

Belton holds successful 4th of July Celebration



Courtesy Photo
The annual patriotic program is held on the grounds of the Bell County Courthouse as part of the City’s 4th of July festivities.
Special to the Journal

The Belton community celebrated another successful 4th of July Celebration despite rainy weather conditions. “We can’t control the weather, but we didn’t let the weather control us,” stated Randy Pittenger, President/CEO of the Belton area Chamber of Commerce. “All of our events were held on schedule and were well attended, fun, and successful.”

“We are especially proud to provide so many family-friendly activities and entertainment where Belton citizens and visitors can enjoy the events and learn more about our community, added Pittenger.

The Kick-Off Downtown Street Party on June 28 had a record crowd in attendance, with thousands of people enjoying live music and vendors, as well as many special activities for children. A new highlight this year was the Little Miss and Mr. Belton 4th of July contest,

with some adorable children given the honor of riding in the parade, among other prizes.

While rain limited attendance at the Carnival in Liberty Park, people didn’t hesitate coming out Friday for the annual Patriotic Program, Parade and Festival on Nolan Creek in Liberty Park. Big crowds came out early and lined the streets to watch the parade. Many commented that they were happy to have much cooler weather than usual for the 4th of July, despite brief rain showers.

Soldiers from the 36th Engineer Brigade deployed a bridge across Nolan Creek to allow thousands of parade spectators to cross over to the Festival on Nolan Creek in Liberty Park to visit food trucks, vendors, games, pony rides, and exotic animals at the petting zoo. In addition to the annual REV, White & Blue Car Show,

See **SUCCESSFUL**,
Page A2



Courtesy Photo
The Charter Oak in Bell County is where the first elections were held in the area.

Residents brave weather for parade, patriotic program

By **David Tuma**
The Belton Journal

Bell County residents were out in force, braving the rain as tens of thousands of folks lined up Main Street to watch the Belton July 4th Parade. There were over 200 parade entries.

Before each parade, there is a Patriotic Program with speakers at the Bell County Courthouse steps.

“Welcome to Belton. Everybody who has complained about the heat in years past, this day is for you. We had volunteers out working this morning before the sun came up,” said Randy Pittenger, President of the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce.

The Grand Marshal of this year’s parade was Bell County Judge David Blackburn.

“It is an honor to be here. We have a Charter Oak Tree North of the Leon River. The first year

See **BRAVE**,
Page A4

Belton 4th of July Parade Award Winners Announced



Courtesy Photo /Steven Peters

Special to the journal

The Belton Area Chamber of Commerce announced the award winners for the 4th of July Parade. The theme was “Celebrating 175 Years of Bell County” and there were 195 entries registered for the parade, ranging from individuals to large groups, elected officials, floats, musical groups, businesses, and non-profit organizations and groups. Not all entries were eligible or chose to be judged, but it was a difficult decision for the judges to select the best of the best.

“We were pleased with the quality and diversity of the parade entries this year and appreciate the way our community celebrated our theme of Celebrating 175 Years of Bell County,” stated Randy Pittenger, President/CEO of the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce. “Despite the rain,

we enjoyed the cooler weather, and it was a great day to celebrate in Belton with a very successful parade!”

Even with the rainy weather, thousands of people lined the parade route along Main Street and Central Avenue, cheering for their favorite parade entries as they rolled by. Spectators began saving their favorite place on the parade route up to a week in advance, with many already in their seats before daylight on Friday. Many families and friend groups have been in the same location for generations, watching the parade from their special vantage point.

Astound Broadband was the Parade awards sponsor again this year.

“We are proud to once again sponsor the parade awards and were impressed with both the number and quality of entries,”

See **PARADE**
Page A2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Obituaries.....A3

BTOWN.....A5

Editorial.....A7, B4

Lifestyles.....A4

Service Directory.....A8

Sports.....B1

Classifieds.....B5 - B6

Church Directory.... B8

Belton woman survives Hill Country flooding nightmare

By **David Stone**
The Belton Journal

A 19-year-old Belton woman narrowly escaped rising flood waters that tore through her Hunt, Texas, hotel during a Fourth of July gathering.

Riata Schoepf waded through chest-deep water in

the middle of the night before she was rescued by a group of strangers.

She was part of a group of 33 friends and family members who spend the July 4th holiday every year at the River Inn Resort & Conference Center in Hunt.

“It was late and I had gone to bed, but a few people

in our group were still up,” Riata said. “I woke up about 2:30 a.m. to a banging on our door. My boyfriend’s brother burst into the room and said the hotel was flooding and we needed to go.”

“There had been many lightning strikes right around

See **NIGHTMARE**,
Page A4



Courtesy Photo
Riata Schoepf is interviewed about escaping flood waters in Hunt, TX over the 4th of July.

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Flood claims life of former Lakewood Elementary teacher

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Country music star and Waco native Pat Green shared on social media this week that he and his family have suffered “a heartbreaking and deeply personal loss” for the Hill Country floods over the Fourth of July holiday weekend.

Green said he lost his brother, sister-in-law and two nephews in the floods.

His sister-in-law, Julia Anderson Burgess, was a former teacher at Lakeway Elementary School in Belton.

Green said that he and his family are “grieving alongside countless Texans whose lives have been upended by this

tragedy.”

“Over the weekend, during the devastating flooding that hit Central Texas, my family — like so many others — suffered a heartbreaking and deeply personal loss,” Green wrote in an Instagram post July 8.

The floods, spurred by a rapid rise in water levels in Central Texas’ Guadalupe River, represent the worst disaster of this kind in years. On Wednesday, June 9, the death count rose to 109.

Green’s wife, Kori, also spoke of the tragedy on social media.

“We are so thankful for the outpouring of love and concern, Kori wrote in another Instagram post. “Pat’s little brother

John, his wife, Julia, and two of their children were swept away in the Kerrville flood. We are heartbroken.”

The flooding came in the early morning hours of July 4, with rainfall causing the river to surge over 26 feet in less than an hour, according to Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick.

As first responders and volunteers continued to scour the region, rescuing people clinging to trees using helicopters, the death toll has steadily risen.

“Right now, we kindly ask for privacy and space as we mourn, support each other and begin to process what comes next for our family,” Pat Green wrote. “Thank you for your love, prayers and

compassion.”

Randy Pittenger, president of the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, posted about the loss on social media.

“We are saddened by the heartbreaking news of the unimaginable and tragic loss of Julia Anderson Burgess and John Burgess. Julia was a valued teacher on LaGay’s 5th grade team at Lakewood Elementary and was a treasured friend and colleague. They were an important part of our Belton community before their move to Liberty. May we honor their memory by remembering the impact they had on so many of us. Our prayers continue for their precious children, family, and friends.”

Parade - From Page A1

stated Lori Salisbury, Community Relations Manager for Astound. “Thank you to the Chamber and all the volunteers; what a fantastic job putting this event together. It was a perfect way to kick off Independence Day.”

Awards were presented in the following categories:

Chairman’s Choice: CGI, with an impressive and creative animated float.

Best of Show (For Profit Business): FSR Roofing, with an impressive patriotic float.

Best of Show (Non-Profit Organization): Lone Star Santas, with a fun collection of Santas combining the spirit of Christmas with the 4th of July.

Best Use of Theme (For Profit Business): Belltec Industries.

Best Use of Theme (Non-Profit Organization): Belton Police Foundation.

Most Patriotic (For Profit Business): ROAM Roof & Solar.

Most Patriotic (Non-Profit Organization): SPJST.

Most Original: Claude Allen Specialized House Leveling Foundation Repair & Concrete, with a vintage stagecoach.

Best Youth Organization: Belton High School Student Council.

Best Equestrian Unit: Cen-Tex Saddle

Club.

Best Walking or Marching Group: The Belton High School Marching 100.

Best Vehicle: Outlaw Jeeps of Central Texas.

“Our parade committee, volunteers, and City of Belton staff did a great job of planning and coordinating a massive logistics challenge to provide such a safe and enjoyable parade for participants and spectators alike,” added Pittenger. “We appreciate KWTX Channel 10 doing an excellent job of live broadcasting the parade for those unable to attend in person, and then replaying it later in the day so participants could watch it too.”

Parade sponsors were KWTX Channel 10, CGI, ProStar Rental, Cefco, H-E-B Helping Here, Astound Broadband, Vista Real Estate, Cory Herring Homes, A+ Roofing, Atmos Energy, Baylor Scott & White, Belton Christian Youth Center, Edward Jones, Oncor Electric Delivery, Pine Gate Renewables, Temple College, Temple Technology Services, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, and the City of Belton.

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





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Successful - From Page A1

everyone was able to enjoy the Fort Hood 1st Cavalry Band, performing on the Liberty Park Pavilion stage.

Friday night ended with a capacity crowd at the Backyard Party at Schoepf’s concert by recording star Randall King, with local favorites Wolf Mahler and Jared Johnson providing the opening entertainment. The biggest cheers of the night were for the spectacular fireworks show lighting up the Belton sky for over 30 minutes.

“We are so very thankful for Ronnie and Staci Schoepf providing their venue for this wonderful annual event, where our entire community can gather in the surrounding neighborhoods to see an awesome fireworks show,” added Pittenger. “We are also thankful for our sponsors: Gunter Financial Services, Don Ringer Automotive, John R. Holmes Fi-

nancial Advisor and Tito’s Handmade Vodka, who help make it possible for us to provide this to our community.”

