

LOOK INSIDE



BELL COUNTY'S 2025
JULY 4TH CELEBRATION

Schedule
Of Events

4th Of July
Celebration Guide

Budget presentation focuses on Capital Improvement Projects

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Belton's Director of Finance Mike Rodgers presented a report at Tuesday's city council meeting on a five-year capital improvement plan that ends in Fiscal 2030.

The capital improvement plan identifies Belton's infrastructure needs for the next five years, and it provides the potential impact of these projects on future operating budgets.

Nearly \$80 million in capital improvement projects have been identified. That number

includes \$25.3 million in utility projects and \$54.3 million in "general government projects."

According to Rodgers, a total of \$10.76 million will be spent on capital projects in Fiscal Year 2026 on items such as street and sidewalk projects, public safety projects, water and wastewater projects and drainage projects.

The "general government projects" include converting the recently purchased Miller Heights Elementary School building into a public safety center

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Downtown Belton Street Party to kick off Belton 4th of July Celebration



File photo

Despite the heat, crowds of people line the streets for the street party.

Special to the Journal

The Belton Area Chamber of Commerce is kicking off the 4th of July Celebration with a Downtown Belton Street Party on Saturday, June 28 featuring live music, food trucks, craft beer and wine, activities and games, and fun for all. This non-ticketed family friendly event is open to the public at no charge with a goal of bringing people together to celebrate in the Downtown Belton area.

The event officially begins at 5:30 p.m. and live musical entertainment will be performing on the Vista Real Estate/Cory Herring Homes Stage on Central beginning at 6:30 p.m. The stage will be located in front of the Historic Bell County Courthouse on Central Avenue. Featuring encore performances, leading off will be

the popular award-winning Tejano band, Grupo Pression, and then closing out the evening will be the Leon River Band, all under the direction of Stage Manager Seth Vance with Texas Tour Gear.

A special added event this year is the Little Miss & Little Mister Belton 4th of July contest, open to children ages 3-7 and 8-10. The contest will be held during the break between bands around 8:00 p.m. No pre-registration is needed and all children in attendance can participate. Prizes include the opportunity to be featured in the 4th of July Parade.

"We are excited about bringing this event back to our community for the 4th of July Celebration," stated Randy Pittenger, Belton Area Chamber President/CEO. "We are especially thankful for our event sponsors who are

making this available to our community and visitors at no charge."

Sponsors for the Belton Downtown Street Party include Vista Real Estate, Cory Herring Homes, CGI, Extraco Banks, H-E-B, KWTX News 10, Scores Pizza & Wings, Summer Fun, West Temple Orthodontics, Edward Jones, First Community Title, ASCO Equipment, Bold Republic Brewing Company, Hole in the Wall, Redbox+ of Central Texas, and Schoepf's BBQ.

Several family friendly activities will be available throughout the event. West Temple Orthodontics is sponsoring the Photo Booth, First Community Title will have face painting, Temple Children's Museum will have a kids activity

See **STREET PARTY**,
Page A2

Cherished scouting camp now open to public



BELTON JOURNAL/HARVEY JACKSON OSS

The ribbon is cut during the grand reopening ceremony for Camp Tahuaya, which is now available for public use.

By Harvey Jackson Oss
The Belton Journal

Camp Tahuaya celebrated its grand opening on Friday, June 20.

The camp, which since 1932 has exclusively been used for scouting activities, now welcomes the general public to its grounds.

Festivities began with the traditional raising of the flag and scout salute by a group of scout alumni. Wendy Shaw, CEO of the Longhorn Council, then briefly took the podium.

The Longhorn Council is one of 240 scouting councils across the United States and provides scouting opportuni-

ties to 23 counties throughout North and Central Texas. The council operates three primary camps, the southernmost located being Tahuaya, as well as several primitive properties.

Shaw was followed by Randy Pittenger, President of the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce. The chamber co-hosted the event as part of their mission to promote economic growth and quality of life in the Belton area.

"Whether it's families getting together, or business groups coming out and using the facilities, that will be a great resource for our community," said

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98.7 FM to serve local area with launch expected in September

Joe and Sara Royer of Temple are launching a new community focused radio station near downtown Temple. With about 100 watts of power, 98.7 FM will serve Temple, Belton and most of Bell County starting in September.

Courtesy Photo/
JohnJohn Montelongo



By David Stone
The Belton Journal

A 100-watt community radio station that will serve the Belton and Temple area is expected to launch in September.

The not-for-profit station is owned by the Royer Foundation, created by the husband-and-wife team of Sarah and Joe Royer.

"We're shooting to launch the station in September," Joe said. "There's a lot to do — fundraising and we need to purchase some equipment — but September is our goal."

The station will serve Temple, Belton and all of Bell County.

"We have a low-power FM license — KTCP will reach as far as Copperas Cove," he said.

"Our vision for 98.7 FM is to bring the community closer together by amplifying voices, helping us better understand and appreciate one another," Joe said.

"We are passionate about communication and education, and through this station,"

See **98.7 FM**,
Page A2

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Allison receives maximum sentence in high school stabbing



**Caysen
Tyler Allison**
By Harvey Jackson Oss
The Belton Journal

On Monday, June 23, Caysen Tyler Allison received his final sentencing for a fatal altercation with a classmate Joe Ramirez that occurred at Belton High School just over three years ago on May 3, 2022. Allison was initially found guilty

of criminally negligent homicide by jury trial in April, a conviction that came with an imprisonment range of six months to two years. However, after further review in May the court added an assault with a deadly weapon enhancement that raised the possible time in prison from two years to ten.

Sentencing took place in the 478th Judicial District Court under Judge Wade Faulkner at the Bell County Justice Center.

Allison sat flanked on both sides by his attorneys Melissa Tyroch and Zachary Boyd.

Witnesses called by both the state and the defense took the stand to

testify. Among the prosecution’s witnesses was a former BHS teacher Caitlyn Johnson who retired due to PTSD from the incident.

Johnson spoke on how the anxiety from that day has continued to affect her life.

“I used to go out and do a lot of things, but now I stay home,” said Johnson.

Members of Ramirez’s family took the stand in order to speak on his character.

“Joe was the most kind and caring and loving kid you’d ever know” shared his aunt Nikki Roberts.

“His presence is so missed,” stated Amanda Rios, his mother.

Rios expressed her discontent with the fact that Allison was not found guilty of the murder or manslaughter of her son. “There is no justice, this is not justice.” When asked if she forgave Allison, Rios stated that she did not and explained “me and God have already had that talk, and he understands.”

Allison’s parents James and Denise both took the stand in defense of their son. James Allison argued that the defendant had changed significantly since the incident in high school.

“He’s grown up a lot, he’s more serious now.” The parents stated that they feared retaliatory violence from the Ramirez

family and had been followed home from court by one of Ramirez’s sisters.

“We will always be looking over our shoulders,” said Denise Allison. She also spoke on how Allison had been baptized this year and gave his life to Christ.

The defense and the prosecution delivered their closing statements. Boyd argued that Allison would be endangered in prison.

“When you sentence Caysen to prison ... it’ll be a death sentence.” The state, represented by John Erskine, advocated that Allison receive the full ten years.

After a two-hour recess, Judge Faulkner re-

turned with his ruling that Allison would receive ten years imprisonment. Family and friends of Ramirez erupted into applause but were quickly quieted by Faulkner. Roberts and Rios were given time to speak off the record.

Passions soared as Rios took the stand.

“I’ve waited 1,147 days for this moment to look at you and tell you what a coward you are.”

Remarks about Allison’s girlfriend provoked laughter from the gallery. Allison was handcuffed and escorted out of the room shortly after, sent off with cheers of “we love you” from his own family and “have fun” from those of Ramirez.

Street Party- From Page A1

area, Vista Real Estate and Extraco Banks will have corn hole and other games set up on the courthouse lawn, and other activities will be available. A variety of food trucks and craft brew will also be on site.

In addition to these activities, two special efforts will be involved raising funds for non-profit organizations: Belton Christian Youth Center and Belton Police Foundation.

The week of July 4th will be full of festivities, including the annual Carnival in Liberty Park July 1-6, and the 101st annual PRCA Rodeo at the Cadence Bank Center (formerly known as the Bell County Expo). On

98.7 FM- From Page A1

tion, we’re combining technology, creativity, and community engagement to provide a platform for connection. By telling our stories, we can build a stronger, more united future.”

The Royers bring a wealth of broadcasting experience to KTCP. Joe is a Ham radio operator, and he now has six radio licenses. Sarah has a strong background in television — she has owned four stations in three states.

“When we started the Royer Foundation, we were looking at ways to serve our community,” he said. “We arranged to get three homeless people housed and started thinking about other ways of doing things for our area. That’s how we came up with the idea of a community radio station.”

Joe said the new station will be able to train for an on-air show.

“We will have a morning show, probably hosted by Sarah and I at first, and we will have some talk shows and music,” he added. “We have 12 hours of airtime to fill — the station will be on the air from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. — and we would love to have local program-

ming. We would love to have some local musicians.”

“We are working with Temple College and we already have a TC intern on board. We also hope to reach out to local school districts.”

Most of the on-air folks will be local volunteers, but the Royers have hired JohnJohn Montelongo as station manager. The original plan was to put the station in the basement of their home, but instead they are looking to move into an old fire station near downtown Temple.

“We’re looking into a lot of options,” Joe said. “Maybe some local football on Friday nights and perhaps live remotes.”

As part of its dedication to community engagement, the Royer Foundation plans to work with Temple College and Temple Independent School District — a district where they would like to integrate radio broadcasting into science, technology, engineering and mathematics education for K-12 students.

“This initiative will provide

Friday, July 4, the day will include the Patriotic Program, Parade, Festival on Nolan Creek in Liberty Park featuring the 1st Cavalry Rock Band from Fort Hood and the Rev, White & Blue Car Show, and then close out with the Backyard Party at Schoepf’s Concert and Fireworks, featuring Randall King in concert prior to the fireworks show. The concert is a ticketed event, with reserved tables available, but the fireworks show is free and open to the public.

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

young learners with hands-on experience in broadcast technology and storytelling, inspiring the next generation of innovators and communicators,” Royer said.

“Our vision for 98.7 FM is to bring the community closer together by amplifying voices, helping us better understand and appreciate one another,” he said.

Joe said he and Sarah would love to teach kids how to do their own radio show, and perhaps broadcast those shows on Saturday mornings.

