. Communication to the family can be sent to: 1681 Newcastle Dr. Abilene, TX 79601

Belbeck
Gary Wayne Belbeck
December 12, 1965 –
April 28, 2025

Gary Wayne Belbeck, 59, of Temple, born on December 12, 1965, in California, passed away at his home in Temple, Texas, on Monday, April 28, 2025. He leaves behind a legacy of love, dedication, and service that will be cherished by all who knew him.

Gary’s career as a police officer began after he completed his training at the police officer academy, leading him to proudly serve for the Columbus, Ohio Police Department for 20 years. His strong-willed demeanor and commitment to his profession were evident both on and off duty, embodying the values he held dear.

Growing up, Gary had a passion for sports, notably playing hockey as a goalie in High School and

became a fan of the Blue Jackets. He graduated from Bottineau High School in North Dakota, where he laid the groundwork for a life filled with adventure and service. His interests

expanded to the water, where he became a skilled diver, joining the Belton dive and rescue team and bonding with nature and

See **OBITS**,
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the oceans he loved so much. As a father, Gary was immensely proud of his two sons, Spencer Belbeck, born in 2001, and Austin Belbeck, born in 2005. He dedicated countless hours to supporting them at their meets and competitions, always present as they pursued their dreams. He showered them with compassion and respect, encouraging them to grow into mighty men. Family meals, often enjoyed at local favorites like Dead Fish Grill or BJ’s, became cherished moments filled with joy and laughter.

Gary was not only a loving father but also a devoted entertainer. He had a knack for storytelling, often filling his home with laughter. he spent occasions enjoying leisurely smoking his cigars at a local cigar bar talking about many facets of life. His love for family entertainment created an inviting atmosphere, ensuring that everyone felt welcome and full with his delicious barbeque.

He was a man of many hobbies and interests, including amateur photography, which earned him several recognitions through his association with a photography club. Additionally, Gary had a passion for collecting miniature die-cast metal police cars, a testament to his enduring love for the police force.

In his leisure time, Gary found exhilaration on the open road with his beloved Harley Davidson Motorcycle and later his H.D Trike, a true embodiment of his adventurous spirit. He also had a keen appreciation for cars, with a particular fondness for his Porsche.

Gary is survived by his two sons, Spencer and Austin Belbeck; one brother, Scott Belbeck, and his wife, Sara. He is preceded in death by his parents, Raymond Belbeck and Jean Lund Belbeck.

In lieu of flowers please consider making a memorial donation to a charity of your choice.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday May 24, 2025, starting at 1:30 p.m. in Young’s Daughters Funeral Home Chapel located at 4235 E. U.S. Highway 190, Temple, TX with Deacon Barney officiating.

As we reflect on the life of Gary Wayne Belbeck, we remember a man who exemplified strength and love, touched many hearts, and devoted his life to service. His memories will live on in the hearts of his family and friends, a reminder of the special bond they shared. He will be deeply missed.

Arrangements are under the direction of Sabrina Young and Young’s Daughters Funeral Home and Bereavement Center.

Starbuck
Kelli Marie Starbuck
May 13, 1970 –
May 3, 2025

Kelli Marie Starbuck, affectionately known as “Red,” passed away on Saturday, May 3, 2025, in Temple, Texas, at the age of 54. Born on May 13, 1970, in Colorado Springs, Colorado, to James E. Starbuck and Teresa D. (Johnson) Starbuck. Kelli was a vibrant spirit whose life was characterized by her love for family, her community-oriented nature, and her artistic passions.

A Belton High School graduate, Kelli furthered her education by obtaining her Commercial Driver’s License (CDL), a testament to her adventurous spirit and readiness to tackle life’s challenges. She took on various odd jobs to provide for her family. Known for her generosity and kindness, Kelli became a beloved figure in her community, offering tree services, cooking for Bill’s Grill, and providing cleaning services at Denim and Diamonds. Additionally, her CDL allowed her to contribute to VA transportation, showcasing her commitment to serving others.

Kelli was a proud mother, blessed with two daughters. Her first daughter was born in 1997, followed by another in 2007. The bond she created with her daughters was marked by joyous moments spent

together, including delightful picnics by clear waters, where laughter and love were the main ingredients for their cherished memories.

Her personality was enchanting and full of life; Kelli was often described as goofy, loving, and generous. With her high-spirited demeanor, she embraced her nickname, “Red,” which reflected her fiery hair and vibrant personality. Much like her mother, Teresa Diane Johnson, whom she is preceded in death by, Kelli possessed a servant’s heart, always eager to lend a helping hand. She had an endless curiosity and a knack for being a busy body, continuously finding ways to enrich the lives of those around her.

Kelli brought charm and warmth to every room she entered. Her hobbies included baking, which she loved to share with others, and her appreciation for Bluebonnets was evident as she would often pull over just to admire their beauty. An artist at heart, she expressed her creativity through drawing and painting, customizing her belongings, and collecting old antiques and trinkets.

Her spirit bore a resemblance to that of the Little Mermaid, deeply connected to the wonders of nature and life.

She is survived by her father, James E. Starbuck; her two daughters, Amber Marie Petersen and Chantel Marie Wofford; and her two brothers, Christopher Lynn Starbuck and Bobby Joe Starbuck. Kelli will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her, leaving behind a legacy of love, creativity, and unwavering dedication to family and community.

Arrangements are under the direction of Sabrina Young at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center.

At her time of passing Sandra was a member of Impact Church of Temple, TX. In her free-time she enjoyed dancing, spending time with her daughter, granddaughters, and many family members and friends. Babygirl will be remembered by her strength and the joy she exuded.

She is survived by her daughter Candice Marie Grasty, granddaughters Hope Lily Grasty and Grace Eden Grasty, sisters Loretta Weir, Hazel(Bill) White, Viola(Danny) Carr, Leona(Benny) Rodriguez, Nancy Gutierrez, and Rachael(Mike) Pritchard, her brothers Clarence Spiller Jr, Darwin Spiller, and Robert Spiller, plus many many nieces and nephews.

She is preceded in death by her granddaughter Faith Marie Grasty, her husband John Allen Allsup, her parents Clarence Henry Spiller and Deloris Irene Spiller, and her sisters Janice(Benny) Carr and Deloris(Joseph) Willoughby.

A special thank you to all the staff who cared for her at Baylor Scott and White Hospital.

Arrangements are under the direction of Young’s Daughters Funeral Home and Bereavement Center.

Yearwood
Helen C. Yearwood
June 25, 1935 –
May 18, 2025

Funeral services for Helen C. Yearwood, 89, of Belton, will be held at 10:00 AM, Thursday, May 22, 2025, at the Dossman Funeral Home chapel with Keith Evans officiating. Burial will follow at 1:00 PM at the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery in Killeen.

The family received friends for visitation from 5-7 PM Wednesday evening at the funeral home.

Mrs. Yearwood died Sunday, May 18, 2025 in a Belton assisted living home.

Mrs. Yearwood was born June 25, 1935, in Union Point, Georgia, the daughter of Leon and Louise (Mauldin) Bryan. She married Bill Yearwood, October 1, 1952, in Union Point. She was a homemaker but also worked for 12 years with Bell County Abstract. She was a devoted member of Keys Valley Baptist Church.

Mrs. Yearwood was preceded in death by her husband of 69 years in 2022, also one grandson, Bryan Yearwood and great grandson, Tyler Yearwood.

Survivors include son Steve Yearwood; daughter Kathy Latimer and her husband Larry; three grandsons, Scott Yearwood, Jason Yearwood and wife Laurel, and Joshua Yearwood and wife Debi; and six great-grandchildren, Tannor, Carson, Melissa, Hayden, Hunter and Holton.

Memorials may be made to the Gideons International P. O. Box 1023, Belton, Texas 76513.

Spiller
Sandra Elaine Spiller
July 6, 1966 –
May 6, 2025

Sandra Elaine Spiller, age 58, entered the kingdom of heaven on May 6th at 2:15 a.m. Sandra was the widow of John Allen Allsup, married 31 years before his passing.

Born in Claremore, Oklahoma on July 6, 1966, she was the daughter of Clarence Henry Spiller and Deloris Irene Spiller (Ward). She spent her childhood traveling the country with her family as a migrant worker picking cherries, cotton, and other fruits and vegetables. Though Sandra or Babygirl never graduated high school, she was educated in the ways of the world.

Sandra was a young mother, giving birth to her first and only daughter, Candice Marie, on December 25, 1983. She married her true love John Allen on April 1, 1993. She found joy in many things in her life but her husband and daughter brought her the most joy, that is until her granddaughters came along.

Sandpipe - From Page A4

life.

“I think this is going to be very well used,” Leigh said. “I can already imagine families fighting over the grill here.”

Councilmember Daniel Bucher then gave the invocation after reflecting on his time serving on the parks board. He thanked the city workers in yellow vests and called the park a “Beacon of Belton.”

City Manager Sam Listi detailed the standpipe’s history, noting its original purpose as a water tower built in the early 1900s and its architectural uniqueness. He said early grant efforts failed, but the vision of a community park on the site changed everything. He thanked partners including Texas Parks and Wildlife and recognized State Representative Hugh Shine for years of support, unveiling a plaque in Shine’s honor.

“Standpipe Park achieves three important objectives,” Listi said. “It preserves infrastructure over 100 years old, creates a recreational space for new generations, and connects to historic tourism across Belton.”

Landscape architect Tyler Richburg called the project a dream to design and emphasized that it came from community ideas rather than outside plans.

“This is one of those projects that had full community buy-in from the start,” Richburg said. “It wasn’t just about designing a park—it was about helping bring a neighborhood’s vision to life.”

Texas Parks and Wildlife representative Kara Escajeda said investments

like this one matter because parks are essential to both physical and mental well-being. She praised Belton for making the project a priority and said she looked forward to seeing it used for years to come.

Josh Pearson, chair of the Belton Parks Board, said other cities might have torn the structure down, but Belton had the vision to preserve it. He thanked city leadership for their creativity and responsibility in following through, and he gave special thanks to the public works and parks staff for maintaining projects like this after the ribbon is cut.

James Grant, Director of Parks and Recreation, wrapped up the program by pointing out details of the restroom and playground, noting that the building is solid concrete and can be a safe shelter if a tornado hit.