The three-day Belton 4th of July Rodeo was also well attended at the air-conditioned Cadence Bank Center, with those in attendance enjoying impressive performances by the cowboys, cowgirls, Mutton Busters, and livestock. Several dozen children participated in the KPA Engineers Stick Horse Stampede on Family Night Saturday, riding their trusted stick ponies, unicorns, and other assorted creatures on the arena floor.

“We couldn’t do all these events without our army of community volunteers, sponsors, and City of Belton partners working hard for months to plan and coordinate all the details. The weather provided some additional challenges but our teams adapted quickly,” added

Pittenger.

“Special thanks to our Chamber staff: Dawn Orange, Katherine Mutchler, and Lexy Sarinana for their dedication and service to our community to make everything work well, and to our Rodeo Director Keith Smith and his committee for another great experience at the 101st Belton 4th of July Rodeo.”

Lead sponsors for the Belton 4th of July Celebration include CGI, Pro Star Rental, KWTX Channel 10, Cefco, H-E-B Helping Here, Keg One O’Neal, Mac Haik Auto Group, Astound Broadband, Vista Real Estate, Cory Herring Homes, and The Carlson Law Firm.

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



God Bless Texas

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OBITUARIES

Farris

Howard “Carl” Ferris
May 7, 1937 – June 30, 2025

Howard “Carl” Ferris of Belton passed away peacefully on June 30, 2025, after 88 trips around the sun. He is survived by two children in Central Texas, five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his parents and brother.

Born and raised in Manitoba, Carl was a civil engineer by trade, working in Ontario, Oregon, and Texas, designing and managing construction of bridges, dams, roads, and water networks. He loved his family, his garden, and he was especially fond of all the dogs in his life, particularly Scout and Mandy. He loved the water, and was most happy when he was fishing, swimming, motorboating, skiing, crabbing, kayaking, or just walking the dogs at Belton Lake. He was a great swimmer, even into his twilight years, and as a teenager saved his father from drowning. Other hobbies in his retirement included cursing politicians when watching TV and making sure utility companies didn’t sneak in any superfluous fees. He was known for his sense of humor.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Carl’s memory to the ASPCA or the Salvation Army.

Memorial service will be held at Hewett-Arney Funeral Home on Saturday, July 12, 2025, at 11 o’clock a.m.

Hewett-Arney Funeral Home of Temple is entrusted with these arrangements.

Boulette

Thomas Clinton Boulette
Jan 7, 1971 - Jul 1, 2025

Thomas Clinton Boulette, affectionately known as Clint, passed away on Tuesday, July 1, 2025, in his hometown of Temple, Texas. Though he is no longer with us, his warmth, generosity, and enduring spirit live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved him.

Born in Temple on January 7, 1971, Clint was a proud graduate of Temple High School’s Class of 1989. During his high school years, he not only excelled academically but also made his mark as a four-year varsity soccer player, forming lifelong friendships and building cherished memories on and off the field.

Clint dedicated his professional life to retail management, working with numerous companies across the Temple area. Known for his compassionate leadership and friendly demeanor, he earned the admiration and respect of colleagues and customers alike. It’s often said that Clint never met a stranger—and he never made an enemy.

In December 2023, Clint experienced one of life’s greatest joys when he married his high school sweetheart, Renee Marie (Morales) Boulette. Their love story, rekindled and celebrated decades after it began, was a testament to lasting devotion. Clint’s proudest role, however, was being a bather to his beloved children, Christopher Clinton Boulette and Brittany Boulette. The bond he shared with them was deep and unwavering, filled with laughter, guidance, and love. Becoming a grandfather brought Clint even more joy—his grandchildren, Harley Melancon and Acelyn Shong, were his pride and delight, and the family eagerly anticipates the arrival of another grandchild in December.

A man of many passions, Clint was an avid pool player and a proud 16-year member of the American Poolplayers Association (APA). He could often be found on Monday and Thursday nights at Dooley’s Pool Hall and Pro Shop, demonstrating both skill and sportsmanship in 8-ball and 9-ball matches. Off the table, Clint’s generous spirit shone through in the simplest of ways—he loved baking and was known for sharing homemade muffins, cookies, and pies with friends, neighbors, and coworkers.

Clint’s kindness extended far beyond his immediate family. His capacity to love, to give, and to uplift others made him a source of light to all who crossed his path. He leaves behind a profound legacy of compassion, loyalty, and joy.

He is deeply missed by his loving wife, Renee; his children, Christopher and Brittany; his grandchildren, Harley and Acelyn; his parents, Ernest Peter Boulette and Linda Carol (Burtchell) Boulette; and his siblings, Robert Boulette, Stephanie Boulette, and Robin Boulette Barron.

A visitation will be held on Friday, July 11, 2025, from 5 p.m.

to 8 p.m. at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center in Temple, TX, with a Rosary to be prayed at 6 p.m. A Mass of Christian Burial will follow on Saturday, July 12, 2025, at 11 a.m. at St. Mary’s Catholic Church in Temple.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests memorial donations be made to Limbs of Life, an organization that provides prosthetics to those in need—an initiative close to Clint’s heart.

The family extends a heartfelt thank you to Dr. Gonzalez, Dr. Morain, Dr. Lynch, and Dr. Chuwu for their compassionate care and oversight throughout Clint’s health journey.

As we say goodbye to Clint, we hold tightly to the love he gave, the laughter he shared, and the legacy he leaves behind. His life was a gift, and his memory will forever be a blessing.

Guinn

Charlene Marie Guinn
January 26, 1967 — June 14, 2025

Charlene Marie Guinn, born on January 26, 1967, in Kenner, Louisiana, departed this world on June 14, 2025, in Temple, Texas. She was a vibrant soul known for her infectious laugh and a sense of humor that could brighten the darkest days. Charlene’s spirit shone brightly in all she did, wrapping those around her in warmth and joy.

Celebrated for her wit and charm, Charlene was more than just a loving wife and devoted mother; she was a friend to all who knew her. Her marriage to her beloved husband, Osborn Guinn, began on February 2, 2012, and together they shared 13 beautiful years filled with laughter, love, and adventures. The bond they formed was a testament to the strength of their love, a partnership that blossomed with every passing day.

Charlene found happiness in life’s simple pleasures. Whether she was nature walking, hiking the mountain trails, or tending to her garden, she poured her heart into everything she loved. Her passion for gardening, in particular, allowed her to express herself through the beauty of flowers. Growing and arranging them became one of her proudest accomplishments, a reflection of her nurturing spirit and creativity.

In addition to her love for nature, Charlene had a special affection for animals, particularly puppies. She found joy in their playful antics, taking delight in moments spent playing with them. Her home was a canvas for her artistic flair, as she poured her creativity into decorating, transforming spaces with her unique vision and vibrant energy.

Cherished by her family, Charlene leaves behind her husband, Osborn Guinn, her son, Soloman Smith, and her brother, Chester Douglas “Buddy” Berry. Their lives are forever enriched by the love and laughter she so generously shared. While they mourn her absence, they also celebrate the indelible mark she left on their hearts.

Arrangements are under the direction of Sabrina Young with Young’s Daughters Funeral Home.

Marek

Wanona Leona Goldman Marek
May 29, 1937 – July 5, 2025

Wanona Leona Goldman Marek, a beloved wife, mother, grandmother, and friend, passed away peacefully on Saturday, July 5, 2025, in Temple, Texas, surrounded by her devoted husband and loving family. Born on May 29, 1937, in Temple, Texas, Wanona was a radiant presence whose life touched many.

Throughout her life, Wanona wore many hats, excelling as a handyman, a skilled restaurant cake baker, and a dedicated homemaker. Her creativity and determination were evident in the thriving garden she nurtured, the delicious baked goods she prepared, and the intricate crochet projects she completed. Wanona was particularly known for her freshly made kolaches and could often be found tending to her greenhouse or crafting new items. She enjoyed watching judge shows, gaming shows, and channels dedicated to cooking and farming. She loved playing 42 dominoes and taking casino trips.

Wanona attended school at Thompson Community School and graduated from Rosebud High School in 1956. Her educational experiences provided her with a strong foundation that she would build upon throughout her life. A true family person at heart, Wanona devoted herself to her loved ones, often recalling the moment she met the love of her life at a picnic in Marak. This meeting led to their marriage and the blessing of two daughters, Ruth Ann and Diane. Their journey

took them from Leedale to Dallas for work for about ten years, and eventually back to Rogers, where they lovingly built a home and cultivated their family farm together.

She is survived by her devoted husband of 69 years, Alvin Marek; her daughter, Ruth Ann Cox and her husband, Creed Eddie Cox; granddaughter, Rebecca Lyn Cox; grandson, James Robert Spohn and his wife Christie Spohn; granddaughter, Jennifer Spohn; and grandson, Jason Spohn.

Wanona is preceded in death by her father, Paul Goldman; her mother, Leona Pfeiffer Goldman; her infant brother, Lloyd Ray Goldman; her daughter, Diane Elizabeth Spohn; and her son-in-law, Don Spohn. As her family and friends reflect on her life, they remember her for not only her strong personality but for her unwavering love and commitment to those she held dear.

Visitation will be held from 1-2 p.m. Thursday, July 10, 2025, at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center in Temple, Texas. Celebration of Life will begin at 2 p.m. In lieu of flowers please consider making a memorial donation to the Ronald McDonald house of Temple.