Being a non-profit, the station can’t delve into politics. Also, there won’t be commercials like those heard on other stations.

“We are passionate about communication and education, and through this station, we’re combining technology, creativity, and community engagement to provide a platform for connection. By telling our stories, we can build a stronger, more united future.”

Tahuaya- From Page A1

Pittenger.

Afterwards Joe Burnett, another Longhorn Council official, took his turn to speak on the impact Camp Tahuaya has had over the years.

“Our camp has always been more than just a scout camp — it’s a place where people of all ages discover their potential and build confidence that lasts a lifetime.”

Pittenger presented a red and gold ribbon and invited all guests to join in holding it taut for the ceremonial cutting. Tours of the camp were offered, as well as complimentary lunch in the Lakeside Bistro where attendees were encouraged to sign the ribbon.

Camp Tahuaya has been renovated to a great degree in preparation for the transition to general use.

“It’s ultimately a \$10.2 million campaign,” commented construction liaison Steve Carney. Additional maintenance funds will likely bring the total between \$13 million to \$15 million.

The renovations include 26 family glamping suites, 4 cabins, a catering facility, and 12 RV spaces.

“It was really a lot of electrical work underground, fixing drainage, putting in new roads and trails, that sort of thing” explained Camp Director Becca Kowalski. Phase 2 of renovations will incorporate a welcome center and pool.

Renovation efforts have relied heavily on community donations from individuals such as Dave Chambers, who has given about \$1,200 and volunteered his time for the past 30 years.

“We love scouting and we want to see it grow,” he said.

The decision to open Tahuaya to the public was driven both by fiscal incentives and the opportunity to make scouting more well known and accessible. Camp revenues from non-scout visitors help to offset the operating costs of the Longhorn Council, which is a non-profit organization. The camp gives visitors a chance to experience scouting activities for themselves without having to commit to being a scout.

“It gives us an opportunity to spotlight scouting so everybody has a chance to see it, experience it, and try it,” remarked Shaw.



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

Publisher: David Tuma, David@BeltonJournal.Com; **Classifieds & Legals:** Elsie Wiley, Legals@BeltonJournal.Com; **Marketing Experts:** Kimberly Cables, Ads@BeltonJournal.Com; Madison Sinclair, Sales@BeltonJournal.Com; **News Editor:** Lynette Sowell, LSowell@CoveLeaderPress.com; **Sports Editor:** Clay Whittington, Sports@BeltonJournal.Com; **Sports Reporters:** Tony Adams, Aries Ramos **Graphic Artists:** Jason Bachie, Emma Gill, Jordan Hernandez, Kat Burkhouse; **Creative Consultant:** Susan Kolodziejczyk; **News Reporters:** David Stone, Daniel Moctezuma, Michelle Rodriguez, Annie Dockery, Harvey Jackson Oss

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OBITUARIES



Shine
Judith Prince Shine
August 2, 1942 – June 18, 2025

Judith Ann Prince Shine, a devoted mother, cherished grandmother, beloved great grandmother, and loving sister passed away peacefully on Wednesday, June 18, 2025, after a life rich in love and family. Services will be held Tuesday, June 24, 2025, at Harper-Talasek Funeral Home in Belton, with a visitation starting at 10 am and funeral service immediately following at 11 am. Burial will be in North Belton Cemetery. Born on August 2, 1942, in Lawton, Oklahoma, at Fort Sill Army Base, Judy was the treasured daughter of the late Master Sergeant (Retired) Howard Taft Prince I and Blanche Bledsoe Prince. Judy’s life was profoundly shaped

by her unwavering dedication to her family, her faith, and a deep love for travel and adventure. She found immense joy in the life-long friendships she cherished while nurturing the connections she made throughout her journey. She was preceded in death by her beloved husband, John Henry Shine Jr., of Spicewood, Texas. Their enduring legacy continues through their five sons: John Howard and his wife Raquel of Justin, Texas; Robert Lee and his wife Tracie of Jarrell, Texas; Michael Alan of Austin, Texas; Steven Scott and his wife Amy of Troy, Texas; and James Andrew and his wife Melinda of Liberty Hill, Texas. Judy was also preceded in death by her parents and her brothers, Robert Dale Prince (USAF) of Allen, Texas, and The Honorable Brig. General, Howard Taft Prince II, (Retired), PhD, of Austin, Texas. She is survived by her loving sister, Linda Lou Prince Etheredge of Temple, Texas. Her greatest joys included her grandchildren: John Shine “JJ”, Stephanie Snyder, Michael L. Shine, Alex Shine, Jacob Shine, Anthony Gonzales, Seth Shine, and Akasha Rotella Shine (USN). Judy was also blessed with four great-grandchildren: Preston, Kinsey, Henry, and Nora Snyder, and numerous step grandchildren and great grandchildren who all brought immeasurable happiness into her life. Judy’s warmth, kindness, and unwavering love for her family and friends will be missed by all who had the privilege of knowing her. She leaves behind a beautiful legacy of strength, compassion, and enduring love.



Meeker
Sandra Sue Meeker
July 5, 1945 – June 14, 2025

Sandra Sue Meeker, age 79, of Temple, Texas passed away on Saturday, June 14, 2025 in Temple. She was born on July 5, 1945. A visitation for Sandra will be held Monday, June 30, 2025 from 5-7 p.m. at Crawford-Bowers Funeral Home, Temple, TX. A funeral service will occur Tuesday, July 1, 2025 at 11 a.m. at Crawford-Bowers Funeral Home. The family asks you to either wear something purple or they will have purple ribbons at the visitation and funeral. Purple is for Alzheimer’s and Dementia and her previous employer UMHB.

Council - From Page A1

that will house police, fire and other personnel. The building also may provide a safe place for sheltering during weather events.

The city will seek grant money for the renovation of the former school building.

During the five-year capital improvement plan, park amenities will be added to Heritage Park. These amenities include the construction of a walking trail and a family pavilion.

The five-year plan also calls for the design or reconstruction of several roadways, including Connell Street, Toll Bridge Road, Davis Street, Hughes Street, Avenue J and Avenue I.

Replacing the East Central Avenue bridge is a significant project scheduled for 2026.

Sidewalks will be constructed along E. Sixth Avenue and Sparta Road. The dry utilities along East Sixth Avenue may be relocated underground in 2030 if grants can be found to fund the project.

The utility’s capital improvement plan includes projects that meet future development and replaces aging infrastructure.

Five water projects have been identified, and several projects involve the replacement of failing or undersized water lines throughout Belton. A significant multi-year project, replacing Belton’s aging water metering infrastructure began in 2024. The Wheat Road water line project will increase water volume and capacity in south Belton.

Five wastewater projects are included in the capital improvement plan.

Water and sewer lines beneath East Sixth Avenue must be replaced prior to the roadway reconstruction that is scheduled for 2027. The Mitchell Branch sewer line will be upsized or replaced with a parallel interceptor in 2028. Lift station and sewer extensions will accommodate growth.

The larger of two drainage projects is the addition of new culverts and channels at East Fourth Avenue and North Blair. In 2026, the construction of a new detention pond should reduce flooding near Avenue I.



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Body of Christ Community Clinic celebrates 15 years

Special to the Journal

On June 10th, the Body of Christ Community Clinic, Inc. (BOCCC) celebrated 15 years of being a beacon of hope and healing for the underserved in East Bell County, offering both medical and dental care while sharing the boundless grace of Jesus Christ.

At its core, BOCCC is more than a clinic, it is a sacred ministry fulfilling Christ’s call to compassion and healing.

For many in need, it has been a lifeline, ensuring that care is available regardless of financial circumstances.

Every patient who walks through its doors is met with not only expert medical or dental attention, but also the comforting presence of prayer, reminding them that they are deeply loved and never alone.

This mission would not be possible without the unwavering generosity of the community. BOCCC is fully supported by the faith and kindness of its 15 member churches, representing diverse denominations, alongside local residents and businesses.

By choosing to rely solely on these gifts, without governmental assistance, BOCCC is free to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ, offering prayer and spiritual encouragement to all who seek healing.

Through the years, the clinic has flourished. Expanding beyond its initial one-night-a-week schedule, BOCCC now serves thousands of patients annually, with over 3,300 patient visits recorded in 2024 alone. Its dedicated volunteers, more than 180 in the past year, have given nearly 11,000 hours of service.

In 2016, BOCCC opened a stand-alone dental clinic, built debt-free.

As the BOCCC celebrates 15 years of miracles and mercy, they invite people to take part in BOCCC’s 15 for 15 Campaign, a call to support the clinic’s continued mission.

Whether it is \$1.50, \$15, \$150, \$1,500, or \$15,000, every gift is a reflection of God’s love in action.

To make a donation, please visit bodyofchristclinic.org and click on the Donate Today button.

The BOCCC is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization and is sponsored by 16 area churches of various Christian denominations. Since opening the clinic has had nearly 16,000 patient visits and has grown from three hours a week of operation to 20 hours a week. It now operates two clinics, one for medical care and one for dental services, and is staffed primarily by unpaid volunteers.

Contact Donna Dunn at (254) 939-9500 or at donna.dunn@bodyofchristclinic.org for additional information.



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A4
Thursday,
June 26, 2025

LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Family-owned business brings the East Coast of Jersey Shore to Belton

By **Michelle Rodriguez**
The Belton Journal

Scotti's Italian Ice is a small, veteran-owned, family business dedicated to serving up refreshing, authentic Italian ice just like the kind the owner, Ann Scotti, grew up with on the Jersey Shore.

They are located at 219 S. East St. behind the Gin. "I'm proud to introduce our East Coast favorite to the Belton community. I'm originally from Jersey Shore. I grew up in Lighthouse and would go to Ralph's and I said, 'I want to do that one day,'" said Ann Scotti.

Ann Scotti and her daughter Mikayla would visit New Jersey in the summers and visit Ralph's and eat Italian ices. The Scottis came to Texas because both Ann and her husband served in the Army.

"Italian ice is a gourmet version of shaved ice. It has a soft texture and it's smooth. It's made in a special machine creating the texture," said Mikayla Scotti. "The business is named after my dad, Dan Scotti. He inspired my mom because of his go-getter attitude."

The product is all natural, and the cookies and cream tastes like cookies.

"My mom is super excited about all this. She's very Italian," said Ann Scotti. "I talked about it for ten years and now it's come true."

