

Local teen wins Robotics Championship

By Jack Freedman
The Belton Journal

On August 11, Jason Smith, a local high school junior, led Keystone School to victory at the National Robotics Championship of the K12 Robotics League.

“It took a long time for Jason to get here, but in the end it paid off and we’re proud of him,” Evelyn Smith, Jason’s mother, said.

Instead of attending a traditional school, Smith attends the Keystone School, an online private academy. The flexibility of learning over the internet has allowed Smith to spend time preparing for the robotics contest.

“Keystone has allowed me to work at my own pace. I have time to work at my own pace and spend time working on extracurricular activities, such as robotics.”

Smith and the rest of the robotics program could only communicate remotely, adding to the challenge



Courtesy photo
Left to Right: Jason Smith, Sarai Drost and Luke Brewster display their winning certificates.

of preparing for the contest. Because the Keystone robotics club meets digitally, they practice programming with the Virtual Robotics Toolkit.

“Working in person is more difficult. We had less than two days to get the robot to work in the real life challenge board, when online we have about

a few weeks. We also had to take physics into consideration, as well as the robot’s batteries. These aren’t

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Speed reduction set for Loop 121 section during widening project

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Belton City Council on Tuesday voted unanimously to reduce the speed limit on Loop 121 between West Avenue O and Connell Street from 60 mph to 45. The reduced speed limit will be in effect during the Loop 121 widening

project, said Director of Public Works Scott Hodde. “This request is for a temporary speed reduction from 60 mph to 45 mph during expansion construction,” he said. “The request is for workers and traveling public safety during construction of the Phase 22 Loop 121 widening project.”

“TxDOT officials have notified city staff that the project could begin as early as September 2026,” he said. “The signs will likely not change until construction begins.”

The Texas Department of Transportation will be responsible for sign replacements to reduce the posted speed limit, and

they will also be responsible for replacing the signs back to 60 mph post construction.

Also Tuesday, City Council authorized the Belton Economic Development Corp to enter into a performance agreement

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Mayor talks Interstate 14/35 expansions with House Transportation Committee

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Belton Mayor David K Leigh addressed the Texas House of Representatives Transportation Committee last week, detailing how local city leaders and the Texas Department of Transportation collaborated to secure favorable design revisions for the upcoming I-14 and I-35 expansion project.

During his address, Leigh highlighted how persistent community feedback and local coordination successfully shaped a revised TxDOT proposal that addresses critical local access and traffic safety concerns.

Leigh emphasized the importance of maintaining open communication lines between state legislators, TxDOT and Belton residents to ensure local economic and transit needs are met during major infrastructure overhauls.

“I talked to them, and they found out that I’m also an engineer,” Leigh said. “We sat down and talked engineer to engineer, and we got good results. Much better than the originally proposed plan. That plan called for 22 lanes going through Belton, including six express lanes going from Belton to Temple. We knew there would be businesses and churches that would be impacted by the expansion.”

“But once we started talking to TxDOT, things changed,” Leigh said. “Fewer businesses will be impacted by the expansion.”

“I encourage the state to find ways to bypass the interstate intersection,” he said. “Encourage state designers to have product managers who speak for the people.”

The Transportation Committee discussions centered on managing regional growth, mitigating daily gridlock and reducing frequent traffic accidents along the congested I-35/I-14 corridor.

TxDOT has held multiple public meetings regarding the proposed changes with hundreds of residents attending. The meetings are designed to gain feedback from the community.

The proposed changes call for improvements to Interstate 35 from south of Loop 121 in Belton to Loop 363/U.S. Highway 190/State Highway 36 in Temple, also known as Segment 1 of the Interstate 14 Extension Project.

TxDOT plans to improve Interstate 35 from Loop 121 in Belton to Loop 363/ US 190 in Temple as part of an I-14 expansion project were discussed at public meetings earlier this month to get the public’s input and concerns about the project.

“The interstate improvements in Bell County stretch eight miles,” said TxDOT spokesman Jake Smith. “The proposed improvements include improving the I-14/US 190/I-35 system interchanges, widening I-35 and improving overall safety, connectivity and mobility.”

“Currently, the existing typical section along this cor-

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Animal Shelter hosts adoption bash, Paws Out Summer

By Jack Freedman
The Belton Journal

On Saturday, August 22, the Bell County Animal Shelter held an end of summer adoption bash called Paws Out Summer from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. to promote their \$5 adoption special that has been going on for the whole month of August.

The event was open to

families as well as their pets and included bounce houses, animal caricature artists, and more activities.

“The shelter has been offering [\$5 adoptions] for the entirety of August, and it’s part of the National Clear the Shelters campaign,” Bell County Public Information Officer Cliff Coleman said.

In addition to family and kid-oriented activities, there were also activities and services geared toward pets. Healthy dog and cat treats were provided by Mochi Luxe Treats, a local company specializing in unique pet cakes and cookies. Free grooming and nail trimming were offered by Wag’s Mobile Pet Group. Human food was also available, including free popcorn, lemonade, and shaved ice from Kona Ice.

“We’re willing to support any company that helps dogs,” Veronica DeLeon,

the owner of Mochi Luxe, said.

The average price for adopting a sterilized cat or dog from the shelter is \$60, with a non-sterilized cat or dog going for \$50. For the rest of the month, the price of a furry companion has dropped 90%. The event will also offer free micro-chipping, which normally costs \$10.

“In the end, all we want is for these animals to have a home,” Coleman said.

Throughout the month of August, a total of 76 animals were adopted. Another 28 were transferred to other shelters, giving them another chance of being adopted.

“We’re hoping that there will be a good turnout and that we’ll be able to see some of these animals get adopted,” Police Lieutenant Jared Alton said.

Alton is one of several officers working at the



BELTON JOURNAL/Jack Freedman
Lt. Jared Alton sits down in the breakroom with Dog Father, a pit bull mix.

shelter. Their duties include picking up dogs and cats off the streets, taking care of them and making sure that they find good homes.

Ultimately, the event was a big success for the

shelter. Dozens of families showed up and 11 pets were adopted, with several others reclaimed.

“I think it went well, and I’m glad that people were able to come down and

see what we do,” said Alton.

As of August 17, the Bell County Commissioner’s Court has authorized five new officer positions at the shelter. These positions are yet to be filled

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BISD receives the Special Olympics Texas Red Ball Award

Special to the Journal

Belton ISD’s commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for students of all abilities has earned regional recognition as Belton ISD Adapted Physical Education Teacher and Head of Delegation for Special Olympics Lauren Marx received the Special Olympics Texas Red Ball Award for the Central Region.

Presented during the Special Olympics Unified Impact Summit on July 31 in Austin, the Red Ball Award recognizes leaders, students and athletes who embody the Play Unified movement by promoting inclusion, acceptance and opportunities for individuals with and without intellectual disabilities.

For Marx, the recognition belongs to an entire team. “This isn’t my award,” Marx said. “It’s a team effort. I couldn’t do this by myself. Everyone has a role in making our Unified programs successful.”

For 22 years, Marx has helped grow Unified Sports and inclusive programming throughout Belton ISD. Through Unified Track and Field, Unified Robotics, Night of Champions, Tip-a-Cop and other inclusive initiatives, Belton ISD has created opportunities for students of all abilities to compete, lead, serve and build lasting friendships.

“I feel like our district is embracing the Unified movement,” Marx said. “Everyone is opening up and accepting one another. Every student deserves a place where they belong, and I believe we’re creating that.”

The impact is visible both on and off the field. Unified athletes are celebrated with pep rallies, hype photos and send-offs alongside other student-athletes, reinforcing that they are valued members of the Belton ISD community.

“I’ve watched friendships form that probably never would have happened otherwise,” Marx said. “Students look out for one another, encourage one another and become a family. They don’t just participate together; they genuinely care about each other.”

Marx believes the lessons students learn through Uni-



Courtesy Photo

Belton ISD Adapted Physical Education Teacher and Head of Delegation for Special Olympics Lauren Marx received the Special Olympics Texas Red Ball Award for the Central Region.

fied programs extend far beyond graduation.

“It goes beyond the classroom and beyond our schools,” she said. “Students carry these experiences into their future careers, their communities and their relationships. They learn acceptance, leadership and what it means to stand alongside someone else.”

The district’s commitment to inclusion was also high-

lighted at the summit when Lake Belton High School Unified athlete Johnny White served as one of the event’s opening speakers. White shared his personal journey and how participating in Unified Sports transformed his school experience.

“I love Johnny’s story because he tells it from his heart,” Marx said. “He’s had challenges, but being part of the Unified team has given him confidence, friendships and opportunities he never imagined. Watching him stand in front of educators from across Texas and share his story was incredibly powerful.”

Marx also credited fellow educators Misty Norwood, Jessica Persilver and Tiffney Barnes for their dedication to Belton ISD’s Unified programs.

“They volunteer their time, advocate for our students and always say yes when we have a new idea,” Marx said. “Their commitment is one of the biggest reasons our programs continue to grow and succeed.”Belton ISD Autism and Assistive Technology Specialist Misty Norwood said one of the greatest successes of the Unified movement is the relationships students build.

“I’ve seen friendships develop that never would have happened without Unified,” Norwood said. “Students don’t see each other as different. They see each other as friends and teammates, and that’s what makes this program so impactful.”

Belton ISD’s Unified programs continue to expand opportunities for students through athletics, leadership, service and community engagement. During this year’s Tip-a-Cop campaign, the Temple Texas Roadhouse partnered with multiple Special Olympics teams, including Belton ISD, to help raise nearly \$5,000 in support of Special Olympics Texas.