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



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A4
Thursday,
July 10, 2025

LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Dynamic duo shares their passion for health with the community



Courtesy photo

Dr. Jason Raesz and his wife, Danielle, share their passion for health with the community.

By Michelle Rodriguez
The Belton Journal

A local couple, Dr. Jason Raesz and his wife, Danielle Raesz, provide alternative health options in the Bell County area with their companies.

Dr. Raesz co-owns Advanced Chi-

ropractic with business partner Dr. Jeff Schels, D.C.

Danielle Raesz owns Live Unparalyzed. Dr. Raesz has been a chiropractor for 20 years and Danielle Raesz has been in the health fitness industry for over 10 years. They are very active in the commu-

“Honestly, they are the kindest people I know. The clinic was also one of the places that was destroyed last year during the tornado and has come back even stronger,” said friend Glennis Lamm.

They both take a holistic approach and give their patients the ability to take back their health.

“They have affordable options that really take the whole person into consideration. I’ve been noticing lately how much of an impact that they have in the community, and they deserve to be highlighted and get some praise for the things they do without expecting anything back,” said Lamm.

Danielle Raesz is a personal trainer studying online to become a NASM certified nutrition coach. She currently trains at home where her garage was turned into a gym. She also volunteers and coaches soccer. She used to be a competitive American Ninja Warrior before an injury.

“We don’t believe in the traditional healthcare model where the solution is to prescribe a pill. At our clinic, when a patient comes in, we try to find out their health goals, for example, travel, pain, play with grandchildren, and lose weight. Health is optimal functioning of the body physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially. We don’t just treat” their symptoms,” said Dr. Raesz.

Typically, people go to a doctor and

take pills to treat a symptom that masks symptoms but does not cure the problem. They try to find out the cause. Patients typically go into the office for spinal care, but they get more than just spinal care. They get a holistic and nutritional approach.

Danielle Raesz typically recommends a food journal to see what they are eating and a plan for proper nutrition.

“There’s a lot of chiropractors out there. If someone comes in with a headache, Danielle and Dr. Schels help to accomplish bigger goals. Danielle is big on the education side for common things like type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure. When patients are told not to do something they explain why to give patients’ understanding,” said Dr. Raesz.

Advanced Chiropractic is located at 7348 W. Adams, Ste. 700 in Temple across from Fuzzy’s Tacos. They are open Monday through Thursday. Their website is templechiropractor.com.

Danielle sometimes does consults at home and her schedule is based on clients’ needs. She is very flexible. Her website is liveunparalyzed.com.

“We both value health. Our core value is to be as healthy as we can and share our knowledge and constantly learn and grow. We are passionate about taking information to the community. We coach our two daughters to have a good work ethic, grow, and get better,” said Danielle.

Brave - From Page A1

after the colonies declared independence, the Declaration of Independence was read across the colonies. The freedom we celebrate today is not free. God Bless the United States of America,” said Blackburn.

The spot chosen for the first election in Bell County was beneath a magnificent live oak. It was located about 50 yards east of the log cabin home of William F. Hill and about 200 yards south of where the Old Military Road crossed the Leon River. Although Hill’s was the only house near the crossing, the site was centrally located and most convenient to the few voters in the county.

On that historic day in April or May 1850, three men were appointed judges, and each of the 30 or 40 men present orally voted for five special commissioners. These commissioners were given the specific task of organizing the new county, a task which included surveying it, locat-

ing a county seat, laying off the townsite, selling the lots at auction, and erecting public buildings.

“Freedom is something we don’t inherit; it is something we earn every day. We don’t see political lines in Belton. That is unique. You have neighbors who love you here,” said Belton Mayor David K. Leigh.

“I am honored to be here today. The good Lord puts you where you are supposed to be. The people of Belton and the surrounding areas support our soldiers. Today speaks volumes about this community. Soldiers knowing that their families will be supported is important. We are better soldiers because of the support we receive. Freedom is something that should be supported. July 4th isn’t just about fireworks and parades. It is about sacrifice,” said Col. LaHavie Brunson, 13th Armored Corps Command.

Nightmare - From Page A1

the hotel, so my first thought was that the hotel was on fire,” she said.

“We walked outside and the flood water was up to the bottom-floor doors,” Riata said. “It was insane — it just came out of nowhere.”

Like many of the hotel guests, Riata ran to her car but was stuck in un-moving traffic as the water lapped at her car door.

“We were just sitting in the car and you start seeing the water rising. We were at a standstill. There was nowhere for us to go.”

Riata joined other hotel guests and fled from the car.

“We started walking down the street, and as we were walking, the water rose higher and higher,” she said.

She said her group was passing a two-story house where people on the top floor were using flashlights to peer into the fast-moving waters below.

Riata said the people

in the house screamed for them to come up, and they let down some sheets.

“They let down the sheets and we started climbing up,” she said. “I was probably in chest-deep water for 20 minutes before I got pulled up, then I started helping get others up the sheets.”

Riata said cell service was almost non-existent. She sent a text to her Mom and Dad, but they didn’t get the message until about 8 a.m.

“We were busy getting ready for the Fourth of July parade, and we hadn’t really heard much about the flooding in the Hill Country,” said Ronnie Schoepf, Riata’s father. “We were actually going to be in the parade.

“We didn’t know the extent of the tragedy when we got her text,” he said. “I kept thinking: ‘Is this real? Is this happening? We kept trying to get hold of her and the people she was with.’”

Ronnie Schoepf said he and his wife would

receive occasional texts from their daughter.

“One text said: ‘They are going to rescue us soon — they are getting the elderly people out first,’” he said. “I drove to the other side of Marble Falls and my wife got another text saying they weren’t going to get them out tonight. I couldn’t get in the flooded area, so I turned around and went back to Belton.”

Schoepf’s BBQ, the family business, was hosting a Fourth of July concert and fireworks that night. Another text from Riata, this one saying that the Army had showed up and they were “taking us out tonight.”

She was taken to Austin, and later in the weekend she was able to go get her car and return to Belton.

“We are super glad she is safe, and we continue to pray for those families who have losses and are recovering from devastation,” Ronnie said.

Ruby Tea Room holds three-course “LiberTEA” celebration



Courtesy photo

Co-owners of Ruby Team Room Executive Chef Sara Nevarez and her business partner Kristie Whites held a Fourth of July LiberTEA celebration.

By Michelle Rodriguez
The Belton Journal

Ruby Tea Room recently moved into Arusha’s located at 126 N. East St. They offer tea party experiences from birthdays to bridal showers to holiday celebrations. Ruby Tea Room is co-owned by Executive Chef Sara Nevarez and her business partner Kristie Whites. The two met in college in Waco and were roommates.

“Chef Sara Nevarez curates the menu based on what anyone wants like scones, cake, and custom cakes. At our ribbon cutting, her scones were a big hit,” said Whites, a native Beltonian. “We are Ruby Tea Room, a hidden gem in Belton. For us, tea is a unifier. We are tea,” said Whites.

They are tea sommelier certified. Their signature fruit tea is their Ruby Red Berry. It’s caffeine free and infused with hibiscus and rosehips balanced with strawberries, black currants, and raspberries.

Their signature herbal tea is their Bluebonnet Magic. It’s caffeine free and infused with a butterfly pea blossom base with notes of lavender that turns violet when lemon juice is added to it.

They are booked out through August with bridal showers, birthday parties, and events.

“We are not only at Arusha’s but are mobile from Dallas to Houston. We offer a business tea series. We have tea blending classes, etiquette, and a bit of history, for example, to drink your tea with your pinky up is American, not done in Europe,” said Whites.

Their website rubytearoom.com launched the day of their ribbon cutting.

“Our mission is to put the tea in ‘communi-tea.’ We believe everyone is so digitally connected they are socially disconnected. Our why is simple, bringing ‘communi-tea’, together,” said Whites.

They’ve held events for every major holiday this year like Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, and Fourth of July. For their Fourth of July LiberTEA celebration, they sourced colonial teas that were thrown into the Boston Harbor.

Ryan Nevarez, Sara Nevarez’s husband very enthusiastically helped serve tea. Tea was served in fine China tea-cups. Timers were given so you could decide how strong the tea tasted. Steep for three minutes for light, four minutes for medium, and five minutes for a strong tea flavor.

“I loved the pop rock candy scone, drinking tea, and visiting,” said Darcel Grounds. She attended the event with friends.

Their afternoon tea service included a choice of their signature tea and a three-course tea service served on a three-tier cake stand with cucumber dill, and turkey, Swiss cheese, and blueberry jam sandwiches on the bottom tier; fire-work scones were topped with pop rock candy and served on the middle tier; and blueberry cream tart, coconut crisp, and red velvet cake at the top tier.

“We do this around the area. This is our fifth or sixth tea party. I brought my mom here today for her birthday. We go to Austin and Killeen. This is my first time here. I heard about it on Facebook,” said Leah Albino.

Red, white, and blue colored popcorn from Popcorn Friday was also served with the red popcorn having a red-hot flavor, the white popcorn having a vanilla flavor, and the blue popcorn having a blueberry flavor.

Ruby Tea Room’s tea is in its purest form, USDA certified organic, kosher, free of artificial flavors, harsh chemicals, and GMOs. Teas, tea accessories, tea boxes, and events can be purchased and booked online at their website.

Local Activities & Events

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.

Master Gardeners - July 11

Troy Chamber of Commerce Lunch and Learn, Community Center in Troy Texas. 12 Noon to 1 pm. Texas 'Weeds', Yep y'all can eat them. This informative session will teach attendees how to identify common Texas "weeds" that are not only safe to eat—but actually delicious and nutritious. Learn simple harvesting tips, culinary uses, and safety precautions when foraging in your own yard. Bring your lunch, bring your curiosity, and join us for a wild weedy take on native plants you didn't know you could eat! This event is free and open to the public. Class Limit: 50 Register at info@greatertroychamber.com or contact Gaby Warlick at 254-400-7345.

Meet the Umpire Ninja - July 12

Come out and meet the Banana Ball Umpire Ninja on July 12, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. at the Crow and Cactus, 122A N Penelope, Belton.

Martian Folk at Standpipe Park - July 12

Join us on Friday, July 12 from 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. at Standpipe Park, Hughes Street and W Ave J, Belton, for a pop-up style event of music and fun! Martian Folk will be landing with some out-of-this-world tunes, and we'll have yard games ready for all ages to enjoy. It's a come-and-go event, so stop by for a bit—or bring a blanket and a picnic and stay for the whole show!

Master Gardeners - July 17

Bell County Master Gardener Association monthly seminar is on Composting - How to get started, presented by Certified Master Gardener, Glenn Melton on Thursday, July 17, 6:00-7:30 PM at 1605 N. Main St. BCMGA Learning Center. Glenn will discuss how the homeowner can easily start, maintain, and use compost in the landscape. Plus Glenn will teach us what to do and not to do to insure success. Class Limit: 50. Please register at BCMGAspeakers@gmail.com.

Polka at Polk - July 18

Our Parks Tour continues with a toe-tapping good time at Yettie Polk Park, 401 Alexander, Belton, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.! Join us for Polka at Polk featuring the lively sounds of Off the Grid Band!

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!

Master Gardeners - July 26

9:00 am to Noon, AgriLife Extension Grounds, Kitchen Classroom in Belton. Join us for a flavorful morning of hands-on learning as we explore the power of herbs in the kitchen! We will start with a presentation on the Herbs we will be cooking with. Learn to prepare easy and delicious dishes using the herbs from your Garden. This hands-on workshop is a great opportunity to learn simple ways to add fresh flavor to your meals while having fun in the kitchen. Hosted by Bell County Master Gardeners Association's Herb Study Interest Group. Limited to 25 participants. Please RSVP to BCMGAspeakers@gmail.com. Pre-registration is required. All ingredients and supplies will be provided. Donations accepted. HEB Better Living is our Sponsor.

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

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet both on TUESDAY, July 8th and July 22nd at 6:30pm at the Temple VA Hospital. Use the entrance on the Valet parking side of the hospital and take the elevator to the 5th floor -Conference Room 5G31. Both care-givers, supporters and those suffering from mental illness are welcome to join us for mutual support and sharing of information. For more information, call 254-771-3638.

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

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

Bell County Historical Commission holds their meetings on the fourth Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the historical Bell County Court House, 101 E. Central Ave in Belton. Join us in our vision of preserving and promoting Bell County's rich historical heritage for current and future generations. We are dedicated to initiating and conducting programs that preserve and celebrate the county's historic cultural resources in alignment with state laws governing historical preservation in Texas. Our community resources consist of a research room, book repository, cemetery information, historical markers and monument records. Our services include information on historic preservation, educational programming, history community outreach and partnerships. We welcome you to come join other history minded folks and get involved by serving on one of our committees that consist of preservation, cemetery, markers and education. To volunteer or for more information please visit historicalcommission@belcounty.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. Mahjong games are available every Monday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Come join the fun and meet new folks. For more information text Jeanne at 409-313-0611.

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

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

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

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

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

Community Information

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

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

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

Citizens Helping in Police Service (CHIPS)

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

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

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

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



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Bell County Museum to open new exhibit July 12



Courtesy Photo
Billy Hassell's painting "Pileated Woodpeckers and Longleaf Pines" is one of the works that will be part of his exhibit July 12 – September 13 at the Bell County Museum.

Special to the Journal

The Bell County Museum will open its newest exhibit, *A Sense of Place, Artwork by Billy Hassell*, on Saturday, July 12.

The exhibit features paintings of Texas flora and fauna in Hassell's signature vibrant, colorful style. Open to the public July 12 through September 13. Admission to the Bell County Museum is free. Hours of operation are Tuesday – Friday 12-5 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

"We are excited to exhibit the works of noted Texas artist Billy Hassell. His celebration of our state's natural beauty through the medium of art is truly incredible. This is something new and exciting for our visitors and I hope everyone takes the opportunity to visit during this two-month

exhibit run," said Coleman Hampton, museum Executive Director.

Fort Worth-based fine artist Billy Hassell has been showing his artwork since the 1980s in galleries across the country. His bold colors and patterns inspired by nature have captured the imagination of collectors throughout the nation. Few artists use color as effectively as Billy, and his graphically illustrative style contributes to his work's emotional punch.

Elite museums in Texas such as the Dallas Museum of Art, the Modern in Fort Worth, the Houston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Menil Collection in Houston, among others, have acquired Billy's oil paintings for their permanent collections. His work hangs in a US Embassy, the University of Texas, the offices of HBO, and the George W. Bush Presidential Center.



Courtesy Photos
Brandon Baker, Ashley Janke, Troy Tubbs, Guy Humphrey, Stanley Durbin, and Alecia Williams were at Belton Feed and Supply Monday morning organizing donations for the flood relief in the Hill Country. The room was filled with donations from area residents who wanted to give back. Bold Republic Brewing & Troy Tubbs helped collect & take donations to Belton Feed and Supply, where they were sorted and sent on their way. The donations were put on pallets at Belton Feed.

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Belton students honored, take home medals at annual SkillsUSA Workforce Development Event in Atlanta



Courtesy Photo
James Clark, Joseph Fuentes, Erik Schiller, Bryson Necessary from Belton High School were High School Silver medals in TeamWorks at the 2025 SkillsUSA Championships in Atlanta.

Special to the Journal

More than 6,500 students competed at the 2025 SkillsUSA Championships, held in Atlanta June 25-26. The event is a national showcase of career and technical education.

The SkillsUSA Championships is the largest skill competition in the world and covers 1.79 million square feet, equivalent to 31 football fields or 41 acres.

Among them were students from Belton High School and Lake Belton High School, who were awarded medals

and a Skill Point Certificate, respectively.

Team E, consisting of James Clark, Joseph Fuentes, Erik Schiller, Bryson Necessary, from Belton High School was awarded the High School Silver medal in TeamWorks.

Likewise, Ryan McGinnis, a student at Lake Belton High School, was awarded a Skill Point Certificate in T-Shirt Design.

First place state winners were invited to the event to demonstrate their technical skills, workplace skills and personal skills in 114 hands-on occupational and leadership competitions including robotics, automotive technol-

ogy, drafting, criminal justice, aviation maintenance and public speaking. Industry leaders from 850 businesses, corporations, trade associations and unions planned and evaluated the contestants against their standards for entry-level workers.

More than 1,200 industry judges and technical committee members participated this year.

All SkillsUSA Championships competitors were honored on Friday night, June 27 at the closing SkillsUSA Awards Session at State Farm Arena.

As an indicator of proficiency, Skill Point Certificates were awarded to the national contestants who met a pre-determined threshold contest score for their SkillsUSA event, demonstrating workplace readiness. Students can add this certificate to an employment portfolio.

A total of 1,250 gold, silver and bronze medals were presented to students on Friday night, June 27 at the SkillsUSA Awards Session. Many winners also received industry prizes, tools of their trade or scholarships.

"More than 6,500 students from every state in the nation participated in the 2025 SkillsUSA Championships," said SkillsUSA Executive Director Chelle Travis. "This showcase of career and technical education demonstrates SkillsUSA at its finest. Our students, instructors and industry partners work together to ensure that every student excels. This program expands learning and career opportunities for our members."

The SkillsUSA Championships event is held annually for students in middle school, high school or college/postsecondary programs as part of the SkillsUSA National Leadership & Skills Conference. The national, nonprofit partnership of students, instructors and industry is a verified talent pipeline for America's skilled workforce that is working to help solve the skills gap.

93-year-old sews dresses for girls in poverty

By Michelle Rodriguez
The Belton Journal

Jo Broomfield, a 93-three-year-old Salado woman, has a passion for sewing. Her mission is to sew and donate dresses to children in poverty all over the world.

"She buys all the material herself and donates the dresses to charitable organizations and missions. Her dresses are given to poverty recipients all over the world. Her production is so high, her house is full of racks of dresses," said neighbor and friend Linda Sherman.

Broomfield and Sherman are neighbors and live in the Hidden Glen over-50 community in Salado.

"My dresses have made three trips to Peru and Bangladesh; two trips to Africa, Madagascar, Indonesia, Belize, India, Kenya, a mission in Laredo, and different foster

and social services," said Broomfield.

She lived in California for more than 50 years and has lived in Texas for two-and-a-half years.

"This is something from my heart. I like to sew. I used my Social Security, fixed income to purchase material, trimmings, elastic, and things of that sort," said Broomfield.

She wakes up at 3 a.m. or 4 a.m. and sews all day until 10 p.m. She's looking for donations of cotton fabric. She makes the dresses in three sizes. Size one is comparable to 12 months, size two is comparable to 2T, and size three is comparable to 3T.