A three-ounce cup of Italian ice is 70 calories compared to a three-ounce cup of ice cream which has 160 calories.

"I really like to see the kids' reactions. They say, 'it's good because the flavor is authentic, natural, and good,'"



Scotti's Italian ice comes in flavors like cookies and cream, and sour watermelon.

said Ann Scotti.

The Italian ice flavor options are cookie dough, cookies and cream, chocolate fudge, brownie, and cappuccino. They also have water ice. The water ice flavors are USA

rainbow, which contains blue raspberry, cherry, and lemon; watermelon; and sugar free lemon that doesn't taste sugar free.

"We've been getting a lot of feedback. On June 28 we will be at the Belton Street Party. It will be our first event. People have been asking us to attend their events. We are booked for the weekends at the Gin until Labor Day," said Ann Scotti.

The Italian ice's are made with all natural ingredients like agave, real fruit, and cookies. They are kosher certified and lactose free.

"We also sell cannolis, fresh squeezed lemonades, and Italian sodas," said Mikayla Scotti.

Flavors can be added to the lemonades like strawberry, blue raspberry, and cherry. The Italian sodas are served in sixteen-ounce plastic cups. The flavors are: pina colada, mango, and blue Hawaii. It's low calorie because it's made with club soda. It has cream and whipped cream.

"A cannoli is a shell made out of dough wrapped around a metal rod with a filling with ricotta cheese, powdered sugar, chocolate chips, and orange zest," said Mikayla Scotti.

"Dad always took me to get cannoli and an Italian ice in the summer. It's very nostalgic to re-live summer memories. A cannoli is a very Italian dessert. They're very popular. We didn't think people knew about them or even have them on our menu," said Ann Scotti.

Their hours are Fridays and Saturdays 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., and Sundays 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Stoney Brook of Belton hosts 2025 Senior Prom

Special to the Journal

Prom season was in full swing at Stoney Brook of Belton this spring as the community hosted its annual Senior Prom 2.

The event, coordinated by the Stoney Brook team, with support from several local healthcare partners, featured an evening of dinner, dancing, photos, formal attire, fond memories, and reminiscing through the years.

Resident Pat Howard was delighted to have the opportunity to get dressed up and dance. "It was the highlight of our week," she said.

Attendees posed on the red carpet for photographs, looking and feeling their best, thanks to Essie Golder, (owner and stylist with Hair by Essie, Stoney Brook's community salon) and Heart of Texas Hospice, who generously donated their time and resources for the special event. Music for the event was carefully selected to inspire memories and provided by Quinton Locklin, Senior Real Estate Specialist with Keller Williams. The Stoney Brook dining services team, with support from Navigate Home Health and Hospice, provided refreshments for the evening.

Everyone who attended dressed their best to dance the night away and enjoyed reminiscing about their high school sweethearts and the various proms and events they attended years ago.

Residents Victor DeVleming and Carmen Peffley were crowned Prom King and Queen from the community's memory care neighborhood. Irvin and LouAnn White received the title in the community's assisted living residence.

"All the dancing made me feel like a teenager again!" said resident Mary Lee.

Life Enrichment Director Trisha Taggart was thrilled to see such a fantastic turnout and positive response. "It was a huge success! The support we received from the residents and members of the community coming together was more than I could have anticipated when we first started planning this event," Taggart said. "I had more fun at this prom than my own high school prom."

Stoney Brook of Belton is an assisted living and memory care community offering a full range of lifestyle options for older adults, enabling them to live life to the fullest. The community is located at 500 River Fair Blvd. To learn more about life at Stoney Brook, visit www.stoneybrookliving.com or contact Samantha O'Neil at 254-933-3800. Stoney Brook

Senior Living is locally owned and is managed by the Long Hill company, a subsidiary of Masonicare, a leading not-for-profit provider of senior living and healthcare services.



Courtesy Photo

TOP LEFT: Resident Barbara Jennings poses for a prom photo. TOP RIGHT: Resident Shirley Moore dancing with a volunteer during Stoney Brook of Belton's Senior Prom. ABOVE: Stoney Brook residents Irvin and LouAnn White were crowned Prom King and Queen.

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CAC announces 2025 concert lineups

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

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

RUTHIE FOSTER JAZZ BAND — July 12

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

AN CLIBURN FINALIST CLAYTON STEPHENSON — Oct. 18

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

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL — Nov. 8

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

SHINYRIBS - Dec. 6

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

Belton's 4th of July Celebration and PRCA Rodeo - June 28 through July 5

Join us in celebrating patriotism, traditional family values, and small-town America at the Belton 4th of July Celebration! Music is an important part of our celebration with the Backyard Party at Schoepf's Concert and Fireworks show being an annual favorite. Kicking off our weeklong celebration is the Downtown Street Party and Concert on June 28th! The Downtown Street Party is open to the public as a free non-ticketed event. Reserved VIP areas are available for sponsors. With an estimated 30,000+ people lining the streets, and a live televised broadcast reaching around the world, the 100-year tradition of the Belton 4th of July Celebration will include a 1 1/2 mile parade route running south on Main Street (FM317) from the University of Mary Hardin-Baylor to the Bell County Courthouse, then east on Central Avenue, and north on Birdwell to the Belton Police Memorial. Following the parade, much of the crowd moves to the adjacent Liberty Park for the Festival on Nolan Creek with food and craft vendors, games, a petting zoo, static displays of military and first responder equipment, and live entertainment at the centrally located gazebo. Carnival rides and attractions fill Liberty Park located within a short walking distance on the Belton Hike and Bike Trail. The three-night PRCA Rodeo is held July 3-5 at the Cadence Bank Center, an indoor, air-conditioned facility with a capacity for 5,900 rodeo attendees. Cowboys from around the country descend on the only PRCA Rodeo in Texas during this holiday weekend making it a must-see event. For more information visit beltonchamber.com.

Master Gardeners - July 8

Bell County Master Gardeners Association and Harker Heights Library & Activity Center are hosting Insects in the Home and Garden on July 8th, 6:00-7:30 PM at 400 Indian Trail, Harker Heights. Certified Master Gardener, Dave Slaughter will be presenting insects of the home and garden and a discussion of their characteristics and benefits or detriments. Photos of their life cycle and a conversation regarding tolerance vs. termination and methods of insect management. Class Limit: 50. To register for this class please see HarkerHeights.gov/Library.

Master Gardeners - July 10

The regular monthly Herb Study Group meeting will be held on Thursday, July 10 from 6-7:30 PM at the AgriLife Extension Grounds, Learning Center in Belton. This month's session will be a Round Table discussion or Oregano. As always, the group encourages sharing, so attendees are welcome to bring favorite herbs, bottles, or recipes to contribute to the creative fun. Class Limit 50. Please RSVP to BCMGA-speakers@gmail.com.

Summer Reading Program - July 19 & 26, Aug 2 & 9

Join the Mary Ruth Briggs Library Summer Reading Program this Summer as we celebrate "Amazing Science". We will have programs with speakers on Weather, Rocks and Minerals, Plant Propagation and Forensics. Games, crafts, storytime and free backpacks with school supplies! This program is for ages pre-K through 5th grade. You can sign up for free at the Morgan's Point Resort website: morgan-spointresorttx.com or paper applications available at MPR City Hall located at 8 Morgan's Point Blvd, Morgan's Point Resort Texas. The dates are 4 Saturdays: July 19th and 26th and August 2nd and 9th from 10:00 AM until noon. Location is at the Mary Ruth Briggs Library, 8 Morgan's Point Blvd in Morgan's Point Resort. We look forward to seeing you!

Marine Corp League will meet the third Tuesday of each mont at VFW 3859. Diner is served at 6:30 p.m. and metting will begin at 7:00 p.m. 201 VFW Dr, Harker heights, Tx 76548. Email commandant@mc11249tx.comfor more inforamtion.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet on Tuesday, June 24th at 6:30pm at the Temple VA Hospital. Use the entrance on the Valet parking side of the hospital and take the elevator to the 5th floor -Conference Room 5G31. Both care-givers, supporters and those suffering from mental illness are welcome to join us for mutual support and sharing of information. For more information, call 254-771-3638.

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

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

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

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

Bell Fine Arts Visitors welcome Wednesday's from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 306 E 5th Ave in Belton. Ma-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.

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

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

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

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

Community Information

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

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

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

Citizens Helping in Police Service (CHIPS)

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

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

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

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



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- **1950:** THE UNITED STATES DECIDES TO SEND TROOPS TO FIGHT IN THE KOREAN WAR.
- **2007:** TONY BLAIR RESIGNS AS BRITISH PRIME MINISTER, A POSITION HE HAD HELD SINCE 1997.



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100 Years Ago This Month: Historical events from June 1925

The month of June has been home to many historical events over the years. Here's a look at some that helped to shape the world in June 1925.

- Twenty-one-year-old New York Yankee Lou Gehrig is inserted as a pinch hitter for Pee-Wee Wanninger in a game versus the Washington Senators on June 1. Gehrig's appearance begins what would become a streak of 2,130 consecutive games played.
- An Independence Tribunal orders the closure of Turkey's Progressive Republican Party on June 3. The order is issued on the grounds that the party had supported the protection of Islamic religious customs that had spurred the Sheikh Said rebellion.
- The Rentenmark becomes obsolete in Germany on June 5. The currency had initially been issued in 1923 to combat hyperinflation in the Weimar Republic. The Reichsmark replaced the Rentenmark.
- Walter P. Chrysler incorporates the Chrysler Corporation on June 6 after acquiring the assets of the defunct Maxwell Motor Company.
- Norway sends out two planes to search for Roald Amundsen and his crew on June 6. The explorers had been on the North Pole seaplane expedition but were missing for two weeks before the planes were sent. Amundsen and his crew would land safely in Norway on June 16.
- On June 7, the Beaumont-Hamel Newfoundland Memorial is unveiled on the grounds where the Battle of the Somme had taken place in France in July 1916.
- Seventeen people are killed as a result of a coal mine

explosion in Sturgis, Kentucky, on June 8.

