

# Belton firefighters go way beyond the call of duty

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

An elderly man who passed out while mowing his yard in 90-degree heat received more than medical care from Belton firefighters.

“We were dispatched for a medical emergency,” said Belton Fire Chief Jon Fontenot. “He had passed out because of the heat. He had some health issues as well.”

Firefighters arriving at the scene treated the man for heat illness and prepared him for transport to Baylor Scott & White Medical Center in Temple.

As he was being transported to the hospital, firefighters decided to go back to the residence and finish up the man’s yard work. They mowed the yard and finished laying down sod for him.

“Our firefighters are very compassionate,” Fontenot said. “That is their nature — they are compassionate about helping people and giving back to their community.”

Summer in Texas comes with a warning: Stay safe when working or playing outside in hot weather. When temps hit the 90s or 100s, it’s important to take steps to avoid heat-related illness such as heat stroke or heat exhaustion.

**Here are some tips to help you beat the heat:**

**Hydration**

Drink plenty of water: Don’t wait until you’re thirsty; sip water regularly throughout the day, especially when you’re active outdoors.

Replenish electrolytes: If you’re sweating heavily, consider low-sug-



Courtesy Photo

A Belton firefighter goes beyond the call of duty and mows an elderly Belton resident's yard. The resident had passed out due to the heat and received medical attention.

ar sports drinks or coconut water to replenish electrolytes lost through perspiration.

Eat hydrating foods: Fruits and vegetables like watermelon, cucumbers, and berries have a high water content and can contribute to hydration.

Avoid dehydrating drinks: Limit or avoid alcohol, caffeine, and sugary beverages, as they can contribute to dehydration.

**Staying cool indoors**

Seek cool environments: If you don’t have air conditioning, spend time in cooled spaces like libraries, malls, or community centers.

- Close blinds and curtains: Block out sunlight during the hottest parts of the day to keep your home cooler.
- Use fans strategically: Position fans to circulate cool air, and open windows at night to let in cooler air if the outdoor temperature is lower than the indoor temperature.
- Take cool showers or baths: Cool water helps lower your body temperature and can provide immediate relief.
- Limit heat-producing activities: Avoid using ovens, stoves, and

See **FIREFIGHTERS**,  
Page A2



Courtesy Photo

The Dementia Enrichment Center and members from Primoris (James Construction Group) gathered together on July 4 for a ribbon cutting to celebrate the center’s newly renovated backyard

## Engineering group gifts renovated yard to Dementia Enrichment Center

By Kaylee Dusang  
The Belton Journal

A local engineering group has transformed the backyard of Belton’s Dementia Enrichment Center into a peaceful retreat for visitors.

James Construction Group, a subsidiary of Primoris Services Corporation (PSC), renovated and redesigned the backyard of the center as part of an annual community service initiative. This year, the company wanted to pursue a project that involved helping those affected by dementia.

“What Hailey is doing is extremely impactful, and people want to help, so we were really happy to help and extremely proud to be a part of it,” said Kathryn Williams, a project engineer at James Construction Group.

The project holds a deeper meaning for Williams and her father, Joey Williams, who also serves as the group’s division manager. Williams first discovered the Dementia Enrichment Center while looking for resources for her grandmother who lived with dementia.

See **DEMENTIA**,  
Page A2

# Belton ISD introduces proposed bond projects

By Kaylee Dusang  
The Belton Journal

During a recent community meeting on Thursday, July 10, Belton Independent School District shared proposed bond projects that include updates on general classroom needs as well as expansions to sports facilities, such as high school football stadiums and the Swim Center.

While a bond has not been called yet, the Bond Exploration Meeting allowed board members and district staff to share the potential projects that could be placed into a bond. The community also had an opportunity to provide feedback on how the district plans to use the bond funding.

“The Community Bond Meeting was a meaningful opportunity to hear directly from our families and community members about the proposed bond projects,” Superintendent Dr. Malinda Golden said. “The conversations were thoughtful and focused on what matters most—creating safe, functional and future-ready learn-

ing environments for all students. I’m grateful for the engagement and feedback as we continue planning for the needs of our district.”

Following the meeting, district staff asked attendees and those who were unable to attend to fill out a feedback survey on the proposed bond projects. A copy of the presentation and survey for the bond projects are available on the district website.

The proposed bonds fall into four propositions, which cover general needs, sports stadiums, technology devices, and the swim center:

**Proposition A**

Proposition A covers general needs to maintain the district’s aging facilities. It offers two package options – the first option (A-1) at a total of \$143.3 million and the second option (A-2) at a total \$126.4 million.

The proposed bond addresses safety and security measures, such as updates to exterior lighting, replacing fire alarm systems, and updates to playground fencing and video surveillance. It also includes replacing HVAC systems, roofing, and classroom furniture as well as pro-

gram needs that involve renovating older campuses and spaces.

Community members can view a breakdown of costs for each option on the district website.

**Proposition B**

Proposition B covers renovations and expansions of sports stadiums at Belton High School and Lake Belton High School. The total bond is estimated at \$41.4 million to address both stadiums.

Both of Belton’s 5A high schools share one competition stadium – Tiger Field at Belton High School. The bond proposes either renovating Tiger Field and/or expanding Bronco Field at Lake Belton High School.

According to the proposition, Tiger Field has not been renovated since 1996, and contains infrastructure and accessibility challenges. While Bronco Stadium is newer, it does not have the capacity as a full competition stadium.

**Proposition C**

See **BISD**  
Page A3

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Lifestyles.....A4

BTOWN.....A5

Church Directory.... A6

Editorial.....A7, B4

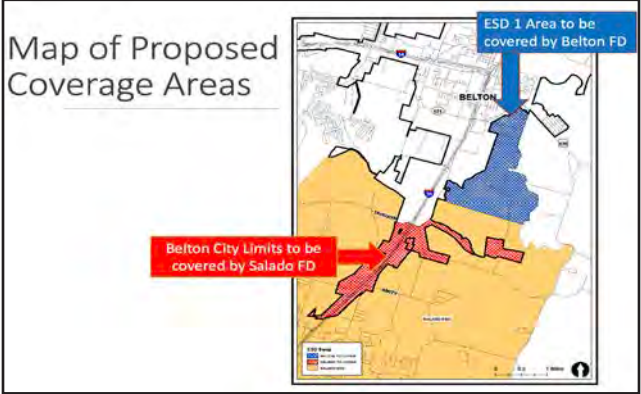
Sports.....B1

Classifieds.....B5 - B6

Service Directory.....B8

## Council OKs changes to Belton, Salado fire district

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal



Courtesy graphic

A map shows the fire district coverage changes between the Belton and Salado fire departments. With the changes, response times in the affected areas will be improved.

The City of Belton will enter into an agreement with the Salado Fire Department which will realign fire-response districts to promote more timely and efficient emergency services.

“To improve response efficiency and to better serve the public, the Belton Fire Department and Bell County ESD 1 have worked together to identify and adjust our

fire district boundaries,” said BFD Fire Chief Jon Fontenot.

“The proposed change focuses on areas where another agency is simply closer and can provide a faster response,” he said.

According to Fontenot, these adjustments are based on real-world geography — traffic patterns, growing populations, and proximity.

“It’s a simple concept: the closest unit should respond, and this realignment helps make that happen,” he said in a report to Council.

Fontenot said the realignment has been discussed for several years, but recent progress was prompted by Salado to establish an Emergency Service District.

“This allows the Salado Fire Department to hire full-time firefighters,” Fontenot said. “It also puts Salado’s fire-fighting capabilities in-

See **COUNCIL**,  
Page A3

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# Popular Temple ice cream parlor opens Belton location

By **Harvey Jackson Oss**  
*The Belton Journal*

The line for ice cream stretched to the door at the grand opening of Nic & Ned’s Scoop Shop in Belton on Saturday afternoon.

The new venue is the second location for the business which first opened last year in Temple. It is situated within the downtown Katy Commons building on East Street.

Nic & Ned’s found success in Temple, with many customers making the trip from neighboring Belton to patronize the business.

“We had a lot of people from Belton,” explained store official Jason Kirk. “There were people were asking if we had any plans on opening up one closer to Belton.”

While hesitant at first, the store decided to make the leap to a Belton branch on the recommendation of their landlord and local businessman Terry Potts.

Potts, who owns the building of Nic & Ned’s Temple location as well as Katy Commons, offered a vacant spot within the Katy which previously housed a candy store to the ice cream shop. After multiple months of renovations, the new storefront was ready to open.

“It’s lovely when you see people that you know, that have been supporting us, and now they have their own little home-

town ice cream shop,” said Potts.

Contrary to popular belief, Nic and Ned are not the names of the shop’s proprietors.

Kirk noted, “It’s one of the most common questions that we get, are you Nic or are you Ned?”

In reality, the shop takes its name from two Great Depression era oxen that belonged to owner Adam Pauley’s grandfather. The name was chosen because of its relation to dairy, as well as its alliteration.

Nic & Ned’s Temple location consists of a patio and drive-thru. In contrast, the Belton location is indoors and has a nostalgic ice cream parlor feel.

“This is more of a traditional ice cream shop where you can see all the flavors,” said Pauley.

Nic & Ned’s Scoop Shop serves its customers super-premium ice cream, a grading defined by low air content and high butterfat. At 30 percent overrun (a 3:1 cream to air ratio), the shop exceeds the typical quality of 1:1 cream to air found in grocery stores.

“It’s a super dense creamy product,” stated Pauley. The shop also offers a rotating variety of non-dairy oat-based ice creams, as well as no sugar added options.

Kirk described his favorite flavor that the shop carries, Yippie Skippy. “It’s a peanut butter ice cream with a caramel ripple; it’s got brownie chunks and chocolate cov-



Courtesy Photo

Nic and Ned’s, a popular ice cream shop in Temple, has opened a second location in Belton at the Katy Commons building. It is designed to give the customer a nostalgic ice cream parlor experience.

ered pretzels.” Pauley on the other hand prefers the simpler Zanzibar Chocolate, a deep dark chocolate flavor. Going forward, the shop hopes to partner with Foster Love, an organization dedicated to improving the lives of children in foster care, on events such as their annual Christmas in July celebration.

## Dementia- From Page A1

“It was very fresh at the time that we were talking about our community service (project),” she said. “Not much before that, we had talked to Hailey about what she offered to see if it was something that my nanny could be a part of.”

After her grandmother passed away last year, Williams and her family saw the project as an opportunity to support the center and others who are impacted by dementia.

The engineering team not only cleaned out the center’s backyard, but also added walking paths, benches, a new chicken coop, as well as four raised garden beds and a watering system. The refreshed outdoor area also contains a memory of Williams’ grandmother – a metal rooster of

hers that stands in the corner of the newly renovated yard.

“It’s just a really nice way also to recognize the living side of dementia by giving people a living, breathing space that they can enjoy,” said Hailey Peek, Founder and Director of the Dementia Enrichment Center.