The Red Ball Award recognizes individuals who demonstrate exceptional leadership in advancing the Play Unified movement, which promotes inclusion, respect and meaningful opportunities for people of all abilities. For Belton ISD, the recognition reflects a community-wide commitment to ensuring every student is seen, valued and celebrated.

Texas Commission on the Arts announces call for nominations for State Poet Laureates, Musicians, Visual Artists

Special to the Journal

On behalf of the Texas Legislature, the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) is seeking nominations for the positions of 2027 and 2028 State Poet Laureate, State Musician classical genre, State Musician nonclassical genre, State Artist two-dimensional media (i.e., painting, photography), and State Artist three-dimensional media (i.e., sculpture).

All Texas citizens are encouraged to make nominations, and self-nominations are accepted. Citizens can nominate more than one artist. The nomination form and complete information are available online at <https://www.arts.texas.gov/initiatives/texas-state-artist/>. The deadline for Texas State Artists nominations is October 15, 2026.

All qualified nominees must be native Texans or five-year residents of the state. They must be US citizens. Candidates must have received recognition for high levels of excellence and success in their respective disciplines. They also must have received critical reviews in state, regional or national publications.

Chosen artists will join the company of previous state artists such as Willie Nelson, Earlie Hudnall, Jr., Carrie Fountain, Dario Robleto, and Kathy Vargas, and will receive statewide recognition. Texas State Artists also have the opportunity to participate in TCA events and promotions, including participation on TCA’s Texas Touring Roster and other initiatives in relation to

their respective arts discipline.

“We are fortunate to have many outstanding artists in Texas, and we anticipate receiving numerous qualified nominations,” said Gary Gibbs, executive director of TCA. “Being named a Texas State Artist is the Texas Legislature’s highest honor for an artist, and it brings new career opportunities and recognition from the arts community and the general public.”

TCA oversees the selection process for the five positions, in accordance with Chapter 3104 of the Texas Government Code. TCA issues the call for nominations, oversees an evaluation review process, and provides a list of finalists to the selection committee. The committee, composed of members appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, makes the final selections. The 90th Texas Legislature will make the appointments in spring 2027 when they are in session.

About the Texas Commission on the Arts

The mission of the Texas Commission on the Arts (TCA) is to advance our state economically and culturally by investing in a creative Texas. TCA supports a diverse and innovative arts community in Texas, throughout the nation and internationally by providing resources to enhance economic development, arts education, cultural tourism and artist sustainability initiatives. For more information on TCA and its programs, please visit www.arts.texas.gov.

BISD scores ‘B’ in TEA accountability ratings

By David Stone

The Belton Journal

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) today announced the release of 2026 A-F Accountability Ratings for public school systems and campuses across the state.

As a school district, Belton scored a B by scoring 80 of 100. The district, which is made up of 13,516 students and 20 schools, has an attendance rate of 94.3 percent. Belton ISD has 14.4 students per teacher — according to TEA — and a full-time staff of 1,968.7, including 938.1 full-time teachers.

“The Texas Education Agency has released the 2026 accountability ratings, and for the second consecutive year, Belton ISD has earned an overall B rating,” said Dr. Malinda Golden, superintendent of BISD. This achievement is a testament to the hard work of our students and educators.”

The annual ratings evaluate several key areas of performance, including:

- Student achievement, what students know and can do, as well as progress, how far students have come or grown in a subject;
- Closing the gaps, determining how different student groups are performing;
- Progress to English Language Acquisition;
- Graduation Rates; and
- College, Career, and Military Readiness (CCMR)

“Our district saw growth in student achievement and school progress this

year,” Golden said. “Notably, we earned an A rating in CCMR, along with 11 distinction designations earned by campuses across the district. These honors highlight our commitment to preparing students for a successful future.”

“While we celebrate these successes, we also view these ratings as a guide for continuous improvement,” she added. “We remain dedicated to supporting every campus and strengthening our practices so every student in Belton ISD can thrive.”

Two individual campuses — Lake Belton High and Lakewood Elementary — scored A’s. Six schools — Belton Early Childhood, Belton High, New Tech High, Lake Belton Middle School, North Belton Middle School, and Sparta Elementary — were awarded B’s.

Belton ISD C schools included Tarver Elementary, Leon Heights Elementary, Joe Pirtle Elementary, James Burrell Elementary, Chisholm Trail Elementary, Charter Oak Elementary and Belton Middle School. Receiving D grades were South Belton Middle School and Southwest Elementary. Receiving Fs were High Point Elementary and Hubbard Branch Elementary.

The district’s Alternative Education Program was not rated.

Across the state, 1,202 districts and 9,105 campuses were rated in 2026. Twenty-four percent of both districts and campuses increased in rating compared to 2025. 585 campuses across

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a problem on a computer.”

Smith led a team of two other students, including Sarai Drost of Elkridge, MD, and Luke Brewster of Lascasas, TN. This was Smith’s fourth year in robotics.

“Over the four years it took for us to eventually reach first place, I had to learn about teamwork. In two days, we were able to come together and figure it [the contest] out, and I feel like we did it more concisely than the other teams.”

The competition was held in Virginia, where Smith and his teammates met in person.

“We usually just meet with Zoom cams and such.

This wasn’t exactly the first time we met in person. Every year we would meet up in West Virginia and spend time together. This year we didn’t have time to have fun, but we felt like we were all sharing the same brain and thinking of ways to problem solve.”

Because Smith’s team had only worked with virtual robot models, they were met with the task of programming a physical robot that other teams may have been more familiar with. Despite their handicap, the Keystone team managed to pull through and win the championship.

“For our challenge, the robot had to cross a mat cov-

ered in Lego bricks. The robot had to move these bricks and get them to certain places. We had to get the robot to move to the right places without getting off track. Unlike the other teams, we did things very, very slowly. The judges will take points into consideration over time. So we did things gradually and made fewer mistakes.”

Each member was awarded \$500 and an official Robotics League trophy. This marked Keystone’s fourth time in the championship and their first victory. Smith hopes to pursue a degree in biology and believes that robotics will look good on his resume.

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

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

OBITUARIES

Estill

Virginia Jones Estill

July 5, 1928 – August 25, 2026

Virginia Jones Estill passed away peacefully on August 25, 2026 in Bryan, Texas. Virginia was born on July 5, 1928 in Houston to Charles Thomas Percy and Susie (Huebotter) Jones. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband of 61 years, Louis L. Estill, and her sister, Flora Ann Jones Miller. After graduation from Stephen F. Austin High School in Houston, Virginia attended and graduated from Mary Hardin Baylor College with a BA. in Music and a teaching certificate in May 1949. She received a Masters degree from Baylor University in August 1973. While “studying” and attending college at MHBC, she met a hometown Belton boy who was the love of her life, Louis Estill. They were married in Belton on July 9, 1949. They remained in Belton where they lived, worked, and raised a family. Virginia worked as a music teacher, an LLD teacher, speech therapist, and diagnostician. She was employed over the years, by Academy, Belton, and Temple school districts, retiring in 1987. Virginia used her musical talents teaching music, directing school and church choirs, and she loved

playing the piano and organ for church services. Two of her favorite pastimes were playing a lively game of 42 and playing Bingo. Virginia was an active member of the First Presbyterian Church in Belton, Taylor’s Valley Church in Temple, and Miller Heights Baptist Church in Belton. Virginia is survived by one favorite son, Louis Charles Estill and favorite daughter in law, Jennifer, Murphy, Texas, one favorite daughter, Janet Estill Galindo and favorite son in law Charles, College Station, Texas, two grandsons, Charles Galindo, Jr. and wife, Brooke, Austin, Texas, John R. Galindo, Carolina Beach, North Carolina, and one granddaughter, Katy Jo Estill Tarrant, and husband, Jacob Tarrant, Palmer, Illinois , three great grandchildren, Lawson Tarrant, Charlotte Galindo, and Bennett Galindo. Visitation will be at Dossman Funeral Home in Belton, Sunday, August 30, 4:00-6:00pm. Graveside Services will be at North Belton Cemetery, Monday, August 31, 10:00am.

Young

Holly Christine “Rocket” Young

December 15, 1989 – July 29, 2026

Holly Christine Young, lovingly known as “Rocket,” passed away unexpectedly on July 19, 2026, in her home-

town of Temple, Texas. Born on December 15, 1989, also in Temple, Holly’s vibrant spirit and enduring kindness touched the lives of everyone who had the privilege to know her.

Holly was cherished deeply by her family. She leaves behind her father, Daniel Young Jr.; her mother, Tammy Jean Sproull Young; her brother, Nicholas Beaty; and her sister, Ashely Young. Their memories of Holly—as a loving daughter, devoted sister, and loyal friend—are treasures that will always be held close to their hearts.

Throughout her life, Holly was known for her energy, warmth, and the passion she brought to every endeavor. The nickname “Rocket” was more than just a moniker; it reflected her boundless enthusiasm and the dynamic outlook that defined her character. Whether in her family circle or among friends, Holly’s laughter, wit, and genuine care were sources of joy and inspiration.

While her time with us was far too brief, Holly’s memory will remain an enduring presence in the lives of those she loved. Her hometown roots in Temple, Texas, anchored her life’s journey—a journey marked by generosity and a spirit that encouraged others to shine. Holly’s legacy lives on in the love and fond remembrance shared by her family and all who knew her.

