

With the 2025 November election now over, preparations are beginning for next year's general election, with filing officially open to run in the March primary election.

Archive photo

Filing opens for March primary candidates

Alex Kielar

news@breckenridgeamerican.com

With the 2025 November election now over, preparations are beginning for next year's general election, with filing officially open to run in the March primary election.

The first day to file for all candidates scheduled to run in the Tuesday, March

3 primary was Saturday, Nov. 8. That's except for precinct chair candidates—whose first day to file was Tuesday, Sept. 9.

There are several local Stephens County offices that are up for election, as well as state offices which began to see candidates officially file their intent to run. The deadline to file is Monday, Dec. 8 by 6 p.m.

Stephens County offices up for election

County Judge

Michael Roach announced his intention not to seek re-election for Stephens County Judge in April. Following four years of serving as the county's justice of the peace, Roach

See Filing, Page 3

Countywide burn ban back on

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The Stephens County-wide burn ban has been put back on by the commissioners court per the direction of Fire Marshal and Breckenridge Fire Chief Malcolm Bufkin.

Effective Monday, Nov. 10, the burn ban is for another 90 days unless lifted sooner depending on drought conditions. This was following Bufkin issu-

ing a red flag warning for Saturday, Nov. 8 and Sunday, Nov. 9, with high winds and very dry conditions over the weekend.

The Keetch-Bryam Drought Index (KBDDI) showed Stephens County on the higher end of the 0-800 scale at 552 Sunday, Nov. 9. Although lower than it was reading a few weeks ago when it was averaging around 630,

See Ban, Page 3



The Stephens County Commissioners Court voted to put a 90-day burn ban back on following it being previously rescinded.

Photo/Alex Kielar

Coalition discusses SNAP plan success, future plans

Alex Kielar

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On the heels of the Senate taking the first step towards reaching a bipartisan agreement to reopen the federal government, the Stephens County emer-

gency coalition discussed successes from its food assistance plan and where to go in the future if and when the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) is again suspended as part of another possible shutdown.

Food benefits still remain in limbo despite the agreement made Sunday, Nov. 9 and only ensures the government is fully reopened until Friday, Jan. 30, 2026.

The agreement to reopen

See SNAP, Page 2



Texas PACE Authority President Charlen Heydinger speaks to the Stephens County Commissioners Court during a public hearing regarding the implementation of a PACE program Monday morning, Nov. 10.

Photo/Alex Kielar

County approves PACE program

Alex Kielar

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Following a public hearing, Stephens County Commissioners Court approved the establishment of a Property Assessed Clean

Energy (PACE) program for the county, opening up long-term financing opportunities for energy and water efficiency upgrades.

The court unani-

See PACE, Page 3



Stephens County Chief Appraiser Will Thompson, left, touched on the funding that remains following the two separate occasions in which SNAP-eligible individuals and families received gift cards.

Photo/Alex Kielar

Weekly Local Forecast

Saturday, Nov. 15
High 89 | Low 54
Precipitation 2%

Sunday, Nov. 16
High 82 | Low 58
Precipitation 3%

Monday, Nov. 17
High 87 | Low 53
Precipitation 2%

Tuesday, Nov. 18
High 80 | Low 56
Precipitation 6%

Wednesday, Nov. 19
High 76 | Low 52
Precipitation 59%

Thursday, Nov. 20
High 71 | Low 50
Precipitation 59%

Friday, Nov. 21
High 70 | Low 44
Precipitation 32%

Hubbard Creek
At capacity: 1,183.00
Current: 1,169.53

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Obituaries



Joe Martinez

June 18, 1944 – November 11, 2025

Joe Martinez, age 81 of Breckenridge, passed away Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2025. Funeral mass was held at 11 a.m. Friday, Nov. 14 at Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Interment followed at 2 p.m. in the Rule Cemetery in Rule under the direction of Morehart Mortuary. Visitation was held from 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 13 at Morehart Mortuary.

Joe Luna Martinez was born June 18, 1944 in Alamo to Leonardo Martinez and Paula Luna Martinez. He joined the United States Army and proudly served in the Vietnam War before his honorable discharge in 1970. On Feb. 6, 2004, he married Katherine Jimenez in Abilene. Joe worked for the Texas Department of Transportation for years until his retirement. In his free time, he loved working on antique cars and going dancing. Most of all, Joe loved spending quality time with his family, especially his grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents; one brother, Lupe Martinez; sister, Sista Eisenman; one nephew, Billy Wayne Martinez; one granddaughter, Celeste Contreras; and Isabel Vargas.

Joe is survived by his wife, Katherine Martinez; two daughters, Mariah Joe Martinez, MaKaLam Joe Martinez, both of Cape Girardeau, Missouri; three step-children, Teresa Contreras of Lubbock, Melinda A. Hatfield of Abilene, Gabino Martinez of Abilene; four sisters, Mary Cedillo, Hope Goraham, Lala Foster of Fort Worth, Janie Walton of Colorado Springs, Colorado; eleven grandchildren; five great grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Memorials may be made to the charity of the donor's choice and may be left at Morehart Mortuary. Condolences may be made online at www.morehartmortuary.net.

Ernie's Spanish Kitchen receives special recognition



Celebrating its 50th anniversary in October, Ernie's Spanish Kitchen was presented with a special congressional recognition from Congressman Roger Williams, presented to them Monday morning, Nov. 10 from the Stephens County Commissioner's Court.

Photo/Alex Kielar

SNAP

Continued from Page 1

the government after the longest-ever shutdown would, however, keep programs such as SNAP and veteran services funded through next year. Smaller communities such as Stephens County would also have the highest risk of being harmed as funding dries out in the midst of another poten-

tial shutdown.

The deal will now have to pass the House of Representatives, with lawmakers in the House being put on 36-hour return notice, so it may take several days before they take the vote.

Stephens County held its second emergency planning session regarding the SNAP

program Monday, Nov. 1, in which Resource-Care of Breckenridge also had a seat at the table in addition to some of the entities that had attended the first meeting Monday, Oct. 27.

The meeting was led by Stephens County Emergency Management Coordinator David Leonard, who reported that \$34,060 was raised by Stephens County residents over the couple weeks that the plan was in place.

Stephens County Chief Appraiser Will Thompson said that there is a remaining cash balance of \$8,160 and 129 gift cards, which the coalition decided to hold in reserve in case of another similar situation in February.

Thompson said that 35% of the number of eligible SNAP cases in the county received gift cards over the two separate donation periods—Saturday, Nov. 1 through Sunday, Nov. 2 and Saturday, Nov. 8 through the Stephens County Mission

for Hope.

"I thought this was a very successful program," Leonard said, which others at the table agreed. "I applaud everyone's efforts."

Sheriff Kevin Roach said that he had a sheriff deputy on scene for both occasions, who reported no issues occurring, as people showed the identification that was required to receive the gift cards.

The group talked about how there were so many unknown variables with the situation, which meant that they didn't know how much was going to be needed or how quickly to hand out the cards.

Thompson noted that they have enough remaining to have been able to last another week and a half to two weeks of handing out donations. He and others at the table were also clear that if anyone is currently in need, they should not hesitate to reach out to Mission for Hope by calling 254-249-4200 and they can use some of the re-



Stephens County Emergency Management Coordinator David Leonard, middle, listens during the county emergency coalition's second meeting Monday, Nov. 10 regarding the situation with SNAP.

Photo/Alex Kielar

maining funds.

The group decided to reconvene in the second week of January in order to prepare for a potential SNAP suspension in February. The meeting will take place Monday, Jan. 12 at 3 p.m. and if there is another shutdown, they will develop a brochure informing SNAP beneficiaries of additional services that they can look to receive.

Other discussions that were brought up were other potential

groups to bring to the table, like local churches. They also discussed other avenues of getting the word out about the program besides social media, such as text notifications and posting info sheets with QR codes at grocery stores that would take people to a landing page with all the necessary resources.

The group will continue to monitor and will be prepared if and when a similar incident occurs.

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Stephens County Fire Marshal and Breckenridge Fire Chief Malcolm Bufkin speaks to the commissioners court at their Monday, Nov. 10 where the court voted to put a 90-day burn ban back on following a couple of weeks of it being off.

Photo / Alex Kielar

Ban

Continued from Page 1

it has still neared the emergency level of 570.

The county had lifted the burn ban Saturday, Oct. 25 after some rainfall and the KBDI mark dropping into the 300s

before rising back up over the last couple of weeks.

“The fuel levels are just getting more dangerous. We’ve got a lot of fuel out there,” Bufkin said.

County Judge Mi-

chael Roach noted that it is just a standard burn ban with no additional restrictions, which Bufkin agreed and the commissioners voted unanimously to approve it at their Monday, Nov. 10 meeting.

Filing

Continued from Page 1

was first sworn in as county judge in January of 2019 and was re-elected in 2022, running unopposed.

Stephens County Chief Appraiser Will Thompson announced earlier this year his intention to run for County Judge in the Republican Primary.

District Clerk

Stephanie Elder was appointed as the Stephens County District Clerk in May 2024 after longtime District Clerk Christie Coapland retired. Elder has been serving in the position through the end of the four-year unexpired term.

Justice of the Peace

Judge Steve Spoon has served as Stephens County Justice of the Peace since 2019 after being elected in the November 2018 general election.

Precinct 2 Commissioner

Incumbent Mark McCullough has served as precinct 2 commissioner since being sworn January 2, 2019, replacing the retiring D.C. “Button” Sikes.

Precinct 4 Commissioner

Incumbent Tanner Wade has served as commissioner as precinct 4 since being appointed by Judge Roach last November 25 following the resig-

nation of Eric O’Dell. Wade officially began his service Jan. 1.

State Offices

Governor

Incumbent Greg Abbott announced that he will run for re-election Sunday, Nov. 9, seeking his fourth term in office. He is being challenged in the Republican primary by Peter Chambers and Ronnie Tullios.

The Democratic primary has seen four candidates file— Bobby Cole, Gina Hinojosa, Nick Pappas and Meagan Tehselder.

State Senate District 10

Sen. Phil King has served Senate District 10 since 2023, which serves eight counties including Stephens.

State Representative – District 60

Mike Olcott was first elected for Texas House District 60 in 2024 and announced his plan for re-election in June. District 60 serves the counties of Stephens, Palo Pinto and Parker. In August, Amy Fennell announced her campaign for District 60 representative.

Lt. Governor

On the Republican ticket, incumbent Dan Patrick is seeking reelection for a fourth term, with Timothy Mabry and Esala Wueschner running against him in the primary. Vikki

Goodwin is so far the lone candidate on the Democratic ticket, currently serving as Texas House District 47 representative.

Attorney General

Incumbent Ken Paxton has served as the attorney general of Texas since 2015, serving three terms. Paxton is running in the Republican primary for U.S. Senate in Texas as one of the challengers against incumbent John Cornyn.

That being said, four candidates have stepped forward on the Republican ticket for attorney general—Joan Huffman, Mayes Middleton, Aaron Reitz and Chip Roy.

On the Democratic side, Tony Box, Joe Jaworski and Nathan Johnson have put their name in the running.

Other offices on the ballot include Agriculture Commissioner, State Comptroller, Land Commissioner, Railroad Commissioner, State Board of Education (eight seats), U.S. Senate and U.S. House Texas District 25.

Key election dates

Voter registration deadline: Monday, Feb. 2

Ballot by mail application deadline: Friday, Feb. 20

Early voting: Feb. 17-Feb.27

Election Day: Tuesday, March 3

PACE

Continued from Page 1

mously approved the resolution for establishing the PACE program Monday, Nov. 10 after hearing from Texas PACE Authority President Charlen Heydinger and Breckenridge Economic Development Corporation CEO Michael Paris.

Authorized by the Texas Legislature in 2013, the PACE program allows cities and counties to create voluntary financing mechanisms that allow commercial, multi-family and industrial property owners to fund upgrades to HVAC systems, lighting, roofing and plumbing—all without using taxpayer dollars or assuming financial risk.

“We see this as increasing the probability of local businesses taking advantage in order to develop their infrastructure—

their cooling needs or heating needs. Any efficiency within their manufacturing process,” Paris said. “It’s also going to help us in attracting businesses here. So if we can articulate a way which a business that’s coming here or a business that’s currently here can take advantage of discounts on the interest rates for banks. And also reconsideration of terms...I think it’s going to help the business community be successful here in Breckenridge.”

As part of establishing the PACE program, the commissioners also approved a professional services agreement with Texas PACE Authority to administer the program in Stephens County.

“Stephens County—and all counties don’t have the expectations to operate these programs and the amaz-

ing thing about PACE is that we can contract them to administer the program,” County Judge Michael Roach said. “That really leaves us hands off for the most part.”

Heydinger signed the contract to officially begin the process of administering the program and get it off the ground.

The Texas Pace Authority president explained the inner workings of the program and its potential impact at a previous court meeting Oct. 27.

“What you would be doing if you create your PACE program is you create a mechanism that eliminates the risk for lenders,” Heydinger explained last month. “So lenders will loan over a longer period of time, and if you stretch our financing long enough, the savings will exceed the cost.”



Executive Director of the Breckenridge Economic Development Corporation, Michael Paris, speaks Monday, Oct. 27 to the Stephens County Commissioners Court about the implementation of a Texas PACE program

Photo / Alex Kielar

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A prophet in my own mind...

I've never claimed to have the gift of prophecy, nor do I now.

Yet, it seems beyond coincidence that two of my past three columns have centered on bears, and now—lo and behold—bears are back in the news, particularly in Japan, where they are attacking people. To the few readers who may think me to be clairvoyant, don't let me stop you from elevating me to prophet status. If there's just one such reader, I am flattered.

In the early days of TV, actor/wrestler Gorgeous George—with shiny locks of hair draping down to his waist—was a “so-so” wrestler, but what a showman! Once he claimed that he never considered himself to be the world's greatest wrestler, the planet's most intelligent human being or the most handsome man ever. Then he added, “But what's my opinion against millions of others?”

...

It may require a



Don Newbury

Idle American

prophet with advanced degrees to untangle worldwide messes of discord that are expanding daily, so let's limit observations to goings-on in Dallas, Texas.

Even as I type, please consider just two of the multiple issues boiling in Big D cauldrons. Dallas leaders can't decide whether to repair City Hall, demolish the building and rebuild on site, or construct a new building at some other location.

And, two of its three professional sports teams are squabbling about policies of their shared “home,” American Airlines Center...

...

Let's start with City Hall, recognizing the idiom that claims “we, the people” can't fight. Watch out, when big-time players start screaming, fights seem sure to follow, with one group claiming that current City Hall grounds would be a peachy place for a gambling playground.

The late Chinese-American architect, I. M. Pei, is lauded for designing what was considered a world-class structure at the time, “oohed and ahed” as an architectural masterpiece around the globe. Now, 48 years later, it's in sad repair, with hundreds of millions of dollars needed if it is to be brought up to speed.

Perhaps it shouldn't be mentioned, but structures in Europe have been constructed for the ages, and in the US, quite the opposite is true. Recently, Rome's Torre dei Maggiori fortified tower—once almost 200 feet tall—partially collapsed. It was com-

missioned by Pope Paul III and begun in 1238. It withstood earthquakes and other misfortunes, reducing its height by about a half. During much of its history, it housed City Hall offices, finally closing in 2006. The European Union came up with some \$8,000,000 for transformation of remains into a museum, but the October partial collapse could alter plans...

...

Now, let us briefly peek in at American Airlines Center, where Dallas Mavericks' and Dallas Stars' brass are baring fangs, each filing suits and counter-suits. There must be much chop-licking by attorneys such as Thomas J. Henry, whose ads about “the name we know and the firm we trust,” dominate TV.

Their warring is simply beyond the understanding of most of us.

I'm reminded of the little old lady who was mentally disheveled at

See Newbury, Page 5

Ask Rusty:

Did the Obama-era Social Security tax cuts hurt the program?

Dear Rusty: I will be retiring early next year but my question to you is: During the Obama administration, payroll taxes that employees pay were cut in half from 6.2% to 3.1%, while the employer's part stayed the same at 6.2%. This continued for around a year I think.

This was an attempt at giving people a tax cut, which I think was a bad idea or maybe the wrong way to have done it.

How much damage do you think this may have caused to Social Security? **Signed: Soon to Retire**

Dear Soon to Retire: FYI, the Obama-era cut in the employee portion of FICA payroll taxes and SECA (self-employment tax) was a temporary measure, which has long since expired.

However, the legislation which enabled that cut in employee FICA/SECA taxes also included a provision to replenish the Social Security Trust Funds from the General US Treasury in an amount equal to the estimated loss of tax revenue to the Trust Funds.

So, in effect, there was little or no impact on the Social Security Trust Funds.

FYI, the Trustees of Social Security have been projecting for many years that the Social Security reserves would be fully depleted in the mid-2030s, unless Congress takes action to reform the SS program.

Unfortunately, Congress has not yet taken any meaningful action to accomplish that reform, and the current projection from the Trustees is that all Social Security reserves will be depleted in about 2033, necessitating an across the board cut of about 21% in everyone's benefit.

Time is running short, and we see



Russell Gloor

Social Security Matters

signs that Congress is finally starting to seriously discuss Social Security reform.

At AMAC, we have developed and submitted to various Congressional Representatives a reform plan which would restore Social Security to full solvency.

You can see AMAC's suggested plan at www.amac.us/social-security-guarantee. And AMAC is working every day in Washington, D.C. to promote Social Security reform to avoid future cuts in benefits.

We believe and hope that Congress will eventually reform the Social Security program to avoid future benefit cuts but, unfortunately, not until they can muster sufficient bipartisanship to make the hard choices needed.

To this end, contacting your Congressional Representative to demand Social Security reform now would be a good thing to do. The longer Congress delays reform, the harder the choices will be.

...

This article is intended for informational purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the Association of Mature American Citizens Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA). NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the SS Administration.

Thanksgiving: Have an attitude of gratitude

Thanksgiving is much more than a big meal with family and friends. It's a time to reflect on, and be thankful for, all of the good things you have. It's important to be grateful, not just on Thanksgiving, but each and every day. Rather than lamenting what you feel is lacking in your life, begin each new day by develop-

ing an attitude of gratitude. Take inventory of your blessings and you will be surprised at just how much you have to be thankful for.

If you have enough to eat, a place to live, a way to get around, people who care about you, or people you care about, then you are wealthy. If you lack any of these elements, you

must still be grateful for what you do have, while striving to obtain whatever is absent.

Focus on all positive aspects of your life. Take nothing for granted. Every morning, recharge your appreciation. Be happy for everything there is, not upset over what you feel is missing.

Dreams of the future



Bryan Golden

shouldn't diminish appreciation for the present. If all you do is concentrate on what you want, you won't enjoy today. Don't be jealous of others; what they do or have has no bearing on you.

You can feel bitter or resentful for a variety of reasons. Perhaps you feel something is missing from your life, things aren't going your way, or you have been treated unfairly. You may wonder, “why do these things always happen to me?”

Life's problems tend to dominate your thoughts, turning your focus to what you feel is wrong. You may start to resent those who appear to be better off. You're apt to dwell on things you think would make your life better if you had them. If only you had more money, more time, a bigger house, a different car, a

See Golden, Page 5

The Breckenridge American offers local readers an opportunity to share their opinions on community topics and issues of public importance. Mail or deliver letters to the office at 114 E. Elm Street in Breckenridge, or e-mail letters to editor@breckenridgeamerican.com. The deadline is 5 p.m. Friday for the midweek edition. Letters that do not meet the deadline will not be printed in the paper. Letters must be submitted by the author/signee, and not by a third-party on behalf of the author/signee. Letters must contain the author's first name, last name, complete address, and telephone number. Only the writer's name and title of the letter, as appropriate, will be published with the letter. Names cannot be withheld. Letters from any candidate who is actively running for any political office will not be published. Writers may submit letters of up to 500 words. Letters are not guaranteed to be published in the next edition, but every effort to do so will be made. Unverified letters and letters containing personal attacks the newspaper deems to be of a libelous nature will not be published. In any event, the newspaper reserves the sole discretion to decide whether or not a reader submission will be published. All letters and columns featured on the Opinion Page are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Breckenridge American.

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Voters approve all 17 proposed amendments

Texas voters approved all 17 constitutional amendments on the ballot last week, the Houston Chronicle reported.

Those included measures to raise the homestead exemption and reduce property taxes for businesses, and to provide \$1 billion annually for a statewide water fund.

Other propositions passed would allow judges to deny bail to people accused of serious crimes and create a \$3 billion dementia research fund.



Gary Borders

Capital Highlights

"This legislative session, we delivered the conservative victories Texans demanded," Gov. Greg Abbott wrote in a statement. "And this November, Texans showed up to enshrine

them in the Texas Constitution."

State exceeds 3 million registered businesses

Texas has set a record high by exceeding 3 million registered businesses, Abbott announced.

"This milestone shows the true strength of the Texas economy. Texas is the land of freedom and opportunity where businesses and workers can chart their own path to succeed and thrive," he said.

The number of regis-

tered business entities in the state has more than doubled since 2015, when 1.4 million businesses were registered.

The total includes both businesses incorporated in Texas and out-of-state entities conducting business here. The largest classification is in-state, limited liability companies (LLCs).

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas.

Newbury

Continued from Page 4

the prospect of voting on whether to legalize horse racing and dog racing. She thought this to be the height of stupidity, claiming simply that "the horses will win every time—their legs are longer."

Oh, that issues looming today could be settled without voices raised, fists pounded and lawsuits filed.

Admittedly, there is always the danger of over-simplification.

My brother, Dr. Fred Newbury—the scholar of our family who has

taught every year at Dallas' Richland Campus of the 21st century and the final 27 years of the 20th century—made an observation about the current state of the Dallas Cowboys. "At least the Cowboys have become consistent," he said. "They're as bad on offense as they are on defense."

Dr. Newbury, a speaker in the Metroplex, may be reached at 817-447-3872; email: newbury@speakerdoc.com. Audio version at www.speakerdoc.com.

Golden

Continued from Page 4

different job, a different boss, had picked a different career, etc.

Once your attitude becomes one of deficiency instead of abundance and appreciation, you can become overwhelmed by feelings of frustration and feel like a victim. As this happens, a consuming vicious cycle starts.

Being bitter or resentful blows situations out of proportion. People who are bitter frequently find that their situations deteriorate and their mental and physical health

decays.

It's difficult, if not impossible, to achieve your goals while you are bitter or resentful. Regardless of what challenges might befall you, bitterness makes finding solutions much more elusive.

There is no point to feeling bitter since it accomplishes nothing, harms you and makes things worse. Filling yourself with gratitude on a daily basis makes you feel good, while driving out negative feelings.

Begin your practice of gratitude each morn-

ing as soon as you wake. Every day is a great day. If you have any doubts, try missing one.

Take inventory of everything, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, that is good in your life.

If it helps, make a written list of all things you are grateful for. Read your list every day. As you do this, you will build and reinforce your attitude of gratitude. Don't waste any time with what you feel you don't have.

Keep things in perspective. