



Cowboy & Cowgirl Hall of Fame to hold Ring of Honor event



Courtesy Photo

Bell County Cowboy & Cowgirl Hall of Fame President Mike Seiler presenting 2025 Ring of Honor inductees with the ceremonial plaque and belt buckle.

By Harvey Jackson Oss
The Belton Journal

The Bell County Cowboy & Cowgirl Hall of Fame will be hosting their annual Ring of Honor induction ceremony, reunion, and fundraiser on June 27.

This year's inductees include John Downing, Randy Gaitan, Chris Gott, Jimmy Hodge, Butch Martin, Denny Norman, Gary Reid, Charlie Sheffield, Missy Swartz, and Tom Wilson. Larry Carson, Fred Elms, and Ronald Wilson will be recognized posthumously as empty saddle honorees.

The Hall of Fame traces its history back to old timer's rodeo reunions in Bell County during the 1970s, organized by legendary Belton bull rider Johnny Boren. These reunions attracted cowboys statewide, eventually leading to the creation of the Texas Rodeo Cowboy Hall of Fame.

"The Bell County part just kind of fell by the way-side", explained former President Tom Ray.

The Bell County Cowboy & Cowgirl Hall of Fame was founded to continue Boren's vision on the local level.

Since its founding, the Hall of Fame has expanded its focus beyond rodeo competitors. Inductees also include ranchers, horsemen, and western artists.

"They just keep the western heritage alive," stated inductee Chico King.

Inductees must be at least 45 years of age and have

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Trinity Full Gospel celebrates 70th anniversary

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe
The Belton Journal

Trinity Full Gospel celebrated its 70th anniversary and homecoming this past Friday evening.

The event was led by Johnny Herring, the founder's son and a member of the church, with music and a lesson in the church's history.

On Saturday afternoon, the service included gospel music from the Hendrix Trio, as well as a message and prayer at the altar. On Sunday morning, the Hendrix Trio sang more gospel music, and Pastor Rick Lasly provided a message. A meal and fellowship also followed the Sunday service.

Pastor Rick Lasly, who has been the pastor at Trinity Full Gospel for 20 years, talked about the importance of having

events like these.

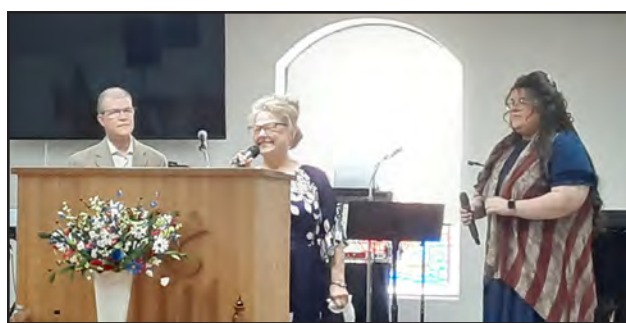
"It is celebrating what God is doing, what He has done in the past and what He is doing in the present," he said. "History is very important - history of the nation, history of the family."

The church has emphasized prayer from its infancy and continues to do so.

Pastor Lasly added, "That's one of the things that continues today, is a lot of prayer meetings, and a lot of time spent on prayer."

"Our main goal is always to see people saved, to see people helped, delivered from sin and set free. But we do emphasize prayer a lot."

"Obviously, the main thing of the church is definitely to help people come out of whatever they're struggling with



Courtesy Photo

Hendrix Trio singing gospel music at Sunday's 70th Anniversary Celebration

and have freedom to live a successful life in the Lord."

The best part about the weekend, he said, was that "We just had a great time of worship with the Hendrix Trio, and of course preaching, and then people responding to the altar."

The homecoming event also brought back quite a few people who had previously been involved with the church.

When it comes to the regular schedule, Trinity Full Gospel has Sunday school at 9:30 a.m. and worship at 10:30 a.m., with more worship and word at 6:00 p.m. On Tuesdays, they have prayer at 7:00 p.m., and on Wednesdays, they have more worship and word at 7:00 p.m. The church also has both a men and women's ministry, though meeting times vary.

Frank Minosky named Belton 4th of July Parade Grand Marshal

Special to the Journal

The Belton Area Chamber of Commerce announced that the Grand Marshal of the Belton 4th of July Parade this year will be Frank Minosky.

The theme for this year's parade is "Celebrating 250 Years of the USA" with a special focus on honoring our military veterans, so it is fitting for a veteran servant leader in our community to serve as the Grand Marshal.

Retired Command Sergeant Major Frank Minosky came to Belton via assignment to Fort Hood, and thanks in no small part to his wife Joey, quickly made it his home, sinking deep roots and investing in our community to make it better.

Minosky had a second



CSM RET. FRANK MINOSKY

career with Workforce Solutions of Central Texas, with a special focus on the needs of veterans. He has also served our community in many other ways, including volunteering with the

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City receives multiple TAMI state communication awards

Special to the Journal



Courtesy Photo

Cristina Waits, Paul Romer, and Katherine Mutchler show off their TAMI Awards.

The City of Belton received three statewide communication awards at the Texas Association of Municipal Information Officers' annual TAMI Awards in Austin, recognizing the city's work in branding, photography and overall communications. The city received a first-place TAMI Award for its Polka on the Square logo, a second-place Award of Ex-

cellence for Best Small Shop and a third-place Award of Honor for Best Photography. The Polka on the Square logo and branding initiative promoted an inaugural event similar to Oktoberfest celebrations in other communities. Polka on the Square filled downtown with Czech inspired music, food, dancing and adult beverages. The logo is a tribute to the historic Czech roots of East Bell County and blends

elements of European cultures, including Czech, German, and Polish traditions. The Best Small Shop category recognizes the overall work of small communications departments with two or fewer full-time employees. Belton's entry included four projects: Battle of the Badges Blood Drive video, Polka on the Square logo, Belton 101 internal communications

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Troy Ashford
Local Agents Supporting Local Athletes and Their Families For 20 Years!

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Library Friends seek new members

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

An organization that supports the Lena Armstrong Public Library is looking for a few more "Friends." A lot more, actually.

Friends of the Belton Public Library currently has about 116 members, but organization officials are hoping to bring that number to more than 200 in the near future.

"We have purchased tote bags with our logo on them," said Friends president Juanita Smith. "We are giving them as an incentive to new members of certain levels."

Friends has six membership levels, according to Robin Battershell, vice president of membership for the group.

An Individual membership is \$10 per year, a Family membership is \$20 a year, a Supporting membership is \$50 a year, a Patron is \$100 a year, a Benefactor membership is \$500 per year and a Corporate membership is \$1,000.

The tote bags are being given to Family memberships and above.

"We had 96 but signed up another 20 two weeks ago," Battershell said. "Our target is 200."

Smith said it is important to get as many families as possible involved in the public library.



Courtesy Photo

The Friends of Belton Public Library is giving tote bags to some new members, depending on the membership level that the person pays for. The group hopes the membership drive brings in more than 80 new members.

"Schools and cities have limited budgets," she said. "Tax dollars are stretched thin, and that makes 'Friends' even more important. The city makes tough decisions with taxpayer dollars — and that makes

donations very important. Friends started because the library needed a microfiche reader."

Friends of the Lena Armstrong Public Library formed June 13, 2001, and the name was changed about five years ago, Smith said.

"We raise money for special books, periodicals, non-budgeted amenities and volunteer help as requested by the librarian," she continued. "We also help with programs and PR to keep the library prominent in the community. We are advocates for the library."

"The library is a big part of my world," Smith said. "It has expanded in recent years — now there's more technology and space for meetings. It's much more than just books. We help with financial support so it can expand further."

"We need a wider base of community individuals involved in the library through the Friends group," she added. "The goal is to have as many members from community as possible to help us increase community literacy."

In its 25 years of existence, Friends has raised more than \$27,000 for projects and donated 22,000 free books for the community.

"We are giving out about 4,000 free books a year now," Smith said. "We recently distributed free books at Harris Community Center and a homeless dad and his

kids were there. He wanted to make sure his kids had books to read. This program is so important to our community."

Both Smith and Battershell hope to see Friends continue to evolve.

"I'd like to see more board diversity," Smith said. "We also hope to have public support for this year's Book & Author Luncheon."

The next luncheon will be March 6 at Christ the King Catholic Church Community Center and will feature Don Bentley, a former Army Apache helicopter pilot who has helped write Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan books.

Bentley has his own book — Double Tap — coming out Sept. 15.

"The majority of our funds come from the annual luncheon and the membership drive," Battershell said. "These provide a wide base of income that's there every year."

Smith said Friends of Belton Public Library hopes to set up book clubs and additional opportunities to volunteer in the future.

"We participated in the library's kick off for their summer reading program on June 4," she said. "And we will be there in July for the end of that program. There will be a mini parade and other activities."

More information about the Friends can be found at FriendsBeltonLibrary.org.

Five Troop 117 Scouts earn Eagle Scout rank



Courtesy Photo

Scout Creighton Carroll along with fellow Troop 117 members clean and paint multiple fire hydrants in the vicinity of Belton High School as part of his Eagle project.

Special to the Journal

Five members of Belton's Boy Scout Troop 117 recently earned the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest rank within Scouts BSA. Landon Karnes, Luke Cowan, Creighton Carroll, Miles Magyar, and William Graham are members of Troop 117, chartered by the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce.

In addition to earning 21 merit badges, an Eagle Scout candidate must hold a leadership position, and organize, plan, and lead a significant service project benefiting his community, church, school, or similar non-profit organization.

Landon Karnes' Eagle project included the donation and installation of a lighted flag pole and landscaping at Kleypas Park in Morgan's Point Resort. Landon attends Vista Community Church.

He is a sophomore and is active in band, golf, and UIL Math at Lake Belton High School. Landon is the son of Brian and Julie Karnes.