Williams adds that other local partners and businesses also donated their services to the project to help them revitalize the outdoor space.

The Dementia Enrichment Center is an adult day program in a non-clinical setting that supports individuals with dementia and caregivers. The center offers various programs, such as an enrichment club where they offer cognitive, creative,

and movement activities and outings for those who have mild to moderate dementia. Through the home-based enrichment program, the center provides a customized enrichment plan that people can use at home or in other care settings.

“We’re really there to speak to people’s hearts, and to help them get through whatever it is where they are right now,” Peek said. “And also, to give a person with dementia the normalcy, the interaction, the independence, the confidence, and the self-esteem to still engage.”

Caregivers can join support groups, where the center provides resources and brings in professionals who can help them work through any challenges.

“Our goal is to really give those peo-

ple an opportunity to still live their lives while the person with dementia is living their life,” Peek said. “They can do that kind of side by side – with us in the middle providing that net for both of them.”

The center also provides workforce and leadership training for those looking for experience in fields such as social work or healthcare.

The Dementia Enrichment Center along with members from Primoris’ James Construction Group officially unveiled the new backyard with a celebration and ribbon cutting on July 4.

To learn more about the Dementia Enrichment Center, visit <https://www.dementiaecc.com/>.

## Firefighters- From Page A1

other heat-generating appliances during peak heat hours.

- Sleep on lower levels: Heat rises, so sleeping in a basement or on a lower floor can be cooler.
- Consider a DIY air conditioner: Position a bowl of ice in front of a fan to create a localized cooling effect.

**Staying cool outdoors**

- Limit strenuous activity: Schedule outdoor activities for the early morning or late evening when temperatures are cooler.
- Seek shade: Stay out of direct sunlight whenever possible.

- Dress appropriately: Wear lightweight, loose-fitting, light-colored clothing to reflect heat and sunlight. Howdy Health suggests choosing fabrics like polyester, polypropylene, nylon, or nylon-blends, or even merino wool for their moisture-wicking properties.
- Wear sun protection: Protect yourself from the sun’s rays by wearing sunscreen with an SPF of 15 or higher and a wide-brimmed hat.
- Carry a spray bottle and umbrella: Spritz your skin with water and use an umbrella to provide personal shade when outdoors.

**Recognize the signs of heat-related illness**

- Heat exhaustion symptoms: Include dizziness, headache, nausea, weakness, muscle cramps, and fatigue.
- Heatstroke symptoms: Include changes in mental status (confusion, delirium), core body temperature above 104°F, seizures, and loss of consciousness.
- Seek immediate medical help if you or someone you’re with experiences symptoms of heatstroke.

By following these tips, you can significantly reduce your risk of heat-related illnesses and enjoy the summer safely.

The ♥ of a first responder

Our Belton Fire Dept. was dispatched to a call for an older gentleman who passed out while mowing his lawn. As he was being transported to the hospital, our firefighters finished mowing his lawn.



*Carry each other's burdens,  
and in this way you  
will fulfill the law of Christ.*



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# Heavy July rains increase risks of black mold and mosquitoes

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

The Belton area has received more than six inches of rain since the first of the month, opening the door for black mold and tons of mosquitoes.

“Rainfall for Belton is mixed,” said Patricia Sanchez, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service in Fort Worth. “Out toward the Temple airport, there’s been 6.35 inches since July 1. But just west of Belton, nearly 7 inches has been recorded.”

On average, Belton receives less than 2 inches of rain during the entire month.

This year, heavy rains in the Hill Country caused tragic flooding on July 4, and according to Sanchez, “the excessive moisture could bring out both mold and mosquitoes” in Central Texas.

“Mold and mosquitoes most definitely could become an issue in Belton,” she said. “That wouldn’t surprise me one bit.”

“Mold is always an issue in Texas because of the state’s humid climate,” Sanchez added. “But with all the rain, the risk of mold growth in homes and businesses has increased.”


Brandi Reese, a former Belton business owner, knows first-hand the dangers black mold can bring.

“I operated my business — Mobi Dog — in Belton for years and built a large following,” Reese said. “My shop was in an old house, and it turned out to be full of black mold.”

“I was very sick for more than a year,” she said. “Eventually I had to move my business to Temple.”

Last week, Fire Station No. 2 in Temple, 1710 E Avenue

H, was shut down temporarily because of black mold, according to Emelie Palma, a public relations specialist with the City of Temple.



“While the source of the mold remains uncertain, we took the finding seriously and made the immediate decision to relocate Fire Station No. 2 personnel to ensure their health and safety,” Palma said.

Texas experiences high humidity, which contributes to moisture buildup in buildings.

Sanchez — the meteorologist — said heavy rainfall can add additional moisture inside homes and other buildings. Buildings with poor ventilation can exacerbate mold problems.

Mold isn’t always visible — it can grow profusely in hidden areas like behind baseboards, inside air conditioning systems and under cabinets. It can sometimes trigger severe allergy symptoms and respiratory problems.

In addition to mold, Sanchez said July’s heavy rains also may lead to a massive increase in mosquito populations.

“Standing water left behind by rain events provides ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes, especially floodwater mosquitoes, which are known to be larger, more aggressive, and persistent biters,” she said.

Mosquitoes also can be a nuisance for Central Texans,

and not only because they bite. Excessive rain and flooding can create a noticeable surge in mosquitoes, potentially leading to a greater risk of mosquito-borne diseases such as malaria, West Nile virus, dengue fever, Zika virus, and Chikungunya.

To protect yourself from mosquito-borne diseases, it’s important to take precautions such as:

- Use insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, or lemon eucalyptus oil.
- Wear long sleeves and pants when outdoors.
- Stay indoors during peak mosquito biting hours (dusk to dawn).
- Eliminate standing water around your home, where mosquitoes breed.
- Use mosquito nets when sleeping in areas where mosquito-borne diseases are common.

## Council - From Page A1

line with Belton and makes this adjustment both practical and timely.”

“By reducing drive times, we will also reduce the wear and tear, fuel use and equipment strain,” he said. “More importantly, we’ll strengthen the working relationship between our departments and provide more reliable coverage during major incidents or overlapping calls.”

Fontenot said the exchange of fire protection coverage areas will not come with a cost to either Belton or Salado.

“The agreement reflects an equitable adjustment in district responsibilities based solely on operational efficiency and proximity of emergency response resources,” he said. “No financial compensation, reimbursement or fee is required by either party in connection with the territorial exchange.”

Salado approved the agreement earlier this month.

Belton City Council approved two items this week related to the Temple-Belton Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Council authorized City Manager Sam Listi to ex-

cute a construction contract and any changes associated with the contract. Council also authorized Listi to enter into an agreement with Temple-based Kasberg, Patrick & Associates (KPA) for construction administration services.

According to Scott Hodde, Belton’s director of public works, the wastewater treatment plant on FM 93 (East Sixth Avenue) is jointly owned by the two cities — Temple’s share of capital improvement costs is 75 percent and Belton’s is 25 percent.

The facility is currently permitted to treat up to 10 million gallons per day of wastewater with a peak flow of 30 million gallons per day and is operated under contract by the Brazos River Authority. Originally constructed in 1975 and expanded in 1990, the plant currently serves approximately 70 percent of Temple and all of Belton.

Phase II of the expansion will allow the plant to treat 16 million gallons of water per day with a peak flow of 40 million gallons, which is a 60 percent increase in capacity.

The Texas Commission on Environ-

mental Quality requires wastewater treatment plants to initiate steps toward expansion once certain influent flow thresholds are met. In 2010, the plant’s influent flow exceeded 75 percent of its permitted capacity for three consecutive months, triggering TCEQ’s requirement to begin preliminary engineering for future expansion.

In response, Belton authorized KPA in 2011 to prepare a preliminary engineering report for the plan to evaluate the needed expansion.

Design of Phase I commenced in 2015 and was completed in 2020. Phase I included a new headworks facility, odor control units, and converting the abandoned digesters to a storage basin, allowing wastewater to be stored and treated during high flows.

According to Scott Hodde, Belton’s director of public works, the Phase II design process in 2020 included provisions for disk filtration and UV disinfection, anticipating the potential for a Total Phosphorus limit to be added to the plant’s discharge permit. However, the updated permit issued at that

time did not include a TP limit, allowing the plant to continue utilizing the existing chlorine contact basins for disinfection.

In 2023, KPA submitted a draft permit application to TCEQ for Phase II. It was determined that the improvements included in Phase II would now require UV disinfection and disk filtration, leading to these components being added back into the project’s design scope.

Hodde said in a report to Council that two competitive bids were received for the expansion project. Matous Construction submitted a bid of \$67.5 million, and ARCO Murray submitted a bid for \$77.5 million. Both cities — Temple and Belton — have now agreed that Matous is experienced and capable of completing this project.

Belton’s share of the expansion costs will be 25 percent of the total amount, which equates to \$16.88 million. Construction time for the expansion is 920 calendar days. Belton’s share will be paid through Certificates of Obligation that were issued earlier this year.

## BISD - From Page A1

Proposition C covers the replacement and purchasing of technology devices. It is also broken down into two potential bond options — the first option (C-1) is estimated at \$9.2 million, and the second option (C-2) is estimated at \$6 million.

The school district provides over 19,000 devices for students and staff, such as laptops. The proposed bond would replace student and staff devices as well as interactive flat panels for classrooms. The second bond package option removes the replacement of the interactive flat panels.

**Proposition D**

Proposition D proposes to build an additional swimming pool space for the district. The first option (D-1) covers the building of a new swimming facility at an estimated \$16.1 million, and the second option includes a new facility as well as the expansion of the current Swim Center at \$24.1 million.

The district’s current Swim Center, built in 2007, will remain open in both options. Per the proposition, the additional space would allow the district to reinstate and grow their swim programs. The expansion includes a 50-meter stretch pool and an indoor ventilated facility.

After reviewing the feedback from the meeting and survey, Belton ISD leadership will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees, who hold the final author-

ity on whether and when to call a bond election.

The primary sources of funding for Texas public schools are generated by local property taxes and the state’s foundation school program. School districts often rely on bond elections to build new schools, update aging facilities, or ensure the safety of learning environments.

“Safety items are always going to be a top priority,” Deputy Superintendent Mike Morgan said. “And then for us, is making sure we address the needs of our aging facilities and make sure that we have safe schools.”

Belton ISD previously issued voter-approved bonds in 2017 and 2022.

The community can provide feedback via the survey through July 17.

“We have an incredible community, and they always respond when we ask for input,” Golden said. “It makes me proud that our community is so invested in enhancing the learning experiences of our students. They care about our students, want to be informed of the district’s needs, ask thoughtful questions and provide valuable feedback on potential solutions.”

For more information and updates about Belton ISD’s bond exploration process, visit [www.bisd.net/bondadvisorycommittee](http://www.bisd.net/bondadvisorycommittee).



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**A4**  
Thursday,  
July 24, 2025

# LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

## Honor Flight Austin's program recognizes veteran heroes

By Michelle Rodriguez  
The Belton Journal

Honor Flight Austin's program recognizes veteran heroes that served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam for a trip of a lifetime.

"I enjoy making the phone call and telling them they've been selected to go on the flight. We give them carry on gear bags with the Honor Flight logo, so everyone has the same sized bag, two blue polo shirts, name tags or a ribbon tag for the bag, and a baseball cap with the Honor Flight logo and branch they were in," said Maxine Burnett. She's been volunteering for Honor Flight Austin for ten years.

Veterans that were enlisted before May 1975 are eligible. To sign up, they or a family member can sign them up on the website.

"It started in 2005 to 2006 by a doctor in Ohio that was in a flight club and had a lot of veteran patients. He asked his patients if they would like to see the World War II memorial, and he flew them to the memorial. Today, Honor Flight is in 140 different cities," said Burnett.

They ask as many people as possible to meet the veterans at the airport. Sometimes, there are as many as one hundred to two hundred people to see them as they arrive back from their trip. The color guard leads them carrying flags while the police play bagpipes and drums.

"The honor flight takes

veterans to Washington D.C. to visit all the memorials like WWII, Vietnam, Lincoln, Korean, Tomb of the Unknown, and the Pentagon. We left on a Friday, do it on Saturday, and get back on Saturday night. My favorite part was how you got respected because when I was in the Marine Corps, we weren't respected. During the Vietnam War, people didn't like us, we would get spit on, and it would bring tears to our eyes," said John Casey.

Casey's trip was in March along with 47 other veterans. People that can't walk get pushed in a wheelchair. They have paramedics and a guardian, and a military person is assigned to them.

"They put you up in a nice hotel. You have a nice dinner with ribeye steaks and a couple of beers. After dinner, they have a sea story session to talk about experiences in the military. I told about my experience of the Cuban Missile Crisis. It's real rewarding. It makes you realize that freedom is not free. Some give some and some give all, in other words, they give their life," said Casey. He is a member of the VFW in Austin, Marine Corps League.

James Proctor and 47 other veterans including three Korean War veterans attended the Honor Flight in May. He was in the Air Force from 1962 through 1982. He was in the Vietnam War.

"You have to submit paperwork and wait because they have so many people. Each veteran has an advocate. I saw the Viet-



ABOVE LEFT; John Casey & ABOVE RIGHT: James Proctor TOP: along with 47 other veterans attended the Honor Flight in March. Honor Flight Austin's program recognizes veteran heroes that served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam for a trip of a lifetime.

nam Wall, the traveling wall, and my favorite was Arlington. It's so impressive. It was just a feeling that these places are there to honor all these soldiers. The World War II Memorial is huge," said Proctor.

Proctor is on the Board of Directors for the Belton Senior Center. He helps the Belton Police Foundation with fundraisers to raise money, a part of CHIPS, and CPAA, the Citizens' Police Academy Association.

tion.

"I think Americans don't realize how lucky we have it. It's like a wake-up call," said Proctor.

Honor Flight Austin's program is a small token of appreciation for those that

gave so much. If anybody is interested in attending, they would call 888-530-8880 or Maxine Burnett 512-632-9680 or visit the website at [www.honor-flightaustin.org](http://www.honor-flightaustin.org).

## L & R Meat Market under new ownership

By Michelle Rodriguez  
The Belton Journal

Native Beltonian brothers Marcus and Michael Ogas are the new co-owners of L & R Meat Market, located at 601 E. Central Avenue, Suite B in Belton.

"My brother Michael has been in the meat industry for 15 years. He was a meat distributor and sold meat to L & R, Best Quality Meat, and Cosper's Meat Market in

Killeen," said Marcus Ogas.

Marcus Ogas also owns Private Solutions, an underground utility locating company. The original owner of L & R, Larry, owned it from 1988 to 2015, followed by Steve Gray, who owned it from 2015-2025.

"In 37 years, the store has had three owners and has always been in Belton. The most popular items are the summer sausage, snack sticks, beef jerky, and our variety of

smoked links. All are made in the shop," said Ogas.

The smoked linked flavors include regular, jalapeno, jalapeno cheese, garlic, and boudin. They also have a boudin that is homemade finished with flaming hot Cheetos. Their lunch menu is Tuesday through Friday and they are closed on Monday. They don't do lunch on Saturday.

"We do sausage wraps on Saturdays that is made with bread, barbecue sauce, and onion," said Ogas.

Their head chef is River Hernandez Ogas.

"I've been working here a month. I make the sausage poppers from scratch," said River Hernandez Ogas.

They have steak, shrimp, sausage, boudin, and chorizo poppers that are bacon wrapped filled with pepper jack cheese. Their manager is Jessica Neal and Jess Paynter

works the front of the house. The meat cutter is Chris Bethke.

Their jarred foods include dilled pickles, ranch house pickles, dilled green beans, sweet potato butter, candied jalapenos, and peach butter. They also have dog treats like pig ears and chicken feet. Their frozen products include hush puppies, frog legs, swai fish, french fries, chicken drumsticks, breasts, thighs, cornish game hens, and turkey wings.

"Our fresh cuts are sirloin, choice ribeye, boudi belle which is a chicken breast stuffed with boudin and pepper jack cheese wrapped in bacon," said Ogas.

They have seasonings that are freshly made. They have season all, perfect blend, and low sodium. People order them and they get shipped all over. People call in and order

them. It's a secret recipe.

"The biggest thing we've done is instead of competing we've partnered with best Quality Meats and BBQ in Temple and Cosper's Meat Market in Killeen to offer good deals and buy things in bulk," said Ogas.

Marcus and his brother Michael Ogas grew up in Belton. They try to give back to the community. They officially joined the Belton Chamber of Commerce on March 4 and had a ribbon cutting on March 6.

"We've donated meat to different sports teams, benefits like Boot Out Brain Cancer for Brandon Newman, and the Penguin Project for special needs. If you haven't been in the shop in a while, we would like for people to come in and give it a try. We are grateful for our customers," said Marcus Ogas.



L & R Meat Market, under new ownership of Marcus and Michael Ogas, celebrate with a ribbon cutting this past spring.



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## 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:

##### 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.

##### Summer Reading Program - July 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: [morganspointresorttx.com](http://morganspointresorttx.com) or paper applications available at MPR City Hall located at 8 Morgan's Point Blvd, Morgan's Point Resort Texas. The dates are 3 Saturdays: July 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 - Aug 5

Join us for our free seminar "Gardening in Harmony with Nature" on August 5, 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Harker Heights Activities Center, 400 Indian Trail, Harker Heights, Tx. The Bell County Master Gardeners and Harker Heights Parks and Recreation invite you to a free seminar with Master Gardener Dave Slaughter. Learn how to garden the way nature intended-using native plants, local materials, natural rainfall, and no chemicals. Discover how to create beautiful, low-maintenance landscapes that support the environment and conserve resources. Register at [forms.gle/58u1z1pMZ5tt8R3m9](https://forms.gle/58u1z1pMZ5tt8R3m9). Free and open to the public.

##### Master Gardeners - Aug 14

Join us for our monthly Herb Study Group! August 14 (Thursday), 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. at AgriLife Extension Grounds Learning Center, 1605 N. Main St., Belton. This month, we're diving into a Round Table discussion on Gotu Kola! Whether you're a seasoned herbalist or just curious, everyone is welcome to share their favorite herbs, bottles, or recipes for a fun and collaborative evening. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow herb enthusiasts and expand your herbal knowledge! See you there! Class Limit: 50 participants. Please register at [RSVP BCMGA1998@gmail.com](mailto:RSVP BCMGA1998@gmail.com) to secure your spot!

##### Master Gardeners Aug 20

Join us for our monthly Herb Study Group! This month, we're diving into a Round Table discussion on Gotu Kola! Whether you're a seasoned herbalist or just curious, everyone is welcome to share their favorite herbs, bottles, or recipes for a fun and collaborative evening. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow herb enthusiasts and expand your herbal knowledge! See you there!

August 20 (Wednesday), Time: 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. at AgriLife Extension Grounds Learning Center, Belton, 1605 N. Main St., Belton. Class Limit: 50 participants. Register at [RSVP BCMGA1998@gmail.com](mailto:RSVP BCMGA1998@gmail.com) to secure your spot!

##### Bell County Museum - Everyone is an Artist - Aug 11

Join us at the museum to explore different art techniques through fun activities and a chance to see the newest exhibit, A Sense of Place: The Art of Billy Hassell. Make your own beautiful art pieces using techniques focused on watercolor pencils and stamps. The event is completely FREE for all ages, kids and adults at 201 N mains St, Belton, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Call 254-933-5243 for more information.

##### Soggy Doggy Day - Sept 6

Pups help end the Splash Pad Season in Belton. Right after Harris Community Park's Splash Pad closes to humans for the season, we fence it off and let dogs in! This year's Soggy Doggy Day will be Saturday, September 6, 2025. For more information contact Belton Parks & Recreation at 254-933-5860.

##### Movies in the Park - Sept 20

The Parks & Recreation Department hosts the Movie in the Park series each year. Movies and activities are free and open to the public. Encanto will be shown at Harris Community Park, 312 N. Alexander, Belton. For more information contact Belton Parks & Recreation at 254-933-5860.

##### Family Camp Out - Oct 24 - 26

Roll up your sleeping bags and hit the trail for a campout at Heritage Park. Activities include fishing, kayaking, and s'mores. This year we are offering an extended weekend of fun, Saturday-Sunday, October 24-26, 2025. Stay tuned for registration information from Belton Parks & Recreation.

**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@mcl1249tx.com](mailto:commandant@mcl1249tx.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](http://aspenhealthcare.net) or call 512-856-5668 for more information.

##### Young's Daughters Funeral Home Dementia/Alzheimer's Caregiver Support

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

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

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

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

**Local chapter of the Crochet Guild of America** meets from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Wednesdays at the Lena Armstrong Public Library, 301 E. First St., in Belton. The group is open to anyone interested in crochet. All skill levels are welcome. For information email Betty Reichert at [bettyreichert@yahoo.com](mailto:bettyreichert@yahoo.com) or Kathy Bement at [katshookandneedle@gmail.com](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](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.belontexas.gov/takemehome](http://www.belontexas.gov/takemehome). Read more about the program here: [https://www.belontexas.gov/news\\_detail\\_T11\\_R1166.php](https://www.belontexas.gov/news_detail_T11_R1166.php).

