

Belton holds 9th annual Bacon, Blues, and Brews Festival



Downtown Belton is filled with spectators on Friday night for the Belton's Bacon, Blues and Brews festival.

By Shanna Grote
The Belton Journal

The 9th annual Bacon, Blues, and Brews Festival, also known as B4 was held September 26th and 27th in Historic Downtown Belton Courthouse Square. The annual festival included live entertainment, a bacon cook-off

between food trucks, craft vendors, breweries and wineries, and a very popular pig calling contest. Friday evening kicked off with 1st Cavalry Band at 5:30 p.m. The band is comprised of infantrymen who also have a love and talent in music. The 1st Team Band, dressed in uniform, lifted morale and excited the crowd with up-

beat music including horns, trumpets, and a saxophone. The band danced and clapped while the crowd cheered and sang along. The First Team Band entertained the crowd again Saturday morning with an even larger crowd on

See B4,
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Walk to End Alzheimer's held in Liberty Park



BELTON JOURNAL/Michele Weisman
Luz Rainey with her son, Manolo Rainey, and daughter, Valentina Rainey

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

The Alzheimer's Association's 2025 Walk to End Alzheimer's held its largest fundraiser of the year at Liberty Park on Sept. 27. 500 participants registered to walk one mile to raise funds and awareness for a cure for Alzheimer's, and all forms of dementia.

Shannon Eller, Development Manager for Walk to End Alzheimer's, said, "The Walk to End Alzheimer's is an event that we hold throughout the entire United States. It's meant to be a way that the community can come together, show support for one another and raise awareness about the disease. And throughout the Alzheimer's Association's history, we have raised close to

See WALK,
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Belton purchases used 3,000-gallon water truck



Courtesy Photo
Here's a look at the 3,000-gallon Freightliner water truck Belton is purchasing for \$99,500 plus an additional \$20,000 for striping and equipment.

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Belton City Council moved to purchase a 3,000-gallon Freightliner water truck from Jarrell Fire Department/Williamson County ESD No. 5 during last Tuesday night's meeting. Fire Chief Jon Fontenot said Belton Fire Department continues to respond to a high volume of motor vehicle accidents, often on high-speed roadways such as Interstates 35 and 14. "To improve responder safety, the Fire Department has researched vehicles that could serve as blocker trucks," Fontenot said. "While a Department of Transportation-specific blocker truck is ideal, size

limitations at Central Fire Station restrict what can be housed there. The proposed used Freightliner platform offers a safer alternative and meets space constraints." "Belton's highways and rural areas require dependable mobile water resources for effective fire suppression," he added. "Some parts of our jurisdiction do not have sufficient hydrant coverage. A 3,000-gallon water truck significantly enhances our tactical water supply capabilities during structure fires, grass fires, and highway operations." According to Fontenot, the used Freightliner aligns with Belton's existing fire fleet and is already outfitted with minimum emergency lights and sirens.

The truck is a 2005 four-wheel-drive model with 58,650 miles, and the truck was completely refurbished in 2022. The truck is compatible with existing parts and service practices, the chief said. "When evaluating options for a blocker truck, we carefully considered several approaches to balance cost and functionality," Fontenot said. "One option was to purchase a new water truck. Another option was to purchase a used chassis and have the rear of the truck built to specification, which came in at \$98,000 or \$46,350 for the rear plus the additional cost of the chassis."

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Two Lake Belton High School seniors named National Merit Semifinalists



Special to the Journal

Lake Belton High School seniors Dhruv Bhat and Alex Yuen have been recognized as 2025 National Merit Scholarship Program Semifinalists, placing them among the top academically talented high school students in the nation. They are two of approximately 16,000

Semifinalists nationwide, a distinction that represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors. Both students now have the opportunity to advance in the competition for 7,500 National Merit Scholarships worth nearly \$30 million. Dhruv Bhat, the son of Sanjay and Nandita Bhat of Temple, is ac-

tive in tennis, UIL Academics, National Honor Society, Student Council and HOSA. He described the recognition as a moment of pride. "This was the first time I had a number to my name," Bhat said. "I put the work in, but I hadn't really had that reward yet. This was the first reward." Bhat said his parents

have provided consistent support and encouragement. He noted that his calculus class last year showed him the importance of balancing hard work with enjoying life — a lesson that shaped his academic journey. Alex Yuen, the son of Joyce Xhao and Josh Yuen of Belton, See MERIT, Page A2

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City Council OKs safety grant for new elevator

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

A \$50,000 building safety grant to construct an elevator at 213 E Central Avenue in the Downtown Belton Commercial Historic District was approved last Tuesday by City Council.

The location is the home of Popcorn Friday and the Touch Root Foundation, along with additional tenant spaces available for lease.

The applicant, Uche Ogwudu of Touch Root Foundation, plans to build an elevator at the rear-right exterior corner of the property. The elevator shaft will be built with split-face masonry to complement the existing building.

According to Belton City Planner Tina Moore, the building was built in 1885 and remodeled in 1955.

The estimated cost of the project is \$175,000 and the grant is a matching program that will provide \$50,000 for accessibility improvements.

“The proposed elevator will be detached from the main building, matching the building’s height while complementing the existing materials,” Moore said. “This approach balances modern functionality with preservation principles.”

The Belton Historic Preservation Commission considered the elevator project during it’s Sept. 4 meeting and recommended the approval of the \$50,000 grant.

Also Tuesday, Council tabled an

agenda item related to high-profile sign heights on properties along Interstates 35 and 14. After much deliberation, the motion was made to table the item.

City Council approved three zoning changes related to the Imagine Belton Standards following a public hearing during Tuesday night’s meeting.

The three areas proposed for a transition zone are Area 1, which is west of Shine and North Pearl, southwest of West Eighth Avenue and Shine, and east of Nolan Creek and north of West Second; Area 2, which is south of West Third, east of Burnet Street, north of West Avenue C and West of but not adjacent to Nolan Creek; and Area 3, south of Nolan Creek, east of East Street, northwest of Interstate 35, south of East Avenue C, and west of Liberty Park.

According to Bob van Til, Belton’s development services director, The Imagine Belton Plan was adopted in mid 2022. One of the key recommendations in the plan was to create the Imagine Belton Standards that would implement and guide development and redevelopment for the plan area.

The Standards were approved in



January, and they are designed to implement the vision of the Imagine Belton Plan.

“The plan articulated a new paradigm for the Imagine Belton Area,” van Til said. “This paradigm shifts development objectives from the traditional suburban, low rise, low density use of land to a more urban use of land.”

The Standards created five new zones: the Neighborhood Zone, the Transition Zone, the Main Street Zone, the Uptown Zone, and the Central Downtown Zone, he said.

The Neighborhood Zone promotes housing types and preserves the residential character of the neighborhoods. The Transition Zone accommodates housing near parks, downtown and busy corridors. It has a mix of housing such as apartments, townhouses, multiplexes and live/work buildings. The Transition Zone also allows dining, retail, offices and neighborhood services.

“The Main Street Zone allows a range of commercial uses that serve surrounding residential areas,” van Til said “It also provides for adaptive reuses that include structures that were

once used as residential but are now proposed to be non-residential.”

The Central Downtown Zone has a variety of uses and accommodates walkability and higher density standards, van Til said. The Uptown Zone expands the Central Downtown Zone to provide for a transition between the Neighborhood and Transition zones.

“The Uptown Zone tends to contain less density than the Central Downtown Zone, and it proposes to enable a range of commercial uses,” he added.

Grandfathering helps with transitioning between the old Zoning Code and the new Standards. Grandfathering or non-conforming uses are uses that are legal under the current zoning but do not meet the standards of the new code.

For instance, an auto repair facility may be allowed under the current zoning but is not permitted under the new code. The car repair place can continue to operate until the owner proposes to expand or the business has been vacant for a period of one year. Then, the property must be brought into conformity with the new code.

Van Til recommended approving the rezoning of properties in the areas to the Transition Zone.

The Planning & Zoning Commission held a public hearing on the rezoning on Sept. 16, and approximately 14 people spoke during the hearing. After the public hearing, the Commission voted to recommend approval of the rezoning.

Water Truck

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Another option was to purchase a used truck and have it retrofitted,” he said. “We sent out three requests for quotes and only received one response, which was \$190,000 for the complete retrofitting and outfitting alone, not including the cost of the truck.”

“We also searched for used trucks already in fair to good condition that

could meet our needs with only minimal outfitting required. After reviewing all possibilities, the truck from Jarrell Fire Department proved to be the best option.”

The City is spending \$99,500 for the truck and is allowing an additional \$20,000 for upfitting and equipment.

Walk

- From Page A1

one billion dollars.

“The reason we are called the Alzheimer’s Association is 70 percent of dementia diagnoses just happens to be Alzheimer’s. But we’re still doing research for all types of dementia, because they’re all debilitating, they are all life limiting.

“The money we raise goes towards research. It also goes towards putting resources back in the community, and it helps us lobby our government.”

Luz Rainey came to the Walk to End Alzheimer’s with her son, Manolo, and daughter, Valentina.

“I lost my grandmother to Alzheimer’s. Currently, my sister-in-law, her mom has early-onset Alzheimer’s. We wanted

to support for that cause as well,” said Luz.

Frank Garrett, a legend in fundraising for Walk to End Alzheimer’s, passed away this year. Last year he raised \$40,000.

On Saturday, they presented his daughter, Bianca McBride, with the first Frank and Ida Garrett Award, to be presented yearly to the person who raises the most money.

The Austin Chapter hosts five walks a year and covers over twenty counties. Their next walk will be on Oct. 11 in Waco. Saturday, 59 teams raised over 80% of the goal and fundraising continues until Dec. 31, 2025. Their 24-hour helpline is at alz.org.

Merit

- From Page A1

is involved in National Honor Society, HOSA, Student Council, UIL Academics and previously played tennis. He said learning of his Semifinalist honor brought him joy. “It was a goal, but it was not the end of the world if I didn’t make it. I felt joy,” Yuen said.

He credits his mother’s support in preparing for the SAT and said his favorite class, AP

Chemistry, strengthened both his academic interests and friendships. He plans to attend the University of Texas at Austin to pursue a premedical path with the goal of becoming an ophthalmologist.

Lake Belton High School Principal Steele Hantgin praised both students for their achievements. “Dhruv and Alex are exceptional examples of the dedication, perseverance and curiosity we see in our students,” Hantgin said. “We are proud of their accomplishments and excited to see the opportunities that await them as they move forward in the National Merit competition and in life.” More than 1,000 students in Texas were named Semifinalists this year. Bhat and Yuen represent Belton ISD among this elite group of scholars.

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OBITUARIES



Hogwood

Dorothy Helen Hogwood
March 14, 1936 –
September 25, 2025

Dorothy Helen Hogwood, affectionately known as Helen, left this world on September 25, 2025, at the age of 89, in Belton, Texas. Her services will take place on October 2 at 10:00 a.m. at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Temple. A meal with the family will follow directly after the service. They want to invite everyone to attend and bring a hearty appetite to celebrate their mother in the most honorable way by serving everyone and sharing stories about her memories. Burial will take place at 12:45 p.m. at Temple Garden of Memories.

Helen was born on March 14, 1936, in Walburg, Texas, to Oswald Ray Neitsch and Anita Louise (Morkisch) Neitsch. She was one of 17 siblings and attended Zion Lutheran Church with her family, where she was confirmed in 1950.

She later became a devoted wife “of nearly 45 years” to Curtis Hogwood, whom she married on April 22, 1961. Helen was the proud mother of four. She was not just a mother but a source of strength and inspiration. Her devotion and support for her children were always evident as she never missed an event they were involved in. It is still a mystery how she was able to appear at multiple events and locations for each of them on a single day.