Luke Cowan's Eagle project included updating landscaping and installing river rock at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Temple to improve drainage and resolve flooding problems with the church's buildings.

Luke attends Immanuel Lutheran Church. He is a senior at Lake Belton High School where he is active in football, powerlifting, and FFA. Luke is the son of Calvin and Heidi Cowan.

Creighton Carroll's Eagle project included working with the Belton Fire Department to clean and paint multiple fire hydrants in the vicinity of Belton High School. Creighton is a sophomore at Belton High School where he is active in orchestra. Creighton is the son of Brian and Laura Carroll.

Miles Magyar's Eagle project included the construction of multiple signs for the U.S. Army Corps of Engi-

neers to improve community knowledge and information at various parks at Lake Belton, including Leona, Rogers, Miller Springs and Temple's Lake Park. Miles is a senior at Lake Belton High School, where he is active in the Stampede marching band, the Business Professionals of America, Academic UIL, and the Technology Students of America. Miles is the son of William and Kim Magyar.

William Graham's Eagle project included constructing updates and remodeling at Tapestry Community Church in Belton.

William is a senior at Lake Belton High School where he serves as drum major for the Stampede marching band. William is the son of Curtis and Lauren Graham.

Troop 117 is chartered by the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce and meets every week at the First United Methodist Church in Belton.

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and Christmas on the Chisholm Trail marketing campaign. This is the second time in four years that Belton has placed in the Best Small Shop category. "It's so important for municipalities to communicate well, whether it's promoting an event, orienting new employees or educating about an important initiative or project," said Belton Director of Communications Paul Romer. "The TAMI Awards are a manifestation that Belton's efforts are among the best in Texas." The photography entry included photography from the Fourth of July Parade, Christmas on the Chisholm Trail and Polka on the Square. Belton's primary communications team is Romer (center) and Public Relations Coordinator Cristina Waits (left). Marketing Specialist Katherine Mutchler (right), who serves a dual role with the Belton Economic Development Corporation and the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, also contributed to Belton's success this year. She created the Polka on the Square branding in partnership with the Chamber and the Belton Convention and Visitors Bureau. Waits, who has worked with the city for one year, contributed photography, videography, marketing, social media content and helped draft award entries.

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lived in Bell County for at least five years.

The Hall of Fame's charitable mission includes college scholarships for 4H and FFA competitors, aid for injured cowboys, and financial support for members who can't pay their bills. Around \$30,000 has been disbursed in the past year.

"It's a generous organization, it's not about any kind of money on the deal at all," noted Ray.

The Ring of Honor event will take place at VFW Post 4008 in Belton, with doors opening at 10:30 a.m.

"They're very accommodating to this organization,

it's kind of a two-way street," remarked Ray.

The VFW provides food for meetings and events. BBQ plates will be served at noon for \$20 each, including brisket, beans, potato salad, and onions.

An auction and the induction ceremony will be held after food is served. A wide range of items will be bid on, such as cattle, rodeo spurs, photograph albums, handmade purses, hats, rifles, an antique 1897 shotgun, a wine bar, an arrowhead collection, black powder guns, and even whole leftover briskets from the event. The auction items are donated by members.

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VFW, AUSA, Belton Planning and Zoning Commission, and City Council.

His work with the Belton Chamber over the past 20+ years has included serving on the Board of Directors, as Chair of the Military Relations Committee, and as Chair of the 4th of July Parade. He was named the 2005 Citizen of the Year, and in 2025 was honored with the Chamber's Legendary Impact Award.

Minosky has been a driving force in promoting the one-percenters luncheon on the last Friday of each month for veterans and was instrumental in helping the Military Relations Committee thrive. He helped the committee connect and col-

laborate with Fort Hood neighbors and veteran community.

"We are excited to celebrate the 250-year anniversary of our country, and our military veterans with the parade this year," stated Randy Pittenger, President/CEO of the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce. "Frank Minosky is a great representative, not only of our community, but also of the honor and appreciation our veterans are due."

The annual parade serves as the centerpiece of a week-long 4th of July celebration in Belton that will start with a Downtown Street Party on the Courthouse Square on Saturday, June 27.

The 4th of July will be full of festivities, in-

cluding the Patriotic Program, Parade (starting at 9 a.m.), Festival on Nolan Creek in Liberty Park featuring the Rev, White & Blue Car Show and the 5th Annual Hot Dog Eating Contest, Family Night of the 102nd annual PRCA Rodeo at the Huntington Bank Expo (formerly known as the Cadence Bank Center, and more commonly known as the Bell County Expo), then finishing the day with the Backyard Party at Schoepf's Concert and Fireworks.

For more information about these events, visit the website at www.beltonchamber.com, call 254-939-3551, or email info@beltonchamber.com.

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To be considered for inclusion in the Belton Journal, all submissions must be received by 5:00 p.m. on Monday of the week in question.

Opinions expressed (including Letters to the Editor) are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions held by the Belton Journal's management, staff or advertisers. Letters to the Editor should not exceed more than 350 words. Contact us at (254) 939-5754.

OBITUARIES

Champion

Mario Champion

April 9, 1957 – June 9, 2026

Mario Champion of Temple, Texas, passed away June 9th, 2026. Born April 9, 1957, in Temple, TX, he was the son of Joe Champion and Mary Luz Medrano.

Mario answered the call to serve his country, enlisting in the United States Navy in 1975 and serving honorably until 1977. He later built a career with El Paso Natural Gas that spanned decades and carried him across the Texas panhandle before he returned to Temple in his later years to be close to the family he loved most.

Mario was not a man defined by trophies or titles. He was defined by the people he showed up for. Raising his children largely from a distance, he held on in the ways available to him: keeping his obligations, making his calls, loving his kids from wherever the work took him, and he never stopped. In his later years, back in Temple with family close by, he found the life he had always been working toward – Sunday afternoons with his grandchildren, cookouts with siblings, quiet evenings watching an action movie or a Longhorns game. He arrived, at last, at the thing that mattered most to him: knowing his family was going to be alright. That was his measure of a life well lived, and by it, he succeeded.

Mario was a devoted member of Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Temple. He was happiest at a charcoal grill, a pool table, or the gym; watching movies with the people he loved; and cheering on his Texas Longhorns. He treasured his friendships, especially that of his cousin, Frank Medrano, and his longtime friend, Pat Flores.

Mario is survived by his children, Elizabeth Rosemarie Chandler (Christopher Cody Chandler), Michael Wayne Champion, and Katelyn Marie Champion (Amanda Lynn McCoo); his grandchildren, Hunter Ryan Erickson, Lauren-Elizabeth Erickson, and Brexton Walker Chandler; Elijah Daniel Champion and Emily Rebeccah Champion; and his siblings, Anna Champion, Joe Champion, James Champion, Lanora Flores, and Mary Champion-Smith.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Mary Luz Champion, and his sisters, Virginia Ann Hernandez and Juanita Champion.

Mario's family would like to send our love and special thanks to the Temple Presenius staff, especially his nurse Lucy; Baylor Scott and White Hospice staff; and Annie and her amazing staff at Our Hospice House. You each will hold a special place in our hearts for the love and care you had shown to not only our dad, but our entire family.

Visitation will be held at Harper-Talasek Funeral Home in Temple on June 23rd from 6-8 pm with the Rosary at 7pm; a service will be held at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Temple on June 24th at 10 am; interment will take place at Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery in Killeen on June 25th at 9 am. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made at OurHospice-House.org/donate.

Sorrow

Irene Covarrubias Sorrow

June 19, 1944 – June 10, 2026

The family of Irene Covarrubias Sorrow shares her passing from this earthly life to her eternal heavenly home on Wednesday, June 10, 2026. She was surrounded by her daughters and husband at her home in Temple, Texas.

Irene was born on June 19, 1944, in Rockport, Texas to Alfredo and Santos Soto Covarrubias. The family of nine made a living in the shrimping and oystering industry in Port O'Connor, Texas. It was there Irene met a handsome guy from Georgia, who was serving in the Air Force in POC, in a boat unit. Rupert and Irene were married on September 9, 1961, and raised three daughters in the community. Irene served their church First Baptist POC faithfully for many years. She also worked alongside her husband in their businesses by managing a gas station and then Sorrow Air Conditioning. For a time, she operated her own gift store, The Gift Emporium, wrapping each gift in lovely ribbons for her customers.

One of Irene's loves was her role as homemaker and her creativity shined in painting, ceramics, sewing, cake decorating, crafting, and jewelry art most recently. She made her daughter's dresses as they grew up and gave wonderful birthday parties for them. Once she and Rupert moved to Temple,

she found a new passion in giving to the Operation Christmas Child shoebox ministry. She sewed all year long making items for the little girls' boxes that are sent abroad. Her specialty was making pillowcase dresses and purses to match. By November, she would have as many as 20 dresses or 50 purse totes ready to be put into the boxes. They were designed with ribbons and lace and bows and buttons and everything to make each one unique. The family sees Irene's greatest legacy as leaving behind a family who felt completely adored by her, pouring love, time, and wisdom about the love of Jesus into each of them.

Irene was preceded in death by her daughter, Beverly Ulmer and grandson Gilbert Mendoza, Jr (Mijo); parents Fred and Santos; sisters, Hilda Covarrubias and Sherri Ureste; and brothers, Alfredo (Cookie) Covarrubias and Rudy Covarrubias.

She is survived by her husband of nearly 65 years, Rupert Sorrow; daughters, Tina Mendoza (Gilbert) and Suzanne Rollo (Greg); sisters, Claudine Covarrubias, and Ludine Boyd; brother, Adolfo Covarrubias; grandchildren, Thomas Mendoza, Kevin Ulmer, Kyle Ulmer, Erik Ulmer, Lucas Rollo (Madison), Jackson Rollo and great-grandchildren Maddox Mendoza and Madelyn Mendoza.