- Eddie Gaedel is born in Chicago on June 8. Despite his career lasting just a single plate appearance, the 3-foot-7 Gaedel is remembered as the shortest player in Major League Baseball History.
- Various churches merge to form the United Church of Canada on June 10. The merger takes place during a meeting of church leaders and representatives at the Mutual Street Arena in Toronto, and the Church of Canada immediately becomes the largest Protestant denomination in the country.
- On June 11, the Republic of China agrees to assist the Empire of Japan and Japanese soldiers with the removal of Korean immigrants from China's northeastern provinces, where Korean independence agitators had established a foothold.
- The Southern Branch of the University of California, now known as the University of California, Los Angeles, awards its first Bachelor of Arts degrees on June 12. Ninety-eight of the 128 degrees are awarded to women.
- Charles Francis Jenkins publicly demonstrates the synchronized transmission of pictures and sound in Washington, D.C. on June 13.
- Hawaiian surfer Duke Kahanamoku, a gold medal-winning swimmer at the 1912 Olympic Games, saves eight people off the coast of Newport Beach, California, on June 14. Kahanamoku's heroics were prompted by the capsizing of the fishing yacht Thelma.
- The Philadelphia Athletics score 13 runs in the eighth inning of a game versus the Cleveland Indians on June 15. The thirteen-run outburst erases a 14-2 deficit, and the comeback

from 12 runs down remains a record today. The 1925 Athletics share the record with the 1911 Detroit Tigers and the 2001 Indians.

- Thirty-eight nations sign the Geneva Protocol on June 17. The protocol establishes a general prohibition on the usage of chemical and biological weapons in international armed conflicts.
- Italian Prime Minister Benito Mussolini launches "La battaglia del grano" ("The Battle for Grain") on June 20. The campaign aspires to decrease Italy's reliance on imported grain and advocates for the consumption of rice and rice-based substitutes for traditional Italian foods.
- The Vietnamese Revolutionary Youth League is formally established on June 21. The organization is considered the beginning of communism in Vietnam.
- The Irish Free State holds elections on June 23. The elections are the first local elections since Ireland gained its independence.
- General Theodoros Pangalos leads a bloodless coup d'état to overthrow the government of the Second Hellenic Republic on June 25. Pangalos installs himself as the leader of Greece a day later.
- "The Gold Rush" starring Charlie Chaplin premieres at Grauman's Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood on June 26. The film remains one of the most celebrated works of Chaplin's career.
- After a speech by Helen Keller at its international convention in Ohio, the Lions Club formally launches its signature mission of assistance to the blind and the visually impaired on June 30.

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EDITORIAL

Randomness

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

Ever wonder why a wet rag absorbs more water than a dry rag? Probably some sort of kitchen witchcraft. The same thing with other wet stuff, wet pavement and you slide in your car, wet fingertips and you can grip slippery things.

Have you ever been some place and time stood still? Like being in an elevator with other people, the door opens and a young lady steps in. Someone asks her when her baby is due, and everyone else knows she isn't pregnant.

Remember when air conditioning on a car was an option? Glad those days are in the past.

Ever notice how we spend our weekends fertilizing and weeding our yards, watering them during dry seasons, spending all that money so we can use a lawnmower to cut it off every Saturday?

Was the concept of "catch and release" fishing thought of by someone that wasn't hungry?

What was the process of determining the best way to make it through a bear attack? Stand up and look big, oops, I guess that only works with mountain lions. Make lots of noise and yell, nope not that good either. Grab her cub and hold it hostage, well that was a really bad idea. Curl up in a ball and pass out, yep, works like a charm.

Who thought; we can get on a mad horse and get bucked off without killing ourselves, lets try that with a bull?

Is it ironic that a Masonic Lodge is in a metal building?

I mean I don't know a lot about them, but it seems like a metal building would be a bit out of their specialty.

Thinking of the puffer fish, it is poisonous, but not all of it, just one of the innards. How did they figure that out? How many of your friends do you make sick before you determine which little part you had to remove?

Who invented the banjo? And why? "Hey, I have a great idea, let's take something like a guitar and make it harder to play and sound worse, we can sell a ton of them to hillbillies...."

What about the first American that went to England and ordered a muffin? I am sure they were surprised at how an English muffin tasted compared to the much better version we have here.

"Hey partner, this here ain't no muffin, there ain't no fruit or nuts or nothin' in it at all..."

Can you imagine the ridicule the first person that shaved received. I mean for thousands of years all men had beards, then someone invented a razor and used it to shave his beard off. I am sure his friends were initially shocked, then laughed at him and called him all sorts of sissy names. Then they probably wanted to use his new razor to shave their beards. All the time not realizing they were going to have to shave every morning.

How long after the first car rolled off Ford's assembly line did someone become a "used car salesman"? Did he invent the phrase, "It was owned by a little old lady that only drove it to church on Sundays..."?

How many iterations did the PBJ sandwich go through before landing on what we have now? "Peanut butter and cornmeal, nope. Peanut butter and gruel, yeech... Let's try something sweet like jelly... and we have a winner!"

What a stroke of genius that someone took a regular sized cake and made it smaller and easier to eat, like a cupcake. And just in case that wasn't good enough they often come packaged in pairs, you know because one may not be enough.

How come when I get a song stuck in my head it is never one I like, always a song I dislike greatly. I mean I could sing along with a favorite song all day, yes it may annoy the people around me but I would be happy.

Explain it to me – using words

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

I wrote a column about how pictures can add much to a news story, and that pictures are a fun part of the event, especially if you can't be there.

But let's look at the other side of this coin and how news and stories are much more than just pictures with headlines.

Long ago, before the written word as we know it, people would communicate with pictures.

I would venture to ask, are we regressing back to that form of communication?

The trouble with pictures is, our brains fill in the blanks and sometimes we're not right. We can make a wrong assumption. Or we have questions that we want answered, that a picture can't answer for us.

I've noticed that our society is still very visual. We see an interesting picture online with a headline, but do we click on the link? Or do we just make assumptions based on the headline? That's why sometimes it's called click bait – the media knows this is what makes readers read. Or should. A headline should grab your attention, and it should make you pause for a moment. You should go, "Hmm. . . I need to find out more about that."

But do we really try to find out more about "that" and read what goes along with it?

Case in point: I will share a photo via social media along with a link and a headline that invites the reader to explore more. The idea is, the reader should click on the link and find out more. But, are we really reading? Do we look at a headline, look at a picture, and then keep going? Often, more information that answers questions raised by the headline is provided in an article. That's why it's called a news article. The article details are important because they answer questions (or should).

Are we as a society becoming less inquisitive to the point that we won't look for information? We will ask someone "out there" for an answer, but will we look for ourselves? This is why we as a newspaper share links. It begs the reader to read more. I like to say that people who read articles are often those who like to research.

Do they teach research in school these days? Do they teach how to find information for something other than asking a friend or posing a question on social media?

Some individuals will post comments, asking questions about a headline that an article will answer (if they would only read it). And then, the reasonable reader will comment, "Well, if you read the article, you will see that it says (the answer to your question)."

Often, if you ask a question on social media, the answers you receive can vary greatly. Some will be the same period. Some will be wrong. Some will only be partially correct.

Yes, I love pictures, but the growing "dumbing down" of a society where many can't or won't look beyond a headline to learn more – even about something as simple as a community event – is concerning.

Here's to the curious ones, the readers, the ones who will seek answers for themselves instead of having social media do the mental "heavy lifting" for them.



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Temple Work Based Learning

Lake Belton Middle School Students make history on the national stage

Special to the Journal

Lake Belton Middle School students earned top honors at the National History Day (NHD) Contest, held June 8–12, 2025, at the University of Maryland, College Park—an event that brought together nearly 3,000 student historians from across the nation.

This marks the eighth consecutive year that Belton ISD has had student representatives at the national level, and this year, Lake Belton Middle School sent more delegates to the national contest than any other campus in Texas.

Eighth grader Neil Devaraj placed among the Top 10 Junior Paper finalists for his essay HIPAA and Patient Rights. Inspired by his own hospital stay, Neil explored the impact of HIPAA on both patients and healthcare providers.

“I thought writing an essay would be the best way to voice my thoughts and feelings about this topic,” he shared. “After hearing about HIPAA while I was in the hospital, I wanted to understand it and communicate why it matters.”

Eighthgrade classmates Caleb Dixon, Javi Guerra and Hashaam Sheikh won the History of the Physical Sciences and Technology Student Prize for their documentary Ethics and the Manhattan Project, which examined the conflicting views of scientists and world leaders involved in the development and use of the atomic bomb.

The team emphasized the importance of

communication throughout their project, noting that “with so many ideas and different ways to explain things, we had to stay connected and work as a team.”

Seventh graders Emery Hobson and Sarah Jackson earned the NHD State Outstanding Entry Award for their documentary Betty Crocker and Women’s Roles. Their project explored shifting gender norms through the lens of a familiar cultural figure, blending interviews with teachers, family members and feminist scholars.

“We wanted our project to be personal and relatable,” they said. “Learning how cooking roles changed across generations helped us connect history to our own lives.”

In addition to competing, the students had the opportunity to take in the sights of our nation’s capital, including a special tour of the U.S. Capitol conducted by the office of Representative John Carter—an unforgettable experience that added deeper context to their historical studies.

These student achievements reflect Belton ISD’s commitment to the Journey of a Graduate competency communication, which encourages learners to express complex ideas clearly and effectively across multiple formats. Through original research, collaboration, and creativity, these students brought history to life on a national stage. Established in 1974, National History Day encourages students in grades 6–12 to explore history through research and creative media.



Courtesy Photo

Lake Belton Middle School students competed at National History Day in College Park Maryland and came away with several award. They are pictured with teacher Paige Hooten and principal Kris Hobson.

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One man’s road from Belton to the Savannah Bananas



Courtesy of Caleb Kuiken @kuiken_media

Umpire Ninja stands on the field for Banana Ball

By Annie Dockery
The Belton Journal

Seth Markham watched as a batter hit the ball and went straight for first base. As the runner closed in, the first baseman caught the ball and Markham made his split-second decision, did a front

flip and made the call-out! Markham’s remarkable journey into Banana Ball has let him combine his love for baseball, Ninja sports, and acrobatics to become a Banana Ball Umpire.

Banana Ball is a fast-paced, entertainment-focused version of baseball

created by the Savannah Bananas.

It features unique rules designed to make the game more exciting and action-packed, along with choreographed dances and other theatrical elements.

Discussing the difference between Banana

Ball and regular baseball, Markham said, “In my eyes, they are two different sports. Professional baseball requires you to take the time to stay focused. Banana Ball is multitasking at its finest. Baseball is about doing everything right in the traditional sense. Banana Ball allows for greater risk and encourages trying new plays.”

