

Bell County Archives Department keeps the files of history



Above Left: The Bell County Archives Department contains hundreds of thousands of files, some of which date back to the 1800s. Above Right: The Bell County Archives Department has been led by Yolanda Yarbrough, who is retiring. Marc Smith, a University of Mary Hardin–Baylor alumnus, officially took over as Archives Manager on Monday, August 18.

Special to the Journal

Nestled behind the Loop Jail, the Bell County Archives Department quietly safeguards hundreds of thousands of historical files—some dating back to the 1800s.

Despite its modest size, the department operates with remarkable precision, thanks to a dedicated team of just seven employees. Each member plays a vital role, from managing countywide mail pickup and operating the daily switchboard to the department’s core mission: maintaining over 22,000 boxes of Bell County records.

The Archives Department was established in 2012 under the leadership of Yolanda Yarbrough, the county’s first Archives Manager. When she began, the department housed just 5,000 boxes. Over time, Yarbrough helped build the comprehensive system that now orga-

nizes and preserves essential documents from every county department.

“Our system works like clock-work,” Yarbrough said.

The archive includes everything from criminal records and court cases to birth, death, and marriage certificates. Each box is meticulously cataloged using department numbers and barcodes. A record management database tracks every movement—ensuring that no file goes unaccounted for. Bell County’s system has become a model for other counties, many of which tour the facility to learn from its success.

After a distinguished military career and 13 and a half years with Bell County, Yarbrough is retiring—and passing the baton.

“Starting the Bell County Archives Department from scratch was a major undertaking. In the beginning, it felt like caring for a newborn. Over the years,

I’ve nurtured it with dedication, and now I’m passing it onto someone else’s care. It’s bittersweet, but above all, I feel immense pride in what we’ve built from the ground up,” she said.

Marc Smith, a University of Mary Hardin–Baylor alumnus, officially took over as Archives Manager on Monday, August 18. He brings decades of experience to the role, most recently serving as Director of Mailing Services at Southern Methodist University in Dallas.

“I’m ready for the challenge. I’m really looking forward to working with this team and being a support to them. They know what they’re doing,” Smith said.

Yarbrough is confident in Smith’s leadership and believes the department is in good hands.

“At the end of the day, it’s not just about the work we do—it’s about establishing relationships,” she said.

Hairston selected to lead Belton Public Library

Special to the Journal

Belton City Manager Sam Listi has announced the hiring of Amanda E. Hairston as the new Library Director for the City of Belton’s Lena Armstrong Public Library.

Hairston has worked for the Belton Independent School District since 2020 and currently serves as a Digital Instruction Specialist at Hubbard Branch Elementary School.

At Belton ISD, she has led library programs, developed instructional resources, and managed campus-wide literacy and STEM initiatives.

“Amanda brings a wealth of experience in both public and school libraries, along with deep ties to the Belton community,” Listi said. “We are so pleased to welcome her back to the Lena Armstrong Public Library in a leadership role.”

Hairston began her library career in Belton’s public library where she served as a Library Clerk from 2011 to 2013. Since then, she has served as Children’s Librarian for the Harker Heights Public Library and held multiple education roles in Belton ISD. She has experience managing bud-



Amanda E. Hairston gets, overseeing programming, and aligning library operations with state education policy.

Hairston holds a Master of Library and Information Science from San Jose State University and a Bachelor of Arts in English from Kansas State University. She is a certified educator and a longtime resident of the Belton area.

“It’s an honor to return to the library where my career began,” Hairston said. “I look forward to building on its strong foundation and continuing to serve the community through learning, literacy, and connection.”

The Library Director position became available earlier this year following the retirement of former Director Kim Kroll.

Her first day in the new role is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 2.

Council appoints members to boards, OKs ETJ exchange with Temple

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Belton’s City Council appointed members to several important boards and commissions during this week’s meeting.

Two terms on the Historic Preservation Commission — held by Barrett Covington and Ann Carpenter — are expiring Sept. 8. Covington will retain his seat for another two years, but Carpenter did not want to be reappointed. Ashley Potts was recommended by Mayor David Leigh and approved by the Council as Carpenter’s replacement.

Martina Martinez was named as an alternate for a two-year term on the Zoning Board of Adjustment. She replaces Judy Owens who was named earlier this month as a regular on the

board.

Jimmy Rowton was reappointed to a three-year term on the Civil Service Commission.

Also Tuesday, Council approved a Title VI Nondiscrimination Plan policy. According to Jo-Ell Guzman, Belton’s grants and special projects coordinator, the US Department of Transportation requires recipients of federal financial assistance to prepare a plan to clarify their roles, responsibilities, and procedures established to ensure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The City of Belton developed the Title VI Nondiscrimination Plan to ensure compliance with the US Department of Transportation and Texas Department of Transportation, which requires that federal financial assistance

be provided on the condition that the recipient provide an assurance that its programs and activities will be conducted in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The requirement addresses and prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

Title VI is limited explicitly to issues of race, color, and national origin. It is designed to ensure that no person is denied participation in, or the benefits of any federally funded program, simply because of their race, skin color, or national origin.

Council members also approved the exchange of extraterritorial jurisdiction with the city of Temple.

In conjunction with the annexa-

tion of the Tyler Ridge Belton property, which is located east of Hubbard Branch, north of FM 436, several areas between the proposed subdivision and the existing city limits are in the city of Temple’s ETJ. These areas prevented Belton from annexing the Tyler Ridge Subdivision.

Several areas were suggested to Temple for an exchange. Temple’s City Council agreed to the exchange during its Aug. 7 meeting.

Generally, areas south of the Leon River could be placed in the Belton ETJ, and the area north of the Leon River could be placed in the Temple ETJ.

According to Belton Development Services Director Bob van Til, the three areas are:

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City Of Belton holding public hearing on proposed tax rate

Special to the Journal

The Belton City Council recently took a record vote to propose a tax rate of \$0.522500 per \$100 valuation.

The record vote was not unanimous, with John R. Holmes, Sr., Mayor Pro Tem; Craig Pearson; Stephanie O’Banion; and Daniel Bucher voting to propose that rate.

Luke Potts voted against proposing that tax rate.

David K. Leigh, Mayor; and Dave Covington were absent from that meeting.

This rate is higher than the no-new-revenue tax rate of \$0.496581 per \$100, but lower than the voter-approval tax rate of \$0.531427 per \$100.

The no-new-revenue tax rate is the tax rate for the 2025 tax year that

will raise the same amount of property tax revenue for the City of Belton from the same properties in both the 2024 tax year and the 2025 tax year.

The voter-approval tax rate is the highest tax rate that the City of Belton may adopt without holding an election to seek voter approval of the rate.

This means that the City of Belton is proposing to increase property taxes for the 2025 tax year.

A public hearing on the proposed tax rate will be held on Tuesday, September 9, at 5:30 p.m. at Wright Room at the Harris Community Center, 401 N. Alexander St.

However, since the proposed tax rate is not greater than the voter-approval tax rate, the City of Belton is not required to hold an election

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Tail-wagging fun to take place at Splash Pad



Courtesy Photo

A dog jumps through a fountain during last year’s Soggy Doggy Day at the Harris Splash Pad in Belton.

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Man’s best friend will make a big splash next month as Belton hosts a dog-friendly aquatic event marking the end of summer.

Harris Splash Pad will be reserved exclusively for dogs on Saturday, Sept. 6, as the city celebrates Soggy Doggy Day

2025, Belton Parks & Recreation Director James Grant said.

The free event begins at 9 a.m. and concludes around noon.

“We’ve been doing this since 2017,” he said. “Normally, we do not allow animals in the splash pad while it’s open to the public. We turn it over to the dogs before we shut down for the season.”

Grant explained that the popular splash pad shuts down for humans on Labor Day, then opens for local pups the following Saturday.

“We fence it in and allow dogs to have a great time,” he said with a chuckle. “We’ve had up to 90 dogs show up for Soggy Doggy Day events — the average is probably about 70 dogs each year.”

In addition to dogs-only splash-pad fun, several other events contribute to a tail-wagging good time.

“This year, we will have an obstacle course set up, as well as photo booths and dog-art booths. Frosty Cones will be there giving out pup cups.”

The obstacle course will be hosted by

NXT Level Dog Training, and every pup who attends will receive a party bag full of treats, trinkets and pet supplies, Grant said.

“Don’t miss out,” he added. “This is the ultimate way to cool down and bond with your best four-legged friend.”

Movie in the Park is Sept. 20

A free Movie in the Park event featuring the Disney hit Encanto! will be held Saturday, Sept. 20, at Harris Community Park, Grant said.

Activities will begin at 6 p.m. and the movie will start at dusk.

“Get ready for an enchanted evening under the stars sponsored by Parks & Recreation,” Grant said. “Before the show, enjoy magical activities the whole family will love, then, as the sun sets, cozy up with your lawn chair or blanket and sing along with the family madrigal on the big screen.”

“This is the perfect way to welcome fall with friends, family and a little bit of magic.”

Public - From Page A1

at which voters may accept or reject the proposed tax rate.

Belton citizens may express support for or opposition to the proposed tax rate by contacting the members of the city council of the City of Belton at their offices or by attending the public hearing mentioned above.

The following table compares the taxes imposed on the average residence homestead by the City of Belton last year to the taxes proposed to be imposed on the average residence homestead by the City of Belton this year.

	2024	2025	Change
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.522500	\$0.522500	0% increase
Average homestead taxable value	\$295,184	\$309,386	4.81% increase
Tax on average homestead	\$1,542	\$1,616	4.79% increase
Total tax levy on all properties	\$10,138,886	\$11,111,607	9.59% increase

For assistance with tax calculations, please contact the tax assessor for CITY OF BELTON at (254) 939-5841 or customerservice@bellcad.org, or visit www.bellcad.org for more information.

Barge Ranch event to benefit Our Hospice House in Belton



Courtesy Photo

Patients can receive care at Our Hospice House in Belton at no cost, thanks to the generosity of donors. A benefit is being hosted at the Barge Ranch for Our Hospice House on Saturday, Sept. 6.

Special to the Journal

A unique blend of Western elegance and heartfelt purpose is set to take center stage on Saturday, September 6, as the private ranch of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Barge opens its gates for Turquoise and Boots at the Barge Ranch, a special fundraising event benefiting Our Hospice House in Belton.