The \$1.5 million project was funded through a grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife and support from local partners. Construction began in late 2024 and was completed in spring 2025.

Standpipe Park includes paved side-walks, a pavilion, playground, practice field, and lighting atop the tower. The hillside slide is the only one of its kind in Belton.

After serving as part of the city’s water system for over 50 years, the standpipe was retired in 1975 but preserved. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1990 and became Belton’s first Local Historic Landmark in 2019.

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EDITORIAL

Small World

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

I recently ran into a man, about my age, we were talking about our past, where we grew up and where we went to school and all the normal things. Well, it turns out that he was indeed my age. We went to the same elementary school (apparently we didn’t have grammar schools in Texas). We lived fairly close from what we could tell. So as technically advanced humans, we popped open a maps app on our phone and then on a larger device. And while we were not near our childhood homes that day, we did indeed find out that we were neighbors. He literally lived just across the street from my house. There was a street that led to a circle just in front of my house. This “friend” lived a couple of doors down, so we grew up just a few hundred feet from each other, at the same time, at the same school. Now while I do not specifically

remember him by name, I am quite certain we crossed paths and probably enjoyed some boy-hood activities together. There were often impromptu ball games, bike rides, and other fun things in that neighborhood. We all had bikes and rode around the area in groups just enjoying our times away from school. Once we found out exactly the locations of our childhood homes, we thought about all the chance meetings we could have had. His mother lived in the same house until just a few years ago, needing to move due to her health concerns. I had moved away some years before and relocating to a small town a bit south of there. There were a lot of things to do in the area, and often there were fairly large groups of kids that would gather for a day of fun. I had my closest friends, and a few that were a part of my

life. However, there were others that just filled in the extra spots on those days, we probably never knew each other past the color and brand of bicycle or sports ability, but friends nonetheless. There was a common spot that we both remembered. It was a bridge over a small creek. The creek had a few fish, nothing exciting, but fun to catch. Under the bridge was a beam that spanned the entire length. We called it a “catwalk”, it was only a foot or so wide. I don’t remember exactly how high this was above the creek, however I do know that the creek was at best only a couple of feet deep. It was often a “dare” to walk across the catwalk, from one end to the other, full upright all the way, without stopping. I did that at least once, I was not as brave as I might have seemed at the time, but I was able to pass the span of the bridge while my

friends looked on, becoming a bit of a hero at the time. Looking back it probably wasn’t as bad as we thought, however it was not the smartest decision we would have made that day. The other attractions were a 7-11 at one corner, very near this aforementioned bridge, where we could get candy with whatever coins we had at the time. Also for some reason Duncan Yoyos were sold there and at times a representative from Duncan would show up for an afternoon demo to give us new tricks, but mostly to sell yoyos, it often worked as I had several. Going back the opposite direction was another convenience store, it was across from a small park where we often played. I don’t remember a name for this store and there wasn’t really anything special about it, other than we could get candy with whatever coins we had at

the time. I might add that at the time finding any coin, regardless of the denomination, was a big deal, we could often make a purchase with our loot. Going to either of these stores, and also the nearby parks took us through a couple of shortcuts. One way was along the creek, with the famous walkway. The other way took us through a “cave”. While it was not a true cave, it was a path through some thick brush. It was easy to navigate on a bike or by walking, it wasn’t really dark, but was covered by foliage at any point in the year. There were a few spots along the path where one could stop and rest. Thinking back it may not have been very far through those woods, but it seemed like it at the time. I wonder if I could walk that catwalk again today. I might have to give it a try if I get back to the old neighborhood.

For the grads

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

This Thursday marks a big milestone for hundreds of students in our community. They’re “done” with the school and education of childhood. It’s a week full of excitement and anticipation. Oh, to be 17, 18, or 19 again—not that I’d be willing to repeat the throes of the teenage years. But to know then, what I know now...I was there once, with plenty of ideas of what I was going to “be.” It was a tossup for me to choose a major. Even now, I can hear my mother’s voice echoing in my head, her words in the late 1980s about how I should go into computer graphics. Instead of that or English – I was always a good writer and speller – I chose to major in art. I attended a private liber-

al arts college in Pennsylvania and then completed my undergraduate studies at a public college in Massachusetts, and dabbled in a few graduate courses in education after my bachelor’s. My career has been a winding road of twists and turns that my 17-year-old high school graduate self wouldn’t believe if I could tell her. If I could sit down with a grad today, I’d tell them – go to college, go to trade school. But it’s okay if you don’t end up with a job in your major, or if trade school isn’t what you thought it would be. We hear the classic stories of a four-year education and the newly graduated college student landing a job within their field. Or, that’s the idea. You have to be

willing to go where the jobs are in your major and that might and likely will mean leaving your family and what you’ve grown up with. You have to be willing to get out of your comfort zone. However, in the last year, I’ve come to realize one of the best things a grad can figure out is their “why.” What are the things that drive your passion for not just a career, but for your life? What are you good at? Numbers? Listening? Making things? Talking to people? Being creative? All of these things, and more, can help you in a future career – a career in addition to the “rubber stamp” of what your degree “says” you are qualified to do. Do you like helping

people? If so, who do you like to help? What cause ignites a fire in you? Is it injustice? Is it making your community a better place? You can learn some of these skills while you’re in college, but I’m willing to bet, graduate, you have been developing a lot of these things related to your “why” your entire life. So, don’t pressure yourself to fit into that “box” of a degree. If you’re like me, one day, all those qualities and passion will fall into place like tumblers in a lock and you will find yourself in a place where it all fits right. If you don’t know what you’re going to do after school is out, it’s all right, too. You can start thinking about the answers to those

same questions above. What’s your “why”? You are full of promise and potential. A promise is something that’s going to happen. Potential is the capacity to reach something you haven’t attained...yet. Be careful as you navigate the waters after graduation. Sometimes, we are our own worst enemy. We have the ability to sabotage even the brightest possibilities. Yes, life can be unfair but sometimes it’s the result of what we’ve chosen for ourselves. Grad, 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? Don’t feel left out. You already have natural gifts and talents and skills, many

of which can’t be judged by numbers. Take some time to learn what those are, develop them, and follow your passion. As you go out after graduation, realize that you’re a small fish in a big, big pond. I don’t care if you were the great white shark or barracuda of BISD. 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 stepping into your future. Take a deep breath, enjoy the ride, and keep us all posted on how you are doing.

BNT - From Page A1

helped solidify his interest in engineering. After graduation, Chinonso plans to pursue a degree in computer science and business at the University of Texas at Austin, with hopes of joining the Computer Science Business (CSB) Honors Program. Long-term, he dreams of building a business that makes a difference—and returning to invest in the people and programs that shaped him. “New Tech has helped me grow not just academically but socially,” Chinonso shared. “It’s a place where I felt encouraged to communicate, connect and become the person I wanted to be.”

Salutatorian: Tran Le

Tran, daughter of Nhung Le and Tri Nguyen of Temple, is a dedicated and driven student known for her resilience, humility and heart for service. She currently serves as the historian of the National Honor Society, competes on the tennis team and is an active member of the Dragon Council. She began her educational journey at Alice J. Tarver Elementary and continued through North Belton Middle School before enrolling at Belton New Tech @Waskow High School. Throughout her time in Belton ISD, Tran has overcome significant challenges as an immigrant adapting to a new country and culture. “I don’t see tough times as adversity,” she said.

“They’re opportunities. I overcame the fear of not challenging myself.” She credits her growth to the unique learning environment at New Tech, which emphasized collaboration, communication, and independent thinking—skills she says helped her discover her voice and confidence. Looking ahead, Tran plans to serve in the military and attend medical school at the University of Texas at Austin, where she will pursue her dream of becoming a physician. She says her proudest accomplishment in high school was learning to face fears and push herself beyond her comfort zone. Her message to fellow students: “Give it your all and dream big.” Tran is quick to express gratitude for the support of her family, especially her mother, who she says has been a constant source of motivation and strength. “I’m definitely thankful to my mom for always being there and encouraging me.” Classmate and valedictorian Chinonso shared heartfelt admiration for Tran, saying, “Tran is honestly my favorite person in the world. She’s generous, selfless and has been a role model for me since freshman year.” Belton ISD congratulates both students on their outstanding accomplishments and wishes them continued success in the next chapter of their journeys.

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Thursday,
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LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Belton ISD names 2025 teachers of the year

Courtesy photo

Belton ISD recognized its 2025 teachers of the year. Marie Angelica Guzman of Southwest Elementary and Jay Walker of Belton High will represent the district at the Region 12 Teacher of the Year competition, with winners announced in August.

Special to the Journal

Belton ISD is celebrating the 23 outstanding educators selected as Teachers of the Year for the 2024-2025 school year. These exceptional individuals were chosen to represent their campuses or areas of specialization in recognition of their dedication, innovation and passion for education. Each one plays a vital role in inspiring students and fostering academic success across the district.

From the campus-level honorees, the district selected one elementary and one secondary educator to represent Belton ISD in the regional Teacher of the Year competition. Marie Angelica “Angie” Guzman, a fifth-grade dual-language teacher and interventionist at Southwest Elementary School, was named the Elementary Teacher of the Year. J’nata “Jay” Walker, a business teacher and Master Incubator Teacher at Lake Belton High School, was named the Secondary Teacher of the Year.

Both Guzman and Walker began their careers in public education not as teachers, but as support staff—Guzman as a paraprofessional and Walker as an attendance clerk. Their rise to being named Teachers of the Year is a reflection to their extraordinary drive, deep commitment to students and unwavering belief in the power of education. Their stories reflect the very heart of Belton ISD: that passion, perseverance and purpose can turn humble beginnings into extraordinary impact. Today, they represent not only excellence in teaching but the very spirit of what it means to grow, serve and lead in Belton ISD.

Elementary Teacher of the Year: Marie Angelica Guzman

Guzman has been teaching for 17 years, starting in 2008, and began her career as a paraprofessional supporting bilingual students. A former migrant student herself, Guzman was inspired by her own fourth-grade teacher to

become a voice and a role model for English learners. “Being named Teacher of the Year means so much to me and my family,” she said. “I didn’t always have confidence in myself, but I knew I wanted to help bilingual students—because I’ve been in their shoes. I know how they feel, and I know how to help them.”

