

C.A.S.T. For Kids impacts local youngsters with special needs

By Shalee Corey-Wiebe
The Belton Journal

C.A.S.T. for Kids held a fishing event for children with special needs at Creekside Park on Feb. 21.

On this cool Saturday morning, starting at 9:00, children and volunteers stood along the edge of the water with fishing poles in hand.

Jim Behnken, the regional director and event coordinator for this C.A.S.T. for Kids event, said that C.A.S.T. for Kids serves not only children with special needs, but also underserved children, including kids from the Clemons Boys & Girls Club.

Every kid gets to leave with their own rod, reel, and tackle box, as well as participate in an awards ceremony, where they receive a gold medal and a plaque with a photo of the fish they caught. The foundation is in its 35th anniversary this year, and C.A.S.T. for Kids does over 100 events per year, with 40 events per year in Texas alone.

"It's about the local community coming together and showing these



BELTON JOURNAL/David Tuma
Young anglers enjoy trying their hand at fishing during Saturday morning's C.A.S.T. For Kids event at Creekside Park in Belton.

children that are getting off that bus right there, that they're loved and valued by their community," said Behnken. "My favorite part is when we have the mic set up after lunch, and every child gets to come up, and a volunteer will get to put the gold medal around their neck and hand them their photo plaque, and you put that microphone in front of his or her face, because you never know what a kid's going to say."

Volunteers also had something to say about how C.A.S.T. for Kids helps out kids with special needs and their families.

"So the group C.A.S.T. for Kids puts together a special event, gets volunteers for every kiddo, and they just get to do something fun that they don't get to do very often," Darren Perkins said. Darren's favorite part about C.A.S.T. for Kids is "just seeing the joy on the kids' face when

they catch a fish. I think sometimes we get more out of it than the kids do."

Joseph Dyer, park superintendent, said, "It provides them an opportunity to come out and do something they might not do on their own. Organization, providing coaches. It takes away a lot of the concern and a lot of the extra work associated with doing extracurricular activities, and I think it's amazing for them and the community."

Belton ISD trustees approve technology bond sale and bond refunding

Special to the Journal

The Belton ISD Board of Trustees unanimously approved the sale of \$6 million in bonds to support the Technology Proposition approved by voters in November 2025 and authorized the refunding of two previously issued bond series during its regular meeting on February 23, 2026.

The \$6 million bond package will provide updated technology devices for students and staff district-wide.

The bonds will be repaid over five years, with annual payments projected at approximately \$1.3

nology plays in education," said Superintendent Dr. Malinda Golden. "Technology is evolving at such a rapid rate, and this bond allows us to keep pace with innovation while ensuring our students and staff have the tools they need to succeed."

Under the district's device replacement schedule, high school student devices will begin replacement in 2027, middle schools in 2028 and elementary schools in 2029.

Staff devices, many of which are nearing the end of their life cycle, will begin replacement starting next school year.

Trustees also authorized the

This reduces the amount of tax revenue needed to satisfy those obligations and can either lower the Interest and Sinking (I&S) portion of the tax rate or allow the district to retire debt sooner than originally planned.

The refunding approved on February 23 is projected to generate over \$760,000 in savings for taxpayers.

Over the past decade, Belton ISD has successfully executed five bond refundings, resulting in total taxpayer savings of \$14,978,871.

"In the last ten years, Belton ISD has successfully executed five bond refundings, saving district

Belton Council election cancelled; BISD and MPR elections are May 2

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Belton City Council members John Holmes, Sr. and Dave Covington will serve two more years because the May 2 city election has been cancelled.

The determination was made at Tuesday evening's city council meeting, as the two were the only candidates to file for office.

According to Amy Casey, Belton city clerk, state law allows cities to avoid the cost of an election when all candidates are unopposed.

Casey: "I have attached a certification attesting to such, and it would be appropriate for Council to adopt the ordinance declaring each unopposed candidate elected to office and canceling the election previously ordered for May 2."

Holmes and Covington will be administered at the regular Council meeting on Tuesday, May 10.

Tuesday's action not only cancels the election, it also nullifies contracts with Bell County and Belton ISD that were approved during the last Council meeting.

The City had \$10,000 budgeted for the election and that money will roll back into the General Fund or be used for other departmental purposes.

Belton ISD will still hold its school board election on May 2.

Two incumbents also have filed for the Belton Independent School District election. They are Rucker Preston and Brandon Bozon — both occupy at-large seats. Maria Martinez also has filed as a candidate.

Any candidate receiving a majority of votes cast for an office will be elected, but in the event of a tie or in the event that no candidate has the majority of votes a run-off election will be held on June 13 between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.

If a run-off is needed, the names of the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be on the ballot. A drawing would be held to determine the order that names will appear on the ballot.

Morgan's Point Resort will be filling three City Council seats during the May 2 election. The Council seats up for election will serve 2-year terms.

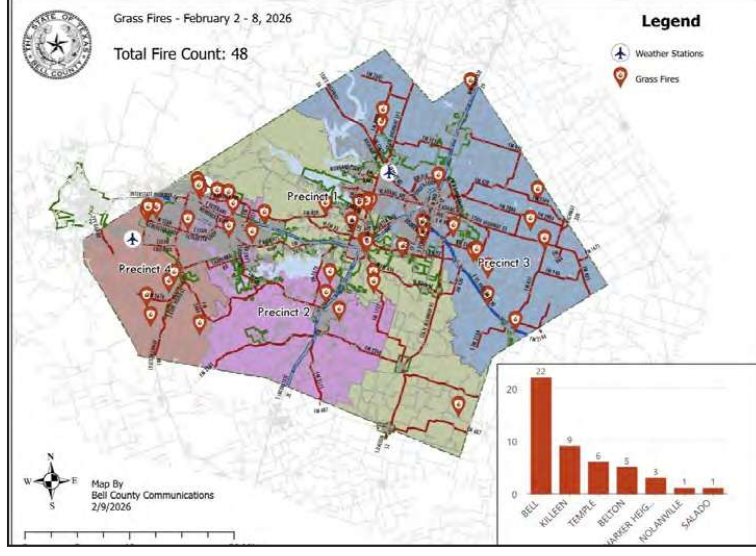
Candidates who have filed for the MPR Council seats are Dorothy Allyn, Bruce Leonhardt, Louis Guillard III, Melanie Bohler, Samuel L Pallin and Sarah Steers. Pallin, Allyn and Leonhardt are incumbents.

The MPR early voting clerk is Kelli Merolillo and deputy clerks are Shahdiah Valentin and Amanda Dominguez. The presiding judge on Election Day will be Sally Barron.

Early voting for the May 2 election takes place April 20-24, and April 27-28.

MPR early voting will take place at the Garrett

Firefighters in Bell County have fought 242 wildfires this year



Courtesy Graphic

This map shows wildfires in Bell County during the week of Feb. 2-8.