Throughout her life, Helen demonstrated a genuine commitment to serving others. Her memory is fondly marked by her talent for cooking, particularly her famous chicken spaghetti, as she often prepared enough to feed an army, even when cooking for just herself. She later found joy in serving the other residents at Park Place Manor, where she has lived for the past eight years. She has always dedicated her time and love to those who needed assistance. Her kindness and giving heart knew no bounds; she was always there, ensuring that everyone around her felt cared for and loved. She mostly communicated her love by sharing her prepared meals, snacks, and candy. Even in her final days, if you went to see her, she was giving you a cookie, candy, or a soda that she had obtained as winnings from one of her residential games at Park Place. No grandchild or great-grandchild ever

left her presence empty-handed.

Helen held her faith close to her heart, deeply loving the Lord. Her devotion guided her actions and shaped her connections with those around her. Known for her loving personality, she maintained her Lutheran faith after marriage at Immanuel in Temple until Prince of Peace Lutheran Church opened in Belton. Proud to be a charter member, Helen dedicated over 40 years to her church, serving in the choir and performing in every Christmas cantata. Her passion for singing was clear to all who knew her, as she poured her heart into every note for her Lord.

She leaves behind a vibrant family that includes her children: Mike Hogwood and his wife Catherine of Waco; Keith Hogwood and his wife Jennifer of Belton; Doug Hogwood and his lifelong partner Lois of Killeen; and Susan Kolodziejczyk and her husband Chris of Belton. She is also survived by her sister Margie Nell Faltesek of Taylor; her grandchildren: Meaghan Wheelis and her husband Matt; Angela Bacon and her husband RJ; Lauren Bates and her husband Scott; Eric Hogwood and his wife Samantha; Lorna Fritz and her husband Bryce; Misty Johnson and her husband Jeremy; Wendy Hogwood; Cooper Kolodziejczyk; and Grace Kolodziejczyk; along with 18 great-grandchildren, numerous nieces and nephews, and two cherished daughters, Charmaine Hogwood and Jacqueline Peters.

Helen also leaves behind her Park Place Manor family, who have loved and cared for her over the past eight years.

She is now reunited in peace with her beloved husband, Curtis, her parents, and her siblings: Ruth Domel, Johann Neitsch, Adolph Neitsch, Bernhard “Ben” Neitsch, Johanna Alford, Nelda Hamilton, Ernest “Buddy” Neitsch, Emma Hardin, Maybelline Kattner, Josephine Louise Neitsch, Marie Neitsch, Louise “Gertie” Barber, Robert Neitsch, Gustav “Gus”; Neitsch, and Oswald Ray “Nickey” Neitsch.

In remembering Helen Hogwood, we celebrate a life well-lived, filled with service, love, and an enduring commitment to family and faith. “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Matthew 25:21

Visitation was held on Wednesday, October 1, from 6-8 p.m. at Dossman Funeral Home in Belton. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made in Helen’s honor to a charity of your choice or to Our Hospice House at 5235 Tollbridge Rd, Belton, TX 76513, or online at ourhospicehouse.org.

Martinez Jr.

Leandro Louie Martinez, Jr.
July 26, 1941 –
September 7, 2025

Leandro Louie Martinez, Jr., born on July 26, 1941, to Leandro Luz Martinez Sr., and Susan B (Armbeck) but was partnered by his Great Aunt Albina and her husband Jimmy Bright in Denver, Colorado, passed away suddenly at the local hospital on Sunday, September 7, 2025. He was a devoted husband, father, and friend whose life was characterized by his humility, generosity, and an unwavering commitment to those he loved.

Louie, as he was affectionately known, led a fulfilling and industrious life. He attended Highlanders Boys Military School during his formative years, and served many years as an altar boy at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Denver, Colorado. His faith was further exemplified by his membership at St. Joseph’s Catholic Church in Houston. He graduated from East High School, where he was actively involved in swimming and gymnastics, before furthering his studies at the University of Colorado. While active in this life he was a coach for a Little League Basketball team in Denver as he lead them to the playoffs. He worked as a Dairy Truck driver for Cambridge Dairy in Denver, Colorado then as a meat cutter and boner commercial worker for Safeway Stores, Inc. His early years were filled with a zest for life, as he enjoyed horseback riding, swimming, football, and boxing—having been trained under the renowned Corky Gonzalez as a Golden Glove boxer. His interests remained diverse throughout his life, including a passionate following of the Denver Broncos, Houston Astros, Houston Rockets, Baylor, and Colorado Buffaloes. He met the love of his life in a restaurant bar where he was playing pool in 1980, and married in 1982, Ms Janie Gutierrez. Together they blended their families where he parented the upbringing of their children.

Professionally, Louie dedicated 48 years to the grocery industry, beginning his career as a lumper for a local meat warehouse and moving into his apprenticeship, leveling up as a meat cutter, and then advanced to the level of Boner at Safeway Stores Incorporated. He later transitioned to the Grocer’s Supply in Houston as a night shift shipping and receiving manager. Then he worked for Mim’s Meat Company in Houston as a supervisor in the ground beef department, retiring in 2002. His reputation in the community was one of respect and admiration, he was very organized and showed exemplary management skills as he carried out his work with dedication and integrity.

Beyond his career,

Louie was a man of deep conviction and strong character. His calm demeanor and ability to see the good in people made him a cherished friend to many. He was known for his generous spirit, objective nature, and his privacy, often choosing to listen rather than speak ill of others. His heart’s passion was participating in pool—a member of the “Mis Shots” league at Future Cue’s in Temple—and bowling, along with his love for the great outdoors through hunting big game such as elk, moose, and bear. He was a valued member of the Harris County Grand Jury

He is survived by his beautiful loving wife of 44 years, Janie (Gutierrez) Martinez; three sons, Anthony R. Martinez, G. Anthony Ramos and his wife Elvia Reyes Ramos, and Steven C. Ramos and wife Corina M. Ramos; and three daughters, Charlene Sue (Martinez) Streno, Tonya Lynn (Martinez) Streno, Mónica Gisselle (Ramos) “Rab” Hartsfield; five sisters-in-law, Lupe, Frances, Belinda, Ana, and Angie formerly Gutierrez and their spouses. his niece, Kathy Hughes, and husband Bill; two nieces, Samantha and Audrey, and along with ten grandchildren and three great-grandchildren, l great-great niece, Meadow, and two great-grandchildren, Novalee and Micaiah Maldonado. Along with numerous nieces and nephews.

Louie is preceded in

death by his parents, Mr. Leandro Luz Martinez, Sr., and Susan B. (Armbeck) Pappenheim, along with one brother, Jerry Armbeck; one sister-in-law, Elsa formerly Gutierrez; and one brother-in-law, Joe Gutierrez.

In Lieu of flowers please consider making a memorial donation to Ronald McDonald House in temple.

A Celebration of Life in honor of Louie was held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, October 4, 2025, at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center in Temple, Texas. Friends and family are invited to pay their respects, share mem-

ories, and celebrate a life well-lived. Louie’s legacy of kindness, commitment, and love will forever remain in the hearts of those who knew him.

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

Sikes

Sammy Ray Sikes
October 14, 1946 –
September 3, 2025

Sammy Ray Sikes, age 78, was a husband, father and grandfather. He went home to meet his Lord and

See **OBITS**,
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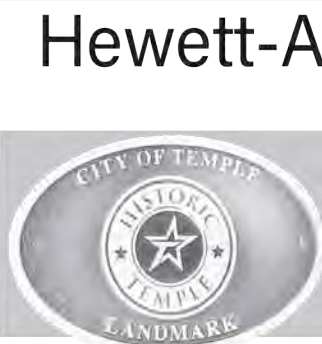
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Rescue Magazine to host Tenth Annual Pet Extravaganza

By **Michelle Rodriguez**
The Belton Journal

The tenth annual Pet Extravaganza hosted by Rescue Magazine will be held at the Cadence Bank Center on October 11 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and October 12 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

“The Pet Extravaganza is the largest pet adoption event in Central Texas. It is also a large trick or treat event. It’s family friendly and lots of fun,” said president of Rescue Magazine Ron Ducharme.

Tickets for adults cost \$10 with an early bird discounted cost of \$8. Tickets for children cost \$5 with an early bird discounted cost of \$4. There are V. I. P. ticket options for \$20 that offers front of the line admission, a swag bag (while supplies last), and a special photo op with special guest Captain Dan Sparrow. There is free admission for first responders, military, and pets. Dogs must be on non-retractable leashes and have their rabies certificate. Tickets can be purchased on the Rescue Magazine website. Donations are also accepted there.

“The Bell County Animal Shelter will be there

to focus on adopting animals. There will also be fun-filled attractions, trick-or-treating with lots of candy, pony rides, lots of vendors, micro-chipping, trainers, pet care, home improvement, and Captain Dan Sparrow from the U.K.,” said Ducharme.

There will be a haunted hotel built onsite, over eighty vendors will be passing out candy for trick or treating, and there will be a costume contest for kids, adults, and pets. There will be a fun zone with bounce houses and games, a petting zoo, and an eight-foot Bumble Bee. Special guest Captain Dan Sparrow will be there for photo ops.

Volunteers will help with set up, tear down, customer service, games, raffle tickets, and clean up. They will be provided with free tickets to the event, lunch, and refreshments.

There are opportunities for vendors and sponsorships. Non-for-profit organizations like rescues, shelters, and other agencies have opportunities for free spots. Some sponsors include Pet Angels Cremation, Grand Avenue Theatres, The Belton Journal, Hampton Inn and Suites, Realty Executives, First Convenience Bank, ACH Pest, Wal-mart, Sam’s Club, Bubba’s 33,

Tractor Supply Co., HEB, Petco, Domino’s, Belton Veterinary Cline, and more.

Rescue Magazine is free digital magazine that is published digitally every month. They are also a local animal welfare organization that supports local animal shelters and rescues with food drives and adoption events. They donate over 150,000 pounds of food and pet supplies every year. Most recently, Journey Home Rescue thanked Rescue Magazine for their donation of pet food received last week.

Ducharme also hosts KTEM’s News Radio 14 animal hour every Sunday from 11 a.m. to noon, a radio show where animals have a voice. The show features interviews and segments about animal welfare, adoption, and care.

He is also a non-compensated consultant for Bell County Animal Shelter. He is helping with increasing the number of animal adoptions, volunteers, and bringing awareness to the shelter.

More information can be found on the website at <https://www.rescuemagazine.org/> or Rescue Magazine’s Facebook page.

Country artists to be featured at Cultural Activities Center visit

By **Michelle Rodriguez**
The Belton Journal

The Cultural Activities Center, located at 3011 N. Third St., Temple, will open a new exhibit featuring country artists Holly Dunn and Cindy Walker on November 1. The public is invited to a free reception from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The exhibit will be available for viewing

from November 1-12.

On opening day, there will be a performance by local artist Emma Voglesinger Millard. She will cover music by Dunn and Walker. There will also be an auction, and funds raised will benefit Sleep in Heavenly Peace, a national organization, the Bell County Chapter, that provides beds for children.

Dunn’s awards, custom made outfits for album covers, custom made boots, and guitars will be on display at the exhibit. Many of Walker’s custom-made guitars will also be on display. Both Dunn’s and Walker’s dresses will be on dress forms behind glass. They will both have the same number of songs covered at the reception.

“Walker lived in Mexia, Texas for 50 years in the same house. She wrote more than 500 songs and 400 of those were recorded. Her top 40 were hits. Her number one song was ‘You Don’t Know Me,’ which was recently redone by Michael Buble,” said chairman of the Board of Governors, Norman Northen.