“I have definitely taken the long route.” Markham said, “I have not been the strongest student, but I have always enjoyed putting in the effort – at work and at athletics. I feel blessed by God for my physical abilities, and I try to use those blessings the best way I know how.”

Sports have always been a part of the Markham family’s life.

Being homeschooled allowed Markham the ability to compete in several sports to improve his baseball skills. He was also able to have more time at the Ninja gym.

Carrie Markham, Seth’s mother said, “My husband and I bought property in Belton in 2013 and moved our family out here in 2014. Seth was 11 at that time. He has been involved in the community since we moved here. He played middle school football for the Centex Chargers, a local home-school sports organization.”

She continues, “In high school, he played ball for the home school team, the Austin Texans; during that time, he also played travel ball in both the Austin Wings and Waco Storm organizations.

Seth continued his dream with a season at McClellan Community College before moving on to Dallas Community College, Richland, where he helped to earn them a place at the JUCO

D3 World Series in Auburn, NY.”

It was on the way to the World Series that Banana Ball came onto Markham’s radar.

“It was on the trip to NY, on an unexpected lay-over at Dulles Airport that Seth met some of the players of the Savannah Bananas,” Carrie said. “Being the outgoing young man that he is, he sat down to talk with a couple of them . . . asked, “How do I get on this team?” The response he got: “Try out.”

Markham sent in his application to try out for the Savannah Bananas. While waiting to hear back about his application, he moved on to Howard Payne University in Brownwood.

“He settled in, got a job, went to school, and then came the email from the Bananas organization to pick a try out to attend,” Carrie said.

In October of 2024, Markam was finally able to try for the Savannah Bananas.

Despite not having any Professional Umpire training other than a four-hour Youth Clinic, during the try out, Coach Tyler Gillum asked him to try and umpire first base.

December of 2024, Markam received a call from Coach Gillum letting him know that he had not made the team but that he had a vision for an acrobatic umpire and that Markam would be a fit.

Markham left for Savannah, Georgia in February of this year to begin his new adventure.

“I have enjoyed the experiences I have had being an umpire.” Markam said, “The travel is the hardest part of the job; however, the

sights and towns have been incredible! I have been able to see and do things I may not have been able to. I have played hacky sack under the Arch in St. Louis to kayaked on Lake Tahoe to explored the music scene in Nashville - what a blessing to experience!”

He adds, “I enjoy my time sneaking through the crowds, signing autographs, photobombing pictures, and acquiring new Ninja apprentices every week.”

Markam said, “I really enjoy the community that it brings around and it’s just we have so much of an opportunity to reach so many people. It’s just an amazing experience. The people in this organization are unmatched. From the players to the wonderful people at the merch stands, they are lovely people that will gladly do anything for you.”

Major League Baseball had always been Markham’s dream since childhood.

“Banana Ball is my present goal, and I love being part of this organization,” the Umpire Ninja said. “Every day is a little different. I also work in baseball ops, so some days, I do field and team “chores”. Other days, we travel, spend time with fans, train and work out, try to get rest here and there.”

Markham is continuing his training to play Banana Ball.

“In 2026, there will be six teams total in the organization, and I am hoping the Ninja earns a spot on one of those teams,” Markam said.

To find out more about The Umpire Ninja, Seth Markam visit his website at baseballninja.com or look for The Umpire Ninja on Tik Tok and Instagram.



BISD offering many summer camps in July

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Summer is in full swing, and Belton ISD is still offering multiple opportunities for young athletes to improve their skills and have fun.

Belton and Lake Belton each have several summer camps remaining before students return to school, starting with the Lady Broncos volleyball camp on July 7.

Like all other camps, attendees will be offered instruction from the team's varsity head coach and their staff through the use of games, drills and competitions along with providing both individual and group attention.

The three day Lake Belton volleyball camp is open to all third through sixth graders, but the

schedule will be broken into two sessions. Third and fourth graders will attend from noon to 2:30 p.m. each day, while fifth and sixth graders follow from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Additionally a second volleyball camp will be offered by the Lady Broncos to seventh, eighth and ninth graders starting July 14. Seventh graders will attend from noon to 2:30 p.m. with the remaining grade following from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

On July 15, Belton is offering a wrestling camp for any third through ninth graders, and it runs from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. each day.

The Lady Tigers soccer camp is also broken into segments. Second through sixth graders will attend in the mornings (8-11 a.m.) starting July 21, while seventh, eighth and ninth grad-

ers attend in the evenings (5-8 p.m.).

The final three summer camps will be offered in late July.

Belton will have a cheerleading camp for kindergarteners through sixth graders from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. starting July 23 prior to the final two camps beginning July 28 at Lake Belton.

The Lady Broncos softball camp takes place between 9 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. and is open to third through ninth graders.

The Broncos football camp runs at the same time and will be available to any kindergartener through ninth grader, but it will be split into sections based on age and ability.

The cost for each camp is \$60 per participant, and tickets can be purchased at BeltonTigers.com or LakeBeltonAthletics.com.

Belton Middle Schoolers participate in basketball camp

By: Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

From June 23-25, Belton Basketball hosted its annual boys summer camp at Belton Middle School, offering three days of instruction, energy, and community building for the next generation of Tigers. The camp ran from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. each day and was split across two gyms, one dedicated to younger athletes and the other for the older group.

More than just drills and scrimmages, the camp served as a bridge between the present and future of Belton basketball. High school coaches and players worked side-by-side to lead

See **BASKETBALL**,
Page B2



Nick Kozole visits Tiger baseball camp

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Nick Kozole knows exactly what to expect.

After spending the last several years molding New Braunfels Canyon into an area power, the head baseball coach recently decided to step away from the role in order to fill the void at Belton left by the retirement of longtime Tigers Coach Mark Krueger.

Unfortunately, the transition occurred at a time that made it difficult for Kozole to oversee the program's annual summer camp.

As a result, he was only able to witness part of the event, but he saw everything he needed to.

"Whenever you do one of these camps," Kozole said, "especially with little kids, you always want to see numbers. I always try to look at how many

young men are out there who love baseball, and it was a really good showing; probably between 60 and 70 kids off the top of my head.

"The biggest thing I was impressed by, though, was how many of the high school players and former players were out there, giving back to the community. That is a big thing to me."

The three-day camp ran for three hours each day, welcoming players entering second through ninth grade.

While the ages varied widely, the camp's purpose did not.

Regardless of skill level, all participants were instructed on fundamentals of the game, including hitting, fielding and throwing, through competitions, contests, games and drills.

For some, lessons consisted of basic skills and mechanics along with introducing rules of

the game, while older kids were given more complex exercises, mimicking a varsity practice.

Ultimately, the goal was for everyone to gain beneficial knowledge, and while his time was limited, Kozole felt accomplished during his visit.

"I was only fortunate enough to catch the tail end of the camp," Kozole said, "but I was able to meet the other coaches and go out to eat, and I got to see a lot of the players come and go. So, I was only able to see people in passing, but I'm very excited about this opportunity."

Belton will open the season trying to build on Krueger's nine consecutive playoff appearances. The Tigers finished second in the District 16-5A standings last season.

Kozole will be forced to attempt the feat without several key components from the pro-

gram's recent success. Among others, first baseman Jacob Quigley, second baseman Austin Wood, shortstop Gage Flores, outfielder Rayshaun Peoples and pitcher Cole Haisler are each graduating.

The departures certainly leave areas of improvement for the Tigers, and while his time within the community has been limited thus far, Kozole knows exactly what to expect in the near future thanks to his brief experience at the camp.

"I saw a lot of really good-looking young men," he said, "who were very strong and athletic, but the biggest thing was just to see their character. Our players really worked well with the young kids, and the fact they were giving up their time to give back was huge."

"That spoke with more volume to me than anything else."

Belton High School participates in TABC Showcase taking advantage of summer basketball workouts

By: Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

The Belton Tigers took the floor this past weekend at the TABC Showcase and walked away with two wins in three games, showing toughness and potential for the upcoming season.

The Tigers opened with a tough loss to Mansfield but responded with back-to-back wins, including a strong 67-51 victory over Dallas Bishop Lynch to close out the event.

Held annually, the TABC Showcase brings together some of the best programs across Texas, offering teams

a chance to test themselves in a competitive environment during the summer offseason. For Belton, it was a weekend of growth and grit.

Head Coach Phil McCaslin reflected on the team's performance after the event.

"I felt really good overall," McCaslin said. "We kind of got hit in the mouth in game one against Mansfield, and I was really proud of how we responded."

The Tigers struggled with rebounding and execution in the open-

See **TABC**,
Page B3



Dr. Jack Welch
From the Bleachers

Blame vs. Leadership: A Coach's and Administrator's Choice

We've all seen it, coaches and administrators blaming others when things go wrong. Whether it's losing a game, missing enrollment targets, being passed over for a position, or facing tough criticism, some leaders resort to pointing fingers. They blame players, officials, faculty, predecessors, policies, even the weather. While there may be elements of truth in those grievances, blame rarely leads to growth. More often, it stalls progress and fractures trust.

Failure is universal. Even legends like Babe Ruth, who struck out more than most hitters of his time, are remembered not for their failures, but for how they responded. The same holds true for leaders in athletics and education alike.

In times of crisis or challenge, true leadership reveals itself, not through finger-pointing, but through ownership and action. Unfortunately, in too many organizations and institutions today, we see a disturbing trend: leaders who shift blame rather than shoulder responsibility. When leaders deflect, they fail. Real leadership means stepping forward with humility and transparency, identifying the problem, and taking decisive steps to address it. Anything less is not leadership, it's avoidance masquerading as authority.

When coaches or administrators focus on external blame, they miss an opportunity to model accountability, resilience, and humility. A leader who consistently finds fault in others creates a toxic environment, one where team members, faculty, or students feel unsupported and disheartened. Growth gives way to defensiveness. Reflection gives way to excuses and trust quietly erodes.


Blaming others limits an organization's ability to self-assess. It implies that mistakes are something to hide, rather than moments to learn. Over time, leaders who default to blame lose credibility, not just with their colleagues, but with the very teams they hope to inspire.

On the other hand, great leaders, whether on the field or in the boardroom, take responsibility. They reflect deeply on their preparation, communication, and leader-



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Lake Belton lands multiples on All-State softball team

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Lake Belton delivered another historic season on the softball diamond, and while it did not result in the program’s first state championship, the Lady Broncos did not go unnoticed.

After making its debut at the University Interscholastic League Class 5A State Tournament a year ago, Lake Belton was on the verge of returning, but eventual champion Melissa eliminated the Lady Broncos in the regional final.

The ultimate goal was to be celebrated as a team following the season’s final game, hoisting a trophy signifying their collective dominance, and

although it did not materialize, Lake Belton’s individual talents could not be denied.

Multiple players were recently recognized for their contributions by landing on all-state teams.

Maddison Ruiz received some of the loftiest accolades by earning spots on the Blue Bell/Texas Sports Writers Association All-State Second Team and the Texas Girls Coaches Association All-State Team.

The senior pitcher, who is entering her freshman season at Angelo State, was also named 16-5A All-District Most Valuable Player after producing both offensively and defensively. During the Lady Broncos’ undefeated

run to the district title, Ruiz had a .567 batting average with 16 RBIs and four home runs, while striking out 74 batters and allowing only one earned run en route to a 6-0 record on the mound.

Additionally, she was one of only 15 players placed on the Texas High School Coaches Association Class 5A Super Elite Team.

Ruiz was joined on the TGCA’s 50-player list by teammates Alexis Ortiz and Madison Perkins, who were each critical to the team’s success throughout the season.

Ortiz, a senior shortstop, was the all-district offensive player of the year prior to garnering her most recent honors. She had a .594 batting average

with 20 runs scored, 19 hits, 16 RBIs and 11 stolen bases during league play.

Ortiz is committed to play collegiately at Trinity Valley.

Perkins, a sophomore outfielder, was the all-district defensive player of the year with a perfect fielding percentage.

Furthermore, she delivered offensively, posting a .704 batting average highlighted by 19 hits, 13 RBIs and 13 stolen bases.

The Lady Broncos finished the season with a 35-4 overall record, losing only twice before being eliminated by Melissa in a best-of-three series, and for the campaign, they outscored the opposition 320-79.



The importance of setting strong financial goals

Scot Hrbacek, CFP® Financial Advisor

There’s a quote about the importance of setting goals: “If you don’t know where you’re going, any path will take you there.”

This holds true for things that are important to you financially as well. To set your financial goals, think about your priorities. Outline them as either “must-haves” — such as a comfortable retirement — or “wish list” — perhaps a vacation or entertainment.

You’ll want your goals to be specific. Assign estimated dates and costs to each one so you can plan how much to save and how much time you have before you need the money.

Next, hold yourself accountable to stay on track. That involves actively tracking your progress, maintaining your focus and using these three time-tested strategies — diversify, own quality investments and keep a realistic perspective. A financial advisor can help with this.

Finally, enjoy that sense of accomplishment when you reach your goals, seeing your efforts literally pay off.

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Basketball - From Page B1

stations, run games, and encourage campers from start to finish. The presence of current Tigers gave young players a firsthand look at what hard work and dedication can lead to.

Head Coach Phil McCaslin shared his thoughts after the opening session on Monday, noting the positive energy despite a hectic start.

“Oh, it was fine. We kind of got off to a little hectic start. I left my keys at home,” McCaslin said with a laugh. “No, it was fun. Little kid camp is always good. We had a good turnout. We’ve got a really good staff, so everything went good.”

The camp’s success was due in no small part to the high school players who gave up their own time to invest in the community. Many had just come off a busy weekend at the TABC Showcase and a full week of summer practices, but still showed up each morning to coach and mentor.

“They’re just awesome kids,” McCaslin said. “They spent the weekend playing at the TABC showcase, they spent all last week basically practicing. They really haven’t had much of a summer, so for them to come up and volunteer their time for these three days to give back to our community, it really embodies what we talk about, making Belton a better place because of you.”

For McCaslin, the long term value of the camp goes beyond the basics of basketball. It’s about planting a love for the game early and instilling habits that can lead to future success in the program.

“We want to get a ball in their hands. Basketball is one of those things, you only get better at it if you put in the time,” he said. “That’s why these guys are so good, because they’ve put that time in. Our theme today was ‘Love the Game.’ We want them to fall in love with basketball, become gym rats, live and breathe it. That’s how we’re going to become successful.”

With strong turnout, enthusiastic participation, and leadership from the high school team, the 2025 Belton Boys Basketball Camp was another step forward in building a stronger basketball culture in Tiger Country.

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Welch - From Page B1

ship decisions. They evaluate what they could have done better, not just what went wrong. They own their role in outcomes; they earn the moral authority to hold others accountable.

This mindset of ownership doesn't mean leaders ignore reality. A missed assignment, a blown call, a budget cut, or an outdated policy may indeed impact performance. Wise leaders place these moments in perspective. They frame them as part of a broader challenge, and they focus on how the team or institution will respond.

This is especially critical in higher education, where leaders face growing pressure,

from declining enrollment to budget constraints, from faculty tensions to shifting societal expectations. It's tempting in these moments to cite external forces or inher-

ited problems. The most effective presidents, provosts, and deans don't make excuses though. They take ownership. Even if they didn't create the problem, they step forward and lead the organization to success.

That's the mark of transformational leadership: a mindset of personal responsibility for the current reality, no matter how it came to be. This mindset inspires confidence. It unifies departments, strengthens morale, and builds a culture where learning and improvement are constant. It says to a community that we don't hide from hard things, we grow through them.

Blame is easy. Leadership is hard and is what builds programs, earns respect, and leaves a lasting legacy, on the field, in the classroom, and across the institution. Whether coaching a team or guiding a college,

the choice is the same: blame or lead. Only one of those moves teams forward.

Thought for the week, "The moment you accept responsibility for everything in your life is the moment you gain the power to change everything in your life." Dick Hedges, legendary high school coach and former community college president.

Dr. Jack Welch serves as Special Teams and Tight Ends Coach with the San Antonio Brahmas of the United Football League. He is also the Director of the Coaches Academy and an Adjunct Professor at East Texas A&M University. With a career spanning professional sports, public education, and rural community development, he brings a servant-leader mindset and a passion for building trust-driven cultures that empower people to thrive on the field, in the classroom, and in life.

TABC - From Page B3

er, falling behind early and never regaining their rhythm.

But rather than hang their heads, the team regrouped and made the necessary adjustments heading into their second and third matchups.

"You could tell we had some sloppy habits in game one. We didn't rebound very well," McCaslin admitted. "They really took it to heart in games two and three, to win effort plays and out rebound. Obviously, everyone knows we can

shoot it. What I wanted to see was, are we going to defend the physicality? Are we going to rebound with physicality? Are we going to be the team that pushes and dominates the pace? And we did that in games two and three."

The preparation leading into the showcase was key, as Belton took advantage of UIL-sanctioned summer practice time without overloading players in June.

"When we go up to that showcase, we want to treat it as important

and put time into it," McCaslin said. "We tried to still treat it like June it's not December, I get that, but we defended, we rebounded. And I think that showed in games two and three."

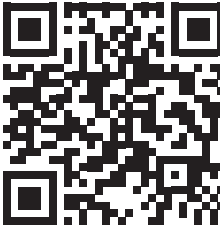
Several young players stepped up and showcased their versatility across the weekend. Whether it was adjusting to new roles or battling on the boards, the Tigers' roster showed its depth and adaptability, traits that will serve them well during the

regular season.

"My main takeaway is when we bring the fight and we rebound with our pace and our shooting I think we can be a really tough team," McCaslin said.

With two summer wins and a clearer vision for the season ahead, the Tigers head into the rest of the offseason with momentum and purpose..

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FISHING REPORT

Belton Lake: Stillhouse

FAIR. Water stained; 77 degrees; 2.31 feet below pool. Big changes were brought on this past week with unseasonably hot days and nights bringing the water temperature up quickly and nudging us toward summer patterns. The water is warming rapidly and the fishing is getting tricky. There is a definite transition underway in which the white bass are making use of the bottom less and less and are beginning to suspend routinely. There are two drivers for this: stratification of the water by temperature which will eventually lead to the creation of the thermocline by mid-June, and the increasing presence of young-of-the-year shad making their way into open water. When fish are suspended, I rely heavily on my 2-D sonar, traditional sonar or colored sonar, as the three-dimensional cone it makes use of extends the echo signature of the fish into long arches which are larger and much more easily seen on a screen than the shorter rice grain signatures seen on side-imaging and down-imaging. The MAL Heavy with silver blade and chartreuse tail has been a consistent lure for the past three weeks. It shows up remarkably well on forward-facing sonar and 2-D sonar. Drop below the suspended fish and crank it up at a steady cadence at least two cranks above the fish showing highest in the water column. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Catfish are good. Anglers can find blue catfish around points and sand flats in 10-20 feet of water. Larger fresh cut baits have been effective for trophy size fish. Eater fish under 10 pounds are active and slow drifting with small cut shad along sand flats will produce. Channel catfish are good and can be caught on punch bait in 10-25 feet of water. Flatheads are excellent on live bait in shallow water around river mouths. Report by Brian Worley, B&S Catfishing. As we enjoy a weekend of fishing we salute and honor our Nation's heroes this Memorial Day. Anticipate increased recreational boater traffic this weekend.

GOOD. Water stained; 77 degrees; 3.42 feet below pool. Big changes were brought on this past week with unseasonably hot days and nights bringing the water temperature up quickly and nudging us toward summer patterns. The water is warming rapidly and the fishing is getting tricky. There is a definite transition underway in which the white bass are making use of the bottom less and less and are beginning to suspend routinely. There are two drivers for this: stratification of the water by temperature which will eventually lead to the creation of the thermocline by mid-June, and the increasing presence of young-of-the-year shad making their way into open water. When fish are suspended, I rely heavily on my 2-D sonar, traditional sonar or colored sonar, as the three-dimensional cone it makes use of extends the echo signature of the fish into long arches which are larger and much more easily seen on a screen than the shorter rice grain signatures seen on side-imaging and down-imaging. The MAL Heavy with silver blade and chartreuse tail has been a consistent lure for the past three weeks. It shows up remarkably well on forward-facing sonar and 2-D sonar. Drop below the suspended fish and crank it up at a steady cadence at least two cranks above the fish showing highest in the water column. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. As we enjoy a weekend of fishing we salute and honor our Nation's heroes this Memorial Day. Anticipate increased recreational boater traffic this weekend.