Her arrival in heaven must have been so sweet when she was greeted there by Jesus, Beverly and Mijo, and other loved ones.

Funeral services will be held at Fellowship Baptist Church, Morgan's Point Texas, officiated by Brother Jeremy Franks. Family graveside to follow. Dossman Funeral Home is overseeing arrangements.

Ralston

Marvin Russell Ralston

November 9, 1965 – June 7, 2026

Marvin Russell Ralston, a devoted family man and skilled refrigeration and air conditioning technician, passed away on Sunday, June 7, 2026, in his hometown of Temple. Born on November 9, 1965, in Temple, Marvin lived a life marked by dedication, love, and a warm spirit that touched everyone who knew him.

Russell's professional career spanned an impressive 41 years, during which he demonstrated exceptional expertise and commitment in his work as a refrigeration and air conditioning technician. His passion for his trade was complemented by a heartfelt enthusiasm for selling motorcycles and four-wheelers, a side hobby that brought him joy and allowed him to connect with others over shared interests.

His educational journey began at Academy High School, where he not only excelled academically but also showcased his athletic ability through pole vaulting. Following high school, Russell furthered his education at TSTI in Waco, where he earned his license in Air Conditioning, setting the foundation for a lifelong career.

Russell's personal life was a testament to his loving and generous nature. It was on a job site that he met Tracy Carter, the love of his life. Their connection was instant and profound: after asking her out on a date, they moved in together just three days later and spent the next 31 years happily united. Russell was a man with a big heart and a vibrant personality—goofy at times, yet deeply sincere. His love and commitment to his family were the cornerstones of his life.

Beyond his professional accomplishments and family devotion, Russell had a number of cherished hobbies and interests that brought him happiness. He enjoyed collecting clocks, and his fashion sense often featured his signature belt buckles and boots. Watches, baseball cards, knick-knacks, and marbles were among the treasured collections he gathered for his grandchildren, reflecting his thoughtful and playful spirit.

Russell took great pride in his family, the source of his greatest joy and accomplishment. He was an excellent husband who wholeheartedly supported his wife Tracy's creative pursuits, spoiling her without condition. His life was enriched by the love and companionship he shared with his family, a legacy that will endure through those he leaves behind.

He is survived by his beloved wife, Tracy (Carter) Ralston; his father, Kenneth Ralston; three sons, Derek Sherrill and wife Megan, Kolby Ralston and wife Alex, Stephen Ralston; five daughters, Kimberly Ralston, Kaitlen Ralston and husband Justin Grantham, Kaele Sherrill and husband Patrick McGinnis, Kendall Almaraz and husband David, Kaslyn Sherrill; three brothers, Kenny Ralston and wife Lisa, JW Ralston and wife Sonja, Bear Haney and wife Jana Haney;

two sisters, Donna Kellen and husband Keith, Debbie Haney; and nineteen grandchildren, Carter Sherrill, Zayden Sherrill, Kaslyn Sherrill, Kaylyn Sherrill, Kable Ralston, Blake Ralston, Carlyn Arthur, Jett Ralston, Bella Ralston, Rowen Ralston, Kamri Ralston, Sybil Grantham, Blaze Almaraz, Trip Helmer, Bowen Southerland, Paul McGinnis, Manny Ralston, Josiah Ralston.

Russell was preceded in death by his mother Patricia Ann Martin Ralston, step mother Janice (Janie) Ralston and 2 brothers David Haney & Delbert Ralston.

Marvin Russell Ralston's life was one of enduring love, devoted service, and joyful spirit. He will be remembered as a man who loved deeply, lived fully, and left an indelible mark on all fortunate enough to know him. His memory will continue to inspire and comfort his family and friends during this time of loss and in the years to come.

Visitation was held on Monday, June 15, 2026, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Young's Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center, located at 4235 E. US Hwy 190 in Temple, Texas. Burial took place the following day, Tuesday June 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM at Reeds Lake Cemetery.

In lieu of flowers please make a donation to Young's Daughters Funeral Home to help with the cost of funeral expenses.

Arrangements are under the direction of Sabrina Young at Young's Daughters Funeral Home and Bereavement Center in Temple, TX.

Sanders

Lydia Sanders

March 29, 1934 – June 11, 2026

Lydia Sanders, 92, of Belton, TX, passed away peacefully on Thursday, June 11, 2026. A visitation was held on Monday, June 15, at 6-8pm. Services were held Tuesday, June 16, at 10am. Both will take place at Dossman Funeral Home. Burial was directly after the service at North Belton Cemetery.

Lydia was born March 29, 1934, in Lampertheim, Germany, the daughter of the late Martin and Margarete Munzenberger.

She was a servant of God and enjoyed gardening, cooking, baking, and clogging. But mostly was known as the drapery lady from Custom Draperies by Lydia.

On June 12, 1954, she married the love of her life, Felix E. Sanders, Jr., who passed away October 27, 2000.

Lydia is preceded in death by her grandson Matthew Sanders who passed on February 14, 2009, and her sister Katharina Thomas who passed on February 26, 2017.

Sher is survived by her sister Anita Wunder, daughters Monica Sobotka (Steve), Felica Watkins (Mark), and Christel Chesney (John), her son Roy Sanders (Karen), 12 grandchildren, 25 great grandchildren, and 3 great great grandchildren.



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Tickets on sale for 102nd Annual Belton 4th of July Rodeo

Special to the Journal

Tickets are on sale for the Belton 4th of July PRCA Rodeo at the Cadence Bank Center (formerly known as Bell County Expo). This is the 102nd consecutive year for the 4th of July Rodeo in Belton, with three nights of high quality family entertainment scheduled for July 2-4 in the air-conditioned arena.

Reserved seats or general admission tickets can be purchased online or at the Cadence Bank Center business office 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. Discounts are available for military and seniors. Reserved seats often sell out early so don't delay.

In addition to the regularly contested PRCA and WPRA events, each night of the rodeo will also feature the always popular Mutton Bustin' with children hanging on to ride sheep for as long as they can. This popular crowd pleaser is always entertaining and worthy of big cheers and photos.

Each night of the rodeo features a different theme, with opening night on Thursday being Hometown Heroes Night honoring our first responders, healthcare workers, and educators. Friday is Military Appreciation Night, featuring a special patriotic opening. Saturday is Family Night, featuring the KPA Stick Horse Stampede. Children will be invited to lead their stick horses onto the rodeo arena floor prior to the rodeo in a memorable and photo worthy experience. As an extra bonus, kids 12 and under get in free with a paid adult general admission ticket on Family Night Saturday.

"We are excited about the 102nd annual Belton 4th of July Rodeo," stated Randy Pittenger, Belton Area Chamber of Commerce President/CEO. "This annual event provides a wonderful opportunity for local residents as well as visitors to our community to enjoy great family entertainment in a safe and comfortable environment. We are especially appreciative of our sponsors working to make this happen."

"Traditions developed over the past 102 years are cherished by families, as we celebrate our history together," added Pittenger. "We know there will be many people



File Photo

in attendance who have grown up attending the 4th of July Rodeo, then taking their children and grandchildren to it. Celebrating our history is an important part of being a community."

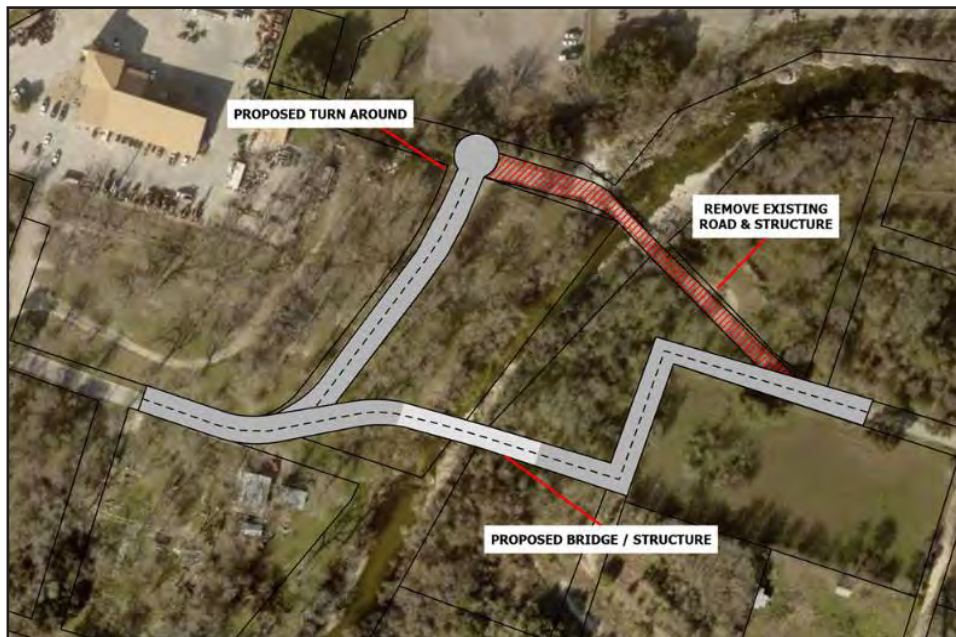
In addition to the rodeo, the Belton 4th of July Celebration includes a kickoff Downtown Street Party at the Historic Bell County Courthouse Square in downtown Belton on Saturday, June 27.

Saturday, July 4 will begin with the Patriotic Program at the Courthouse, continue with the Parade through the

streets of Belton, and continue at the Festival on Nolan Creek at Liberty Park, featuring the High 5 Hot Dog Eating Contest and the REV, White & Blue Car Show. Concluding the big day, the Backyard Party at Schoepf's Concert and Fireworks will feature the popular band with roots to Belton, Sprung, and Jared Johnson, returning for an encore performance prior to the fireworks show.

For more information about the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce or the Belton 4th of July Celebration, visit our website at www.beltonchamber.com, call 254-939-3551, or email us at info@beltonchamber.com.

Council awards contract for bridge replacement project



Courtesy Graphic

The Belton City Council awarded a bid for the Spring Street/East Central Avenue bridge replacement project. Once completed, this will remove the last low-water crossing in the city.

Special to the Journal

The Belton City Council voted unanimously on June 9 to award a \$4.91 million construction contract for the Spring Street/E. Central Avenue Bridge Replacement Project.

The contract was awarded to Yoko Excavating of Belton. The project will replace the low-water crossing on Central Avenue over Nolan Creek, east of Interstate 35 at Spring Street.

The project includes

a 325-foot bridge, a two-lane roadway, a 5-foot sidewalk, a new connector road to E. Central Avenue, about 1,000 feet of 8-inch waterline and street lighting along the bridge.

Public Works Director Scott Hodde said the project will improve flood mitigation, emergency access and access to city infrastructure and facilities, including a sewer lift station and the Belton Police Department shooting range. The project also is expected to support future development in the area.

The bridge replacement will remove the last low-water crossing in Belton. The project

should help water move more freely through the area and reduce debris buildup during heavy rain.

The project is supported by \$5 million in federal Community Project Funding secured through Congressman John Carter's office, along with Tax Increment Reinvestment Zone funds and a city commitment of \$1.25 million.

Ten bids were opened May 5. Yoko Excavating submitted the lowest bid at \$4,914,387.80. City staff and Kasberg Patrick & Associates reviewed the bids and determined the company was qualified to perform the work.

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City HR director recognized for state certification

Special to the Journal

At the Belton City Council meeting last Tuesday, City Manager Sam Listi recognized Director of Human Resources Megan Odiorne for becoming

one of only 63 human resources professionals statewide to complete the Texas Municipal Human Resources Association's second Texas Municipal Human Resources

Certification Program. The certification program is designed for human resources professionals working in city government. It focuses on the specific needs and challenges of municipal HR and confirms that graduates have demonstrated competency in key areas of municipal human resources management. Participants completed coursework in benefits, public sector employment law, workers' compensation, the Fair Labor Standards Act, compensation strategies, employee relations, performance management, conflict resolution, strategic project management, organizational development and employee engagement. TMHRA President Veronica Sanchez said the program reflects the organization's commitment to raising the standards of human resources management in Texas cities and helping ensure communities are served by knowledgeable and skilled professionals.



Courtesy Photo

Belton's Director of Human Resources Megan Odiorne is recognized by City Manager Sam Listi for becoming one of only 63 human resources professionals statewide to complete the Texas Municipal Human Resources Association's second Texas Municipal Human Resources Certification Program.


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LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Starr & Stucky to perform at Grace Art Gallery

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Singer-songwriters David Starr and Erik Stucky return for an intimate live performance at the Grace Art Gallery in Belton on Friday, June 26.

Attendees can expect to hear the stories, sometimes funny, that inspired their mix of Blues and Americana songs.

Playing about 50 days together this year, this one-evening listening event designed for a smaller audience, will feature songs from their 2024 album Starr & Stucky.

Starr said, "I like to showcase not just my songwriting, but I like to showcase Eric's mandolin playing. He's quite a virtuoso. We will probably include a few songs that other people have written, some Jackson Browne and John Prine. That's a nice way to bring people into the conversation that might not be familiar with our music."

The local venue at Grace Art Gallery provides a listening experience set for a smaller audience.

Starr explained it has benefits larger shows do not have. He will primarily play acoustic guitar and sing. Stucky will play the mandolin and sing. But they occasionally swap instruments, and Starr said anything could happen.

"We love playing smaller rooms because we get to connect on such a personal level. People connect to the songs

and they connect to the stories behind them. And we get to make friends with folks."

Starr said about playing with Stucky, "We always tour the UK together in the spring, and that's fun. We go over and play a week or two over there."

Erik Stucky released a new album this year called Bag of Bones. David Starr released Must Be Blue in 2025 and is working on his newest album planned to release later this year.

Twenty-five years ago, Starr opened Starr's Guitars, a retail vintage, new, and used guitar shop in Colorado. The website is starrsguitars.com.

David Starr is on Facebook at David Starr, Instagram at David Starr, Apple Music, and Spotify at David Starr. His website is www.davidstarrmusic.com.

Erik Stucky is on Facebook at erikstuckymusic, Instagram at erikstucky and Spotify - Erik Stucky. His website is www.erikstucky.com.

Held in a listening room at Grace Art Gallery on 108 West Central Avenue in Belton, Friday, June 26 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. this is an opportunity for people to listen to the music and the musicians share the stories behind the songs. Bringing your own beverage is suggested. Snacks and water are provided.

The suggested donation to attend is \$15 or more per person. Email Joni Lange at joniklange@yahoo.com to reserve a seat.



Courtesy photo

David Starr and Erik Stucky will play an evening of Blues and Americana music to connect with the audience through storytelling and their songs at Grace Art Gallery on June 26.

New Life Methodist Church moves to new sanctuary



Courtesy photo

New Life Methodist Church has moved to its new location.

Special to the Journal

New Life Methodist Church celebrated a major milestone on Sunday, June 14, holding its first indoor worship service on its own property at 1245 Williams Road in Salado.

The church recently acquired two portable buildings from Salado ISD and relocated them to the site, adding 3,600 square feet of enclosed space to the campus. One building now serves as the congregation's new sanctuary, while the second will provide classroom space. These facilities join the existing large, covered pavilion and a smaller office building already on the church campus.

"Our church witnessed a miracle Sunday," said Pastor Tom Lathen. "A miracle that I believe continues to equip our little church to fulfill our part of the Great Commission. Today we worshiped inside our new sanctuary for the very first time, a portable building that will be our home until our permanent church is built. After nearly four years of meeting in backyards, rented spaces, and our outdoor pavilion, being inside on our own property was a blessing beyond words."

New Life Methodist Church began nearly four years ago with just 15 people gathered under the trees in a backyard. Since then, the growing and joy-filled congregation has worshiped

at the Salado Museum, Salado Middle School, and their outdoor pavilion. With the addition of the new buildings, the church now has indoor facilities of its own for the first time. Fundraising is currently underway for a permanent sanctuary to be constructed just north of the new structures.

New Life Methodist Church is a Bible-based congregation affiliated with the Global Methodist Church. Weekly services are held every Sunday, with Bible Study at 9 a.m. and Worship at 10 a.m. The church also hosts regular prayer groups, small-group meetings, and community events on the property.

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Belton Public Library to host patriotic summer reading event



Courtesy Photo

Award-winning children's author Sarah Doran will be a featured guest at a patriotic program held at the Harris Community Center as part of the summer reading program.

Special to the Journal

Children and young readers are invited to the Patriotic Summer Reading Event hosted by the Belton Public Library from 2-3 p.m. on Thursday, June 25, at the Harris Community Center in Belton.

The free event will feature award-winning children's author and U.S. Army veteran Sarah Doran.

Doran brings military history to life through heartwarming stories that honor men and women serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

Children can look forward to an interactive story time, a patriotic song medley, a flag-folding demonstration, and a creative activity.

Doran will offer a book signing after the program.

Doran's books include Sleeping Giants, The Fearless and the Fallen, and The Peppercorn Sky.

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Behind the Curtain: What AI Can't Give You



John C. Perry

I have been a fan of AI for a while now. I use it primarily for research, I can't even recall the last time I used Google search for information. I also use it for tech support when I have a PC problem. Last night as I put my laptop to sleep, I noticed there was a Windows update

available. I chose to hold off the update, and I just told my laptop to go night, night. Today when I tried to awaken my laptop, all I saw was that annoying spinning circle, going nowhere! No problem, I will just ask AI. Microsoft CoPilot has been my go-to option for PC issues, although in the last couple of weeks it has not been perfect. I have an Android phone, so Google's AI, Gemini, is pervasive on my phone. A friend clued me in on Claude, so I have added it to my AI mix. This time before I did anything rash, I decided to ask all three about what to

do. Guess what, I got three different answers. Gemini said ignore it, just do a hard reboot, CoPilot said wait 30 minutes and do a hard reboot, Claude was the most conservative, telling me to wait 2 hours, before a reboot. I went with Claude, and I waited 2 hours, but still the spinning circle. Apparently, my laptop got stuck downloading a big Windows update. All is well now with my PC, but my trust in AI has diminished. Turns out each of the three AIs is a different system, trained on different data, with different architectures, and tuned differently by dif-

ferent companies. What I have learned from this is, there is not just one giant AI out there. It's multiple competing AI products with real differences. Which one do you trust? It's like the same situation as if you have a mechanical problem with your car. You take it to three different mechanics. You are liable to get three different diagnoses. Remember the movie, Wizard of Oz when Dorothy discovers the Wizard is just one-man pulling levers behind a curtain? AI seems to present confident, polished answers that feel authoritative, but

behind the digital curtain, they are just mechanisms producing probabilistic outputs, not genuine truth. Be cautious with AI, it's definitely not the end-all be-all. Thankfully, we don't have to rely on flawed algorithms. We have a true end-all, be-all source to turn to; a source of wisdom that is complete, consistent, and never contradicts itself. That, of course, is our Father in heaven. As James 1:5 states, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God." No conflicting versions. One single source to turn to when you are in need, when you need someone in

your corner. We don't need to guess who is pulling the levers behind the curtain, because we can rest secure in the One who holds the entire world in His hands. In a world full of competing algorithms and conflicting diagnoses, God isn't just an option; He is our ultimate, unchanging single source, always ready to answer!

John C. Perry is the Lay Leader Emeritus with New Life Methodist Church. They meet every Sunday at 9 a.m. (Bible Study) and 10 a.m. (Worship Service) at 1245 Williams Road in Salado.

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Local angler hauls in Belton Lake record blue catfish

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

It is a record catch and a cherished experience. Since being introduced to the sport as a child, Belton resident Michael Padgett has been hooked on fishing, spending countless hours with his lure in the water.

Recently, the years of dedication paid off in impressive fashion.

While enjoying the nighttime ambiance on a boat with close company, Padgett's line suddenly tightened, and an almost 10-minute fight ensued before he reeled in a Belton Lake record blue catfish weighing more than 75 pounds.

Initially, the group was targeting yellow catfish, but Padgett is glad things did not go according to plan.

"Catching a fish this size is a memory I'll never forget," he said. "Sharing that moment with my wife and friends made it even more special. As exciting as it was to catch her, making sure she was healthy and released back into the lake was what mattered most to me."

"Fish of that size are old breeder fish that play a huge role in producing future generations of fish, and I'd much rather see her swim away than end up as a filet."

Now, other area anglers can attempt to mimic the feat, but they must be prepared for a fight.

The monster catch measured 50 inches long and weighed 75.02 pounds, easily exceeding Padgett's previous best haul of a 53-pounder hooked at Lake Tawakoni.

It took time, however, before he truly realized his accomplishment.

Seconds following the initial dip of his rod, Padgett was immediately aware he snagged something big as he set the hook, and the moment initiated a lengthy back-and-forth between the two. Approximately seven to eight minutes later, the combat concluded, and reality set in.

"Once she was in the boat," Padgett said, "we got our first real look at just how big she was. We all went crazy, high-fiving and celebrating."

"A moment I won't forget for sure."

The fish was too heavy for Padgett's 60-pound scale, and the group had to find a heftier one to discover the actual weight, but it was worth it.

Having achieved a feat few can comprehend, Padgett can now turn his attention toward the next big



Courtesy Photo

Area angler Michael Padgett displays the record blue catfish he hooked at Belton Lake. The fish weighed 75.02 pounds and measured 50 inches.

catch of his career, but he will never forget the reason for being in the position to begin with. "My love for fishing started with my dad," Padgett said, "who was an avid cat fisherman and taught me a lot of the techniques and traditions I still use today. After he passed

in 2018, I really turned to catfishing and started spending most of my free time on the water.

"Since then, I've fished catfish tournaments and continued something that keeps me connected to him."

Belton ISD boys approaching trip to TABC Showcase

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Tigers and Broncos are on the verge of their first steps toward next season.

Despite being separated by the University Interscholastic League's biennial reclassification, both boys basketball teams intend to find success during the upcoming campaign.

While Belton appears primed to produce another playoff appearance in Class 5A, Lake Belton must contend with a change at head coach and an elevation to Class 6A.

Regardless of either situation, each will begin their process of finding cohesion on the

floor next weekend at the annual Texas Association of Basketball Coaches Boys Showcase.

The event brings together hundreds of teams from all corners of the state and along with providing an avenue to improve, it serves as a stage for players to display their individual skills and possibly capture the attention of some of the countless college scouts in attendance.

The prestigious three-day gathering begins June 26 and will be held at multiple venues in Duncanville and Mansfield, where the Tigers and Broncos will have plenty to prove.

Among those looking to place themselves in the spotlight is Belton senior Gavin Ross.

As a junior, Ross made his debut with the team and immediately proved his worth, helping the Tigers secure a share of the league championship before being named 16-5A All-District Newcomer of the Year. He averaged 4.9 points, 3.5 rebounds and 3.4 points en route to the Tigers' 29-7, 8-2 record.

It was Belton's fifth consecutive season with at least 27 victories.

Ross had plenty of help, however, and several teammates who did not graduate will

join him on the Showcase roster, including senior forward Ty Johnson — a member of 10-person all-district first team.

Johnson was efficient from all over the floor as a junior, making 35.3 percent of his shots from beyond the 3-point arc to average 14.8 points along with grabbing 5.6 rebounds per game.

Additionally, honorable mentions in senior shooting guard Abran Knight and senior guard Luke Munden will represent the Tigers.

Munden averaged 9.1 points, 2.9 assists and 2.3 rebounds, while Knight posted 4.9 points and 2.5 rebounds, making 30.8 percent of his 3-point attempts.

Lake Belton fans could catch a glimpse of what the future might hold as new head coach Jason Fossett oversees his squad for the first time.

Mikey Lockett, a senior guard who was placed on the first team, along with honorable mentions in teammates Allen Muchunu, a guard, and Jackson Striegler, a center, will spearhead the Broncos' attack. Both are seniors looking to help Lake Belton improve on its 20-14 record.

The Tigers' trek through their four-team pool starts June 26.



Belton will play Cypress Falls at Duncanville Fieldhouse at 3:10 p.m. before facing Dallas Highland Park at 6:25 p.m. The following day, the Tigers encounter Waxahachie at 11:10 a.m. at Duncanville High School to conclude their stay.

The Broncos begin play June 27 with a single game, opening against Dallas White at 6:45 p.m. Mansfield Summit High School will host the contest.

They return to the site on June 28 to play Brenham at 10:05 a.m. before traveling to Duncanville High School for a 2:25 p.m. tipoff against La Porte.



Broncos host annual summer basketball camp

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Broncos took their first steps toward a new program this week.

After spending the opening six years of the team's existence under the guidance of former head coach Zane Johnston, Lake Belton recently headed in a new direction following his departure for the same position at Little River Academy.

In his absence, veteran head coach Jason Fossett accepted the

role just weeks ago.

The Broncos' annual three-day summer camp started Monday, and the event served as the initial opportunity for Fossett to begin transforming the program into his vision, and it was successful.

Approximately 80 boys who are entering third through ninth grade attended each day, focusing on fundamental abilities like shooting, passing and dribbling while also instilling knowledge that can be utilized upon reaching the varsity level.

The group took part in a trio of two-and-a-half-hour sessions beginning at 8 a.m. each day with the kids being split into age and skill appropriate lessons.

For the younger boys, the time was spent honing basic skills through games, contests and drills, while the older boys were busy taking part in more of an average practice at the high school level, utilizing similar skills while also focusing on mechanics and strategies of the game.

Along with assistant coaches,

Fossett also had current players serve as instructors during the camp.

The hope is the approach will pay off for the program in the future as the Broncos are coming off consecutive 1-9 records in District 16-5A competition.

Fossett, a former head coach at Belton, has won four consecutive district titles entering his debut at Lake Belton. He captured two of the championships with the Tigers before spending the previous two years guiding Killeen Harker


Heights to first place in District 12-6A.

Fossett's experience could play a valuable role as the Broncos prepare to transition into a Class 6A program for the foreseeable future in the fall.



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Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

After experiencing tremendous success in recent seasons, the Lady Broncos are in search of a new head softball coach.

Kelsie McEachern recently resigned from the role after guiding the program for three years in order to accept the same position at Klein.

In her time at Lake Belton, McEachern led the squad to at least the third round of the playoffs each season, including an appearance in the Class 5A state semifinals in 2024.

She amassed an overall record of 107-17 with the Lady Broncos, winning the district championship each year.

McEachern is also the current Belton ISD Coach of the Year after recently receiving the accolade.

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

FOOTBALL

The football season is rapidly approaching, and the Tigers recently released their schedule of events leading up to the opening-night kickoff.

A mandatory parent meeting will be held July 30 at 6 p.m. before the first practice is conducted Aug. 3. On Aug. 6, a group fundraiser will start, and an intrasquad scrimmage and youth football clinic is set for Aug. 8.

Tiger Moms Camp and media day follow on Aug. 15, and Dads/Guardians and Decals will take place Aug. 22.

The regular-season schedule opens Aug. 28 with a home game against Pflugerville Hendrickson.

WRESTLING

Lake Belton is currently holding summer skills sessions each week.

The sessions run every Monday and Wednesday from 10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.

STRENGTH & CONDITIONING

Belton's summer strength and conditioning program is underway and is open to all middle school and high school athletes.

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

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

For more information, visit BeltonTigers.com.

RUNNING

Registration for the Lions on the Leon Captain "D" Dash for Sight is open until race day Oct. 3.

Hosted by the Belton Lions Club, the five-kilometer race will be held at Heritage Park beginning at 8:30 a.m. An opening ceremony will start at 8:15 a.m.

The event will begin and end at the Lions Pavillion.

Awards will be given to the top three finishers in each age group, and an award will be given to the best pirate costume.

The race proceeds help provide eye exams and glasses for those in need, and donations of used glasses will be accepted for recycling.



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

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



SUMMER CAMPS

Belton and Lake Belton are now offering summer sports camps to area youth.

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

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

Dates and times will vary by sport.

The next camps will be conducted by the Lady Broncos volleyball program.

The three-day events begin July 6 with third and fourth graders attending from noon to 2:30 p.m. each day, while fifth and sixth graders will follow from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Registration is open at events.hometownticketing.com/beltonisd.



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Basketball camp for sixth through ninth graders held this week

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

The Belton High School basketball program is back on the court this week, welcoming its next wave of young athletes for a second summer camp running June 15 through June 17.

After opening the summer with the Lil' Tiger Camp aimed at the communities youngest players, the Tigers are now turning their attention to an older age group. This week's session is built specifically for incoming sixth through ninth graders, giving middle school athletes a focused environment to sharpen their skills before they reach the high school level. The camp runs each afternoon from 1 to 4 p.m. across all three days.

The shift in age range brings a shift in approach. While the Lil' Tiger Camp leaned into introducing the game and building enthusiasm, this week's camp is designed to challenge players who already have a foundation

and are ready to be pushed. The three hour afternoon sessions give the Belton coaching staff time to dig into the details that matter at the next level. Ball handling under pressure, shooting mechanics, defensive positioning, and the kind of team concepts that separate developing players from finished ones.

For athletes in this age range, the timing could not be more important. The sixth through ninth grade window is when habits are formed and roles begin to take shape, and the Tigers are using this camp to give those players a head start. It is also a chance for the coaching staff to connect with the athletes who could one day fill out the varsity roster, building familiarity with the program's expectations and culture well before they ever suit up.