As her family and community mourn her sudden passing, they also honor and celebrate the gift of Holly’s life—a life that brought light and love to so many.

‘Visit Belton’ logos considered by Council



By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Belton City Council gave its opinion on a new logo for “Visit Belton” as part of the city’s ongoing tourism rebranding and marketing initiative.

Earlier this year, Belton hired Found TX to develop a new visual identity for Visit Belton, a tourism-focused brand intend-

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with Wild Millers LLC and Miller’s Smokehouse for a Building Life Safety Grant.

In July, City Council approved a Building Life Safety Grant (BLSG) for Miller’s Smokehouse for structural truss repair and fire safety improvements. The BLSG program is a partnership between the City of Belton and the Belton Economic Development Corporation.

“The program provides assistance for safety improvements to existing structures within the Imagine Belton District, including fire suppression systems, ADA compliance upgrades, asbestos abatement, and other eligible improvements,” said Cynthia Hernandez, executive director of the BEDC.

“BEDC and the City of Belton have each allocated \$150,000 in FY 2026 to fund up to \$50,000 per award,” she said. “The project type is the determining factor as to which entity funds the award. For projects creating or maintaining jobs, BEDC is the funding source through an Economic Development Performance Agreement with the

ed to support the promotion of Belton as a destination and provide a consistent visual identity for tourism marketing, events, publications, digital media and other promotional applications.

A tourism team participated in the development and review of the logo process. The team included Mayor David K Leigh, Council member Stephanie O’Banion, Council member Dave Covington, former mayor Marion Grayson, Dawn Orange of the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, Jordan Samfield of First Texas Bank, and business owners Staci Schoepf and Ashley Potts.

“Through a series of meetings and discussions with Found TX, the team evaluated multiple created approaches and provided feedback that helped narrow the work to two strong logo concepts,” said Assistant City Manager Matt Bates.

“Throughout the process, including before, during, and after the most recent meeting, both concepts received thoughtful and favorable feedback,” Bates said. “Each emerged as a strong and viable creative direction shaped by the Tourism Team’s work.”

“Presenting both concepts allows the City Council to consider the full range of options developed through the process and select the direction it believes will best represent Visit Belton,” he added.

business creating the jobs.”

“Alternatively, if the improvements are not tied to a business committed to operating in the building at the time of the investment, the city of Belton is the funding source for the reimbursement,” Hernandez added.

The BLSG approved for Miller’s in July meets the requirements for Belton EDC funding. An Economic Development Performance Agreement outlines a commitment by Miller’s Smokehouse to invest a minimum of \$153,402.05 in building life-safety improvements and will retain a minimum of 25 jobs. BEDC will reimburse the applicant up to \$50,000 upon completion of the project.

The BEDC Board of Directors approved the Economic Development Performance Agreement with Wild Millers LLC and Miller’s Smokehouse on July 7. No changes are proposed for the scope of work as originally approved by City Council. This item is simply to approve BEDC’s mechanism to fund the grant.

Interstate - From Page A1

ridor of I-35 includes three general-purpose lanes and two frontage road lanes in each direction,” he added. “The proposed typical section would include, in each direction, an additional general-purpose lane for a total of four general-purpose lanes, two express lanes, two to three through lanes and a shared-use path.”

“The I-35 work is part of a larger project that will extend I-14 from its current conclusion in Belton to US 190 in Rogers.”

The purpose of the expansion is to enhance safety, reduce traffic congestion, and improve connectivity in the I-35 corridor and accommodate the future I-14 extension.

According to TxDOT, the project is needed on this stretch I-35 because it currently is inadequate to meet current and future traffic volumes, and there are safety and operation issues with ramp and intersection configurations. Also, TxDOT says the interstate-to-interstate connections do not meet criteria and standards for an interstate facility.

TxDOT says in the Segment 1 corridor, the crash rate exceeds the state average. The concentration of crashes are at the I-14, US 190 and Sixth Avenue interchanges.

Local residents have addressed existing congestion and safety concerns, local access and roadway

conditions, and impacts to properties and neighborhoods.

That plan calls for the widening of US 190 from the western end of I-14 to the Coryell County line. It also includes several Temple projects that will upgrade US 190 to a freeway between South 31st Street and the eastern portion of Loop 363 by removing traffic signals and building overpasses or underpasses.

The plan does not list a I-35/I-14 flyover that would connect to US 190, a project that would be vital to a I-14 designation in Temple, but Smith said that would be included in the Temple project.

“Tourism Team members were also invited to provide individual feedback regarding the strengths and potential drawbacks of each concept and to identify their recommended direction,” Bates said.

At Tuesday’s meeting, Council reviewed the final logo concepts and selected a preferred direction. Found TX will complete requested refinements and prepare the selected logo for final implementation.

The logo likely would be placed on a sign and target leisure daytrippers and weekend travelers looking for an affordable, low-pressure getaway; families with kids who want parks, water and walkable activities; travelers heading to the Expo Center for stock shows and tournaments; friends and family of University of Mary Hardin-Baylor students; and outdoor-minded visitors interested in lakes, paddling, fishing and hiking.



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Central Texas Council of Governments launches Everbridge for new emergency notification system

Special to the Journal

Central Texas Council of Governments (CTCOG) region (Milam, Bell, Coryell, Lampasas, San Saba, Mills, and Hamilton Counties) is now working with Everbridge, the global leader in critical event management and public warning, to keep communities safe and informed with quick and reliable emergency notifications and public service announcements. On September 1, 2026, the Central Texas Council of Governments will be transitioning from the CodeRed Mass Emergency Communication System to the Everbridge Mass Emergency Communication System. Citizens that are signed up to CodeRed will be transferred to the Everbridge system but will still need to create an account and set their personal notification preferences. Jurisdictions will begin using Everbridge to communicate with residents and businesses during emergencies and other critical events. Residents are encouraged to register immediately to receive these alerts: www.ctcog.org Jurisdictions will use the Everbridge emergency notification system to alert residents about a variety of events, ranging from severe weather, fires, floods and other emergencies to more routine announcements, such as road closures and water utility maintenance. Messages will be sent to residents on their preferred devices — cell phone, SMS, home phone, email, and more—to ensure real-time access to potentially lifesaving information. Residents listed in the CTCOG 911 database will be automatically subscribed to alerts by phone, but Everbridge allows citizens to self-register, provide additional contact information or opt out. We have a commitment to ensure public safety, community awareness and emergency response. To uphold this, when critical information and public service announcements are available, we need to reach our residents as quickly and reliably as possible. The Everbridge emergency notification system allows city and county officials to disseminate this information across all types of devices, ensuring residents have access to real-time public information when they need it the most. Citizens will need to register using a specific link for their jurisdiction, for a complete list please follow the link below. Register for Everbridge now at: www.ctcog.org



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A6
Thursday,
August 27, 2026

LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Hope House teaches the love of Christ, learning, growing, and sharing



BELTON JOURNAL/Jack Freedman
Brian "Pigman" Quaca poses by deer shoulder mounts.

Annual hunting expo featuring Brian Quaca a rousing success

By Jack Freedman
The Belton Journal

On Tuesday, August 25, at 6:00 p.m., the twenty-second annual Temple Feed Game Day hunting expo was held at the Bell County Expo Center. The event was open to everyone, including families, and aimed to celebrate the sport of hunting through community, prizes and guest speakers.

"We've been doing this every other year now," Terry Kelce, an event organizer and the manager of Temple Feed, said. "We give away hunt trips and rifles, and it's just so much to give back to the community in a family friendly way. It's a good way to celebrate their legacy." Over 200 people were in attendance. The attendees were free to visit any of the dozens of booths around the assembly hall. These included displays of animal mounts, rifles, and refreshments catered by Schoepf's BBQ. Sponsors included but were not limited to Temple Feed. "I've been coming here for years, and it's always a pleasure," Lee Lackman, owner of



Above: The after-school crowd at Hope House. Above Right: Summer fun at Hope House.

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

The Hope House after-school program began under a tree on Mitchell Circle in 2002. They welcome around 40 kids every Tuesday and Thursday at 730 Saunders in Belton. Jen Sutton, the only staff member, is the director of missions advancement and has been there since 2008.

Sutton said, "We would go out with a kickball and a jug of water, and we would do a Bible story under the tree in the park."

Serving kids from Kindergarten through 12th grade, they have two programs, both of which applications must be submitted. The first one is for K through 6th grade. The second is for older children.

Sutton explained, "Kiddos who have graduated through that program can apply for our next generation program, kids in seventh grade and up. That's a service-based program, to come in and help with the younger kids."

Located next to Belton Housing, when children enter Hope House after school, they get snacks and free play for forty-five minutes. During this time they can play with arts and crafts, board games, or on a court out back. Next comes homework and tutoring as needed. After homework, they have a Bible lesson with a curriculum.

Sutton said, "We're doing a curriculum called Bummer. It is about how even when things seem bleak, the Lord has something planned for you. We're doing the story of Joseph in the Bible, seeing where he started out



Courtesy Photos

being sold into slavery to being able to help his family and his country."

Sutton explained the steps of renting to owning the Belton Housing building they are in as a leap of faith. And now they are starting to plan for a new building, with the hope of expanding their program.

She said, "We're looking for people to partner with us."

Architects and builders for the planning stages and help with budgeting, fundraising, and grants for the project.

"What we do at Hope House is we learn about God's love, grow in our love for Him, and share His love with others."

After twelve years of Hope House, they've seen entire families go through Hope House, start college, join the military, or start families of their own.