Hosted from 6 to 9 p.m., the evening will feature dinner under the stars, live music by The Leon River Band, craft cocktails, a curated live auction, and a celebration of community and compassion—all set against the scenic backdrop of one of Central Texas’s most iconic private ranches.

Proceeds from the event will directly


support Our Hospice House, a local, faith-inspired nonprofit that provides around-the-clock, no-cost care for terminally ill individuals in a peaceful, home-like setting. As a 100 percent donor-funded charity, the organization ensures that no one walks their final journey alone—and that no family ever receives a bill.

“This event is more than a fundraiser—it’s a celebration of community, dignity, and the belief that every life matters to the very end,” said Jennifer Bates, co-founder and board member of Our Hospice House. “We’re honored to gather at the Barge Ranch for an evening that helps make this sacred work possible.”

To purchase tickets or learn more about sponsorships, visit OurHospiceHouse.org.

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OBITUARIES

Cordero
Gianna Rose Cordero
June 25, 2010 – August 10, 2025

Gianna Rose Cordero, lovingly known as “Gigi,” was born on June 25, 2010, in Temple, Texas, to Gonsalo Cordero III and Tonya Cordero. On Sunday, August 10, 2025, at just 15 years old, Gigi left this world far too soon, leaving behind a family and community who will forever love and miss her. Gigi had just begun her journey at Academy High School, where she was an enthusiastic participant in both the powerlifting team and ROTC. She was known for her sass, her quick wit, and her unwavering loyalty to her friends — truly a “girl’s girl” in every way. Gigi met life with a spark in her eye and a heart full of love for the people closest to her. Her vibrant personality, humor, and fierce spirit made an unforgettable impact on

everyone who knew her. She is survived by her parents, Gonsalo and Tonya Cordero; her siblings, Jameela Cordero and Gonsalo Cordero IV; Aunts, Amber Perfetti, Shawna Pearson, Anastasia Cordero, Miranda Rodriguez, Lois Rodriguez, Erica David, Shalonda Johnson, and Uncle Jeremy, aunt Jessica and uncle Adrian Aragon; along with cousins; Adriana Lusk, Kailynn Pearson, Karson Cox, Briana Leschuck, Cecilia Díaz, Alyssia Diaz, Kason Wilson & Kai Rodriguez; grandparents, and many extended family members and friends who cherished her deeply. A celebration of Gigi’s life was held at 3 p.m. on Saturday August 23, 2025 at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home. The celebration was a collection of stories told. Gigi’s light will continue to shine in the hearts of all who loved her. Arrangements are under the direction of Sa-

brina Young at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home and Bereavement Center in Temple, TX.

Melvin
Melvin Lee Scott
November 6, 1962 – August 15, 2025

Melvin Lee Scott was a Christian, a beloved son, brother, and friend, passed away on August 15, 2025, in Temple, Texas, at the age of 62. Born on November 6, 1962, in Kansas City, Missouri, Melvin’s journey through life was marked by his unwavering commitment to his family, career, and country. Melvin was a dedicated professional who served as a hiring manager for Washington International Inventory Services, where he was known for his keen insight, ability to connect with people, and reputation as a great employee. His

career was not just a job; it was a lifelong passion that reflected his values of integrity and service. In addition to his professional achievements, Melvin proudly served in the Navy, an experience that shaped his character and instilled in him a deep sense of duty and respect for others. His military service is a testament to his commitment to serving his country and protecting the values he held dear. Even while in the Navy, Melvin made sure to send financial support back to his mother and siblings, demonstrating his devotion to family. A true sports enthusiast, Melvin enjoyed all sports throughout his life. He participated on his high school basketball team and was considered the Wilt Chamberlain of his day. He loved watching wrestling and took up golf in his later years. Melvin was someone his family cherished deep-

ly. He was always ready to lend a hand if something urgent arose or to send a thoughtful gift to his Aunt Marilyn Hudson to brighten her day. As a good friend, he was the kind you could always depend on—reliable, supportive, and kind-hearted. He is survived by his loving family, including his brothers Robert Morris and Randy Morris, along with their respective spouses, Kenya Morris and Janice Morris. Melvin’s significant other, LaTasha Clark, was a cherished part of his life, providing companionship and support during their time together. As well as a host

of nephews, nieces, cousins and Aunt. A visitation was held on August 27, 2025, from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center in Temple, Texas. Following the visitation, a graveside service took place on August 28, 2025, at 1 p.m. at the Central Texas State Veterans Cemetery in Killeen, Texas. Melvin Lee Scott will be remembered for his kindness, dedication, and the love he shared with all who knew him. He leaves behind a legacy of compassion and integrity that will resonate in the hearts of his family and friends.

Council - From Page A1

Area A – consisting of approximately 31 acres located south of the Leon River including a portion of a 113.421 acre tract owned by Tamara Elisha Neuwirth and a portion of a 114.94 acre tract of land owned by the Glynda Hubbard Neuwirth Oath Trust generally located along the eastern portion of the Belton ETJ and west of a 113.90 acre tract of land owned by the Tyler Ridge Land Investments, LLC. This area was approved to be in Belton’s ETJ. Area B – consisting of approximately 18 acres located west of a 113.90 acre tract of land owned

by the Tyler Ridge Land Investment, LLC; including the southern portion of a 113.421 tract of land owned by Tamara Elisha Neuwirth located east and south of the eastern extensions of the Belton ETJ, and including the right-of-way of FM436. This area is now in Belton’s ETJ. Area C – consisting of approximately 64 acres generally located north-east of the Leon River and extending in a north-eastern direction to a point north of Witter Rd., containing portions of property owned by the Wright-Double J Ranch, Inc., James and Cathy

Wright, and James R. Lucksinger. This area is now in Temple’s ETJ. Josh Welch intends to build about 250 single-family homes on the property in the Tyler Ridge Belton addition. He intends to use Belton water and sewer. A recently approved ordinance that requires property owners to annex into Belton if they utilize city utilities requires Welch to voluntarily annex into the city. The property was mostly in the Temple ETJ, so Welch petitioned the city of Temple to release his property from their ETJ, which they did. The

next step was to include the property in Belton’s ETJ. This was accomplished in May 2025. The next steps include the annexation of the property and a zoning change to SF-3, prior to the approval of the plat, construction documents, and the development of the subdivision. The Belton Planning & Zoning Commission recommended approval of the zoning in June.

Lions on the Leon event set for October

By Harvey Jackson Oss
The Belton Journal

The Belton Lions Club will host their third annual Lions on the Leon Captain “D” 5K Dash for “Sight”, Picnic in the Park and Wacky Boat Race on Saturday, Oct. 4 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Heritage Park. The event begins with the 5K dash at 8:30 a.m. Participants take off from the parking lot by the soccer fields, proceed down Park Avenue, circle through the neighborhood, then return along Park Avenue back to the Heritage Park parking lot. Upon completion, participants will receive awards and may take photos with Captain “D”. The race is untimed, but the length is nearly 5 kilometers. All participants will receive a commemorative spinner race medal, personalized event sunglasses, and a swag bag. Registration by September 5 also guarantees a T-shirt. Award categories are as follows; Adult Male & Female - 1st, 2nd, 3rd; 11 & under Male & Female 1st, 2nd, 3rd; & Costume Award - 1st, 2nd, 3rd. There are separate registration rates for adults and students. Pirate costumes are encouraged. The 5K will be followed by the Picnic in the Park, featuring a performance by Jay White and the Blues Commanders. Activities such as concessions, vendors, pumpkin decorating, face painting, a duck pond, carnival games, corn-hole, silent auction, and more create a unique experience where the community can come together in a family atmosphere. Wacky Open and Cardboard Boats



File Photo

The Belton Fire Department wins the first heat at last year’s Lions on the Leon Wacky Boat Race. will line up at 11 a.m. for People’s Choice and President’s Award judging. The race kicks off at 1 p.m. Boats must be homemade and motorless. They may be raft-like, or more complex. They may hold one or multiple individuals. “The main thing that the Belton Lions Club is asking is that they are wacky in design. If it floats, you have a boat,” stated event coordinator Karen Stagner. Funds raised by this family fun-filled event support the many annual Belton Lions Club activities, such as Lions Park, Heritage Park, High School scholarships, Lions Camp for Children with Special Needs, Holiday Food Baskets for the needy, B.I.S.D. HEARTbeat Program, Friends for Life Fall Festival, Pictures with Santa for the special needs community, and eye exams and eyeglasses for Belton children, among others. Boat race and 5K information and registration can be found on the Belton Lions Club website at www.beltonlionsclub.com.



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LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Hot and spicy family fun coming to MPR



File Photo

Ladies Auxiliary MPR VFD will be hosting its annual Chili Cook-Off & Salsa Competition at Kleypas Park on September 20. Proceeds will fund a new brush truck, to be named “Fiona.”

By Annie Dockery
The Belton Journal

On September 20, The Ladies Auxiliary Morgans Point Resort (MPR) Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) is hosting their annual Chili Cook-Off & Salsa Competition and Individual Cornhole Competition.

The family fun event starts at 8 a.m. at Kleypas Park and the Event Center, 60 Morgans Point Blvd. Proceeds from the event will go to purchase ancillary equipment and items for the new MPR Fire-Rescue Brush Truck, dubbed “Fiona.” The fundraising goal is \$30,000.

Ladies Auxiliary MPR VFD, Karen Stagner said, “This event is a family-friendly extended neighborhood event for outdoor fun and fellowship at Kleypas Park by the Community Pool. It’s a beautiful setting with views of Belton Lake. We’ve made a few changes and improvements to this year’s event. The Auxiliary has added old-fashioned, family-friendly carnival games and prizes; a duck pond and face painting. Plus, we are planning an individual cornhole tournament - with the last contestant standing winning a set of cornhole boards.”

Morgan’s Point Resort currently has a large brush truck, that the department calls “Shrek.”

Stagner said, “The smaller brush truck will enable the firefighters to access remote areas too small for Shrek. And yes, they have decided that the name for the smaller brush truck will be Fiona.”

The chili and salsa competitions is no-holds-barred, anything goes. Individuals and teams are all welcome to compete.