That long term vision is what camps like this one are really about. Beyond the drills and the scrimmages, the week is an investment in the future of Belton basketball, a way to develop the next generation of Tigers while reinforcing the standard the program holds at every level.

For a program focused on building from the ground up, having two distinct camps in a single summer reflects a commitment to player development across every age group. Whether a camper is just starting out or preparing to compete for a spot at the middle school and high school level, the Belton staff is making sure there is a place for every athlete to grow.



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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Administration with the Will Annexed for the Estate of Ronald Wayne Lewellen, Deceased, were issued on June 11, 2026, in Cause No. 26-CPB-00182 pending in the County Court at Law No.1 of Bell County, Texas, to: Sandra Prows. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the following person within the time and in the manner prescribed by law: Sandra Prows c/o: Amy R. Volz, 1100 NW Loop 410, Ste. 700, San Antonio, Texas 78023 /s/ Amy R. Volz Attorney for Personal Representative, State Bar No.: 24034095, 1100 NW Loop 410, Ste. 700, San Antonio, Texas 78023, Telephone: (210) 704-1500, Facsimile: (210) 704-1507
06.18PD

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 26CPB00377

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
RHONDA GLYNN ALEXANDER, Applicant, on June 12, 2026, filed an Application for Determination of Heirship and Letters of Independent Administration in a proceeding styled: BRENDA JO ANDREWS, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00377 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 June 18, 2026 in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.
All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it.
Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.
The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: Rebecca Trevino, 4807 Spicewood Springs Road Building 5 Suite 100, Austin TX 78759
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 June 12, 2026.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513
By: Andrea Marks Deputy
06.18

LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is given that original Letters of Administration for the Estate of MARTHA E. FISHER were issued on June 3, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00516, pending in the County Court at Law Number 1 of Bell County, Texas, to DAVID A. FISHER. All persons having claims against the estate, which is presently being administered, are required to submit them, within the time and manner prescribed by law, and before the estate is closed, addressed as follows: c/o DAVID A. FISHER 2404 Brown Circle Killeen, Texas 76543
Dated: June 12, 2026
R. Talmadge Hammock w/permission
BRETT H. PRITCHARD, Attorney for Administrator of the Estate of MARTHA E. FISHER
06.18

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 26CPB00371

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
BROOKE GUERRERO ESCOBAR, Applicant, on June 11, 2026, filed an Application for Declaration of Heirship and for Issuance of Letters of Independent Administration or Letters of Dependent Administration in the Alternative in a proceeding styled: KIMBERLY KAY KOSH-RUIZ, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00371 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 June 18, 2026 in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.
All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it.
Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.
The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: JOHN ERIC STOEBNER, 2106 BIRD CREEK DRIVE, TEMPLE TX 76502
The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication.
Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on June 12, 2026.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513
By: Andrea Marks Deputy
06.18

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 25CPB00695

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
KATHI MARIE DAVIDSON, Applicant, on November 12, 2025, filed an Application to Determine Heirship and for Letters of Independent Administration in a proceeding styled: BRUCE OLIVER DAVIDSON, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00695 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 June 18, 2026, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.
All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it.
Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.
The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: Eric Nelson, 1100 West Avenue, Austin, TX 78701
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

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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 June 11, 2026.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513
By: Erika DeCasas Deputy
06.18

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Administration for the Estate of LEON RIVERS, Deceased, were issued on May 28, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00279, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: TRACEY LOEB F/K/A TRACEY RIVERS. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: LEON RIVERS F/K/A TRACEY RIVERS, TRACEY LOEB, 11232 103rd Ave. SW Vashon, WA 98070
DATED the 4th day of June 2026.
J. ERIC STOEBNER, State Bar No.: 24049619, 2106 Birdcreek Drive, Temple, TX 76502, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: Eric@templelawoffice.com
06.18

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 26CPB00363

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
SHREE RENEE SLAY, Applicant, on June 08, 2026, filed an Application to Determine Heirship and for Letters of Independent Administration in a proceeding styled: CHARLES EDWARD FISHER, Deceased, and bearing the number 26CPB00363 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 June 18, 2026 in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.
All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it.
Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.
The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: BRETT PRITCHARD, 1201 S WS YOUNG DR STE C, KILLEEN TX 76543
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 June 09, 2026.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513
By: Andrea Marks Deputy, 06.18

NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS AGAINST THE ESTATE OF ROBERT JACK CAMPBELL, DECEASED

NOTICE is hereby given that original Letters of Testamentary were issued on June 2, 2026, in a proceeding styled Estate of Robert Jack Campbell, Deceased, in Cause Number 26CPB00251, pending in the County Court At Law #1 of Bell County, Texas.
Claims may be presented in care of the attorney for the Independent Executrix, addressed as follows: Tina Alyne Polston Campbell Independent Executrix of the Estate of Robert Jack Campbell, Deceased, c/o Burk Roberts, Roberts & Roberts, L.L.P., 2501 East Elms Rd., Ste. A, Killeen, Texas 76542-3023
All persons having claims against this estate, which is currently being administered, are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.
Signed on June 4, 2026.
Roberts & Roberts, L.L.P., Attorneys for Tina Alyne Polston Campbell
By: Burk Roberts
06.18

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Bell County Public Health District among regional agencies preparing for World Cup visitors

Special to the Journal

Regional public health agencies across Central Texas have expanded coordination with regional, state, and federal partners as the region prepares to welcome an increase in visitors associated with the FIFA World Cup.

Enhanced monitoring and collaboration help identify potential health concerns early and support a rapid, coordinated response, helping protect the health and safety of both residents and visitors.

Along with the Bell County Public Health District, participating agencies include the Austin Public Health, Bastrop County Public Health Department, Hays County Health Department, Waco-McLennan County Public Health District, and Williamson County and Cities Health District.

Summer in Central Texas brings sunshine and outdoor activities and also brings seasonal health risks that public health agencies monitor closely.

Warmer temperatures, increased mosquito activity, outdoor dining, and large community events can contribute to heat-related illnesses, mosquito-borne diseases, and foodborne illness outbreaks.

Regional public health officials encourage everyone to take simple precautions while enjoying outdoor summer activities and community events.

“We are excited to welcome visitors from around the world to our communities and help them experience everything Central Texas has to offer,” said Robert Kirkpatrick, Jr., Executive Director for the Bell County Public Health District. “Knowledge and awareness of seasonal health risks help people make informed decisions for themselves and their families. Taking a few simple precautions can help everyone enjoy a safe, healthy, and memorable summer.”

Heat and humidity can create dangerous condi-

tions during the summer months and quickly lead to serious heat-related illnesses, especially for young children, older adults, outdoor workers, athletes, and those without reliable air conditioning.

Watch for signs of heat exhaustion, including:

- Heavy sweating
- Dizziness or fainting
- Nausea
- Cool, clammy skin
- Muscle cramps

Taking precautions can help reduce the risk of heat-related illness while enjoying outdoor activities and summer events, such as staying hydrated, limiting outdoor activity during the hottest parts of the day, and wearing lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing and a hat when outdoors. Also, to make sure older adults and others without reliable air conditioning are staying cool and safe.

Taking a few simple precautions can help reduce mosquito bites and lower the risk of mosquito-borne diseases. Drain standing water in flowerpots, pet dishes, and clogged gutters so mosquitoes do not have a place to breed. Treat water that cannot be drained. Also, use an EPA-registered insect repellent and dress in long sleeves and pants when spending time outdoors.

Warm summer temperatures can also create ideal conditions for harmful bacteria to grow and increase the risk of foodborne illness. Taking a few simple precautions can help keep food safe, such as cleaning hands, utensils, and cooking surfaces often; separating produce, meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs during preparation; cooking food to the proper temperature using a food thermometer; and chilling perishable foods within two hours.

An anticipated influx of visitors to Central Texas has prompted epidemiologists to enhance surveillance

efforts and strengthen coordination with healthcare providers and public health partners.

“We want everyone to enjoy a fun and healthy summer,” said Dr. Amber Erickson, Executive Director for the Williamson County and Cities Health District. “Whether you’re exploring the region, attending community events, or enjoying the outdoors, a little preparation can make a big difference. Simple steps can help reduce health risks to keep you and your family safe all season long.”

For Local Public Health Information, visit Bell County Public Health District at www.bellcounty-health.org/.



What's the Difference?

Find the four differences between the two pictures.

A



B



Answers: 1. Extra fireworks burst on left 2. Missing building back right 3. Missing light on building at front right 4. Extra building on skyline

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1812: France declares war on Russia, starting Napoleon's invasion.

1911: George V and Mary of Teck are crowned King and Queen of the United Kingdom.

1986: Diego Maradona scores the famous "Hand of God" goal in the World Cup.

Holiday FACT:

In 2026, the United States will celebrate this big and exciting event on July 4.

Answer: 250th anniversary

NEW WORD

IGNITE

to catch fire or to cause to catch fire

How they say that in...

- English:** Pop
- Spanish:** Pum
- Italian:** Scoppio
- French:** Bruit
- German:** Knall

Did You KNOW?

Modern fireworks use metallic salts for color and can reach temperatures 15 times hotter than boiling water.



Get the PICTURE?



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Fireworks

EDITORIAL

Fresh eyes

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

Sometimes it's fun to watch home improvement shows, especially ones where people are getting their houses ready to put on the market.

One thing I've noticed when watching those shows is how people often can't see what's right under their noses. They're so attached to their current home that they can't or won't make the effort to make some simple improvements to better their chances of selling. Honey, if your house has been on the market for six months, it's either overpriced or needs some spit 'n polish, heavy on the polish. That's my armchair real estate agent opinion.

Homeowners are aghast when someone comes through their house and says, "Wow, it's really dark in here." Or they might say, "What purpose does this room have? It's hard to tell with all the clutter."