By David Stone

The Belton Journal

There have been 242 wildfires in Bell County during the first two months of 2026 and February isn't over.

Looking at the number of wildfires in January and February since Jan. 1, 2021, this year's numbers are far and away the most. There were 226 wildfires in the first two months of 2025.

Bell County firefighters have fought 1,102 wildfires in the first two months of every year since 2021.

"We've had a very dry, warm winter and the spring forecast looks to be more of the same," said County Judge David Blackburn. "The potential for conditions to be receptive for wildfires this spring is very high. As we approach the next season we need to be extra vigilant in our outdoor activities as it relates to fire prevention."

Conditions ripe for wildfires have prompted Blackburn to issue two emer-

gency burn bans in the past month.

"The decision to issue an emergency burn ban order is based on several factors, including a state-generated drought index measure for our county," Blackburn said. "I also consider the actual conditions on the ground here in Bell County."

"We have seen a significant increase in the number of grass fires across the county this year," the county judge added. "That, along with recommendations from our Emergency Management office, were persuasive enough for me to issue the burn ban orders."

James Stafford, Bell County's public information officer, said Monday that there have been 62 grass fires in Bell County since Feb. 9.

"The county was stretched thin by fires over that weekend," Stafford said. "Emergency Management Coordinator

See 242 WILDFIRES,
Page A3

Belton Fire & Police Departments reflect on 2025 challenges

By Jack Freedman

Special to the Journal

Entering into the new year, residents of Belton take the time to reflect on the challenges the previous year brought.

Two groups that have seen plenty of challenges and helped people through their own challenges are the Belton Police and Fire Departments.

"We obviously don't respond to just fires, but also EMS calls, wrecks, and even minor things like elevator malfunctions," Belton Deputy Fire Marshal Jeffrey Glover said.

"In terms of legitimate fires, we only had about two to three this year. Since then, we've been able to rectify every issue we had at the beginning. Most fires seem to start from electrical issues, usually overloading circuits or misusing extension cords."

The fire and the police departments have seen plenty of action in the past year.

"We had a lot of change," Police Chief Larry Berg said. "We've had some major crimes such as homicides, sexual assaults and some fatal accidents. We're seeing a lot of concern on the interstate. We've lost some of our own family through health issues. My predecessor retired two years ago [in 2024], and so it's been kind of an adjustment. I was his deputy chief."

Both the fire and the police departments were busy in 2025 with the large number of cases they have had.

"The police received over 4,000 calls, and the fire department received over 300 calls," public relations coordinator Cristina Waits said.

Despite the hardships, the first responders of Belton receive incredible support from the community.

"Belton is not shy about taking care of their first responders," Berg said. "We have a really robust volunteer program. We've got about 70 volunteers that back the police department. They'll help out with the Fourth of July parade and Christmas on the Chisholm Trail. So, the citizens are really, really giving. Plus, when it comes time for Police Week, they will bring so many treats and meals."

The community has also helped to promote and support the fire department.

"Belton's residents love us and we love them back," Glover said. "They're always willing to come by the station and leave snacks and food. At one point we started a social media campaign to support firefighters and paramedics who were leaving, and we received a lot of positive feedback from the community."

Both the fire and police departments are known to work closely, supplying the needs of either party when appropriate.

"There are times like interstate accidents where we work hand-in-hand together," Berg said. "Obviously if we have a victim of a crime who has some type of medical trauma, the fire department will come out with the EMS."

In addition to their normal duties, one of the most important skills first responders have learned during their careers is empathy.

"The most difficult part of the job is probably see-



Courtesy Photo

Belton first responders to include firefighters and police responded to more than 4,000 calls for service in 2025.

ing the suffering of other people and having to carry that with us," Glover said. "You see that over and over, but still have to remain professional."

This story first appeared in *The Bells*, published by UMHB.

National United Way leadership team visits local free tax prep sites

Special to the Journal

The Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Stakeholder Partnerships, Education and



Communication (SPEC) leadership team traveled to Central Texas to personally visit two United Way of Central Texas VITA sites on February 19, 2026.

All VITA volunteers are IRS-certified at no cost, ensuring accuracy and trust, and assist local residents with tax preparation at no charge.

United Way of Cen-

tral Texas, bringing more than \$2.6 million back into the local economy, directly strengthening families and stimulating the Central Texas community.

The visiting delegation included Richard Rodriguez, National SPEC Director; Joseph Hayek, Acting Senior Operations Advisor to the National

Teacher of the Year Jessica Cuellar, who blends classroom learning with real-world service.

"I am incredibly grateful to have the VITA program as part of my class," said Cuellar. "I am so proud of my students for taking on the responsibility of preparing tax returns and serving our community. It is amazing

The executive team also visited the First Heroes National Bank branch on T.J. Mills Boulevard on Fort Hood, another host site supporting free, quality tax assistance for military families and local residents.

United Way of Central Texas President and CEO Veshell Greene, who also

of our host locations and the commitment of our volunteers."

"We appreciate the opportunity to host the IRS SPEC leadership team during their visit to Central Texas," Greene added. "Their engagement highlights the importance of collaboration in delivering free, high-quality tax

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OBITUARIES

Gonzalez Leyva

Jilian Elizabeth Gonzalez Leyva

**August 28, 1977 —
 February 7, 2026**

Jilian Elizabeth Gonzalez Leyva, lovingly known as “Mom,” was born on August 28, 1977, in Long Island, NY to Peter Joseph Gonzalez and Ruth Ellen (Vogel) Gonzalez. She passed away on Saturday, February 7, 2026, at a local hospital in Temple, leaving behind a profound legacy of love and devotion.

Jilian embraced life with a remarkable spirit, always embodying love, care, and support for her family and friends. A proud mother, she dedicated herself to raising her children, often attending their functions and actively participating in their lives. Her love for her family was matched only by her commitment to her career. Jilian concluded her professional journey as the Environmental Service Manager at Crothall Hospital, a position that allowed her to blend her passionate nature with her professional skills.

An accomplished individual, Jilian graduated from Los Fresnos High School where she was involved in the Future Farmers of America and played high school tennis. Her educational journey continued at the University of Texas River Grande Valley, where she not only advanced her studies but also found the love of her life, Arturo Leyva. Together, they shared countless memories, often walking along the beach and exploring new horizons. She later completed her degree at Everest College, adding to the pride she felt for her personal achievements.

Jilian’s personality reflected her nurturing heart and steadfast spirit. She held a firm belief in giving her all and doing her best, a motto that resonated

throughout her life. Her kindness was felt by many; she often opened her home, lovingly hosting events for her children and their friends. Jilian was an outdoor enthusiast who enjoyed hiking and walking, always accompanied by her beloved dogs, “Annabella,” her emotional support companion, and “Zahavah,” her Service Companion.