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

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

##### Citizens Helping in Police Service (CHIPS)

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

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

**Slam the Scam** Throughout the year, we give you the tools to recognize scams and stop scammers from stealing your money and personal information. Share the information with your loved ones & Slam the Scam! Visit [ssa.gov/scam](http://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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**Belton Christian Church**  
9425 W FM ~ 436 254.939.1172

**Belton Church of Christ**  
3003 N. Main ~ 254.939.1816

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

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

**Belton Lighthouse**  
1001 NE Loop 121 ~ 254.654.7278

**Belton Nazarene Church**  
1701 Sparta Rd ~ 254.939.3404

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

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

**Christ Bible Baptist Church**  
1590 Jack Rabbit Rd ~ 254.939.9247

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

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

**Cornerstone Community Church**  
5081 Dog Ridge Rd ~ 254.721.8250

**Crossroads Church**  
500 South I-35 ~ 254.939.2122

**Dominion Life Chapel**  
105 Green Briar St. ~ 254.563.0472

**Elm Grove Baptist Church**  
6388 Elm Grove Rd. ~ 254.933.8127

**Family Gospel Church**  
2210 Holland Rd. ~ 254.721.0707

**Fellowship Baptist Church**  
2025 Morgan's Point Rd ~ 254.780.2388

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

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

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

**First Presbyterian Church of Belton**  
2500 Church Street ~ 254.939.2115

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

**Free Pentecostal Church of Jesus**  
1111 Cacti Lane ~ 254.933.8201

**Freedom Bible Fellowship**  
3087 W. Ave. D ~ 254.933.3310

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

**Hope Community Church**  
507 Mitchell St. ~ 254.933.8222

**Hope Tabernacle**  
202 E. 1st Ave. ~ 254.933.8222

**Iglesia de Cristo**  
3303 N. Main ~ 254.939.6910

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

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

**Lakeview Baptist Church**  
7717 N Hwy. 317 ~ 254.780.1884

**Liberty Church**  
302 E. Central Ave. ~ 254.933.7107

**Liberty in Christ Church**  
2520 N. Main ~ 254.939.3337

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

**Ministerios Vida**  
2020 S. IH-35 ~ 254.624.8015

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

**New Life Fellowship**  
706 E. 4th. ~ 254.939.8011

**Nolan Valley Baptist Church**  
13206 W. FM 93~ 254.721.5998

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

**Redeemer Reformed Baptist Church**  
2378 FM 1670 ~ 818.519.9855

**Temple Vision de lo Alto**  
4357 Orchard Hill ~ 254.563.1231

**Trinity Full Gospel**  
810 East 2nd Ave. ~ 254.939.7673

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

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

**Christian Life Church**  
4343 West FM 93 ~ 254.939.2626

**Covenant Lutheran Church**  
4202 Hickory Rd. ~ 254.733.7718

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

**First Baptist Church Temple**  
8015 West Adams Ave. ~ 254.773.6866

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

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

**First Presbyterian Church Temple**  
12 West French ~ 254.773.3407

**Foundation Church**  
10751 W. Adams ~ 254.780.9673

**Grace Baptist Church**  
740 Jayline Drive ~ 254.773.1401

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

**Grace Presbyterian Church**  
2401 S 57th ~ 254.773.2134

**Harvest Church**  
2501 General Bruce Dr. ~ 254.780.3566

**Immanuel Lutheran Church**  
2109 W. Ave H ~ 254.773.3898

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

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

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

**St. Francis Episcopal Church & School**  
5001 Hickory ~ 254.733.4255

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

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

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

**Temple Bible Church**  
3205 Oakview Drive ~ 254.778.3233

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

**Unity Church of Temple**  
318 N. 2nd ~ 254.770.0070

**Vineyard Christian Fellowship**  
7425 W Adams Ave. ~ 254.778.2802

**Vista Community Church**  
7051 Stonehollow Dr. ~ 254.774.7992

**Wildwood Baptist Church**  
5195 Cedar Creek Rd. ~ 254.773.3177

## When Being Hard on Yourself Becomes a Habit



John C. Perry

When Being Hard on Yourself Becomes a Habit I've been hard on myself for as long as I can remember. In my working years, that trait often looked like a virtue. It pushed me to stay late, double-check the details, and held myself to a standard that, if I'm honest, was often higher than what anyone else expected of me. I wore it like a badge of honor. And in many ways, it paid off. Promotions, respect, a reputation for reliability. But there's a cost to that kind of drive, and it doesn't always show up on a spreadsheet. The cost was time I didn't spend with my family. Dinners missed. Time cut short with my kids. Moments I can't get back. And then there's the internal toll, the stress,

the self-doubt, the quiet voice within which says, "You could've done better," even when you gave it everything you possibly could. I thought retirement would change that. I imagined I'd finally exhale, finally let myself off the hook. But old habits don't retire just because you do. Lately, I've been working hard at the gym, making real progress, feeling stronger than I have in many years. And yet, when my personal trainer looked me in the eye and she said, "You're way too hard on yourself," it hit me like a weight as I realized I really hadn't changed. I think some of it goes back to how I was raised. I grew up in a strict, demanding household where excellence wasn't celebrated, it was expected. There was only so much room for grace. And somewhere along the way, I internalized the idea that love, and approval had to be earned, not simply received. But here's what I'm learning, at the end of the day, the people who matter most won't remember how many hours you worked on the job, or how many reps you did at the gym. They'll remember how you made them feel. And maybe, just maybe, they'll remember the moment you finally

started being a little gentler with yourself. That moment matters. It's not weakness, trust me it's wisdom. It's the realization that God never asked us to be flawless, only faithful. That His love isn't performance-based. That the same grace we should be freely extending to others is something we're invited to receive ourselves. I'm still learning, actually, still unlearning. Still catching myself in those moments when I expect too much, push too hard, or forget what is really important in life. But I'm getting there. And if you're on that same journey, I hope you'll give yourself permission to breathe, to be, and to believe that you are enough, not because of what you do, but because of who you are. As the Psalmist wrote, "The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love." —Psalm 103:8 That's the kind of love I want to live in. And the kind I want to reflect, not just to others, but to myself.

*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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# EDITORIAL

## Dressed to Travel

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

I have had the chance to travel quite a bit in the past few years. I get to fly and of course spend time in hotels, with that you get a good sampling of the people that travel with you. I am not sure when we, as a society, changed how we dressed to travel. I recently saw a graphic online of two distinct styles, one was probably from the 50-60's, the second was a couple that is fairly well known in pop culture today. The older-photo couple was dressed rather well, the man in a suit and the woman in a form fitting dress, both looked quite sharp. The younger couple was dressed in what might be typical clothing for homeless persons in the days of the other photo. Or perhaps worse. I have seen homeless people on some shows, such as the one set in Mayberry, and those homeless people wore sports jackets, albeit old ones. In the graphic the modern couple were dressed in clothes that looked like you just came from the fitness center, or maybe they were doing laundry and had nothing else to put on.

Now I can remember that we dressed well, and comfortable, for any trip we took when I was younger. Flying was dignified; You didn't have to strip down to your skivvies. I don't recall my father wearing a suit, of which he had plenty, when we traveled, but he did dress nicely. Of course the flight attendants were called "stewardesses" in those days, and their outfits were "dressy" as well.

I am not sure when traveling in something akin to lingerie became acceptable attire. I am certainly a big fan of being comfortable when I am traveling, however jeans and a shirt seem to work for me. I have found that temperatures range from hot when you leave Texas, cool

air on the plane, and possibly cold when you get where you are going. I have left good weather only to get to a place and find I was not dressed for rainy and chilly. That is why my choice in clothing covers the potential extremes, plus or minus a few degrees.

On my trips I see people that look like they might be dressed for a hot workout at the gym, others could walk off the plane and right into a business meeting, and of course everything in between.

When you get where you are going it is the same story. Recently while lounging in the hotel lounge, since that is what it is for, I witnessed a couple checking in. They grabbed the luggage cart and promptly filled it up. They had the obligatory suitcases, but also laundry baskets full of, surprisingly, not laundry, but who knows what. Some people travel with other

forms of containers, including trash bags. Often you see bags that were obviously freebies, or maybe clear bags that leave all your "packings" to the view of all your fellow travelers. One consistent at any baggage claim is the newbie with the generic black roller bag that looks like most of the other bags, they are jumping every time another black roller bag hits the conveyor. I have one bag that I travel with that might seem quite out of character for a manly Texas traveler, however I have not mistaken anyone's bag for mine. It is bright and I can spot it as soon as it comes off the plane.

Back to dressing up, it is not just travel, but in all areas of our lives we seem to dress down. Dressing for comfort is one thing, sometimes that level of comfort should be confined to your house. There is a website dedicated to making fun of people that shop at a certain department store. However you can see people that seemed to have jumped out of bed and headed to the store. I don't dress in a suit to shop for groceries, but I don't look like a hobo either. Perhaps these people have absolutely no clothes left and need to shop in their PJ's only out of desperation.

Maybe if the pop culture icons took a bit more pride in how they dressed their "fans" might follow along. I mean if I had more money than I could count I would probably not dress in over priced sweat pants and old t-shirts. I might dress more the style associated with my wealth, or at least as good as I dress now. The days of our "movie stars" dressing in tailored suits are long gone. I just wish we could pick out the millionaires from the homeless people these days.

## The Right Thing

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

Writing a weekly column has its challenges, especially when you've done it for nearly 20 years. Everything worth writing about has been written about.

I asked some reliable helpers—my students—for advice about a writing topic. After all, they write in my class every day. Surely, they'd have some fresh ideas for me. Here are a few they presented:

My students. (Done that.)  
My family. (Done.)  
My husband. (Done that.)  
My daughter. (Done.)  
My son. (Done.)  
My dogs. (Done.)  
My cat. (Don't have one.)  
My garden. (Done that.)  
My chickens. (Done.)  
My first date. (Maybe . . .)  
My job. (Done.)  
Fish. (Done that too.)  
Gummy Bears. (No, but marshmallows are pretty close.)  
Cleaning my house. (Done.)  
Getting lost. (Done.)  
Breaking up with a boyfriend. (Too personal.)

So, first date it is. His name was Kelly, and he asked me to escort him to the church youth banquet. He was too young to drive, so his mom chauffeured. I didn't really "like" Kelly in a romantic way, and I only agreed to go with him because it was considered cool to have a date. Any

date was better than going stag. I was only in the seventh grade, so I didn't have the suave social skills I've now acquired. I was *wretched*.

He brought me a lovely corsage. We took awkward pictures. When he held open the back car door so we could sit together, I stepped around him and climbed in the front seat next to his mother. When we got to the banquet, I barely spoke to him. I spent the evening chatting with my girlfriends.

His mother drove us home. He walked me to the door and told me what a nice time he had. I mumbled a thank you and left him standing on my porch.

I am deeply ashamed. Looking back, I wish I'd been nicer to Kelly. He was a good friend. But at the time, I was so worried about what people would think, so concerned that my friends might link us together as a couple that I behaved in a way I now regret. Today, I'm sure none of my friends remember that night or who I went with or whether or not Kelly and I were an item. But I'll bet Kelly remembers.