Not their house. But by the end of the show they

realize that most of the comments were right on, that it took an outsider's view to make some subtle (or not-so-subtle, if we're talking about removing 1970's wallpaper) improvements.

I think we get so busy with our routines that we think things are fine just the way they are, and we're quick to use the "if it ain't broke, don't fix it" motto and apply it to our house, our yard, our vehicles, or jobs, our town, our relationships.

Worse, we get defensive if someone suggests ways we can improve. If you've watched those real estate shows, you see homeowners in denial about changes that really should be made to their home in order for it to sell. The house might be perfect for their personal style, but for someone else coming in, it's a deal breaker.

How many deal breakers do we go through with our city? Do we ever believe someone else's opinion doesn't matter because they're an outsider?

"Well, you're not from around here, so you just don't understand the way things are done."

One of the strengths of our area is its diversity. We're shooting ourselves in the foot if we disregard someone coming in with fresh eyes. What opportunities we miss.

Maybe they'll have solutions and ideas we haven't considered.

Maybe it's a good idea to swallow our pride and entertain another point of view once in a while.

Maybe it's time to play "let's pretend" and look at things from the viewpoint of an outsider. We might be surprised at what we see.

6 July 1975

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

In addition to my duties as a writer for this feature's flagship newspaper, I also assist with maintaining the archives. Inside these archives are a series of very large bound books representing an eclectic mix of newspapers from the 1950s to the very early 1990s. The set isn't complete, with gaps in some of the years, and at least one paper that was included has had a portion cut out. However, they still offer a valuable glimpse at what came before.

With the 250th anniversary of the United States coming up, I decided to take a look at one of these books to see what it had to say. I was looking for the book that covered July of 1976, the 200th anniversary, but in one of those glitches I occasionally get in my brain due to autism I instead grabbed the book covering July of 1975.

The first issue for July of 1975 was Sunday, July 6th. The headline? "Council Grants Use For Moose Lodge." I admit I only skimmed the story. It was mostly about recent decisions of the city council, such as allowing the local Moose Lodge an alcoholic beverages permit. This was when I realized I'd opened the wrong volume, but it was still the issue after July 4th so I decided to keep looking.

That's when I hit the religion page. The bulk of the page was a very large photo of the Washington Monument, with church listings arrayed on the edges of the photo and sponsors below the photo. Atop the photo, however, was the following sermon entitled "The STRENGTH of a Nation", unsigned by the now anonymous author –

"At this time, our thoughts are turned to our nation and the war that was fought

to bring freedom to our land. Pictured here is a monument to the leader of our people at that time. The people were willing to give their lives that we might be free from tyranny, and have the right to worship as we please. God was with us then as he was with the children of Israel when Moses led them from Egypt. Upon receiving their freedom they sang... 'The Lord Is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.' Exodus 15:2"

Now, for those who don't know, the first half of 1975 was a very dark period for the United States. It was the final months of the Vietnam War leading to the Fall of Saigon. It was the aftermath of the Watergate Hearings, with assorted convictions. It was an energy crisis. There

were at least two plane crashes I found record of. These, and so many more things, were all hitting at once.

And yet this unknown author had the faith and hope to write the above sermon.

Well, let's look at 2026. Things are also getting to be rather rough. There are once again dire pronouncements about the future. Yet for everything that's going on, the United States still holds fast. This is our country, ladies and gentlemen. It's our greatest hope as much as it is our greatest responsibility. Each of us has the obligation to lace our shoes up, get out there, and keep the American Dream alive. Meet your neighbors. Vote. Pick up trash around your town. Volunteer. These and so many other things will help keep everyone and everything going.

We are a beacon. We need to keep that beacon lit.

Looking Down

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Mangan

I will preface this with the clear statement this is not a political issue to me, at all. However I am tired of hearing celebrities tell me what to do politically or health-wise or even morally. If you have read my column or met me you might deduce that I do not have my PhD, however that doesn't mean I need someone to follow me around to help me make decisions. Those days have long passed, and that was my parent's job, and one that was done well, not just parents, but other relatives as well. I have learned how to eat well, I know what types of food I like, I have a preference in clothing, and I certainly have my political opinions (none of which I share here, or rarely share at all).

Let me take some celebrities down a notch or two. They are someone that is good at make believe, something most of us outgrew early in life. They might have some talent that allows them to do and say things that others cannot do, however their ability to play like a character doesn't give them any credibility when it comes to other topics. I mean if someone plays a hero in a movie why would they be an expert when it comes to me eating meat? I enjoy meat, it seems healthy for me, I have the proper teeth, I have mastered the use of a steak knife, why should I eat bean sprouts because some actor tells me to. More than once a celebrity has raised the ire of good old beef raising ranchers.

Perhaps being an actor (using the generic male term here

to save space, no sense writing a lot of extra words that I don't have to write just to make a point) is something that requires skill and or talent, I am not sure. I know that it was never a career that I wanted. Oh I learned some Shakespeare and did a good job of reciting it well, even in front of people. Actors these days have it so easy, they have printed scripts all written in English. In the days of Shakespeare they were not well paid and had to read the script in Old English font, and that odd English accent.

Some actors don't see an issue with spending a half million dollars on an automobile, yet believe we should drive some sissy half electric car because it is good for the economy. In Texas, oil is good for the economy, so I am using my part. I do have one vehicle that gets exceptional mileage, so I am doing my part. What I won't give up is my truck, I have things to haul and I can't do that in some wimpy little car that might stop moving on the way home because it is out of juice. I think we have a place for some alternate technology when it comes to vehicles, and we need to put time and effort into them. In the meantime I want my normal autos. Come on, Jan and Dean and The Beach Boys would never have sung a song about a hybrid car. I mean some of these cars might be fast, but quick from the line making a "pfffffffffffffffff" noise just isn't something that tickles me. You might outrun my truck, but my truck sounds cool and I can stick your hybrid in the bed

and haul it to the nearest power outlet.

Speaking of my truck, and well, my bike too, they all have assorted leather accessories most notably the seats. This is just another part of the beef raising heritage of Texas, beside leather is comfortable. Oh I hear the yankees complaining about the hot or cold seats, well that is just something you have to live with. I remember my first vehicle, it was a truck with plastic seats and no air conditioning, talk about hot and cold seats. I can only imagine the first generation of trucks, little if any cab, hard seats, exposure to the elements, slow, and could haul a fraction of what my current truck hauls, not to mention no power mirrors!

How about celebrities stick to what they do best and pretending to be someone they are not, and I will just do what I want. I will eat food that I like and own the vehicles I want to drive. They can take their millions and do what they want, which is rarely in line with their public opinions by the way. I don't really like movies, I just don't enjoy them, so I won't go see them. I doubt any celebrity will be in need of a ride in my truck or need to haul something from the lumber yard to their mansion. I guess we are even, our lives won't cross so I don't really want to hear the ongoing advice. Perhaps the next time I need to pretend to be someone I am not, I will seek out an actor for advice.

The Key to Happiness

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

We humans are an odd sort. It only takes an hour in an airport to see a full spectrum of strangeness, from wardrobe choice and hairstyles to some of the weirdest behavior you could imagine. But perhaps the thing that takes the trophy for bizarre habits is something we all have in common. Every last one of us.

Why do we give more weight to negative events than positive ones? Everybody does it. It's in our nature. Experts say for experiences, it takes three positives for every negative one for us to feel pretty good about it. So if you have fun 75% of the time when you play golf, you'll keep doing it. But if it's 50%, you'll probably quit.

When it comes to relationships, the ratio is 5 to 1. If my math is correct (and it may not be... I teach English), that means we need to feel good about our interactions with someone 85% of the time to have positive feelings about the relationship. And that's for the *average* person... some of us need that ratio to be even higher. Good thing I have amazing, loving people in my life who put up with my quirky, super-sensitive, cry-at-Disney-movies nature and love me anyway.

But no matter how great our experiences or how awesome our relationships, our personal wellness comes down to *us*. No one can make us happy. It's an attitude we choose. We can dwell on the bad things in our lives and be miserable, or we can focus on the positives. One practice that makes all the difference is the discipline of gratitude.

What is Gratitude?

Gratitude is a humble recognition of the good things in our lives, along with awareness that they came from something outside ourselves. It fosters a feeling of connection to others, to nature, and to God. A growing body of research shows that gratitude improves our health, both mentally and physically.

In the past decade, many studies have shown that people who make a conscious effort to think about things they're grateful for tend to be happier and have less depression and anxiety. These studies point to better immune function, reduced pain, lower stress levels, and improved blood pressure and heart health, all from a thankful attitude.

How Does Gratitude Help?

According to Amy E. Keller, PsyD, "Experiencing gratitude activates neurotransmitters like dopamine, which we associate with pleasure, and serotonin, which regulates our mood. It also causes the brain to release oxytocin, a hormone which induces feelings like trust and generosity which promotes social bonding and feeling connected."

Why does gratitude work so well? According to experts, a grateful attitude helps us appreciate what we already have instead of focusing on what we don't have, or how we wish things were. Including a daily practice of gratitude may feel forced at first, but consistent focus on what we have instead of what we don't have has been proven to increase overall happiness and wellbeing in most people. The effects last for months beyond the last gratitude exercise. The key is *not to stop being grateful*, so you won't lose the benefits.

Here are some ideas to help you exercise an attitude of gratitude:

Write thank-you notes. An old-fashioned, hand-written note is great, but emails and texts are also appreciated.

Make a phone call. Tell someone how much you appreciate something they did or the influence they had on your life.

Visit someone. Drop by or schedule an appointment to connect with someone you're grateful for. Use the time to tell them, face to face, what you appreciate about them.

Send a mental thank you. Perhaps the person you want

to thank has passed on. Maybe you want to thank the stranger who let you go in front of them in line, but you have no idea how to reach them. Send a mental thank-you. It will make you feel better and help you focus on something positive.

Keep a gratitude journal. Write daily or weekly letters to yourself or simply keep a running list of things you're thankful for. One cool thing about writing things down is that you can go back and re-read your entries at any time.

Pray. Set aside a specific time to focus on things you're grateful for and thank God for them. Consider the sunset, the cool breeze through your hair, and the gift of a child's belly laugh.

Be mindful. Mindfulness refers to focusing on right here, right now without judgment. Spend time thinking about what you're grateful for each day, no matter how insignificant. Be thankful for the shoes you're wearing, the roof over your head, your job, or even the bird singing outside your window.

Walk. Exercise helps our bodies *and* our spirits. As you move your body, consider things you see that you're grateful for, such as the trees, the weather, or a friendly face.

Create a family practice. If you live with others, consider starting a daily or weekly tradition of sharing things you're grateful for. Making gratitude a habit helps normalize this positive thought process and retrains our brains to focus less on the negative.

These are just a few ideas for how to make gratitude a normal, everyday process. The practice of gratitude can impact your health, your happiness, and every aspect of your life for the better.

"Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:18



Local Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Activities

June

06/17: Popcorn Bridge
06/18: Nonfiction Book Club
06/22: Well Read Women, Monday
Canasta

06/23: Singing Bluebonnets
06/25: Mexican Train Dominoes
06/26: Fun Lunch
06/27: 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."

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

We are making HISTORY in Belton, Texas with the 1st Annual Juneteenth parade Celebration & Heart of Texas Miss Juneteenth Scholarship Pageant! This event is about honoring the TRUE meaning of Juneteenth—celebrating freedom, culture, and the strength of our community. In a city where this history has not always been fully recognized, we are creating a space to uplift, educate, and celebrate together. We need your support! We are currently seeking: Parade entries (organizations, schools, dance teams, car clubs, etc.), Vendors (food trucks, small businesses, artisans, nonprofits), Pageant participants for the Heart of Texas Miss Juneteenth Scholarship Program, and Sponsors & community partners. Let's come together to rebuild, support Black-owned businesses, and create something powerful for future generations. For registration and inquiries call 254-534-2225.

NAMI - June 23

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet both on TUESDAY, June 23rd 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.

1976 Class Reunion - June 27

Join your classmates on June 27, 2026, 6:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. at The singing Coyote Farm, 6841 West FM 436, Belton for an evening of Fun, Fellowship, and Fireworks.

Temple's Health & Wellness Expo - June 27

Temple's Health & Wellness Expo is bringing a fresh new approach to health, wellness, and community connection on Saturday, June 27, from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the Frank W. Mayborn Civic & Convention Center.

America's 250th Birthday Party, MPR - July 3

Bring the family for a morning of patriotic fun as Morgan's Point Resort celebrates America's 250th birthday! The event begins with a 10:00 a.m. ceremony at the City Hall flagpole, Morgan's Point Resort City Hall, 8 Morgan's Point Blvd., Morgan's Point Resort. Followed by outdoor games, birthday cake, and a Glow Room Party inside the Library. Additional activities may be added as the date approaches. All are welcome.

Bell County Master Gardeners- July 18

Join us for Propagation: Seed Collecting, Saving and Planting. Master Gardener Dave Slaughter will present sexual reproduction in the garden. He will help us develop the skills to properly harvest, handle, store and then test your seeds. Learn to plant using the correct temperature to maximize the seed starting process. July 18th, Thursday, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., at Bell County Extension Office- Learning Center, 1605 N. Main Street. No registration needed.

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

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

Marine Corp League will meet the third Tuesday of each month at VFW 3859. Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. and meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. 201 VFW Dr, Harker heights, Tx 76548. Email commandant@mc11249tx.com for more information.

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

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

Bell County Historical Commission holds their meetings on the fourth Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the historical Bell County Court House, 101 E. Central Ave in Belton. Join us in our vision of preserving and promoting Bell County's rich historical heritage for current and future generations. We are dedicated to initiating and conducting programs that preserve and celebrate the county's historic cultural resources in alignment with state laws governing historical preservation in Texas.

Our community resources consist of a research room, book repository, cemetery information, historical markers and monument records. Our services include information on historic preservation, educational programming, history community outreach and partnerships. We welcome you to join other history minded folks and get involved by serving on one of our committees that consist of preservation, cemetery, markers and education. To volunteer or for more information please visit historicalcommission@bellcounty.texas.gov, call 254-933-5917 or visit the office located in the historic Bell County Courthouse, 101 E. Central Ave., RM 117.

The Bell County Genealogical Society meets the fourth Saturday of each month. The group offers free Genealogy Guidance. Members of the Bell County Genealogical Society will be present to help those with questions about researching their family trees. General meetings are held in the Bell County Museum, 201 North Main St., Belton, TX. All meetings are open to the public. You do not have to be from Bell County or have ancestors from Bell County to participate. For additional information please visit our website at <https://txbcgs.org/home/events/>

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

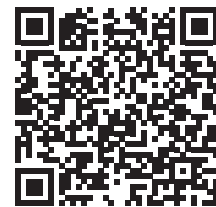
Bell Fine Arts Visitors welcome Wednesday's from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 306 E 5th Ave in Belton. If you have a desire to meet, learn, and work together with those of similar interests or just curious, come visit with us and see what we are about. Mah Jong games are available every Monday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Come join the fun and meet new folks. For more information text Jeanne at 409-313-0611 or just come by.

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.

Community Information

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



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

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

Citizens Helping in Police Service (CHIPS)

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

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

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

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

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Brazos River Authority rescinds stage 1 drought status

Special to the Journal

The Brazos River Authority (BRA) announced on Tuesday morning that Stage 1 – Drought Watch has been rescinded for seven of the nine reservoirs placed under the status in March.

With recent rains and inflows, water supply storage in Lakes Belton, Stillhouse Hollow, Whitney, Georgetown, Somerville, Aquilla, and Limestone has filled, and drought conditions are not expected to return in the near future.

The removal of drought designation allows customer cities, industries and agriculture that receive water supply from these reservoirs to change or remove restrictions they currently have in place for water supply use.

The Stage 1 – Drought Watch declaration, issued on March 27, 2026, remains in effect for Lakes Possum Kingdom and Proctor.

The BRA will continue to monitor conditions throughout its water supply system and will provide notification if future changes to drought designations become necessary.

The goals of Stage 1 – Drought Watch are to raise awareness of the developing drought situation and to achieve a voluntary 5 percent reduction of the water use that would have occurred in the absence of any drought contingency measures.

The Brazos River Authority monitors water supply and drought conditions within the basin and will notify both contract holders and the public when changes under the plan are made or additional action is required. For more information, please call 888-922-6272 or email information@brazos.org.

Health & Wellness Expo set for June 27

Special to the Journal

Temple's Health & Wellness Expo will take place on Saturday, June 27, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Frank W.

Mayborn Civic & Convention Center.

Designed as more than a traditional health fair, this new kind of expo combines wellness, family fun, and an America 250 celebration into one excit-

ing indoor event.

Families can beat the summer heat while exploring local businesses, discovering new ways to feel their best, dancing together, and learning from speakers sharing the latest trends in wellness.

The event highlights the idea that true wellness goes beyond physical health — bringing together the mental, social, emotional, financial, and spiritual areas of life that help create overall well-being.

With more than 48 exhibitors, attendees will have the opportunity to connect face-to-face with local businesses, discover hidden gems in the community, and explore new ideas to start, restart, or renew their wellness journey.

From preventative services like Craft Body Scan to conversations with doctors, nutrition experts, fitness professionals, financial advisors, and other wellness leaders, exhibitors will showcase fresh ideas for individuals and families to take better care of themselves.

The fun continues throughout the day with free family activities, speaker sessions, interactive experiences, and

an America 250 celebration bringing all ages together.

Families can enjoy balloon art, juggling fun, artist demonstrations, music, movement, and hands-on activities, including the special 4:00 pm Dancin' Thru the Decades event where attendees can dance through America's history with the #1 dances to the #1 songs of each decade.

Attendees can enjoy speaker sessions throughout the day exploring today's growing wellness trends, including preventative health, early detection, mental and emotional wellness, financial wellness, fitness, longevity, and more.

Attendees are encouraged to wear red, white, and blue as the community comes together for this America 250 celebration. Adult admission is only \$5, and youth ages 16 and under are free. Children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Concessions will be available onsite.

For a complete schedule of activities, speaker sessions, and exhibitors, visit www.txwellnessexpo.com.

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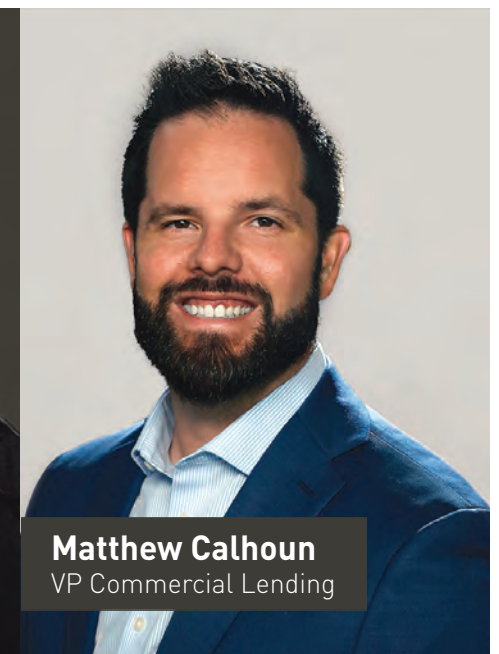
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EVP Bell County



Rodney Morales
SVP Commercial Lending



Ashley Marshall
VP Commercial Lending



Matthew Calhoun
VP Commercial Lending

Happy FATHER'S DAY

#1 DAD

Celebrating all the dads, grandfathers, and father figures in our community.

From The Belton Journal