“We have chili teams and individuals both - and we’ll see who shows up just to compete in the salsa competition,” Stagner said.

Awards include First, Second, Third, Best Chili, People’s Choice Chili, People’s Choice Salsa, and Best Cook Area.

“The fire department(s) compete along with everyone else; then, once the winners are determined, the judges pull out the fire department (FD) entries to determine high-point points between FDs separate from the overall entries. The Chili ‘People’s Choice’ is fun in that it’s not only chili tasting, it’s decorations, personalities, family and friends,” Stagner said.

Salsa “People’s Choice” is planned as a blind tasting - separate from the chili tastings.

For \$5, attendees will get one special token and one small cup for each of the entered chili competitors. After each chili has been tasted, simply place the token in the bucket for your favorite, much the same for “People’s Choice” salsa.

For the salsa competition, attendees will get one salsa token, plus a tray of number marked salsa cups and chips for \$5. They will place their token in their favorite’s respective bucket.

“As for the Fire Department Challenge, we don’t know yet how many fire departments will be competing - however, we always have the friendly competition between Moffat VFD and MPR Fire-Rescue - it’s fun to watch,” Stagner added. “Some of the other chili cook teams so far are a local Scout Troop, MPR Police Department, several other individual MPR residents and whoever just shows up on-site.”

This year’s event will also include an online auction, bucket raffle, dessert sale, t-shirt sales, fill the bucket, and local vendors.

For more information, to sign up to compete, or donate, visit www.morganspointresorttx.com/civicalerts or contact Karen Stagner at kastagne@att.net.

B4 festival coming in September

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Belton will once again become Hog Heaven next month.

The 9th annual Bacon, Blues & Brews festival will be Sept. 26-27 in downtown Belton, and this year’s event will feature great music and new events, according to Judy Garrett, the City’s Tourism & Retail Development Manager.



**Christ the King Catholic Church
Knights of Columbus Fish Fry**

Enjoy a delicious plate of fried fish with all the trimmings!

Friday, September 5
5 to 7 pm

New Parish Hall
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Kids 10 and under \$6 per plate
College Students with ID
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Active Duty Military in
Uniform FREE**
**Add 3 fried shrimp to your
meal for an additional \$2**

“This year’s event has everything you want — bacon, blues and brews,” Garrett said. “The festival is free to enter and impossible to forget.”

Belton’s Bacon, Blues & Brews — known as B4 for short — is held every year on the last Friday and Saturday of September.

“Downtown Belton transforms into hog heaven with live blues music, cold craft beers and bacon-inspired dishes,” Garrett added. “It’s two days packed with family-friendly fun that’ll make you squeal with delight.”

“Belton’s Bacon, Blues & Brews began in 2017 with a single goal: To encourage more people to see our charming downtown and enjoy restaurants and retail stores,” she said. “The event also opened the doors to people’s interest in the empty buildings. This led to more development downtown.”

The city of Belton wanted to create something fun, family-oriented, and unique — something that wouldn’t conflict with nearby events.

“People love bacon and brews,” Garrett said. “Most people love the blues, and everybody loves Belton. Thus, Belton’s Bacon, Blues, and Brews Festival was born.”

On Friday and Saturday, local breweries and wineries line the streets to showcase unique brews for guests to enjoy while sampling delicious cuisine and listening to electrifying blues music.

“Every festival, we bring in talented blues musicians — from original artists to cover bands paying homage to famous icons,” she said.

The 1st Cavalry Band from Fort Hood will kick off the event on Friday and Saturday. Back again this year are Jay White & The Blues Commanders and The Damn Torpedoes (A Tom Petty Tribute Band). Texas Flood, a crowd favorite, is returning to Belton to make a splash before they go on a big tour! And Lone Star Skynyrd (A Lynyrd Skynyrd Tribute Band) is also joining the lineup.

One of the highlights of the festival is the Bacon-Inspired Dish Competition, where local food trucks use 10



File Photo

The annual B4 – Belton’s Bacon, Blews & Brews provides fun for the entire family. The event is set for Sept. 26-27.

pounds of bacon donated by H-E-B to create unique dishes. They compete for cash prizes, and a Grand Prize, Runner-Up, and the People’s Choice awards will be presented.

The judges for the first two categories include local chefs, restaurant owners, and bacon aficionados, while attendees vote for their favorite in the People’s Choice category.

What started as a cook-off between individuals and teams has evolved into a competition between local food trucks, showcasing some of the best local flavors Belton businesses have to offer.

“As the festival has grown, so has the fun,” Garrett said. “2024 saw the addition of craft vendors and a pig-calling contest, both of which are here to stay. This year, we plan to add Bacon Bingo to the festivities and hope to continue growing from there.”

For more details, lodging info, and everything you need to plan your visit, go to SeeBelton.com.

Letter to the editor

The United States conducts world-class scientific research that we all benefit from; however, if we don’t act soon, that research is at risk.

My scientific journey began as a Belton Tiger. From 1st grade with Mrs. Pittenger to AP chemistry at BHS, my BISD education provided the educational foundation from which to pursue an undergraduate degree in biology, and subsequently, a PhD in immunology.

However, my PhD research has been impacted by the recent National Institute of Health (NIH) funding cuts. My laboratory lost an NIH-funded grant, and I have colleagues whose work on childhood development and cancer treatments was cancelled. In all, the Trump Administration has cut more than \$1.8 billion in NIH grants.

NIH funding by the federal government has an excellent return on investment. For every \$1 invested in scientific research through the NIH, it produces an estimated \$2.56 in economic activity, funding jobs and supporting communities. Additionally, NIH funding contributed to every single FDA-approved drug from 2010-2016, including drugs for diabetes, chemotherapy, and autoimmune disease.

Everyone loses when we defund the NIH. Talk to your neighbors, contact your elected representatives, and remind those around you of the importance of science funding.

Together, we can stand up for science.
Meredith Ramba

Local Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Activities

09/01: Bookworms, Chat n Canasta
09/02: Footloose Singles
09/03: Monthly Luncheon, Popcorn Bridge
09/04: 42 Dominoes
09/09: Couples Night Out, Singing Bluebonnets
09/11: 42 Dominoes, Mexican Train Dominoes
09/12: TGIF Lunch

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

CAC announces 2025 concert lineups

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

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

AN CLIBURN FINALIST CLAYTON STEPHENSON — Oct. 18

American pianist Clayton Stephenson's love for music is immediately apparent in his joyous charisma onstage, expressive power and natural ease at the instrument.

ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL — Nov. 8

Founded in 1970, Asleep at the Wheel has been part of the American roots music landscape for more than 50 years.

SHINYRIBS - Dec. 6

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

Knights of Columbus Fish Fry - Sept 5

Skip the work and the cleanup and come out to enjoy a fish dinner in support of our seminarians and wheelchair fundraisers. Dine-in or take-out. Friday, September 5, 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Christ the King Family Life Center 250 E 24th Ave, Belton.

Soggy Doggy Day - Sept 6

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

Golf Tournament - Sept 8

Temple Breakfast Lions Club is hosting their inaugural Golf Tournament in memory of Randy Sepulvado at Sammons Golf Course, 2727 W Adams, Temple on September 8, 2025. Registration begins at 7:00 a.m. and begin playing at 8:30 a.m. For more information about email templebreakfastlionsclub@gmail.com.

Master Gardeners Sept 6

Ready to grow your own herb garden the smart way? Join Master Gardener Gary Slanga as he shares practical tips for propagating herbs using cuttings, seeds, and divisions- all tailored for Central Texas gardeners. By the end of this seminar, you will learn which propagation techniques work best for different plants, what tools are needed to get started, and you'll understand the pitfalls to avoid in our climate. Whether you are just getting started or ready to expand your herb bed, this session is packed with hands-on knowledge and inspiration. Bring your notebook, bring your questions, and bring a friend! See you there! 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. at AgriLife Extension Grounds Learning Center, Belton, 1605 N. Main St., Belton. Class Limit: 50 participants. Register at RSVP BCMGA1998@gmail.com to secure your spot!

Stronger Together Gala - Sept 11

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

Firehouse Chili & Salsa Copetition - Sept 20

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

Movies in the Park - Sept 20

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

Family Camp Out - Oct 24 - 26

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

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

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

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) will meet both on TUESDAY, July 8th and July 22rd 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@bell-county.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. Ma-jong games are available every Monday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Come join the fun and meet new folks. For more information text Jeanne at 409-313-0611.

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

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

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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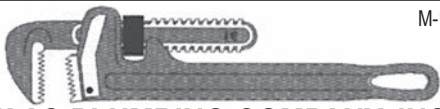
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Rediscovering the Rhythm of the Road



John C. Perry

For forty years, I was a long-distance runner. It all began in my mid-twenties, and from that point on, I was hooked. I ran a myriad of full marathons and more 5Ks and 10Ks than I could ever count. Running wasn't just exercise, it was therapy. I could be wrestling with a major problem, lace up my shoes, hit the pavement, and by the time I got back, the solution had somehow surfaced. I didn't even have to think about it while running. The rhythm of my feet and the steady beat of my heart did the thinking for me.

Then came 2014. I was in Scotland, enjoying a light morning jog through the misty countryside when I felt a small tweak in my left knee. It didn't seem serious, so I brushed it off. Later that day, we traveled

to Dublin. But the next morning, I couldn't walk. Not even a step. The ER doctors in Dublin recommended immediate surgery. Sandra, ever the voice of reason, said no. Instead, they fitted me with a full leg cast so I could travel home.

Back in the States, I learned I needed a full knee replacement. I hesitated. If they had told me I could run again after surgery, I would've signed up in a heartbeat. But they didn't. They said my running days were over, with or without the surgery. And just like that, something I genuinely loved was gone seemingly forever.

I tried to fill the void. First with cycling, but a very nasty fall on a road ride convinced me that wasn't the answer. Then came the elliptical, let's just say it didn't spark joy. But then I discovered the rowing machine. It works about 85% of your muscles and gets the heart pumping like a good sprint. It became my cardio salvation.

Fast forward to today. After recent hand surgery, I've had to pause my rowing workouts. With some unusually cool mornings rolling through Salado, I decided to walk instead. And then, on one of those walks, a wild thought crept in: What

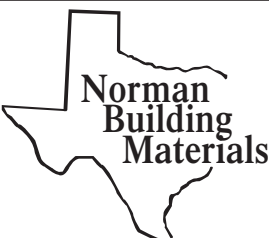
if I jogged? I've lost a lot of weight. I've been doing leg days with weights at the gym for years. Maybe, just maybe, I could run again?

I started small. Just a half-mile jog. Two weeks later, I'm easily up to two miles. No pain. No issues. The last time I ran was in Scotland, over a decade ago. That's a long time to go without something you love. But here I am...jogging again! Not racing, not chasing medals, just moving at a pace somewhere between a determined snail and a cautious tortoise. And loving every step.

Last week my surgeon gave the green light to resume rowing, and I am back at it. But jogging is now back in my life, and I plan to keep it there as long as I'm able. I'm blessed with reasonably good health, and I thank the Good Lord for the chance to rediscover a passion that once literally defined who I was.

I'm feeling grateful. I'm feeling blessed. And I'm feeling the road beneath my feet once again, thank you God!

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

Last week I ran out of paper before I ran out of thoughts, so I will continue with a few more this week.

Have you ever thought that pirates are probably some of the unluckiest people around? Every one you see has a peg leg, a hook for a hand and an eye patch. I mean, after losing one or two of those combinations I would probably find a more suitable job. And what do you do with the extra shoe? Most of them also have a parrot on their shoulder, squawking and begging for a cracker, perhaps the pirates are deaf in one ear as well. Why does the parrot stay with them, with all the fighting and such you would think the parrot would hop off the first pleasant island they stop nearby. I do think that visiting the fantastic islands would be the only positive thing about being a

pirate. The rest of it isn't as exciting. You find a treasure, you dig a big hole on an island and bury the treasure, then you die and someone gets your map and spends the rest of their life following a poorly drawn line to the wrong spot. One might think that with all the old guys wandering the beach with metal detectors that we would be up to our ears in buried treasure by now.

Speaking of oceans. How much would the ocean level drop if we took all of the whales out of the ocean? I mean, just for a few minutes, not forever. I am not sure how many whales are in the seas, but they are big and I am sure there are quite a few. Then while the whales are out we could take all the sponges out of the ocean as well, without wringing them out, the sea level would certainly drop

a lot more. Heck we might even be able to find Atlantis.

If you are like me and have worked with wood and hand tools, when someone mentions the word "router" you think of a power tool that cuts holes and makes a nice edge on a piece of wood. Now out there somewhere is someone scratching their head and has no idea of what I am talking about and only knows that a router is an electronic device that supplies internet to their various devices. There have been a few times when I wanted to take a hammer to a router, you can take that one anyway you want.

OK, I am on toothpaste again. If the toothpaste manufacturers really cared about their customers they would do something about taste. I do not like peppermint, but no matter what brand and flavors

that I try I always seem to end up with peppermint. Cool mint, fresh mint, refreshing mint, great tasting mint, nope, all peppermint. You really want to get people brushing their teeth, make a taste we can get behind. How about a cappuccino flavored toothpaste for the mornings, Then perhaps a gravy flavored toothpaste for nighttime. Give us some options, surely there is another flavor on this planet besides peppermint that you can make toothpaste with, try strawberry, heck give orange flavor another shot.

Sorry for that rant, my frustration with toothpaste never really goes away.

Have you noticed when they post a picture of a criminal from a security camera that it really could be anything from a Sasquatch to your next door neighbor, or per-

haps a chimpanzee to Al Capone? Yet for sports broadcasts on TV there are dozens of angles and each one is of exceptional quality, you can see the tiny logo on the athlete's shoestring. So a bank has a vault full of money yet we have the worst video coverage, and when we want to argue over a point in a sports match and we can see that the athlete's tattoo is misspelled because of the excellent video quality. Instead of tossing a dye pack inside the bag full of money, why don't they throw in a pylon camera from a football game, we could see where the criminals live and what they are up to.

I hope everyone has a thought-filled week, plenty of time to let your mind wander and even stray from the path for a bit of exploration. This should wrap up the random thinking for a week or so.

Reading The Map

Coffee Talk • Renae Brumbaugh Green

About a year or so back, a pundit whose name I don't recall made an inflammatory allegation on social media. I'd almost forgotten about it until an unrelated thing brought it back to mind.

The individual, who apparently lives along the East Coast, was driving through a somewhat rural region of the Southern United States en route to a destination I also don't recall. As they were driving, they noted that they couldn't see a single library from the road they were going down. Thus, they concluded, libraries didn't exist in the rural South. This person had a very low opinion of people from the South even before this, and followed up their allegation by noting how this observation of theirs ostensibly confirmed their sentiments.

Yes, you just read that.

I was one of several people who responded to his allegation by trying to ask some follow-up questions. I never received a reply, and to my knowledge neither did anyone else. It might be that our voices were drowned out by the legion of his followers who were screaming about how his observation also ostensibly confirmed their sentiments

about Southerners. It might be that he was ignoring us. I don't know.

Either way folks, that allegation of his only actually confirmed that *he* was the ignorant one.

Oops...

Folks, take a minute and think about the layout of your town. Where is your public library compared to the main road through your town? It varies from town to town, doesn't it?

Consider the town where I live. The "main road" through town is a so-called "business" extension of US Highway 190 (actually where it used to run through town before a bypass was constructed). This is distinctively different from Main Street, which runs southwest to northeast through town, connecting the highway to a main road that leads onto the nearby military base. Our public library? Off of Main Street. If someone was traveling through the area, they wouldn't be able to see the library even from Business 190, let alone the re-routed Highway 190. But it's there, a proud fixture of downtown. Has been for decades.

Likewise, I can think of other towns


where the library is on a prominent road in the town but a distance away from the actual main road. Maybe you can see the library. Maybe you can't. But again, it's there.

...Hence the follow-up questions I tried to ask this individual: what towns did he drive through, and what roads was he taking as he drove? That would have allowed me to pull up Google Maps, find those towns, and fact-check his observation. With no response, however, I couldn't do that.

Either way, what we have is this pundit engaging in a little something we call "confirmation bias". He went into the situation with a preconceived and very stereotypical notion, he made a surface-level observation that seemingly confirmed his notion, and he ultimately failed to engage in the higher-level logical functions he believes that people who aren't like him don't engage in. Yet because he was so sure he was the "smart" one he never bothered to examine his initial observation.

Folks, there's a reason why phrases like "don't judge a book by its cover" exist. All too often, we can and will

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Doug Mann named Executive Director of Hope for the Hungry

Special to the Journal



Doug Mann

Hope for the Hungry has announced the appointment of Doug Mann as its new Executive Director. With more than 35 years of international nonprofit leadership experience, Doug is well qualified to lead this faith-based global ministry into a season of strategic growth and renewed global engagement.

Much of Doug's career has been spent living and serving across Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans. He is known for championing sustainable, capacity-building solutions for vulnerable communities. Notably, Doug was instrumental in coordinating relief efforts among over 80 organizations during the Kosovo refugee crisis.

"My time living and working internationally throughout my career has really instilled a deep desire in me to see individuals and communities not just survive, but flourish as they find their way through this life," said Mann. "It's exciting to be given this opportunity to help expand this shared vision I have with Hope for the Hungry on an even larger global scale."

Founded in 1982 by Dan and Kandy Kirkley, Hope for the Hungry has spent more than four decades ministering to the poor and underserved. Today, the organization is active in Haiti, the United States, and, most recently, Rwanda.

"We are thrilled to welcome Doug to the team," said founder Dan Kirk-

ley. "His deep faith, leadership experience, and global perspective are exactly what's needed to carry Hope's mission forward into this next exciting chapter."

Under Doug's leadership, the organization is also launching a refreshed brand identity and communications strategy. These efforts include a redesigned website, reflecting a bold vision for the future while honoring the legacy of its founding mission.

As Hope for the Hungry celebrates its 43rd anniversary this year, supporters are invited to mark their calendars for a special banquet on November 13, 2025. At this event, the organization will celebrate its past and share its plans for the future.

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Downtown Nutrition offers healthy shakes and teas



Courtesy Photo
The Chocolate Pretzel shake is served at Downtown Nutrition in Belton owned by Summer Stephens and Nutrition 2305 in Temple owned by Matt Stephens.

By Michelle Rodriguez
The Belton Journal

Downtown Nutrition located at 204 N. Penelope St. Ste. B offers protein shakes and ener-gizing teas as a healthy meal replacement.

They are open Monday thru Friday 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

“I took over Main Nutrition from Jack Black. I always knew I wanted a nutrition club in Belton. I love the atmosphere, community, and aura. It’s warm and welcoming,” said Summer Stephens, owner of Downtown Nutrition.

The Tomball native met her husband, a Troy native, in college at Sam Houston State University. He also owns a nutrition club, Nutrition 2305 located in Temple.

“I went to Temple Nutrition and got into the shakes and teas there. I liked the atmosphere of the club that used to be on 31st Street. My favorite shake at the time was blueberry muffin and my favorite tea was Wonder

Woman. I like experimenting with different flavors,” said Stephens.

She attests to the results, losing 20 pounds in three months, feeling “fantastic” and having a lot of energy.

Downtown Nutrition opened its doors on July 4. The strawberry pina colada is their most popular tea, and Island Time is also a customer favorite. The most popular shake flavors are chocolate banana and banana bread.

“We just recently started serving protein waffles and donuts. The flavor options are vanilla, chocolate, banana bread, blueberry muffin, and Cinnamon Toast Crunch,” said Stephens.

Nutrition 2305 already serves protein waffles and donuts.

“The atmosphere is different. His is more of a comfort place to study and hang out with friends. It has a fireplace. My place is more artsy with the art hanging on the walls in the Gunter building,” said Stephens, comparing her store with that of her husband, Matt’s.

Nutrition 2305 is located at 4311 W. Adams Avenue, Ste. 105 behind the 7-Eleven.

“We have plans to expand with classes on health, gardening, and planting fruits and vegetables in your backyard. (Matt) is going to teach them. He’s very much into agriculture. We take supplements because our food doesn’t have the nutrients it’s supposed to have. We want to bring health and knowledge to the community,” said Stephens. “Our shakes and teas are gluten free, safe for a diabetic diet, and heart health. It takes in all those considerations. We also have a nondairy version.”

They offer products which prepares a body before, during, and after workouts. They also offer supplements that helps with weight management, energy, nutrients, and metabolism.

“I’ve been on (supplements) since August 9th, but I have more energy now. I haven’t seen any weight loss yet since I just started, but I’ve been told at the 60-day mark I will see the weight drop,” said Stephens.

Native Plant Society of Texas Tonkawa Chapter holding Fall Plant Sale

Special to the Journal

The Tonkawa Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas will host its semi-annual sale of Texas native plants, shrubs, grasses, and trees Saturday, Sept. 13th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and, Sunday Sept. 14 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Barrow Brewing, 108 Royal St. in Salado.

This year’s fall sale will include several new and uncommon plants that are sure to sell out early. All plants will be offered in 4” pots for \$5 and 1-gallon pots for \$10, a reduction in price from last year to accommodate reduced incomes.

Shrubs will be available in 1-gallon and 2-gallon pots with 15 varieties of Texas native small understory trees in 5-gallon pots. All trees are ready for immediate planting for the fall.

Experienced Native Plant experts will be on hand for advice and instructions. An online sale at www.npsotcentx.org of 21 varieties of Texas native trees will be active until Sept. 5 with tree pickup in Salado on Sept. 10.

A Children’s Area with various activities will be held during the sale on Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with a few (not real) butterflies for adoption. Cricket Terrilynn of Salado and author of a children’s book entitled “Fluttery the story of a Brave Monarch Butterfly and her adventures in Texas” will be on hand with signed copies of her book for sale.



Cash, credit cards and checks will be accepted for payment of plants, trees, etc. All proceeds from the sale will be used to build Texas native demonstration educational gardens in Bell County. The Native Plant Society of Texas is a 501(c) (3) organization.

For more information, visit www.npsotcentx.org.



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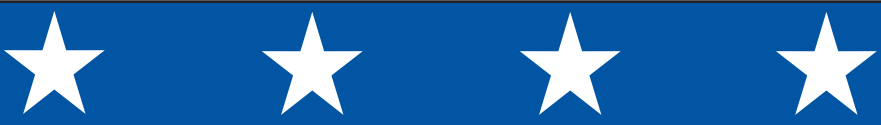
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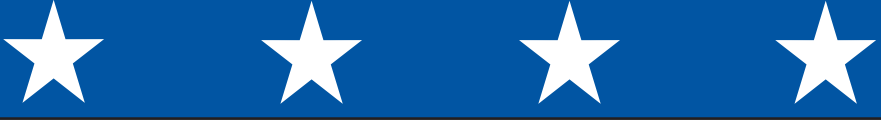
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Cove scrimmage in rear view, Broncos ready for tough test at A&M Consolidated

By **Tony Adams**
The Belton Journal

Starting their sixth year of play, the Lake Belton Broncos have steadily played better in scrimmage games.

Thursday night at Bull-dawg Stadium was one of their best yet.

The Broncos took on Copperas Cove, coached by former Belton head coach Rodney Southern.

While early rain delays pushed the freshmen and junior games into a pair of simultaneous 50-yard scrimmages, Mother Nature loosened her grips and presented Copperas Cove with a great weather night for football.

Overall, the scrimmage had positive feel to it. The

Broncos on the sidelines were supportive of one another, helped give feedback to each other in what they were experiencing on the field, and got after it between the lines.

"We are very proud of the energy our kids brought," Lake Belton football head coach Brian Cope said. "They played with intensity and togetherness for the whole scrimmage. Even when faced with adversity they reacted in a positive manner."

Offensively, the team moved the ball during the scripts. The quarterbacks worked the game plan well, running backs ran between the tackles well with the solid blocking up front, and

See **FOOTBALL**,
Page B3



Clutch Hutch: Hutchins collects 1,000th career kill in Lake Belton's win

By **Tony Adams**
The Belton Journal

It did not happen until late in the match. To the Lake Belton Volleyball program and its fans, they were excited to see the milestone at Bronco

Gymnasium.

Senior Kaitlyn Hutchins' 16th kill of the match came at a clutch time: a cannonading blast onto the Leander Glenn side of the court to cut off a Grizzly rally and gave the Broncos match point.

Lake slammed the door on the match on the next point to pick a hard-earned sweep against a talented Glenn squad.

See **BRONCOS**,
Page B3

Lady Tigers earn four set victory over Harker Heights Knights

By **Clay Whittington**
The Belton Journal

The Lady Tigers' chemistry on the court is evident, but it began long before the season started.

A little more than two weeks ago, Belton opened its schedule with a straight-set victory against visiting Round Rock McNeil, and in the weeks since, it has experienced a lot of success, including placing third at last weekend's Huntsville tournament.

Tuesday, the Lady Tigers followed the showing by traveling to Killeen Harker Heights and earning a four-set victory.

While the program is playing well early in the season, Belton head coach Haleigh Johnson admits the players' tight bonds are nothing new.

"We are starting off the season working well together," she said. "It's so nice to see them having each others' backs and leaning on each other in games this early on in the season. These girls spent a lot of time in our offseason together, and I really think all the character building we did has a lot to do with it."

Regardless of reasoning, it is working. In their second tournament of the young season, the Lady Tigers emerged

from Huntsville with a 7-2 record, reaching the Gold bracket before defeating Madisonville to capture the bronze medals.

Along the way, Belton produced a perfect second day, defeating the host Lady Hornets, Temple and Caldwell.

Additionally, senior outside hitter C.J. Stites was named to the all-tournament team.

The momentum carried over to Tuesday's road match, where Belton bounced back from an early deficit in a close affair that displayed the Lady Tigers' resiliency.

On the heels of back-to-back kills from Stites, Belton held a 10-5 lead against the Lady Knights and inflated the cushion to seven points, 18-11, after sophomore middle blocker Emma Harvey delivered a scoring block.

Harker Heights refused to concede, though.

The Lady Knights responded with a 13-3 outburst to propel them a one-set advantage in the match, but it would not hold as the Lady Tigers withstood every ensuing charge from the opposition en route to a 23-25, 25-21, 25-22, 25-22 win.

In the second set, Belton opened a

See **TIGERS**,
Page B3

Belton ISD cross country teams earn hardware in first meet of season

By **Clay Whittington**
The Belton Journal

Belton's first meet of the season could not have been much more successful.

After spending weeks working, the start of the schedule finally arrived for the Tigers and Lady Tigers last week, when they hosted their annual meet.

While the runners left the event with room for improvement, they also emerged with hardware.

Led by junior Ezra Kahler, who placed third in the boys Class 5A-6A division, the Tigers captured the team title at the Belton Invitational, while the Lady Tigers were second thanks in part to sophomore Isabella Warner's runner-up performance.

Warner posted a time of 22 minutes, 33.6 seconds across the

five-kilometer course at the Belton Lake & Outdoor Recreation Area to claim the silver medal, and the remainder of the team's first five placed among the field's top 15.

Madyson Hartnett, a sophomore, finished with an 11th-place time of 24:43.8, while junior Nataly Valdez (13th, 24:53.8), junior Roxanna Delgado (14th, 25:06.9) and senior Destiny Schutz (15th, 25:25.0) completed the race consecutively.

Additionally, senior Delilah Hoffman (16th, 25:34.7), freshman Ella Johnson (17th, 25:44.0), sophomore Ai Kirkland (18th, 25:49.6), freshman Ayla Waker-shauser (19th, 25:52.8), junior Fancy Jaime (21st, 26:10.0), sophomore Lilian Baggett (22nd, 26:21.1) and junior Xiadani Hernandez (26th, 32:50.3) competed for Belton, but their times did not

count toward the team's total of 51.

With just 19 points, Lorena earned the championship, and Copperas Cove was third (74).

In the boys division, Kahler, who received the bronze medal after finishing in 19:22.3, was immediately followed by a pair of teammates in senior Palu Maringathuparambil (4th, 19:22.8) and junior Jose Perez-Diaz (5th, 19:35.6). Tigers juniors Hayden Brown (7th, 20:11.0) and Alexander Castelan (10th, 20:37.9) rounded out the score.

Pflugerville (2nd, 48) and Copperas Cove (3rd, 49) completed the top three behind Belton (29).

Tigers sophomore Nelson Funez (12th, 20:46.2), freshman Luke Roberts (16th, 21:35.3), sophomore Harrison Booher (18th, 22:08.9), senior Corin

Ramesar (19th, 22:23.1), sophomore Marcus Hernandez (20th, 22:31.2) and senior Rosalio Parra (21st, 22:47.3) also raced.

New Tech was also in attendance, but the Dragons and Lady Dragons did not field complete teams in the Class 1A-4A division.

For the Dragons, junior David Martinez had the top time, placing 55th (23:07.5), while junior Desmond Long was 64th (24:33.8) and freshman Zorian Hajduk was 71st (32:17.1).

In the girls two-mile race, the Lady Dragons were represented by senior Claire Thomas (46th, 14:53.9), freshman Ellie Megoulloa (47th, 14:56.4), sophomore Daniella Idumebor (76th, 18:20.9) and freshman Ileana Antolak (78th, 18:36.0).

Both squads from Belton and New Tech will be back in action

Friday, when they travel to Temple's James Wilson Park for the Temple Pro-Fit Invitational.

LAKE BELTON

The Broncos and Lady Broncos returned to competition last week at the highly competitive Cedar Park Vista Ridge Invitational, where they placed 14th in the girls division and 23rd in the boys division.

The Broncos amassed 599 points in the Gold division's five-kilometer race behind junior Wyatt Potts' 106th-place time of 19:03.


Also scoring were junior Joshua Clark (125th, 19:22) and Josiah Briggs (139th, 19:41) and sophomores Cooper Schels (140th, 19:41) and Tyler Adkins-

See **CROSS**,
Page B2



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Sports Briefs

By Clay Whittington
The Belton Journal

The Dragons and Lady Dragons return to district competition today against Cameron Yoe at Mary Hardin-Baylor, and New Tech will be entering with momentum.

Last week, the Dragons and Lady Dragons traveled to Killeen and cruised to a 14-5 victory against the host squad.

New Tech lost only one doubles match en route to an early lead.