Sometimes, it's easy to be more concerned about what people think than about what's right. I spent much of my adult life catering to other's views of me. I've concealed truths and inflated half-truths; all so people would think I have the fairy-tale life I wish I had. All so people would be

impressed with me.

I often don't realize I'm doing it until after the fact. But the older I get, the more I crave authenticity. I want to do the right thing, simply because it's the right thing, even if others think less of me because of it. After all, chances are, none of you care much about my pretend-perfect circumstances. But hopefully, you'll remember that I was kind. Honest. That I made you

feel important and accepted and loved.

So, Kelly, if you're out there, I was a jerk. I'm so sorry. I hope you've had a happy life. And for what it's worth, thank you for being a good friend, even when I wasn't.

*"So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin," James 4:17.*

## Bell County Historical Commission to hold meeting, program

Special to the Journal

The Bell County Historical Commission will have a very short meeting followed by a program on Monday, July 28.

Keith George will present a program titled "Bonnie and Clyde in Temple Texas."

George will base his program from old oral history tapes found in the vault at the old county courthouse.

A resident of Killeen, Mr. George, is an avid historian who focuses most of his time on Bell County history. All are invited to a small reception

preceding the program, starting at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting/program starts at 6:00 p.m. in the first-floor courtroom of the old courthouse at 101 East Central Ave, Belton.

The public is encouraged to attend this interesting program that focuses on local history.



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# Belton City Council approves new mural application



Courtesy Photo

An application for a new mural was approved by the Belton city council on Tuesday. The mural will be located at 122 N. Penelope at the southwest corner of East First and North Penelope.

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

A new mural in the Downtown Belton Commercial Historic District was approved this week by the city council.

The mural will be on property located at 122 N. Penelope at the southwest corner of East First and North Penelope — near the Crow & Cactus building by the library.

It will feature a “Welcome to Belton” sign over a scenic view of wildflowers and longhorns.

Russell Cushman will bring five decades of mural experience to the project. Cushman specializes in wildlife and Texas heritage murals and sculptures.

The project has an estimated cost of \$15,000, and the grant applicant has requested a grant for \$7,500. The grant includes an additional \$2,500 to maintain the mural for five years.

According to Tina Moore, Belton’s assistant director of development services, the city adopted recommendations from the Beautification Committee on Nov. 14, 2023. One of those recommendations was to establish guidelines to regulate murals in Belton.

“A City permit is required before a mu-

ral is painted,” Moore said in a report to the council. “The mural should be designed in a way the respects and celebrates local culture and history and encourages artistic creativity.”

Also at this week’s meeting, the Council approved:

- A preliminary plat for River Farm, comprising 478.5 acres located east of I-35 on Tollbridge Road north of the Lampasas River.
- A final plat for River Farm Phase 2, which includes 72.2 acres on Tollbridge Road.
- Replats of Lots 5 and 6 of Belton Original, which includes 1.72 acres located at 1200 W Second near the northeast corner of North Loop 121 and West Second Avenue.
- Preliminary and final plats for the Skyview Commercial Addition comprising 12.5 acres located at the southwest corner of I-14 and Loop 121.
- Amendments to existing tax abatement agreements with CSC Group, located within Tax Abatement Zone No. 13 in the South Loop Industrial Park, south of East Loop 121 and east of I-35, at 206 and 212 Groves Road.

# Temple Civic Theatre opens *Matilda JR. The Musical*

By Michelle Rodriguez  
The Belton Journal

Roald Dahl was a British author and screenwriter who achieved lasting fame for his darkly comic children’s books including Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Matilda, and James and the Giant Peach. Dahl himself was in the Belton and Temple area in the 1950’s.

Although he passed away on November 23, 1990, his work will be in Temple through the Temple Civic Theatre’s *Matilda JR The Musical*. The show opens on July 24 at 7:30 p.m.

“The show runs July 24 through 27 in the evening at 7:30 p.m. with a matinee on Saturday and Sunday at 2:30 p.m. The Temple Civic Theatre is doing *Matilda* as this summer’s children’s theatre. This is the first show of Dahl’s work. There’s a children’s show every summer. Next year’s children’s show will be *Willy Wonka*,” said Norman Northen, President of the Temple Civic Theatre’s Board of Directors.

Dahl was in Bell County in the fall of 1953 as a patient at Scott and White. This is documented in his biography titled “Storyteller the Authorized Biography of Roald Dahl” written by Patty Benoit.

Dahl served in the Royal Air Force as a fighter pilot, an intelligence officer, and rose to the ranks of acting wing commander. He suffered injuries from a plane crash during World War II, including a fractured skull and back injuries

for which he received six months of hospital care.

At the time he was in Bell County, Dahl was invited to Belton High School to speak to Mary Cannon’s two senior English classes.

“I heard the stories my whole life as my mother was in the senior class and heard him speak. This has been confirmed by Mrs. Cannon who is 101 years old and member of the class of 1954,” said Northen.

“The Mr. Marsh that was from Waco insisted that Dahl go see his good friend Dr. Arthur Scott,” said Benoit. “The luxury of the Scott and White clinic was shocking compared to the British military hospitals that he had been accustomed. It was even grander being at Dr. Scott’s house.”

Dahl wrote the novel *Matilda* in 1988. The story is about Matilda Wormwood, a girl with a rocky relationship with her uncaring parents and her time in a school run by the tyrannical head mistress Miss. Trunchbull. She discovers she possesses a special power; she can move things with her mind. The novel has been adapted into multiple book editions, audiobooks, a musical, a film in 1996, and a film adaptation of the musical in 2022.

Temple Civic Theatre’s *Matilda JR. The Musical* is packed with high-energy dance numbers and catchy songs. The theatre children attended camp June 30 through July 27. They auditioned June 23 and 24. The show was opened for



Courtesy Photo

Young actors rehearse for *Matilda JR. The Musical* which runs Thursday through Sunday at the Temple Civic Theatre.

children aged eight to eighteen with thirty roles in the company.

Tickets for the Temple Civic Theatre’s *Matilda JR. The Musical* can be

purchased online at [templecivictheatre.com](http://templecivictheatre.com). For information about the theatre call 254-778-4751. The theatre is located at 2413 S. 13 St., Temple.

# Hundreds receive free backpacks, school supplies

By David Stone  
The Belton Journal

Hundreds of Belton-area students received free backpacks and school supplies Saturday during a back-to-school day at Yettie Polk Park.

Back to School with God, hosted by Mount Zion United Methodist Church of Belton, provided 750 backpacks loaded with school supplies to pre-kindergarten through 12th grade during a fun day at the park.

The event also provided free eye exams, haircuts and other items to get students ready for the upcoming school year. While the giveaways were a big part of

the day, there also was free food, games and activities, and a bounce house stayed full throughout the day.

“Mount Zion put this together, and the Lions Club provided hot dogs and other food items,” said Karen Stagner, a member of the Belton Lions Club. “We had a big crowd.”

Mount Zion received many donations and support from Belton residents and businesses.

The Belton Lions Club wasn’t the only local organization to take part in Back to School with God. The Belton Police and Fire departments participated in the day’s events, as did Texas game wardens, Belton H-E-B, Belton Independent School District, Bahama

Buck’s, Bell County Comic Con, United Methodist Church of Belton and Girl Scout Troop 8121.

The backpacks were broken into four categories — pre-kindergarten and kindergarten, first and second grade, third through fifth grade, and middle school and high school. Each backpack was designed for specific grades and contained school supplies for those grades.

The backpacks given away Saturday were stuffed with various school supplies, including crayons, pencils, erasers, glue, folders, scissors and much more.

Saturday’s event marked the 13th year that Mount Zion UMC has sponsored or co-sponsored the giveaway event.

# Motorcyclist dies in Monday morning crash

By Lynette Sowell  
The Belton Journal

An 18-year-old Temple man is dead after a Monday morning pursuit on eastbound I-14 in Belton.

Javion Giovanni Crim of Temple was transported to Baylor Scott & White Medical Center in Temple with incapacitating injuries after colliding with an 18-wheeler on Monday morning.

Crim succumbed to his injuries and was pronounced deceased by medical personnel.

According to a media release from the Texas Department of Public Safety, a DPS trooper attempted to initiate a traffic stop on Crim, who was operating a 2025 CFMOTO motorcycle at a high rate of speed and operating recklessly on eastbound IH-14 in Belton.

“The Trooper activated emergency lights and sirens, but the motorcyclist failed to yield and accelerated to evade the Trooper. The motorcycle contin-

ued eastbound before merging onto the northbound lanes of Interstate 35 (IH-35), reaching speeds in excess of 100 miles per hour,” the media release stated.

Crim then exited at Midway Drive, disregarded a red light, continuing through the intersection at high speed and endangering other motorists.

“The Trooper observed the rider splitting lanes between vehicles along the northbound service road. Due to the red light and traffic conditions, the Trooper was forced to slow down for safety and lost visual contact with the motorcycle.”

Shortly after that, the trooper came upon a crash scene involving a burning motorcycle.

“Preliminary investigation indicates the motorcyclist collided with the rear of an 18-wheeler at a high rate of speed.”

The crash remains under investigation. Next of kin have been notified.

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BISD has impressive year with student athletes

By David Tuma  
The Belton Journal

The Belton Independent School District had impressive numbers participating in sports this past school year.

At the high school level, there were 1,543 athletes in sports. This includes NewTech High School at Was-kow, Belton High and Lake Belton High School.

At the junior high level, the number of participants in sports was 1,251. The total number of students at-tending BISD schools participating in sports was 2,794.

From Adversity to Greatness

Failure or success, which one defines us? Some see obstacles as reasons they can't suc-ceed, while others use those same challenges as fuel to reach new heights. I've always been drawn to stories of individuals who overcame adversity to achieve greatness.

Some of the greatest examples of athletes overcoming adversity were found in the early to mid-1900s. These athletes didn't have access to the equipment and facili-ties available to athletes today. As time moves forward, facilities and gear will only continue to improve. That's why I enjoy reflecting on the challenges the "old tim-ers" faced and how, despite the obstacles, they still managed to achieve at such a high level.



Dr. Jack Welch  
From the Bleachers

Looking back in time, there are many great stories of how athletes over-came adver-sity to have stellar performances. One of those stories is close to home. My father-in-law, Reverend R.B. Shoemak-er, in 1942 became one of the nation's top junior college track and field runners despite humble beginnings. Running on a dirt track in flat tennis shoes, before all-weather surfaces and high-tech footwear, R.B. was one of the nation's top runners.