Karla Kahler, a fellow fifth-grade teacher at Southwest Elementary, described Guzman’s teaching in one word: inclusive. “She brings diverse perspectives into the classroom and makes every student feel seen. Her impact goes far beyond the lesson plan.”

Student Angel DeLeon-Mata agreed, calling Mrs. Guzman “amazing, loving and careful.” He shared, “She teaches us how to treat people right. When I walk into her room, I feel refreshed and ready to learn.”

Secondary Teacher of the Year: Jay Walker
Walker’s journey into teaching began when she worked as an attendance clerk in the district. Encouraged by colleagues who saw her potential, she pursued her teaching certification and never looked back. Today, she is known for her energy, heart and relentless commitment to student growth.

“Being named Teacher of the Year makes me feel seen and heard,” Walker said. “It tells me that the work I’ve poured into this school has not gone unnoticed. I want my students to remember that above-and-beyond is the standard—not mediocre.”

Kristie Shepherd, Digital Instructional Coach, said simply, “Jay is the heartbeat of this campus. Her energy is contagious and her integrity, passion and follow-through inspire students to become lifetime learners.”

Junior Addison Sims described her teacher as “caring, disciplined and loud,” and shared, “She taught me discipline and how to do things the right way. She’s like

a second mom to me—and probably the most deserving teacher in the district.”

The surprise announcements were made during classroom visits on May 13, 2025.

Here are the educators honored as
Belton ISD’s 2025 Teachers of the Year:

- Belton Early Childhood - Ericka Flemming
- James L. Burrell - Camille Hicks
- Charter Oak - Ryley Cox
- Chisholm Trail - Elizabeth Seeger
- High Point - Rebecca Hannon
- Hubbard Branch - Courtney Crossley
- Lakewood - Michelle Francis
- Leon Heights - Lindsey Bennett
- Joe M. Pirtle - Greta Jones
- Southwest - Marie Angelica Guzman
- Sparta - Cara Patranella
- Alice J. Tarver - Ashley Henderson
- Belton Middle - Corinna Capraun
- Lake Belton Middle - Melvin Craig
- North Belton Middle - Ann Reese
- South Belton Middle - Melissa Huckfeldt
- Belton New Tech @Waskow - Tab Lloyd
- Belton High - Justin Truitt
- Lake Belton High - Jay Walker
- Special Programs (Pirtle) - Jaime Lindsey
- Coach (BHS) - Caleb Newcomer
- Fine Arts (LBHS) - Jacob Guerrero
- CTE (LBHS) - Allison Hall
- Guzman and Walker—two outstanding edu-

cators—will go on to represent Belton ISD in the Region 12 Teacher of the Year competition. Regional winners will be announced in August.

Memorial Day Ceremony and Patriot Way brick dedication set for Monday

File Photo

A story board explains the history and purpose of Belton's Patriot Way Brick Walk. There will be a ceremony on Memorial Day to honor veterans.

Special to the Journal

The Belton Area Chamber of Commerce will host a special Memorial Day ceremony on Monday, May 26 in the front parking area for the Chamber office at 412 E. Central Avenue in Belton.

The ceremony is coordinated by the Chamber’s Military Relations Committee, and co-hosted by the Henry T. Waskow VFW Post 4008, Lake Belton VFW Post 10377, Belton American Legion Post 55, and Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Central TX Chapter 22. Each organization honored members who have died in the past year, and those having bricks added to the Patriot Way Brick Walk.

Randy Pittenger, President/CEO of the Belton Chamber,

described this event as a way for our community to honor our veterans in a special way, and to draw attention to the Patriot Way Brick Walk.

“We are proud to honor the memory of those who have served our country and our community with this ceremony during the week of Memorial Day, and we are especially proud to honor those who have been added during the past year to the Patriot Way Brick Walk,” stated Pittenger.

This ceremony will include remarks about Memorial Day by Mayor David K. Leigh, and a bell ringing ceremony honoring each individual. Taps was played to close the ceremony.

The Patriot Way Brick Walk was originally established as a joint effort of the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce and City

of Belton when Central Avenue was renovated. Central Avenue is Belton’s gateway, entering Belton from Interstate 35, passing in front of the Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center, and reaching the historic Bell County Courthouse in downtown Belton.

Bricks are added regularly as veterans are honored by friends and family. Order forms are available at the Chamber office or online at the Chamber website, www.beltonchamber.com. In addition, the website contains a searchable listing of all bricks added to the Patriot Way Brick Walk.

For more information about the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, visit the website at www.beltonchamber.com, call 254-939-3551, or email info@beltonchamber.com.

Belton EDC announces new Amazon delivery station



Special to the Journal

Amazon has announced plans to expand its investment in Texas by opening a 127,000-square-foot delivery station in Belton, located on Capitol Way, just east of IH-35. Launch plans for the facility are in the very early stages, with construction starting in the coming weeks.

“This delivery station will allow us to provide fast-

er delivery and great service to customers in Belton and the surrounding area,” said Jessica Breaux, senior manager of economic development for Amazon. “We’re grateful for our partnership with the City of Belton and the Belton Economic Development Corporation and look forward to sharing more details about this facility in the future.”

Delivery stations power the last mile of Amazon’s

order process. Packages are shipped to a delivery station from neighboring Amazon Fulfillment and Sortation Centers, loaded into delivery vehicles and delivered to customers.

“We’re beyond excited to welcome Amazon to Belton,” Mayor David K. Leigh said. “Many of us have welcomed Amazon delivery into our lives, celebrating a Christmas surprise on our doorsteps more than once a year. And now Amazon’s investment brings local jobs, elevates our tax base, and improves delivery for our community. We look forward to a strong partnership with Amazon as they grow their presence here.”

“One of the core responsibilities of the Belton Economic Development Corporation is to bring new jobs and industry to Belton,” said Brandon Bozon, president of the BEDC Board of Directors. “We are proud of the collabora-

tion between the City of Belton and our BEDC team in making this project possible. Amazon’s decision to establish operations in Belton is a win for our community, and we look forward to construction beginning soon.”

Since 2010, Amazon has created more than 86,000 full- and part-time jobs in Texas and invested more than \$70 billion across the state. These investments have contributed an additional \$81 billion to the Texas economy and helped create more than 171,000 indirect jobs on top of Amazon’s direct hires—from jobs in construction and logistics to professional services. In addition, more than 39,000 independent sellers—most of which are small and medium-sized businesses—in Texas are selling to customers in Amazon’s store, creating thousands of additional jobs across the state.

Belton ISD students take a seat at the table in menu planning



Courtesy Photo

Belton ISD students participate in taste testing for possible menu items for the district.

Special to the Journal

Belton ISD is making student voice a key ingredient in school meal planning—because students are the most important customers in the cafeteria. As part of a districtwide initiative led by the School Nutrition Department, students were invited to participate in taste tests and menu planning sessions to help shape the meals served on campus. By engaging students of all ages in the process, the district aims to create menus that are not only nutritious and balanced—but also student-approved.

Third-grader Taylin Alexander was one of many students who took part in a recent food tasting event and had one clear favorite: the strawberry banana smoothie. “It was sweet and good and also made with healthy stuff,” Taylin

said. “I liked being on the menu planning committee because I got to help pick the food we might have for lunch! We got to try new foods and make sure there were healthy choices.”

“We believe that student voice is vital when planning school menus,” said Heidi Pike, Belton ISD School Nutrition Dietitian. “By bringing together a diverse group of students from different campuses and grade levels, we gained valuable insight that will help shape next year’s

menus.”

During the various menu tasting events, students from Pre-K through 12th grade sampled a variety of new options, including the fruit smoothie—which quickly became a crowd favorite. The smoothie has since made a debut on campus menus during National School Breakfast Week in March.

“Our younger students especially enjoyed trying a new breakfast pizza,” Pike added. “And our older students really liked the chicken and

vegetable dumplings. In previous years, student feedback led us to introduce orange chicken to our menu, which has remained a popular item. Because of its success, we’re now exploring additional Asian cuisine options.”

James L. Burrell Elementary Principal Julee Manley praised the initiative for its impact on student engagement. “As a principal, I loved having students involved in future menu planning,” Manley said. “It encourages healthier eating habits, reduces food waste, and builds a stronger sense of school community. Students collaborated, shared their thoughts, and took what they learned back to their classmates—it was a meaningful experience for everyone involved.”

With enthusiastic student participation and promising feedback, Belton ISD’s School Nutrition Team looks forward to more collaborative tastings in the future—and maybe even more smoothies on the menu.

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Governor Abbott signs Central Texas Water Alliance bill into law

Special to the Journal

A new law signed by Governor Greg Abbott has officially created the Central Texas Water Alliance (CTWA) with the legislation taking immediate effect.

The creation of the CTWA is a historic milestone for Central Texas and will transform water management across the region and deliver impactful benefits for decades to come. CTWA will serve as a regional water authority with a mission to plan and develop water resources across the Central Texas region. The alliance will work to address current water supply challenges, economic development, public health and safety, environmental protection and long-term sustainability.

The alliance has been supported by a broad spectrum of entities, both public and private, to include Bell County, McLennan County, Lampasas County, Fort Cavazos, the Brazos River Authority, Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District, Bell County Water Control and Improvement District No. 1 (WCID 1), multiple cities, multiple water supply corporations, and private entities.

“The creation of the Central Texas Water Alliance is a bold and necessary step toward securing water supply for one of the fastest-growing regions in Texas. By bringing together local water providers, we are enabling them to pool resources, coordinate planning, and access state funding opportunities that were previously out of reach for smaller entities,” said Texas Senator Pete Flores, representing Senate District 24. “This collaboration ensures that our communities are not only prepared to meet today’s needs but are also building the infrastructure and capacity required to support future generations. I am extremely proud to be a part of this forward-thinking legislation. The Central Texas Water Alliance represents the kind of smart, regional cooperation that Texas needs to stay strong and sustainable in the years ahead.”

“I have been so proud to carry and pass legislation that represents such a critical need in our communities as water. Water is an issue that affects our livelihoods, economic development, and opportunities for future generations,” said State Rep. Brad Buckley, serving Texas House District 54. “Thank you to the Central Texas Water Alliance community stakeholders for bringing this important idea to me and for championing its progress through the legislature. Thank you to Senator Flores for his partnership in seeing this come to fruition and to Governor Abbott for understanding the value in the alliance and signing it into law.”

“Access to a reliable water supply is essential to the future of our communities, especially in fast-growing and drought-prone areas like Lampasas County. I was proud to serve as Joint-Sponsor of Senate Bill 1194 (SB 1194), which establishes the Central Texas Water Alliance to help local governments and water districts work together to meet long-term water needs through cooperation—not bureaucracy,” said State Rep. David Spiller, serving Texas District 68. “With the Governor’s signature, this legislation is now in effect, ensuring Central Texas is better prepared to manage and deliver water resources efficiently and responsibly for generations to come.”

“This moment has been a long time coming,” said Bell County Judge David Blackburn. “There is no issue more important to all of us than water, and I’m confident the CTWA will positively impact not just the residents of Bell County, but the entire region for generations to come.”

“I deeply appreciate our leadership for taking this important initiative. I’m confident that the alliance will guide us toward a more secure and sustainable water future. This is essential for driving sustainable economic growth—attracting new businesses to the area and empowering existing industries to expand without water-related constraints,” said Dirk Aaron, Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District Manager.

“We’re grateful to the Texas Legislature for their support in helping us establish this bill and see it through to becoming law,” said Ricky Garrett, General Manager of WCID 1. “The CTWA represents a transformative step forward for our community, fundamentally improving how we address and resolve water infrastructure and supply challenges.”

No single entity on its own in the Central Texas region has the capacity—whether in terms of water supply or infrastructure—to meet the growing demands driven by regional expansion and development. These challenges have prompted meetings with water purveyors, elected officials, and civic leaders over the past several years, ultimately culminating in the passage of SB 1194 and the creation of the Central Texas Water Alliance.

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BO



BISD holds induction ceremony for Wall of Honor

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Trap Johnson was committed.

Early in his high school career, Johnson — a former standout Tigers basketball player — had an opportunity to transfer to newly opened Lake Belton and help build the program.

He could not do it, and recently, he was rewarded for the decision.

After completing his career as one of the greatest players in program history, Johnson was given one of the school's most prestigious honors by being inducted into the Belton High School Athletic Wall of Honor.

"I remember seeing that sign," Johnson said at Saturday's ceremony, "and it said, 'Once a Tiger. Always a Tiger.' That's when I knew where I needed to be.

"Now, I couldn't be more blessed to be standing here."

Johnson was one of four recent graduates to be recognized, including his older brother.

T.J. Johnson, who holds the single-season and career scoring records for the Tigers, assumed his spot on the wall as well, sharing the moment with his brother just like when they were on the court together.

The pair experienced

extensive success both individually and collectively.

T.J. Johnson was named all-district newcomer of the year, offensive player of the year and most valuable player of the year in addition to becoming the first Tigers player since 1961 to receive an NCAA Division I scholarship by signing to Lipscomb.

Now, he plays at Virginia Military Institute.

Trap Johnson, who plays at Montana State, was a two-time all-district offensive player of the year and guided the Tigers to their first playoff victory in almost 20 years, and along with his brother, they helped Belton earn a share of the district champion-

ship for the first time since 2004.

"I knew I wanted to be on this wall one day," T.J. Johnson said, "and this moment is just so much better because I get to do it with Trap. He's my brother and my best friend along with (younger brother) Ty.

"They are the best things to ever happen to me."

Also taking their place among Belton's all-time elite athletes were Lady Tigers soccer player Mallory Bankhead and Tigers offensive lineman John Roach.

Bankhead, a goalkeeper, was instrumental in her team's historic trip to the regional championship in 2023 — a round Belton had

not reached since in more than two decades.

En route to signing with Dallas Baptist University, she was named to the all-region first and all-state second team.

"I'm just extremely grateful to be receiving this honor," Bankhead said, "and I loved every second of being a Belton Tiger.

"I just love this place so much."

While Bankhead helped the Lady Tigers maintain their role as one of the area's premier programs, Roach helped turn around the Tigers.

After earning a starting position as a sophomore, Roach helped the team reach the playoffs for the first time since 2018, and one year

later, in 2023, Belton claimed its first of two consecutive district championships, repeating for the first time since 1974 and 1975.

Individually, he was named all-district offensive lineman of the year twice, and he landed on the all-state second team.

"I'd like to thank my parents," Roach said. "They always helped me out, and I can remember my first pee wee football practice. My Dad told me that it hurts a lot less to go hit someone than to get hit.

"So, I always tried to remember that, and I'd just like to thank all my coaches. It was always nice to know they were there for me."

Lake Belton ends Melissa's 49-game winning streak

By Tony Adams
The Belton Journal

Streaks and records. Two things in sports that are talked about constantly and guaranteed to end at some point.

The Lake Belton Broncos had it happen to them firsthand in 2024, having a 31-game winning streak snapped in the playoffs.

On Wednesday night in Alvarado, it was the Broncos' turn to face the demon that ended their Class 5A state title hopes last season: the Melissa Cardinals.

In fact, both teams had long winning stretches, with Cardinals possessing a 49-game run and the Broncos with a 24-game streak.

For the Broncos, it was a perfectly timed delayed double-steal attempt by Analicia Diaz and Alexis Ortiz that scored the initial run in the bottom of the third and Maliyah Gooden scoring on a passed ball in the bottom of the sixth that gave Maddison Ruiz the run support that she needed to pull off Lake Belton's 2-0 win over Melissa to take a 1-0 series lead.

It temporarily quieted the national pundits hype about Melissa's national home-run record of 112 round-trippers this season.

While it took awhile to try to solve Melissa starting pitcher Eloisa Maes in the circle, the Broncos relied on their defense early to keep things in check.

In the top of the first, Finlee Williams walked and stole second base to lead off the game. Following Kennedy Bradley's flyout to shortstop, Caigan Crabtree hit a fly ball to mid-range centerfield. Madison Perkins caught the ball, Williams broke for third base, and Perkins fired a throw to Brysen Gott at third base to apply the tag for the double play.

Ruiz and Maes continued their scoreless duel into the bottom of the third. With two outs, Diaz walked and Ortiz singled. Perkins swung and missed at the first pitch from Maes, and Ortiz took off for second. Hutton Adrian fired a throw to second base, and Ortiz lured Shug Bradford back toward first while Diaz raced home. Ortiz was tagged out after Diaz touched the plate to give Lake a 1-0 lead.

Ruiz and Briley Updyke did their best to keep the Cardinals' batters from getting extended swings, which at times meant traffic on the base paths. The Cardinals stranded two runners on base in the fourth inning and the bases loaded in the fifth,

See **SOFTBALL**,
Page B3

Lake Belton Baseball falls to McKinney North in Region 2 Semi

By Tony Adams
The Belton Journal

The Lake Belton Broncos continued its quest toward a state tournament berth on Thursday, as they took on the McKinney North Bulldogs at Indians Ballpark in Alvarado.

Brooks Nelson scattered six hits over seven innings and held the Broncos scoreless over 6 2/3 innings as the Bulldogs took a 1-0 series lead with a 4-1 victory.

Brandon Holley took the hill for the Broncos in game one and got the first two outs before a double by Brady Shelton and an error that allowed Gage Bradley aboard led to an RBI single by Nelson to give North a 1-0 lead.

Bryce Davis, who had four of Lake's six hits out of the leadoff spot, reached on a single to start the bottom of the first. Kaden Ward walked with one out, and Davis moved up to second. Brooks induced a flyout and a ground out to end the Broncos' threat.

A pair of Bronco errors to start the fourth led to an unearned North run in the fourth. Cohen Broussard's single loaded the bases. The Broncos turned a double play on Talon Pate's ground-

er and gave up the run in exchange for the two outs, which gave the Bulldogs a 2-0 advantage.

North scored their next run in the fifth inning. Cade Antosca singled and with one out, Shelton was intentionally walked. After a single by Bradley to load the bases, Nelson's groundout scored Antosca to make the score 3-0.

The Bulldogs got back-to-back doubles with two outs in the top of the seventh. Bradley doubled to centerfield, and Nelson's RBI double went to left field to move the margin to four runs.

Cole Mikulas reached on an error by Pate to start the seventh. RJ Hunts' single scored Mikulas to give the Broncos hope for seventh-inning magic. However, the Bulldogs converted a double play three pitches later. Davis tripled with two outs, but a groundout ended the game with Davis stranded at third.

Antosca, Bradley, and Nelson each had two hits in the Bulldogs' nine-hit production.

Nelson picked up the win on the hill, having pitched seven innings, al-

See **BASEBALL**,
Page B2

Bronco Football conducts Spring Football Game

By Tony Adams
The Belton Journal

After multiple spring practices, the Lake Belton Broncos football program conducted their Spring Game last Thursday at Bronco Field.

It was an early morning for all, but a successful one.

"I thought it was a great event," Lake Belton football head coach Brian Cope said. "Having breakfast for our community and kids was a way to say 'Thanks to all for their hard work.' We ran to the football really well on defense and did not allow the explosive play. On offense, we had some bright spots with some young kids which was good to see."

The defense looked good and pressured the QB's/RB's constantly, which led to a good number of points on the scoreboard early. The secondary stuck with the receivers in the lanes.

"We will go as our defensive line goes," Cope said. "They had an outstand-



ing day. Also, our secondary did a good job of making them snap it another time. We improved a lot on defense over the 16 practices so that was good to see."

The offense performed well, with the

quarterbacks dialed in, the running backs breaking off a few solid runs, and receivers ran sharp routes. The offensive line is performing better with each practice"

We were able to get a lot of work with

our three younger quarterbacks," Cope said. "Also, having Zyien Dupree back out there from a season ending injury was a great thing to see. Zion Harness also had an outstanding spring. We still have some competitions going but also solidified some other spots. I think we can be very explosive on offense which will be fun to watch."

Spring games are typically played in the evening, but the staff decided to play it in the morning with Powderpuff, out-of-town baseball and softball playoffs, and the Cording Ceremony.

"Yes, it was a good turnout," Cope said. "Our kids and coaches enjoyed going in the morning and it allowed them to go to other events in the evening to support their friends."


The expectation from the players during the summer months is high, with spring workouts and fall practice in the distance.

"For us to have an ELITE athletic program we need to have great attendance at ELITE camp," Cope said. "This group still has another two steps to take and can't wait to watch them work to get there."



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Baseball - From Page B1

lowed an unearned run on six hits, struck out four and walked one.

Davis and Hunt combined for the six Lake Belton hits.

Holley took the loss having pitched seven innings, allowed four runs (two earned) on nine hits, struck out one and walked one.

Game two’s scheduled Friday start was postponed due to weather so the two teams played Saturday morning again in Alvarado.

Lake’s early lead was answered in the third in-

ning by North, and an infield single by with runners on first and third scored the winning run with two outs in the bottom of the seventh to give the Bulldogs a 2-1, series-clinching victory.

Bartz’s one-out single and two-out stolen base set up Cooper Mees’ RBI single in the top of the first.

Maverik Maddux held the Bulldogs off the scoreboard until the top of the third. Antosca singled, moved to second on Jake Stockford’s sacrifice bunt, and scored on Bradley’s

single for the equalizer.

Neither team had a serious scoring threat until North’s opportunity in the seventh. Pate walked and stole second base with one out. After Pate tagged up on a flyball, Antosca was intentionally walked to set up a force on the basepaths. Stockford beat out an infield grounder at first as Pate touched the plate for the winning run.

Maddux scattered five hits over seven innings, walked three and struck out three.

Mees had two hits, and Bartz and Jory Holland had one each for the Broncos.


Austin Sayman pitched six innings for North, allowed one run on four hits, struck out six and walked four. Cameron Busch pitched an inning

of relief and struck out one.

“It was a tough series against a good McKinney North squad that we matched up well against,” Lake Belton head coach Chris Peacock said. “They made the plays and got offense at the key times when they needed them.”

The loss ended Lake Belton’s season at 26-7-2 overall, with a District

16-5A championship, bi-district and area championships. The team has graduated seniors Ely Vaughan, Cole Mikulas, Cooper Mees, Cameron Bartz, Bryce Davis, Ty Green, Brent Thomson, Samuel Matous, Andrew Ramos-Mendez, Brandon Holley, Tate Lisenbe, Kaden Ward, Rohde Smith, Kellen Scarborough, and Jory Holland.



Questions to Ask Your Financial Advisor

Scot Hrbacek, CFP® Financial Advisor

You should always be able to ask as many questions as you’d like when working with your financial advisor. So, before your annual review, think carefully about what you’d like to ask. Here are a few suggestions:

First, ask if your goals are still realistic. For example, are you still on track toward retiring at a particular age? If not, you may need to adjust your investment strategy.

Also, if you find yourself feeling nervous or uncomfortable about your investment results, you might want to ask if your investment mix is still appropriate for your risk tolerance. Maybe it’s

time to rebalance your portfolio.

Here’s another possible question: Ask if changes in your life — such as marriage, remarriage, loss of a spouse, new children or grandchildren — will affect the way you invest or the goals you’ve set.

Finally, ask how you should respond to external changes such as higher interest rates, stock market fluctuations or changes in tax laws.

A financial professional can provide you with valuable guidance — so take advantage of it by asking the right questions.

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

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Belton football holds annual spring game

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

After spending weeks working, the Tigers were recently rewarded for their efforts by taking part in the program’s annual spring game.

Belton concluded its spring schedule last Thursday, when a variety of players displayed their talents for departing for the summer.

In the end, the White team won the modified scrimmage 38-21, but patience was required initially.

Almost as soon as the

game started, it was temporarily delayed by lightning in the area, leaving the squads in a scoreless tie with 7 minutes, 22 seconds remaining in the first quarter.

Once the teams returned, however, White quickly recovered its rhythm.

Tim Cox capped off the team’s opening drive with three consecutive runs from the 22-yard line, including a five-yard run into the end zone, giving White a 7-0 advantage with 6:17 remaining in the period.

Following a turnover on downs, White struck

again as quarterback Keller Lee threw a 32-yard touchdown pass with 20 seconds left in the first period.

The 14-0 lead remained for a majority of the second quarter until Landon Owens broke free for an eight-yard touchdown with 1:09 on the clock.

Red responded in the third period, capping off an eight-play drive with a 50-yard touchdown pass from Tyler Thomas to Xander Martinez.

The gap would not get any closer, though, as the teams swapped scores for the duration of the game.

White kicker William

Bralley connected on a 30-yard field goal on the ensuing drive, but Red tailback Nick Gallegos crossed the goal line on a 12-yard run minutes later.

On the very next play, White covered 75 yards on a trick play with Cox carrying the ball the final 60 yards into the end zone to give his team a 31-14 cushion late in the fourth quarter.

The teams played an additional 10-minute quarter to complete the game, and following a pair of punts, Gino Zecca had a six-yard touchdown for Red, which was negated

soon after thanks to White running back Oakley Torres’ 17-yard touchdown run to complete the scoring.

The spring game serves as a starting point for the Tigers as they begin building toward the upcoming season.

After consecutive 3-7 campaigns, Belton made its fourth straight playoff appearance last year despite finishing the regular season with a 2-8 overall record.

The Tigers open their season Aug. 28 at Pflugerville Hendrickson before traveling to Georgetown the following week. Belton’s home opener is set for Sept. 12, when it hosts Georgetown East View.

The trek toward another trip to the playoffs begins Oct. 9 with a home game against Killeen Ellison to start the five-game District 10-5A, Division II slate.

Softball - From Page B1

with Ruiz getting third-out strikeouts in each inning.

Ortiz walked to start the bottom of the sixth, and was run for by Gooden. Perkins’ sacrifice bunt attempt was fielded, but the throw dropped at first base, which allowed Gooden to run to third. Madison Naser was batting when Maes uncorked a pitch that Adrian could not manage and Gooden scored to increase Lake’s lead to 2-0.

It was a cathartic victory, and a relief that huge obstacle to clear after the Cardinals ended the Broncos season last year on the state stage.

“Honestly, a little bit of both if I’m being honest,” Lake Belton head coach Kelsie McEachern said. “We knew how close we were to going back to the State Semifinal with that win on Wednesday against Melissa. It just so happened to be against one of the toughest opponents in the country, one in fact that knocked us out last year. This series meant a lot and getting that win proved to us coaches and the girls that all the adversity we faced was worth it. It was a goal of ours to get back to that moment this season, and to play Melissa and hopefully come out on the other side this time.”

Ruiz picked up the win, allowed two hits, struck out six and walked seven over seven innings.

Maes took the loss having pitched six innings, allowed two runs (one earned) on three hits, struck out nine and walked two.

After a long storm delay on Friday night that postponed game two in Cleburne, the contest was played at 10 am on Saturday.

“It can be challenging to stay engaged and locked in,” McEachern said. “It is a waiting game, and you do

not know when or if you will get to play. Our girls were trying to stay upbeat, singing and dancing, passing the time. Unfortunately, mother nature got the win on Friday.”

The Broncos rally in the top of the sixth inning brought Lake to within a run. However, a six-run blitz by the Cardinals in the bottom of the frame put game two out of reach, 9-2.

The loss ended Lake’s 25-game winning streak.

Williams doubled down the left field line in the bottom of the first, which led to Crabtree’s two-run homer over the centerfield wall to put Melissa up 2-0.

Ruiz pitched the Broncos out of trouble in the third, as Williams walked to start the inning and took third base on a steal and over throw. An intentional walk to Crabtree set up a force play on the base paths. Ruiz induced a Hut-ton Adrian pop up to Briley Updyke and Izzy Gonzales flyout to Ortiz to get Lake out of trouble.

Bradley RBI single in the fifth inning increased the Cardinals’ lead to 3-0.

Analicia Diaz leadoff homer over the centerfield wall on the second pitch of the sixth inning put the Broncos on the board. Ortiz singled and was run for by Gooden. With two outs, Gott inside-out swing twisted a fly ball down the rightfield line that dropped for a single to score Gooden to pull Lake to within a run. Maes collected a strikeout to end the inning.

“The team was fired up after the top of the sixth inning,” McEachern said. “We knew we were finally catching on and getting the timely hits we needed. Up until that point we struggled to figure her out.”

Ruiz was rested in the

sixth inning, as Natalie Hosch took over in the circle. Paisley Needham and Gabby Kuehler hit back-to-back solo homers to start the inning. An error scored Bradford and Hattie Winter, and Crabtree ripped her second two-run homer of the game. The Cardinals emerged from the sixth with a 9-2 lead.

The Broncos were unable to score in the seventh, as the Cardinals forced the third game.

Crabtree had four runs batted in, along with two hits and two intentional walks. Williams scored three times, and Bradford added two hits.

Maes picked up the win, having pitched seven innings, allowed two runs on four hits, struck out 12 and walked two,

Ruiz took the loss in the circle as dealt five innings of four-hit ball, struck out six and walked three.

The scene shifted back to Alvarado on Saturday afternoon for the third and deciding game.

Melissa bridged their sixth-inning barrage from game two into the first two innings of game three, as the Cardinals run-ruled Lake 10-0, which clinched the Region 2 championship and advanced the Cardinals into this week’s state semifinal against Aledo.

The Broncos had an opportunity in the top of the first inning with back-to-back walks to Diaz and Gott. Maes induced a pop up and a lineup to get Melissa out of trouble.

Williams reached on an error, stole second base, and advanced home on a second error to put the Cardinals on the board. After an intentional walk to Crabtree and walk to Adrian, Bradley scored on a sacrifice fly, Kuehler laced an RBI double, and Bradford added a two-run

double to give Melissa a 5-0 lead.

Bradley’s two-run homer and an error that scored Crabtree increased the Cardinals’ lead in the second to 8-0.

Adrian’s two-run homer in the fourth upped Melissa’s lead to ten.


Maes pitched a one-hit shutout, pitched five innings, walked two, and struck out four.

Addison Sims had the lone hit for Lake.

“We knew against a great opponent we couldn’t give them second chances or any momentum,” McEachern said. “They are a high energy team that goes off momentum. We had to focus on the little things and details and adjust when needed. On Wednesday we did all those things. We as a team played a great game with timely hitting and a great performance on the mound by Ruiz. Saturday, we did not have the timely hitting like we needed and struggled on defense. Unfortunately, things did not go our way, and we lost to a really great team.”

The Broncos finished this season 35-4, with all four losses coming to teams that finished in the final eight of their classifications (Melissa twice, Leander, Class 6A Conroe) and completed a two-year run of 75-9.

Lake graduates Alexis Ortiz, Trista Sheka, and Maddison Ruiz from this season’s squad.



FISHING REPORT

Belton Lake

FAIR. Water stained; 67 degrees; 3.32 feet below pool. The annual threadfin shad spawn has now become very consistent and will typically remain so through about the third week of May. With so much forage consistently shallow the gamefish have moved shallower as well. Most morning action is taking place from the bank to 25 feet on areas impacted by overnight winds. Live bait will have an edge to catch white bass and hybrids over artificial presentations until the shad spawn begins to weaken. Fish found on sonar will typically not remain in one location very long as bait and fish move rapidly thanks to increasing metabolism as the spring season moves on. Fishing large, four inches or longer, live shad will help select for hybrid stripers, and keep smaller white bass at bay. Smaller baits will ensure more action, but for smaller fish, including white bass and blue catfish. Cut, fresh, dead shad is also an option when fishing gets tougher after cold fronts and during calm winds. Those gamefish spotted feeding on shad on the surface in the first hour of the day and or under cloudy skies, can be sight-cast to. The MAL Original or MAL Heavy with silver blade and chartreuse tail are just the ticket for this scenario. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Catfish remain excellent with a consistent bite. Anglers should search for blue catfish in river channels and around ledges in 20-30 feet of water. Larger cut baits have been effective for trophy size fish. Slow drifting with small cut shad along sand flats will produce eater fish under 10 pounds. Channel catfish are fair but can still be caught on warmer days using punch bait in 15-25 feet of water. Report by Brian Worley, B&S Catfishing.

Stillhouse

GOOD. Water stained; 67 degrees; 4.26 feet below pool. The annual white bass spawn has almost completely run its course, and the annual threadfin shad spawn is now well underway. These coinciding events bring white bass into shallow water to feed on spawning shad most mornings on slow tapering wind blown topographies. With the clear water, these fish quickly move to the 20-25 foot mark after the direct sun rays strike the water shortly after sunrise. In shallow water, the MAL Original works very well to imitate spawning adult shad. Once the fish move out deeper, the silver, three-quarter ounce Bladed Hazy Eye Slab has been the ticket to later morning fish. Dropping the slab to the bottom and cranking it smoothly and consistently 5 to 6 turns up off the bottom while observing for fish response on 2-D sonar or forward facing soar is the key to getting bit consistently. Largemouth bass are now consistently in 8-14 feet of water, especially on topographic irregularities with some form of cover present. Dark, small, naturally-colored soft plastics worked with Texas rigs or Carolina rigs are consistent producers here. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service.



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EMPLOYMENT

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LEGALS

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
- CIVIL

CAUSE NO. 25DCV353242
To
THE UNKNOWN HEIRS OF J.Z. MILLER, JR. THE UNKNOWN HEIRS OF MARY MILLER
Greetings:
You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the PLAINTIFF’S 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 146th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas. Said PLAINTIFF’S ORIGINAL PETITION was filed in said court on April 15, 2025.
The file number of said suit being No. 25DCV353242. The names of the parties in said suit are: HEART O’ TEXAS COUNCIL OF THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA VS. THE UNKNOWN HEIRS OF J.Z. MILLER, JR., THE UNKNOWN HEIRS OF MARY MILLER
The nature of said suit being substantially as follows, to wit:
This lawsuit concerns restrictions placed on the sale of real property located in Bell County, Texas, more particularly described below. In the deed transferring the property to Heart O’ Texas Council of the Boy Scouts of America in 1932, the transferor put restrictions on the future transfer of the property that acts as a complete restraint on alienation. Plaintiff seeks a declaratory judgment from the Court holding that such restrictions constitute a violation of Texas law. The property at issue is described by the following:
Beginning at the South West corner of a certain tract of land conveyed by J. D. Blair to Spencer and Culpepper by deed dated Dec.

LEGALS

2, 1851, and recorded in Book E, Page 272 Deed Records of Bell County, Texas, this point is located s. 19 W, 168 vrs from the South West corner of the Robt. Childers Will Tract: Thence with the above tract S. 71 E. 67 vrs to corner on the West bank of Spring Branch; Thence N. 52, 30 E. 151.8 vrs to point called for as a sycamore stump on the West boundary of Branch; Thence S. 8 E. 50 vrs Thence N 65 E. 40 vrs; Thence N. 10 W 13 vrs to corner in the South line of a tract from Blair to Blair and Barney by deed recorded in Book G. Page 710 Deed Records Bell County, Texas; Thence S. 71 E. 53 vrs to stake or iron pin in the middle of Belton-Georgetown road; Thence with the middle of said road S. 25-30 W. 176.4 vrs, S. 15-30 W. 488 vrs and S. 10 W. 360 vrs to the North side of gravel road; Thence E. 71 30 W. with North side of road 326.3 vrs corner in E. L. Proctor and Pierce land; Thence N. 19 E. 607 vrs L. O. Stump, an Elm bears West 1 vara; Thence N. 71 W. 100 vrs; Thence N. 19 E.100 vrs; Thence S.71 E. 40 vrs; Thence N 19 E. 92 vrs; Thence S. 71 E. 60 vrs; Thence N. 19 E. 108 vrs to the place of beginning containing.- Fifty (50) acres of land.
This was issued at the request of attorney: JAY B. NEWTON, BOURLAND WALL & WENZEL PC, 301 COMMERCE STREET SUITE 2500, FORT WORTH TX 76102.
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 April 28, 2025. Joanna Staton District Clerk Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey

LEGALS

Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, Texas 76513
By: M Cortez, Deputy
05.01,05.08,05.15,05.22

CAUSE NO. 23CPB00679
IN THE ESTATE
OF WILLIAM RUSSELL BEAN, DECEASED IN THE COUNTY COURT OF BELL COUNTY, TEXAS
NOTICE TO CREDITORS, NOTICE OF LETTERS OF INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION AND APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATOR
Notice is hereby given that on April 29,2025, Letters of Independent Administration upon the Estate of William Russell Bean, Deceased, were granted to the Independent Administrator, Angela Mae Fuller, by the Honorable County Court Bell County, Texas, in Cause No. 23CPB00679, pending upon the Docket of said Court.
All persons having claims against said Estate are hereby required to present the same within the time prescribed by law to Angela Mae Fuller at the post office address of the attorney for the said Independent Executor being as shown below: Estate of William Russell Bean, Deceased, Ford + Bergner LLP, c/o Margaret A. Solomon, 700 Louisiana Street, 41st Floor, Houston, Texas 77002 /s/ Margaret Solomon, Ford + Bergner LLP, 700 Louisiana Street, 41st Floor, Houston, Texas 77002, Ph: 713-260-3926, Fx: 713-260-3903, MARGARET A. SOLOMON, TBA #24025691, msolomon@fordbergner.com, Attorneys for Independent Administrator, Angela Mae Fuller
05.22

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 24CPB00681**
To: Olga Smithwick; George Edward Vasquez, JR. NORMA BRADLEY, Applicant, on October 21, 2024, filed an application for appointment of guardian of the person and estate in a proceeding styled: In Re: Guardianship of the Person and Estate of George Edward Vasquez,

LEGALS

SR., an Incapacitated Person, and bearing the number 24CPB00681 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 22, 2025, 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: ROLFE W GOODE, 6464 SAVOY DRIVE SUITE 800, HOUSTON TX 77036
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 14, 2025.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County Texas, PO Box 48,1201 Huey Road ,Belton, TX 76513
By: Sophia Nieto Deputy
05.22

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION-
PARENT AND CHILD

To: Any Unknown Father and All Whom It May Concern, Respondents, in the hereinafter-styled and -numbered cause: You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of 20 days after you were served this

<

LEGALS

P.O. Box 1127, Belton, TX 76513
Issued and given under my hand
and seal of the Court at Belton,
Texas, this the 9th day of May
2015.
Joanna Staton, District Clerk of
Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey
Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, TX
76513
By: C. Rodriguez Deputy
05.22

HONOR AND PRIDE WORD SEARCH

C	I	H	V	E	H	S	I	Y	T	R	R	B	F	Y	U	I	B	R	M
Y	A	S	S	E	L	R	A	E	F	U	S	I	A	T	U	S	N	K	L
P	E	P	D	E	T	L	I	D	C	O	U	M	V	U	A	F	F	L	O
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A	D	U	S	U	R	I	E	M	R	Y	R	A	T	I	L	I	M	S	K
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L	R	D	C	E	N	C	N	G	A	L	F	C	V	T	I	E	M	O	F

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

WORDS

- BRANCH
- CEMETERY
- DRAFT
- DUTY
- ENLIST
- FALLEN
- FEARLESS
- FLAG
- HEROES
- HONOR
- MEMORIAL
- MEMORY
- MILITARY
- OBSERVED
- PLATOON
- REMEMBER
- RESPECT
- SACRIFICE
- SERVICE
- SOLDIER
- SOMBER
- THANKS
- TOUR
- VETERAN

Local **Activities & Events**

Newcomers Club Activities

MAY

05/22: 42 Dominoes
05/26: Monday Canasta
05/27: Singing Bluebonnets
05/28: Crochet and Knit; Fun Lunch

05/29: 42 Dominoes
05/31: Jimmy's Egg

JUNE

06/02: Chat N Canasta
06/03: Footloose Singles
06/04: Monthly Luncheon,
Popcorn Bridge
06/05: 42 Dominoes
06/09: Bookworms
06/12: 42 Dominoes
06/13: TGIF
06/14: Couples Night Out
06/16: Snack time Mahjong

06/17: Bunco
06/18: Popcorn Bridge
06/19: 42 Dominoes; Nonfiction Book
Club
06/20: Trailblazers Walking Group
06/23: Well-read Women; Monday
Canasta
06/25: Crochet and Knit; Fun Lunch
06/26: 42 Dominoes
06/28: Jimmy's Egg

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

CAC announces 2025 concert lineups

The Cultural Activities Center in Temple has announced lineups for its two premier music series, and visiting bands will include Los Lonely Boys, Asleep at the Wheel and the wildly popular Shinyribs. 2025 will usher in new music in both the Texas Music Series and the Central Texas Orchestral Society's Classical Music Series. Some old friends will be making return engagements in Temple, and many new performers also will be playing the CAC stage. For more information, please visit <https://www.cacarts.org/events>. Be on the lookout for the full 2025 Texas Music Series lineup in next weeks edition of the newspaper.