"I used to buy fabric from Joann's but they closed. Now, I go to Hobby Lobby. I got started when I was in California. A missionary visited from the Philippines and I donated 75 dresses," said Broomfield.

The missionary came to do a speech to the congregation. They later sent her a

picture of one village with 25 girls wearing her dresses. She attended a Southern Baptist Church in Bellflower, California, at the time.

"I have a total of 130 dresses ready to go to Kenya next month," said Broomfield.

She has dresses hanging in the bathroom, laundry room, closet, bedroom, and sewing room.

"I use a sewing machine called Janome. Maybe someone has fabric they are not using and trimmings. I started sewing when I was 13 years old on a Singer sewing machine. It had a treadle. I took a class in school. I didn't use thread but a piece of paper to learn how to sew a straight line," said Broomfield.

She's been sewing ever since.

If you would like to make a donation of fabric or trimmings, please contact Ms. Broomfield at 254-308-2060.



93-year-old Jo Broomfield sews dresses and donates them to missionaries all over the world.
— BELTON JOURNAL/
Michelle Rodriguez



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EDITORIAL

Randomness for the Week

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

Have you ever seen a warning about some action and thought, who would be so dumb as to do that, then realized that there is a warning because someone was that dumb and did try it.

Just how big are the worms that an ostrich eats?

Have you noticed that “timers” on various devices are not very accurate at all? I mean, you are doing some mandatory update to the operating system and you have five minutes to go, so you cook a full lunch meal and come back and you still have four minutes to go. The same holds true with the percentages as well. You start at 10 percent, and they tease you with a quick run up to 40 percent, which you stay at for 20 minutes, almost to the point where you are assuming nothing is working, so you debate violating the major rule of not turning off your device, and then it starts again, increasing to a whopping

44 percent. From there it moves fairly evenly, until you get to that last few percent, then it creeps along again at a snail’s pace.

How come when you grab the cord to open or close the blinds, no matter which end of the cord you grab it goes the opposite direction than what you were wanting?

Have you ever considered how many straws are wasted every year by not being used? Being an adult, I don’t need a straw to drink my beverage in a restaurant yet I get a straw every time. Getting a straw for a fast food soft drink is good, especially if you are driving. I don’t really need one the size of a water pipe though.

Why is it called “corn on the cob”? It is naturally on the cob. The canned corn is the odd version, so it should be called corn off the cob. Need more proof? Drive into a farming community

and find a corn field with a farmer nearby, and ask the simple question: what is that? He will reply, “Corn.” I rest my case.

I see some cop shows and they chase a car thief, then recover the car for the “owner.” No thanks. I don’t really want my car back if someone hopped in and “drove it like they stole it.” So if anyone steals my truck, here is what you do. Drive it like you stole it (which you did), blow the engine, shift into neutral and let it slam into a brick wall, and when you get out stuff a lit cigarette (because I know you smoked in my truck) into the gas tank so the truck blows up and burns to the ground. That way I don’t get an abused truck back and my insurance company has to buy me a new truck, for the umpteen years of premiums that I have paid in with no claims.

Have you been driving along and it starts to rain, lightly, so

you hit the manual wiper for a single stroke, then it rains a little harder, so you flip to the intermittent wipers, and inch a little faster as the rain picks up, then finally it rains hard enough that you finally give in and switch the ON position for the wipers, and a couple of swipes, the rains quits and your blades are growling across a dry window? (how is that for a run-on question/sentence/paragraph)

Have you ever watched a fishing show? There is not much drama. You cast a lot and finally get a fish. There is never a chance of catching something exciting like a killer whale or great white shark.

When you are fishing, how come it is that if you are on land, you cast your bait as far out as you can, and if you are in a boat you cast back in to shore? Why don’t you just find the place along the bank of the lake where

the fish are close and fish there, that way you don’t have to buy a boat?

Why do smoke alarm batteries fail only in the middle of the night?

Big companies cannot fix prices and such practices as that, why can’t we force all the TV channels to stop showing commercials at the exact same time? If I am watching a show and a commercial comes on, I flip to another potential interesting channel and there is a commercial playing there, sometimes the same one. Out of 300 channels they manage to coordinate most channels with the same advertising schedule, except golf and fishing shows.

Have you ever noticed that after you get done mowing your grass there is a stalk of grass still standing in the middle of the yard like you never even touched it?

The Dentist

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

A couple of weeks ago, my husband went to the dentist. He is much braver than I am. There are few things that cause me more anxiety than the thought of someone sticking a drill in my mouth.

My daughter inherited my fear of the dentist’s chair. I recall one particular visit, when she was in junior high. We sat in the waiting room, and she listed all the reasons she really didn’t need to get that cavity filled. After all, her mouth didn’t hurt right then. But it would certainly hurt in a few minutes, once she was seated in that chair. And what’s a little cavity anyway? It’s just a tiny hole, way at the back of her mouth. No one could even see it.

And really. Considering who the dentist was, did I really want to put her life in danger like that?

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“I dreamed last night that Chad was the dentist.” (Chad was her church youth minister.)

“He didn’t know what he was doing, Mom. He gave me laughing gas, but he forgot to put oxygen in the laughing gas, and I couldn’t breathe. Do you really want me to die today?”

“I’ll tell you what. When they call your name, I’ll speak to the dentist. If it’s Chad, you don’t have to stay.”

She pondered that. “What if Chad is the hygienist?”

“Then you stay. You’re only getting out of this if he’s the actual dentist.”

With that, she leaned back in her seat and tried to come up with another reason why this whole dentist

thing was a bad idea.

I don’t blame her. When it comes to having another person put his or her hands in my mouth, I’m a great big whiny baby. I cringe. I gag. I’ve even shed a silent tear or two in that chair.

But after I leave, I feel so much better about my teeth. They feel shiny and clean and smooth, and I have confidence in their ability to help feed me for many years to come.

Sometimes, we have to go through dentist-type experiences in other areas of our lives. They’re uncomfortable. They’re not fun. They make us cringe and gag and cry.

But like the dentist, God really is one of the good guys. He only wants what’s best for us. And many times, what’s best in the long run is a little uncomfortable in the moment.

Okay, maybe a lot uncomfortable.

But when we struggle, it only makes things worse. If we’ll just relax and trust God’s goodness, knowing He’s working to make our spirits healthy and whole and strong, we can have confidence in the outcome. The discomfort is only temporary. In the end, it’ll all work out for the best.

“And we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose,” Romans 8:28.



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THE BELTON JOURNAL
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Bite back at mosquitoes in the yard

Mosquitoes are winged pests no one wants to have around, except for bats and other animals that eat them for dinner. The World Mosquito Program says mosquitoes can spread a number of nasty diseases, including malaria, dengue, West Nile virus, chikungunya, yellow fever, and Zika. Pet owners likely are aware that mosquito bites can transmit diseases like heartworm.

Vector Disease Control International says mosquitoes are some of the most adaptable and successful insects on Earth. Although male mosquitoes only live for six or seven days as adults, females with an adequate food supply can live up to five months or longer. Adult female mosquitoes lay an average of 50 to 200 eggs at one time, ensuring the population continues to thrive. Unless people take adequate precautions, mosquitoes can be anything from a nuisance to a real danger. Controlling mosquitoes around the home helps improve health and comfort. These strategies can help.

Eliminate standing water

Mosquitoes require stagnant water sources in order to reproduce. Regularly emptying, scrubbing and turning over items that can hold water can help control populations. This includes flower pots, tires, bird baths, and any other vessels that can hold water. For those with ponds or water features on their properties, circulating

the water with a fountain or pump can prevent mosquito breeding. Introducing fish that eat mosquito larvae also can help.

Sow the right plants

Mass Audubon says certain scented plants help to repel mosquitoes. Incorporating them around outdoor living areas can keep mosquitoes at bay. Such plants include lemon balm, eucalyptus, marigold, garlic, sage, lemon verbena, scented geranium, catmint nepeta, lemongrass, and others.

Tidy the yard

Mosquitoes love to hide in tall grass and debris. Mowing the lawn and addressing weeds or other natural litter can help deter mosquitoes from hanging around.

Replace outdoor lights

Opt for yellow-colored lights outdoors, which are less likely to attract mosquitoes and other flying insects.

Turn on a fan

When entertaining outdoors, use a box fan to blow toward people, which will make it harder for mosquitoes to fly and land on people since they tend to be weak fliers.

Professional mosquito control services

Sometimes it may be necessary to call in the professionals to treat yards to control mosquitoes, particularly at homes that abut streams or other natural areas where a large number of mosquitoes can be found. Treatment solutions often include products that are both safe for people and their pets. Season-long applications will help tame the number of mosquitoes throughout the duration of the warm weather.

Mosquitoes are a part of warm weather, but they don't have to compromise the comfort of outdoor living spaces.





Belton Journal/Tony Adams

The Belton Longhorns and Belton Diamonds, members of Belton Youth Softball Association's T-ball division, played at the 2025 Texas Teenage Baseball/Softball Association's 6U State Tournament in Gatesville. Twenty-one teams vied for the state championship. Both teams finished in the top 15 in the state, with the Longhorns wrapping up the season 10th and Diamonds at 15th.



Courtesy of Jillian Douglas-Kinsey.