She took great pride in her children, frequently showcasing picture books filled with their accomplishments and cherished moments. Her enduring spirit and gentle demeanor had a lasting impact on those who knew her. Jilian is survived by her devoted husband of 27 years, Arturo Leyva; her three children, Matthew, Nathaniel, and Alyssa Leyva; as well as her cherished retired emotional support companion Annabella, and her service companion Zahavah.

Jilian is preceded in death by her parents, Peter Joseph Gonzalez and Ruth Ellen (Vogel) Gonzalez. Her immense capacity for love and unyielding support touched countless lives, and she will be remembered fondly by all who had the privilege of knowing her.

Visitation was held before the service on Monday, February 23, 2026 from 2:00 - 3:00 pm and Celebration of Life Service began at 3:00 pm with Pastor Ryan Pennington officiating at Young’s Daughters Funeral Home & Bereavement Center 4235 E. U.S. Hwy 190, Temple, TX.

In Lieu of flowers please consider making a memorial donation to an Autism Awareness Foundation of your choice.

A special thank you to Pastor Ryan Pennington of Fortress Lutheran Church for his support to the family.

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

Maruna

Craig Allan Maruna

**December 23, 1961 –
 February 14, 2026**

Craig Allan Maruna, 64, born December 23, 1961, in Bell County, Texas, passed away peacefully on February 14, 2026 surrounded by his loving family.

A celebration of life will be held to honor his memory on March 1, 2026, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 1031 Early Boulevard, Early, Texas.

Craig was preceded in death by his father, Frederick V. Maruna; his grandson, Jayden Hill; and his granddaughter, Tatum Baker.

Craig is survived by his devoted wife of 36 years, Teresa Maruna; his mother, Dorothy Cozart and husband Durwood Cozart of Belton, Texas; his brother, Mark Maruna and wife Lisa; his sister, Melissa Seigler and husband Ricky; several nephews and one niece; his children, William Hill and wife Jessica, John Hill, and Terrie Hill; his grandchildren, Breonna Hill, Kyler Hill, Marjorie Hill, John Wesley Hill Jr., Blayne Hill, Gabriel Marek, and Tucker Baker; and his great-grandchildren, Bryson Cash, Wesley Cash, Aizle Cash, Maddilynn Glass, Braxton Hill, and Brayleigh Hill.

Craig dedicated 30 years to Kohler as a lead man. He enjoyed fishing, hunting, gardening, cooking, and most of all spending time with his family. He will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

Online condolences, memories and tributes can be made to the family at www.heartlandfuneralhome.net

Another burn ban in place

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Bell County Judge David Blackburn issued an emergency burn ban Sunday that prohibits outdoor burning in the unincorporated areas of the county.

Blackburn’s decision was based on low humidity levels, high winds and a lack of rain in the forecast.

These factors have created an environment in

which wildfires have the potential to grow rapidly and spread at a rate that would make it very difficult for firefighters to control.

This is the second emergency fire ban issued by the county judge this month.

The first ban was issued following a deep freeze that left vegetation dry, resulting in a weekend of heavy wildfires across the county. The Bell County Office of Emergency Management reported more than 30 fires

in three days.

That ban was lifted early last week after the area received heavy rainfall.

“The decision to issue the first emergency burn ban order was based on several factors, including a state-generated drought index measure for our county,” Blackburn said. “I also considered the actual conditions on the ground here in Bell County.”

“We saw a significant increase in the number

of grass fires across the county,” the county judge added. “That, along with recommendations from our Emergency Management office, were persuasive enough for me to issue the burn ban order.”

The Keetch-Byram Drought Index is a tool used to estimate how likely wildfires are in an area. It measures how much moisture is in the ground by weighing ongoing dry conditions against recent

rainfall.

The index runs from 0 to 800, with lower numbers showing moist soil and little fire risk, and higher numbers showing very dry conditions and a much greater fire danger.

During a burn ban, residents living in the unincorporated area of Bell County are prohibited from outdoor burning, but the orders do not prohibit welding or the use of barbecue pits.

242 Wildfires - From Page A2

Bpb Reinhard told me Feb. 10, when we last issued a

each of the volunteer departments from other vol-

fires?

“Make sure grass

trash, or a small pile of brush (with no burn ban in

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A4
Thursday,
February 26, 2026

LIFESTYLES

THE BELTON JOURNAL

Magnolia Realty Temple Belton office moves to downtown Belton



BELTON JOURNAL/Michele Weisman

Broker and Owner of Magnolia Realty Temple Belton, Kristi Sanguinet, cuts the ribbon to celebrate the opening of their new offices.

By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

Magnolia Realty Temple Belton celebrated its new location on Wall Street, in historic Belton. Their Open House was held on Thursday, Feb. 19, from 4 pm to 7 pm. Partners, vendors, affiliates, and the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce came out for the ribbon cutting and celebration.

Broker and Owner of Magnolia Realty Temple Belton, Kristi Sanguinet, searched for the new location. Formerly, their office was in Temple

Belton plan, the 125-year-old home was rezoned for commercial use.

Sanguinet said, "So I jumped on it and turned it into a commercial space."

The guests and the Magnolia Realty Temple Belton team gathered out front for the ribbon cutting. The Belton Area Chamber of Commerce brought the ribbon and scissors to celebrate the grand opening in style.

The President and CEO of the Belton Area Chamber of Commerce, Randy Pittenger, asked Sanguinet to say a few words about purchasing the

Sanguinet said, "It is such a huge blessing to be so visible."

At their new location, they are already seeing foot traffic stop in and ask questions. Two criteria for the new space were visibility and an easy walk to Downtown Belton.

"We're really happy with what it turned out to be, so we're really excited," said Sanguinet.

After the ribbon-cutting, guests continued to visit and enjoy a tour of the property. There were cupcakes and cookies available inside. You can visit the new location, Wall Street



BELTON JOURNAL/Michele Weisman

Top: Adam Trujillo on stilts welcomes guests to the Father-Daughter Dance. Above: Isaias Salazar plays at the shooting gallery with his daughter Raylah.

11th annual Father-Daughter Dance held over two nights

By Michele Weisman



Local Activities & Events

Newcomers Club Activities

February

02/25: Fun Lunch
02/26: Mexican Train Dominoes

02/27: Trailblazers Walking Group
02/28: Jimmy's Egg

March

03/02: Chat 'n' Canasta
03/04: Monthly Luncheon
03/09: Bookworms
03/10: Singing Bluebonnets
03/12: Mexican Train Dominoes,
Couples Night Out
03/13: TGIF Lunch
03/16: Snack Time Mah Jongg
03/17: Bunco

03/19: Nonfiction Book Club,
Meet & Greet
03/21: Exploring Wines
03/23: Well Read Women,
Monday Canasta
03/24: Singing Bluebonnets
03/25: Fun Lunch
03/26: Mexican Train Dominoes
03/27: Trailblazers Walking Group
03/28: Jimmy's Egg

"To join or for more information, please call:

**Mary Pringle (760)265-5035 or email at: pringlem@msn.com.
Visit the website: www.bellcountynewcomers.com."**

Bell County Museum Historic Escape Games - Mar 6

A robbery has been committed and we need your help to solve it! You have one hour to solve the crime and "escape" the museum. Bell County Museum - 201 N Main St, Belton Pre-registration is required and available online at bellcountymuseum.org. Call 254-933-5243 for more information.

