

Belton Lake trash clean-up set for Sept. 13



Courtesy Photo
Jonny Watts stomps trash in a Dumpster to make room for more debris collected during last year’s Lake Belton Trash Clean-Up. This year’s event is Sept. 13 at Cedar Ridge Park.

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Lake Belton Trash Getters, a group of local volunteers dedicated to keep the lake clean and pristine, will hold its annual clean up on Sept. 13.

The Lake Belton Trash Clean-Up will start at 7 a.m. at Cedar Ridge Park’s Turkey Roost pavilion with registration, breakfast and a safety meeting.

The cleanup will begin at 7:30 a.m., and lunch will

be served at 1 p.m. Also, prizes provided by corporate donors will be given out at 2 p.m.

Participants are urged to wear closed-toe shoes, gloves, bug spray and sunblock. Hats and towels for cooling off also are recommended.

“We are starting the cleanup at 7:30 but people are welcome to come out later if they wish,” said Teri Swanson, a Clean-Up organizer. “We will have three groups

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Courtesy Photo
Belton firefighters Jose Reyes-Rios, Eric Morales and Barak Cloe participate with other fire, police and Emergency Medical Services personnel in a climb of 110 floors in the Comerica Bank Tower to honor those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack on New York’s Twin Towers.

Three Belton firefighters climb 110 floors during 9/11 memorial event

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Three Belton firefighters traveled to Dallas last weekend to participate in the 9/11 Stair Climb, a gathering where thousands of fire, police and Emergency Medical Services personnel climbed 110 floors in the Comerica Bank Tower to honor those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack on New York’s Twin Towers.

The Belton firefighters participating in the

memorial climb included Jose Reyes-Rios, Eric Morales and Barak Cloe. They donned firefighting gear and made the climb.

The event is not a timed race but a tribute that requires physical clearance from a doctor and months of preparation.

“We climbed a total of 110 floors in Dallas to honor the 343 firefighters, 71 police officers and eight EMS workers, and all the innocent lives lost

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Page A2

Soggy Doggy Day held at Harris Community Splash Pad

By Shanna Grote
The Belton Journal

Soggy Doggy Day was held at Harris Community Splash Saturday, Sept. 6 at 9 a.m. by the City of Belton Parks and Recreation.

Typically, the City of Belton reserves the splash pad for families only but once a year at the end of the splash pad season, the city allows pups to have a little fun. During soggy doggy day the splash pad is fenced off and dog park rules are utilized, allowing the dogs to run around interacting with one another without a leash and playing in the fountains.

The splash pad was bustling with beloved pets as soon as the day began. Pet played with their dogs in the fountains and had photo opportunists in an oversized lawn chair. Outside of the fenced area, a variety of businesses and organizations

were set up for pets and their owners.

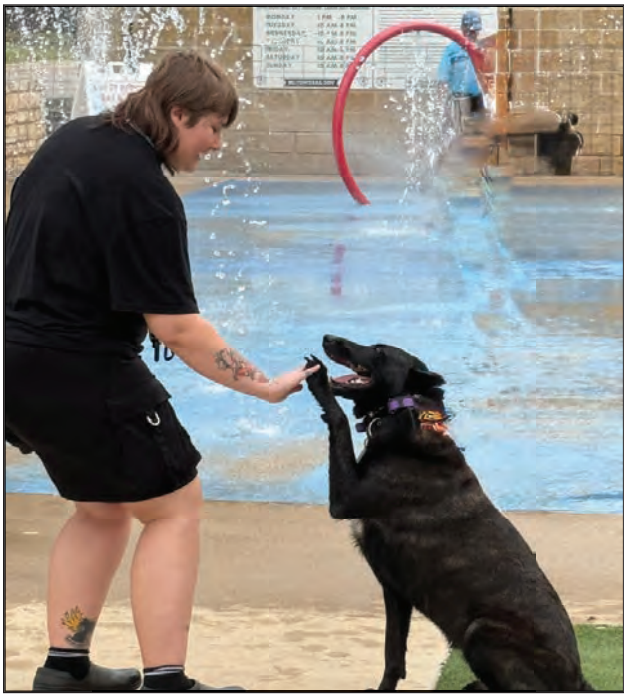
Scotti’s Italian Ice was on site providing delicious treats to pet owners as the dogs enjoyed the obstacle course and upbeat tunes played across the park.

Belton Veterinary Clinic offered dog paw print painting as well as treat bags for attendees.

The Bell County Animal Shelter was also present.

Tanian Gozalo brought her dog, Cynder “the block” out for the first time this year. This is the second time Tanian has attended but Cynder has been in training and it was her first time to enjoy the fun. Cynder was rescued from Temple Animal Shelter and now that she has aced her training routine was able to enjoy the water and her first time in a group setting.

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A pup gives its owner a high-five during the annual Soggy Doggy Day held at the Harris Community Center splash pad.
— **BELTON JOURNAL/**
Shanna Grote

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Council OKs 2026 budget, tax rate

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Following weeks of discussion and a public hearing, the Belton city council unanimously adopted the Fiscal 2026 budget during Tuesday night’s meeting.

The new budget will raise more total property taxes than the Fiscal 2025 budget by more than \$1.2 million — 9.91 percent — and of that amount \$443,526 is tax rev-

enue to be raised from new property added to the tax roll, according to Mike Rodgers, Belton’s director of finance.

City Manager Sam Listi presented the city council with the proposed Fiscal Year 2026 budget in July. The budget includes total resources of \$52.8 million and expenditures of \$47.9 million.

The Fiscal Year 2026 budget incorporates an increase to total property tax revenue in the amount

of \$1.2 million based on a tax rate of \$0.5225 cents per \$100 of taxable value.

Prior to council’s vote on the Fiscal Year 2026 budget, a public hearing was held on the tax rate. The rate will raise taxes for maintenance and operations on a \$100,000 home by about \$16.20.

The average taxable value of a Belton residence was \$295,184 last year. This year’s average taxable value of a residence is \$309,386.

Under the Fiscal Year 2026 tax rate, taxes imposed on the average home will be \$1,616.

Also Tuesday, Council adopted a new Fee & Rate Schedule for Fiscal Year 2026.

The new plan includes six “pillars,” including connectivity, business development, quality of life, infrastructure, engagement and public safety.

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Troy Ashford

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Freshville Market to open new location Sept. 17

Special to the Journal

Freshville Market invites the Belton community and surrounding members to a grand opening celebration on Wednesday, Sept. 17, starting at 1:30 p.m.
The new fuel and truck stop is located at 7370 U.S. Hwy. 190 in

Belton.
They will have special promotion pricing for fuel, food, snacks, and beverages during the grand opening.
In addition to being a fuel stop, Freshville Market features a full-service deli operated by JDS kitchen, known for its homemade meals.
In addition to food, Freshville Market offers a wide selection of snacks, cold drinks, beers, groceries and everyday essentials to meet the needs of the community.
As a family-owned business, the market stands as a proud part of the town dedicated to serving neighbors, travelers and commuters alike.



Courtesy Photo

The new Freshville Market in Belton will hold a grand opening celebration starting 1:30 p.m. next Wednesday, Sept. 17.

Soggy - From Page A1

Tanian said, “Cynder is loving it! It’s really fun here, it lets them just have fun.”
Cynder even gave a high five to Tania after splashing through the water.
The Belton Community Response Team (CERT) provided emergency kits and education to pet owners.
“Studies show that 60 percent of pet owners consider their pets part of their family,” said CERT Coordinator Angie Fontenot. This often creates a difficult choice for pet owners during emergency situations. Pet owners

are often reluctant to leave their pets behind when they need to evacuate and are known to even return to their home putting themselves in danger to stay with their pets.
“We witnessed this in the last emergency evacuation of Bastrop,” Angie Fontenont said. The emergency kits are helpful when entering an emergency shelter and are equipped with items needed to safely transition away from the owner’s home.
This was Candice Waugh, owner of Ruffpuppy Boarding and Training, first time to attend the Belton event although she has attended other similar

events. Candice brought along Rosie, a golden retriever who has been training with Ruffpuppy and utilizing their in-home boarding services.
“Having something fun like this for these dogs is extremely important. With her natural internal love for water, I could not pass up the opportunity to bring her in,” Candice said. Rose seem to do the happy dance seeing the water coming from all directions.
“Ruffpuppy is extremely blessed to have the ability and opportunity to attend an event like this while helping families train their furry family members” stated Candice.

Climbs - From Page A1

on Sept. 11, 2001,” Morales said late Saturday.
“Every step is a reminder of the courage, sacrifice and resilience shown that day,” he added. “We climb so their bravery is never forgotten and so future generations understand the weight of their service.”
“This climb is not just a physical challenge, but a living tribute to those who gave everything in the line of duty,” Morales said. “We hope to inspire other firefighters and police officers in Belton to make the climb with us next year.”
In addition to the many firefighters, police officers and EMS personnel participating, special guests from New York City attended and shared stories of the attack. The guest list included family members of first responders

and others lost in the attack.
On Sept. 11, 2001, 19 al-Qaeda terrorists hijacked four commercial airplanes scheduled to fly from Boston to California. In a coordinated attack that turned planes into weapons, the terrorist flew two of the planes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center.
They also flew a third plane into the Pentagon in Arlington, Va. Passengers and crew on the fourth plane launched a counterattack, forcing the plane to crash into a field in Somerset County, Penn.
The 9/11 attacks killed 2,977 people, the single largest loss of life resulting from a foreign attack on American soil. The attacks caused the deaths of 441 first responders.

Stronger Together Gala set for this evening

By Michelle Rodriguez
The Belton Journal

The Stronger Together Gala is being held at the Frank W. Mayborn Civic and Convention Center, located at 3303 N. Third St. in Temple on Thursday, Sept. 11, at 6:30 p.m. to support the Intrepid Spirit Center at Fort Hood and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Central Texas, Temple Chapter.
The organizations are dedicated to mental, behavioral health awareness and resources. The community is invited to eat, drink, dance, and help make a difference.
“We decided to go with mental health for our first gala. This gala is

personal for me. After the loss of my brother, I knew I had to become his voice and make sure people know there are resources! I just wish I could have helped him,” said Amanda Aranda licensed Texas Realtor with Magnolia Realty.
The event was created out of love and loss. It’s a response to pain, but also a celebration of purpose. It also brings together the community to say, “We see you. We hear you. We’re here for you.”
The evening will feature a full dinner, craft cocktails, a silent auction, and entertainment by All Hat No Cadillac, the 90’s country band that covers
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Trash - From Page A1

going out, so if it’s easier for families to come a little later, that’s OK.”
“We usually have about 100 volunteers take part,” she added. “This year we are going to focus on Rogers Park, Leona Park and around some of the marinas. We will also have a group cleaning up by the damn in the overflow area.”
“Trash is a community problem, and the Lake Belton community has definitely stepped up to the plate to help keep our lake clean,” Swanson said. “We want our beautiful lake to stay pretty and healthy for many years to come.”
“We hope we can reach the younger generation so they develop the same passion as we do for keeping our lake beautiful,” she said. “Periodically, members of the group get together and clean small areas throughout the year.”
“This will be our sixth year of being an organized cleanup group for Lake Belton,” Swanson said. “Last year, we cleaned more than 32,000 pounds of trash.”
For additional information, call Swanson at (254) 913-7476.