The Cindy Walker Foundation is restoring Walker’s home in Mexia into a museum. Walker was recognized after her death and was inducted into the Songwriter’s Hall of Fame in 2024, Nashville Songwriter’s Hall of Fame in 1970, and she was the first female songwriter to be inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1997.

“Dunn won awards for her music in the eighties, and she retired in the early 2000’s. She left her mark between 1985 thru 2002. In 1987, she was the ACM’s new female artist of the year, CMA’s

new artist of the year, and she was nominated for best country song for the Grammy Awards,” said Northen.

Dunn’s father, Franklin, was a Church of Christ pastor, and her mother, Yvonne, was a Texas hill country landscape artist. Dunn’s art is inspired by her mother. Dunn passed away of ovarian cancer in 2016.

“When speaking with her brother Rodney Dunn, a realtor in Temple, he said, ‘She would have liked donating to a children’s charity like Sleep in Heavenly Peace,’” said Northen. “The program will end with a recording of Silent Night.”

Dunn underwrote a song to raise money for children called when the stars come out at Christmas. It’s a song about how some children dream for a red bicycle, and others hope for a miracle. Dunn was inducted into the Grand Ole Opry in 1989.

“Dunn’s two number one songs are: ‘You Really Had Me Going’ and ‘Are You Ever Gonna Love Me.’ Her song ‘Daddy’s Hands’ was in the top ten at number three. She sang a duet with Michael Murphy and a duet with Kenny Rogers. She had an art gallery in Salado for a number of years,” said Northen.

United Way of Central Texas Hosts 24th Annual Day of Caring

Special to the journal

United Way of Central Texas (UWCT) will be hosting its 24th Day of Caring on Friday, October 3. Volunteers will participate in service projects throughout the community. From painting and landscaping, to reading to children, United Way volunteers will take on a variety of service projects throughout Central Texas, primarily in Belton & Temple areas.

“Day of Caring is an opportunity for our community to come together and address the issues that matter most to them,” said Veshell Greene, Interim President/CEO at United Way of Central Texas. “Day of Caring mirrors the work that United Way of Central Texas does year-round.”

In 2024, we had over 550 volunteers

that will completed 34 projects in the community. 2025, we have almost 700 volunteers to complete 34 projects!

“United Way of Central Texas’ Day of Caring is more than just a day of service,” Greene said. “it is a powerful reminder of how communities can come together to create lasting change. By giving our time and energy, we strengthen the bonds between neighbors and lay the foundation for a brighter, more compassionate future for Central Texas.”

Day of Caring promotes the value of volunteerism and demonstrates that neighbors helping neighbors can create positive change in the lives of Central Texas children, families and seniors. For more information on Day of Caring, please call Veshell Greene at (254) 778-8616 or visit the website to register www.uwct.org.

Belton ISD earns superior financial accountability rating

Special to the Journal

Belton ISD has once again earned the state’s highest mark for financial accountability, achieving a Superior Achievement “A” rating in the School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST).

The FIRST system evaluates school districts on 15 key financial indicators, including fund balance, debt management and overall financial stability. Ratings range from superior achievement, above-standard achievement, and standard achievement to substandard achievement.

This marks the 14th consecutive year Belton ISD has received a Superior Achievement rating. In addition, the district has earned six consecutive years of recognition from both the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) and

the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) for excellence in financial reporting.

“This achievement underscores our unwavering commitment to fiscal responsibility and transparency,” said Superintendent Dr. Malinda Golden. “It is evidence of our focus on managing taxpayer dollars responsibly while keeping student needs at the center of every decision.”

Belton ISD Chief Financial Officer Melissa Lafferty said the honor reflects the hard work of the district’s finance team and the district’s culture of accountability. “We take pride in maintaining the trust of our community through sound financial practices. Earning this recognition year after year shows our consistent commitment to financial excellence,” Lafferty said.

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Former Belton teacher arrested for “invasive” recording of BHS female students

By Lynette Sowell
The Belton Journal

A former Belton High School teacher has been arrested again, this time by U.S. Marshals in Bexar County on state criminal charges for invasive visual recording of several female high school students in a classroom setting.

The announcement came on Monday from the Belton Police Department.

Pietro Victor Giustino, 39, was arrested on Sept. 23. He had previously been arrested on July 18 on federal charges by the FBI for child pornography charges. The depictions in that particular case did not involve local students, but during that investigation, the FBI discovered 13 cellphone videos that it shared with Belton PD to identify and notify victim families and for Belton PD to pursue any applicable state criminal charges.

“The videos were invasive visual recordings of several female students without their apparent knowledge. With the assistance of school staff, it was later determined that the individuals were Belton High School students,” said Christina Waits with the Belton Police Department. “Parents of students who are

believed to be in the recordings have been contacted by Belton Police and/or the Belton Independent School District. If parents have not been contacted, then their children do not appear to be involved.”

The number of students was not specified in the department’s announcement on Monday.

“We appreciate the FBI’s strong partnership and the cooperation of Belton ISD,” Belton Police Chief Larry Berg said. “Anytime a juvenile is the victim of a crime, we take it very seriously. We will pursue justice for any victim of a predatory crime.”

On Sept. 17, Justice of the Peace Cliff Coleman issued two warrants for invasive visual recording. Giustino will be transferred to the Bell County Jail at a later date. As of Tuesday, Giustino was not listed on the inmate list for Bell County.

Malinda Golden, BISD superintendent, likewise issued a statement on Monday regarding Giustino’s arrest and shared the message that was distributed to district families.

“On July 17, 2025, I informed you that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) San Antonio Field Office arrested a now-former Belton High School employee,

Pietro Giustino, on federal charges of possession of child pornography.

“In addition to those charges, local law enforcement has been conducting its own investigation. Today, a warrant was issued for state charges of invasive video recording. Belton ISD continues to fully cooperate with both the FBI and the Belton Police Department. Because this remains an active investigation, no further details are available at this time.

“Based on the limited information provided by the FBI in July, we acted promptly to terminate Giustino’s employment. Belton ISD will not tolerate any behavior that endangers or compromises the safety of our students. We remain firmly committed to providing a safe, supportive learning environment for all children.

Thank you for your understanding and support as we work through this sensitive matter.”

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

Belton ISD hosts community presentations on 2025 bond

Special to the Journal

Belton ISD will share information about proposed projects in the 2025 Bond during an upcoming community presentation.

The first presentation was held at Belton Middle School on Wednesday.

A second presentation will follow next week at Lakewood Elementary, 11200 FM 2305 in Temple, on Monday, October 6, at 5 p.m.

The 2025 Bond proposal is focused on addressing student safety and creating learning spaces that meet the needs of our fast-growing district.

“These meetings are an opportunity for our community to hear the facts, ask questions and understand how the proposed projects align with Belton ISD’s long-term priorities for student learning and safety,” said Superintendent Dr. Malinda Golden. “We value our families, staff, and neighbors and we want everyone to have clear, accessible information as they consider the bond.”

Both presentations will include an overview of the proposal, campus and district impacts and time for Q&A.

For more details about the 2025 Bond, visit bisd.net/bond2025.



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Obits - From Page A3

Savior on September 3, 2025 due to cancer from Agent Orange. He was born on October 14, 1946 in Brenham, Washington County, Texas. He was the son of Oscar R. Sikes and Gloria M. (Bolsins) Sikes. He married Kimberly S. (Vernlund) (Johnson) on May 18, 2002 at Pioneer Park in Bell County, Texas.

Sammy grew up in Temple and attended Temple High School. He and his family were charter members of Meadow Oaks Baptist Church in Temple. Sammy was in the U.S. Army 101st Airborne Division as a paratrooper, where he served two tours in Vietnam. He received several honors and medals while in the Army. Sammy was self-employed as the owner of Southwest Masonry. He learned his masonry skills at a young age from his uncle, Shelley Bolsins. Sammy used to love to go sailing in his sailboat. He loved to ride his Harley motorcycle. He was a member of the elite Bell County Red Rag Motorcycle Society, where he served as Road Captain. He planned all of the blood drives, Toys for Tots drives, fund-raisers and group road trips. Sammy was always helping others and was very independent, not ever asking others for help. When his father became ill, Sammy moved in with him and became his primary caregiver, while still working and running his business. Sammy also loved to spend time fishing at the coast. He loved to cook, especially for the holidays. The turkey and dressing, ham, potato salad, mashed potatoes, deviled eggs, desserts and “Sikes’ Tea” had to be perfect. He loved his pet dogs, especially Red and Zorro. His nieces and nephews referred to him as “the cool uncle.” He loved to joke and tell stories.

Sammy was preceded in death by his parents and brother-in-law, Bobby Wiley, Sr. He is survived by his wife, Kimberly S. (Vernlund) (Johnson) Sikes, son, Michael Ray Sikes (Vanessa) in Temple, stepson, Jeremiah Johnson (LeeAnne) in Killeen, grandchildren: Parker Sikes, Lauren Sikes, Austin Jackson, step grandchildren: Michaela Johnson and Angelica Johnson, brother, Freddy Sikes (Tonie) in

Huntsville, sisters, Mellicent (Sikes) Wiley in Huntsville and Shelley (Sikes) Wilde (Dave) in Temple, sister-in-law, Caroline Hawley (Rick) in Austin, Caryn Ryan in Tempe, Arizona, Mike Vernlund in Seattle, Washington, nieces and nephews: Christy (Sikes) Atkins (Wade), Kerri (Sikes) Thompson (Joel), Travis Sikes (Rian), Bobby Wiley II (Michelle), Heather (Wiley) Christian (Jason), Heath Wiley, Justin Wiley (Joanna), Joey Mraz (Krissy), Chad Mraz, Brian Mraz (Jennifer), several great nieces and nephews, aunt Vanny Bolsins in Temple and numerous cousins and friends.

The family cannot thank enough the pastors, medical staff, honor guards, neighbors and friends for their prayers and thoughtfulness during this time.

There will be a “Celebration of Life” service in the main auditorium at Meadow Oaks Baptist Church, 3001 Meadow Oaks Drive, Temple, Texas 76502 on Friday, October 3, 2025 at 9 a.m.

After the Celebration of Life service, there will be a family and friend visitation in the fellowship hall at the church. Refreshments will be served from 10-11:30 a.m.

Procession from the church to the graveside service will start at 11:30 a.m. The graveside service will be at the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery, at 11463 State Highway 195, Killeen, TX 76542 on Friday, October 3, 2025 at precisely 1 p.m. with military rites. Please allow for the busy Friday afternoon traffic.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Sammy Sikes’ memory can be mailed to The Sikes Family Scholarship Endowment, Attention: Office of University Advancement, SHSU, Box 2537, Huntsville, Texas 77341-2537 or to Meadow Oaks Baptist Church Building Fund, 3001 Meadow Oaks Drive, Temple, Texas 76502.

Please keep the family in your prayers during this time. You may leave a message for the family on the Crawford Bowers Funeral Home’s website in Temple:

The memorial service to be videotaped and available on the church YouTube channel after the service @meadowoaks9482.

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LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Central Counties Services holds Candlelight Vigil

Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Central Counties Services held its first Candlelight Vigil for survivors of suicide, Sept. 25. CCS's LOSS Team (Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors) presented the program at the Fallen Officer Memorial, in Belton from 6-7 p.m. Citizens and Belton Police attended.

James (Randy) Dixon, LOSS Team Coordinator, said the event was to "commemorate the ones we lost this past year. We hope that we can bring some attention to the problems, because this particular area has a higher percentage of suicides than other areas."

Speaking of the LOSS Team, Dixon said, "My job is to help the survivors afterwards. And we do that by going out, either to the scene or a couple of days later. Our job is dependent upon the local police departments and the JPS to let us know when one happens. The LOSS Team helps them get through grief easier...we'll work with them as long as they take...whatever help they need.

There's only fourteen LOSS programs in Texas. So, we're kind of on the cutting edge here in our area."

Felicia Burden, Community Services Manager for Central Counties Services LOSS Team welcomed everyone.

Burden said, "This candlelight vigil is a sacred time for us to gather as a community to honor those we've lost to suicide, distinguish survivors and remind one another that we do not walk alone."

Belton Mayor David K. Leigh spoke at the event.

Leigh said, "We lost our son to suicide a little over a year ago. It's something you can't prepare for. You and your family and your friends have been walking a difficult journey. We mourn with you and the loss of your loved ones."

Some survivors spoke about themselves and the loved ones they lost to suicide.

Burden concluded the evening with the lighting of hand-held candles, saying, "Together we will take a light to remind us that even the smallest light can shine through the great darkness."

Volunteers are needed to help the survivors. Contact James (Randy) Dixon at James.Dixon@ccs1967.org to find out more. Several TV stations were present for the Vigil.



Belton Journal/Michele Weisman

Above left: Community members gather for a candlelight vigil to remember those lost to suicide. Above right: Belton Mayor David K. Leigh speaks about how suicide has impacted his own family. Above: Belton police officers show their support at last week's candlelight vigil.

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A group of People's National Bank former employees celebrated Pat Wallace's 90th birthday at their monthly breakfast.



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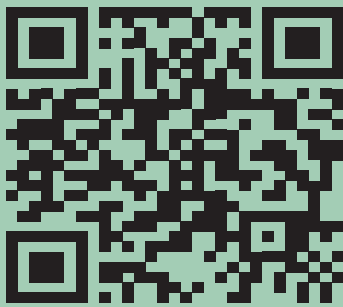
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Boo-tiful Halloween craft ideas

Halloween is a highlight of fall, as children and even adults anxiously await October 31. Similar to the holiday season, people often decorate their homes for Halloween, and even do so well in advance of late October to maximize the amount of time they get to enjoy the trinkets and other items.

Many people enjoy getting hands-on for Halloween. It's possible to craft decorations, personalized treats and festive costumes. Consider these ideas for Halloween craft projects.

3D Pumpkins

Carving pumpkins is a popular Halloween tradition. But there are many people who feel the job is too messy. Instead, a fun way to add personality to pumpkins comes by way of some hot glue and paint. Use a hot glue gun to create a pattern on the outside of the pumpkin. It can be designs, a jack-o'-lantern face or just about anything. Once dry and hardened, use craft paint to go over the entire pumpkin. The raised de-

sign will be evident and add dimension.

Spooktacular Wreath

Adorn the front door with something creative. It can be utterly frightening or something more festive. Start with a premade spring greenery wreath or a wreath frame that you cover with your own greenery. Purchase a round, unfinished wooden sign panel, and paint with black chalkboard paint. Add your own message with chalk or chalk paint. "Keep Away" or "Enter at Your Own Risk" are great Halloween phrases to consider. Attach the sign in the middle of the wreath. You also can add some embellishments to the wreath, including black moss and floral stems and leaves. A glittery black and green ribbon or bow is the finishing touch before hanging.

Boo Treasure Box

Purchase a wooden treasure chest or box from the hobby store. Paint it all black or your favorite Halloween colors. Then add additional designs like spider webs,

bats or pumpkins. Fill the box with treats or small toys. Kids can have fun picking out their treasures.

Halloween Gnomes

Gnomes have been popular for years, and they keep turning up in different iterations. You can craft your own gnomes for Halloween with a few supplies. Start with a 9-inch-tall foam cone. Cut the bottom off the toe part of a solid colored ankle sock just past the heel, and pull it up so it covers the lower few inches of the cone. Add some hot glue to secure, draw a beard shape on the back of the faux fur and cut it out. Attach the beard to the lower part of the cone over the sock. Use a crew length patterned sock to create a hat for the gnome, and glue to the top part of the cone. Glue on a large wood bead for the nose. Decorate the gnome any way you'd like, such as adding felt patches to the sock hat.

Halloween can be even more fun with some creative crafts the entire family can enjoy.

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Retirement: A New Kind of Busy



John C. Perry

Before I retired, someone once told me, “You’re going to love retirement, every day feels like Saturday.” As a former workaholic, that sounded like paradise. Fewer obligations, more freedom, it was an appealing vision.

Fast forward five or six years, and here I am, fully retired ... and somehow just as busy as I ever was. Maybe even busier! What happened? I suppose the old saying is true: a leopard doesn’t change its spots. If you’re wired for a fast-paced life, retirement doesn’t necessarily slow you down, it just shifts the scenery.

I remember another retiree once saying, “I don’t know how I ever had time to work.” That’s me now. My days are packed with meetings,

deadlines, and the familiar feeling that there just aren’t enough hours. Not much different than when I was gainfully employed.

My wife says my problem is simple: I can’t say no. Ask me to serve on a committee, lead a group, or help with a project, and I’ll almost always say, “Sure!” She’s convinced I’m my own worst enemy when it comes to managing my time, and she’s probably right.

But I think I do it because I still want to feel useful. I’m not the type to sit in a rocking chair and meditate all day, though a little of that might do me a lot of good. I’ve also been blessed with reasonably good health, and I’m keenly aware that not everyone my age can say the same. I see friends and peers struggling with health challenges, and my heart goes out to them. So, I keep going. I want to do all I can, while I still can.

A large portion of my time is devoted to my church, and that’s where my heart truly lies. I have a deep passion for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with those who need to hear it. In fact, I’d estimate that a third or more of my time is spent on church-related endeavors.

Jesus gave us clear instructions

in the Great Commission: “Then Jesus came to them and said, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

This passage not only establishes His authority, He also gives us a mission. I believe this world desperately needs Jesus at the center of everything, and I want to do my part, however small, to help move us in that direction. My goal is simple: to help make disciples who go out and make disciples.

So, here’s my suggestion to you, gentle reader: Live your life to the fullest. Do all you can, while you still can. And if you’re a Christian like me, devote a healthy portion of your time to sharing the Good News, which is Jesus Christ. May God bless you!

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



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EDITORIAL

Randomness for the Week

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

When I was young there were two types of t-shirts, the “tank top” and the classic one with sleeves, but two different neck styles. Now there are many types and styles, of a variety of fabrics suitable for various uses and weather, and of course many colors. My father wore a suit and tie to work, and of course a white t-shirt. I guess that seemed normal to me. Now, I wear a t-shirt with any shirt that I wear out in public, including another t-shirt, of the graphic variety. I have summer t-shirts, some that are good for winter wear, some fit tight for support, some are athletic in case I need to do something energetic while I am out. The problem is that most of my t-shirts are a shade of gray. I have a few that are blue, my favorite color, and a couple of white ones that are suitable for a more formal shirt, and

well, a suit. I am quite happy with all of these performance t-shirts, I just wish I could tell the difference in them. Their labels are rubberized print in the collar that washes away within the first few months. I need some way to let me know what I have previously designated this particular shirt for and when to wear it.

OK, that was more than a single thought, and no I did not intend on doing an entire column on t-shirts, as exciting as that may be.

Have you ever been drinking an iced drink, all of the ice stays put as you turn the glass up, then lets go and splashes in your face? Or a similar instance when a splash sends a single drop your way, in slow motion you watch this round ball of liquid heading right toward your eye, and not enough time to

move so you end up with a drop of your drink in your eyeball.

How about getting in bed, all comfy and your pillow just right, it is cool enough that you tuck your arms under the covers and wiggle around until you get the blanket just tight enough to be super comfortable for the night, then you get one of those itches on your nose that just won’t go away so you have to undo all that you just did to scratch that itch for a couple of seconds.

Have you noticed that if you bite your lip or the inside of your cheek those tend to heal up fairly quickly, sometimes the next day, but burn the roof of your mouth with a piece of hot pizza and that is sore for a couple of weeks?

A side note to my editor, I put in these run-on sentences so that it is apparent that I am not

using AI to write my weekly column. In case the misspellings and poor grammar weren’t evidence enough.

Here is an open suggestion to the maker of kitchen roll towels, put a colored line on the perforation so we know where it is located and we can make the attempt to tear it there. I don’t really care about the flowers and designs if I am mopping up a spill, the wet paper towel is going to the trash. When I am trying to grab, pull out and tear a single paper towel to clean up a mess it would be somewhat handy to know where I should expect the paper towel to separate from the remainder of the roll. At least when I have half a roll pulled out and I am highly frustrated it would help me know where I should put my effort into ripping off and minimize my losses.

Why do we have sour cream? Did someone leave good cream out for a few days and thought that might be good on a potato? I am not really complaining as I like sour cream on a few food items, baked potatoes for example. Sour milk is not very good for anything, and actually the same thing goes for buttermilk, which people actually buy.

While we are on the topic of baked potatoes, why are they so big all the time? Again, I am not complaining, just curious. Could we get a smaller potato in the same recipe, although I would probably use the same amount of butter, sour cream, and cheese as I would on one of the huge baked potatoes.

I hope everyone has a thought filled week.

Gang Alliance

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

I live in the country, down a rural, dead-end farm road far away from city lights and traffic. Until recently, I’ve enjoyed the peaceful existence this lifestyle brought. But that’s all changed. We have not one, but two gangs of hoodlums that have decided our yard is a great place to hang out. We’ve tried to run them off separately... they’ve responded by joining forces. I’m worried they might win.

The first gang showed up a couple of months ago wearing suits of armor, vandalizing our yard every night after we went to bed. Appar-

ently, we have good grass—home to fat, juicy grubs, and the armadillo gang likes to get drunk on their juice. For weeks, every morning we’d wake up to a new section of our yard dug up like a graverobber in King Tut’s tomb. A few shotgun shells later, we’d scared them off.

Within days, they were back—or so we thought. My son, who is an encyclopedia of little-known trivia, noticed the dig patterns were different. “Armadillos didn’t do this. These marks were made by skunks.”

Skunks? Really? Sure enough,

we spotted a family of skunks slinking around the property.

Here’s the thing. Birdshot may scare off an armadillo. But how in the world do you get rid of a skunk without making things a thousand times worse?

I figured we’d just surrender. I don’t need a pretty yard nearly as much as I need oxygen.

But my brilliant husband and son wouldn’t give up that easily. Together, they devised a plan to catch the skunks in the act, herd them out of our yard through the back gate until they were out of our air space, and shoot at them un-

til they ran away. (At least that’s what they told me, because as bad as skunks are, they’re still cute, and I don’t want them dead. We’ve agreed to a “Don’t ask, don’t tell” policy when it comes to controlling the critters in my yard, and I’m okay with that.)

But just about the time this genius skunk plan was hatched, the armadillos came back. The two groups joined forces in an effort to keep us guessing.

What would it look like if we humans joined forces like that? We all have our flaws. None of us is perfect. But what if, instead of work-

ing against each other, we decided to work together against the dark forces that threaten our peaceful existence? What if liberals and conservatives realized we are not each other’s enemies... evil is.

I don’t know if that can happen. Then again, I didn’t think skunks and armadillos could live peacefully in the same yard, digging the same dirt, sharing the same field of grubs. Highly unlikely, but it’s possible when each one uses its strengths.

I refuse to give in. I refuse to back down to evil and hate. Will you stand with me? I’ll even let you

choose your colors—skunk or armadillo. Together, I know we’ll form the winning team.

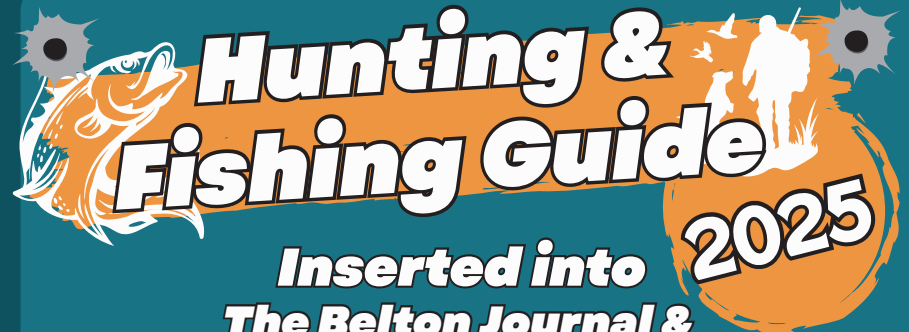
“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”

Romans 14:19.



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B4 - From Page A1



Belton Journal/Shanna Grote

Above are highlights from last weekend’s Bacon, Blues, and Brews festival, which included live music, a hog calling contest, family dogs, and crowds galore – and plenty of bacon.

the courthouse lawn.

Bacon Bingo was a big hit, filling every seat during all four time slots over the two-day festival. Bacon Bingo was hosted by Matty Serna with prizes donated by H-E-B. Bacon Bingo consisted of players playing traditional style bingo with various bacon player cards. Prizes ranged from nerf guns to soft fall blankets. Bacon Bingo was a shady place to cool off and enjoy time with family and friends.

Serna stated, “I really enjoyed hosting Bacon Bingo at B4 and it was fun to visit with festival goers.”

Serna is well known for running various types of bingo and kitchen karaoke around town which is a type of amateur karaoke with limited equipment. Jerry and LaVon Watson, visiting from Brighton, Col. for two weeks, joined in on the bingo fun while relishing a sweet treat from Scotti’s Italian Ice.

LaVon stated, “We have never been to this festival before but it seems like a fun place to be.”

B4 Market was open both days of the festival with a variety of vendors.

Michelle and Ruben Villarreal, owners of Soda Loca Dirty Soda and More were firsttime vendors.

Michelle said, “we heard about this event from our friends at Wat Tha Truck who is also a vendor at the event. Soda Loca has only been open a few months and this festival has been great for business; we plan to return next year.”

Soda Loca offers an array of sodas with added ingredients such as sweet cream, lime, and cinnamon. Their menu also offers slushies, burritos, and a Loca Bacon Churro.

Seth Krumnow, owner of Krafty Krum, stayed very busy at his booth all day Saturday. Krumnow is a caricature sketch artist. Festival goers laughed and talked with Krumnow as he sketched them into playful cartoons.

Krumnow while wearing his “Body By Bacon” shirt donated by The Giving Tree stated, “I have drawn a lot of great people today and I have also drawn a lot of dogs which is really fun. This has been fantastic, and I hope to have a booth again next year.”

You can find more information about Krafty Krum or follow along on his YouTube page by visiting his website at www.kraftykrum.com.

Tammy Valdez, owner of Easy Life Boutique was also a first-time vendor. Valdez stated, “we carry women’s and men’s fashion, boots, fits, and accessories and we are known for our Charm and Hat Bar”. Easy Life has two locations in Belton, one inside Lindy Lu’s on the Square and their new location at Charm & Crown. Valdez said in preparing for B4, “we had a lot of steaming, tagging, and making sure our booth shows off our fun, stylish, and community driven vibe”.

Many local breweries and wineries such as Bold Republic, Barrow, and Bird Creek were busy showing off their fall favorites. Curmudgeons out of Gatesville was giving away samples of their locally famous Honey Mead. Scores Pizza and Wings of Belton had a very large raised trailer that featured a double-sided bar for guest to chill out and relax over a drink. Lowe’s Legs was a popular spot to grab a turkey leg or roasted corn on the cob. The City of Belton offered sunglasses, slap bracelets, and an opportunity to provide feed back regarding the future of Belton’s parks, trails, and programs with a survey. The City of Belton also promoted their upcoming Christmas on the Chisolm Trail in downtown Belton on Dec 5th and 6th. For more information on the City of Belton and events please call 254.933.5260 or visit beltontexas.gov.

The food trucks competed in a Bacon-Inspired Food Truck Competition from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday. Riptip BBQ entered a brown chicken bacon bite, Wat Tha Truck entered a piggy back chicken mash, and Rusty Shells put forth the bacon wrapper. Lulamae’s cooked up a bacon bourbon bread pudding, Twisted Pig entered an amazing pig tail, Lowe’s Legs a bacon wrapped sausage, and Soda Loca their loca bacon churro.

The food truck that stole the taste buds of the judges was Old Time Funnel Cakes with their bacon loaded ribbon fries. Old Time Funnel Cakes received \$1,000 for their first-place prize. Wat Tha Truck, a repeat vendor at B4 was awarded \$500 for the people’s choice award.

One of the most popular events of the festival is the pig calling contest. The Youth category, ages 12 and under, began at 2pm on Saturday. Contestants are ask to use their best pig call in front of the main stage. Winners are chosen by round of applause by the audience. Lillian Schexnider

was the first-place winner of the youth category with her loud and clear pig call. Lillian received a red trophy topped with a golden pig as her family cheered and embraced her.

The adult competition offered fewer contestants but the intensity of the calls was exciting to hear and see. Jennifer Smith stole the show in her pink overalls and googly eyes pig shirt and a pig call that can’t be beat. Jennifer is a two-time pig call winner taking home first place last year as well.

Jennifer stated, “I have been showing hogs since I was eight years old. What a better way to show off my talents than in the B4 pig calling contest.”

B4 was full of amazing live music performances. Texas Flood who plays live blues closed out Friday evening. Texas Flood historically has closed out Saturday night but after having to miss last year to the crowd’s dismay was featured Friday night this year. Texas Flood is a fan favorite at the festival and drew a large crowd. Festival attendees brought lawn chairs and blankets to enjoy on the grassy area in front of the court house and in the street in front of the stage.

On Saturday after the 1st Team Band, Jay White & the Blues Commanders took the stage at 1 p.m. Jay White boasts Belton as his hometown and interestingly has no formal guitar training despite being extremely talented and successful in his music career. Jay White & the Blues Commanders played lively blues perfect for Saturday afternoon.

Next up was Lone Star Skynard, a tribute to Lynyrd Skynyrd. Lone Star Skynard was upbeat and had people dancing in the street while the bands long hair and electric guitars danced around on stage. Lone Star Skynard interacted with the crowd and created an electric environment. The streets and lawn filled to nearly max capacity as everyone prepared for the final act Saturday evening.

The Damn Torpedoes paid tribute to Tom Petty to close out the festival. The Damn Torpedoes rocked the stage as fans cheered, danced, and sang along. It was no question why this band has been asked to play at B4 year after year.

The City of Belton was busy at work maintaining traffic control, cleaning up, and providing a safe and clean environment for all attendees and vendors. The festival was a great success and fun for all who were able to come out.

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UMHB

Belton ISD runners will descend on Heritage Park for the Pro-Fit Last Chance Invitational

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

This is the final stop before postseason begins

After logging countless hours across hundreds of miles, the cross country season is approaching its finish line. District meets for Belton, Lake Belton and New Tech are less than a week away, and at the events, only the top three teams and top 10 individuals extend their campaigns.

Then, only regional meets separate harriers from the University Interscholastic League Cross Country State Championships, and today is the last preparation prior to embarking on the trek.

Teams from across the area, including all three Belton ISD programs, will descend on Heritage Park for the Pro-Fit Last Chance Invitational. The event begins at 8 a.m.

Lady Dragons freshman Ella Megoulla enters today's race with

momentum after winning the girls junior varsity championship at last week's Robinson Invitational. She completed the two-mile course in 14 minutes, 45.4 seconds.

Her closest competition was teammate Claire Thomas, who posted a silver-medal time of 15:20.8, beating out Bruceville-Eddy's Kylie Tergerson (3rd, 15:29.0).

Daniella Idumebor also raced for New Tech, placing 19th (16:48.6).

The Dragons did not field a complete team in the boys junior varsity division, but they did produce a top-10 showing thanks to David Martinez, who was ninth (19:40.1).

Daniel Zubaty (13th, 19:59.0), Desmond Long (25th, 20:40.6) and Zorian Hajduk (71st, 26:52.6) also represented New Tech on the five-kilometer route.

Belton traveled to compete

in the annual Granbury "Race for the Loot," where the Lady Tigers and Tigers placed seventh and 10th, respectively, in the Class 5A-6A division.

Paced by sophomore Isabella Warner (38th, 22:01.36) and junior Roxanna Delgado (40th, 22:02.32), the Lady Tigers amassed 232 points. The score was rounded out by junior Nataly Valdez (51st, 22:35.83), freshman Ayla Wakershauser (57th, 23:04.57) and senior Delilah Hoffman (64th, 23:26.17).

Additionally, senior Destiny Schutz (68th, 23:47.50), sophomore Madyson Hartnett (71st, 23:59.98) and freshman Natalie Mott (74th, 24:12.10) raced for Belton, but their times did not count toward the team total.

Highland Park easily captured the team title with 28 points as junior Ryan Sontag (1st, 18:53.15) and sophomore Finley Heckler (2nd, 18:56.40) were the top two finishers, beating out

sophomore Landrie Coker (3rd, 19:21.28), who guided Arlington Martin (56) to second place.

Burleson Centennial (3rd, 80) and Cleburne (4th, 99) completed the top four.

Martin (1st, 69), Centennial (2nd, 72), Highland Park (3rd, 75) and Cleburne (4th, 116) occupied the top four spots in the boys five-kilometer race.

The Tigers were 10th (259) with junior Jose Perez-Diaz (27th, 17:47.04), senior Palu Maringathuparambil (33rd, 18:07.67), senior Rosalio Parra (74th, 19:30.34), freshman Ethan Trevino (77th, 19:40.91) and junior Hayden Brown (78th, 19:41.70) accounting for the points.

Alexander Castelan (83rd, 20:03.63), a junior, and sophomore Nelson Funez (89th, 20:35.46) also raced.

Granbury senior Gannon Dolan (1st, 15:55.44) won the race with Chisholm Trail senior Xavier Mendez (2nd, 16:19.57)

and Centennial sophomore Landon Martinez (3rd, 16:49.75) following.

Lake Belton's penultimate competition before district occurred at Saturday's Georgetown ISD Invitational, where the Lady Broncos scored 309 points to place 11th.

The Lady Broncos' point-producers were Keira Dzenowski (25th, 20:07.5), Lucy Loa (70th, 21:19.7), Madelyn Rivas (72nd, 21:20.4), Jenna Benedick (73rd, 21:21.0) and Alayna Fulton (90th, 21:42.7), while Sarah Gray (101st, 22:02.2), Elizabeth Sandlin (105th, 22:07.2), Demi Fisher (106th, 22:08.8), Clara Hill (116th, 22:32.5) and Claire Henn (137th, 23:20.8) also competed.

Georgetown won the team title with 76 points.

Individual champion Landon Fluckiger (1st, 15:13.5) and bronze medalist Leo Brasil (3rd,

See **RUNNERS**,
Page B2



With district win in pocket Lake Belton heads south for game against East View

By Tony Adams
The Belton Journal

Texas high school football has a funny way of turning on a dime.

Just ask Lake Belton head coach Brian Cope.

With Leander Rouse up by 10 points with 9:22 remaining in the game last Friday night at Tiger Field, the Raiders opted to go for a dagger: a successful onside kick attempt to keep the ball away from the Broncos' powerful offense.

What they got was a head scratch from the football gods, and then a 50-yard onside kick return for a touchdown by Josh Lighthall.

It started a 21-point swing in which all three facets kicked in great plays in a 49-38 win.

"Josh Lighthall with huge play," Cope said. "AJ Peters is the 212 player of the game because of his special teams' effort. Chuong Long (7-of-7 in point after conversions) has done a good job being consistent. We won the big play and starting field position

and were one yard away from winning the net punting battle. It was a good job all around."

With special teams setting the table for the turnaround, it set the offense up to add to their success. Maverik Maddux did an excellent job of controlling the ball, mixing in Zyien Dupree and Arrington on the run, and working passes into Davion Peters, Brock von Rajcs, Zion Harness, Luke Phillips, and Logan Winkler. The offensive line gave him plenty of time to make offense happen, with a 455-yard output overall.

"A great job by our offense," Cope said. "We scored three out of five times in the first half. In the second half, it takes three scores to win the game, and we ended up scoring four when you count the kick return. Our receiving corps had 11 dominating blocks, so we won the perimeter, and offensive line did great job in pass protection. Then, at the end of the game, to run the ball to win and seal it was outstanding to watch. I am proud of that group for them playing

a complete game."

The Broncos gave up a good number of yards on defense but picked off two key passes and had several big third and fourth down stops that gave the offense some short-field opportunities to convert.

"Outstanding job by our defense when it counted," Cope said. "Gavin Owens and Gavin Stewart played outstanding. We won the turnover battle and the explosive play battle which is always so important in the game."

Next up for The Lake Show: a trip to Birkelbach Field in Georgetown to take on the East View Patriots. The offense passed for 130 yards per game and rushed for 148 in their 31-17 win over Leander Glenn. It is a very balanced offense, as the Pats average 169.3 yards passing and 162.8 yards per game rushing.

"They are minimal in their formations but very effective in what they do," Cope explained. "They

See **BRONCOS**,
Page B2

Tigers have bye, ready for Ellison on Oct. 9

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Tigers' time for rest has arrived.

For the past five weeks, Belton has competed, traveling across the area to clash with elite competition in preparation for the District 10-5A, Division II schedule, which will determine the program's playoff fate.

This week, however, the Tigers are off, receiving their bye ahead of hosting Killeen Ellison on Oct. 9 to begin league play.

Belton follows with games at Waco University (Oct. 17), versus visiting Bryan Rudder (Oct. 24) and Waco (Oct. 30) and at Brenham (Nov. 7).

Upon returning from their break, the Tigers will look to earn a fifth consecutive postseason appearance, but to do so, they must end their current losing skid at some point.

After earning back-to-back road victories by beating Pflugerville Hendrickson 21-17 and Georgetown 34-26, Belton suffered three straight defeats, falling to Georgetown East View (24-10) and San Angelo Central (49-21) by double digits before almost upsetting state-ranked Cuero last week.

It took a late rally to do so, though.

After a hard-fought, back-and-forth first half, state-ranked Cuero exploded for 21 unanswered points to assume a commanding 42-24 lead with 4 minutes, 8 seconds remaining in regulation.

Belton refused to succumb to the scenario, however, rallying to take a one-point advantage, 43-42, before the Class 4A,

Division II No. 7 Gobblers produced a 94-yard touchdown drive on the ensuing possession to emerge with a 50-43 victory.

The outcome concluded a contest that witnessed the teams combine for 65 points in the second half.

On the heels of a 30-yard touchdown connection between seniors Jaxxon Marie and Walker Dietze to give Cuero an 18-point advantage in the fourth quarter, which came after recovering a kickoff, the Tigers appeared to be doomed.

Approximately two minutes later, though, senior running back Gino Zecca's 10-yard touchdown sparked a 19-0 run for Belton.

A fumble recovery led to sophomore quarterback Sawyer Harbin finding Asa Thomas, a senior, for a six-yard touchdown, and after recovering an onside kick, the Tigers needed one play to convert as Harbin connected with Gavin Ross for a 52-yard score.

Unfortunately, the Gobblers responded with a 94-yard march into the end zone and added a two-point conversion to punctuate the contest's scoring.

The outcome drops Belton's record to 2-3.

Cuero (5-0) opened the game by starting at its own 1-yard line, and it did not work out well as the Gobblers were forced to punt away the possession less than a minute later.

The Tigers capitalized on the ensuing drive, covering 46 yards in four plays with Zecca breaking free for an 18-yard touchdown to give Belton a 7-0 advantage with 10:00 remaining

See **TIGERS**,
Page B2



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Lake Belton Junior ranked in top 100 Texas recruits

By: Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

At 5-feet 11-inches and 165 pounds, Lake Belton junior wide receiver Davion Peters has carved out his place as one of the most electric playmakers in Texas high school football.

A three-star recruit according to 247Sports, Peters is ranked the No. 79 wide receiver in the nation and the No. 71

overall recruit in Texas for the Class of 2026 and he’s only getting started.

Peters rise has been fueled by his versatility and production on both the ground and through the air.

In 2023, his first varsity season, he flashed his dynamic ability in limited touches. He rushed for 170 yards on just 13 carries, scoring two rushing touchdowns, and added another 378 yards and

five touchdowns on 18 receptions. Those numbers were only a preview of what was to come.

In 2024, Peters emerged as a true go-to weapon for the Broncos. He became a bigger part of the rushing attack, carrying the ball 60 times for 506 yards and 10 touchdowns. At the same time, he established himself as one of the top receivers in Central Texas, hauling in 57 passes for 706 yards and six touchdowns. His ability to make defenders miss and turn short plays into big gains made

him nearly impossible to game plan against.

Now in the 2025 season, Peters continues to show why major college programs are lining up to land his commitment. Through just four games, he has already recorded 14 catches for 281 yards and three touchdowns. Whether lined up wide, in the slot, or in the backfield, Peters has proven he can make an impact anywhere on the field.

That versatility has not gone unnoticed by college recruiters. Peters holds offers from

Arkansas, Illinois, Houston, Boston College, and Baylor. After weighing his options, he decided to stay close to home, verbally committing to Baylor. For the Bears, Peters represents exactly the type of explosive playmaker who can thrive in the Big 12.

For Lake Belton, Peters has become the heartbeat of the offense, a leader in the locker room and a nightmare matchup on Friday nights. His combination of speed, vision, and toughness allows him to contribute in

multiple ways, whether breaking free on a deep route or powering through defenders on a jet sweep.

With a full season left to add to his already impressive résumé, Peters is positioning himself as one of the premier prospects to come out of Central Texas in recent years. His commitment to Baylor ensures fans won’t have to travel far to keep watching him shine.

For now, though, Peters’ focus remains on helping Lake Belton chase victories and make noise in the playoffs.



Financial steps to prepare for Alzheimer’s and dementia

Scot Hrbacek, CFP® Financial Advisor

Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia affect more than 7 million Americans, per a 2025 report by the Alzheimer’s Association. The emotional toll of watching a loved one’s health decline can be overwhelming. And the financial burden can be significant too.

Hopefully these diseases never impact your family, but it’s important to be financially prepared. Here are some steps to consider:

First, check your family’s health insurance options, including Medicare, supplemental medical policies, long-term care policies

and even veterans’ benefits.

You’ll also want to ensure legal documents are in place — such as a durable power of attorney for finances and health care decisions. An attorney can help.

For caregivers who pay health care costs out of pocket, there may be tax credits and deductions. These benefits vary by state, so consult with a tax advisor about your eligibility.

Work with qualified professionals to take proactive financial steps. It can help provide confidence for the journey ahead.

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

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Runners - From Page B1

15:25.4) helped Round Rock (69) win the boys championship.

The Broncos were 21st (601). Jack McCullagh (115th, 18:01.9), Drew Houston (136th, 18:23.0), Josiah Briggs (140th, 18:28.9), Tyler Adkins-Beltran (141st, 18:31.5) and Cooper Schels (147th, 18:42.3) were responsible for the score.

Austin Adams (163rd, 19:07.5) and Efren Romero-Meza (182nd, 19:59.4) also raced for Lake Belton.

Waco’s Heart of Texas Soccer Complex will host the District 16-5A meet Oct. 8, while the District 19-3A meet will be held at Cameron on Oct. 6.

Broncos - From Page B1

have two very talented receivers and two good running backs. Their quarterback moved from receiver and can run really well along with running their offense as well. This is another big test for our defense. We must get off the field when we get the chance.”

Defensively, the Broncos have been able to handle both aspects of offenses through the first four games. They were extremely aggressive against the Rouse passing game, and it affected the run game as well.

“They keep stepping up in big moments,” Cope said. “Gavin Stewart and Braxtan Cope in the back end, along with Jy Sherman and Christian Onchweri, have done outstanding. Gavin Owens is leading the linebackers, and Evan Lazott and Caleb Chandler are doing a great job in the front seven. They are leading from the front, and our team is responding to them.”

The Patriots are second overall in 8-5A-I in points allowed per game with 24.3. Defensively, they are aggressive in the front seven and play the pass well.

“They are a 3-4 defense who blitzes two almost every play, Cope said. “They force you into man-to-man matchups on the offensive line, and we must win those. They are talented across the board with their secondary being outstanding. This will be a battle of strength versus strength. In the little SEC, every week is going to be one that you must bring it.”

The Broncos’ passing game has gotten into the groove as of late, with averaging 210 yards per game. The run game is averaging 130 yards per contest through four games. Please

talk about the Broncos’ offense and what we expect to see out of them on Friday.

“We have to execute our plan,” Cope said. “We did that in two of the four games this year. In district, you do not have a chance to miss. We have to win the perimeter and take advantage of their aggressiveness. It is going to be another tough test because they put tons of pressure on you.”

Bouncing back from the program’s first two-game losing streak, Lake rebounded with two huge wins and has another opportunity to go 1-0 again on Friday.

“We have to respond to success,” Cope said. “It is easy when you lose to respond. But when you win two in row, you have to practice even harder. This is now a six-week battle, and we have to take it one week at a time.”

Tigers - From Page B1

in the first period.

After exchanging fruitless possessions, the Gobblers crossed the goal line with 10:47 left in the second quarter, tying the contest 7-7 on a five-yard touchdown pass from Marie to Dietze.

The score held until 81 seconds remained in the half, when Harbin, who assumed the starting role under center prior to halftime last week following an injury to junior Will Shepard, punched in a 1-yard touchdown to cap off a 92-yard drive spanning almost five minutes.

The cushion was immediately deflated, though, thanks to Marie’s 34-yard touchdown to junior Camelo Perez with 26 second remaining, and the squads went into halftime tied 14-14.

Tigers senior kicker Corin Ramesar connected on a 22-yard field goal to begin the third-quarter scoring, but a 31-yard touchdown from Marie to junior D’Zayvin Bonner sent the Cuero back atop

Harbin and Achilles Palomares combined for a 42-yard score with 8:11 left in the third quarter, but the Gobblers reached the end zone approximately two minutes later to begin their rally.

Last year, the Tigers only won two games, but they were critical district victories against Rudder and Waco, which secured their playoff berth.

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Lake Belton keeps district momentum rolling with two big wins

By **Tony Adams**
The Belton Journal

The Lake Belton Broncos began their District 16-5A week on Friday afternoon as they hosted the Killeen Ellison Eagles.

Lake Belton celebrated their

annual Go For Gold Game, which is in recognition of those who have battled or are battling pediatric cancer.

On the court, the Broncos were in control for most of the evening, as they survived an Eagles attack in the second game

but survived to win the match, 3-1.

Scores of the game were 25-12, 23-25, 25-8, and 25-7.