The boys duo of Leland Moore and Zaylen Kimball won 4-0, 4-1, while teammate Gracin Cattertoon and Jett Lopez won 4-2, 4-2. For Moore and Kimball, the outcome was their second consecutive win as a duo.

In mixed doubles, Samantha McKenzie and

Tim McPike earned a 4-2, 4-2 win to go along with a trio of girls doubles victories from the tandems of Annabel Ferniza and Carime Montez, Aubrie Bower and Taylor Clay and Hope Boettger and Harper Lee.

Then, Moore, Kimball, McPike, Aiden Finn, Desmond Long, Ferniz, Lee and Jessica Delgado recorded singles wins.

BELTON TENNIS

The Tigers and Lady Tigers improved to 2-3 on Friday, when they defeated Temple 10-2 at home.

Belton trailed 4-3 following doubles matches, but bounced back with a 10-2 showing in singles, giving it a 13-6 victory.

The squad returns to action Friday, traveling to Copperas Cove.

FUNDRAISER

The seventh-annual Rockin for Youth benefit for the Clements Boys and Girls Club, Belton Tiger Athletic Booster Club and Lake Belton High School Athletic Booster Club will be held Oct. 11 at 301 Thomas Arnold Road in Salado. The event will begin at 5 p.m.


General admission tickets are \$25 at the door and \$20 if purchased in advance at OutHouseTickets.com.

Kids ages 12 and under are free.

ATHLETIC PASSES

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

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



Planning your business exit: Start with the end in mind

Scot Hrbacek, CFP® Financial Advisor

If you own a business, you probably spend countless hours managing it. But have you thought about how you'll eventually step away?

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Think too about what you want to leave for your family or charitable causes.

Knowing the value of your business is

important, so have it valued in writing, even if retirement is a few years away.

Finally, consider who your buyer might be. Perhaps family members, business partners, employees or an external third party.

You can get help building your exit plan from professionals, such as a financial advisor, tax professional, legal advisor and business valuation expert.

Taking proactive steps now helps you control your future, including when and how you transition away from your business.

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Belton coaches evaluate talent against Shoemaker

By Aries Ramos
The Belton Journal

while also identifying areas that needed improvement.

Belton's coaches and players came away with similar takeaways. While the scoreboard wasn't the focus, the Tigers had opportunities to test out new combinations, evaluate talent, and make adjustments before the games started to count.

Now, Belton turns its attention to the regular season, which kicks off on Thursday, August 29, at 7 p.m. against the Hendrickson Hawks. The Tigers will be eager to put their preparation to work when they hit the road.

Last year's contest against Hendrickson was a defensive battle from start to finish, ending in a 14-0 win for the Hawks.

Belton's defense kept the game close, with then sophomore linebacker Azian Wilkinson racking up six solo tackles and showing flashes of the physical play the Tigers hope to build on this fall. On the offensive side, quarterback Will Shepard, also a sophomore at the time, managed to complete five of nine passes for 37 yards in what was one of his earliest varsity starts.

This year, Shepard and Wilkinson both return with another year of experience under their belts. The Tigers' offense will look to find more consistency and rhythm, while the defense aims to remain stout and create momentum plays.

With more maturity and depth on the roster, Belton is hoping to avoid another low-scoring grind and instead spark early confidence with a strong opening performance.

As the countdown to kickoff continues, one thing is clear: the Tigers are ready to compete. With a core of returning playmakers and fresh energy from underclassmen, Belton is determined to open 2025 with a performance that reflects the growth of the program and signals a promising start to the season.

Cross - From Page B1

Beltran (147th, 19:46).

Sarah Gray (66th, 22:20), Lucy Loa (70th, 22:26), Jenna Benedick (89th, 22:48), Madelyn Rivas (98th, 22:58) and Elizabeth Sandlin (122nd, 23:32) accounted for the Lady Broncos' 394 points.

Broncos freshman Drew Houston (150th, 19:49), junior Austin Adams (156th, 19:57), sophomore Efren Romero-Meza (182nd, 21:07), senior Brody Mansfield (191st, 22:35) and sophomore Anthony Garza (198th, 23:59) and Lady Broncos Alayna

Fulton (123rd, 23:36), Claire Henn (124th, 23:36), Clara Hill (127th, 23:40) and Isabela Romero (154th, 24:41) also competed.

Like its fellow Belton ISD schools, Lake Belton will race at the Temple Pro-Fit Invitational on Friday.



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Broncos - From Page B1

Scores of the match were 26-24, 25-19, and 25-22.

“This was a big win for us tonight,” Hutchins said. “We worked super hard in practice, came out, and competed.”

“I am so proud of the way the team battled tonight, and I love that Kaitlyn was able to get to 1,000 kills here at home,” Lake Belton head coach Allison Waits said.

The Broncos (9-6) grabbed an 8-4 lead in game one, with Hutchins converting a kill and an ace early, and Ava Wood and Madi Bingham each picking up two kills.

Glenn worked their way back into the game with a 15-8 stretch to take a 19-17 lead.

Hutchins, Wood, Bingham, Madi Jackman, and Makinzi Johnson picked up kills late, with Wood’s set-ending blast having given the Broncos an early match advantage.

Lake never trailed in game two, as Bingham contributed an early ace as the Broncos led 4-0, and extended their lead to as many as seven points. Wood, Hutchins, Abbi Jones, and Morgan Kukulski were set up well from solid plays from Bingham, Natalia Partida, Keileigh Krueger, and Kruz Smith to pace the Broncos to a six-point win.

The Broncos did not trail in game three, as Lake led by six points in the middle of the set before Glenn made a late push as they pulled to within four points, 23-19.

It set the stage for Bingham’s set from right to left along the net front, which Hutchins eagerly slammed to the deck on the Glenn side for game point, match point, and career kill 1,000.

“For awhile there, I felt like I was getting unlucky with some of the shots,” Hutchins said. “When we got the free ball back, I told myself that this was it. It finally came, and it was really cool. It was neat to see the reaction from the whole gym.”

The milestone, reached early in Hutchins’ senior year, is a monumental one for the Bronco program. And one that will propel the team going forward.

Hutchins finished the night with a team-high 17 kills.

Broncos break even at Volleypfest, Volleypalooza up next



The Lake Belton Broncos volleyball team played at the Pflugerville Volleypfest this past weekend.

In the opening pool, the Broncos took on Brentwood Christian, Pflugerville Connally, and Katy Jordan.

The Broncos swept the pool, having won six games straight.

Lake Belton defeated Brentwood Christian, 25-12 and 25-11. The Broncos beat Connally, 25-18 and 25-11. They completed the

sweep with the win over Jordan, 26-24 and 25-19.

In the second day, the Broncos split in their matches against Hutto and Buda Johnson.

In the opener, the Broncos defeated the Hippos, 25-16 and 25-23.

Lake ran into a buzzsaw against the Jaguars, as Johnson swept the Broncos, 25-22 and 25-13.

Saturday’s bracket opener began against Pflugerville Weiss.

The Wolves sent the Broncos to the consolation side of the bracket with 25-17 and 25-18 wins over Lake.

The Broncos concluded the tournament against Smithson Valley.

The Rangers got the best of Lake, with a narrow sweep of the Broncos, 25-20 and 25-22.

Lake went 3-3 at Volleypfest, with Kaitlyn Hutchins was named to the Volleypfest All-Tournament Team.

The Broncos will play at Volleypalooza beginning on Thursday in Round Rock.

Tigers - From Page B1

20-14 lead before Harker Heights rallied by scoring seven of the next 10 points, but a kill from Stites ended the run, allowing the Lady Tigers enough space to even the set.

Then, in the third set, Belton withstood another 7-3 run after leading 21-15.

Finally, a 16-12 advantage was erased in the fourth set when an ace gave the Lady Knights a 19-18 lead, and after the Lady Tigers scored five of the next six points, Harker Heights battled back again.

The Lady Knights threatened to extend the match, creeping within a point at 23-22 before

Malu Pula, a sophomore, had a scoring block and sophomore Brylee Renegar followed with a hit to earn the win.

“I’m very proud of my girls for their teamwork,” Johnson said.

“The stayed calm in situations that were intense, so I’m very proud of them for holding their composure.”

Belton (13-8) will look to continue its winning ways starting today, when it travels for the three-day Little River Academy tournament.

Upon returing from its final tournament, the Lady Tigers will travel to Killeen on Tuesday, and they host China Sping on Sept. 5.

Football - From Page B1

the receivers worked the routes well. The Broncos won the scripted/untimed session, scoring seven touchdowns to Cove’s two. Lake played the timed session appeared good, but not as successful as they were unable to convert a fourth down and two at the Cove 31 with 17 seconds remaining to drop the session, 14-7.

“There were a lot of positives to take from it,” Cope said. “I thought we pass protected well, ran the ball downhill and also threw and caught it pretty good. We did turn it over a few times and that has to be fixed. But overall, we are pleased.”

Defensively, the line play looked sturdy and stood up to the running and passing game. The secondary played well, despite not having Braxtan Cope in pads.

“Our first group did a good job,” Cope said. “We had a few fit issues but those are easily fixable. They played hard and thought our defensive line was a strength for us.”

Though special teams got limited reps, punt return and kick return looked solid. Davion Peters punted the ball well, and kicking game looked good, which will be an interesting battle with Tommy Stephens and Hunter Hutchins now graduated.

“Davion will be a weapon on our punt team,” Cope said. “We are excited to have him back there and get back to our rugby punt formation this year. We have two kickers this year: senior Aiden Lasich and sophomore Long Chung. It will be a good battle throughout and feel like they will only continue to get better.”

A trip to Tigerland is on tap for the Broncos on Friday night against A&M Consolidated in College Station. When the teams met in 2024, Consol won in a close battle, 33-21. It was a coming out party for Zyien Dupree as he ran for 95 yards and a touchdown. Davion Peters caught eight passes for 94 yards and a score. The defense held Consol’s passing game to 81 yards and the rushing game to 5.8 yards per carry.

“This is one of the top programs in the state and we get an opportunity to play them Week 1. What a great test!” Cope said. “Our kids are excited about this. They have an outstanding secondary so it will be a good test. They also blitz every play, so we have to be able to hold up in pass protection and take our shots when we can. Staying ahead of the chains will be key and we need to have a successful night running the football.”

Offensively, Consol’s bread-and-butter is the run. While they will have a new quarterback this season, Camron Roston and Ja’Marion Mooring are a couple of shifty running backs that move the ball well. Consol always has an excellent, physical front line.

“They will be explosive,” Cope said. “It will be interesting on what quarterback ends up leading them. When that is a question that means they will rely on their running game early. We have to win their battle up front.”

The Broncos defense will have a great look to it, with studs all over the field.

“It will be a fun year on defense,” Cope said. “Of our nine senior captains, we have five on defense. They will be expected to lead the whole year. They are Evan Lazott, Caleb Chandler, Gavin Owens, Gavin Stewart, and Braxtan Cope. Christian Onchweri is also a captain and will play on both sides.”

While the Broncos offensive system has always

had electric skilled positions, the linemen always been the moving men for The Lake Show.

“This is a good group of offensive linemen,” Cope said. “Maybe not the same size that we have had, but you cannot measure heart. Coach Ryan Graves, our offensive line coach, has done an outstanding job with them. Jacob Johnson, Hunter Loraus and Henry McGaha will be some senior leaders for us up front.”

Defensively, Consol has depth, with good speed and flies to the ball. While the Broncos saw many Tiger seniors on defense last season, Ethan Walton coled the Tigers in tackles in the 2024 game and Simon Starks, Myles Riggs, Hagen Chmelar, and Riley O’Bannon also were instrumental in the game. All five return for Consol this season. Please talk about the Tigers defense and what the Broncos will see offensively.

“It will be a 3-4 attack defense,” Cope said. “They paratroop them in with all the blitzes they have. It will be a tough test for our offense. We have to attack the storm.”

Cope has many memories of Tigerland, coaching in “The Jungle.” There are not many places in the country that host a football weekend like College Station, with Texas A&M hosting UT-San Antonio on Saturday night.

“I have had this one circled ever since we scheduled the matchup,” Cope said. “It is a special place for me. I met my wife there. Created some great memories at that stadium, and now I get to coach the Broncos there. Before the game, I will take a few moments to think back. But after that, it is game on.”

From a crowd aspect, Cope knows that Consol

Tiger fans are loyal and vocal. A great traveling Bronco crowd will be a plus for the team.

“They will pack the house, and we need the same,” Cope said. “With the Aggies playing at home, there will not be many hotel rooms available. So, carpool and find a way to get down there.”



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EDITORIAL

A revolution of words

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

When Johannes Gutenberg invented the movable type printing press in the mid 1400s, many scribes throughout Europe probably freaked out about their jobs. Until then, pretty much everything was hand-written by scribes who wrote on vellum, aka animal skin.

Europe went through a revolution because of the press and movable type, and that revolution affected the entire known world at that time.

But what about the scribes and the shrinking demand for their handwritten work. Was their business obsolete? What would a smart scribe do in order to earn a living?

Fast forward not quite 600 years and we’ve been in the midst of a pixel revo-

lution and our world has become increasingly digital.

Until working for the newspaper, my exposure to the world of “paper” was limited to that of book publishing. With the advent of ebooks, things have changed for paperbacks and with that, publishers had to rethink the way they do business.

Years ago, I attended a conference workshop given by Allen Arnold, then senior vice president and publisher of Thomas Nelson’s fiction division. He directly met the idea of what publishers and publishing should do about this digital revolution head-on.

“We are not simply paper book publishers,” I recall him saying. “We are information publishers. It is our job to provide that information, those books, to our readers in whatever form they would like to buy it.”

Smart publishers don’t fight the change, and like those scribes of old, they figure out a way to adapt to the

changing formats. I think it’s an exciting time to be a writer.

In fact, anyone can start an online “newspaper” and start sharing what they think is “news,” when it’s not really the news. Gullibility runs rampant on the Internet.

Those in the newspaper biz must understand that people get their news in other formats besides opening printed and folded pages. For some, there’s no better way to get hometown news than in digital form. You can get your local newspaper on your mobile device first thing Tuesday and Friday mornings.

We will still have newspapers of record. There’s something to be said about the “realness” of paper. When it’s printed, it is that more real when so much about the digital world has become fake. Also, clippings of significant events in our lives never go out of style. There is nothing like someone seeing their name in print. Paper or pixels, it doesn’t matter. Either way, you can still keep up with current events that mean something to you.

With all the information out there, wouldn’t it be nice if you could get your news and information in one place? What if you miss a Facebook post, social media junkies? Also, how do you wade through screen after screen of information which is sometimes mis-information?

My quote of the week is this, by Al Cross, the director of the University of Kentucky’s Institute for Rural Journalism and Community Issues:

“We practice journalism, which reports facts. To do that, we verify information or we attribute it to someone else. That is called the discipline of verification, and it is the essence of the news media. Social media [outlets] have no discipline, and hardly any verification, and they emphasize opinion. Newspapers separate fact from opinion, reserving our own views for the editorial page. Of course, our views influence what news we choose to cover, so if you think we’re not covering what should be covered, or have failed to separate fact from opinion, or make another mistake, we want you to tell us.”



FISHING REPORT

Belton Lake

FAIR. Water stained; 81 degrees; 4.36 feet above pool. Catfish are fair. Anglers can find blue catfish around points and sand flats in 10-25 feet of water. Larger fresh cut baits have been effective for trophy size fish. Eater fish under 10 pounds can be caught slow drifting with small cut shad along sand flats. Channel catfish are good and can be caught on punch bait in 10-20 feet of water. Flatheads are excellent on live bait in shallow water around river mouths. Report by Brian Worley, B&S Catfishing.



Stillhouse

SLOW. Water stained; 84 degrees; 3.38 feet above full pool. The lake is flooded with 7.68 feet of water above full pool, dropping about a half-foot per day with a 2,500+ CFS release ongoing. USACE has only one boat ramp open inside the Union Grove Park at this time, so that park is more congested than usual on both weekdays and weekends, and will remain so until other ramps come online. Flooding has led to two significant changes in white bass fishing: the fish have moved shallower and are often in under 30 feet now; and the fish are once again using bottom, not suspending exclusively. The best bite is in the first 3 hours of the morning. Downrigging to find concentrations of fish using Pet Spoons on multi lure rigs like umbrella rigs is working well. Once the concentrations are found, locking in the vicinity and working vertically and horizontally with MAL Heavy Lures with a silver body and blade with chartreuse tail. Report by Bob Maindelle, Holding the Line Guide Service. Bass are great in the shallows around the flooded vegetation and are destroying topwater baits such as frogs, etc. This will not last long, so get out there soon if you want some of that action. Otherwise, throwing worms and creature baits in deeper water around 20 feet in cuts and coves will get plenty of bites as well. Report by Bryan Cotter, Texas Havgs

The nutritional value of seafood

Certain types of cuisine tend to inspire a little extra devotion, and seafood is one such food. Seafood is an umbrella term that refers to fish such as salmon and tuna as well as shellfish like shrimp, crab and oysters. That’s a wide range of foods, which underscores the versatility of seafood.

Versatility is one notable attribute of seafood, and diners can keep that in mind as they plan nights out on the town. Another worthy quality of seafood is its nutritional value, which is perhaps more significant than even the most devoted fish and shellfish lovers recognize.

- Fish is low in saturated fat. The American Heart Association notes that fish is not high in saturated fats. In fact, the AHA recommends eating two servings of fish, particularly fatty fish like salmon, each week. Additional types of fatty fish include bluefin tuna, oysters, mussels, herring, mackerel, and anchovies.
- Certain types of fish and seafood can help lower triglyceride levels. Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) are two types of fatty acids found in fish such as mackerel and salmon that are associated with heart health. The Cleveland Clinic notes that EPA and DHA help to lower triglyceride levels, which is beneficial for a variety of reasons. According to the Mayo Clinic, high triglycerides may contribute to a hardening of the arteries or a thickening of arterial walls, a condition known as arteriosclerosis. Arteriosclerosis is a known risk factor for stroke, heart attack and heart disease.
- Shellfish are high in protein and low in calories. WebMD reports that shellfish are a great source of lean protein. That’s a notable benefit, as lean protein is easily digestible and vital for muscle growth and repair. Lean protein sources also can help people feel fuller for longer periods of time, potentially reducing the likelihood that people will overeat. WebMD notes that a single, three-ounce serving of clams contains 22 grams of protein, which is more than 40 percent of the daily recommended intake for people adhering to a 2,000 calorie diet. That same three-ounce serving also contains just 126 calories.

Many people mistakenly believe that dining out will compromise their diets. However, individuals who make wise choices when dining out can enjoy delicious foods without the guilt. Various dishes that fall under the umbrella of seafood provide a delicious and healthy option when diners want to hit the town without compromising their overall health.

Reading The Map

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

About a year or so back, a pundit whose name I don’t recall made an inflammatory allegation on social media. I’d almost forgotten about it until an unrelated thing brought it back to mind.

The individual, who apparently lives along the East Coast, was driving through a somewhat rural region of the Southern United States en route to a destination I also don’t recall. As they were driving, they noted that they couldn’t see a single library from the road they were going down. Thus, they concluded, libraries didn’t exist in the rural South. This person had a very low opinion of people from the South even before this, and followed up their allegation by noting how this observation of theirs ostensibly confirmed their sentiments.

Yes, you just read that.

I was one of several people who responded to his allegation by trying to ask some follow-up questions. I never received a reply, and

to my knowledge neither did anyone else. It might be that our voices were drowned out by the legion of his followers who were screaming about how his observation also ostensibly confirmed their sentiments about Southerners. It might be that he was ignoring us. I don’t know.

Either way folks, that allegation of his only actually confirmed that *he* was the ignorant one.

Oops...

Folks, take a minute and think about the layout of your town. Where is your public library compared to the main road through your town? It varies from town to town, doesn’t it?

Consider the town where I live. The “main road” through town is a so-called “business” extension of US Highway 190 (actually where it used to run through town before a bypass was constructed). This is distinctively different from Main Street, which runs southwest to northeast through town,

connecting the highway to a main road that leads onto the nearby military base. Our public library? Off of Main Street. If someone was traveling through the area, they wouldn’t be able to see the library even from Business 190, let alone the re-routed Highway 190. But it’s there, a proud fixture of downtown. Has been for decades.

Likewise, I can think of other towns where the library is on a prominent road in the town but a distance away from the actual main road. Maybe you can see the library. Maybe you can’t. But again, it’s there.

...Hence the follow-up questions I tried to ask this individual: what towns did he drive through, and what roads was he taking as he drove? That would have allowed me to pull up Google Maps, find those towns, and fact-check his observation. With no response, however, I couldn’t do that.

Either way, what we have is this pundit engaging in a little something we call “confirmation bias”. He went into the situation with a preconceived and very stereotypical notion, he made a surface-level observation that seemingly confirmed his notion, and he ultimately failed to engage in the higher-level logical functions he believes that people who aren’t like him don’t engage in. Yet because he was so sure he was the “smart” one he never bothered to examine his initial observation.

Folks, there’s a reason why phrases like “don’t judge a book by its cover” exist. All too often, we can and will make snap observations that are based on flimsy criteria, observations that don’t accurately reflect the situation around us. Things like stereotypes, misinformation, and personal biases can fuel this phenomenon. That extra minute or to we take in investigating matters can make quite a bit of difference.



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LEGALS

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
CASE NUMBER 23CPB00471**

To: UNKNOWN HEIRS
BRANDON SCOTT BIDDLE, Applicant, on August 21, 2025, filed an application to determine heirship and for letters of independent administration in a proceeding styled: CHARLES EARL BIDDLE, Deceased, and bearing the number 23CPB00471 in the County Court of Bell County, Texas.

The court will hear the aforesaid Application after the expiration of ten days, exclusive of the day of publication, from the date this citation is published which will be August 28, 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: STEVEN E. BLYTHE, PO BOX 2088, 319 N THIRD ST, TEMPLE TX 76503

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 August 21, 2025.

Shelley Coston County Clerk of Bell County, Texas, PO Box 48,0 1201 Huey Road, Belton, TX 76513

By Sophia Nieto Deputy
08.28

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION-PARENT
AND CHILD**

To: Any Unknown Father and All Whom It

LEGALS

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 2, 2025, against Phyllis Heier, also known as Phyllis Wickens, and Unknown Father, Respondent(s), numbered 25DFAM354195, and entitled “In **the** Interest of ISABELLE WICKENS, 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: ISABELLE WICKENS, DOB: December 31, 2019, Place of birth: Texas

The court has authority in this suit to render 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 22nd day of August
2025

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

By: C. Rodriguez Deputy
08.28

**NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING
CLAIMS AGAINST
THE ESTATE OF RONALD THOMAS
CLUP, DECEASED**

NO’ICE is hereby given that original Letters of Administration were issued on August 22, 2025 in a proceeding styled Estate of Ronald Thomas Culp. Deceased, in Cause

LEGALS

Number 25CPB00255, pending in the County Court At Law #1 of Bell County. Texas.

Claims may be presented in care of the attorney for the Independent Administrator, addressed as follows; Randy Thomas Culp Independent Administrator With Will Annexed of the Estate of Ronald Thomas Culp. Deceased, c/o Burk Roberts, Roberts &Roberts. L.L.P.,2501 East Elms Rd., Ste. A, Killeen. Texas 76542-3023

All persons having claims against this estate, which is currently being administered, are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

Signed on August 25, 2025.

Roberts & Roberts. L.L.P.. Attorneys for Randy Thomas

By: Burk Roberts
08.28

**NOTICE TO ALL PERSONS HAVING
CLAIMS AGAINST
THE ESTATE OF YOUNG S.
LOWRANCE, DECEASED**

NOTICE is hereby given that original Letters of Testamentary were issued on August 22, 2025. in a proceeding styled Estate of Young S. Lowrance, Deceased, in Cause Number 25CPB00356. pending in the County Court At Law #1 of Bell County. Texas.

Claims may be presented in care of the attorney for the Independent Executrix, addressed as follows: Vicky Leigh Aguirre Independent Executrix of the Estate of Young S. Lowrance. Deceased c / o B u r k R o b e r t s, Roberts &Roberts. L.L.P., 2501 East Elms Rd.. Ste. A, Killeen. Texas 76542-3023

All persons having claims against this estate, which is currently being administered, are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

Signed on August 25. 2025.

Roberts & Roberts. L.L.P., Attorneys for Vicky Leigh Aguirre.

By: Burk Roberts

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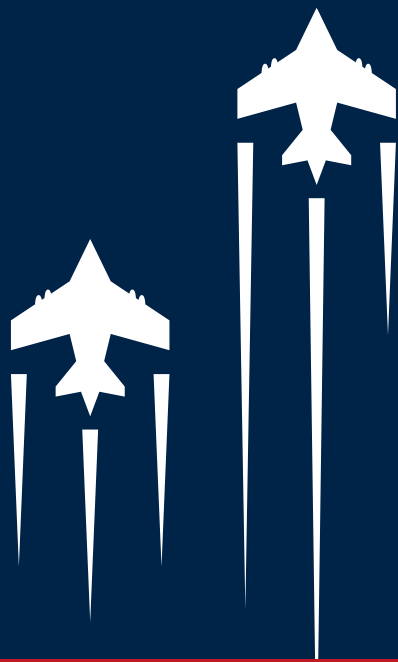
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MARCH 17, 2026

Senate sends new congressional map to governor

By Richard Lee
Special to the Journal

The Senate on Saturday voted in favor of a new congressional district map that its author believes will increase the number of Republicans Texas sends to Washington, D.C.

This issue sparked House Democrats to leave the state for two weeks to delay passage and raised a national debate on mid-decade partisan redistricting. They were successful in blocking the legisla-tion during the first special session, but Governor Greg Abbott vowed to call as many sessions as necessary to pass the bill.

With no end in sight, House Democrats returned last week and allowed that chamber to reestab-lish a quorum. Able to conduct business again, the House quickly passed the new maps along a par-ty line vote Monday.

The bill, HB 4, is slightly different than the ver-sion passed by the Senate in the first special ses-sion, though these differences aren’t significant, said Weatherford senator and bill author Phil King.

Like that bill, King said this map meets the three criteria he used to guide the process: a map that com-plied with all applicable laws, a map that improved partisan performance for Republicans, and a map that made the state’s congressional districts more compact

than the current map.

Though redistricting is required after each decen-nial census, King said that the legislature is per-mitted to take up the issue whenever it wills.

“Courts have well recognized this broad author-ity, therefore it is perfectly legal for us to have HB 4 before us today,” he said.

While there are legal standards regarding drawing district lines based on race, courts have ruled that par-tisanship is a legitimate basis for determining district boundaries. King said he only con-sidered political performance when drawing lines.

“I have not reviewed any racial data,” said King. “In contrast to the complications that are involved with race-based redistricting, political performance is really a pretty easy map to draw and it’s ab-solutely permissible as a basis for drawing electoral districts.”

Based on 2024 voting trends, the new map would elect five more Republicans to the state’s con-gres-sional delegation, which currently stands at a 25 to 13 Republican/Democratic split.

That doesn’t mean it will do that in 2026, said King.

“There are no guarantees,” he said. “There are competitive districts in here now, more competitive than the current map, and I have no idea who’s going to run for what office.”

Though King said the map is race-blind, Demo-

crats opposed to the map pointed out that the result of the next election could very well reduce the number of minority representatives in the state’s congressional delegation.

“Since the Civil War, African-Americans have been able to work with different persons in the legis-lative body and the courts in order to get four African-American representatives in Congress,” Dal-las Sena-tor Royce West told King. “What your map does, is it reduces it to two...I call that retro-gression.” Other members decried the map for carving up communities and diluting the voting power of black and Hispanic Texans.

Following passage of the new map, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick released a statement praising the measure.

“This is a significant step forward — Texas’ Con-gressional Redistricting Map will now more accu-rately reflect our state,” he said.“ The people of Texas expect and deserve a Congress that repre-sents their values.”

The bill now sits on Governor Abbott’s desk, where it will soon be signed.

“I promised we would get this done, and deliv-ered on that promise,” Abbott said in a statement. “I thank Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick for leading the passage in the Senate of a bill that ensures our maps reflect Texans’ voting preferences.”

Fundraiser scheduled to support efforts to build new MPR library

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

A new nonprofit organization is working to build a new library in Morgan’s Point Resort.

Friends of Mary Ruth Briggs Library is working to build a standalone facility that will expand hours to evenings and Saturdays to better serve residents of all ages, according to Linda Bridges, MPR Economic Development Corporation president.

“Right now, the library is housed within City Hall,” Bridges said. “The library faces frequent clo-sures due to administrative needs such as meetings and municipal court. City Hall is in need of expanded space, so the Friends are working to build a stand-

alone library.”

To kick off fundraising efforts for a new library, the Friends will host a special Oktoberfest celebration from 1 to 6 p.m. on Saturday, Oct . 4, at Ansay Park, located between Thistle and Lake Forest Drive.

The event — the Page Turner’s Party — will be part of the City’s Community Yard Sale and will in-clude:

- A Jam Session Challenge for volunteer musi-cians and vocalists.
- A beginner’s line-dance class.
- Two bounce houses for kids.
- A German Food cooking contest.
- A Bratwurst Plate fundraiser.
- Beer from Bold Republic Brewing.

- The Papa Bear Kettle food truck with burg-ers, hot dogs, nachos, fries, shaved ice, kettle corn and cotton candy.

“The volunteer-driven celebration will offer resi-dents with a place to gather in the spirit of Oktober-fest, especially after the annual SummerFest was can-celled,” Bridges said.

“We are seeking helping hands for the event setup and take down, the kid-zone safety, parking assistance and DJ support for open dancing,” she said.

“Let’s turn the page together toward a brighter, more connected future for Morgan’s Point Resort.”

Bridges said the group will hold its annual board meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 26, at 1:30. p.m. at the cur-rent location, 8 Morgan’s Point Blvd.



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Scotti’s Italian Ice brings the Jersey Shore to Belton

Scotti’s Italian Ice is a small, veteran-owned family business dedicated to serving refreshing, authentic Italian ice, reminiscent of what owner Ann Scotti enjoyed growing up on the Jersey Shore.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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