Budget - From Page A1

There are 41 initiatives within the six pillars that emerged from the May 30-31 retreat. Rodgers said most of the changes in the new Fee & Rate schedule will have a minimal impact.
Connectivity pillar initiatives include critical street, trail and sidewalk projects, including work on Interstates 14 and 35, Loop 121, Sixth Avenue, FM 39, Texas 317, Connell Street and the Spring Street bridge.
Business development initiatives include Imagine Belton projects, utility work at Belton Economic Development Corporation properties, updated building codes, and landscaping, murals and sidewalk work.
Quality of life initiatives include developing a new parks master plan and various partnerships to improve historical and cultural districts.
Listi said infrastructure initiatives include work on water and wastewater master plans, a Central Texas Water Alliance and street maintenance programs.
Exceptional customer service, marketing and educating Belton residents are key initiatives to the engagement pillar, and public safety initiatives include occupancy of the recently purchased Miller Heights Elementary School, cybersecurity, location of a new fire station and community safety.



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OBITUARIES

Gaplinger

Gary Lynn Gaplinger
November 6, 1950 – September 2, 2025

Gary Lynn Caplinger, born on November 6, 1950, in Crosbyton, Texas, passed away peacefully at his home in Temple, Texas, on Tuesday, September 2, 2025. Gary lived a life full of love, dedication, and a commitment to family that was evident in everything he did.

Raised in a nurturing environment, Gary graduated from Lubbock High School before furthering his education at the Southwestern Oklahoma School of Pharmacy. His career began in 1974 with a private pharmacy, and he later took pride in serving as a pharmacist at the VA hospital. After many years of devoted labor, Gary concluded his professional journey at Walmart Pharmacy, retiring in 2017.

Throughout his life, Gary was known for his easy-going nature, great sense of humor, and tender-heartedness. He was kind, caring, and always appreciative of those around him. With a positive spirit, he instilled the values of loyalty and protection in his family, along with a deep reverence for the word of God. His faith was evident through his dedication as a member of the Crossroads Church, where he enjoyed participating in Bible studies and golf fellowship.

In 1974, Gary met the love of his life, Patty, and upon their first glance, he knew she was the one. They were married six months later, and together they built a loving family, celebrated numerous milestones, and created a bond that lasted through their 50 years of marriage. Gary cherished being a family man and took immense pride in his sons, Jeremy and Jeff, as well as his beloved grandchildren. He was particularly fond of his wife, whom he affectionately called “Patty Sue.”

Gary enjoyed many hobbies, including golfing, watching sports—especially college basketball—and he possessed a passion for classic cars and collecting antiques. An avid reader, he took delight in History, Christian Literature and the Bible. He also developed a reputation as a master of dad jokes, always bringing laughter to those around him. He had a great love for animals especially his dogs and cats.

Gary is survived by his devoted wife of 50 years, Patty Caplinger; his two sons, Jeremy (Jennifer) Caplinger and

Jeff (Wendy) Caplinger; his sister Debra (Richie Crowell); his grandchildren, Travis, Gavin, Caleb, River, William and Abbie; his nephews Jarrett and Cason, niece Melanie and his beloved cat. He is preceded in death by his parents, Ernest and Naomi (Pickens) Caplinger, and one brother, Don Lee Caplinger.

His life and legacy were celebrated during a visitation on Monday, September 8, 2025, at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center in Temple, Texas, from 9 a.m. with a Funeral Service following at 10 a.m. A burial service at Hillcrest Cemetery will commence afterwards.

Gary Lynn Caplinger will be remembered for his unwavering love, his dedication to family, and the light of God that flourished in him. He has left an indelible mark on the lives of all who knew him.

A special thank you to all family and friends, the Crossroads Church members, his golf buddies and “The Girl Gang” for all their support and prayers during this time.

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

Culver

Shirley Anne Culver
August 26, 1948 – August 17, 2025

Shirley Anne Culver, born August 26, 1948 and longtime resident of Salado, passed away on Sunday August 17, 2025. She is survived by her son Russell and wife Michele; her daughter LonAnne and Mike; her grandchildren Mason, Madison and husband David, Austin and wife Maggie, Thomas and William; and by her Dearest Steve - her dance partner for the last 20 years. Shirley is also survived by her sister Alice Wells; her sister Margaret Hardin and husband Rodney; her brother Jim West and wife Carol; her sister-in-law Pam Downing and many nieces and nephews who adore her.

Shirley is preceded in death by her husband Bill Culver of Salado; her parents Jack and Bettye West of Groom; her grandparents Elton and Maggie Ruth Johnston of McLean and Charley and Ina West of McLean.

“Miss” Shirley was married to her high school sweet-

heart and soul mate, Bill, for thirty-three and a half years and is now reunited with him in heaven.

Working as a Certified Financial Planner in Bell County from 1980 to 2021, Shirley found her calling getting to know people and their families and helping them attain their goals and dreams.

Shirley will always be remembered for her love for her family and friends, for her service to the people she counseled throughout her years as a financial planner, and for her connection to strangers who were drawn to share their stories with her. She truly had a gift for making everyone feel they had an important place in the world.

A private family gathering is planned. In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials sent to one of the following organizations or to any charity of your choice:

Route 66 Roping Arena, c/o Bill Homer, P.O. Box 339, Groom, TX 79039

Families in Crisis, P.O. Box 25, Killeen, TX 76541 -- www.familiesincrisis.net.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, and what is unseen is eternal. ~ 2 Corinthians 4:18.



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SARW to hear from Brotherhood Academy executive director

Special to the Journal

The Salado Area Republican Women are holding a Membership Special starting at the Sept. 25 Meeting.

Dues for 2026 are \$25, a \$10 reduction, if paid in September through November. Dues may be paid for at the meeting or mailed to SARW, PAC, P.O. Box 373, Salado, TX 76571. Address and occupation are a must for state reporting, and an email is necessary to receive club information.

Julie Jones, the Executive Director of the Brotherhood Academy, will speak to the Salado

Area Republican Women at their Sept. 25 luncheon at the Salado Civic Center.

The Brotherhood Academy is a non-profit General Residential Operation (GRO) that provides a safe and nurturing home for boys and young men in Texas.

The home sits on 17 private acres in Salado. Currently, they serve 12 boys aged 10-17, with plans to expand to accommodate boys aged 18-22 in a transitional house, focusing on life skills, education, and employability. Eventually, the Academy hopes to expand their services to provide a home

for infants and young boys aged 0-9, fostering their growth and development. For more information go to thebrotherhoodacademy.org.

As part of the Caring for America, SARW will be providing the Director with a \$300 check to allow the agency to buy some sports equipment.

Everyone is welcome but reservations are requested for food and seating. Contact Sherri Perhach at sherriperhach@gmail.com by the deadline of Monday, September 22. The luncheon starts at 11:30 a.m. at the Civic Center. Cost of the luncheon is \$20.

Gala - From Page A2

George Strait, Brooks and Dunn, Tim McGraw, and more.

The community has endured loss by multiple lives taken by suicide, a reminder of the urgent need to do more. Funds raised will help support mental health awareness and resources in the community. Each ticket purchased, table, or auction donation will help benefit the Intrepid Spirit Center and NAMI.

The Intrepid Spirit Centers are a network of Department of Defense outpatient treatment centers that provide comprehensive, interdisciplinary care for traumatic brain injury and psychological service members, veterans, and their families.

NAMI is the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization. They are dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

The Stronger Together Gala has a goal to raise \$80,000 and has reached 60

percent of their goal with 43 supporters donating \$48,525. Donations are being accepted, individual tickets can be purchased, sponsor a table for friends, family, or business, or items can be donated to the silent auction (from gift baskets to weekend getaways), and every contribution helps.

The Stronger Together Gala is a night of remembrance and a call to action to break the silence and stigma surrounding mental health, to educate individuals about resources, and to raise funds for resources.

General admission tickets are \$75, with a reserved table costing \$600

For tickets, tables, and donation information, visit www.StrongerTogetherGala.org. There are links on their website via Facebook, X, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and email.




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Belton Walk to End Alzheimer’s set for Sept. 27

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Hundreds will participate in the Walk to End Alzheimer’s walkathon in Belton on Sept 27. The walkathon funds go to the Alzheimer’s Association, a nonprofit 501(c)3, for research, support, and care for Alzheimer’s.

Participants will gather at Liberty Park, 700 Veteran’s Way Drive. Registration begins at 8 a.m. followed by a ceremony at 9 a.m., with the one-mile walk beginning at 9:30 a.m.

Adults can register online at www.alz.org. In the search bar, enter the Belton zip code, 76513, to find the 2025 Walk to End Alzheimer’s - Bell County.. Register children offline or online. Every participant needs to register and sign waivers.

Registrants who fundraise \$100 or more will be mailed a Walk to End Alzheimer’s T-shirt. Only those who have done so four weeks prior to the walk will

receive the T-shirt before the walk.

Strollers are welcome, but please leave your skateboards, inline skates, bicycles, and footwear with wheels at home.

The Promise Garden Flower personalizes the walk for every participant. Blue flowers represent those living with Alzheimer’s or dementia. Purple flowers represent those who have lost someone to Alzheimer’s. Yellow flowers represent those caring for someone with Alzheimer’s. Orange flowers are for anyone who supports the Alzheimer’s Association goal of a world without Alzheimer’s and dementia.

Volunteers set up, hand out flowers at the Flower Garden, register walkers, clean up, and more.

To serve at Walk to End Alzheimer’s, go to the volunteer page at www.alz.org and enter Belton’s zip code, 76513.

Contact Shannon Eller at sheller@alz.org or 512-975-2683 with questions about the event.



File Photo

Hundreds will walk in Belton on Sept 27 in the annual Alzheimer’s Walk. This event is held in more than 600 communities nationwide and is the world’s largest fundraiser for Alzheimer’s care, support and research.

City Council OKs water pipe upgrade near Rodeo Travel site

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

The Belton City Council authorized City Manager Sam Listi to enter into a development agreement with Belton Partners LLC for the upsizing on an 8-inch water line to a 12-inch at the site of Rodeo Travel Center, which is being developed on the east side of I-35 between Elmer King Road and East Amity.

According to Scott Hodde, director of public works, the development originally called for an onsite well, which was permitted through Clearwater Underground Water Conservation District. But, test results indicated

minimal gallon-per-minute flows, prompting the developer to reach out to the City to discuss water supply options.

“Currently this area south of the river is primarily served by Central Texas Water Supply,” Hodde said in a statement to the City Council. “While the City does maintain a 12-inch transmission water line just south of the river on the west side of I-35 which is served by Bell County Water Control & Improvement District No. 1, which is our primary water provider, the projected water demand from the Travel Center is minimal and does not justify extending that line at this time.”

To meet their needs, The Rodeo Travel

Center proposed connecting to CTWS’s existing water main running parallel to Amity School Road extending it down Dillard Road to I-35. From there, the line will cross I-35 to the east side and continue south to the southern boundary of their property. Per the City ordinance and design manual, an 8-inch water main is required, and the developer requested approval to install the line at their own expense.

The City’s Master Water Plan identifies future 12-inch water mains in this area. To align with that plan, the City elected to cost-share with the developer to upsize the proposed line to a 12-inch main.

According to Hodde, Belton’s cost for the project — which will provide adequate water service for future development — is \$329,612.

Belton Partners LLC has 274 days to complete installation once the agreement is in place.

Also at Tuesday’s meeting, the Council adopted Belton’s Five-Year Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2026-2030. The new plan includes six proposed “pillars,” including connectivity, business development, quality of life, infrastructure, engagement and public safety.

See **PIPE**
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PUBLIC NOTICE

Brief Explanatory Statements of Proposed Constitutional Amendments Special Election, November 4, 2025

Proposition Number 1 (SJR 59)

SJR 59 proposes a constitutional amendment to establish two special funds in the state treasury to provide a dedicated source of funding for capital projects and equipment purchases related to educational programs offered by the Texas State Technical College (TSTC) System. The proposed amendment requires the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts to manage the funds, including managing any investment activities related to the funds and making the funds available for use by the TSTC System. The proposed amendment authorizes the TSTC System Board of Regents to use amounts distributed by the Comptroller to the available fund to acquire land, construct and equip buildings and other permanent improvements, make major repairs and rehabilitations of buildings or other permanent improvements, acquire capital equipment, acquire library books and materials, make payment of the principal and interest due on any bonds or notes used to finance permanent improvements, or for any other purpose authorized by law. Under the proposed amendment, the TSTC System could not use the appropriated funds to construct, equip, repair, or rehabilitate buildings or other permanent improvements that are to be used for intercollegiate athletics or auxiliary enterprises.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the permanent technical institution infrastructure fund and the available workforce education fund to support the capital needs of educational programs offered by the Texas State Technical College System.”**

Proposition Number 2 (SJR 18)

SJR 18 proposes a constitutional amendment to prohibit the legislature from imposing a tax on the realized or unrealized capital gains of an individual, family, estate, or trust. This prohibition would include a tax on the sale or transfer of a capital asset that is payable by an individual, family, estate, or trust selling or transferring the asset. The proposed amendment would not prohibit the imposition or change in the rate of an ad valorem tax on property; a sales tax on the sale of goods or services; or a use tax on the storage, use, or other consumption in this state of goods or services.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The**

constitutional amendment prohibiting the imposition of a tax on the realized or unrealized capital gains of an individual, family, estate, or trust.”

Proposition Number 3 (SJR 5)

SJR 5 proposes a constitutional amendment to require the denial of bail pending trial for persons accused of certain criminal offenses. The proposed amendment would apply only to a person accused of committing one or more of the following offenses: murder; capital murder; aggravated assault if the person caused serious bodily injury to another, as defined by law, or the person used a firearm, club, knife, or explosive weapon, as those terms are defined by law, during the commission of the assault; aggravated kidnapping; aggravated robbery; aggravated sexual assault; indecency with a child; trafficking of persons; or continuous trafficking of persons. Under the proposed amendment, a person accused of one or more of these offenses must be denied bail pending trial if the attorney representing the state demonstrates by a preponderance of the evidence that the granting of bail is insufficient to reasonably prevent the person’s willful nonappearance in court; or the attorney representing the state demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence that the granting of bail is insufficient to reasonably ensure the safety of the community, law enforcement, and the victim of the alleged offense. A judge or magistrate who grants bail to a person accused of one or more of these offenses under the proposed amendment must set bail and impose conditions of release necessary only to reasonably prevent the person’s willful nonappearance in court and ensure the safety of the community, law enforcement, and the victim of the alleged offense. The judge or magistrate must also prepare a written order that includes findings of fact and a statement explaining the justification for the grant of bail. The proposed amendment specifies that it may not be construed to limit any right a person has under other law to contest a denial of bail or to contest the amount of bail set by a judge or magistrate or to require any testimonial evidence before a judge or magistrate makes a bail decision with respect to a person to whom the amendment applies. A judge or magistrate who determines whether a preponderance of the evidence or clear and convincing evidence exists under the proposed amendment shall consider the likelihood of the person’s willful nonappearance in court; the nature and circumstances of the alleged offense; the safety of the community,

law enforcement, and the victim of the alleged offense; and the criminal history of the person. A person is entitled to be represented by counsel at a hearing described by the proposed amendment.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment requiring the denial of bail under certain circumstances to persons accused of certain offenses punishable as a felony.”**

Proposition Number 4 (HJR 7)

HJR 7 proposes a constitutional amendment to dedicate a portion of the revenue derived from state sales and use taxes to the Texas water fund and to provide for the allocation and use of that revenue. The proposed amendment would authorize the legislature to allocate and transfer funds to accounts administered by the Texas Water Development Board. The proposed amendment also allows the legislature to suspend allocations of funds to these accounts during a state of disaster declared under Chapter 418 of the Texas Government Code.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment to dedicate a portion of the revenue derived from state sales and use taxes to the Texas water fund and to provide for the allocation and use of that revenue.”**

Proposition Number 5 (HJR 99)

HJR 99 proposes a constitutional amendment to allow the legislature to exempt animal feed held by the owner for retail sale from ad valorem taxation. The proposed amendment would authorize the legislature to provide additional eligibility requirements for the exemption.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to exempt from ad valorem taxation tangible personal property consisting of animal feed held by the owner of the property for sale at retail.”**

Proposition Number 6 (HJR 4)

HJR 4 proposes a constitutional amendment to prohibit the legislature from enacting a law that imposes an occupation tax on a registered securities market operator or a tax on a securities transaction conducted by a registered

securities market operator. The proposed amendment would not prohibit the imposition of a general business tax measured by business activity, a tax on the production of minerals, a tax on insurance premiums, a sales and use tax on tangible personal property or services, or a fee based on the cost of processing or creating documents. The proposed amendment would also not prohibit a change in the rate of a tax in existence on January 1, 2026.

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment prohibiting the legislature from enacting a law imposing an occupation tax on certain entities that enter into transactions conveying securities or imposing a tax on certain securities transactions.”**

Proposition Number 7 (HJR 133)

HJR 133 proposes a constitutional amendment to allow the legislature to give surviving spouses of United States armed services veterans a property tax exemption on their residence homestead. The proposed amendment would exempt all or part of the property tax on the spouse’s residence homestead if the veteran died from a condition or disease presumed under federal law to be service-related. The exemption would apply only to a surviving spouse who has not remarried since the veteran’s death. The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: **“The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a veteran who died as a result of a condition or disease that is presumed under federal law to have been service-connected.”**

Proposition Number 8 (HJR 2)

HJR 2 proposes a constitutional amendment to prohibit the legislature from imposing a state tax on a deceased individual’s estate because of the individual’s death, including an estate, inheritance, or death tax. The proposed amendment would prohibit the legislature from imposing a state tax on the transfer of an estate, inheritance, legacy, succession, or gift from an individual, family, estate, or trust, including generation-skipping transfers, if the tax was not in effect on January 1, 2025. The proposed amendment would also prohibit the legislature from

(CONTINUED)



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LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Boots & Turquoise benefits Our Hospice House

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

The Boots & Turquoise benefit for Our Hospice House was hosted at the Barge Ranch on Saturday evening, Sept. 6.

Our Hospice House founders, Jennifer Bates, RN, FNP, and her husband, Jeff Bates, MD, invited the community for their first fundraiser as Our Hospice House enters its third year of operation.

“My grandmother passed away when I was 14, and that was my first introduction to hospice. At the same time, my dad was also diagnosed with lung cancer,” said Jennifer Bates, the visionary for the three-bedroom hospice home.

“I’ve been a hospice nurse for 25 years and nurse practitioner for 13 years. I saw a huge need for hospice in our area. Most people think of hospice, think of really elderly

people. But hospice serves everyone. My heart really goes out for the young moms who have breast cancer, who certainly don’t want to pass away at home,” she added.

Jeff Bates, MD, said, “We are the fastest growing, most successful hospice house in the country. Our Hospice House has cared for more than 140 patients and thousands of family members. This house is entirely donor supported.”

Carolyn Williams, a promoter for the ministry, said about the hospice staff, “These are the most passionate, lovely people you will ever meet.”

Kay Williams, a board member, said, “We serve with 24-hour round-the-clock care.”

Hillary Hickland, an attendee, said, “Tonight’s fundraiser of Our Hospice House was a wonderful reminder of how beautiful it is when a community comes together to

care for those in need.”

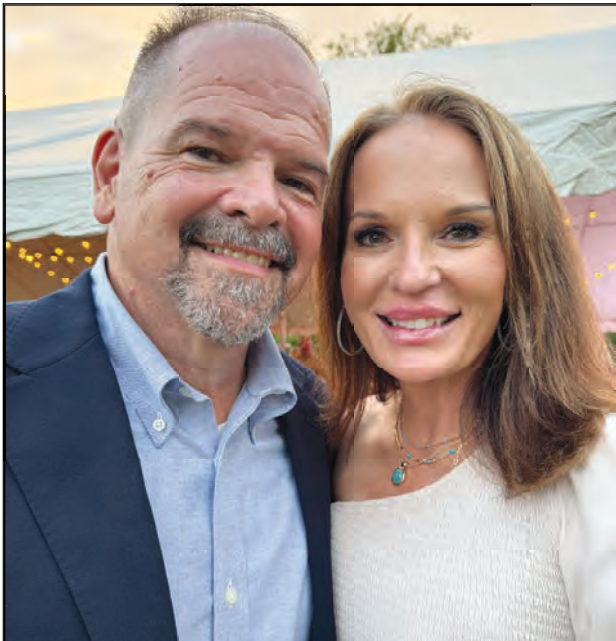
The outdoor setting accommodated 32 tables seating 250 guests. Ticket prices were \$150 with the option to purchase a full table for \$1,000.

The self-serve dinner was green beans, sausage, brisket, and potato salad. Homemade desserts of cookies, frosted quick breads, and pecan pie were pre-plated.

The Leon River Band played as guests arrived and dined.

Some of the live auction items were a Serrano Wine Basket, Texas blue topaz jewelry, a Benelli shotgun, a crocheted blanket, and a bourbon and whiskey basket.

To learn more about Our Hospice House, visit their website, OurHospiceHouse.org, or call 254-500-7123. They serve guests during the last 30 days of their lives. They are part of THE LORDS WORK INC a 501 (c)(3) non-profit.



BELTON JOURNAL/Michele Weisman

Jeff Bates, MD and Jennifer Bates, RN, FNP, founders of Our Hospice House, pause for a photo at Saturday evening’s Boots & Turquoise benefit for the donor-supported facility.

Knights of Columbus hold fish fry fundraiser

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

The Knights of Columbus held a fish fry at Christ the King Catholic Church on Friday, September 5, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. Proceeds fund local and international charities, and support Christ the King Catholic Church.

“We are open to everybody, anybody in the community to come and partake,” said Sergio Gamino, the Grand Knight for Knights of Columbus for Christ the King Catholic Church Council #7196.

“We don’t evangelize. We invite them to come, have some fellowship with your fellow American, fellow Beltonian, and enjoy some good food.”

Local charities they fund are the St. Vincent de Paul food pantry and Our Lady of the Angels Maternity Shelter in Temple.

Referencing the Maternity Shelter, Gamino said, “Last year, we did a huge baby drive where we raised an entire pickup truck load full of baby supplies, diapers, wipes, formula, clothes, baby bottles, just all kinds of stuff for babies. Knights of Columbus made a huge donation in support of the Texas floods a few months ago.”

The Knights of Columbus is one of the largest supporters of national aid, supporting The National Wheelchair Foundation, Special Olympics, and Habitat for Humanity.

The parking lot was packed as diners chose to eat at one of the dining tables while others chose the takeout option. Pricing options range from \$14 for an adult plate to free for clergy, active military, and first responders in uniform. They served coleslaw, fries, fried and grilled fish, beans, and



ABOVE LEFT: Sergio Gamino, the Grand Knight, leads the Knights of Columbus at Christ the King Catholic Church, ABOVE RIGHT: Carlos Gonzales, former Knight, his wife, Irene Gonzales, and her cousin, Stella Santos, enjoy the fish fry held by the Knights of Columbus at Christ the King Catholic Church.



BELTON JOURNAL/Michelle Weisman

hush puppies.

Irene and Carlos Gonzales, a former Knight of Columbus, dined with her cousin, Stella Santos Friday night.

“As a fourth-degree

knight, I did a little bit of everything. I cooked fish fries, French fries, and worked in the festival,” said Carlos Gonzales.

“The Knights of Columbus Fish Fry supports

our church, Christ the King,” Irene Gonzales said.

To learn more about the Knights of Columbus, visit their website kofc.org or visit Christ the King Catholic Church’s front of-

fice to be put in contact with Sergio Gamino. They are a men’s organization that supports everyone. Organizations can hire them for a relatively low fee to run a casino night.

New Life Methodist Church of Salado to dedicate pavilion and meeting building

Special to the Journal

On Saturday, Sept. 13 at 11:30 a.m., New Life Methodist Church of Salado will host a special dedication ceremony for its newly completed outdoor pavilion and meeting building. The structures are located on the site of the church’s future sanctuary, on Williams Road across from Salado Middle School.

The large, covered pavilion will be dedicated in loving memory of Judy Lazarus, a cherished member of the congregation who passed away last year following an extended illness. Judy’s legacy of faith, friendship, and music will be honored with a performance by the Salado Community Chorus, where she sang for many years.

Pastor Tom Lathen shared, “This new meeting building, a portable structure, marks the first permanent footprint on our future

church home. It will serve as both a church office and a gathering space until the sanctuary is built.”

Lay Leader John C. Perry added, “We’re excited to share this first step in our journey toward a permanent home, and deeply honored to celebrate Judy Lazarus, whose life continues to inspire us.”

The entire Salado community is warmly invited to attend. Guests will enjoy an old-fashioned picnic lunch, uplifting music, and heartfelt fellowship as the church gives thanks for its growth and the lives that have shaped its mission.

New Life Methodist Church is a Bible-based congregation affiliated with the Global Methodist Church. Founded three years ago, the church currently holds 9 a.m. Adult Education and 10 a.m. Worship services each Sunday at the Salado Middle School.

Pipe - From Page A4

“There are 41 initiatives within the six pillars that emerged from the May 30-31 retreat,” Listi said in a report to the council.

Connectivity pillar initiatives include critical street, trail and sidewalk projects, including work on Interstates 14 and 35, Loop 121, Sixth Avenue, FM 39, Texas 317, Connell Street and the Spring Street bridge.

Business development initiatives include Imagine Belton projects, utility work at Belton Economic Development Corporation properties, updated building codes, and landscaping, murals and sidewalk work.

Quality of life initiatives include devel-

oping a new Parks Master Plan and various partnerships to improve historical and cultural districts.

Listi said infrastructure initiatives include work on water and wastewater master plans, a Central Texas Water Alliance and street maintenance programs.

Exceptional customer service, marketing and educating Belton residents are key initiatives to the engagement pillar, and public safety initiatives include occupancy of the recently purchased Miller Heights Elementary School, cybersecurity, location of a new fire station and community safety.

SEPT
20




Item examples - artwork, candles, seasonal holiday decorations, bedding, household decor, gift baskets, dishes, collectibles and more. Shop early for Christmas!
Item tables closing bid deadlines will be staggered throughout the sales hours so you can come and go early or stay until the end.

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John C. Perry

By the time I hit 40, officially middle-aged, I thought I had life neatly sorted out. I figured I had learned everything I ever needed to know, and that from here on out, it was just execution. Boy was I wrong. At that age, work sat squarely at the top of my priority list. I was the first one in the office, the last one to leave, chasing titles and promotions like they were holy grails. I was convinced that the hours I logged and the sacrifices I made were all for my wife and kids. cars (yes, a Corvette, a 1976), the house, the pool, it was easy to justify it all by saying it was for them. But truth be told, it was more about proving something to myself... or maybe to the world. My job consumed me. A single mistake felt catastrophic, and criti-

cism, whether fair or not, cut deep. I lived for image and approval. I poured myself into my career, leaving less for my family and even less for myself unless it was tied to work. I was a Christian by name, but not by practice. I went through the motions without letting the faith I claimed shape the life I lived. The result? I lost my marriage to divorce and became initially estranged from my children. Work, which had been my idol, left me empty. Nothing felt truly satisfying. People often talk about a “come to Jesus” moment when they first find faith. My moment came not in finding Jesus, but in finally choosing to follow Him. In the depths of my despair, I realized I didn’t just need to change, I needed to be transformed. I left the high-stress job behind and started anew, eventually launching my own business. Progress came slowly, often in baby steps, but it came, nonetheless. I returned to church, not out of habit but out of hunger. I became a lay minister, rediscovering the joy of serving. And then came grandchildren, the greatest blessings wrapped in tiny hands and wide eyes. Each one brought joy that felt like healing. I cherished every moment with them,

though part of me still aches for the time I missed with my own kids. Now retired, I am so far from perfect, but I am miles from where I used to be. My days are filled with learning, volunteering, traveling, writing, and spending time on the things that nourish my spirit. My hope is that my life now is Christ-centered. I no longer chase approval or worry about how others see me. One verse has guided me through this transformation is **Philippians 4:6-7** “*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*” To my readers, if you had to write this story for yourself where would you be today? You are never too old to change, my wish for you is a hope that you find that peace in Christ. Life, on this Earth, is too short to live without it. *John C. Perry is the Lay Leader with New Life Methodist Church. They meet every Sunday at 9 a.m. (Bible Study) and 10 a.m. (Worship Service) in the Salado Middle School at 1169 Williams Rd.*



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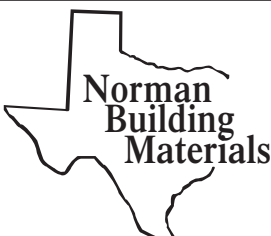


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Courtesy Photo
Patrol officers Nick Perez and Travis King with the Belton Police Department are among the first responders who enjoyed an appreciation lunch at Harper-Talasek Funeral Home’s Belton location on Tuesday. The funeral home also hosted a breakfast at its Temple location on Tuesday, and lunch at the Killeen location on Wednesday.

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							2	6
1	2		3			4	8	
					7			

Level: Advanced

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

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

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EDITORIAL

Artificial what?

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

I have written about Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the past. I don't understand all of the hype or potential uses. However, it is a big deal. Someone suggested that I invest in some well-known companies that are involved in AI, so I did, and so far I have been quite disappointed.

Perhaps we need AI that will make suggestions on what to do with your money; "Hey, I see you are about to invest in this company, the CEO is a drunk, they haven't turned a real profit since they started and now it appears as if they are losing their smartest engineers, how about you go to the store and buy a case of Dr Pepper, at least you will get some enjoyment out of your money."

I have often wondered how birds flying in a big flock could make turns and change directions without the individual birds smacking into each other and falling to the ground. We have some of the smartest cars on the planet and we still have cars running into each other, can we get some AI to fix that?

Perhaps it is my age, or my generation, or just that I understand how to drive, but I do quite well driving without all of the aids that are available. My truck is not that old, still quite modern, but it, by design, didn't have all the "helpful" driving aids on it. I mean, if you set the cruise control it will drive along, and if someone is driving slow in front of you it will run right over them. If you decide you want to change lanes and someone is in your blind spot, well that is their bad luck, my truck will let you clip them and teach them a valuable lesson about hiding where a good driver can't see you. Since it has none of these fancy options I am required to actually pay attention and drive like I am in full control of the vehicle, which is just how I want it.

I firmly believe that all

new drivers learn how to drive in a 1970s era vehicle with a standard transmission and no power options. If you can drive one of those you should do fine in something a little nicer, but learn to drive first.

How about AI that somewhat understands people's shopping needs. I may look up a coffee maker, so type in the search bar; "fancy \$300 coffee maker with timer that I really don't need but would like nice next to my less fancy \$250 coffee maker". After scrolling through a few pages of these options I realize that I don't need another coffee maker, so I move on to something else. However, the less intelligent part of the internet thinks that I want to keep shopping for a coffee maker for the next six weeks. That is understandable, however, if I didn't buy one within the first couple of days, I have started looking at something else that I don't need. So if I have bought one, I don't

need any more ads for them, if I decided that I want a chrome four slice toaster with fancy lights instead, then I am not likely still interested in the coffee maker, so all of those ads are just a waste of time.

One thing that is quite helpful is the way your search will make an attempt to figure out your poor attempt at spelling something and actually get you to where you wanted to go in the first place. This would have been incredibly helpful back in the day when I was needing to use a dictionary so I could spell a word correctly. I mean I look up; "new-monya", nothing, oh that's right it starts with a "P", why I am not sure, so another attempt; "pnew-moinia", still nothing. Then after a lengthy monologue with the book, I look up "virus" which seems to meet my needs, so that becomes the word that I use.

I had a job early in my life that involved taking cash from someone and then making

change back to them. I learned quickly how to accurately do this, which actually was quite easy. Then it seemed overnight that cash registers did this calculation for the clerk. The best way to derail this was to give the person behind the counter a bill, but then also empty your pocket of change, it required them to count, which they couldn't do, and they had no way of determining what to feed the cash register so it would tell them what to give you back in change. Often you could just "suggest" an amount and they were happy to hand that over, right or wrong. Some smarter clerks would actually call a manager, not that it was any better, but now you had two brains trying to determine what the bills and change were so they could plug in an amount to satisfy the mindless register.

I hope everyone has a smart week!

Making a List

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

I give great advice. Really, I do. Friends call me often to share their problems and ask for my wisdom. I'm glad to help. And it would all be so much better, so much more authentic if I actually followed the advice I give others. But talking the talk is easier than walking the walk... so I typically stick to the therapist role.

For example, my friend texted me this morning. She's feeling overwhelmed about changes in her life, and she's frozen with anxiety. So I told her to make a list of five or six things she wants to accomplish today. Then choose one of the things, work on it until it's done or she hits a roadblock, then check it off and move to another item. At the end of the day, even if she doesn't finish the list, she'll have a physical reminder of all she accomplished.

Great idea, don't you think? Yeah, me too. But you know what I don't always do?

Make a list.

This morning, I was feeling overwhelmed about writing this article, because after nearly two decades of writing this article, I don't feel like I have anything interesting left to say. I'd rather just cycle back through my old stories, but apparently my editor likes fresh ideas. At my age, everything feels stale and crusty. Fresh is a luxury.

I told my friend what a hypocrite I am. I told her I was procrastinating this article, and she's the one who suggested I write about making lists. Talk about turning things around on me. That advice was for her, not for me.

I didn't say that last part to her. I just thanked her for her input and ended the conversation.

Then I made a list. And proceeded to do everything on the list except write this article. I separated the dog's food into baggies. (She eats a raw food diet, and it's easier to freeze and thaw what's needed.) I did some yard work. I logged into my work email and checked on a few things there, even though I don't have to go to the office until later today.

I was about to change my sheets when I decided, why not just get it over with? I opened up my laptop, sat in my comfy chair, and started typing this to you. And you know what? The thing I dreaded most hasn't been that bad. I'm not sure I've said much, or at least not anything that interesting, but hey. I'm almost at my word count. All because I made a list. All because, with a little encouragement, I took my own advice.

How many other pieces of sage wisdom have I shared but not practiced? If I'd tell my daughter or my best friend to do something, shouldn't I do it myself? I'm worth the good advice. I'm worth

the effort. Right?

I'm going to start talking to myself like I'm talking to a friend. I'll ask myself what I'd suggest for someone I care about, and remind myself that I'm worth caring about. I'll stop scrolling, turn off my phone, and go to sleep. I'll exercise a little, if I can't do a lot. I'll be kind to myself. I'll make the list, and celebrate the things I checked off, even if it's only half. I will listen to myself.

Because I'll love others better if I love myself well.

And because I really do give good advice.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Mark 12:30-31



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Tigers eyeing Georgetown East View for home opener

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

After two weeks and two wins, the Tigers are finally coming home.

Belton opened its schedule with a pair of victories, punctuating the performance by defeating host Georgetown 34-26 last week, and now, the Tigers will attempt to put on another successful show on a familiar field.

Georgetown East View comes to town Friday for a 7 p.m. start, and if all goes according to plan, Belton will celebrate its first home win in more than a year by evening's end.

The Tigers lost all five of their home games in 2024. Their last victory at Belton came in the opening round of the 2023 playoffs, when they beat Austin Tra-

vis 61-6 on Nov. 8.

Last year, the Patriots defeated the Tigers 48-14, but things have changed for Belton.

Injuries to key players sent the Tigers' season into a tailspin a year ago, and they lost seven games before recovering to return to the playoffs.

This season, the struggles are diminished, and Belton is thriving.

Following a 21-17 win at Pflugerville Hendrickson in the season-opener, the Tigers cruised past the Eagles in Week 2 thanks in part to an almost flawless showing from quarterback Will Shepard.

The junior completed 17 of 18 passes for 245 yards and three touchdowns to go along 53 yards rushing and a touchdown on 13 carries.

Shepard was complemented by a number of teammates, though.

Gavin Ross, a junior receiver, was responsible for 159 yards and three touchdowns on 10 catches, junior running back Javid Planz carried the ball 15 times for a team-high 61 yards and sophomore halfback Cason Morton had three carries for 16 yards and a score to go with a trio of catches for 81 yards.

Defensively, senior Jacob Lewis led the team with 10 total tackles, including five solo, while junior Azian Wilkinson had eight total tackles and a fumble recovery.

East View enters the contest with a 1-1 record after defeating Burnet 42-28 last week, and like the Tigers, the Patriots received a strong showing from their signal-

caller.

Cormyc Guerrero, a senior, completed 18 of 25 passes for 226 yards and rushed for another 66 yards, but East View's running back generated most of the team's points.

Jayvion Clater, a junior, had four touchdowns and 53 yards on 10 carries, while senior teammate Blake Honeycutt carried the ball 16 times for 73 yards and a score.

The Patriots also produced three interceptions in the dominating win that saw them leading 35-14 following the first three quarters.

Belton did not have as easy an encounter versus Georgetown.

Leading by just a single point, 27-26, late in the game, Shepard secured the outcome with a three-yard run into the end zone with nine seconds remaining

in regulation. The play capped off a 98-yard drive that began after a potential go-ahead touchdown pass for Georgetown was intercepted near the goal line.

While everything worked out in the Tigers' favor, they struggled offensively in the second half after reaching the end zone on all three of their possessions in the first and second quarters.

Outside of the opening half's first and last drives, the squads alternated scores throughout the first two quarters thanks in part to Shepard's connection with Ross.

The pair hooked up six times in the half for 113 yards and a pair of touchdowns with the first coming approximately four minutes after the Tigers forced Georgetown to punt away its initial possession.



Broncos grow in tough loss to McNeil, sights set on Killeen

By Tony Adams
The Belton Journal

A team's improvement is most evident between games one and two.

For the Lake Belton Broncos, a 34-28 loss to the McNeil Mavericks may show in the loss column. However, the Broncos were much improved overall.

The Broncos looked more improved in ball handling and care, having committed no turnovers and had a balanced offense that advanced the ball 385 yards in 47 plays.

Arrington (AJ) Alexander ran for 143

yards and two touchdowns, while Josiah James threw for 162 yards and two touchdowns, and Braxtan Cope had two clutch touchdown receptions.

"We only had eight possessions, and scored 50% of the time," Lake Belton head coach Brian Cope said. "We rotated two young quarterbacks, and they managed the game really well. We are proud of the effort that they put into the game plan. Also, AJ Alexander had an outstanding game running the football. We are very proud of that

See **BRONCOS**,
Page B4

The Lake Belton Broncos volleyball squad continued to work their way toward the end of their non-district this week, as they played home matches against the Rudder Rangers and Smithville Tigers.

On Friday, Lake stormed into Bronco Gymnasium and blitzed Rangers from first serve to last as they swept Rudder in three games.

Scores of the match were 25-7, 25-14, and 25-16.

Lake improved their record to 15-11, while Rudder dropped to 13-17.

On Tuesday, Lake Belton hosted Smithville at Bronco Gymnasium.

The Broncos never trailed at any point of the match, as they won all three games in double-digits.

Scores on Tuesday were 25-9, 25-10, and 25-10.

early 8-4 deficit and spurred 9-1 run in game one.

With the score at 23-23, a Cougar hit a big drive toward outside line. Davila dug the ball just an inch above the deck. Her teammates took care of the score as the play gave Belton game point. The Tigers gained the next point to take a 1-0 lead in the match.

Belton led throughout game two, as they closed the game on a 14-6 run. Kaitlyn McCracken, CJ Stites, Brylee Renegar, and Landry Duggan picked up kills to aid the Tigers to a 2-0 lead.

See **BELTON**,
Page B3

Lake jumped out to a 4-1 lead in game one, as Abbi Jones had an early kill.

The resilience of the Lake Belton offensive rang true toward the middle of the first game, as Ava Wood, Madi Bingham, Morgan Kukulski, and Kaitlyn Hutchins registered kills down the strength as the Broncos won the opener by 16 points.

Lake opened game two with a 4-0 lead and weathered a short 4-2 Smithville run to answer with nine straight points at the end and a total of a 18-5 run to give the Broncos a 15-point win in game two.

Jones, Kukulski, Wood, and Keileigh Krueger all registered kills in the set.

The Broncos took a quick 3-0 lead in game three, with Hutchins picking up a kill and an ace, and Makinzi Johnson

See **LAKE**,
Page B4

Lake Belton finishes third in Midway Invitational

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Lady Broncos are traveling to Grand Prairie on Friday for the annual Ken Gaston Race at the Lake, where they will look to build on last week's showing.

Racing along a three-mile course at Waco's Heart of Texas Soccer Complex, Lake Belton placed two in the top 10 en route to finishing third at the Midway Hewitt Kiwanis Invitational.

Thanks in part to freshman Keira Dzenowski, who was fifth overall with a time of 20 minutes, 24.9 seconds, and sophomore Lucy Loa (7th, 20:32.9), the Lady Broncos amassed 62

points to situate themselves behind champion Cleburne (42) and runner-up Temple (46) in the Class 5A-6A division.

The junior tandem of Sarah Gray (13th, 21:03.6) and Jenna Benedick (16th, 21:06.9) and sophomore Alayna Fulton (22nd, 21:31.5) also generated points for Lake Belton.

Lady Broncos junior Madelyn Rivas (25th, 21:35.4), sophomore Emyle Love (26th, 21:47.8), sophomore Elizabeth Sandlin (34th, 22:16.3), senior Clara Hill (42nd, 23:06.0) and sophomore Claire Henn (50th, 23:33.9) also competed, but their times did not count toward the team total.

In the boys division, the Broncos scored 191 points to

place seventh.

Wyatt Potts, a junior, had Lake Belton's top time, crossing the finish line in 17:51.4 to place 25th, while all four of his scoring teammates — sophomore Cooper Schels (38th, 18:16.6), junior Josiah Briggs (40th, 18:17.8), sophomore Tyler Adkins-Beltran (46th, 18:29.1) and freshman Drew Houston (50th, 18:39.8) — were among the top 50.

Rounding out the Broncos' squad was junior Jack McCullagh (53rd, 19:03.3), sophomore Efren Romero-Meza (56th, 19:13.8), sophomore Kyan Whitmire (62nd, 19:45.5) and senior Leonardo Piedra (67th, 20:35.9).

Killeen Ellison (1st, 39),

Killeen Harker Heights (2nd, 41), Temple (3rd, 82) and Killeen Chaparral (4th, 89) occupied the top spots in the standings.

New Tech was also in attendance, running in the Class 1A-4A junior varsity division, but neither the Dragons nor Lady Dragons fielded a full team.

David Martinez, a freshman, had the best outing, placing 16th with a time of 20:35.1, while junior Desmond Long (37th, 22:12.6) and freshman Zorian Hajduk (85th, 27:05.3) followed.

The Lady Dragons were paced by senior Claire Thomas (9th, 14:40.0) and freshman Ellie Megoulloa (12th, 14:53.7).

Daniella Idumebor, a sophomore, was 46th (17:30.1) in the two-mile race.

Unlike the Broncos and Lady Broncos, New Tech will take part in today's Salado Tenroc Invitational, but Belton will join Lake Belton at Grand Prairie, making the trip for a second consecutive week.

The Tigers and Lady Tigers participated in last week's Gerald Richey Invitational hosted by UT-Arlington. The event also served as the University Interscholastic League Region II Preview Meet.


Both of Belton's teams landed among the top 10 with multiple runners placing in the

See **XC**,
Page B4



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Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

Belton recently released its schedule for the upcoming season, and the Tigers and Lady Tigers open by hosting Waco Midway on Nov. 12 before traveling to Azle for a two-day meet beginning Nov. 20.

Belton ISD venues will host six more events before Belton High serves as the site for the District 6-5A meet Jan. 28.

FUNDRAISER

The seventh-annual Rockin’ for Youth benefit for the Clements Boys and Girls Club, Belton Tiger Athletic Boost-

er Club and Lake Belton High School Athletic Booster Club will be held Oct. 11 at 301 Thomas Arnold Road in Salado. The event will begin at 5 p.m.


General admission tickets are \$25 at the door and \$20 if purchased in advance at [OutHouseTickets.com](#).

Kids ages 12 and under are free.

ATHLETIC PASSES

Belton ISD family passes are on sale for \$75 and can be purchased at the Belton High School field house or at the Belton ISD administration office.

The pass allows the owner and all immediate family members entry into any Belton ISD athletic event played at home, excluding football games.



Financial tips for first-time college students

Scot Hrbacek, CFP® Financial Advisor

Sending your child to college is an exciting milestone. It may also be the first time your student will manage their own money.

Don’t worry. With a few simple strategies, you can help them avoid pitfalls:

Start with a budget. Many people use the “50/30/20” rule, which calls for 50% of income toward needs, 30% for wants and 20% toward savings and financial goals.

Guide them toward smart credit habits. That first credit card in college can be scary. The key is helping them understand how to use it wisely, ideally not overspending, so your child is paying off the card balance on time, every month.

Pay attention to everyday expenses. College life doesn’t have to break the bank. For example, remind your child to take advantage of student discounts available at restaurants, clothing and grocery stores and entertainment venues.

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

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District begins for BISD tennis teams; Tigers, Broncos and Dragons dominate preseason

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

Belton ISD’s tennis teams are off to a strong start this fall, with the Tigers, Broncos, and Dragons all showing promising performances as district play begins.

The Belton Tigers began their district campaign with an impressive road victory at Chaparral High School. The team came out strong in doubles, winning the majority of matches and setting the tone for the rest of the competition. In singles play, the Tigers continued their momentum, dropping only two matches out of twelve to secure a decisive 16-3 win. The victory

puts Belton at 1-0 in district play and 4-4 overall for the season. The team has shown that it can perform well under pressure, blending experienced players with emerging talent.

The Lake Belton Broncos have been equally impressive, remaining undefeated through the early portion of the season. Their most recent match against University was a dominant 19-0 victory, with the Broncos winning all seven doubles matches and all twelve singles matches. Despite some closely contested games, the young team demonstrated composure to emerge victorious in every matchup. The Broncos’ next district match will be

at Belton High on Tuesday, September 9, where they will look to maintain their perfect record.

The Belton New Tech Dragons have faced a more challenging schedule but continue to show persistence and potential. In a recent home match against Cameron, the Dragons fought hard in doubles, with Leland Moore and Zaylen Kimball claiming a hard fought victory to extend their winning streak.

Singles play also featured standout performances, with Moore and Jett Lopez picking up key wins, and Grant Wiseman taking an exhibition match. Several other matches were extremely close, going to

third set tiebreakers, and although the Dragons fell just short in those contests, the team’s effort were evident. Currently 1-2 in district and 2-3 overall, the Dragons are preparing to face Marble Falls this Thursday at the Yvonne Li Tennis Center, aiming to bounce back and build momentum for the remainder of the season.

As the fall season progresses, Belton ISD’s tennis teams are showing that they have both depth and skill across the board. With upcoming matches and district play intensifying, supporters are encouraged to attend and cheer for these young athletes as they continue to represent their schools with pride.

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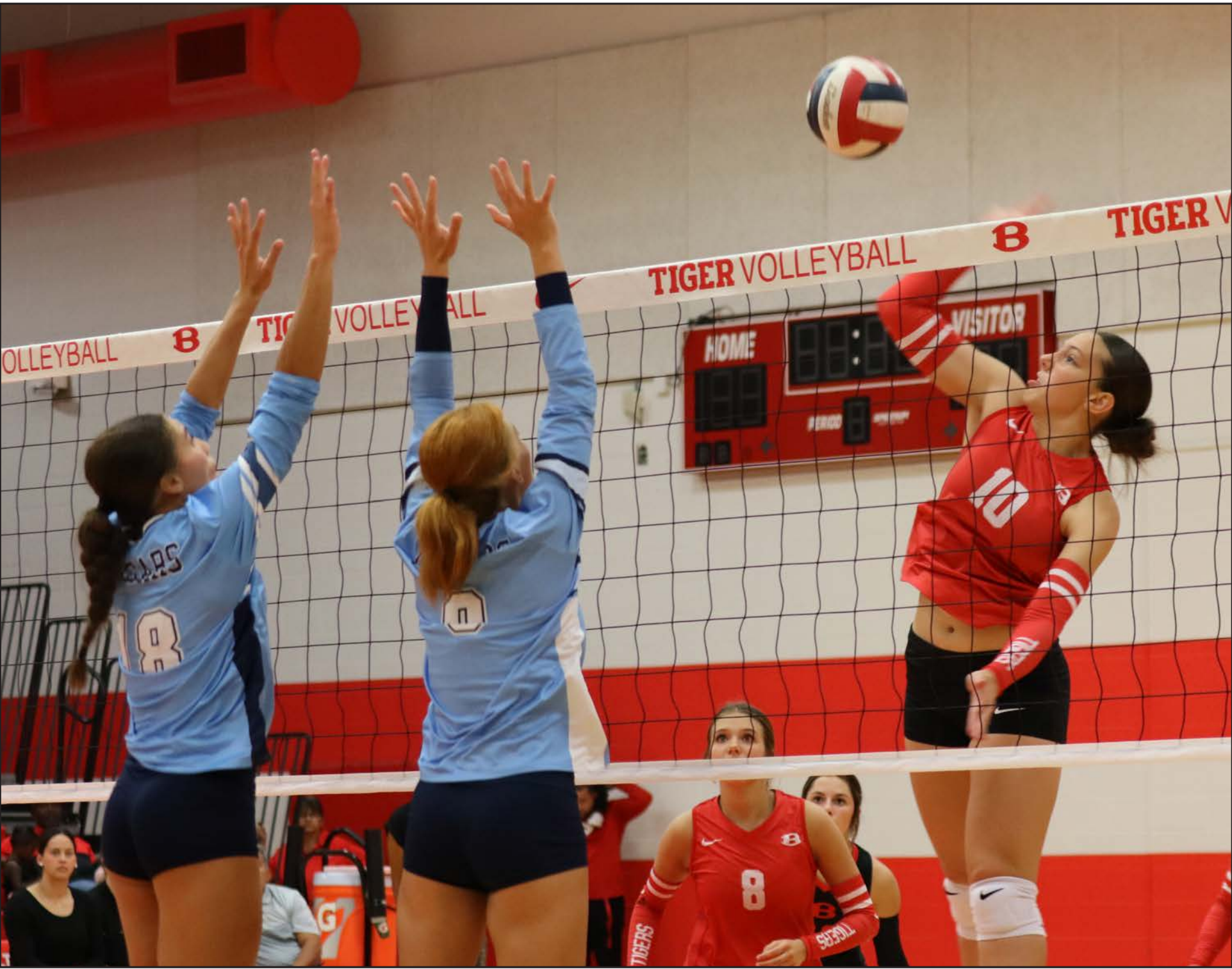


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Belton - From Page B1

The Cougars woke up early in game three, establishing a nine-point lead. Belton was unable to get a foothold in the game, as

China Spring took the third contest by eight points. The teams traded the lead during game four as neither team had more than a

three-point lead. Belton had a 22-19 advantage when the teams traded long volleys. The Cougars took four of the seven rallies. However,

the Tigers won the final rally to clinch the match but two. “I am extremely proud of how the girls battled to-

night,” Belton head coach Haleigh Johnson said. “It was fun watching Miley getting the 500th dig at a huge time, and the team ral-

lied for a big night.” Belton will travel to Gatesville to take on the Hornets on Friday at 4:30 pm.



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Belton Lake Stillhouse

GOOD. Water normal stain; 87 degrees; 0.13 feet above pool. Water surface temperature is likely the hottest we will see for 2025 now that there are multiple cold fronts due in the next week. The drastic drop in water level and increased water temperature has adversely impacted the white bass fishing for the time being. Any concentrations of fish and shad are very hard to come by. Life seems to be scattered between 25-30 feet deep over the entire lake. White bass fishing is poor right now and likely to remain so until the release of water is finalized. Perhaps two in three mornings will see some light topwater action as white bass force shad to the surface for about 30 minutes either side of sunrise on Cork Rigs equipped with Sandy Sandwich streamers. Downriggers rigged with #12, or #13 Pet Spoons are the way to go to cover lots of ground; when fish are found, work that area until you stop catching, then down-rig again to find another concentration of fish. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Catfish are good. Anglers can find blue catfish around points and river channels in 10-25 feet of water. Larger fresh cut baits have been effective for trophy-size fish. Eater fish under 10 pounds can be caught slow-drifting with small cut shad along ledges and river channels. Channel catfish are great on punch bait in 10-20 feet of water. Flatheads are good on live bait in shallow water around river mouths. Report by Brian Worley, B&S Catfishing.

FAIR. Water stained; 87-88 degrees; 0.58 feet above pool. Dropping about 0.04 feet per day with a 200+ CFS release ongoing. Water surface temperature is likely the hottest we'll see for 2025, given multiple cold fronts due in the next 10 days. USACE has reopened all boat ramps except Cedar Gap near the FM3481 bridge. The drastic drop in water level and increased water temperature has adversely impacted the white bass fishing for the time being. Any concentrations of fish and shad are very hard to come by. Life seems to be scattered between 25-30 feet deep over the lower two-thirds of the lake. White bass fishing is poor right now and likely to remain so until we get a drop in temperatures. If you fish, downriggers rigged with #12 Pet Spoons are the way to go to cover lots of ground; when fish are found, work that area until you stop catching, then down-rig again to find another concentration of fish. Keep a Cork Rig with Sandy Sandwich streamer handy for eruptions of topwater feeding by schoolie-sized largemouth and white bass. They seem to stay on the surface for just moments at a time. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Fish have been shallow since it flooded but with the water receding, the bass have moved back out. Look for grass on humps and underwater points and work those areas with Texas-rigged worms or craws. Working the coves in deeper water are producing as well. Worms and creature baits work well in those areas. Report by Bryan Cotter, Texas Hawgs.



Lake - From Page B1

having collected a kill. Hutchins, Jones, Wood, Bingham, and Kruz Smith each had kills down the stretch. Bingham and Natalia Partida had multiple assists as well. “It was another opportunity for the team to get stronger and supported each other well,” Lake Belton head coach Allison Waits said. “I am really happy that we were able to keep the level of play throughout the game. While we were practicing yesterday (Monday), for the specific areas that we were workings on, I told them to use tonight as an opportunity to work on those things.” Lake recorded multiple runs throughout the match. In game one, the Broncos had runs of 5-1 and 15-5. In game two, Lake logged runs of 4-0, 8-3, and 9-1. In game three, Lake registered stretches of 7-2, and 14-4. “In a game like this, it gives the team opportunities,” Waits said. “We are always thinking about the future for outsides and liberos.”

Lake Belton has three games left on their non-district schedule: Friday afternoon at 4:30 pm at West, Tuesday at Bronco Gymnasium against

China Spring at 6:30 pm, and at Pflugerville Weiss on Sept. 19 at 6pm. The Broncos start District 16-5A play on Sept. 23 at Belton.



XC - From Page B1

top 50. The Lady Tigers were eighth among the Varsity, Division II field with 167 points. Isabella Warner, a sophomore, was the

team’s first member to cross the finish line, posting a 22nd-place time of 23:38.0, while sophomore Ai Kirkland (30th, 23:34.3), senior Destiny Schutz (45th, 25:18.4), junior Roxanna Delgado (47th, 25:24.3) and junior Fancy Jamie (53rd, 25:35.8) rounded out the team total. Additionally, junior Nataly Valdez (54th, 25:37.3), freshman Ayla Wakershauser (55th, 25:40.3), sophomore Lilian Baggett (57th, 25:51.0) and sophomore Madyson Hartnett (69th,

26:54.7) also competed for Belton. Occupying the top three spots were Frisco Wakeland (1st, 20), Frisco Liberty (2nd, 88) and Rockwall-Heath (3rd, 96). In the boys Division II race, senior Paul Maringathuparambil (33rd, 18:41.9) led the Tigers to a ninth-place showing with 249 points. He was complemented by juniors Ezra Kahler (40th, 18:55.7), Alexander Castelan (69th, 20:07.6) and Hayden Brown (72nd, 20:11.6)

and sophomore Harrison Booher (78th, 20:32.7). All finishing within 40 seconds of each other, sophomores Nelson Funez (80th, 20:47.3) and Marcus Hernandez (81st, 20:51.1), senior Rosario Parra (82nd, 20:53.6), junior Jose Perez-Diaz (85th, 21:03.8) and freshman Luke Roberts (88th, 21:26.1) also competed for Belton. Dallas Highland Park earned the team title with 53 points, beating out Frisco Wakeland (2nd, 58) and Cypress Springs (3rd, 60).