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1400 S. Wall St. ~ 254.939.1835

Ministerios Vida
2020 S. IH-35 ~ 254.624.8015

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

New Life Fellowship
706 E. 4th. ~ 254.939.8011

Nolan Valley Baptist Church
13206 W. FM 93 ~ 254.721.5998

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

Redeemer Reformed Baptist Church
2378 FM 1670 ~ 818.519.9855

Temple Vision de lo Alto
4357 Orchard Hill ~ 254.563.1231

Trinity Full Gospel
810 East 2nd Ave. ~ 254.939.7673

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

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

Christian Life Church
4343 West FM 93 ~ 254.939.2626

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Eighth Street Baptist Church
215 Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. ~ 254.773.2598

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

Oak Park United Methodist Church
5505 South 31st St. ~ 254.773.3021

St. Francis Episcopal Church & School
5001 Hickory ~ 254.733.4255

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

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

Taylor's Valley Baptist Church
2497 W. FM 93 ~ 254.939.0503

Temple Bible Church
3205 Oakview Drive ~ 254.778.3233

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

Unity Church of Temple
318 N. 2nd ~ 254.770.0070

Vineyard Christian Fellowship
7425 W Adams Ave. ~ 254.778.2802

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A Best Man for a Lifetime



John C. Perry

This week, I have the honor of standing once again as the Best Man at my friend Tom's wedding. It's a role filled with tradition, a toast or two, and maybe a few embarrassing stories, but it also got me thinking more deeply about friendship and what it really means to call someone a friend.

I've been blessed in my life with some truly good friends, men and women who've walked with me through many seasons. But Tom... Tom is something different. Our friendship goes back to high school, and like all meaningful things, it didn't arrive without a story.

When I moved from Dallas to Temple, Texas, I was a shy teenager dropping into a small town of about 30,000 people. The transition was more than just geographical, it was personal. I had gone from a school where I was surrounded by friends to a new place where I knew no one and felt like I

didn't quite belong. I struggled. I was quiet, unsure of myself, and, for a time, pretty miserable. Rejection seemed to be the theme of those early days. I even remember getting stood-up for a date once, and let's just say my confidence was not thriving.

A few friendships sprouted through church, including Doyle and Terry, good guys who helped lighten the load. But it was at Temple High where I met Tom. Somehow, we just clicked. We were both trying to find our way, and we found some joy in navigating it together. We laughed, went on ill-fated double dates, and survived teenage life one awkward moment at a time.

We stayed close. When we each got married, we stood beside one another as Best Men. We attended Temple Junior College together, worked at the local newspaper, and even as our paths split, Tom moving around the country in the newspaper business, and me choosing to stay and make a life in Temple, we stayed connected. We've leaned on each other through the big stuff: the loss of parents, divorce, the hard decisions, the quiet moments life doesn't prepare you for.

So how do you define a friend? The Bible offers guidance. In *John 15:15*, Jesus says: *"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does*

not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends." This highlights the steadfast nature of true friendship.

To me, a true friend is someone who simply gets you. Someone you can laugh with, cry with, trust with your truth. They don't judge your lows or compete with your highs. A friend shows up, not just when it's easy, but when it's hard. They are present, steady, and sincere.

That's my buddy Tom. And this week, I'm in Oklahoma, proud to stand beside him once again, not just as his Best Man, but as a lifelong witness to his journey. We've grown from shy teenagers fumbling through double dates to men who've weathered life's storms with grit and grace.

He's more than a friend. He's family, the kind you choose, not the kind you inherit. He is like a brother to me. And as I stand beside him at his wedding, I'll be honoring a friendship that's lasted decades, shaped who I am, and reminded me what loyalty really looks like.

Here's to old friends, new beginnings, and never taking either for granted!

John C. Perry is the Lay Leader with New Life Methodist Church. They meet every Sunday at 9 a.m. (Bible Study) and 10 a.m. (Worship Service) in the Salado Middle School at 1169 Williams Rd.



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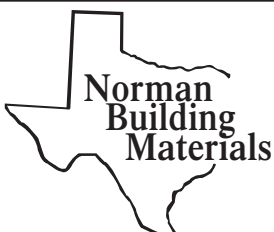
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EDITORIAL

Don't Worry. Choose Happy.

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

Happiness. The word is hard to define, and the definition is a little different for everyone. Many of us think happiness is an elusive goal, like a wisp in the wind, that we hope for but can't really guarantee. We let our emotions happen to us as they come, and we cross our fingers and say our prayers that they bring joy instead of grief.

But research supports that we can choose to be happy. The brain is a muscle, and we can train it into muscle memory for joy instead of sadness or anger or other negative emotions. The more we practice the discipline of choosing joy, gratitude, or peace, the less likely we are to go to the bad place when faced with difficult circumstances. Or at least, the faster and easier it will be to pull out of our negative mindset.

If your happiness quotient needs a boost, you're in luck. Below is a list of happiness-boosting practices that will help train your brain to give you glee instead of gloom.

Live Small. Instead of waiting for happiness to show up in one grand gesture, focus on the little things that bring joy. A baby's laugh, a budding rose, even the sound of bacon crackling on the stove can be sources of pleasure. Make it a habit to stop a moment and focus on those small delights as they come.

Smile. Make it your goal to smile at every person you see. This includes smiling at yourself in the mirror. When you smile, most people smile back, and this sends happy signals to your brain. It's also just a nice thing to do and will make people like you more.

Be friendly. When it comes to making friends, cast a wide net. It often takes making an effort with ten or twenty (or more) people to find that one person you can really connect with. But the effort itself brings satisfaction as you learn more about others and offer them friendship and support. Eventually, you'll find one or two people who get you, and with whom you really enjoy spending time.

Be kind. Make a game of doing five (or four, or seven) random acts of kindness each week. Doing this helps us feel good about ourselves and boosts our happiness.

Do what you love. Maybe you're fortunate to have a job you love. But even if your job is kind of meh, make time to paint or play tennis or swim or read great literature or whatever it is that makes your heart sing.

Practice gratitude. Each day, set aside time to consider your blessings. Focusing on the things you're thankful for, no matter how large or small, has been shown to calm the nerves and put us in a more peaceful state of mind. You get bonus points if you write down the things you're thankful for or record positive experiences, as the act of writing helps you relive the experience.

Try new things. Set a goal and work toward it. It doesn't even matter if you reach it, as long as you take steps in that direction. Take a class. Learn a new skill. Visit that restaurant you've been meaning to try.

Be mindful. Try to savor each moment. To savor, in this context, means to slow down and really enjoy something in a way that makes it last as long as possible. You can be mindful of your surroundings, or you can be mindful of the taste of the salmon and baked potato on your plate.

Take care of yourself. When we're tired, run-down, and malnourished, it's easier to slip into depression and anxiety. We're also more irritable. By eating right, exercising, and getting plenty of rest, we increase our chances for happiness.

Go outside and exercise. Research has proven that sounds and sights of nature put us in a more Zen state of mind. A simple walk or jog, three times a week, can help improve clinical depression more than medication alone or even medication plus exercise. That's powerful stuff.

Let it go. Holding on to anger, bitterness, sadness, or other negative emotions from your past hurts you more than anyone else. Each time you remember something bad from your past, breath it in, then exhale slowly and picture that bad feeling leaving your body, never to return. (It helps. Really.)

Play. Act silly. Dance in your kitchen. Chase your spouse around the living room, or speak in goofy voices with your kids. Laughter really is great medicine!

One of the most fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith is freedom of choice. God doesn't force us to love Him. He doesn't program us like robots to choose Him, to choose love, to choose happiness. We get to decide.

We can't control the thoughts and feelings that drift through our minds. But we can control which ones we sit in. When it comes to happiness, these choices may not make life perfect, but they will make it better. Next time you find yourself focusing on how sad/depressed/angry/miserable you are, argue with yourself. Defy your thoughts and choose happy. You'll be glad you did.

"You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore."

Psalm 16:11

USA 101: Cheese

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

Thanks to the modern magic we call the internet, I have been able to speak with a great many people from all over the world. As bizarre as it might seem, one of the things I'm most commonly asked about in regards to the United States is our cheese situation. No, I'm not joking.

So for those of you who hail from outside of the United States and happen to be reading this, allow me to explain.

To begin with, the canned "spray tube" – style cheese you might have seen is more novelty item than serious food-stuff. Even our own pop culture sometimes mocks it. Therefore, let's set that aside for right now.

As far as American cheese goes, you can actually thank the UK for that, as by the 1790s American-made Cheddar-style cheeses were being imported to the UK. The cheese itself is a processed cheese that has been mixed with sodium citrate. The cheese and sodium citrate mixture is then melted together to ensure a single consistency, at which point it's subjected to the Pasteurization process on top of this first heating process. This results in a cheese that easily melts, has a mild flavor, pairs well with just about everything, has no aftertaste under normal circumstances, and is readily affordable. It is, in essence, a very working-class cheese.

However, that's not the only cheese to hail from the United States.

For starters, we have Colby, which hails from the city of Colby, Wisconsin. Colby is produced through a variation on the process used to create Cheddar-style cheeses, meaning that while it is still what would be considered a "hard" cheese it's a bit softer and moister than a regular Cheddar. Colby is quite commonly sliced for use in sandwiches, but you'll also see it shredded or cubed for use in salads and you might even see people just snack on it as-is. US law states that this is one of a handful of cheeses from which American cheese can be derived.

Or of course there's Monterrey Jack, native of Monterrey, California. It's a white cheese which owes its existence in large part to the influence of Franciscan monks, and somewhat hard but not so hard as Colby. It melts almost as well as American cheese, yet its mild flavor is unique compared to most other cheeses. Due to its composition, history, and origin, it's commonly used with burritos, quesadillas, and other items that in the United States are seen as traditionally "Mexican" cuisine. Variations on Monterrey Jack include Pepper Jack, where dried bits of peppers have been added into the cheese for a bit of extra kick, and Colby Jack, where Monterrey Jack and Colby have been blended to have the former's low melting point and latter's flavor profile in the same product.

Then there's cream cheese, an innovation on the Neufchatel cheese wherein cream is added. The end result is a cheese so soft that if made and stored properly it can be used as a spread. Typically, cream cheese is served atop the humble bagel, but one variation of the Philadelphia-style Cheese Steak sandwich uses a popular name-brand of cream cheese, and it's also one of the key ingredients in cheesecake (yes, we make cake from cream cheese; you should try it).