He grew up in a large family in rural southeast Kansas and did not have the finances to buy the best equipment or train at the top facilities. Without access to great facilities or proper run-ning gear, he set the Fort Scott Community

College record in the 880-yard dash with a time of 53.8 seconds. That record can never be broken at FSCC, as the event has since converted to the 800-meter distance in the late 70's. While his time may not seem extraordi-nary by today's standards, consider the conditions: a longer distance, no spikes, and a dirt surface. That speaks volumes.

Then there's the legendary Jesse Owens, who made history in 1935 by setting six world records within a single hour, an achievement still unmatched. He entered the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin under intense pressure. At home, many

called for him to boy-cott the Games because of Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime. Abroad, Hitler anti-cipated that German athletes would prove Aryan su-periority on the global stage. Owens chose to compete. Not only did he compete, he dominated, winning gold in the 100yard, 220 yard, 4x100 yard relay, and the long jump. Though Hitler refused to publicly acknowledge his victo-ries, Owens later revealed that the German leader offered him a private handshake. Jesse Owens' success wasn't just ath-letic; it was symbolic.

Another remarkable story is that of Betty Rob-inson. At age 16, she won Olympic gold in the 100-yard dash in 1928, tying the world record in her first official season. Just

See **WELCH**,  
Page B3

The schools won 10 district championships, seven bi-district championships, and two area championships (Lake Belton).

Lake Belton softball lost to Melissa in the regional finals. Melissa went on to win the state championship for the second year in a row.

The Belton High boys basketball team also lost a close game in the area finals.

The schools combined with 31 all-state players. Lake competed with 2,270 in attendance at Class 5A, Division I level, and Belton with 1,742 at the Class 5A, Division II level.

"We have a really strong group of head coaches running our programs," Belton ISD athletic director Sam Skidmore said. "We love our athletic staff. There was tremendous participation, which is a great thing to have."

"At the junior high level, they are teaching termi-nology, getting ready for high school sports. Every ju-nior high has a proper weight room open to all sports. "In wrestling, this was our first year. The participation was good. Lake Belton's unified team made it to state. This is where special needs athletes compete with ath-letes together."

Tiger soccer continues off season workouts with annual summer camp

By Aries Ramos  
The Belton Journal

The Belton Lady Tigers soccer program took another step forward in its offseason development with the annual Soccer Camp, held from July 21 to 23 at Belton High School grass fields behind the swim center. The three day event brought to-gether young athletes from around the community and served as a bridge between Belton's current varsity team and its future stars.

Originally designed as two separate sessions for girls entering 2nd-6th grade and 7th-9th grade, the camp was ultimately combined into one group, all training togeth-er from 8 to 11 a.m. each day. The schedule change did not dampen

enthusiasm, as a strong turnout created a lively and competi-tive atmosphere from the opening whistle to the final huddle.

With drills, small games, and position focused instruction, the camp helped younger players ex-perience the structure and expecta-tions of the Belton soccer program. It gave student athletes the chance to interact with Belton coaches and get familiar with the way the Lady Tigers practice and compete.

High school players were also on hand throughout the week, helping lead drills, demonstrating technique, and offering encourage-ment to campers. Their leadership and support helped build connec-tions between the varsity team and the next generation of Lady Tigers.

For the Belton soccer program,

the camp is more than just a summer activity. It's a chance to bring young athletes into the program early and help them develop both their skills and understanding of what it means to be a part of the Belton culture.

Meanwhile, the varsity Lady Tigers have stayed active this sum-mer, completing three full weeks of workouts as part of their annual off-season "Summer Grind." The team has focused on strength, condition-ing, and building chemistry as they prepare for the upcoming school year and season.

With continued work and strong leadership, Belton looks to carry its momentum into the fall. Events like the LTS Soccer Camp play a key role in that journey, laying the foundation for future success both on and off the field.

Volleyball season weeks away from home openers

By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

Only days separate the Lady Tigers and Lady Broncos from starting their seasons, and once the first matches arrive, the schedule is unrelenting.

Lake Belton, the District 16-5A runner-up from a year ago, hits the ground running, facing stiff com-petition immediately to begin its campaign.

The Lady Broncos open at Class 6A Killeen Harker Heights on Aug. 12 before taking part in the three-day Duncanville tournament, which brings together elite talent from the Dallas-Fort Worth Metro-plex. The event begins Aug. 14.

Then, on Aug. 19, Lake Belton begins its home schedule against Salado.



The Lady Broncos lost their only encounter with the Lady Knights in 2022, and the Lady Eagles are coming off a 40-win season that ended in the Class 4A, Divi-sion II state semifinals.

Lake Belton concludes its tour-nament schedule with trips to the Pflugerville ISD tournament (Aug. 21-23) the ultra competitive Vol-leypalooza (Aug. 28-30) tourna-ment in Round Rock. In between the events, the Lady Broncos travel to Temple on Aug. 22 and host Le-ander Glenn on Aug. 26.

After a whirlwind first month, the routine eases a bit with six matches rounding out nondistrict play.

The Lady Broncos play at Robinson (Sept. 2), West (Sept. 12) and Pflugerville Weiss (Sept. 19) and host Bryan Rudder (Sept. 5), Smithville (Sept. 9) and China Spring (Sept. 16).

If all goes according to plan, Lake Belton will be primed for a playoff push with league play start-ing Sept. 23 at Belton.

The Lady Tigers will have an

equally challenging trek to the dis-trict opener.

Belton welcomes Round Rock McNeil as its first opponent Aug. 12 before traveling to its first of three tournaments.

Beginning on Aug. 14, the Lady Tigers play in the three-day Georgetown tournament, and they will remain on the road until early September.

Belton has matches set at Rud-der (Aug. 19), Harker Heights (Aug. 26) and Killeen (Sept. 2) be-fore returning for its second home match as China Spring comes to town Sept. 5.

Additionally, prior to facing the Lady Cougars, the Lady Tigers take part in the Huntsville tourna-ment (Aug. 21-23) and the Little River Academy tournament (Aug. 28-30).

Nondistrict play for Belton concludes with contests at Gates-ville on Sept. 12, at Lorena on Sept. 16 and against visiting West on Sept. 19.

The Lady Tigers and Lake Bel-ton begin the second round of dis-trict against each other on Oct. 10.

The Lady Broncos won both encounters last season versus Bel-ton by identical 3-0 scores.

Along with Lake Belton and the Lady Tigers, the district includes Killeen Ellison, Killeen Chaparral, Waco and Waco University.

Belton New Tech sees new faces on tennis team

By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

Jordan Wedemeyer knows change has arrived, and he is ex-cited.

For the past four years, Belton New Tech's head tennis coach has primarily overseen the same group of players, watching some grow with the program, which is still in its infancy.

During the spring, however,

the first crop of senior Dragons and Lady Dragons graduated, departing after helping guide the squad to its most successful season.

Now, with the season opener just days away, a number of new faces are filling the voids, and while the scenario provides challenges, Wedemeyer is embracing the op-portunity.

"This is definitely an exciting time," he said. "The nice thing about having new kids on varsity is that

you get a whole new set of person-alities, skills and abilities. So, it is up to me to figure out who is better at doubles, who is better at singles and where everyone fits within the team.

"I have to develop a whole new outlook on what the team is capable of and how to use everyone to the best of their abilities."

One year ago, New Tech cap-tured its first victory on the court en route to finishing fifth in the final District 25-4A standings with a 3-4

record, leaving it one spot shy of ad-vancing to the playoffs.

The goal this season is to ex-ceed the showing and reach the postseason, but there is little time to prepare.

The Dragons and Lady Drag-ons began practicing Wednesday with the first match set for July 31, when they travel to Waco University for a 9 a.m. start.

One week later, on Aug. 7, New Tech opens district play by fac-

ing Little River Academy in the first of eight league matches.

"We are starting district play earlier than we ever have before," Wedemeyer said. "We have nine schools in the district, and the sched-ule has to be done by the first week of October. So, we have to start be-fore the kids are even in school."


"So, that is going to be a chal-

See **TENNIS**,  
Page B2



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Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington  
The Belton Journal

Two former Lady Tigers softball players recently made their collegiate commitments official.

Iris Molina, a shortstop, signed with Texas Lutheran, and outfielder Jacklyn Munoz signed with Mary Hardin-Baylor.

Both players were 16-5A All-District Honorable Mentions after helping Belton place second in the league standings and earn another trip to the playoffs.

**SUMMER CAMPS**  
The three-day Lady Broncos softball camp is

set to begin Monday, and it takes place between 9 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. each day. It is open to third- through ninth-graders.

The Broncos football camp runs on the same days and times 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.

**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.

**BELTON BOOSTER**  
The Belton Tigers Athletic Booster Club has scheduled its Meet the Tiger event for Aug. 16 at 6 p.m.



**Why rebalancing your portfolio matters — and how to do it**

**Scot Hrbacek, CFP® Financial Advisor**

In life, balance is everything — whether it’s finding time between work and family or maintaining a healthy diet.

The same goes for investing. Have a balanced, and occasionally rebalanced, portfolio helps you have the right mix of investments like stocks, bonds and cash for your individual needs.

This “mix” — known as asset allocation — should reflect your personal comfort with risk, your investment goals and how long you have until you need the money.

Your ideal mix will change as your life changes. Younger investors might favor stocks for growth. As you near retirement, you’ll likely focus more on income and stability.

Over time, the value of each investment may change, causing your portfolio to become unbalanced. Rebalancing helps you adjust for this or as your goals evolve.

So, indulge in a few snacks while following a healthy diet. But take time to consider balance in your investments as well.

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

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Seth Markham, of Belton, is the fan-favorite “Ninja Umpire” for the world-famous Savannah Bananas. Known for his high-flying acrobatics, flips, and jaw-dropping tricks, Seth brings a whole new level of excitement to the ballpark—blending athleticism, entertainment, and the traditional role of an umpire into a show for fans. Pictured are Beckham Stone of Temple with Markham at Crow and Cactus Company Downtown Belton Saturday.

**Tennis** - From Page B1

lenge in itself, because not all the kids will be back from vacations and stuff by then. That is just part of it, though, and we’re going to have to do the best we can and hope for the best.”

District competition continues Aug. 14, when New Tech travels to Liberty Hill Legacy Ranch. Burnet, Jarrell, Lago Vista, Marble Falls, Salado and Cameron Yoe complete the league.

Academy emerged with last season’s district championship before reaching the third round of the playoffs.

“The goal is to always aspire for the playoffs,” he said. “I think we will be really solid on the guys’ side this year, and if a few of the girls step up, then I think we have a really great chance. I know we have to face some tough schools, but a lot of those teams are kind of in the same boat as us.”

“Last year was just phenomenal, so we are definitely looking to build on that success and punch our way into the postseason.”

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# WHITISH

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**Welch** - From Page B1

three years later, a devastating plane crash left her severely injured. After spending six months in a wheelchair and years regaining her ability to walk, many assumed her track career was over. Betty persevered. Though she couldn't kneel for a proper sprint start, she earned a place on the 4x100 yard relay team at the 1936 Olympics. Running the third leg, she helped the U.S. secure gold, becoming a two-time Olympic champion.