Here's a look at the 2025 Texas Music Series:

RUTHIE FOSTER JAZZ BAND — July 12

With five Grammy nominations to her name, Ruthie Foster stands as a testament to the power of authenticity and resilience in music. Her soulful melodies, heartfelt lyrics and an unwavering commitment to her art inspire audiences and fellow musicians as she continues to carve a path uniquely her own.

AN CLIBURN FINALIST CLAYTON STEPHENSON — Oct. 18

American pianist Clayton Stephenson's love for music is immediately apparent in his joyous charisma onstage, expressive power and natural ease at the instrument.

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL — Nov. 8

Founded in 1970, Asleep at the Wheel has been part of the American roots music landscape for more than 50 years.

SHINYRIBS - Dec. 6

Shinyribs, a regular visitor to the CAC, defies genres as a melting pot of Texas blues, New Orleans funk, horn-driven Memphis soul, country twang, border music, big band swing and roots-rock. The 2025 CTOS Classic Music Series includes four big shows.

Photography Walk with Courtney Lea Murphy - May 23

Grab your camera or smartphone and join us for an inspiring Photography Walk through Downtown Belton! Whether you're a seasoned photographer or just starting out, this is your chance to explore the heart of the town through a new lens. Learn from local photographer Courtney Lea Murphy! Tickets are \$25 and include a cocktail or mocktail at Blackbird! Admission can be paid in person at 203 North East St, Belton. Walk begins at 5:45 p.m.

MPR Explorers - May 29

The MPR Explorers (sponsored by the Mary Ruth Briggs Library) is holding their monthly "Conversation over Coffee" with Nayda Santana, MPR Government Relations & Procurement Director, on Thursday, May 29 from 9 am to Noon at the Garrett and Mic Hill Event Center (60 Morgan's Point Road).

Spring into Summer Market - May 31

Join us for a SPRING INTO SUMMER MARKET! We will have lots of amazing local vendors to come shop! Saturday, May 31, 2025, 11:45 - 3:45 p.m. at 312 N East, Belton.

Wilhite Family Reunion - June 7

The descendants and families of George Albert Wilhite and Frances Jane Martin Wilhite will hold a family reunion from 11am to 4pm, Saturday, June 7, at the Belton Church of Christ, 3003 N. Main St. in Belton. Attendees are asked to bring a covered dish for lunch. For information call Cindy Bounds Gilleland at 254-939-6761.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet both on TUESDAY, May 27th at 6:30pm at the Temple VA Hospital. Use the entrance on the Valet parking side of the hospital and take the elevator to the 5th floor -Conference Room 5G31. Both care-givers, supporters and those suffering from mental illness are welcome to join us for mutual support and sharing of information. For more information, call 254-771-3638.

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

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

Bell County Historical Commission holds their meetings on the fourth Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the historical Bell County Court House, 101 E. Central Ave in Belton. Join us in our vision of preserving and promoting Bell County's rich historical heritage for current and future generations. We are dedicated to initiating and conducting programs that preserve and celebrate the county's historic cultural resources in alignment with state laws governing historical preservation in Texas. Our community resources consist of a research room, book repository, cemetery information, historical markers and monument records. Our services include information on historic preservation, educational programming, history community outreach and partnerships. We welcome you to come join other history minded folks and get involved by serving on one of our committees that consist of preservation, cemetery, markers and education. To volunteer or for more information please visit historicalcommission@bellcounty.texas.gov, call 254-933-5917 or go by their office located in the historic Bell County Courthouse, 101 E. Central Ave., RM 117.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Temple-Belton Ladies Lion Club Meeting Second and Fourth Monday of every month at 6:30 pm at the Belton V.F.W., 2311 S. Pearl St., Belton.

Community Information

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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POINT RESORT**

Agape Christian Center
321 N. Penelope ~ 254.939.WORD

Anchor of Hope Fellowship
5700 F.M. 439 ~ 254.721.6514

Belton Christian Church
9425 W FM ~ 436 254.939.1172

Belton Church of Christ
3003 N. Main ~ 254.939.1816

Belton Church of God in Christ
1122 W. 2nd Ave. ~ 254.939.1697

Belton First Assembly of God
500 S. IH-35 ~ 254.933.2803

Belton Lighthouse
1001 NE Loop 121 ~ 254.654.7278

Belton Nazarene Church
1701 Sparta Rd ~ 254.939.3404

Bethel A.M.E. Church
401 S. Davis St. ~ 254.939.6090

Central Texas Cathedral Worship Center
700 S. Main Street ~ 254.831.3064

Christ Bible Baptist Church
1590 Jack Rabbit Rd ~ 254.939.9247

Christ the King Catholic Church
310 E. 24th Ave. ~ 254.939.0806

Christian Tabernacle Church Apostolic UPC
1010 S. Wall St. ~ 254.939.3464

Cornerstone Community Church
5081 Dog Ridge Rd ~ 254.721.8250

Crossroads Church
500 South I-35 ~ 254.939.2122

Dominion Life Chapel
105 Green Briar St. ~ 254.563.0472

Elm Grove Baptist Church
6388 Elm Grove Rd. ~ 254.933.8127

Family Gospel Church
2210 Holland Rd. ~ 254.721.0707

Fellowship Baptist Church
2025 Morgan's Point Rd ~ 254.780.2388

First Baptist Church Belton
506 N. Main St. ~ 254.933.3391

First Christian Church of Belton
306 E. Fifth Ave. ~ 254.654.5096

1st Christian Church of Temple
300 N 5th St ~ (254) 773-9061

First Mexican Baptist Church
703 S. Wall St. ~ 254.939.6900

First Presbyterian Church of Belton
2500 Church Street ~ 254.939.2115

First United Methodist Church
205 E. 3rd Ave. ~ 254.939.5703

Free Pentecostal Church of Jesus
1111 Cacti Lane ~ 254.933.8201

Freedom Bible Fellowship
3087 W. Ave. D ~ 254.933-3310

Holy Temple of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith, Inc.
519 S. Pearl St. ~ 254.613.4591

Hope Community Church
507 Mitchell St. ~ 254.933.8222

Hope Tabernacle
202 E. 1st Ave. ~ 254.933.8222

Iglesia de Cristo
3303 N. Main ~ 254.939.6910

Immanuel Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
1215 S. Wall St. ~ 254.939.0824

Keys Valley Baptist Church
4393 W. US Hwy. 190 ~ 254.939.1650

Lakeview Baptist Church
7717 N Hwy. 317 ~ 254.780.1884

Liberty Church
302 E. Central Ave. ~ 254.933.7107

Liberty in Christ Church
2520 N. Main ~ 254.939.3337

Miller Heights Baptist Church
1400 S. Wall St. ~ 254.939.1835

Ministerios Vida
2020 S. IH-35 ~ 254.624.8015

Mt. Zion United Methodist Church
218 Alexander St. ~ 254.939.5621

New Life Fellowship
706 E. 4th. ~ 254.939.8011

Nolan Valley Baptist Church
13206 W. FM 93~ 254.721.5998

Pentecostal Church of Jesus Christ
117 N. Birdwell St. ~ 254.939.0822

Redeemer Reformed Baptist Church
505 E. Ave C. www.RRBC1689.com

Redeemer Reformed Baptist Church
2378 FM 1670 ~ 254.939.6446

Temple Vision de lo Alto
4357 Orchard Hill ~ 254.563.1231

Trinity Full Gospel
810 East 2nd Ave. ~ 254.939.7673

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bell County
1726 Morgan's Point Rd. ~ 254.778.8034

First Presbyterian Church Temple
12 West French ~ 254.773.3407

Foundation Church
10751 W. Adams ~ 254.780.9673

Grace Baptist Church
740 Jayline Drive ~ 254.773.1401

Grace Comm. Primitive Baptist Church
3111 N. 3rd St ~ 254.774.8192

Grace Presbyterian Church
2401 S 57th ~ 254.773.2134

Harvest Church
2501 General Bruce Dr. ~ 254.780.3566

Immanuel Lutheran Church
2109 W. Ave H ~ 254.773.3898

Leon Valley Church of Christ
4404 Twin City Blvd. ~ 254.939.0682

New Hope Church of God
2005 W. Ave D., Suite D. ~ 254.742.2181

St. Francis Episcopal Church & School
5001 Hickory ~ 254.733.4255

St. Luke's Catholic Church
2807 Oakdale Dr. ~ 254.773.1561

St. Mary's Catholic Church
1018 S 7th St. ~254.773.4541

Taylors Valley Baptist Church
2497 W. FM 93 ~ 254.939.0503

Temple Bible Church
3205 Oakview Drive ~ 254.778.3233

Temple First Church of the Nazarene
5000 S. 31st ~ 254.773.3744

The Redeemed Christian Church of God Salvation Center
405 Van Dyke Drive, Suite 403A ~ 469-348-1475

Unity Church of Temple
318 N. 2nd ~ 254.770.0070

Vineyard Christian Fellowship
7425 W Adams Ave. ~ 254.778.2802

Vista Community Church
7051 Stonehollow Dr. ~ 254.774.7992

Wildwood Baptist Church
5195 Cedar Creek Rd. ~ 254.773.3177

SURROUNDING AREA

Central Union Church of Christ Nolanville
100 W. Avenue G ~ 254-698-0313

Little River United Methodist Church
104 N Kings Tr. ~ 254.982.4767

Little Rivers Freedom Road Fellowship
1406 W. Church St. ~ 512.595.1886

New Life Methodist Church (Salado Middle School)
1169 Williams Rd. ~ 254.493.8482

Salado United Methodist Church
650 Royal St. ~ 254.947.5482

TEMPLE

Christ Episcopal Church and School
300 N. Main St. ~ 254.773.1657

Christian Life Church
4343 West FM 93 ~ 254.939.2626

Covenant Lutheran Church
4202 Hickory Rd. ~ 254.733.7718

First Baptist Church Temple
8015 West Adams Ave. ~ 254.773.6866

First Methodist Church Temple, GMC
102 N. 2nd Temple. TX ~ 254.773.7992

A Mission of Prayer: Touching Lives at Walmart



John C. Perry

For some time now, I have been striving to become a more faithful follower of Jesus Christ. As believers, we are called to take part in Christ's Great Commission—spreading the Good News and sharing His love with others. But knowing this and actually stepping out to do it are two very different things.