There are a few other cheeses hailing from the United States, but I think this proves the point: even if the cheese legally known as American cheese isn't your thing, you'll still have some options to dine on while you're here.

SUDOKU

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | | 4 | 7 | | | | 8 | |
| | | | | | 2 | | 1 | |
| | | 6 | | | 9 | | | 5 |
| | | | | | | 7 | | 4 |
| | | | | | | | 9 | |
| | | | 3 | 5 | | 8 | | |
| 7 | | | | 8 | | | | 3 |
| | | 1 | | 6 | | | | |
| | 2 | | | | | | | 9 |

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 4 | 9 | 8 | 1 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| 2 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| 1 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 8 |
| 5 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 4 |
| 4 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 |
| 3 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| 2 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 |

ANSWER:

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!



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drawn. If a hearing is granted, the subject of a hearing will be limited to disputed issues of fact or mixed questions of fact and law relating to relevant and material air quality concerns submitted during the comment period. Issues such as property values, noise, traffic safety, and zoning are outside of the Commission’s jurisdiction to address in this proceeding.

MAILING LIST. In addition to submitting public comments, you may ask to be placed on a mailing list to receive future public notices for this specific application by sending a written request to the Office of the Chief Clerk at the address below.

AGENCY CONTACTS AND INFORMATION. All public comments and requests must be submitted either electronically at www14.tceq.texas.gov/epic/eComment/ or in writing to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Office of the Chief Clerk, MC-105, P.O. Box 13087, Austin, Texas 78711-3087. Please be aware that any contact information you provide, including your name, phone number, email address and physical address will become part of the agency’s public record. For more information about the permitting process, please call the TCEQ Public Education Program, Toll Free, at 1-800-687-4040 or visit their website at www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/pep. Si desea información en Español, puede llamar al 1-800-687-4040. You can also view our website for public participation opportunities at www.tceq.texas.gov/goto/participation. Further information may also be obtained from Asphalt Inc., LLC, 11675 Jollyville Road, Suite 150, Austin, Texas 78759-4108 or by calling Mrs. Melissa Fitts, Senior Vice President, Westward Environmental, Inc., at (830) 249-8284, Notice Issuance Date: June 10, 2025 06.26

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION-PARENT AND CHILD

To: Any Unknown Father and All Whom It May Concern, Respondents, in the hereinafter-styled and -numbered cause: You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of 20 days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. The Original Petition of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, was filed in the 146th Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas, on April 14, 2025, against Nekieva Office and Unknown Father, Respondent(s), numbered 25DFAM353143, and entitled “In the Interest of AYA OFFICE, minor child.” The suit requests to terminate the parent-child relationships and/or to appoint a managing conservator of the child. The date and place of birth of the child who is the subject of the suit is: AYA OFFICE, DOB: April 10, 2025, Place of birth: Texas

The court has authority in this suit to render an order in the child’s interest that will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child’s adoption. The name and address of the attorney for plaintiff is Ryan Smith, Bell County Attorney’s Office, P.O. Box 1127, Belton, TX 76513

Issued and given under my hand and seal of the Court at Belton, Texas, this the 20th day of June 2025

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

By: C. Rodriguez, Deputy. 06.26

NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS AGAINST THE ESTATE OF DORIS MARIE BIGGS, DECEASED

NOTICE is hereby given that original Letters of Testamentary were issued on May 13, 2025 in a proceeding styled Estate of Doris Marie Biggs, Deceased, in Cause Number 25CPB00079, 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: Brenda Childers Independent Executrix of the Estate of Doris Marie Biggs, Deceased, c/o Burk Roberts, Roberts & Roberts, L.L.P., 2501 East Elms Rd., Ste. A, Killeen, Texas 76542-3023

All persons having claims against this estate, which is

currently being administered, are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

Signed on May 19, 2025.

Roberts & Roberts, L.L.P., Attorneys for Brenda Childers

By: Burk Roberts 06.26

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION-PARENT AND CHILD

To: Brett Howard, any Unknown Father and All Whom It May Concern, Respondents, in the hereinafter-styled and - numbered cause:

You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of 20 days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. The Original Petition of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, was filed in the 146th Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas, on January 31, 2025, against Julia Yates and Brett Howard, Respondent(s), numbered 25DFAM351510, and entitled “In the Interest of CHRISTOPHER YATES, minor child.” The suit requests to terminate the parent-child relationships and/or to appoint a managing conservator of the child. The date and place of birth of the child who is the subject of the suit is: CHRISTOPHER YATES, DOB: September 29, 2008, Place of birth: Unknown

The court has authority in this suit to render an order in the child’s interest that will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child’s adoption. The name and address of the attorney for plaintiff is Susan Parker, Bell County Attorney’s Office, P.O. Box 1127, Belton, TX 76513

Issued and given under my hand and seal of the Court at Belton, Texas, this the 17th day of June 2025.

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

By: C. Rodriguez Deputy. 06.26

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION-PARENT AND CHILD

To: Danny Boyd, and All Whom It May Concern, Respondents, in the hereinafter-styled and -numbered cause:

You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of 20 days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. The Petition to Modify of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, was filed in the 146th Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas, on June 11, 2025, against Jasmine Ecford and Danny Boyd, Respondent(s), numbered 23DFAM337233, and entitled “In the Interest of KALLEY NICHOLE BOYD, minor child.” The suit requests to modify the parent-child relationships and/or to appoint a managing conservator of the child. The date and place of birth of the child who is the subject of the suit is: KALLEY NICHOLE BOYD, DOB: June 23, 2009, Place of birth: Texas

The court has authority in this suit to render an order in the child’s interest that will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child’s adoption. The name and address of the attorney for plaintiff is Jennine Cintron, Bell County Attorney’s Office, P.O. Box 1127, Belton, TX 76513

Issued and given under my hand and seal of the Court at Belton, Texas, this the 17th day of June 2005

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

By: C. Rodriguez, Deputy.06.26

NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS AGAINST THE ESTATE OF SHIRLEY ANN CARLISLE, DECEASED

NOTICE is hereby given that original Letters of Administration were issued on June 16, 2025 in a proceeding styled Estate of Shirley Ann Carlisle, Deceased,

in Cause Number 25CPB00226, pending in the County Court At Law #1 of Bell County, Texas.

Claims may be presented in care of the attorney for the Independent Administrator, addressed as follows: Zacharie Blake Carlisle Independent Administrator of the Estate of Shirley Ann Carlisle, 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 16, 2025.

Roberts & Roberts, L.L.P., Attorneys for Zacharie Blake Carlisle

By: Burk Roberts 06.26

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Betty Lorraine Epperson, Deceased, were issued on June 9, 2025, in Cause No. 25CPB00320, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: John Norris Epperson Sr.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. Estate of Betty Lorriane Epperson, c/o: John Norris Epperson Sr., 807 Macy Dr., Troy, Texas 76579

DATED the 16th day of June, 2025.

Respectfully submitted, THE ZIMMERMAN LAW FIRM, P.C.

By: /s/ Garrett L. Beach ,Garrett L. Beach ,State Bar No.: 24101493, 3501 W. Waco, Dr. Waco, Texas, 76710, Telephone: (254) 633-3333, Facsimile: (254) 752-9680, E-mail: gbeach@zlawhelp.com Attorneys for John Norris Epperson, Sr. 06.26

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION - CIVIL CAUSE NO. 25DCV353823

To :THE UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF ROBERT JONES

Greetings:

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the ORIGINAL PETITION at or before 10 o’clock AM of the first Monday after the expiration of 42 days from the date of issuance of this Citation, the same being Monday, at or before 10 o’clock AM, before the Honorable 146th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas. Said ORIGINAL PETITION was filed in said court on May 14, 2025.

The file number of said suit being No. 25DCV353823.

The names of the parties in said suit are: FREEDOM MORTGAGE CORPORATION VS. AILI JONES,THE UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF ROBERT JONES DECEASED

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

This proceeding concerns the foreclosure of a lien on the following real property and improvements commonly known as 1318 Honey Hill Dr., Temple, TX 76502, and more particularly described as LOT NINE (9), IN BLOCK ONE (1), OF LAKE POINTE PHASE III, IN THE CITY OF TEMPLE, BELL COUNTY, TEXAS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT OF RECORD IN PLAT YEAR 2016, NUMBER 71 A & B, PLAT RECORDS OF BELL COUNTY, TEXAS.

This was issued at the request of attorney: PETER K. KNAPP MILLER GEORGE & SUGGS 6080 TENNYSON PKWYSTE 100 Plano TX 75024.

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

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office in Belton, Texas, on June 16, 2025.

Joanna Staton District Clerk Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, Texas 76513 By: M Cortez Deputy Clerk 06.26,07.3,07.10,07.17



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BIGGEST pet event in Central Texas

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PET EXTRAVAGANZA!

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PROMO

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CODE

BELTON JOURNAL

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EXTRACO EVENTS CENTER
SPRING 2026



There are four differences between Picture A and Picture B. Can you find them all?

A



B



Answers: 1. Man's hair is different 2. Ferris wheel in background 3. Boy wearing heart glasses 4. Girl has hand stamp smiley face

ANSWER: ROLLER COASTERS

THIS DAY IN...



HISTORY

• **1898:** JOSHUA SLOCUM OF NOVA SCOTIA COMPLETES THE FIRST SOLO CIRCUMNAVIGATION OF THE GLOBE.

- **1950:** THE UNITED STATES DECIDES TO SEND TROOPS TO FIGHT IN THE KOREAN WAR.

- **2007:** TONY BLAIR RESIGNS AS BRITISH PRIME MINISTER, A POSITION HE HAD HELD SINCE 1997.



PEOPLE ENJOY RIDING ON THESE
THRILLING ATTRACTIONS AVAILABLE
AT THEME PARKS ALL OVER THE
WORLD.

How they SAY that in...

ENGLISH: Ticket

SPANISH: Boleto

ITALIAN: Biglietto

FRENCH: Billet

GERMAN: Karte

Did You Know?

KINGDA KA AT SIX FLAGS GREAT ADVENTURE IN NEW JERSEY IS THE TALLEST ROLLER COASTER IN THE WORLD, AND THE FASTEST IN NORTH AMERICA.



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

ANSWER: ROLLER COASTER