Ellis joins Broncos Volleyball, girls Basketball staff

By **Tony Adams**
The Belton Journal

The Lake Belton Broncos have added a coach to the staff that has plenty of sports knowledge on the court, as well as a wealth of academic knowledge away from it.

Renaldo Ellis joined Lake Belton High school on June 26 as the new volleyball assistant coach under Allison Waits and new girls'

basketball coach under Tiffney Barnes.

Ellis spent two stints in Temple ISD, the first from 2012 to 2020 and second from 2022 to 2025. Between 2020 and 2022, he was the head coach of girls' basketball at Rosebud-Lott High School.

Ellis has a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology and Exercise Science from the University of North Texas in 2011. He added a Master

of Science degree in Sport and Fitness Administration/Management from Southeastern Oklahoma University in 2023.

Ellis was a Texas High School Coaches Association R.O.C.K. Mentor in the 2024-2025 school year and is a THSCA R.O.C.K. Brand Ambassador this upcoming school year.

"I am officially a Bronco," Ellis said. "It is time to work!"

Tigers put finishing touches on football off season

By: **Aries Ramos**
The Belton Journal

The countdown is officially on for the Belton Tigers football team as the start of the 2025 season draws closer. With August 11 marking the first day of UIL-approved conditioning and August 16 opening the door for full-contact practices, the Tigers are putting the finishing touches on an offseason filled with development, competition, and a renewed sense of purpose.

Last fall, Belton finished fourth in District 11-5A Division I, clinching a playoff spot.

Though their postseason run was short-lived following a first-round loss to the Randle Lions, the experience served as motivation heading into the offseason.

One of the key components of the Tigers' summer has been their participation in 7-on-7 football, a format that allows skill position players to sharpen their timing, communication, and decision-making. Head coach Brett Sniffin emphasized the importance of these sessions in an earlier interview.

"For the kids, it's about learning the basics

See **TIGERS**,
Page B2

Former Lady Tiger to run for University of Houston

By **Clay Whittington**
The Belton Journal

Olivia Brillhart's future is finally right in front of her.

After spending the previous four years creating one of the greatest running legacies in school history, the former Lady Tigers standout is on the verge of a new beginning.

In approximately one month, Brillhart — a distance runner — embarks on her long awaited college career at Houston, where she will serve as a member of both the cross country and track teams.

While the opportunity is exciting, admittedly, it is somewhat overwhelming as well.

"I'm getting to see what my college experience is going to be like," Brillhart said, "and it has definitely been very interesting. There has been a lot of running this summer to prepare.

"It has been super fun, though."

After reporting to the Cougars in the middle of August, the cross country team will have its first meet of the season within weeks, making the summer extremely important.

As a new athlete to the squad, Brillhart cannot afford to arrive in anything other than prime form, but that has never been an issue.

During her high school career, she earned four consecutive trips to the University Interscholastic League Cross Country State Championships and earned a berth in the state track meet.

At each, she excelled.

A multiple-time district, area and regional gold medalist, in her first two appearances at the state cross country meet, Brillhart delivered a pair of top-55 performances.

As a freshman, when the Lady Tigers were a Class 6A program, she completed the five-kilometer course 53rd overall with a time of 19 minutes, 0.6 seconds, and she followed the debut by jumping to 17th (19:03.0) as a

sophomore.

Then, Brillhart returned to the meet for a third consecutive time, and placed 56th after missing a majority of the regular-season schedule due to a lingering knee injury. Brillhart had a time of 19:36.9.

In her final trip to Round Rock, she placed 26th with a time of 19:10.0.

Months later, she made her debut at the state track meet, posting a fifth-place time of 10:47.39 in the 3,200-meter run.

After years of success, however, Brillhart is adjusting her expectations for her freshman

See **HOUSTON**,
Page B2

Belton ISD holding final round of summer camps

By **Clay Whittington**
The Belton Journal

The final opportunities for having fun and learning fundamentals have arrived.

For multiple weeks, Belton ISD's athletic programs have been offering camps for all ages, and now, with the school year rapidly approaching, only a few chances remain for kids to participate.

Belton and Lake Belton each have a few camps remaining before students resume classes, starting with the Lady Broncos volleyball camp Monday, which is reserved for seventh, eighth and ninth graders.

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 Lady Broncos' volleyball camp will run from noon to 2:30 p.m. for seventh graders with the remaining grades following from 2:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

On Tuesday, 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 graders 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 be-

See **CAMPS**,
Page B2

A Life Well-Led: Remembering Dick Hedges and his legacy of service and leadership

Thinking about when I served underneath a legendary administrator, I was reminded of the leadership and guidance I received. In a world where titles are often seen as the measure of success, Dick Hedges never saw his roles, as college president of Fort Scott Community College, mayor, or board of trustee, as positions of power, but rather as platforms for service. His life was not defined by the seats he held, but by the lives he touched.

Dick Hedges, a man whose name has long been synonymous with integrity, mentorship, and community commitment, leaves behind a legacy that reaches far beyond any single institution or office. He was not just a leader; he was a builder of people, a steady hand in turbulent times, and a voice of reason and compassion when it was needed most.

Those who had the privilege

of knowing Dick, remember a man who never sought the spotlight, yet somehow always found himself in it, not because he demanded attention, but because his character commanded respect. He mentored young leaders, guided institutions through seasons of change, and reminded everyone in his circle of the value of humility, hard work, and doing the right thing, even when no one was looking.

Serving as president, Dick led with a deep understanding that education was more than books and tests. It was about unlocking potential. Under his lead-



Dr. Jack Welch
From the Bleachers

ership, programs expanded, student success soared, and a culture of care and accountability took root. He walked through the halls, shook hands, listened deeply, and believed in second chances. He understood that shaping minds also meant shaping hearts.

His service as mayor was equally impactful. In every city council meeting, in every community project, in every decision made, Dick brought the same sense of stewardship and purpose. His leadership was never about personal gain; it was always about leaving his community better than he found it. Streets were paved,

parks were improved, but most importantly, people felt seen and heard. He governed with the belief that small towns could do great things when people worked together.

As a member of the board of trustees, Dick never missed a chance to lift others up. He encouraged collaboration over competition, vision over ego. Whether mentoring a young coach, advising a new teacher, or guiding a fellow trustee, Dick believed in sharing wisdom, not hoarding it. Although he is now gone from this world, his influence continues to spread through schools, city halls, churches, and homes.

At the heart of everything Dick Hedges did was an unshakable belief in service. He lived as a transformational leader, someone who didn't just manage change, but inspired it. He didn't just lead teams or organizations;

he led people to become better versions of themselves.

We often talk about "legacy" in abstract terms, but with Dick Hedges, it's visible and real. It lives in the institutions he strengthened, the policies he shaped, and the people he mentored. It lives in the students who walked across graduation stages because he never gave up on them. It lives in the citizens who felt pride in their town because he fought for it. It lives in the hearts of all of us who carry his example forward.


My aim is to strive to be more like my mentor: listening more, judging less, leading with heart, and lifting others along the way. He once said, "Leadership is simply serving others long enough, often enough, and self-

See **WELCH**,
Page B2



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Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Former Belton standout swimmer Liana Planz is preparing to travel across the globe for one of the sport’s most prestigious competitions.

The 21-year-old will take part in the World Aquatics Championships in Singapore. The event begins Friday and runs through Aug. 3.

Planz intends to use the opportunity as a springboard toward a potential Olympic berth.

Following her trip to Singapore, Planz plans to compete in the Oceania Swimming Championships — an event held once every two years — in 2026. The 2028 Summer Olympics will be held in Los Angeles.

Planz recently graduated from Queens University of Charlotte with a degree in exercise and physiology. Now, she is preparing to attend the University of Texas at Austin to obtain her masters degree.

Last year, Planz competed in three events — 50-meter

freestyle, 50 butterfly and 100 butterfly — at the World Aquatics Swimming Championships in Hungary.

VOLLEYBALL

Tryouts are rapidly approaching for the upcoming volleyball seasons.

University Interscholastic League rules allow teams to begin issuing equipment and conducting workouts on Aug. 1, and the Lady Tigers will use the date to begin their tryout process.

Incoming ninth-graders will be evaluated from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m., and participants should arrive to check-in between 6:30 a.m. and 6:55 a.m.

Sophomores, juniors and seniors will follow from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Later in the day, all grade levels will return for a second two-hour session, beginning at 3:30 p.m.

Then, all participants will return for a second day of workouts Aug. 2 with sessions running from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Athletes should arrive at least 15 minutes before each session and should wear running or volleyball shoes, knee pads, a T-shirt in school colors if possible, spandex and running shorts. They should also bring water.

Additionally, all participants must have a current physical on file with the school and all necessary paperwork submitted.

The Lady Tigers will be hosting a player/parent meeting

in advance of tryouts on July 31 at 5:30 p.m. inside Belton’s gymnasium. Players and parents should both attend.

For more information, contact Lady Tigers head coach Haleigh Johnson at Haleigh.Johnson@BISD.net.

Lake Belton will also be conducting tryouts around the same time, but specific information has not been released.

UIL rules permit scrimmages to begin Aug. 8, and the first day for regular-season matches is Aug. 11.

FOOTBALL


Preparations for the upcoming football season will begin in less than a month for countless teams across the state.

University Interscholastic League rules permit teams that did not participate in spring training to begin workouts Aug. 4. Belton and Lake Belton, however, took part in spring training, so each squad can begin conditioning one week later on Aug. 11.

The first day the Tigers and Broncos can don pads and have full contact is Aug. 16.

Both teams have a scrimmage set for Aug. 21 with Belton hosting Killeen Shoemaker and Lake Belton traveling to Copperas Cove. Each scrimmage will start at 7 p.m.

The regular-season schedule kicks off Aug. 29, when the Tigers play at Pflugerville Hendrickson and the Broncos play at College Station A&M Consolidated.



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Scot Hrbacek, CFP® Financial Advisor

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An effective estate plan can prevent costly legal battles in probate court and give loved ones a clear roadmap to follow. And it can help you feel confident, knowing that what matters most — your family, your purpose, your legacy — is protected.

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Houston - From Page B1

campaign with the Cougars.

“I know the transition to college is going to be a big jump,” she said, “and academically, I’m going to be on the pre-med track, so that is a very demanding major as well. So, just trying to balance school and athletics will be something I have to navigate through during my first semester.

“I want to make sure I’m putting the student part of my life first, and we are in a great conference with a lot of awesome athletes.”

Brillhart is embracing the moment, though.

With her workout routines increasing as the first day of collegiate practice approaches, Brillhart understands life is about to become very hectic, and athletics will only be one portion.

It will not be easy, but her future has finally arrived.

“All of this training definitely makes me feel very accomplished,” Brillhart said. “I just feel great after doing these workouts and hitting the mileage that was expected for me. It gets me really excited. It is really cool to look back and see what my high school career has led up to.”

Tigers - From Page B1

of our offense and defense,” Sniffin said. “It also helps build chemistry, especially between our quarterbacks and wide receivers. On defense, it’s all about eye discipline and communication.”

Belton’s 7-on-7 practices focused primarily on live-action scrimmages, giving players the opportunity to compete and improve through repetition. Positions like wide receiver and defensive back especially benefit from the format, with reps helping players develop timing and coverage recognition in real time.

“We want to see our guys compete,” Sniffin said. “There’s no pass rush, so it comes down to discipline, effort, and communication. That’s where we see who wants it.”

Off the field, the Tigers have been grinding through a structured summer strength and conditioning program. Lifting sessions, speed and agility drills have helped players improve their physical fitness and mental toughness. Coaches have also placed a strong emphasis on leadership, holding players accountable and encouraging growth in preparation for fall camp.

Belton’s first scrimmage is set for August 21, offering the team a chance to evaluate its progress before the regular season begins. With returning experience, rising talent, and a focused offseason under their belt, the Tigers aim to build on last year’s playoff appearance and push even further in 2025. The wait is almost over and Belton is ready.

Camps - From Page B1

ginning 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.

Welch - From Page B1

lessly enough that they begin to believe they can do more than they ever thought possible.” Dick Hedges did just that. Those who had him as a mentor are better because of it.

Thought for the week, “If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.” Isaac Newton

Dr. Jack Welch serves as President of fort Scott Community College. 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. He is also the author of Foundations of Coaching: The Total Coaching Manual.

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Lake holds three day volleyball camp

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

The Lake Belton Volleyball Camp, held July 7th through 9th from 12 to 5 p.m. each day, brought together athletes, coaches, and high school mentors for a three day event focused on growth, learning, and community.

Designed for young volleyball players, this camp offered not only foundational instruction but also a chance to experience the culture and pride that comes with being a part of the Lake Belton athletic family.

From the start, the camp's energy was vibrant and engaging. Campers began with a fun game of Sharks and Minnows to warm up, an activity that got the kids moving and laughing while setting a positive tone for the afternoon. Afterward, the athletes transitioned into skill drills, beginning with bumping, one of the sport's

most essential fundamentals.

One of the defining features of the Lake Belton camp was the presence of student athletes from the high school program. These older players served as hands on mentors, guiding drills, giving advice, and connecting with campers on a personal level.

Head coach Allison Waits, who oversaw the camp, took time each day to personally interact with the campers. She kicked things off with a fun icebreaker by asking them about their favorite part of summer. Throughout the sessions, she asked questions about the game to promote understanding and encourage the campers to not just play but to learn.

When asked what it means to her to host these camps every year, Coach Waits emphasized the long term impact.

"Just fostering love for the game for the next generation is why we do what we

get to do," she said. "One of my favorite parts is actually getting to see our high schoolers step into this role. They're so sweet, they're so patient, some of them are natural coaches."

She also spoke to the importance of these camps in creating a strong foundation for the program. "For a lot of them, this might be the first time they touch a volleyball, or this might be their dream school to get to come and play in someday. I think it really just cultivates a sense of pride to be a Bronco volleyball player one day."

As the camp wrapped up, Coach Waits reflected on the transformation she sees over just three days.

"Starting from day one to day three, we see campers who may not know what they are doing sometimes, and then when they develop a skill and just seeing that progression is my favorite part."



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EDITORIAL

FISHING REPORT Belton Lake Stillhouse

FAIR. Water stained; 83 degrees; 3.58 feet below pool. Belton has climbed another 4.58 feet since last week after recent rain and releases from Lake Proctor. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is now releasing water at a rate of 1,100 CFS. Fishing for white bass has gotten tougher now that young-of-the-year shad are in abundance, and the water is stratifying as the thermocline develops. I observed that most of my success is coming in the first few hours of light in the morning and again in the last hour of light on either side of sunset. Covering ground by downrigging with a 3-armed umbrella rig equipped with #13 Pet Spoons and keeping a close eye on depth so as to keep the balls about 3' up off bottom was the key to finding scattered fish. The MAL Heavy with silver blade and chartreuse tail continued to produce well this week after locating fish by downrigging. It shows up remarkably well on forward-facing sonar and 2-D sonar. Drop it either to the bottom if fish are on bottom, or below the level of suspended fish, and crank it up at a steady cadence at least two cranks above the fish showing highest in the water column. If a chase occurs, keep cranking at that same steady cadence until the fish either catches it, or turns away. When a strike occurs, keep right on cranking without a hard hookset. On the downriggers, run balls just 1-2 feet above the shallowest fish showing on 2-D sonar. Mornings are best from 7:20-10:15 a.m. Topwater action on "schoolie" largemouth increased this past week but is far from peaking. Small shad imitating baits, preferably soft baits, cast quickly and accurately to a fresh "boil" will be much more likely to draw a strike. Minnow-shaped baits excel for this application. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Catfish are fair. Anglers should expect slower activity while catfish are spawning. Shallow water around timber with fresh shad or prepared bait can produce smaller blue catfish under 10 pounds. Flatheads catfish are fair on live bluegill around river mouths and log piles. Report by Brian Worley, B&S Catfishing.

GOOD. Water stained; 84 degrees; 1.30 feet below pool. Stillhouse rose another 0.78 feet since last week. The water is warming rapidly and the fish are suspending more and more each day. The two drivers for this are 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 use 2-D sonar as the three-dimensional cone 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. Use a MAL Heavy with silver blade and chartreuse tail when the fish are aggressive, and downrigging with Pet Spoons is my backup plan when the fish are not aggressive. The MAL shows up remarkably well on forward-facing sonar and 2-D sonar. Drop it either to the bottom if fish are on bottom, or below the level of suspended fish, and crank it up at a steady cadence at least two cranks above the fish showing highest in the water column. If a chase occurs, keep cranking at that same steady cadence until the fish either catches it, or turns away. When a strike occurs, keep right on cranking without a hard hookset. On the downriggers, run balls just 1-2 feet above the shallowest fish showing on 2-D sonar. Mornings are best from 7:20-10:15 a.m. Topwater action on "schoolie" largemouth increased this past week but is far from peaking. Small shad imitating baits, preferably soft baits, cast quickly and accurately to a fresh "boil" will be much more likely to draw a strike. Minnow-shaped baits excel for this application. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Bass are schooling up on the main lake so be ready with some walking baits and other topwaters to catch quite a few that way. Otherwise flip and drag around any standing trees or look for piles of grass around. You usually cannot go wrong with a creature bait, fluke or worm dragging the grass in most places. Report by Bryan Cotter, Texas Hawgs.

Tired of giving?

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

More and more, we hear about people needing a financial hand with something, for various reasons. Unemployment, cancer or other sickness, fire or flood, you name it. With the world ever-expanding via the digital world, you can find someone asking for a handout at every turn. TV, newspaper, radio, Internet, it's all there, all the time.

Years ago, we took our kids to Washington, D.C. for a family trip, and we did quite a bit of walking throughout our nation's capital. Just a few blocks means an entirely different thing than it does in Copperas Cove, or even Austin.

What surprised them was the number of panhandlers. In the Metro station, on street corners, along the

sidewalks. They'd see us from where they sat, and if you made eye contact, they'd rattle their can. Sure, they had change in the cans to make a bit of noise and catch passersby's attention, but I'm sure they preferred the dollars.

For me at least, it was hard to walk by and not give each of them a little something, but I did it. There were so many, far more than I ever remembered from visiting D.C. when I was a kid, or even in college.

After a while, I managed to ignore the can rattling, even as my heart said, "That's somebody's father, or brother, or son, or daughter, or...If it was my kid..."

After a while, it does get a bit old, doesn't it, with one cause after another of some-

one asking for something, especially money? We start ignoring the sound of the can rattling, so to speak. There's something called compassion fatigue, but in this case, maybe our compassion gets a bit worn out. Another need, another call for money. Always another tragedy.

But, that's life, isn't it? We do live in a world where there are great needs. There are people who are sick, and their energy, along with their family's energy, is focused on getting well again in the face of incredible medical costs, not all covered by insurance. Houses burn down. Businesses fail.

Recent events remind us that most of us have it pretty comfortable. Our needs are met. We have a roof over our heads and

we're pretty sure we're going to eat tonight, and the next morning, and the day after that. We know we have electricity and running water. We have transportation. Or, if we don't have a vehicle, we have transportation to get us around for a dollar a ride.

But we are also reminded, and should remind ourselves, of the great needs surrounding us. It does get tiring. Yet when we all shoulder a bit of the load together, we can carry it.

This year, we ought to give when and where we can. Don't give blindly because not every cause is necessarily a true cause, but everyone's little bit can add up to a lot.

"Very few burdens are heavy if everyone lifts" – an Amish proverb

A Timely Consideration

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

As I type this, I'm in the middle of something that I don't often get to experience these days: a Saturday with no plans to go anywhere and the house all to myself.

The bad news is that I accidentally broke a decorative plate while trying to water the plants. I splashed a little trying to water one plant, I went to clean things up, I bumped one item, and a domino effect occurred causing the plate to go over the edge. Starting to think that perhaps that shelf is just a wee bit too crowded.

The good news is that I was able to take a good chunk of the morning and get working on some

long-delayed projects. In particular, I was able to finish the final chapters of two different books I'd been reading, whereupon I put those books away and pulled out others I still need to get to. I am, unfortunately, being literal when I say that I have books I bought 10+ years ago that are still waiting for me to read them.

In fact, there's a lot on my to-do list that seems like I might not get around to ever actually doing. Long story short I had a medical episode in 2022 that did a number on my stamina, and I'm still not quite back to where I used to be. Previously it was nothing for me to be up as late as midnight or later and unless I knew I specifically needed to be up early the next day, and so I had a lot of time on my hands to get things done.

For example, on Tuesday nights I would – if I

had nothing else going – sit down in my den and put on a DVD. Back when I was in college, I would avail myself of the local garage sales, where I could get DVDs, CDs, and other media in bulk for cheap; I'd then flip them online via Half [dot] com, and put the money towards tuition. However, Half no longer exists and I missed the window to have my listings placed on E-Bay instead, so I now have literal boxes of DVDs to move. Thus, my plan to watch each DVD and do a "retro" review on each one to further expand my stockpile. Nowadays I'm lucky if I can stay awake until ten unless I've managed to sleep in that day, and so I'm now well behind on a lot of the projects I was doing in the later evening. Thus, the various projects and tasks slowly piling up and my having to make some choices about what

I'm going to prioritize getting done versus what I'm going to have to let go of. For example, I've already gone through a couple of those boxes and donated a number I no longer felt interested in watching to the library, which sells used media to finance its summer reading program.

Folks, our health isn't guaranteed. Neither is the amount of time we have, either in a day or in our lifetimes. There's only so long we can put something off before we face the prospect of it never happening, whether it's conquering a stack of books, going back to school, taking care of your personal well-being, or telling someone how you feel about them. There are things we should be getting to sooner rather than later, and "today" is a good time for it to be sooner. Ponder what needs to be done, then do it.



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particularly described as LOT FIFTEEN A (15A), IN BLOCK ONE (1), IN REPLAT OF LOTS 10-16, BLOCK 1, DAWSON RANCH II, SECTION III, IN THE CITY OF BELTON, BELL COUNTY, TEXAS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT OF RECORD IN CABINET D, SLIDE 391-D, 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 TexasLawHelp.org. Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office in Belton, Texas, on June 26, 2025. Joanna Staton District Clerk Bell County, Texas, 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, Texas 76513 By: M. Cortez Deputy Clerk 07.03,07.10,07.17,07.24

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 25CPB00393

To: TELECIA TUCKER
TIFFANY PATTERSON, Applicant and Plaintiff, on July 03, 2025, filed an opposition to request for probate of will, TIFFANY PATTERSON’S application to probate will and for issuance of letters of administration, motion for declaratory judgment, conversion and motion for temporary restraining order and temporary injunction in a proceeding styled: LUTHER VINES, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00393 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas. The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be July 10, 2025, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas. All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513. The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: Shayla Smith 8700 Stonebrook Parkway Box 1996 Frisco TX 75034 The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days

before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication. Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on July 03, 2025. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513 By: Sophia Nieto Deputy 07.10

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Don Bacon, Jr. were issued on July 1, 2025 in Cause No. 25CPB00354, pending in the County Court at Law Number 1 of Bell County, Texas, to Margie Bacon. All persons having claims against the estate, which is presently being administered, are required to submit them, within the time and manner prescribed by law, and before the estate is closed, addressed as follows: c/o Neale Potts, P.O. Box 969, Belton, TX 76513 Dated July 2, 2025 Neale Potts, Attorney for Executor of the Estate of Don Bacon, Jr. 07.10

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of THOMAS P. REILLY, Deceased, were issued on June 24, 2025, in Cause No. 25CPB00341, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: DONNA K. REILLY. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: DEVON S. LINZY Attorney at Law, PO Box 428, TEMPLE, TX 76503 DATED the 1st day of July, 2025. DEVON S. LINZY Attorney for DONNA KREIL,L State Bar No.: 240862T8, PO Box 428, TEMPLE, TX 76503, Telephone: (254) 773-1663, Facsimile: (254) 773-2574, Email: devon@linzythigpen.com 07.10

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION-PARENT
AND CHILD

To: Tristan Perez, 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 Amended 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 3, 2025, against Eileen Aviles, Angel Perez, Tristan Perez, Respondent(s), numbered 25DFAM352530, and entitled “In the Interest of AIZYLNN PEREZ, et al., minor children.” The suit requests to terminate the parent-child

relationships and/or to appoint a managing conservator of the children. The date and place of birth of the children who are the subject of the suit are: AIZYLNN PEREZ, DOB: October 11, 2022, Place of birth: Texas, AVERI PEREZ, DOB: July 21, 2024, Place of birth: Texas The court has authority in this suit to render an order in the children’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 30th 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 07.10

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 25CPB00414

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
JACKIE PURCELL, II, Applicant, on June 30, 2025, filed an application for determination of heirship and letters of independent administration in a proceeding styled: JACKIE LEON PURCELL, III, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00414 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas. The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be July 10, 2025, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas. All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513. The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: DANIEL PALMER, 100 N. RITCHIE ROAD STE 200, WACO TX 76712 The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication. Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on June 30, 2025. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513 By: Sophia Nieto Deputy 07.10



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“During COVID, it was really important because a lot of people were trying to keep their house clean and sanitized,” said Lauren English-Thurman. “Our motto is a clean home is a healthy home.”

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

“I get the most joy when we can go in and help

them, and then they’re so appreciative because it helps their overall quality of life to have a clean home,” Thurman-English added. “And it definitely helps the busy moms working and things like that, but I find the most satisfaction when I can help somebody that would not otherwise be able to do it.”The company employs around 10 to 12 employees at each of its offices, in both Waco and Belton. Each employee is well-trained, screened and has passed a background check. They are also insured, bonded and carry workers’ compensation.

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

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Rev. Kathy Vineyard, Pastor

Have You Ever Been Truly Afraid?



John C. Perry

Fear is something we all know intimately. It creeps in, sometimes unexpectedly, sometimes lingering longer than we'd like. Most of the time, fear is a helpful signal, a warning that protects us from danger. But sometimes, fear becomes something more.

I have lived with an irrational fear for as long as I can remember, acrophobia, the fear of heights. It's one of the most common phobias, affecting roughly 6% of people. Mine took hold in childhood and never quite let go. But one experience stands out as one of the most terrifying moments of my life.

I was 11 years old, living in Dallas. A group of older boys in the neighborhood invited me to go on a bike ride, and I eagerly said yes. We

stopped at nearly finished water tower a few miles away. The construction fence had been taken down, and climbing to the top seemed like a real adventure.

Going up was easy, I felt no fear. But at the top the very moment I looked down, panic took over. My acrophobia paralyzed me, and while the others moved freely, I stayed as far back from the edge as possible. When they started climbing down, I couldn't follow. My feet refused to move, and my mind spiraled into terror.

They yelled for me to come down, but I wouldn't budge. Eventually, they rode away, leaving me stranded. Time passed, and I started to believe I might never get down. Then, voices from below. Someone was climbing up.

A fireman appeared, his calm presence cutting through my fear. To this day, I don't know who called the Fire Department, but the fireman assured me he would help. Another fireman followed, and they gently instructed me to close my eyes and trust them. Securing a harness, they guided me down step by step, their steady voices leading the way.

When I finally touched solid ground, relief flooded over me. They loaded my bike onto the firetruck and

drove me home. It was a Saturday, and I knew my dad would be home, and I feared his reaction. One fireman spoke with him while the other unloaded my bike. As I walked past my dad, he simply said, "Go to your room."

I braced for punishment. Instead, he came in and asked, "Did you learn anything from this?"

I answered, "Yes, sir." And that was the end of it. No other punishment, and no ridicule.

I still have acrophobia, but it's not as severe. Today, though, I find solace in Scripture. Isaiah 41:10 reminds me: "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God." And 2 Timothy 1:7 offers strength: "For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control." But my favorite verse is Psalm 34:4: "I sought the Lord, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears."

I wish I had known that verse back then. But even in my fear, I believe I was never truly alone.

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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