Last month, I attended a Kingdom Builders conference in Temple, designed to equip us with the confidence and skills to witness to others, even total strangers. It was a powerful experience, but the real challenge—the true test of faith—came

when we had to put that training into action. The final task required us to approach strangers and ask if they had any prayer requests.

Let me tell you, this is not for the faint of heart. Some attendees backed out entirely. Others were visibly nervous but pushed themselves to try. To ease the process, they paired introverts with extroverts before sending us out. To no one's surprise, I was categorized as an extrovert.

I was partnered with Kyle—a quiet but kind-hearted man—and together, we were sent to Walmart on West Adams in Temple. Our mission was simple yet profound: to approach complete strangers, not to invite them to church or to push any denomination, but simply to ask if we could pray for them. It was a cool, drizzly day, so we decided to work inside the store. I half expected to be asked to leave the store,

but we pressed forward.

In the end, we spoke with around 15 people. Only one declined, politely saying, "Thanks, but no thanks." I started off leading the first few interactions, but before long, Kyle gained confidence, and we began sharing the task. We encountered people of all backgrounds, different ages, races, and walks of life—each with their own burdens. Some shared their requests, while others allowed us to pray with them right there in the aisle, in the middle of their errands, with the world moving around us.

What struck me most was how openly people shared their prayer needs, and how deeply they appreciated our presence. One man, after thanking us once, followed us several aisles later just to express his gratitude again. The experience was humbling, eye-opening, and powerful.

But perhaps the greatest revelation was

this: we had set out to be a blessing to others, yet Kyle and I were the ones who walked away most blessed. It was a reminder that when we step out in faith—when we obey God's call, even in small ways, the impact ripples far beyond what we can see.

Since then, I've continued this practice wherever I go. I even started carrying little plastic Jesus figures, offering them to people along with a simple question: "How can I pray for you?" I keep a list of prayer requests and invite my entire church family to pray over them.

God moves in ways we don't always expect. His voice is calling each of us to step out, to serve, to share. And when we do, His love and blessings pour out, not just for those we reach, but for us as well.

Listen to Him. Follow His Word. And together, let us reflect the love of Christ to the world.

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EDITORIAL

Hard of hearing

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

I need a new secretary. My old one is either a smart-alec, or she needs hearing aids.

Siri is the reason I spent the big bucks on an i-Phone. Despite the fact that she has yet to fetch my coffee in the morning, I like being able to send her on virtual errands to find information, call my husband, or add an item to my grocery list. But this morning, I depended on her. This morning, I needed her. This morning, she failed me.

I picked up my mom to take her to her doctor’s appointment in the next town. I’d never been to this particular address, so I asked Siri to find a map. That’s not too much to ask a secretary, is it?

“Siri, find directions to 1717 Paluxy Drive, Granbury.”

“Finding directions to 707 Taluxy

Drive, Grand Prairie.”

Was she kidding me? I had spoken quite clearly. But everyone’s entitled to an error every now and again, and I’m a forgiving person. The first time, anyway.

“Siri, find directions to 1717 Paluxy Drive, Granbury.”

“Finding directions to 1617 Patuxie Drive, Hamberry.”

Hamberry?

“Siri. Find directions to 1-7-1-7- P-A-L-U-X-Y Drive, G-R-A-N-B-U-R-Y.”

And on we went. After the seventh or eighth try, she got it right. At that point, I was ready to chunk her out the window. At that point, we were nearly there.

I should really have more compassion, considering the number of times I’ve failed to hear Him correctly. Time and again,

God has given clear directions for my life. He doesn’t mumble or stutter, and yet time and again, I’ve heard what I wanted to hear instead of what He actually said.

I can be stubborn. Obstinate. Even pig-headed.

I pretend not to hear. I choose my own path and then try to plead ignorance. I plow right into that wide, muddy path when the detour is clearly marked.

When God tells me to go left, I pretend to hear “right,” and I feign surprise when I get stuck in the mire. I’m not sure why He hasn’t fired me yet, or left me to gurgle and kick in the quicksand of my decisions.

I’m so glad He’s patient with me. When others would have left my stubborn self to sink, He comes every time to pull

me out of whatever hole I’ve landed in. He gives me chance after chance to get it right, whispering words of wisdom and counsel in hopes that this time, I’ll listen.

I don’t know why I’m so hard of hearing, but I am. He spells things out clearly, and I still mess up. Sometimes He even yells. The problem is all mine; I need to adjust my spiritual hearing aids so I can recognize His voice, listen to His guidance, and find my way the first time He speaks.

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock,”

Matthew 7:24.

Fight Or Flight

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

Admittedly, I went into this one cold. I saw one trailer one time, and that trailer didn’t even have a release date. I also noted similarities to other movies, like 2022’s “Bullet Train”. But I decided that if it came locally I’d give it a chance anyway.

Once upon a time, Lucas Reyes (Josh Hartnett) was an elite Secret Service agent. Everything changed when he discovered that the individual he was assigned to protect, the CIA director’s brother, had a fondness for brutalizing the victims of human trafficking. Lucas decided to brutalize the younger brother in retaliation, and so not only was Lucas immediately burned, but the CIA had spent the past two years sending mercenaries and assassins after him.

Lucas is down to the very last bar in Bangkok where he can drink in peace when he is unexpectedly contacted by Katherine Brunt (Katee Sackhoff), a field office com-

mander who he once had a relationship with. Brunt was the person who reported Lucas to the higher-ups, and so he initially wants nothing to do with her. It’s only when she promises to give him his life back that he even considers listening.

For the past few years, a hacker known as “Ghost” has been waging a one-person vigilante war against the tech industry. On one hand, they’ve exposed a great many crimes and heinous happenings, such as the use of child slave labor in various factories that assemble different gadgets. On the other hand, they’ve done so in such a fashion that several major tech companies have been destroyed, several crime syndicates have been exposed, and even a few world governments have been stung. A lot of people are after her, and a failed CIA attempt to capture them has left Ghost wounded and on the run. There’s reason to believe that

Ghost will be boaring a plane from Bangkok to San Francisco, and all Lucas has to do is figure out who Ghost is & detain them, at which point all will be forgiven.

Thing is, Ghost has made a great many enemies, and the information about Ghost’s itinerary comes from a dark web posting. It isn’t until Lucas actually makes it on the plane that he discovers it’s filled with assassins who want Ghost dead... and Lucas himself, for reasons he has yet to figure out. If he wants his life back, he has to keep the world’s most infamous hacker alive.

To put it simply, the film isn’t that bad, but it isn’t all that good, either. It is, indeed, very derivative of other works, many of which, like “Bullet Train”, did a better job of character development and pacing. We also have the problem of “give them the impossible but not the implausible”, in that we have enough implausible things happening

(like firearms and climbing equipment making it through modern security protocols and onto checked luggage) to be distracting.

...Which is a problem because the film’s main selling point is supposed to be the mindless yet incredibly creative violence. That’s where it succeeds. If Lucas isn’t talking, he’s killing. And he’s not the only one racking up the body count. Cue some of the few truly dramatic moments in the film, where Ghost sees first-hand the consequences of their actions.

If carnage is your thing, and you just want to sit back & enjoy a brutal ride, this movie will keep you satisfied. If not, though, then there are other, better films, even in the action genre, to consider.

Total: 7.5 / 10

Rating: R

Run Time: 97 minutes

Business Showcase

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“Let us sweep you off your feet.”

English Maids has been a long-standing dependable and trustworthy business offering residential cleaning services to Belton and the Central Texas communities for over a decade. The business was started by Kay English out of her home in Waco in 2006, and her daughter, Lauren English-Thurman joined the business in 2009. The company then expanded from Waco to serve surrounding communities, including Belton, Salado and Temple. The mother-daughter team focuses on providing the best service for residential and commercial cleaning, offering weekly, bi-weekly and monthly cleaning.

“During COVID, it was really important because a lot of people were trying to keep their house

clean and sanitized,” said Lauren English-Thurman. “Our motto is a clean home is a healthy home.”

Every home is cleaned and disinfected during every visit, she added. English-Thurman said that some of their customers utilize their services because they physically cannot clean or do it themselves.


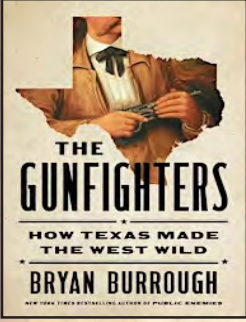
“I get the most joy when we can go in and help them, and then they’re so appreciative because it helps their overall quality of life to have a clean home,” Thurman-English added. “And it definitely helps the busy moms working and things like that, but I find the most satisfaction when I can help somebody that would not otherwise be able to do it.”The company employs around 10 to

12 employees at each of its offices, in both Waco and Belton. Each employee is well-trained, screened and has passed a background check. They are also insured, bonded and carry workers’ compensation.

“I think what sets us apart is we’re family owned and operated,” English-Thurman said. “We pay special attention to detail. I talk to our customers on a regular basis, build a relationship with them, so that we can customize their cleaning.”




English Maids is a member of The Cleaning For a Reason Foundation and offers free cleanings to women receiving cancer treatment. For more information, visit www.englishmaids.biz or call 254-231-0583.

Bell County Museum




Bryan Burrough's newest book, released on June 3, 2025, examines Texas gunfighter culture in the late 19th century and its broad cultural impact. A Bell County native, Burrough will give his first lecture on *The Gunfighters* at the Bell County Museum.

Date: June 13, 2025
Time: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM
Pre-registration is required



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THIS DAY IN HISTORY




23

1840: The Province of Canada is created by the Act of Union.

1903: The Ford Motor Company sells its first car.

1962: Jackie Robinson is inducted into the National Baseball Hall of Fame.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



29

1790: Rhode Island becomes the last of the original colonies to ratify the Constitution.

1919: Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity is tested by Arthur Eddington and others.

1988: Ronald Reagan visits the Soviet Union.

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