Each of these individuals reminds us: it's not the circumstances we're given, but how we respond to them that defines us. Greatness is not born from ease; it's forged through struggle, persistence, and heart.

*Thought for the week, "Being challenged in life is inevitable, being defeated is optional." Roger Crawford*  
*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 in the classroom, on the field, and in life. He is also the author of Foundations of Coaching: The Total Coaching Manual.*



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# Friday Night



# Football Frenzy



## 1st ISSUE: AUGUST 31, 2025



**The FRIDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL FRENZY is a special tab that will run for 10 weeks during football season. It will feature game coverage from every Varsity football game and will be available for pick-up (FREE OF CHARGE) the next morning at local facilities around the area. If you would like to help sponsor this tab and support the BISD athletics, please contact your AD rep TODAY!**



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EDITORIAL

Readers are smart

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

Readers are smart. Not everyone is a reader, however. If you’re reading this, I think you’re probably a reader, and if so, you’re someone who does more than just read a headline.

You go beyond clicking and scrolling, if you’re into online reading. If you’re holding this as an actual, physical paper, you might be sitting at a desk or a table, possibly with some sort of hot beverage beside you. Or, you might be sitting somewhere, waiting, and are killing the time in a medical office or a mechanic’s shop, or another place where you need to wait your turn. In doing so, you like to learn and know things.

Freedom of the press is still alive and well. The government doesn’t tell us what we can or can’t print. We welcome the words of others, who want to share their concerns publicly.

Unfortunately, there are platforms out there that you can’t really trust. Oh, you can enjoy the cyberworld with its articles, the social media that works faster than the gossip lines of old. Speaking of gossip, do

you remember the game of gossip, sometimes called telephone? The teacher would stand kids in a line, and whisper something to the first kid in line, who would in turn whisper it to the next one, and so on, and so on. Then, the kicker would be the last kid in line, saying aloud what they’d heard. Usually, it was far, far different than what the teacher originally said.

So it goes with the world of online information. You may have seen someone say, “Well, I don’t know if this is true or not, but I thought I’d share,” and then share a photo or a statement that may or may not be factual.

But readers, smart readers like you, look to the newspaper for what’s actually going on...What is being constructed downtown, or what will the building on X Avenue be transformed into? Who is paying for the new school, and how? Or, what will we be voting on in November, or May? What slice-of-life story are we going to read about next week, perhaps a story about something the “bigger” news outlets don’t have the time for?

Newspapers believe in helping magnify voices. Not all voices bring us news stories. Some stories aren’t really newsworthy. Some stories make a breaking headline such as “Insert Name of Famous Actress Here was seen stepping out in famous designer’s outfit while shopping with new boyfriend.” Someone, somewhere evidently believed a reader somewhere would care about that.

Or, more locally, someone was upset with the service (or lack thereof) that they received at a certain restaurant. They’re mad as heck and they want everyone to know. Or, there is the voice of the passive-aggressive one: “To the person who cut me off in traffic. . .” and so on.

A newspaper isn’t the platform for whiners. There is plenty of social media space for that, which, if you are a business owner, you can see that the special information you’re trying to get to customers gets passed over because of the ones I just mentioned.

In fact, I was talking with a small business owner just last week, and she told me

that social media isn’t really that helpful for her business. It isn’t enough to connect her with her customers. She will hear, “Oh, I wish I’d known about that, I didn’t see your post.”

Then, there’s another local reader who lamented in front of a city council meeting that, “Isn’t there something (the city) could do to let people know about the outcome of these meetings? Can you put something in the utility bill, like a printed recap of the meeting?”

Oh, yes, when I heard his lament, I promptly made sure he was signed up for a free subscription – he gave his home address prior to addressing the council. I hope he’s found the news coverage helpful.

Coming back around to my original point. . .Readers, like you, are smart. You deserve to have the best information we can get you. We only have so much space that we can only include what there’s room for. But thanks to the businesses who have confidence in us, we can continue to do so.

I don’t forget this – readers are smart. Thanks for reading.

Spectrum Of Being

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

In October of 2013 I began doing my movie review, with this op/ed feature coming the following month.

Over the years, there have been situations where I’ve wrestled with whether or not to discuss a given topic. In most cases I eventually conclude that this feature is not the right venue or that something with my lead times is disadvantageous. In other cases, however, the matter will stay in the back of my mind.

Today I’ll be discussing one such matter.

Long-time readers of this feature may, by now, have realized that there’s something a little “different” about me, more than just my approach to writing. Well folks, that “difference” is a little something called high-functioning autism. That’s right: I’m on the autism spectrum.

I grew up in a time where autism was rather poorly understood. Rather, because I was ahead of my peers in various areas, I was given the “gifted” label and the much higher list of ex-

pectations that went along with it. Few people back then understood that autism was a spectrum, and so the only frame of reference most folks had was pop culture depictions that showed children with severely impaired functionality. Even works like “Rain Man”, where the title character had greatly advanced math skills, showed impairment and limitation.

Suffice to say that those of us who were labeled as “gifted” didn’t exactly get the support that we today know people who are high-functioning need to fully transcend to the level of our gifts, support that includes helping us overcome the more mutually challenging aspects of being on the spec-

trum. As such, even though I knew I was wired differently as far back as high school, it wasn’t until a few years after I started this feature that a mental health professional took the time to hear me out and ultimately provide the diagnosis. Since then, I’ve been reevaluating my life experiences to date, putting things in context of this new information in order to see other angles and learn what new lessons there are to learn.

At the same time though, I’ve also become more aware how pop culture is still generating misinformation about what it means to be on the spectrum, let alone high-functioning. Whether it’s sitcoms trying

to justify a character’s toxic behavior by saying the person is autistic, young adult features that use “autistic” as a synonym for “arbitrary” and “quirky”, or movies that imply autistic individuals can “turn off” their “tells” and be “normal”, there’s still a long way to go. Ironically, some of the most \*positive\* examples of high-functioning autism are characters who weren’t intended to be written that way but whose behaviors and actions are more in keeping with what real-life individuals say and do.

Folks, autism simply means that our brains and bodies are a bit different. We were born that way through means that science doesn’t

quite understand yet. There are days where we need a little extra patience, just as we ourselves sometimes need to be a little more patient with others. A diagnosis is nothing to be ashamed of.

Ignore Hollywood. Ignore the whispers. If you think you might be on the spectrum, or you are caring for someone who you think might be on the spectrum, seek competent, certified professional advice, then follow up by talking to those of us who ourselves have been diagnosed. If you know someone who is on the spectrum, treat them the way you would want to be treated.

It shouldn’t take a misguided “family” movie to get that conversation going.

Belton teacher appears in federal court for alleged possession of child pornography

By Lynette Sowell  
The Belton Journal

A Belton High School teacher was arrested last Thursday on criminal charges related to his alleged possession of visual depictions of sexual activities by minors, as announced via a media release on July 18 from the Western District of the United States Department of Justice.

Pietro Victor Giustino, 39, allegedly possessed and attempted to possess child sexual abuse material, including depictions of minors engaged in sexual inter-

course, according to the media release.

Giustino was one of BISD’s Teachers of the Year in 2022, and on staff at Belton High School where he taught STEM. According to his LinkedIn profile, Giustino is a UT-Austin alum with a degree in mechanical engineering and has taught for BISD since 2011.

Giustino made his initial appearance in a federal court in Waco on Friday. The FBI is investigating the case with assistance from the Belton Police Department, and with cooperation from the Belton Independent

School District. Assistant U.S. Attorney Greg Gloff is prosecuting the case.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice.

On Thursday afternoon, the Belton Independent School District shared communication which was sent to parents from Superintendent Ma-linda Golden.

“I want to address a serious matter that is impacting our district. We


were contacted today by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) San Antonio Field Office that a Belton High School employee, Pietro Giustino, has been arrested for possession of child pornography. We are fully cooperating with the FBI and because this is an ongoing federal investigation, we have no other information that we can share with you about this case.

“However, based on the nature of the limited information we have received to date, we will be pursuing termination. Belton ISD will not tolerate any behavior that compromises student safety. We are committed to maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment for all of our students. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation as we work through this sensitive matter.”

If convicted, Giustino faces up to 10 years in prison and a maximum \$250,000 fine.

A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

U.S. Attorney Justin R. Simmons of the Western District of Texas made the announcement.



## 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. The likelihood of topwater action increases as the water warms, and at least some light action is taking place on all but the windiest mornings and evenings. Be on the lookout for herons feeding repetitively over open water, then go in stealthily for a look so as not to spook the fish and push them off the surface. 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 then 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.



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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of CONSTANCE BLOWERS, a.k.a. CONSTANCE A. BLOWERS, a.k.a. CONSTANCE ANN BLOWERS, Deceased, were issued on April 23, 2025, in Cause No. 24CPB00539, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: WILLIAM E. BLOWERS.  
All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. ESTATE OF CONSTANCE BLOWERS c/o: WILLIAM E. BLOWERS, 3713 Las Cienega Blvd, Temple, Texas 76502  
DATED April 23, 2025.  
KAREN M. VILLANUEVA, State Bar No.: 24102608, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: karen@templelawoffice.com  
07.24

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of Irene Ruppert, Deceased, were issued on 6-27-25 in Cause No. 25CPB00339, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: Harold Irlbeck.  
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: Dori Ray Mystic Attorney at Law, 907 S. Main St., Copperas Cove, TX 76522  
DATED the 16th day of July 2025.  
Dori Ray Mystic Attorney for Harold Irlbeck, State Bar No.: 04091800, 907 S. Main St., Copperas Cove, TX 76522, Telephone: (254) 547-6000, Email: doriraymistic@hotmail.com  
07.24

NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS AGAINST THE ESTATE OF HERBERT THOMAS ABRAMS, III DECEASED

NOTICE is hereby given that original Letters of Testamentary were issued on July 15, 2025 in a proceeding styled Estate of Herbert Thomas Abrams, III, Deceased, in Cause Number 25CPB00289. pending in the County Court at Law #1 of Bell County, Texas. Claims may be presented in care of the attorney for the Independent Executrix, addressed as follows: Frances Edith Abrams Independent Executrix of the Estate of Herbert Thomas Abrams, III, Deceased c/o Burk Roberts, Roberts &Roberts, L.L.P., 2501 East Elms Rd.. Ste. A, Killeen, Texas 76542-3023  
All persons having claims against this estate, which is currently being administered, are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.  
Signed on July 16, 2025.  
Roberts & Roberts, L.L.P., Attorneys for Frances Edith Abrams  
By: Burk Roberts  
07.24

NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS AGAINST THE ESTATE OF GLADYS M. JOHNSON, DECEASED

NOTICE is hereby given that original Letters of Testamentary were issued on July 15, 2025 in a proceeding styled Estate of Gladys M. Johnson, Deceased, in Cause Number 24CPB00631, pending in the County Court At Law #1 of Bell County, Texas. Claims may

LEGALS

be presented in care of the attorney for the Independent Executrix, addressed as follows : Donna Wesley and Trena Johnson Independent Co-Executrixes of the Estate of Gladys M. Johnson. Deceased c/o Burk Roberts, Roberts &Roberts, L.L.P. ,2501 East Elms Rd., Ste. A, Killeen, Texas 76542-3023  
All persons having claims against this estate, which is currently being administered, are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.  
Signed on July 16, 2025.  
Roberts &Roberts, L.L.P., Attorneys for Donna Wesley and Trena Johnson  
By: Burk Roberts  
07.24

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 25CPB00450

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS  
MARIAHLYNE BRIONES aka MARIAHLYNE BRIONES ROMO, Applicant, on July 15, 2025, filed an application to declare heirship and application for independent administration by agreement with issuance of letters of independent administration without bond in a proceeding styled: JOHN BRIONES, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00450 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 24, 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: Anna D.M. White, 13625 Ronald Reagan Blvd Bldg. 5 Ste 200, Cedar Park TX 78613  
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 15, 2025.  
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 765,13  
BY: Sophia Nieto Deputy  
07.24

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 25CPB00403

ANTHONY MEYER, Applicant, on June 24, 2025, filed an Application to Determine Heirship in a proceeding styled: EMILY GRACE MEYER, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00403 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 24, 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.