Sutton said about the families they serve, "We want to invest in their lives."

About the community at large, Sutton said, "I think our community is just so amazing and so sweet because they are such an involved community. It's so important for the community to come together and wrap around someone from a bunch of different directions."

Hope for the Hungry was founded locally in 1982, serving in Haiti, started Hope House, originally called Local Outreach. To support Hope House or find out more about them, go to their website at beltonhopehouse.org. There is a refrigerator and a cupboard for people to drop off food and take what they need. The refrigerator is currently broken.

Belton's Bacon, Blues & Brews festival set for September

Special to the Journal

The City of Belton is partnering with H-E-B plus! for its 10th annual Belton's Bacon, Blues & Brews festival on Sept. 25-26, 2026.

The two-day festival takes place near the historic Bell County Courthouse and features live entertainment, adult beverages, and a bacon cook-off between local food trucks.

"A strong lineup of blues bands with bacon wafting through the air is a great way to spend a Friday and Saturday in late September," said Belton Recreation Superintendent Adam Trujillo. "We'll close down a few streets downtown and provide people with great entertainment in a unique setting next to the historic Bell County Courthouse."

The festival begins with a kickoff party from 5:30-10 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 25, featuring:

- 1st Cavalry Division Brass Band: 6-7 p.m.
- Youth Pig Races (Ages 5-10): 7 p.m.
- South Austin Moonlighters (live blues): 7:30-10 p.m.
- Beverages for sale by local breweries and wineries
- Food trucks

On Saturday, Sept. 26, the festival continues, 11 a.m.-10 p.m., with an all-day market and more blues and brews:

- B4 Market: 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
- Peterson Brothers: 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
- Bacon Bingo: 1:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., and 5 p.m.
- Youth Pig Calling Contest (Ages 12 and under): 2 p.m.
- Jay White and the Blues Commanders: 2:30-4 p.m.
- Youth Pig Races (Ages 5-10): 4:30 p.m.
- ZZ Tex Band: 4:30-7 p.m.
- Food Truck Competition Awards Ceremony: 5:15 p.m.
- Adult Pig Calling Contest (Age 13 and up): 7 p.m.
- Texas Flood Band: 7:30-10 p.m.

Admission to the two-day event is free.



Courtesy Photo

Top: Texas Flood band & Above: The South Austin Moonlighters, will be palying at the 10th annual Belton's Bacon, Blues & Brews festival on Sept. 25-26, 2026.

-THE- BELTONIAN

Tenacious D in The Pick of Destiny
WED - Aug 26 @ 7:30
THUR - Aug 27 @ 7:30

Nacho Libre
FRI - Aug 28 @ 7:30
SAT - Aug 29 @ 4:30
SAT - Aug 29 @ 7:30
SUN - Aug 30 @ 4:30
SUN - Aug 30 @ 7:30

A Minecraft Movie
SAT - Aug 29 @ 2:00
SUN - Aug 30 @ 11:30AM
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Stagecoach
WED - Sep 2 @ 7:00
THUR - Sep 3 @ 7:00

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SAT - Sep 5 @ 7:00
SUN - Sep 6 @ 11:00AM
SUN - Sep 6 @ 3:00
SUN - Sep 6 @ 7:00
MON - Sep 7 @ 11:00AM
MON - Sep 7 @ 3:00
MON - Sep 7 @ 7:00

Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla
WED - Sep 9 @ 7:00
THUR - Sep 10 @ 7:00

My Neighbor Totoro
FRI - Sep 11 @ 7:00
SAT - Sep 12 @ 11:30AM
SAT - Sep 12 @ 2:00
SAT - Sep 12 @ 4:30
SAT - Sep 12 @ 7:30
SUN - Sep 13 @ 11:30AM
SUN - Sep 13 @ 2:00
SUN - Sep 13 @ 7:30

Titanic
WED - Sep 16 @ 6:30
THUR - Sep 17 @ 6:30
FRI - Sep 18 @ 6:30
SAT - Sep 19 @ 2:30
SUN - Sep 20 @ 3:30
SUN - Sep 20 @ 7:30

The Little Mermaid
SAT - Sep 19 @ 10:30AM
SAT - Sep 19 @ 12:30
SUN - Sep 20 @ 11:30AM
SUN - Sep 20 @ 1:30

Close Encounters of the Third Kind
WED - Sep 23 @ 7:00
THUR - Sep 24 @ 7:00

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SUN - Sep 27 @ 4:30
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Why Do I Keep Doing What I Hate?



John C. Perry

In Bible study last Sunday, Romans 7:14-25 came up. I have read this passage many times over the years, but this time Paul's words hit me like a two-by-four upside the head.

Listen to what he wrote: "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but

what I hate I do."

Think about that for a moment. Paul, an absolute giant of the faith and a spiritual hero to so many of us, struggled with the very same internal tug-of-war we face every single day.

He wasn't speaking from some untouchable, ivory tower of perfection. He was right down in the trenches of human nature. He felt that exhausting tension we all know so well, knowing clearly what God desires for us, yet feeling the relentless pull of worldly distractions, quick tempers, selfish impulses, and everyday temptations. It causes us to stumble into actions we later regret, doing the exact things we swore we wouldn't, all while knowing they run directly contrary to God's best

for our lives.

Folks, that is real, gut-wrenching tension, and I personally feel it all too often. Paul gives voice to that universal ache with his honest cry: "What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24). That isn't just ancient scripture; it reflects every believer's longing to get it right, paired with the quiet heartbreak of falling short yet again.

Too often in my own prayers, I find myself hanging my head and saying, "Lord, I let you down yet again today." If the truth be known, I have had to pray that so frequently that I catch myself trying to think of new ways to phrase it just so I don't sound like a broken record.

But that's not where the story ends. Paul does not abandon us to despair. In the very next breath, in verse 25, he delivers the glorious pivot: "Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

In other words, Paul reminds us of the greatest truth in the Gospel: yes, we fall short, but our shortcomings do not have the final say. Because Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice on the cross, our missteps and human weaknesses are met with limitless grace and complete forgiveness rather than condemnation.

We know the path we are called to walk. Our daily striving should be to live as shining examples of Christ's love and mercy, reflecting to our neighbors what

He has done in our lives. We will falter along the way. We will have days where we trip over our own feet. But the good news of Romans is that our salvation does not rest on our flawless performance; it rests on His finished work.

Thankfully, we serve a loving, patient, and forgiving Father, a God who turns our stumbles into stepping stones. And with that grace beneath us, every new day becomes a chance to rise, to grow, and to walk in the light of His love.

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

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Hunting - From Page A6

Top Gun Taxidermy, said. “I get to interact with my clients tonight and show off some of the work that I’ve done.”

As the night went on, there were various drawings for door prizes. The prizes ranged from animal feed to gift cards, hunting trips, and even rifles. The event organizers promoted several upcoming deer hunting competitions such as the Venado Grande Deer Contest, which cost \$25 to enter.

“There will be multiple categories in the contest, and we encourage anyone who’s interested to sign up,” Adam Lucksinger, an event organizer, said. “The full rules are on our Facebook page.”

The event hosted Brian “Pigman” Quaca, star of the TV series “The Pigman,” which documents Quaca’s experience with helicopter hog hunting. He gave a speech about his hunting adventures and took questions from his fans, including several children who enjoy his show. “I’m very grateful for the City of Belton and its hunters, as well as the sponsors who made all of this possible,” Quaca said. “I think that it’s important that we pass hunting on to the next generation; it’s legal, it’s a way of life, and it’s how a lot of us make a living. I thank God that He’s allowed me to be where I am today.”

Before the event concluded, Kelce presented awards to certain attendees for their deer hunting accomplishments in the last year, such as heaviest deer and longest antler length. The event concluded around 8:30 p.m.

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Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Texas Vintage Addiction, located in a historic home in Belton, has several vendors, and those vendors have repeat customers. Kimberly and Doug Hunter, who run the shop, know that customers return to see what vendors have added to their booth area.

Traveling from room to room, customers discover silver serving dishes, crystal, China sets, women’s hats from days gone by, and vinyl records. There is also furniture, uranium items that glow under black light at the shop, books tucked into bookshelves, wall décor hanging, lighting on display, and jewelry in a glass hutch.

Kimberly Hunter said the vendors have given people a reason to come back. They stock about 80 percent true

vintage items and mix in newer pieces here and there.

Kimberly Hunter has learned their customers are looking for a good deal and quality items. She has tips to help them out.

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Kimberly explained that vintage means an item is 20 years old or more. To be considered an antique, furniture is 100 years old or more.

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Tigers open new era under Mann against Hendrickson

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The time has arrived to see if Joshua Mann's winning ways relocated with him.

For the better part of the last two decades, the veteran head coach dedicated himself to transforming Leander Rouse into a winner.

He began with an idea as he oversaw the creation of the program from its inception, and for the next 18 years, he evolved the Raiders into one of the area's most successful teams.

After opening in 2008, Mann guided Rouse, which was not recognized as a University Interscholastic League program until 2010, to an overall record of 91-89-1 through its first 16 seasons, collecting consecutive district titles in 2020 and 2021. In the playoffs, the Raiders were 13-9 in nine appearances, reaching the Class 4A, Division I state semifinals in 2012.

On the heels of a second straight six-win season, though, Mann departed his longtime home to assume control at Belton, where he inherited the Tigers from former head coach Brett Sniffin, who was 35-32 in six years.

Belton has qualified for the playoffs in five consecutive seasons to establish a new school record, and Friday, Mann begins his journey toward the Tigers' sixth postseason appearance.

His tenure begins with a 7 p.m. kickoff against visiting Pflugerville Hendrickson.



The Hawks, who have finished each of the last two seasons with a 5-5 overall record, have not produced a winning record since going 6-4 in 2020, and like the Tigers, they are ushering in a new era under former Hereford head coach Adam Naron. The Whitefaces were 2-8 in his last season.

Hendrickson returns each of its top three rushers from last year, including senior E.J. Neal-Adams, who accounted for 456 yards and six touchdowns rushing as a junior.

Defensively, Rhett Peterson anchors the unit following a 35-tackle junior season that also included a pair of interceptions.

The Tigers will rely on their premier quarterback-receiver combination to move the ball.

En route to averaging 403.0 yards per game last season, quarterback Will Shepard, a senior, completed 141 passes for 1,968 yards and 16 touchdowns. Additionally, he was the Tigers' leading rusher, amassing 543 yards and nine touchdowns on 114 carries with a trio of 100-yard games.

Gavin Ross led the entire state of Texas in receptions as a junior, catching 110 passes for 1,478 yards and 12 touchdowns.

Furthermore, also returning are senior center Ben Gutierrez, senior linemen Beckett Butler and Jaxon Simmons, junior lineman Frederick Makubi, senior running back Javid Planz and junior tight end Cason Morton among others.

On the opposite side of the ball, Belton will rely on seven returning starters highlighted by senior defensive backs Azian Wilkinson and Graham Chambley, junior linebackers Alex Carpenter and Oakley Torres and junior lineman Garrett Stermer.

The Tigers will look to take advantage of playing their opener at home, because they follow by spending three of the next four weeks on the road, traveling to Bryan (Sept. 3), Bastrop (Sept. 11) and San Angelo Central (Sept. 25). Belton's lone home game for the month occurs Sept. 18, when they host Waco Midway.

District 8-5A, Division II play starts Oct. 9 with a visit from Bryan Rudder.

Broncos, Vista Ridge set for season opening showdown Thursday night

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

The Lake Belton Broncos kick off the 2026 season on Thursday, August 27, hosting Vista Ridge in a matchup between two programs that have never met on the field but come in with plenty to prove.

Vista Ridge enters the contest fresh off a 6-5 season that saw them go 5-3 in district play, good enough for a fourth place finish and a trip to the playoffs. Their season ended in the first round with a 38-14 loss to Dripping Springs, a result that will likely fuel their motivation as they look to build on last year's postseason berth. Head coach Kirk Rogers and the Broncos will need

to be ready for an opponent with playoff experience and a chip on its shoulder.

While the two schools haven't squared off before, there's at least one shared data point to lean on heading into the opener. Both teams played Killeen last season, with markedly different results. Lake Belton came away with a 28-21 win over the Kangaroos, while Vista Ridge fell to Killeen 56-30. It's far from a perfect measuring stick, game plans, personnel, and matchups change year to year, but it's the only common thread available between these two programs, and it offers a small edge in the confidence department heading into Thursday.

For Lake Belton, the season opener represents a chance to establish an identity

early. A home crowd and the energy of a season opening night game should give the Broncos a boost as they look to set the tone for the year. With new pieces on both sides of the ball following the offseason, this matchup serves as the first real test of how the roster's changes translate to live competition.

Vista Ridge, meanwhile, will be looking to prove last year's playoff run wasn't a fluke. A team with a winning record and postseason pedigree is never an easy season opening draw, and the Broncos will need to bring their best effort from the opening whistle to avoid an early setback.

Kickoff is set for Thursday night in Belton, where the Broncos will look to open the season 1-0 and send an early

statement about what kind of team they intend to be in 2026. With so little history between these programs, Thursday's result will go a long way toward defining the early narrative of both teams' seasons and give Lake Belton a shot at answering some of the questions still surrounding this year's squad.



Belton ISD teams take strong showings into Temple meet

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

All six Belton ISD programs will be in action Friday at Temple, where the Tigers and Lady Tigers intend to build on strong starts to their seasons.

At last week's Belton Invitational, Belton captured all the gold, emerging with individual championships and team titles in both the boys and girls divisions.

Led by senior Jose Perez-Diaz, who crossed the finish line with a first-place time of 19 minutes, 4.47 seconds, the Tigers scored a meter 23 points to beat out Del Valle (2nd, 52) and Copperas Cove (3rd, 60).

Racing along a three-mile course at the Belton Lake Outdoor Recreation Area, sophomore Ethan Trevino (2nd, 19:24.96), senior Hayden Brown (5th, 19:37.82), junior Marcus Hernandez (7th, 20:16.36) and junior Nelson Funez (8th, 20:34.37) complemented Perez-Diaz as top-10 finishers in the Class 5A-6A division.

Furthermore, senior Ezra Kahler (9th, 20:39.76), senior Zander Orsag (10th, 20:40.11), junior Taj Keller (11th, 20:41.10), sophomore Luke Roberts (13th, 20:46.74) and sophomore Tyler Millington (17th, 2:57.25) represented the Tigers in the field's top 20, but their times did not factor into the team total.

Del Valle (2nd, 52) and Copperas Cove (3rd, 60) followed in the final standings.

In the girls race, the Lady Tigers automatically won due to being the only complete team in the field, but they still produced impressive debuts.

Isabella Warner, a junior, earned the individual gold medal with a time of 21:42.87, which was almost 50 seconds faster

than Copperas Cove junior Layla Jackson (2nd, 22:29.27).

Warner was joined on the route by senior Roxanna Delgado (3rd, 24:22.28), freshman Kate Jones (4th, 24:32.87), senior Nataly Valdez (6th, 24:44.85) and sophomore Natalie Mott (7th, 24:47.75), who completed Belton's scoring.

Also competing for the Lady Tigers were sophomore Ayla Wakershauser (8th, 24:54.11), freshman Markayla Allen (9th, 25:06.35), senior Gisella MacDonald (12th, 26:06.81), sophomore Ella Johnson (13th, 26:55.32) and junior Ai Kirkland (14th, 27:40.36).

New Tech was also in attendance, participating in the Class 1A-4A two-mile race.

The Lady Dragons did not field a complete team, but sophomore Ellie Megoulloa (27th, 15:00.90), freshman Nyla Mathews (34th, 15:59.13), junior Daniella Idumebor (45th, 17:22.96) and freshman Julisa Bedolla-Martinez (52nd, 25:23.22) were among the field.

Jonesboro senior Lynlee Deats won the race in 12:03.21, while Gatesville (1st, 39), Thorndale (2nd, 46) and Burnet (3rd, 58) occupied the top spots in the standings.

In the boys division, Burnet placed three runners in the top five, including champion Clark Yanez (17:28.66), to easily win with 23 points. Gatesville and Thorndale were second (51) and third (93), respectively.

With 177 points, the Dragons were seventh as freshman Daniel Zubaty placed 25th (22:19.71) in his debut. He was joined on the three-mile course by sophomores David Martinez (37th, 25:32.38), Ezra Valatine (39th, 25:41.51), Abel Carey (41st, 26:17.33) and Zorian Hajduk (52nd, 30:48.92) and senior Desmond Long (44th, 26:39.10).

The Broncos and Lady Broncos took part in the Cedar Park Vista Ridge Invitational, where approximately 200 runners

and 25 teams were involved in each division.

For the boys, senior Wyatt Potts (43rd, 17:28), junior Tyler Adkins-Beltran (94th, 18:19), senior Jack McCullagh (101st, 18:31), senior Josiah Briggs (112th, 18:43) and sophomore Drew Houston (119th, 18:51) combined to account for Lake Belton's 13th-place total of 419.

The Lady Broncos were 12th (374) thanks to sophomore Keira Dzenowski (58th, 21:40), senior Jenna Benedick (82nd, 22:18), senior Sarah Gray (84th, 22:20), junior Lucy Loa



(92nd, 22:31) and freshman Amara Bodeman (99th, 22:38).

Also representing Lake Belton were Broncos junior Cooper Schels (145th, 19:18), senior Austin Adams (173rd, 19:48), senior Adrian Rentas-Quiles (176th, 19:51) and junior Anthony Garza (210th, 21:23) and Lady Broncos junior Elizabeth Sandlin (105th, 22:50), junior Alayna Fulton (112th, 22:55), sophomore Sophia Garza (122nd, 23:15) and junior Camryn Mikulas (142nd, 23:49).



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Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Broncos and Lady Broncos suffered a disappointing defeat to visiting Leander Rouse last week, falling 10-9.

The tandems of Sonia Padmanabhan and Brianna Dubrocq and Addison Kruppa and Eliana Cavavos won their girls doubles matches, while teammates Micah Briggs and Alyssa Naumann earned a tiebreak victory in mixed doubles.

In singles, Ethan Muehlstein, Andrew Williams, James Robinson, Reid Ramirez, Kruppa and Naumann all won.

Lake Belton travels to Pflugerville Hendrickson on Friday for a 4:30 p.m. start.

Belton travels to Georgetown Eastview for a 4:30 p.m. start Friday

BASKETBALL

The Broncos and Lady Broncos recently released their schedules for the upcoming season.

Lake Belton’s girls season starts Nov. 10 at Killeen Ellison, and the Lady Broncos will take part in tournaments at Leander Rouse (Nov. 12-14), Cibolo (Nov. 24-25) and Waco Midway (Dec. 28-29). They open District 12-6A play Dec. 15 at home against Midway.

The Broncos open with games versus the Austin Royals on Dec. 10 and Dec. 12, and they will participate in the Austin Lehman tournament (Dec. 3-5), the San Antonio ISD tournament (Dec. 10-12) and the Buda Hays tournament (Dec. 28-29).

Lake Belton’s district opener is Jan 2 at Temple.

The first day for practice is Oct. 21 for girls and Oct. 28 for boys.

ATHLETICS PASS

Family athletic passes for the upcoming school year are on sale and can be purchased at the Belton High School athletic complex or the BISD administration offices.

The pass admits the holder and immediate family into all home games conducted by BISD. It is accepted for all sports except football.

Cost is \$100.

Cash or credit card is accepted for purchases made at Belton High School, while cash is required for purchases at the administration offices.



BOOSTER CLUB

The Belton Tiger Athletic Booster Club is currently accepting memberships for the upcoming school year.

Contributions benefit all athletes across all sports for the entire school year with options for both community and corporate memberships. Benefits vary based on memberships.

For the community, Cub (\$75), White (\$150), Red (\$300) and Varsity (\$500) options are available, while corporate options are Tiger (\$1,250), Elite (\$3,000) and Legacy (\$5,000).

Payments for memberships can be made online at BeltonTigersABC.org, through Venmo by using the handle @ BeltonTigers-ABC or by sending via mail to BTABC, PO Box 1454, Belton, TX, 76513.

For more information, visit BeltonAthletics.com or BeltonTigersABC.org.

RUNNING

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

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

The event will begin and end at the Lions Pavillion.

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

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

Central Texas Republican Women host networking luncheon

Special to the Journal

Central Texas Republican Women’s August Networking Luncheon was a huge success with over 125 people in attendance. Our dedication to Help Elect Republicans paid off big time with a whopping \$36,000.00 raised and donated to numerous Republican candidates. A goal was set, and expectations were exceeded, enabling the Club to give more in the

fight to Keep Texas Red. But our success didn’t stop there; CTRW rose to a new height this year to become one of the four largest clubs in Texas! Again, your efforts to support and promote the Club resulted in tremendous growth. Special thanks to everyone who participated in growing membership. Due to a last-minute schedule change for Senator Bob Hall, Mandy Drogin, Senior Fellow, Government Reform & Oversight

Coalition at Texas Public Policy Foundation, was guest speaker. Our thanks to Mandy for her insightful and galvanizing presentation on the Islamification of Texas and what is being done by Governor Greg Abbott and Representatives Brad Buckley and Hillary Hickland to stand up for Texas. Central Texas Republican Community, expect your membership renewal reminders to arrive starting next month.



Central Texas Republican Women raise \$36,000.00.

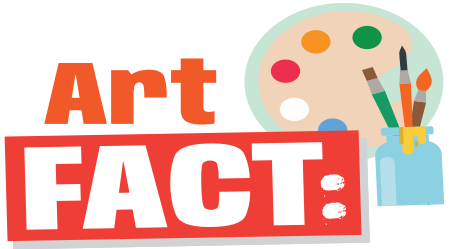
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Despite early outburst, Lady Tigers fall to Harker Heights at home

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Lady Tigers welcomed former district rival Killeen Harker Heights to town Tuesday, and following a strong start, Belton lost control late.

In their penultimate home match before league play, the Lady Tigers appeared poised to upset the Lady Knights, who won their first 12 contests, but Harker Heights would not allow it.

After claiming the opening set, the Lady Tigers were unable to continue the surge, and the Lady Knights emerged with a 22-25, 26-24, 25-

19, 25-16 victory.

Belton (3-10) took control early, holding a 14-9 advantage midway through the opening set, but the Lady Knights rallied, pulling within a point at 22-21 before falling short of completing the comeback.

The Lady Tigers won three of the next four points to secure the set.

After playing to a 10-10 tie in the second set, the teams were deadlocked again at 17-17, and the trend continued until Harker Heights tied the match with a 26-24 win.

The third set saw the Lady Knights construct an early lead, and they did not ease up en route

to claiming a 2-1 lead and the ensuing set in one-sided fashion.

It was the second time Harker Heights (15-4) beat Belton this season, winning their first encounter in straight sets at the Killeen ISD tournament.

The outcome follows a 2-6 showing at the annual Pflugerville ISD tournament.

Belton opened the event with a trio of losses, falling to El Paso Americas 25-20, 25-20, Pflugerville Weiss 25-9, 25-16 and Brock 25-8,

25-16, and the following day, the Lady Tigers suffered two more losses before snapping the skid.

Austin Bowie earned a 25-17, 25-15 victory before Austin Westwood won 25-13, 25-13, but in the ensuing contest, Belton beat Waco University in straight sets 25-17, 25-17.

The Lady Tigers carried the momentum into Saturday's bracket play and produced a 25-21, 16-25, 25-19 victory against Waco Connally,

but Belton's run ended in a 26-24, 25-21 loss to Austin McCallum.

While the tournament did not end the way the Lady Tigers wanted, there were plenty of highlights along the way.

Among them, Kensley Wolfe finished the first day with 11 kills and seven digs, while teammate Rexlynn Drake recorded 11 digs during the following day's action.

One day later, Reagan Stuart had a total of 14 digs.

Now, the Lady Tigers begin making their final adjustments before opening the District 16-5A schedule against visiting Liberty Hill Legacy Ranch on Sept. 8.

Belton makes its final tournament appearance this weekend, traveling to the three-day Little River-Academy for opening matches today. Then, a home contest versus Georgetown East View on Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. and a trip to China Spring (Sept. 4) conclude nondistrict competition.

In each of the previous two seasons, the Lady Tigers have advanced to the second round of the Class 5A, Division II playoffs.



Broncos battle Leander in five set thriller

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

The Lake Belton volleyball team battled Leander through all five sets Tuesday night before falling 19-25, 26-24, 25-23, 26-28, 10-15 in a match that had the makings of a classic from the opening serve.

The Broncos came out flat in the first set, dropping it 25-19 as Leander's offense found its rhythm early. But Lake Belton answered with poise, clawing back to steal set two 26-24 and even the match. The Broncos carried that momentum into the third, scoring the last 6 points straight to win the set 25-23 and take a 2-1 lead over the visiting team.

Set four was the

night's defining stretch. Both teams traded points deep into extras, with Lake Belton digging in but coming up just short as Leander forced a 28-26 finish that put Leander back even in the match at 2-2. It was the kind of set that swings momentum and this time it swung the wrong way for the Broncos, who couldn't carry the fight into the decisive fifth. Leander pulled away late for a 15-10 win to close out the match.

The loss drops Lake Belton to 9-11 on the season, while Leander improves to 12-7. Even in the defeat, the Broncos showed the kind of resilience that's defined their season, a team capable of hanging with anybody when they're locking in defensively and cutting

down on unforced errors. Five set matches are as much about mental toughness as talent, and Lake Belton proved they have the fight to stay in almost any battle, even if the finishing touches weren't quite there against a good Leander squad.

The Broncos won't have much time to dwell on the loss. Lake Belton is right back in action this Friday, August 28, when they head into tournament play against Glen Rose and North Crowley. The quick turnaround gives the Broncos a chance to shake off the five set grind and refocus, with two very different tests waiting for them in pool play.

With the Broncos sitting under .500, this tournament could be a pivotal

stretch. A strong showing against Glen Rose and North Crowley wouldn't just boost the record, it would build the kind of confidence Lake Belton needs after such a hard fought, ultimately heart-breaking loss to Leander.





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Petition of the Texas Department of Family and
Protective Services, Petitioner, was filed in the
146th Judicial District Court of Bell County,
Texas, on January 14, 2026, against DiNeasha
Huff, Demondela Hayes, Christopher Hicks,
Christopher Hicks, Respondent(s), numbered
26DFAM358867, and entitled "In the Interest
of JACEN HUFF, et al., minor children." The
suit requests to terminate the parent-child rela-
tionships and/or to appoint a managing con-
servator of the children. The date and place
of birth of the children who are the subject of
the suit are: JACEN HUFF, DOB: August 5,
2019, Place of birth: Texas, CAELEN HUFF,
DOB: September 16, 2020, Place of birth: Texas
CASSIUS HUFF, DOB: September 16, 2020,
Place of birth: Texas
The court has authority in this suit to render an
order in the children's interest that will be bind-
ing on you, including the termination of the
parent-child relationship, the determination of
paternity, and the appointment of a conservator
with authority to consent to the child's adoption.
The name and address of the attorney for
plaintiff is Yolanda Cortés Mares, Bell County
Attorney's Office, P.O. Box 1127, Belton, TX
76513
Issued and given under my hand and seal of
the Court at Belton, Texas, this the 20th day of
August
2026
Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County,
Texas 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton,
TX 76513
By: C. Rodriguez Deputy.
08.27

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 26CPB00494**

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
SUSIL THAPA, Applicant, on August 19,
2026, filed an Application for Independent
Administration and Letters of Administration in
a proceeding styled: SUNIL THAPA, Deceased,
and bearing the number 26CPB00494 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 August 27, 2026 in the
County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell
County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in
Belton, Texas.
All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are
commanded to appear at or before the time set
for said hearing by filing a written contest or
answer to said application should they desire to
oppose or contest it.
Said written contest or answer shall be filed
in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk,
Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas
76513.
The name and address of the attorney for appli-
cant is: ASHLEY S CLAPPER,
CORBIN & CLAPPER PC, 603 N 8TH ST,
KILLEEN TX 76541
The officer serving this Citation shall, in compli-
ance 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 August 20, 2026.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County,
Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton,
TX 76513
By: Andrea Marks Deputy
08.27