Bell County Master Gardeners - Mar 7

Registration for the March 7th, 2026, Spring Garden Forum, "Gardens that Nourish" is now open! Join us Saturday, March 7th for a community gardening forum offering expert-led talks designed to inspire and inform Central Texas gardeners. Hear from an outstanding lineup of speakers Saturday, March 7, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Temple College Pavilion, 1903 S 1st St, Temple, TX Registraer at txmg.org.

SPJST Hosts Public 42 Domino Tournament - Mar 7

Compete in the Texas classic game of dominoes at the SPJST 42 Domino Tournament Saturday, March 7. All seasoned and new players are encouraged to join. The tournament offers a full day of friendly competition, prizes, and community fellowship. Held at the SPJST Home Office, 520 North Main Street, Temple, Texas, check-in runs from 8 to 8:45 a.m. Play time begins at 9 a.m. The tournament is open to players 16 and older. Registration is \$30 and includes admission, lunch, snacks, and refreshments. Seating is limited, with space available for 30 teams. This is a two-player format, and partners will be assigned if needed. Prizes will be awarded to the top teams. Registration is available online at spjst.org/tournaments. For more information, please call 254-773-1575, ext. 164, or email tammym@spjst.com

MPR Explorers - Mar 26

MPR Explorers invites residents to its monthly gathering featuring a musical performance by the Lake Belton High School Choir Show Ensemble, followed by a meet-and-greet with the Directors of the Friends of the Mary Ruth Briggs Library. The program highlights local tal-

are joining together to better understand and learn tips and tricks for daily life. Young's Daughters Funeral and Bereavement Center is located at 4235 East Hwy 190 in Temple.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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2210 Holland Rd. ~ 254.721.0707
 - Fellowship Baptist Church
2025 Morgan's Point Rd ~ 254.780.2388
 - First Baptist Church Belton
506 N. Main St. ~ 254.933.3391
 - First Mexican Baptist Church
703 S. Wall St. ~ 254.939.6900
 - First Presbyterian Church of Belton
2500 Church Street ~ 254.939.2115
 - First United Methodist Church
205 E. 3rd Ave. ~ 254.939.5703
 - Free Pentecostal Church of Jesus
1111 Cacti Lane ~ 254.933.8201
 - Freedom Bible Fellowship
3087 W. Ave. D ~ 254.933-3310
 - Holy Temple of Our Lord Jesus Christ of the Apostolic Faith
519 S. Pearl St. ~ 254.613.4591
 - Hope Community Church
507 Mitchell St. ~ 254.933.8222
 - New Life Fellowship
706 E. 4th. ~ 254.939.8011
 - Nolan Valley Baptist Church
13206 W. FM 93 ~ 254.721.5998
 - Pentecostal Church of Jesus Christ
117 N. Birdwell St. ~ 254.939.0822
 - Redeemer Reformed Baptist Church
2378 FM 1670 ~ 818.519.9855
 - Tapestry Community Church of Belton
1215 S. Wall St. ~ 254.218.4008
 - Temple Vision de lo Alto
4357 Orchard Hill ~ 254.563.1231
 - Trinity Full Gospel
810 East 2nd Ave. ~ 254.939.7673
 - Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Bell County
1726 Morgan's Point Rd. ~ 254.778.8034
 - Grace Baptist Church
740 Jayline Drive ~ 254.773.1401
 - Grace Comm. Primitive Baptist Church
3111 N. 3rd St ~ 254.774.8192
 - Grace Presbyterian Church
2401 S 57th ~ 254.773.2134
 - Harvest Church
2501 General Bruce Dr. ~ 254.780.3566
 - Immanuel Lutheran Church
2109 W. Ave H ~ 254.773.3898
 - Leon Valley Church of Christ
4404 Twin City Blvd. ~ 254.939.0682
 - New Hope Church of God
2005 W. Ave D., Suite D. ~ 254.742.2181
 - Oak Park United Methodist Church
5505 South 31st St. ~ 254.773.3021
 - St. Francis Episcopal Church & School
5001 Hickory ~ 254.733.4255
- ~ TEMPLE ~
- Chalice Church - Disciples of Christ



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Tonkawa Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas holding spring sale

Special to the Journal

The Tonkawa Chapter of the Native Plant Society of Texas Annual Online Tree sale is going on from now until March 24 and can be accessed on the npsotcentx.org website.

The tree sale includes a large variety of shade and pollinator trees in three-gallon and 5-gallon containers, and a number of very hard to find natives such as native pecan, Blackgum, Hornbeam, and Texas Persimmon along with Live Oak, Lacey Oak, Burr Oak, Texas Red Buds and more.

The chapter's Spring Plant Sale will be held on Saturday and Sunday, March 28 and 29 at Barrow Brewing, 108 Royal St. in Salado. Hours are Saturday 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. And Sunday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Trees from the online sale will be available for pickup at the plant sale.

If products are sold out on Saturday, the Sunday sale will be canceled. Cash, checks, and credit cards will be accepted.

Texas native plants, trees, shrubs and grasses have been collected from several sources and are healthy and ready for planting.

Many vital pollinator attracting plants for full sun, shade, and partial shade will be included in the sale.

All plants are in 4-inch, 1-gallon, and 3-gallon container sizes which are perfect for adding to home landscaping, fields, meadows, and planters.

Host and nectar plants along with information on how to grow native plants and how to build your own Monarch way stations will be available.

These hard-to-find varieties have grown success-

fully in some Texas counties and the growing conditions described will allow for successful growth in Bell County according to the Lady Bird Johnson and npsot.org website databases.

A children's area with fun activities including adopting a butterfly, planting seeds, and meeting "Fluttery" the traveling butterfly will be held Saturday, March 28 9 a.m. until 4 p.m.

As always wagons and volunteers will be on hand to help with carrying your purchases to your vehicle.

An information table will be at the sale to help with Q&A.

All proceeds from the sale go to fund educational community projects in Bell County and to encourage the planting of vital Texas natives.

A partial list of plants can be found on the website www.npsotcentx.org.

Council honors Sara Clark, BHS theatre troupe and local teens

By David Stone
The Belton Journal

Assistant Belton City Clerk Sara Clark completed the Texas Municipal Clerks Certification Program and was awarded the Certificate of Graduation by the University of North Texas on Jan. 23.

This is the only university-level professional education program for city clerks and secretaries in Texas.

Clark was honored during Tuesday's meeting of the Belton City Council.

Mayor David K Leigh was notified by letter of Clark's accomplishment.

The letter stated: "As an officer of the City, achieving certification confirms Sara's professional and personal commitment to her city by staying up to date on laws affecting municipalities in Texas. The certification program offers training that results in increased personal awareness, flexibility and relevant knowledge necessary for more effective administration of local government."

Also at Tuesday's Council meeting, Belton High School's Theatre Troupe was honored with a proclamation declaring March as Theatre in Our Schools Month.

Members of the troupe were present to accept the proclamation.

According to the proclamation, "Theatre education plays a vital role in the intellectual, social and emotional development of students by fostering creativity, collaboration, critical thinking, and communication skills."

The proclamation also said Theatre in Schools Month is observed to recognize the importance of theatre education and to celebrate the positive impact of school-based theatre programs on students and the community.

City Council also heard a presentation by Youth Advisory Commission Chair Anahitaa Malhorta on the organization's fundraising and a proposal for a Community Teen Night event.

James Grant, Belton's Parks & Recreation director, said the Christmas on the Chisholm Trail popcorn fundraiser was organized and supported by Youth Advisory Board members with the goal of reinvesting proceeds into programs that benefit the community.

And, Grant said, the proposed Community Teen Night is intended to provide a safe, engaging recreational opportunity for local teens to support youth engagement within the community.

The Teen Night would be mostly funded by proceeds from the popcorn fundraiser, which was about \$190. Additional funds would come from the Parks & Recreation budget.

Father-Daughter - From Page A4

the hallway was a shooting gallery, a buz-wire toy, two corn-holes, and a snowball competition. A table with a large jar full of clown noses invited one-and-all to guess how many noses were inside.

The W.F. Simpson Room had a professional photo booth and a sitting area for caricatures. A ring toss with HEB carbonated waters and red rings was in the T.W. and Teresa Wright Room. A recessed wall in the hall offered a fishing hole with small rubber duckies and colorful plastic balls.

A dinner of corn dogs and pretzels were served in the Kinchion Room.

Daughters in attendance ranged from pre-K to teens. Many of the youngest girls were in sparkly party dresses. Most of the older girls chose dresses that also revealed their maturing

tastes in fashion. If a father wore a tie and jacket or a button-down shirt and jeans, all were comfortable in the atmosphere created by Parks and Recreation and the Harris Center. Some families have made the annual dance a family tradition, while others were attending for the first time.

A little girl named Raylah Salazar said her favorite thing about the night was "eating cotton candy." Her father, Isaias Salazar, played at the shooting gallery with her.

Attendee Jimmy Torres said, "It's a chance to get out and spend time with your daughters. It's something he (Solomon Thomas) and I have done together for years. This is probably one of our last ones. It's just a cool event."

Thomas said, "We've been doing daddy-daughter since she was like three, and she's 14. Getting to celebrate her and enjoy time together. Getting to make them feel special and let them know they are special."



Central Texas BBQ Roundup set for March 21

By Michelle Rodriguez
The Belton Journal

The community is invited to attend the Central Texas BBQ Roundup on Saturday, March 21 at the Cadence Bank Center. This is the first year for the IBCA sanctioned State Championship competition.

"It is a free community festival driving a real impact across Central Texas," said Founder and Chairman George Bunker. "As of today, we have a total of 97 registered barbecue competition teams."

During Covid, Bunker was raising money for senior citizens that could not afford to buy food for themselves in West Texas through the Texas BBQ Bash. Bunker wants to similarly continue to help the community with the Centex Barbecue Roundup.

A limited number of registrants will get the opportunity to be a judge and taste the barbecue for free, one of the three meats: brisket, chicken, and spareribs. Spots are limited for the free food tasting. Another option for a registrant is to be

a Friday night Jackpot judge. It's a private event where all the competitors compete in dessert, beans, and a chef's choice dish.

Those who wish to sign up to judge need to register online at <https://form.jotform.com/253383854113154>.

On Saturday, the day of the event, those who want to participate in People's Choice judging at the festival can do so for \$15 per adult and \$8 per child.

The schedule of events are as follows, Barbecue Competition with barbecue served

from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., all day live music festival, Piston and Pitbosses car show from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and an animal adoption event from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. There will also be food trucks on site.

According to the Centex Barbecue, funds raised support the people and causes that serve Central Texas every day including animal services and youth programs and local emergency responders.

Among those listed on the website are Belton Education Foundation, Belton CERT, Belton Lions Club, Civil Air Patrol, and Healing Rehab.

Local businesses are invited to stand as community sponsors. Levels available are \$1,000, \$2,500, \$5,000, and \$10,000. Local businesses agree to sponsor by benefiting direct exposure to thousands of Central Texas families, positive brand alignment with community, charity, and service, and onsite visibility at a high energy, and multi-attraction event. Sponsors are recognized as supporters of local animal services, youth programs, and emergency responders.

Their mission is to strengthen and connect Central Texas communities through clarity, innovation, and celebration. They are committed to creating inclusive, free community events that remove financial barriers and ensure everyone, regardless of income or circumstance, can participate with pride and dignity.

With their launch this year, Bunker expects to have 100 BBQ teams, 300 cars in the car show, 100 animal vendors, 60 artisans, and 30 cornhole teams with an expected increase year after year. They are expecting 15,000 public attendees

for the first year and expect an increase of attendance year after year.

The organization also expects to make an economic and community impact with a five percent giving rate raising approximately \$84,000 per event for local causes. Volunteerism is expected to grow from 150 volunteers, in the first year, to more than 600 by year five.

"The Central Texas BBQ Roundup is poised to become one of the largest and most impactful community events in the region, and by year six, the largest of its kind in the world," said Bunker.



CENTRAL TEXAS BBQ ROUNDUP

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THE BELTON JOURNAL

EMPLOYMENT

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LEGALS

THE FOLLOWING VEHICLE IS BEING STORE AT TRIPLE NICKEL TOWING

1949 CHRYSLER NEW YORKER, VIN: C39-52823, NO PLATES
Vehicle Abandoned at 3700 Bacon Ranch Rd., Unit A, Killeen, TX, 76542
Vehicle is being stored at 3700 Bacon Ranch Rd., Unit C, Killeen, TX, 76542
02.26

POSSESSION BY COTENANT HEIR

TO: ALL HEIRS OF FRANK QUINTEROS, SR., deceased Property: Being Lot Three (3), in Block One (1), of the H. A. Brocker Subdivision of Blocks Five (5), and Seven (7) and part of Block Three (3) of Highland Addition to the City of Temple, Bell County, Texas, according to the map or plat thereof of record in Volume 621, Pages 241 et seq. Of the Deed records of Bell County, Texas. Name of cotenant heir claiming full title by adverse possession: Mary Quinteros Muriel. Name of owner under whom cotenant claims possession Frank Quinteros Sr., deceased.

Notice is hereby given to all heirs of Frank Quinteros, Sr. that Mary Quinteros Muriel claims the above described Property by her adverse possession of the Property in accordance with the provisions of Section 16.0265 of the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code.

The date the affidavit of adverse possession was filed in the Bell County Real Property Records is January 30, 2026.

DATED this 30th day of January, 2026.

By: Pat McGowan, Attorney for Mary Quinteros Muriel Attorney at Law, 2584 Blue Meadow Drive, Temple, Texas 76502, 254-778-8934, patriciafmcgowan@gmail.com, State Bar No: 13641900
02.05,12,19,26

NOTICE TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids for furnishing all labor, materials, equipment, and performing all work required for the construction of improvements associated with **RIVER FARM TOLLBRIDGE ROAD PHASE 1A LANDSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS, for HUNT COMMUNITIES BELTON, LLC.** will be received at the office of SEC Planning, LLC., located at 3600 W. Parmer Lane, Suite 210, Austin, Texas 78727 until **2:00 pm CDT, Thursday, March 5, 2026** and immediately thereafter publicly opened and read. Bids received after the scheduled opening time will be discarded.

Scope of the Project: The Contractor shall provide construction of Entry Signage, Mail Kiosk, Park

LEGALS

A bid bond or certified cashier's check must accompany each bid in the amount of 5% of the total bid amount payable to Hunt Communities Belton, LLC.
02.12,02.19,02.26

CITATION BY PUBLICATION

THE STATE OF TEXAS COUNTY OF BELL

NOTICE TO DEFENDANT: "You have been sued. You may employ an attorney. If you or your attorney do not file a written answer with the clerk who issued this citation by 10:00 am on the Monday next following the expiration of 42 days after the date this citation was issued, a default judgment may be taken against you." To: UNKNOWN HEIRS AT LAW OF ROSA VANHORN A/K/A ROSA VAN HORN, DECEASED YOU ARE HEREBY COMMANDED to appear before the 169TH Judicial District Court of Bell County, Texas in the Courthouse in the City of Bell, Texas at or before 10:00 o'clock A.M. Monday, the 16th day of March, 2026, being the Monday next after the expiration of forty-two days after this citation is issued, and you are hereby required then and there to appear and file written answer to the Petition, filed in said Court on October 17, 2025, in suit numbered 25DCV357042 on the docket of said court, wherein Mill City Mortgage Loan Trust 2019-GS1, Plaintiff, v. David Vanhorn a/k/a David Van Horn and Rosa Vanhorn a/k/a Rosa Van Horn and The Heirs at Law of Rosa Vanhorn a/k/a Rosa Van Horn, Deceased, Defendants.

The Petition seeks an order to foreclose the lien on the property and assert a claim to the property located at 4457 West Drive, Belton, TX 76513 and legally described as: Being All That Certain Tract Of Land Containing 0.435 Acre, Being The East One-Half (E 1/2) Of Lots 3 And 4, Block 3, Lakewood Terrace, A Subdivision In Bell County, Texas, According To The Map Or Plat Of Record In Cabinet A, Slide 135-C, Plat Records Of Bell County, Texas, And Being The Same Tract Of Land Conveyed To David And Rosa Van Horn In A Deed Recorded In Volume 3202, Page 350, Official Public Records Of Real Property, Bell County, Texas, And Being More Particularly Described As Follows: Beginning At A 3/4 Inch Iron Pipe Found At The Northeast Corner Of Said Lot 4, Being On The South Right-Of-Way Line Of West Drive And On The West Right-Of-Way Line Of Lakewood Lane, A Gravel Road, For The Northeast Corner Of The Herein Described Tract; Thence South 19 Degrees 12 Minutes West - 160.06 Feet (Bearing Base) Along The West Right-Of-Way Line Of Said Lakewood Lane, To A 1/2 Inch Iron Rod Found At The Northeast Corner Of Lot 2; Thence North 70 Degrees 57 Minutes 15 Seconds West - 118.45 Feet Along The North Line Of Said Lot 2, To A 1/2 Inch Iron Rod Set At The Southeast Corner Of A Tract Of Land Conveyed As The Fourth Tract To Li & L Properties In A Deed Recorded In Volume 3049, Page 196, Official Public Records Of Real Property, Bell County, Texas; Thence North 19 Degrees 13 Minutes East - 160.19 Feet (Record 159.95 Feet)

LEGALS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of ELIZABETH ANN WILLIAMS CONGER, Deceased, were issued on February 18, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00052, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: DARIUS JOHN CONGER, JR. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. ESTATE OF ELIZABETH ANN WILLIAMS CONGER c/o: DARIUS JOHN CONGER, JR., 5313 Foxhill Rd., Temple, Texas 76502
DATED February 19, 2026.

KAREN M. VILLANUEVA, State Bar No.: 24102608, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: karen@templelawoffice.com
02.26

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of KECIA LOUISE DAVIS were issued on January 9, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00643, pending in the County Court at Law Number 1 of Bell County, Texas, to TIKIMENA-MIA E. COLTRANE.

All persons having claims against the estate, which is presently being administered, are required to submit them, within the time and manner prescribed by law, and before the estate is closed, addressed as follows: c/o TIKIMENA-MIA E. COLTRANE 3906 Griffin Drive Killeen, Texas 76543
Dated: 02/18/2026

R. Talmadge Hammock, w/permission
BRETT H. PRITCHARD, Attorney for Executor of the Estate of KECIA LOUISE DAVIS
02.26

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters of Administration for the Estate of CLINTON GRIFFIN, SR AKA CLINTON GRIFFIN, Deceased, were issued on February 6, 2026, in Cause No. 25CPB00595, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: RICHARD MARION GRIFFIN.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. c/o: DANIEL A. CORBIN Attorney at Law, 603 North 8th Street, Killeen, TX 76541
DATED: The 23rd day of Feb. 2028
CORBIN & CLAPPER, PC ,603 North 8th Street, Killeen, TX 76541, Tel: (254) 526-4523, Fax: (254) ASHLEY CLAPPER, DANIEL A. CORBIN, State Bar No. 04814300, ASHLEY CLAPPER, State Bar No. 24076317, Legal@CorbinLegalTeam.com Attorney for RICHARD MARION GRIFFIN
02.26

THE STATE OF TEXAS

LEGALS

76513
By: Lillian Phillips Deputy
02.26

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of JEAN E. DAHL, Deceased, were issued on February 5, 2026, in Cause No.26CPB00011, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: TERRI DAHL and KEITH DAHL.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within 120 days of this notice. c/o: Addison Eubank Scott Attorney at Law ,3809 West Waco Drive, Waco, Texas 76710 DATED the 19th day February, 2026. Addison Eubank Scott Attorney for TERRI DAHL and KEITH DAHL, State Bar No.: 24116333, 3809 West Waco Drive, Waco, Texas 76710, Telephone: (254) 752-8644 ,Facsimile: (254) 752-8624 , Email: addison@raineyandraine.com 02.26

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of THOMAS RALEIGH DAHL, Deceased, were issued on February 5, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00012, pending in the County Court-At-Law No: 1, Bell County, Texas, to: TERRI DAHL and KEITH DAHL.

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within 120 days of this notice. c/o: Addison Eubank Scott Attorney at Law, 3809 West Waco, Drive Waco, Texas 76710 DATED the 19th day of February 2026. Addison Eubank Scott Attorney for TERRI DAHL and KEITH DAHL, State Bar No.: 24116333, 3809 West Waco Drive ,Waco, Texas 76710, Telephone: (254) 752-8644, Facsimile: (254) 752-8624, Email: addison@raineyandraine.com 02.26

**THE STATE OF TEXAS
CITATION BY PUBLICATION
Case Number 25CPB00352**

To: Anthony Gonzaga
6609 SW Admiral Way, 615, Seattle WA 98116
ERICA GONZAGA, Applicant, on May 30, 2025, filed an application for appointment of guardian of the person in a proceeding style and bearing the number 25CPB00352 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 February 26, 2026, in the County Court at Law #1 Courtroom, at the Bell County Justice Complex, 1201 Huey Road, in Belton, Texas.
All people interested in this matter are commanded to appear at or before the time set for said hearing

LEGALS

and in the manner prescribed by law.
DATED the 23rd day of February, 2026
Respectfully Submitted: Lane Heginbotham
HARRIS LAW OFFICE, 425 North Eighth Street, Killeen, Texas 76541, Phone (254) 526-0108,
Fax (254) 526-7141, Lane Heginbotham State Bar No.: 24000323, lane@centexlawyers.net 02.26

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the Estate of KAREN R. WILLIAMS, aka KAREN R. WILIAMS, Deceased, were issued on February 20, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00059, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas, to: MARVIN E. WILLIAMS, aka MARVIN E. WILIAMS. All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them to the undersigned within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. ESTATE OF KAREN R. WILLIAMS, aka KAREN R. WILIAMS, c/o: MARVIN E. WILLIAMS, 5204 Deerwood Trail, Killeen, Texas 76542 DATED February 23, 2026. KAREN M. VILLANUEVA, State Bar No.:

LEGALS

24102608, Telephone: (254) 771-1855, Facsimile: (254) 771-2082, E-mail: karen@templelawoffice.com 02.26

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

TO ALL PERSONS HAVING CLAIMS AGAINST THE ESTATE OF GLORIA B. JACKSON, DECEASED

Notice is hereby given that original Letters Testamentary for the ESTATE OF GLORIA B. JACKSON, DECEASED, were issued on February 12, 2026, in Cause No. 26CPB00007, pending in the County Court at Law No. 1 of Bell County, Texas to JILL JACKSON POPELKA as Independent Executor. Claims may be presented to the Independent Executor at the following address: Representative, Estate of GLORIA B. JACKSON, c/o Drew Popelka, 6173 W. Adams Ave., Ste. C-201, Temple, Texas 76502

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.
Dated this the 23rd day of February, 2026
Popelka Law Firm, PLLC, 6173 W. Adams Ave., Ste. C-201 Temple, Texas 76502
By: Drew Popelka, State Bar No. 2401334,5 Attorney for Independent Executor 02.26

TEXAS COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



AMENDED NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF APPLICATION AND INTENT TO OBTAIN WATER QUALITY PERMIT PROPOSED PERMIT NO. WQ0016922001

APPLICATION. South Central Water Company, P.O. Box 570177, Houston, Texas 77257, has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for proposed Texas Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (TPDES) Permit No. WQ0016922001 (EPA I.D. No. TX0148768) to authorize the discharge of treated wastewater at a volume not to exceed a daily average flow of 800,000 gallons per day. The domestic wastewater treatment facility will be located approximately 0.97 miles northwest of the intersection of East Hillyard Road and County Road 452, near the city of Troy, in Bell County, Texas 76579. The discharge route will be from the plant site via pipe to unnamed tributary, thence to Deer Creek, thence to Brazos River Above Navasota River. TCEQ received this application on January 2, 2026. The permit application will be available for viewing and copying at Salado Public Library, 1151 North Main Street, Salado, Texas prior to the date this notice is published in the newspaper. The application and associated notices are available electronically at the following webpage: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/wastewater/pending-permits/tpdes-applications>.

This link to an electronic map of the site or facility's general location is provided as a public courtesy and not part of the application or notice. For the exact location, refer to the application.
<https://gisweb.tceq.texas.gov/LocationMapper/?marker=-97.26805,31.249722&level=18>

ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE NOTICE. Alternative language notice in Spanish is available at: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/wastewater/pending-permits/tpdes-applications>.

El aviso de idioma alternativo en español está disponible en

<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/permitting/wastewater/pending-permits/tpdes-applications>.

ADDITIONAL NOTICE. TCEQ's Executive Director has determined the application is administrative-ly complete and will conduct a technical review of the application. After technical review of the application is complete, the Executive Director may prepare a draft permit and will issue a preliminary decision on the application. Notice of the Application and Preliminary Decision will be published and mailed to those who are on the county-wide mailing list and to those who are on the mailing list for this application. That notice will contain the deadline for submitting public comments.

PUBLIC COMMENT / PUBLIC MEETING. You may submit public comments or request a public meeting on this application. The purpose of a public meeting is to provide the opportunity to submit comments or to ask questions about the application. TCEQ will hold a public meeting if the Executive Director determines that there is a significant degree of public interest in the application or if requested by a local legislator. A public meeting is not a contested case hearing.
OPPORTUNITY FOR A CONTESTED CASE HEARING. After the deadline for submitting public

EDITORIAL

Readers who don't understand

My Front Porch • Lynette Sowell

I don't know about you, but I really like a good infographic. I'm a visual person, what educators call a visual learner. If you tell me something verbally, I'm not going to pick it up as quickly as I would if I look at it, read it, visualize it...or write about it.

So with that said, I happen to like infographics. They give you summary bullet points to give information. They're visually interesting with cool fonts and use of colors. I think there's a great benefit from infographics. They can be very usable online, with social media. Infographics can be great way to get a point across using few words and using pictures. I think that's fine in some cases.

However, it concerns me to see our capacity for reading content is going down. I've even seen it in myself with my attention span while reading. It's not like it used to be.

Researchers are finding that preteens who use increasing amount social media don't perform as well in reading, vocabulary and memory tests in early ado-

lescence compared to kids who use little or no social media. A study of more than 6,500 preteens was published last fall in the Journal of the American Medical Association. As preteens got older, the ones who used social media (or smartphones, I'd venture) were shown to not score as well on cognitive and reading tests.

As technology has changed, those who have embraced that technology have changed. We don't need a Terminator for machines to take over. Not anymore.

So it concerns me that people, us older ones, make judgment calls based on infographics, based on click bait, based on little items that they read. As the saying goes, "a picture is worth 1,000 words." However, without context, people can make up almost whatever they would like about a picture, and if there's questions that aren't answered or information that's left out, whether on purpose or inadvertently, this can cause misunderstanding. People make assumptions based on the little things that they see.

I think that's kind of a dangerous habit to get into,

where we read something small and frame our own views around it. I'm not saying we need a 100,000-word document to understand something fully. But on the other hand, it takes practice to read. It takes practice to understand.

I've joked before that, I can lay it out for you in words, but I can't understand it for you. It's concerning to see the level of understanding of people dwindling. They find something to be mad about, but they don't take the time to get the full information.

I constantly remind myself, I write for readers. I don't write for clickers, those who click on click bait or those who just want it in a meme. I try to give information as concisely as possible, but some information just isn't conducive to that.

Infographics are just a jumping off point. Sometimes we need to take a little deeper dive into information. We have so much of that information swirling around today. So reader beware where you're getting your information from. And yes, I ended that sentence with a preposition.

A Band Of Theseus

Shop the Insanity • Darren Blair

This is one that I've been mulling over for some time now.

There's a popular thought experiment known as the "Ship of Theseus". By Greek mythology, Theseus was the founder-king of Athens. After slaying the infamous minotaur he rescued a group of children and brought them on board his ship, which he sailed to Delos for safety. The reverence for this story was so great that for centuries after, the residents of Athens kept a vessel believed to be his ship in good repair so that they could make an annual pilgrimage to Delos in honor of the god Apollo.

Well, part of keeping a ship in good repair means periodically replacing the wood and fixtures on board as they rot, corrode, break, or otherwise fail.

Thus, the thought experiment: once all of the original parts of the ship were completely replaced, did it stop being Theseus' original ship? On one hand, none of the original parts remained. On the other hand, the new parts were slowly integrated over time, providing some degree of continuity.

The reason I've been mulling this over is because there's actually a similar controversy going on in the world of music. As time goes on and bands change their line-

ups, at what point does a band stop functionally being that band? It's not an idle proposition either, as lawsuits have actually been filed over the matter.

In some instances, bands do rename themselves as line-ups transition and their sound changes. The Yardbirds becoming the New Yardbirds and then finally Led Zepplin. Jefferson Airplane becoming Jefferson Starship and then finally Starship. Wicked Lester reforming as KISS. Vinnie Vincent Invasion becoming Slaughter. Joy Division becoming New Order. Et cetera.

In other instances, we have situations where bands experience numerous line-up changes, yet one or more members are consistent. Gene Simmons and Paul Stanley of KISS. James Hetfield and Lars Ulrich of Metallica. Richie Blackmore of Rainbow (which has gone through so many line-ups that an entire Wikipedia article is devoted to cataloguing the members). Akira Takasaki of Loudness. And so on.

But there are times where the band's line-up changes so completely that none of the original members are left. Such is the case with groups like Blackfoot, where according to Wiki none of the original members are left. Is Blackfoot still Blackfoot?

One part of the "Ship of Theseus" is the question of what would happen if someone had saved the discarded portions and made a ship out of them; would *that* have more claim to being the actual ship? In music, that can happen when members of different groups form rival incarnations. Yes, that happens. One example is the rock band Ratt, with member Bobby Blotzer spending 2015 – 2017 in multiple lawsuits involving members Juan Croucier, Warren DeMartini, and Stephen Pearcy over which group was the true "Ratt" as Blotzer, Pearcy, and Croucier were all on tour with their own groups. This left enough bad blood as to effectively ensure that a Pearcy / Croucier tour was functionally the band's last.

Everything, of course, must all be understood in light of the phenomenon of *imposter* acts, musicians falsely presenting themselves as other bands. As incredible as it might seem, this is actually so common that "The Simpsons" once infamously made fun of it in a scene where hired guns forgot *which* group they were supposed to be impersonating.

So yeah folks, as the summer concert season draws near, you might want to make sure that the band you want to see is actually the band you want to see...

Constant state of change

Pleasant Ramblings • Mark Magnan

I was at a business the other day, and across the street was a school. While I was in the parking lot the bell rang and out of the doors poured a file of tiny students. I was watching the, probably, first graders head out onto the playground without a care in the

about getting outside, much like the kids that I had witnessed this past week. Then I was just looking forward that final bell of the day so I could go home and be outside even more.

In those days there was not a lot to keep a boy inside, no

of school I would often get outside during the day and watch the people walk or drive by. They were free, unlike me, stuck inside the towering "prison" walls. I remember one school, it was a huge old stone building at one end of an enormous fenced in area. People

could drive by a school and have pity on the poor children detained and subjected to the misery of having to learn.

Now, learning to me was not so bad, I enjoyed it. Perhaps it was just the lack of freedom that I had to deal with on a daily basis

when I was on the other side of the fence. I wanted to be out looking in, and now I was. In a way I wished I was one of those kids without a care in the world, only looking forward to the next thirty minutes of semi-freedom.

I guess I am happy now with

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2026 Bell County Youth Fair & Livestock Show Auction

Thank you Buyers and Cattle Crew, making the 2026 BCYF Auction a great success

For the past 15 years the Grand Champion and Reserve Grand Champion Steers have been purchased by a group of businesses and individuals pooling their resources and contributing over \$50,000 each year to support Bell County Youth participating in the Livestock Show Auction. As a result of the BCYF Auction, over 2000 pounds of ground beef is then prepared and distributed by this team each year and given to the Salvation Army and Feed My Sheep to feed the homeless.

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*Delivering to the Salvation Army and Feed My Sheep,
with members of the Buyer's Group*



*Reserve Grand Champion
Cash Parker, Stampede Creek 4-H*

Business Showcase

Engaging Spring events at the Bell County Museum

Bell County Museum

Spring Break at the museum

Tuesday:

The Chisholm Trail



By Michele Weisman
The Belton Journal

The Bell County Museum's mission is "to engage and educate the community by collecting, preserving, and interpreting the prehistoric and historic heritage of Bell County." Entry is free and they welcome

Little River Log Cabin, built in the 1850s displays original logs and stones, seen in a smaller version of the original. Come in and imagine what life must have been like in the reconstructed cabin that originates from the Little River/Academy area.

Another permanent collection showcases

Belton, and Bell County cemeteries.

The Bell County Museum was founded on April 25, 1988 by the Bell County Commissioners Court as part of the county government. The museum is housed in the beautifully restored 1905 Belton Carnegie Library building,