LEGALS

The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: WENDI LESTER , 312 WEST UNIVERSITY AVENUE, GEORGETOWN TX 78626  
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 15, 2025.  
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480,1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513  
By: Lillian Phillip Deputy  
07.24

THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION – DIVORCE CAUSE NO. 25DFAM352213

To: BILLY JOEL SAAVEDRA  
Greetings:  
You are hereby commanded to appear before the 478th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas, by filing a written answer to the ORIGINAL PETITION FOR DIVORCE at or before 10:00 A.M. of the Monday next after the expiration of 20 days after the date of service hereof, a copy of which accompanies this citation, in cause number 25DFAM352213, styled In the Matter of the Marriage of VICTORIA ALEXANDRA CHAVEZ and BILLY JOEL SAAVEDRA  
filed in said court on March 05, 2025, and the nature of which suit is a request to Divorce: No Children.  
The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgment or decree in the child’s/children’s interest which will be upon you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child’s/children’s adoption.  
The Court has authority in this suit to enter any judgment or decree dissolving the marriage and providing for the division of property which will be binding on you.  
This was issued at the request of attorney: BRETT PRITCHARD, 1201 S WS YOUNG DR STE C, KILLEEN TX 76543.  
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 twenty days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. In addition to filing a written answer with the clerk, you may be required to make initial disclosures to the other parties of this suit. These disclosures generally must be made no later than 30 days after you file your answer with the clerk. Find out more at TexasLawHelp.org.  
Witness, Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas.  
Issued and given under my hand and the seal of said Court at office in Belton, Texas, on July 15, 2025.  
Joanna Staton District Clerk, P. O. Box 909, 1201 West Huey Road ,Belton, Texas 76513  
By: M Cortez Deputy  
07.24

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Living Trust of Shantel Denise Powell gives public notice of withdrawal from public status and assumption of full private trust control. The trust also gives notice of \$16,000,000.00 lien for commercial default against Belton Justice of the Peace Precinct 2, reported to the IRS under Forms 1099-C and 1096.  
Filed by: Shantel Denise Powell, Trustee.  
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# Senate opens special session on flood relief, THC ban, new congressional maps

By Richard Lee  
Special to the Journal

The Texas Senate kicked off the first called session of the 89<sup>th</sup> Legislature on Monday, one which will see lawmakers consider legislation to aid regions of the Texas Hill Country devastated by record flooding in early July.

Governor Greg Abbott added these issues to the agenda of a session he called following his veto of SB 3, a bill that would virtually ban hemp-derived consumables containing THC, the psychoactive chemical in cannabis. Also on tap are new maps for the US Congress and a number of bills that passed the Senate but couldn't find enough House support before the 89<sup>th</sup> regular session ended on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Abbott announced that he would call a special session to address the hemp consumables industry in his veto statement to SB 3, issued on June 23. The Senate, led by Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, pushed strongly for the full ban that ended up passing both chambers, but Abbott said that such a law could get tied up in litigation for years.

"If I were to allow Senate Bill 3 to become law, its enforcement would be enjoined for years, leaving existing abuses unaddressed. Texas cannot afford to wait," wrote the governor in his veto statement.

Abbott laid out a blueprint for a regulatory system that still permits the manufacture and possession of hemp consumables containing THC. This includes restrictions for those younger than 21, stricter guidelines for labeling and packaging, limits on the amount of THC allowed in a product, and a local option to ban such vendors in the community.

Patrick met the news with dismay at a press conference the following day. He reiterated his disagreement in social media posts on Monday.

"Regulating THC for 21+ in TX is a backdoor way to legalize recreational marijuana," he wrote. "Law enforcement is against regulation and supports a full ban."

That debate looked to dominate the upcoming session until record flooding hit the state on July 4, killing nearly 150 Texans. The issue now tops the official proclamation setting the agenda for the called session, and includes bills to address disaster preparation, warning, intra-agency communication, direct financial relief, and ways to improve the speed at which affected communities receive that relief.

The House and Senate have each created a select committee to consider the issue and scheduled a joint meeting on the state response to the disaster for Wednesday at the Capitol.

Lawmakers have also slated a trip to Kerrville next week so that local residents affected by the floods can testify in front of the panel.

Abbott's agenda also calls for the redrawing of some state congressional districts following a memo from the Department of Justice, which claims that four districts are unconstitutional. Similar efforts in 2003 led to a Democratic walkout during regular and called sessions on the issue. Ultimately, those maps passed the legislature and were upheld – save for one district - by the courts in 2006.

"The Governor placed this on the call, and we have a constitutional duty to show up for work and do our job," said Weatherford Senator Phil King, who is set to chair the committee that will consider new maps. He said he plans to open hearings Friday.

The rest of the agenda contains a number of priority bills that passed the Senate but failed to get across the finish line in the House. This includes a ban on abortion pills shipped into Texas, a ban on the use of public funds by cities and counties to lobby the legislature, and a bill that would require that individuals use bathrooms, dressing rooms, and other gender-segregated spaces based on the sex listed on their birth certificate. Should the legislature not pass one or more of these bills before the 30-day session expires, the Governor can call lawmakers back to Austin to take them up again as many times as he likes.

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"I'm proud to introduce our East Coast favorite to the Belton community. I'm originally from the Jersey Shore. I grew up in Lighthouse and would visit Ralph's, saying to myself, 'I want to do that one day,'" said Ann Scotti. Ann and her daughter Mikayla enjoyed Italian ices during summer trips to New Jersey before moving to Texas after she and her husband served in the Army.

"Italian ice is a gourmet version of shaved ice. It has a soft, smooth texture, created in a special machine," explained Mikayla. "The business is named after my dad, Dan Scotti, whose go-getter attitude inspired my mom."

The product is made with all-natural ingredients, and the cookies and cream flavor tastes just like cookies. "I really enjoy seeing the kids' reactions. They say, 'It's good because the flavor is authentic, natural, and delicious,'" said Ann. A three-ounce cup of Italian ice contains only 70 calories, compared to 160 calories in a three-ounce cup of ice cream. The Italian ices are crafted using all-natural ingredients like agave,

real fruit, and cookies. They are kosher-certified and lactose-free.

The Italian ice flavor options include cookie dough, cookies and cream, chocolate fudge, brownie, and cappuccino. They also offer water ice flavors such as USA rainbow (blue raspberry, cherry, and lemon), watermelon, and a sugar-free lemon that tastes just as good.

In addition to Italian ice, they sell cannolis, fresh-squeezed lemonades, and Italian sodas. "We can add flavors like strawberry, blue raspberry, and cherry to the lemonades," Mikayla noted. The Italian sodas come in sixteen-ounce plastic cups and are available in flavors such as piña colada, mango, and blue Hawaii. They are low-calorie because they are made with club soda and topped with cream and whipped cream.

"A cannoli is a shell made from dough wrapped around a metal rod, filled with ricotta cheese, powdered sugar, chocolate chips, and orange zest," explained Mikayla. "Dad always took me for cannoli and Italian ice in the summer. It's very nostalgic to relive those summer memories. They are located at 219 S. East St., behind the Gin, and their hours are Friday and Saturday from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. and Sunday from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m."

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## How to get students excited about a new school year

A new school year presents a wealth of opportunities for students. At the dawn of a new school year, students have a chance to further their academic careers, student-athletes may be given a shot at making a team or moving up to varsity, and extracurriculars provide a chance for personal growth outside the classroom.

Despite all that a new school year represents, students may need a little extra motivation to get excited about going back to campus once summer winds down. A relaxing and largely obligation-free summer vacation can be tough to give up, as can mornings without alarm clocks. Parents recognize that kids might not be enthusiastic about the return of early mornings and sessions in the classroom. In such instances, parents can try the following strategies to get kids excited about a new school year.

- Make the first day special. First days can be challenging regardless of a person's age. Professionals with years of experience in their field still feel first-day jitters when they begin a new job, so youngsters can be excused if what seems like a lack of excitement is really just nervousness about a new school year. Parents can calm those nerves by doing



something to make the first day special. Skip the standard cereal and prepare a homecooked breakfast or let kids buy lunch at the school cafeteria instead of packing a PB&J in their lunchbox. A little something special on the first day can go a long way toward getting kids excited about going back to school.

- Emphasize new subjects. As children advance through school, they're typically

exposed to more engaging subjects or challenged in ways that helps them build on previous years' work. Emphasizing new subjects or opportunities can increase kids' excitement to get back in the school year swing of things. If a youngster likes playing an instrument, emphasize how the new school year is an opportunity to get better, play alongside other students and take a talent to new heights. If students are

old enough to take subjects they've long been interested in, such as a foreign language, make a point to emphasize how that opportunity has finally arrived.

- Create a school calendar. Schools typically make their yearly schedules available prior to the first day of school. Parents can peruse those schedules alongside their children and make a calendar noting special days. Mark down field trips, special events involving parents and students, school performances where kids get to act or sing on stage, and other notable moments during the school year. Kids are bound to grow more excited about a new year when they see a year's worth of fun events marked down on a calendar.
- Host a late summer get-together with friends. A late-summer pool party or play date with various friends can remind youngsters that they're about to see their friends every day. That might be enough to make young students jump out of bed on the first day of school.

Students might be less than excited about the end of summer vacation and the dawn of a new school year. But there's much parents can do to get kids excited about going back to school.