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 35119**

LEGALS

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
CINDY SANDERS, Applicant, on June 23,
2026, filed an Application for Appointment
of Successor Independent Administration and
Letters of Administration in a proceeding styled:
ARTHUR JAMES SANDERS, Deceased, and
bearing the number 35119 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 August 27, 2026 in the
County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell
County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in
Belton, Texas.
All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are
commanded to appear at or before the time set
for said hearing by filing a written contest or
answer to said application should they desire to
oppose or contest it.
Said written contest or answer shall be filed
in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk,
Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas
76513.
The name and address of the attorney for appli-
cant is: JAY R. BEATTY, 3106 SOUTH WS
YOUNG DR BLDG D #401, KILLEEN TX
76542
The officer serving this Citation shall, in compli-
ance 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 August 19, 2026.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County,
Texas, PO Box 480 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX
76513
By: Andrea Marks Deputy
08.27

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 26CPB00490**

To: Unknown Heirs
RUBY A MCPHAIL, Applicant, on August
17, 2026, filed an Application to Determine
Heirship and for Appointment of independent
Administrator in a proceeding styled: JASMIN
LESLIE GOMEZ ROBLES, Deceased, and bear-
ing the number 26CPB00490 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 August 27, 2026 in the
County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell
County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in
Belton, Texas.
All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are
commanded to appear at or before the time set
for said hearing by filing a written contest or
answer to said application should they desire to
oppose or contest it.
Said written contest or answer shall be filed
in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk,
Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas
76513.
The name and address of the attorney for
applicant is: AYAYI FUBARA ENELI MAAT
HERITAGE LAW GROUP, 415 E FM 2410
#2383, HARKER HEIGHTS TX 76548
The officer serving this Citation shall, in compli-
ance 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 August 18, 2026.
Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County,
Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton,
TX 76513
By: Andrea Marks Deputy
087.27

**NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING
CLAIMS AGAINST
THE ESTATE OF TELMA MARIA RIVERA,
DECEASED**

NOTICE is hereby given that original Letters
of Testamentary were issued on August 19,
2026 in a proceeding styled Estate of Telma
Maria Rivera, Deceased, in Cause Number
26CPB00450, pending in the County Court At
Law #1 of Bell County, Texas.
Claims may be presented in care of the attorney

Your home or land could be one
of your largest investments.

We would be honored to
represent you in this important
transaction.



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EDITORIAL

Makeup Mirrors and Graveyards

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

“Every man should have a fair-sized cemetery in which to bury the faults of his friends.”
-- Henry Brooks Adams

I have no idea who Henry Brooks Adams is, but the guy made a great point. When I was in college, I had a lighted makeup mirror. .It had a border of bright lights and the mirror could be switched to a magnifier. All I can say now is “ugh” about the thought of magnification. Every little line, pore, and blemish—I can’t hide from what I see. The same is true with friendship. The more time we spend with someone, I can say with 100% certainty that we’ll see flaws and faults we didn’t notice at first. Just like looking in the mirror, we can’t miss those imperfections. They’re magnified. We can’t escape the reflection of truth. And sooner or later, lest we get smug and congratulate ourselves at what a wonderful friend we are, we end up showing own faults for our friends to see. So it shouldn’t surprise me when friends show me their faults, and I should head out to the cemetery that Mr. Adams speaks of. I should shoulder my shovel,

drag my friend’s offending fault behind me, and start shoveling. When digging, say, “I know this is my friend’s fault/flow. Because they are my friend and I love them, I will bury this fault and won’t keep it with me. I choose not to hold this against them.” We are all works in progress, and our friends remind us of this without saying a word. Sometimes small offenses can pile up over time, and before we know it, we’re lugging a wheelbarrow full of them around with us. One friend or another has misspoken or treated us carelessly, and we never make that trip to bury their fault. This can damage friendships over time, even small things. Recently I have learned just that. Someone had offended me, not in a large way, but in a series of “offenses” that have piled up. I lugged the pile around for far longer than I should have. I still see it, in the corner, not quite buried yet. On the other hand, I am also reminded that my own faults can irritate, or worse, injure my friends. But this is what friends are for--not to be injured, but

to remind us of where we fall short. Friends are the ones who will not hold our faults against us. Instead, our friends will simply hug us, pick up their shovel, and head for the graveyard of forgiveness where our faults are buried. Some good questions to ask: Am I carrying reminders of my friend’s faults? Do I need to forgive my friend’s offenses or bury irritations? Am I the one who needs to think before I speak and/or act? Am I thinking of what I want, more than what is important to my friend? Do I need to ask forgiveness from my friend? Maybe asking those questions of ourselves is overthinking things (just a little), but true friends can be scarce in this world, and we do well when we take care of those friendships. The writer of Proverbs said it well: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”

Birthday Season

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

We’re in the middle of birthday season. Not *my* birthday season... that’s in January. But in our family, we have more than ten people with birthdays in August and September. That makes for a lot of cake and ice cream and a lot of pre-holiday pounds. Add on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and the second round of birthdays, and you end up with half a year of excess. Not that I’m complaining. I’ll take any excuse for a party. On one of those love language surveys, I’ve actually learned that *gift-giving* is one of the main ways I give and receive love. If you want to show me you care about me, get me a simple gift—a bookmark, or a rock you found on the trail that reminded you of me—and I’ll feel like you just gave me a winning lottery ticket. At Christmas, I tend to go a bit over-

board with the gifts. I have more fun giving stuff than receiving. I love every part of it—the shopping, the wrapping, the waiting in anticipation, the watching each person open their present to see the look on their faces. That’s me saying, *I love you. You’re important to me.* So the fall birthday season in our family provides an endless round of delight. Last night, we had a dinner party in honor of my amazing, handsome, hunka-hunka husband. This weekend, we’ll celebrate my daughter-in-law in a way that’s special to her. I think I’m more excited than she is. I wonder if that’s how God feels about us. It must be, because His gifts to us never end. He doesn’t wait for Christmas or birthday... every single day, He surprises us with new ways to show His love. Today, He’s done it with a surpris-

ingly cool August morning. I’m actually sitting outside to write this article. He shows His love by giving me family to celebrate. And a funny-looking dog who makes me laugh. By providing a job I love, that I’d probably do for free, but instead, they pay me. He shows it through a funny, talented daughter who calls me several times a day just to chat, and a kind, hard-working son who always looks for ways to make others smile. He shows love through my husband who, as we speak, is building me a deck for my above-ground pool, so I can lounge in the sun. He loves me through birdsong and soft wind on my face and a yard full of plants in every imaginable shade of green. And those are just the little things. I haven’t even gotten to the big stuff yet. My point is that, while

we tend to celebrate our loved ones on birthdays and holidays, God celebrates us every single day. Every moment, He has something in the works to show His love. His plans for us are good, for a future and a hope. Sometimes, I forget to notice. I forget to say *thank You*. I need to do better. But even when I’m oblivious, He keeps on, moving things around, working things out, setting up little explosions of joy and peace, pouring out evidence of His unfailing, never-ending love. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.” James 1:17

Food For Thought

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

About once a quarter the chapel where I attend services hosts the Red Cross for a blood drive. For those who have never donated, there are certain things to keep in mind. One of them is that you need to have a good breakfast before you go in and donate in order to help ensure that your body is fortified for what’s going to happen. Another is that once you’ve donated, you need to get at least a little something to eat so that you can recover. The Red Cross itself actually makes it a point to set out a table of snacks so that donors can grab something. Cue me sitting in the foyer with a juice box and a bag of hard pretzels as I let my system refresh itself. I had errands to do still, and so needed that charge to get them done. In that moment though, I got to thinking.

Go to The Bible. Find The Old Testament. Look for the book known as 1 Kings. In there you’ll read about a fellow named Elijah. He first shows up in chapter 17, tasked with witnessing to the wicked king Ahab and Ahab’s wife Jezebel. Because of everything those two have done, particularly their efforts to establish Baal worship as the national faith, God’s going to punish the land with a famine. Elijah delivers the message, then as God commands he goes into hiding for three years. When Elijah is commanded to emerge, he sets in motion a divine showdown: him by himself versus every priest of Baal that Ahab can summon. They’ll each ask their respected deity figure to send down fire as a sign. Long story short, Elijah won, and the prophets of

Baal rather lost their heads over the matter. For obvious reasons Jezebel wasn’t too happy about the matter, and so made it clear that Elijah was now at the top of her personal hit list. Once again, Elijah had to beat feet out of there. After a day’s trek into the wilderness, Elijah parked himself beneath a tree and started crying out. He was done. He was at his limit. He couldn’t take anymore. He was just going to lay down. ...Only for an angel to wake him up. The angel wasn’t there to lecture him. Rather, the angel had a pitcher of water and something good to eat. Once Elijah had his fill he went back to sleep, only for the angel to come back later with more chow. Something to eat. Something to drink. A good night’s sleep. Kind words. These simple things were enough to re-

plenish him physically, mentally, and emotionally. With this, he was able to get going again. Folks, you might not be called upon to tell a king to shove off. But odds are there’s going to be a day where you’re going to find yourself utterly spent, having given everything you can give and then some. At that point, there’s nothing wrong with stepping back and taking care of yourself. A good meal. A good bath. A good nap. These can all help you bounce back. And if you know someone who’s hitting their limits? Instead of giving them a lecture or pep talk, consider some kind words to go with an act of kindness. You can do a lot more good than you know. To quite Count Rugen from “The Princess Bride”, “If you haven’t got your health, you haven’t got anything.”

Random Thinks

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

I recently stopped at an estate sale. They had a good assortment of lamps and a few different styles, floor lamps, table lamps. Do you remember when lamps were actually “furniture”? They seemed to be more than just a stick in the corner holding a light bulb. One lamp at this estate sale had a round table, you could read your book and had a nice place to hold your evening beverage, or given the age of this one perhaps an ashtray. I wish I could have purchased a couple of them, but my corners are full. Speaking of those styles, I really miss sunken living rooms. There were actually a couple of styles of those, the one step down, which was fairly common, but then at the next level those areas were at least a couple of steps lower. Of course in Texas (and the south) we don’t need basements, so a change in floor elevation was something special. I remember some magazine layouts with sunken living areas, covered in shag carpet and colorful chairs and couches. I don’t think orange sofas are as popular as in the past. When did we get away from drapes as being a part of the total fashion theme of a house? I know that drapes are still around, but not as common as when I was young. I remember people thinking that “Venetian blinds” were gauche. Now “mini-blinds” are quite common, of course they are much nicer now and available in different materials, so essentially adding some style to the decor.

I can remember when “tie-dyed” shirts were fashionable. (I know that is dating me... but I was young) I even remember making our own tie-dyed shirts, various colors and designs. I might go get me a few white t-shirts, some rubber bands and the little packs of fabric dye. Just in case anyone wants to purchase a custom made shirt, hand made I might add! Speaking of, that is another of those things that has just faded away, and maybe with good reason, those white cotton t-shirts. I have a good assortment of t-shirts and I think only one is white. Have you ever seen a picture, photograph or “art”, of what is supposed to be a relaxing scene. It doesn’t really have a theme or seem to say anything, just very pedestrian. The plain type that might be seen in a place of business. There is one that kinda creates a bit of anxiety for me, there are several versions of these. The one that gets to me is a small cafe on a cobblestone street and out front are a couple of small cafe tables and chairs. My issue is that there is no possible way to get the chairs and tables to be stable sitting on a cobblestone surface, probably impossible. I know that is a very strange problem to have, but I have moved tables in a restaurant because the table wobbled. And those are on a flat floor and have adjustable feet! Another of those restaurant things that drives me crazy; opening up a menu and realizing that the last

time it was cleaned was back in 2021 when they updated the prices, of course they never update the pictures, that plate of food in the picture was prepared decades ago. At some point in my life I want to go to a really fancy and expensive restaurant and get a plate with several little food items and the designs made with sauces and other extraneous bits of garnish. Have you ever had a substance that is harder to clean up than toothpaste? Toothpaste sticks to everything. If for some reason you get it on your skin you wipe and wipe and it still won’t come off. If you are not careful and a glob of toothpaste falls into the sink you can’t just wash it down with water, you need a paper towel or something scrub-worthy to get it up, then there is this area that repels water for a few days. And the toothpaste manufacturers are a bunch of fib-tellers. As I have stated in the past I do not like peppermint, so I avoid it. I get toothpaste that says “cool mint”, liars! It is pepper mint, which implies that the pepper part of this burns, not cool. If you want me to brush my teeth for two minutes then don’t make my toothpaste burn like kerosene. I actually have a picture on my phone so I can reference my favorite brand and flavor in the store before I make a purchase.



Local Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Inc.

The Newcomers Club, Inc. would like to welcome ladies who have moved into Bell County and surrounding areas within the last three years. The club meets for a luncheon and program once a month and may participate in other various activities such as book clubs, a choral group, several dining out groups, walking, and games groups. The club also welcomes ladies who have just retired, or have experienced a life-changing event and are looking to connect with other ladies. For information about joining, contact Sheri Clifton at (602)-432-7510, or sherbear@bearhouse.us

MPR Explorers @ The Point- Aug 27

The Explorers Social will feature special guest Sarena Tate, owner of Modern Makers & More, a newly opened creative studio in Morgan’s Point Resort. Tate will share the mission behind her space, her journey as a local entrepreneur, and the ways Modern Makers & More is designed to support creativity, connection, and community for residents at Garrett & Mic Hill Event Center, 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Bell County Retired School Employee Association- Sept 3

The Bell County Retired School Employee Association (BCRSEA) will hold its first meeting of the 2026-2027 year on September 3. The organization has a new meeting location! Please join us at Fellowship Baptist Church, 2025 Morgan’s Point Road, Belton. Refreshments and socialization will begin at 1:30 a.m., with the meeting beginning at 2:00 p.m. New members are always welcome. BCRSEA is an organization comprised of retired school personnel and other persons interested in education. The purpose of the association is to encourage members to use their talents, their training and experience in furthering the educational, social, and civic growth of the community, the state, and the nation, and to afford opportunities for united action in solving problems relative to the needs of all retired school personnel. For more information, see our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/BCRSEA>).

Community Plant Swap - Sept 5

Belton Public Library Community Plant Swap is coming up, and we can’t wait to see what you bring! Join us for a morning of trading plants, sharing tips, and connecting with fellow green thumbs. Come ready to swap and talk all things plant-related! Bring seeds, cutting or extra house plants to trade. 10:00 a.m. to noon at 301 E. 1st Ave, Belton.

Soggy Doggie Day - Sept 12

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! For more information and rules visit beltontexas.gov/departments/parks_and_recreation.

Bacon, Blues & Brews Festival - Sept 25-26

Belton’s Bacon, Blues & Brews Festival is a celebration of great food, live music, and community spirit in the heart of downtown Belton. This festival brings together the smoky aroma of bacon-inspired creations, the soulful sounds of blues music, and a wide selection of craft brews and beverages for a day packed with flavor and fun. Enjoy performances from talented musicians, explore unique vendors, sample bacon-themed dishes, and experience the welcoming atmosphere that makes Belton special. For more information visit beltontexas.gov

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet both on TUESDAY, Aug. 11th and Aug. 25th 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.

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

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

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

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

Young’s Daughters Funeral Home Dementia/Alzheimer’s Care-giver 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. We are dedicated to initiating and conducting programs that preserve and celebrate the county’s historic cultural resources in alignment with state laws governing historical preservation in Texas. Our community resources consist of a research room, book repository, cemetery information, historical markers and monument records. Our services include information on historic preservation, educational programming, history community outreach and partnerships. We welcome you to join other history minded folks and get involved by serving on one of our committees that consist of preservation, cemetery, markers and education. To volunteer or for more information please visit

historicalcommission@bellcounty.texas.gov, call 254-933-5917 or visit the office located in the historic Bell County Courthouse, 101 E. Central Ave., RM 117.

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

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

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

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

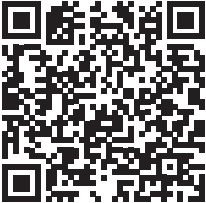
Bell County Texas Democratic Women holds their monthly meeting on the third Saturday of each month at 10 a.m. in the Belton AgriLife Center, 1605 N Main in Belton. Join us to hear from local and state candidates and about important issues and events. This is open to the public.

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

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

Community Information

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

STAY CONNECTED: STAY INFORMED

GOT A LOCAL EVENT, CHURCH GATHERING, OR MEETING?
TELL US AND KEEP EVERYONE IN THE LOOP.

EMAIL DETAILS TO:
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SEPTEMBER 22, 2026

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BELTON 8 AM – 1 PM

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Spots are still open. Contact us today!

⊙ ** ☐ ☺ ☙ ~ ☾ ☿ ✧ ✨ ✖ ✎ ✚ ✛ ✜ ✝ ✞ ✟ ✠ ✡ ✢ ✣ ✤ ✥ ✦ ✧ ✨ ✖ ✎ ✚ ✛ ✜ ✝ ✞ ✟ ✠ ✡ ✢ ✣ ✤ ✥ ✦ ✧ ✨ ✖ ✎ ✚ ✛ ✜ ✝ ✞ ✟ ✠ ✡ ✢ ✣ ✤ ✥ ✦

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ

CRYPTO FUN

☐ ☾ ☿ ✨ ✚ ✛ ✜ ✝ ✞ ✟ ✠ ✡ ✢ ✣ ✤ ✥ ✦

Solve the code to discover words related to golf.
Each number corresponds to a letter.
(Hint: 18 = S)

A. 6 15 17 21 18 13

Clue: Place to play golf

B. 9 17 16 16

Clue: Precise shot

C. 6 24 17 11 18

Clue: Golf equipment

D. 18 16 21 15 20 13

Clue: Attempt to hit the ball

Answers: A. course B. putt C. clubs D. stroke

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to golf.

BEIRD

Answer: Birdie

GUESS WHO ?

I am an actor and musician born in California on August 28, 1969. I attended UCLA with fellow actor Tim Robbins, and we were in a theater troupe. I've had a very successful movie and music career, and was once nominated for a Golden Globe Award for Best Actor for my role as a substitute teacher teaching rock.

Answer: Jack Black

PAR FOR THE COURSE WORD SEARCH

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

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

WORDS

- ALBATROSS
- BIRDIE
- BOGEY
- BUNKER
- CADDIE
- DIMPLE
- DIVOT
- DRIVER
- EAGLE
- FAIRWAY
- FORE
- GREEN
- HANDICAP
- HAZARD
- HOOK
- IRON
- MULLIGAN
- PAR
- PUTTER
- ROUGH
- SLICE
- STROKE
- TEE
- WEDGE