Broncos - From Page B1

young man and his development, both on and off the field.” The Broncos defense allowed 484 yards in 49 plays. Braxtan Cope came up huge with 16 tackles, Gavin Stewart had 10 tackles, and Gavin Owens added nine stops. “Both safeties played outstanding,” Cope said. “We are proud of how they are doing in the secondary trying to lead. We still are continuing to give up too many big plays and that needs to be fixed come district. Our defensive line is doing a good job as well of keeping people off our linebackers. They collectively

as a group are improving.” The improvement of a team is most evident from game one to game two. Cope agreed that the team battled throughout the 48 minutes and showed many signs of improvement. “We did not play nervous against a good football team, and our kids left it out there,” Cope said. “This is a team that has great chemistry, and now it will be tested. We are looking forward to seeing their response.” It is another Thursday night affair, this time with the Killeen Kangaroos. The Roos were involved with a nailbiter against Ellison, where neither team scored in the second half. Killeen gave up 241 yards passing and 233 yards rushing and yielded three touchdowns (all passing). “They run a 3-3 stack scheme that has some similarities to last week’s scheme in McNeil,” Cope said. “We have to be able to win first down again and put us in manageable situations. It will be good to have our starting quarterback back (Maverik Mad-

dux), so that he can be ready when district comes here in two weeks.” The Roos scored twice in the second quarter but could not convert in the second half. “They are a spread team that can be electric when the ball gets in their hands,” Cope said. “Once again, we have to limit the explosive plays to try and help win this tough contest.” Being a Thursday game, the first home game for the Broncos should be a lively affair with both teams battling for their first wins. A win for Lake, matched with an early bye week, would go a long way to getting the Broncos healthy heading into the district opener against Rouse. “It is a big week for our kids,” Cope said. “It is Senior Night for a special group of young men. They have given a lot to this program and proud of them and all that they are doing. As the old adage goes: “It is not how you start it is how you finish.” I have a feeling this will prove very true for the Broncos this year.”

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Deadline: 10/16**



Local

Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Activities

09/11: 42 Dominoes, Mexican Train Dominoes
09/12: TGIF Lunch
09/15: Snack Time Mah Jongg
09/16: Bunco
09/17: Popcorn Bridge
09/18: Meet & Greet, 42 Dominoes
09/20: Exploring Wine
09/22: Well Read Woman, Monday Canasta
09/23: Singing Bluebonnets
09/24: Crochet/Knit, Fun Lunch
09/25: 42 Dominoes, Mexican Train Dominoes
09/26: Trailblazers Walking Group
09/27: Jimmy's Egg

**"To join or for more information, please call:
Mary Pringle (760)265-5035 or email at: pringlem@msn.com.
Visit the website: www.bellcountynewcomers.com."**

CAC announces 2025 concert lineups

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

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

AN CLIBURN FINALIST CLAYTON STEPHENSON — Oct. 18
American pianist Clayton Stephenson's love for music is immediately apparent in his joyous charisma onstage, expressive power and natural ease at the instrument.

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL — Nov. 8
Founded in 1970, Asleep at the Wheel has been part of the American roots music landscape for more than 50 years.

SHINYRIBS - Dec. 6
Shinyribs, a regular visitor to the CAC, defies genres as a melting pot of Texas blues, New Orleans funk, horn-driven Memphis soul, country twang, border music, big band swing and roots-rock. The 2025 CTOS Classic Music Series includes four big shows.

Stronger Together Gala - Sept 11
Mark your calendars, shine your boots, and get ready for a night to remember! The first-ever Stronger Together Gala is coming to the Frank W. Mayborn Civic & Convention Center in Temple on Thursday, September 11, 2025 — and you're invited to eat, drink, dance, and make a difference. And while you're two-stepping the night away, you'll also be helping raise money to support mental health awareness and resources right here in our community. Your ticket, table, or auction donation will help benefit two extraordinary organizations dedicated to mental and behavioral health: the Intrepid Spirit Center at Fort Hood and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Central Texas — Temple Chapter. For tickets, tables, and donation info, visit www.StrongerTogetherGala.org.

Bell County Master Gardeners - Sept 11
This month's Herb Study Group dives into the fascinating world of Elderberry! Join us for an interactive round-table discussion where we'll explore uses, benefits, and creative ways to enjoy this powerhouse plant. As always, sharing is encouraged- bring along your favorite herbs, bottles or recipes to add to the fun and inspiration.
The informative event will be available Thursday, September 11, 6:00-7:30 p.m. or Wednesday, September 17, 10:00-11:30 a.m. at AgriLife Extension Grounds-Learning Center, 1605 N. Main, Belton. Register at <https://forms.gle/wkjFFWdcLacEeQiD9>.

Bell County Master Gardeners - Sept 16
Ready to grow your garden in new ways? Join the Bell Master Gardeners and Harker Heights Parks and Recreation for a free evening seminar with Master Gardener Dave Slaughter as he discusses Plant Propagation and how to multiply your plants with confidence. We'll cover both sexual and asexual propagation methods, then roll up our sleeves for a hands-on workshop practicing soft stem cutting techniques. on Tuesday, September 16, 6:00-7:30 p.m. at Harker Heights Activities Center, 400 Indian Trail, Harker Heights. Register at txmg.org/bell/

Central Texas Republican Women - Sept 17
Central Texas Republican Women invites you to attend our next "RED ROOF Connections Lunch Break" on Wednesday, September 17th at MasFajitas at 1902 SW HK Dodgen Loop in Temple. Come and enjoy Mexican food, margaritas, and the good company of friends and neighbors while supporting our local small businesses. The event is on Wednesday, September 17th from 11:00 a.m. until 1:00pm. Join us for a conversation about policy, legislation, local politics, or whatever is on your mind as a community member. Let's chat. Beverage and food purchases are on your own. The conversation is free. We look forward to meeting you. For more information about Central Texas Republican Women, visit www.ctrw-pac.com.

Firehouse Chili & Salsa Copetition - Sept 20
Mark your Calendar: On Saturday, September 20th, we have scheduled our annual Firehouse Chili and Salsa Competition, at Kleypas Park, by the Swimming Pool, in Morgan's Point Resort on Morgan's Point Boulevard. The event is one of our annual fundraisers; and we're focusing this year's funds to purchase accessories for the new Brush Truck - FIONA. Questions contact kastagne@att.net. Cook Team, Sponsor-Supporter, Vendor, Auction Contributor forms can be found at: morganspointresorttx.com/civicalert

Movies in the Park - Sept 20
The Parks & Recreation Department hosts the Movie in the Park series each year. Movies and activities are free and open to the public. Encanto will be shown at Harris Community Park, 312 N. Alexander, Belton. For more information contact Belton Parks & Recreation at 254-933-5860.

MPR Explorer - Sept 25
The MPR Explorers (sponsored by the Mary Ruth Briggs Library) is holding their monthly "Conversation over Coffee" with Interim Fire Chief Shane Sibley, on Thursday, September 25 from 10:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. at the Garrett and Mic Hill Event Center (60 Morgan's Point Road).

Celebrating the Oktoberfest Season - Oct 4
This family-friendly celebration and fundraiser for the Friends of the Mary Ruth Briggs Library will be part of the City's Community Yard Sale and features Jam Session Challenge for volunteer musicians and singers, Beginner's line dance class and open dancing, German food contest, Bold Republic Brewing and much more. MPR Page Turner's Party & Fundraiser — Celebrating the Oktoberfest

Season on Oct 4, 2025, 100 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. at Ansay Park (between Thistle and Lake Forest Drive), Morgan's Point Resort. Email volunteers.mpr@gmail.com with any questions.

McDowell Cemetary Association - Oct 4
The annual mettof the McDowell Cemetary Associatio is scheduled for Saturady, Oct 4, 2025, 10:00 a.m. in the the sanctuary of Nolan Valley Baptist Church, 13206 FM 93, Belton, located near the cemetary. The association continues to solicit funds or any input about past burials. Inquiries or donations may be sent to John Alexander at McDowell Cemetary Association, 706 N Main St, Belton, Tx 76513. If you have any questions or comments contact Mr. Alexander at 254-541-4349.

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

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 mont at VFW 3859. Dinner is served at 6:30 p.m. and metting will begin at 7:00 p.m. 201 VFW Dr, Harker heights, Tx 76548. Email commandant@mc11249tx.comfor more inforamtion.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet both on TUESDAY, Sept. 9th and Sept. 23rd at 6:30pm at the Temple VA Hospital. Use the entrance on the Valet parking side of the hospital and take the elevator to the 5th floor -Conference Room 5G31. Both care-givers, supporters and those suffering from mental illness are welcome to join us for mutual support and sharing of information. For more information, call 254-771-3638

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

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

Bell County Historical Commission holds their meetings on the fourth Monday of every month at 6 p.m. in the historical Bell County Court House, 101 E. Central Ave in Belton. Join us in our vision of preserving and promoting Bell County's rich historical heritage for current and future generations. We are dedicated to initiating and conducting programs that preserve and celebrate the county's historic cultural resources in alignment with state laws governing historical preservation in Texas. Our community resources consist of a research room, book repository, cemetery information, historical markers and monument records. Our services include information on historic preservation, educational programming, history community outreach and partnerships. We welcome you to 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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Community Information

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LEGALS

tion is published which will be September 11, 2025, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas. All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513. The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: Jonathan R Jackson, MARCUS BEAUDIN 2109 S CLEAR CREEK RD, KILLEEN TX 76549 The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication. Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on September 02, 2025. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513 By: Lillian Phillips Deputy 09.11

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 25CPB00553

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS GUANDA LEE KENNEY, Applicant, on September 02, 2025, filed an APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATOR, DETERMINATION OF HEIRSHIP, AND FOR ISSUANCE OF LETTERS OF INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATION in a proceeding styled: DODI HULL BETTIN, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00553 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 September 11, 2025, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas. All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513. The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: Phillip E. Romero 109 Daisy Path Georgetown TX 78633 The officer serving this Citation shall, in com-

LEGALS

pliance 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 September 02, 2025. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513 By : Sophia Nieto Deputy 09.11

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of GLORIA JUNE MCGREGOR COMBS, Deceased, were issued on August 6, 2025 in Cause No. 25CPB00411 pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to:: Kelly McGregor. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: Mary Wiley Attorney at Law ,100 W. Central Texas Expressway Suite 306, Harker Heights, Texas 76548 DATED the 29 day of August: 2025. Mary Wiley Attorney for Kelly McGregor, State Bar No.: 24032669, 100 W. Central Texas Expressway Suite 302, Harker Heights, Texas 76548, Telephone: (254) 634-6969, Facsimile: (254) 634-6587, Email: mary@lindleylawoffices.com 09.11

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 24CPB00383

To: Unknown Heirs IBRAHIMA GUIRAMA TEMBELY, Applicant, on July 30, 2025, filed an First Amended Application for Letters of Administration in a proceeding styled: SIDI YAYA TRAORE, Deceased, and bearing the number 24CPB00383 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 September 11, 2025, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas. All persons interested in the aforesaid estate are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing by filing a written contest or answer to said application should they desire to oppose or contest it. Said written contest or answer shall be filed in the office of Shelley Coston, County Clerk, Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, Belton, Texas 76513.

LEGALS

The name and address of the attorney for applicant is: Meghan Victoria Romere, 2901 Caballo Ranch Blvd Suite 5D, PO Box 1567, Cedar Park TX 78641 The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication. Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on September 05, 2025. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480 ,1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX, 76513 By: Lillian Phillips Deputy 09.11

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION-PARENT
AND CHILD

To: Any Unknown Father and All Whom It May Concern, Respondents, in the hereinafter-styled and -numbered cause: You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10 a.m. on the Monday next following the expiration of 20 days after you were served this citation and petition, a default judgment may be taken against you. The Original Petition of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, was filed in the 146th Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas, on June 30, 2025, against Cynthia Balladares, Carmelo Hernandez, Unknown Father, Respondent(s), numbered 25DFAM354751, and entitled “In the Interest of ISABELLA BALLADARES, et al., minor children.” The suit requests to terminate the parent-child relationships and/or to appoint a managing conservator of the children. The date and place of birth of the children who are the subject of the suit are: ISABELLA BALLADARES, DOB: July 2, 2016, Place of birth: Texas ELIANA SOLIS, DOB: March 25, 2022, Place of birth: Texas The court has authority in this suit to render an order in the children’s interest that will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child’s adoption. The name and address of the attorney for plaintiff is Susan Parker, Bell County Attorney’s Office, P.O. Box 1127, Belton, TX 76513 Issued and given under my hand and seal of the Court at Belton, Texas, this the 8th day of September 2025 Joanna Staton, District Clerk of Bell County, Texas 1201 Huey Road, P.O. Box 909, Belton, TX 76513 By: C. Rodriguez Deputy. 09.11

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10 tips for great tacos

Tacos are wildly popular comfort food around the world. The taco as most people know it evolved from ancient Mexican recipes blended with modern influences. Before tacos were widely eaten in America, native Mexicans enjoyed a version that was very different from the taco of today.

Tacos are believed to have originated in Mexico long before Spanish explorers arrived in the area. Early tacos were said to be freshly made using soft, flat, corn tortillas and filled with fish and cooked organs, according to Twisted Taco. There wasn't much fanfare to these tacos, as they didn't include any lettuce, cheese, tomatoes, or sour cream. Early tacos likely weren't even called "tacos." The word originated from Mexican silver miners in the eighteenth century who ate the food, and it was considered a meal of the working class.

The taco information website TacoTuesday.com indicates Americans eat 4.5 billion tacos in a given year. At an average cost of \$1.50 per taco, Americans are spending \$6.75 billion on tacos in a 12-month time period. While tacos are delicious enjoyed at an authentic Mexican restaurant, they're also easily made at home. The following are 10 taco tips to help anyone master this popular dish.

1. Use high-quality, fresh tortillas. You even can try making your own fresh tortillas from masa.
2. Heating the taco shells slightly will make them more pliable. Just don't overcook or they can become crunchy.
3. Tacos shouldn't be made from the hard, pre-formed shells found in stores. Authentic tacos are made from soft flour (North Mexico) or corn (Central and South Mexico) tortillas.
4. When selecting meats for the tacos, authentic Mexican tacos typically feature meats that are cooked on a cast iron skillet, in the oven, or on the grill says The Taco Guy Catering. More popular

choices are usually carnitas (braised pork), chorizo, arrachera (skirt steak), and tacos al pastor (marinated pork). Birria, which is a Mexican stew made from goat meat (or beef or lamb), also is a popular filling.

5. Tacos should offer a burst of texture and flavor. Toppings help make tacos special. Traditional options include pico de gallo, cilantro, diced onion, radish, and pickled onions.
6. Fish tacos were made popular in California and other regions with access to fresh seafood. Fish tacos are best made with firm, white, boneless fish.
7. When planning tacos that are filled with heavy, wet ingredients, consider stacking two tortillas per taco for strength.
8. Fillings should be cut into small, even chunks for balanced bites.
9. Popular spice choices for tacos are cumin, chili powder, garlic powder, oregano, onion powder, and paprika.
10. A squeeze of fresh lime juice will cut through the richness of tacos and make them even more delicious.

Tacos are an authentic Mexican dish that have stood the test of time and become a wildly popular food across the globe.



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Who’s holding our local history?

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

I am seeing an alarming trend that I hope our local clubs, civic organizations, and even churches will head off at the pass. It’s giving the reins of our history to social media.

While the best bit of marketing advice I’ve ever heard is find your customers and stand in front of them, we equate social media with where our audience is.

That is partly true. But, there’s a big “however” that I hope that our local clubs, civic organizations, churches, and businesses will pay attention to.

By isolating our sharing of club, civic organization, church, and business events to social media, we are doing two things that are dangerous and potentially harmful to our community’s history – our present, which will soon be history as the days, months and years pass.

One, these groups are limiting their audience.

The audience is an “echo chamber.” A reach will only go so far, before it is lost.

Our society is struggling to connect, after two years of social distancing and limited interactions, and it is difficult enough to connect person to person. Social media often adds more fuel to the fire for misunderstandings. Your club, organization or church’s mission is not limited to people looking at their phones.

Two, and this is something we do not think of often, we are giving up our history to be stored on the servers of a company that is not local and that history will swiftly be forgotten.

Facebook is not your friend. It is an opportunity to share publicly via a product that belongs to a PRIVATE COMPANY.

Why, are we giving our history and privacy to a

private company that is not local and is ONLY out to make money?

Facebook is controlling your group’s message and who receives it, and also holding onto your history.

At my offices, we have volumes and volumes of our city’s history. They consist of printed volumes and digital files stored on our servers and backup. Right now, we have a college student home on break who is purging much of our old printed works, which will soon be bound into annual editions and also completely digitized (everything for the past 12 years or so is both digital AND print.) We don’t fight digital in our offices. We embrace it.

So, my first point, how does a group limit its audience by posting on social media?

Quite frankly, while “millions” are on social media, not everyone will see a group’s newsy post. I follow most of the civic clubs in this town, and even I don’t “see” all their news. I liken social media to a neighborhood fence where people gather to share information. From time to time, many congregate at the “fence” to share news and information. Not all of it is accurate and some is outdated, but that’s for another day. We might catch a tidbit of news while we are “there” at the fence, but then we leave and go on our way. And then, someone shares something we should know – but we don’t see it.

This is how groups limit their audience. Why would you want your audience to be limited? Wouldn’t you want your exposure to be as complete as it can be?

I have also read – and heard – people mention that they did not “see” someone’s time-sensitive notice posted online.

Running to social media and posting should not be your go-to and sole means of distributing information to your members and the general public.

The second, and probably even more disturbing trend, is that we have groups, clubs, churches, and businesses, who are giving up their history to be stored on a faraway server of a company which is not local. The present is what it is, but as the days and weeks and months go on, our current days become history.

Many of our clubs, churches, and businesses have been around for decades. But, what has become of the history? Who is holding that information?

We are a locally owned company, whose staff and employees live, shop, and work locally. We sit in school board meetings and council meetings and committee meetings, because we have a vested interest in what goes on here and getting that information to the community via whatever means we can. A social media does not have that vested interest.

It concerns me greatly to see local groups, churches, and businesses putting their vital information and accomplishments, this present that is becoming part of our community history, on servers and storage elsewhere, seen by few and remembered by fewer.

Who will look at our history in 20 to 30 years and be able to see what happened in our community?

I am not saying that we should abandon an avenue which has become part of our way to do business. But is it not the only way to do business and get word out about what we do. Email, phone call, snail-mail the information to us. But, do not take the easy way out and post pictures which will disappear from our community’s history.

Modern Living?

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

I’m on the official Discord server for video game developer Checkmate Creative, a small indie dev that operates a family of popular app-based games themed around professional wrestling.

One of these games is a love letter to, and affectionate parody of, the 1980s and 1990s, with the characters all either being parodies of real-life people or pop culture figures from the era.

As one can imagine, the area featuring discussion channels for that game often meander into larger discussions of the era, from the pop culture to overall world events. These discussions are bolstered by the fact that several users, like myself, lived through it and so were witness to what took place. Well, given that the game features things like time travel and a professional wrestling stadium on the moon, it was only a matter of time before we got into how the

level of technology in the game’s version of the era compared to the level of technology in real life.

When it comes to the real-life 1980s, so many technological advancements were happening so fast that for a great many people there was an overall sense of wonder. Part of the magic of the era was that we were advancing so quickly there was a belief that our potential was limitless. The more fantastic the idea, the more likely we were to believe it was only a matter of time. As the band Experimental Products proclaimed in their early 1980s song “Modern Living”, “The science fiction movie’s coming true!”.

Yes folks, dive into the pop culture of the 1980s and you’ll find a lot of content premised on some scientist or kid genius somewhere was working on the next big world-altering breakthrough. This fed into

the overall deluge of science fiction and fantasy which was readily available, with a goodly volume of it carrying the overall message that so long as good people worked to better themselves, did their part to stand up for the classic virtues, and opposed all who would sunder the world around them, light would always triumph over dark.

It’s actually a big part of why so many of us were so willing to believe that professional wrestling was real, by the way, as the titans on the screen so often embodied classic virtues or vices, with the heroic wrestlers being presented as the pinnacle of what any good boy or girl could become.

Folks... when did we as a society get so cynical?

As I was reflecting on this conversation, I found myself realizing that much of this optimism, hope, and faith was no longer manifest, especially in pop culture. In fact,

a lot of modern pop culture has consisted of tearing down the heroes of the past, real or fictional. It’s as if the magenta-hued optimism of the past was mostly overwhelmed by a monotone grey nihilism.

Mostly.

You can still see it if you know where to look, and there’s more to it than just aficionADOS of past works or modern creators trying to produce new content with a classic vibe. All of us, each and every one, can still fulfill that past vision. We can still work to better ourselves, stand up for those classic virtues, oppose the darkness, and do our best to make the world a place worth being optimistic about. It may seem like the odds are against us, but folks they never really were all that favorable to begin with. We know what we need to be doing.

“Modern living in the eighties. This is the future that you’re seeing.”

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This year we are honored to have the 1st Cavalry Division band entertaining. You can read more about them in our 100 page magazine that will be inserted into next weeks paper & details the free event.



HAYDEN MARONEY
YOUR SENIOR EXPO
ENTERTAINER

SEPTEMBER 23, 2025
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Miss Hayden Maroney will be singing patriotic songs!! She’s a sophomore at Lake Belton High School and participates in choir, basketball, and tennis. She is also a member of the Hope Squad, which is a national movement to support peer-to-peer suicide prevention. She’s really excited to join the Hope Squad in the program’s first full year. We have lost several students recently due to suicide. It’s been really difficult for her to navigate and she really wants to make a difference for those struggling with mental health. Hayden’s Mom teaches special education and Hayden always loves helping with her students with the skills they are learning. In her spare time, Hayden loves to crochet. She is a member of 1st Baptist Church of Moffat. She is looking forward to being able to honor Veterans through her singing.

For more information and FREE TICKETS to the September 23rd event, please visit BellCountySeniorExpo2025.Eventbrite.com It is truly an AMAZING EVENT FOR ALL AGES! And shows you all the resources you need, but didn’t know were available!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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