On Tuesday, the Broncos traveled to Waco High School to take on the Lions.

Lake Belton took Waco's

best shot. However, the Broncos were steadfast in their approach to the match and swept the Lions in straight sets.

The scores of the match were 25-17, 25-17, and 25-9.

Belton's win over Killeen Chaparral on Tuesday gave the

Broncos first place outright at 3-0.

The Broncos and Bobcats will battle on Friday in Killeen at 5:30 pm. Lake will complete the first part of District 16-5A play on Tuesday evening at 6:30 pm against Waco University.

Belton Lake: Stillhouse

GOOD. Water normal stain; 83 degrees; 0.04 feet above pool. With any luck, this will be the last ho-hum report for quite a while. The lake is near turnover and the great autumn fishing it will bring. Hopefully the midweek cold front will spark the turnover. Lows are to be in the 60s with highs in the 80s for the foreseeable future. There is only about 4 degrees difference between the surface temperature and the air temperature at 60-65 feet, so just a few cool days and nights will do it. In the meantime, fishing is still tough as white bass and hybrid striped bass roam about in search of shad and remain suspended most of the daylight hours, oblivious to any bottom features. Extensive use of side-imaging to cover ground, in conjunction with downriggers used to put bait just above the fish with precision, is producing the best with #12 Pet Spoons on the downriggers. If an area seems to have a good density of fish and bait present, slow down and cast the MAL Heavy or MAL Mini horizontally using a countdown method for suspended fish or the sawtooth method for bottom-oriented fish. Leave one rod hanging vertically in a rod holder with the bait very near bottom, so you can race it up past them as they show beneath the boat on Garmin LiveScope or 2D sonar. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Catfish are excellent. Anglers can find blue catfish around sand flats and river channels in 10-20 feet of water. Larger fresh cut baits have been effective for trophy size fish. Eater fish under 10 pounds can be caught deadsticking with small cut shad along ledges and river channels. Channel catfish are great and can be caught 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; 83 degrees; 0.03 feet above pool. With any luck, this will be the last ho-hum report for quite a while. The lake is near turnover and the great autumn fishing it will bring. Hopefully the midweek cold front will spark the turnover. Lows are to be in the 60s with highs in the 80s for the foreseeable future. There is only about 4 degrees difference between the surface temperature and the air temperature at 60-65 feet, so just a few cool days and nights will do it. In the meantime, fishing is still tough as white bass and hybrid striped bass roam about in search of shad and remain suspended most of the daylight hours, oblivious to any bottom features. Extensive use of side-imaging to cover ground, in conjunction with downriggers used to put bait just above the fish with precision, is producing the best with #12 Pet Spoons on the downriggers. If an area seems to have a good density of fish and bait present, slow down and cast the MAL Heavy or MAL Mini horizontally using a countdown method for suspended fish or the sawtooth method for bottom-oriented fish. Leave one rod hanging vertically in a rod holder with the bait very near bottom, so you can race it up past them as they show beneath the boat on Garmin LiveScope or 2D sonar. Some smaller, schoolie-sized largemouth surfacing, but the action is light and spread far and wide. A small, clear soft plastic on a jighead cast fast and accurately is about the only thing these shad-eating bass will respond to consistently. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service.



Lady Tigers end Chaparral's win streak

By **Clay Whittington**
The Belton Journal

Killeen Chaparral won 13 consecutive district matches stretching back to 2023. Tuesday evening, the Lady Tigers ended the streak.

The defending District 16-5A champions traveled to Belton with an unblemished record through two contests this season, but the hopes of earning another undefeated title were dashed as the Lady Tigers swept the Lady Bobcats.

The last time Chaparral suffered a district loss was at Killeen Ellison on Oct. 20, 2023.

With the victory, Belton is tied for second

place in the district standings, owning an identical 2-1 record with the Lady Bobcats.

Lake Belton sits atop the field, improving to 3-0 by winning 25-17, 25-17, 25-9 at Waco, while Ellison (1-2), Waco University (1-2) and Waco (0-3) round out the field.

The Lady Trojans went the distance with the Lady Eagles on Tuesday, escaping Ellison's gymnasium with a 25-27, 30-28, 25-23, 12-25, 15-3 victory.

Now, the Lady Tigers must contend with the Lady Eagles, who make the trip to Belton on Friday for a 5:30 p.m. start.

Last season, the squads split their encounters.

In the first round, the Lady Tigers fell 25-20,

25-14, 26-24 on the road before avenging the outcome with a 25-19, 25-18, 25-17 win on their home floor in the rematch.

Undoubtedly, sophomore Brylee Renegar will be key for Belton in this year's series after posting eight kills versus Chaparral.

Regardless of Friday's result, next week, the Lady Tigers will need to become road warriors, playing four of their final six matches away from home.

Belton plays at Waco on Tuesday to conclude the first round of district, and the Lady Tigers follow by traveling to Lake Belton on Oct. 10. Then, they sandwich trips to Chaparral (Oct. 17) and Ellison (Oct. 21) in between home matches ver-

sus visiting University (Oct. 14) and Waco (Oct. 24).

Should the Lady Tigers earn a playoff berth, the bi-district round would be played between Oct. 30 and Nov. 1.

In 2024, Belton advanced to the second round of the Class 5A, Division II bracket, sweeping Kaufman in to hoist the bi-district championship trophy, but Po-teet eliminated the Lady Tigers in the ensuing round with a straight-set victory.

Overall, Belton is 24-11 following a shaky start resulting in a 1-5 record, but the Lady Tigers have lost back-to-back matches only once since. During the same span, Belton experienced a five- and 10-match winning streak.



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10/09: Couples Night Out, 42 Dominoes, Mexican Train Dominoes	10/23: 42 Dominoes, Mexican Train Dominoes
10/10: TGIF Lunch	10/24: Trailblazers Walking Group
10/13: Bookworms	10/25: Jimmy's Egg
10/14: Singing Bluebonnets	10/27: Well Read Women, Monday Canasta
10/15: Popcorn Bridge	10/28: Singing Bluebonnets
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CAC announces 2025 concert lineups

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

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

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.

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.

Bell County Master Gardeners - Oct 10

Friday, Oct 10 at noon, Troy Community Center, 201 East Main Street, Troy. The Bell County Master Gardeners and the Troy Chamber of Commerce invite you to an engaging Lunch and Learn seminar with Master Gardener Sherry Oermann. We will dive into the fascinating world of bee to explore their life cycle, learn where they live and how they behave and answer common questions such as why do bees sting? Why are they attracted to soda cans? What does it mean when we see a big cluster of bees on a tree limb? You'll even get to see and touch a bee suit and other beekeeping items in this interactive session! This event is free and open to the public. Bring your lunch and your curiosity! Registration online at <https://forms.gle/EVzzrg1RV36x2xPM9> or contact gabywarlick@gmail.com or call 254-400-7345.

Bell County Master Gardeners - Oct 11

Join us for the final session of our Let's Talk About Herbs series: Winterizing Made Easy. In this seasonal class, we'll cover everything you need to know to prepare your herb garden for winter, from overwintering tender perennials, to protecting container plants and knowing what to cut back and what to leave alone. You will learn smart strategies tailored for our Central Texas conditions. Saturday, Oct 11, 2025, 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. at Oak Grove outside of the AgriLife Extension Office, 1605 N. Main Street in Belton No registration needed.

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.

250th Birthday of the United States Marine Corps Ball - Nov 8

The Louis Wayne Qualls Marine Corps League Detachment 1249 is proud to be hosting the 250th Birthday of the United States Marine Corps Ball on November 8th, 2025, starting at 5pm at the Lone Star Convention Center, Bldg 5764, 24th St, Fort Hood, TX. Events will include Traditional Marine Corps Birthday Ceremonies, Guest Speaker, Sit down Dinner, Music, Dancing, Cash Bar. Tickets are \$65.00 per person; corporate sponsorship is available. Open to all, Black Tie / Military Dress. Tickets must be purchased by October 31st, 2025, at www.mcl1249tx.com. No ticket sales at the door. Website will have a link to get your base pass online and will be active 2 weeks prior to the Ball.

Annual Library Art Show - Nov 15

Mary Ruth Briggs Library in Morgan's Point Resort will hold our 7th Annual Library Art Show on Saturday, November 15th from 6:00 to 8:30 PM at the Garrett and Mic Hill Event Center located at 60 Morgan's Point Blvd in MPR. Drop off times for art pieces are as follows: Friday, November 14th, 9:00 AM until 6:00 PM and Saturday, November 15th, 9:00 AM to Noon. Art entries are limited to 3 per artist and should not include previous entries. Artwork that can be hung must have a hanger on the back that can be suspended on wires to be hung on a wall. Include a 3 x 5 white index card with a short description of your work. Questions? Contact Library@mprtx.us. Cash prizes and ribbons will be awarded for Children and Adults (16 and up) as well as a Peoples Choice Award as decided by the attendees. For online applications see the website at morganspointresorttx.com or paper applications are available at MPR City Hall at 8 Morgan's Point Blvd, Morgan's Point Resort Texas 76513. We look forward to seeing you for a night of music by the LBHS Silver Strings, wine, appetizers and fun!

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@mcl1249tx.comfor more inforamtion.

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet both on TUESDAY, 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 kathhookandneedle@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.

Community Information

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

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

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

Citizens Helping in Police Service (CHIPS)

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

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

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

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



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EMPLOYMENT

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LEGALS

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION - CIVIL
CAUSE NO. 25DCV353776

TO: XVAVIER TUCK

Greetings:

You are hereby commanded to appear by filing a written answer to the ORIGINAL PETITION at or before 10 o'clock AM of the first Monday after the expiration of 42 days from the date of issuance of this Citation, the same being Monday, at or before 10 o'clock AM, before the Honorable 169th Judicial District Court, Bell County, Texas to be held at the Bell County District Courts Building in Belton, Texas. Said ORIGINAL PETITION was filed in said

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Fridays @ 6:30 pm

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vfwhtwpost4008.org

LEGALS

court on May 09, 2025.

The file number of said suit being No. 25DCV353776. The names of the parties in said suit are:

CARRINGTON MORTGAGE SERVICES, LLC VS. STEPHANO TUCK,XAVIER TUCK,THE UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF JAMES D. TUCK, Deceased

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

This proceeding concerns the foreclosure of a lien on the following real property and improvements commonly known as 4305 Hank Drive, Killeen, TX 76549, and more particularly described as LOT TWENTY-FOUR (24), IN BLOCK SEVEN (7), OF CONDER VALLEY PHASE FOUR, IN THE CITY OF KILLEEN, BELL COUNTY, TEXAS, ACCORDING TO THE PLAT OF RECORD IN CABINET C, SLIDE 368-B, C & D, PLAT RECORDS OF BELL COUNTY, TEXAS.

This was issued at the request of attorney: BRADLEY CONWAY MILLER GEORGE & SUGGS PLLC 6080 TENNYSON PKWY STE 100 Plano TX 75024.

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

Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office in Belton, Texas, on SEPTEMBER 11, 2025.

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

By: M Cortez Deputy

09.18, 09.25,10.02,10.09

APPLICATION HAS BEEN MADE WITH THE TEXAS ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION

for a Wine- Only Package Store Permit by NAS 2025 LLC,DBA Express Mart to be located at 300 N Main St, Belton, Bell Co., Texas. Members of said LLC are Akbarali Lakhani-Member, Shumail Khowja- Member and Nayyir Naushad-Member

10.02,10.09 PD

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION-PARENT AND CHILD

To: Any Unknown Father and All Whom It May Concern, Respondents, in the herein-after-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 determi-

LEGALS

nation 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 8 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

10.02

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 25CPB00167

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS

SALLY PAEK LOPES, Applicant, on March 17, 2025, filed an Application to Probate Will as a Muniment of Title More Than Four Years After the Decedent's Death in a proceeding styled: LAWRENCE DENNIS LOPES, SR, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00167 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 October 02, 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: JAY R. BEATTY, 3106 SOUTH WS YOUNG DR BLDG D #401, KILLEEN TX 76542

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 26, 2025.

Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513

By: Lillian Phillips Deputy

10.02

THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION-PARENT AND CHILD

To: Amanda Culp, 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 First Amended Petition of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Petitioner, was filed in the 146th Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas, on March 3, 2025, against Amanda Culp and Andre Sims, Respondent(s), numbered 25DFAM351999, and entitled "In the Interest of ANDREW SIMS, minor child." The suit requests to terminate the parent-child relationships and/or to appoint a managing conservator of the child. The date and place of birth of the child who is the subject of the suit is:

ANDREW SIMS, DOB: February 15, 2025, Place of birth: Texas

The court has authority in this suit to render

LEGALS	LEGALS	LEGALS
an order in the child’s interest that will be binding on you, including the termination of the parent-child relationship, the determination of paternity, and the appointment of a conservator with authority to consent to the child’s adoption. The name and address of the attorney for plaintiff is Susan Parker, Bell County Attorney’s Office, P.O. Box 1127, Belton, TX 76513 Issued and given under my hand and seal of the Court at Belton, Texas, this the 25 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. 10.02	14350 NORTHBROOK DRIVE, SUITE 245, SAN ANTONIO, TX 78232 Dated this 25th day of September, 2025. RONALD S. SCHMIDT, SCHMIDT & WENZEL, P.C. ATTORNEY FOR INDEPENDENTEXECUTOR, BURDINE IDA WUTHRICH 10.02pd	Road, Belton, TX 76513 By: Lillian Phillips Deputy 10.02
CAUSE NO. 25CPB00545 ESTATE OF ARDENE ALBERT WUTHRICH AKA ARDENE A. WUTHRICH DECEASED IN THE COUNTY COURT, AT LAW NO. ONE BELL COUNTY, TEXAS NOTICE TO CREDITORS Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of ARDENE ALBERT WUTHRICH AKA ARDENE A. WUTHRICH, Deceased, were issued on September 24, 2025, under Cause No. 25CPB00545, pending in the County Court at Law No. One, Bell County, Texas, to: All persons interested in the above estate: on the 24th day of SEPTEMBER, 2025, in the COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. ONE, BELL COUNTY, TEXAS, the undersigned duly qualified as the independent executor of the estate of ARDENE ALBERT WUTHRICH AKA ARDENE A. WUTHRICH, DECEASED. NOTICE is hereby given that original letters testamentary on this estate were granted and this is to notify All persons having claims against said estate to present the same to the undersigned within the time prescribed by law. Any person indebted to said estate is hereby notified to pay same to the undersigned. BURDINE IDA WUTHRICH INDEPENDENT EXECUTOR OF THE ESTATE OF ARDENE ALBERT WUTHRICH AKA ARDENE A. WUTHRICH, DECEASED. C/O RONALD S. SCHMIDT, SCHMIDT & WENZEL, P.C.,	THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 25CPB00603 To: UNKNOWN HEIRS BETTY J. MOORE, Applicant, on September 25, 2025, filed an Application to Determine Heirship and for Letters of Independent Administration in a proceeding styled: ZELDA MAE ALLEN AKA ZELDA MAE SUTTON ALLEN, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00603 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 October 02, 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: KELLEY F WHALEN, 611 S CHURCH ST, GEORGETOWN TX 78626 The officer serving this Citation shall, in compliance with the Law, serve it by publication once in a newspaper of the general circulation in this, the County in which the decedent last resided as required by Section 202.052 of the Texas Estate Code, for not less than ten days before the return day hereof, exclusive of the day of publication, and the date of publication said newspaper bears shall be the day of publication. Issued and given under my hand and seal of said Court at office on September 25, 2025. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey	THE STATE OF TEXAS CITATION BY PUBLICATION CASE NUMBER 25CPB00263 To: UNKNOWN HEIRS JEFFREY LYNN ROSS, Applicant, on September 24, 2025, filed an Application for Independent Administration of Intestate Estate by Agreement and Letters of Independent Administration and Application to Declare Heirship in a proceeding styled: RUTH ANN WATKINS, Deceased, and bearing the number 25CPB00263 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 October 02, 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: JAMES A BALLARD, 3503 WILD CHERRY DR BLDG 6., AUSTIN TX 78738 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 25, 2025. Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 480, 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513 By: Lillian Phillips Deputy 10.02

—MPR—

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EDITORIAL

Taking the back roads

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

Major interstates crisscross the state of Texas, and most of the time I am convinced they exist not only to help travelers get somewhere faster, but to help travelers do so in the most frustrating way possible.

If you have traveled at least one of these interstates, you will probably agree with me.

I was recently reminded of this on a trip up and down I-35 back and forth from Dallas. I haven't taken that road in years, so I was hoping things had changed. Um, sorta. So I've dusted this column off as a reminder that "faster" isn't always "better."

You see, I am a fan of the back roads. During our summer road trips to the beach when our kids were younger, we simply took 183 much of the way to the coast.

Now, 183 isn't exactly a back road anymore, but

it sure beats I-35. We enjoyed the stop-and-go inside smaller towns and the hassle-free (for the most part) zipping along the two-lane road.

When you come upon a town in Texas, you know there will be at least one mom 'n pop place to stop and grab a snack, or a meal. There will be somewhere to stop for gas.

When you try to get back on the road after making a stop, there will be none of the adrenaline surge and pulse-pounding mania of fitting your vehicle back into traffic.

Part of the vacation for us was enjoying the back roads. Of course, on the way to Port Aransas, we could never get there fast enough, but on the way back home we certainly weren't in a hurry.

We have stopped at roadside produce stands, and one year we even stopped at Goliad for a picnic. In

fact, a shell from a hermit crab who didn't quite make the trip home from the coast is likely still nestled in the crook of a tree at a rest stop.

Back roads can take you somewhere more slowly than the interstate, but when I hear about traffic backed up for hours on the interstate, the stop-and-go between the back road towns isn't such a bad thing.

Also, we are often so much in a hurry to get to our destination that we forget that part of the fun of the journey is the trip itself.

I hope to make at least one road trip this fall, and if there's a back road involved—at least in Texas—you can be almost certain the majority of our trip will be on it.

Especially since not much has changed between here and Dallas.

Entertainment 101: Polybius

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

What would you say if I told you that one of the most famous video games in the world likely never existed?

That at best it's a mish-mash of vague memories from the 1980s, and at worst a hoax someone created to juice traffic to their website?

Welcome to the fun and lovely world of Polybius.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polybius_\(urban_legend\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Polybius_(urban_legend))

The gist of the urban legend is this. At some point, usually 1981 or so, a mysterious game named Polybius appeared in video game arcades in a specific area, usually Portland, Oregon or another specific major city. The mysterious games were on solid black arcade cabinets with no adornments beyond the name of the game. Equally mysterious individuals could often be seen working on the games and analyzing it, and "Men In Black" types were also hovering around areas where the cabinets were. Those who played the game often suffered from lingering side effects such as trem-

ors, hallucinations, nightmares, and even seizures. But despite this the game was so popular kids were fighting over who got to play it next. Then one day all of the cabinets disappeared, and the game was never seen again.

Sounds like the stuff of horror stories, eh? Except...

Over the years numerous outlets have investigated this urban legend.

The most common description of the game itself makes it sound like the popular video game "Tempest". Tempest was so popular that it's quite plausible kids might have fought over who got to play next. And the differences between Tempest and the report suggests that the mythical game could hypothetically have been an early build or a copy.

The all-black arcade cabinets? The specific cities? Apparently some video game manufacturers would use certain cities to test-market proposed games before mass release, and it was common for these games to be in all-black cabinets so that the

cabinets could just be re-used. Workers constantly tinkering with the machines? Purportedly, early laserdisc-based games were prone to malfunctions and other issues, requiring constant maintenance.

Men in Black types? Arcades were often used as fronts for illegal gambling and other operations, so it's plausible that law enforcement and regulatory agencies were in and out of different arcades conducting investigations.

Seizures, hallucinations, tremors, nightmares, and other side effects? Anyone who has played a video game created since the 1990s will likely be familiar with the warnings most games have about the possible negative effects of the lights, sounds, and other elements within the game. This is because during the 1990s a series of incidents made people aware of how video games could trigger photosensitive reactions even in people who had previously shown no sensitivity to light or motion, and some of the

reported side effects of Polybius sync up with it.

Is it possible that at some point in the early 1980s, a prototype video game was triggering reactions in kids, no one could figure out why, G-men got involved, and the company yanked the game before disappearing in order to avoid legal consequences? Sadly, yes.

It's also possible that half-remembered bits and pieces from nearly 20 years prior were cobbled together on the internet by people whose imaginations filled in the gaps.

And, of course, it's possible it's all one big hoax.

Perhaps it's appropriate, then, that the real Polybius was a Greek historian who focused on the importance of historians being able to verify their reports through interviews and eyewitnesses, as there's little direct evidence the game itself existed and a whole lot of question marks to sort through instead.

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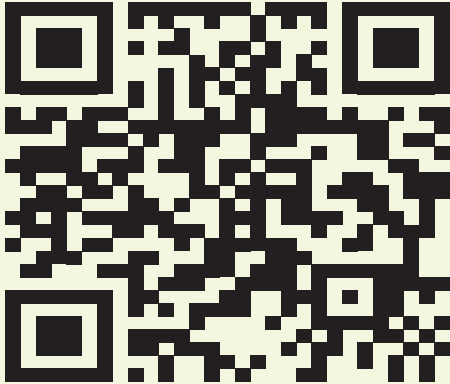
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The numbers in each column add up to the totals on the bottom.

	6	11	19
7	20		35
10		3	18
19	31	22	

3	5	10
8	20	7
11	6	2

Solution

Get Scrambled

Unscramble the words to determine the phrase.

NRGAE FO NMOOIT

Answer: Range of motion

THIS DAY IN HISTORY



1789: The United States Bill of Rights is sent to the various States for potential ratification.

1944: German troops end the Warsaw Uprising.

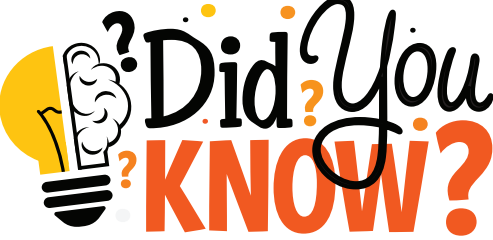
1996: The Electronic Freedom of Information Act Amendments are signed by President Bill Clinton.

NEW WORD THERAPY

treatment designed to relieve or heal a disorder

How they say that in...

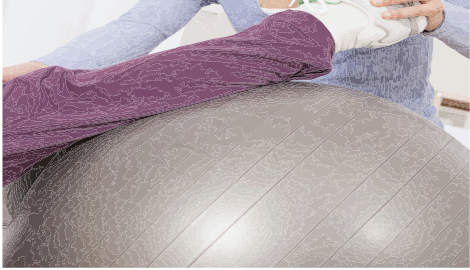
English: Body
Spanish: Cuerpo
Italian: Corpo
French: Corps
German: Körper



Physical therapy can treat a wide range of conditions and injuries by focusing on reducing pain and restoring function.



Get the  **PICTURE?**



Can you guess what the bigger picture is?

Answer: Person stretching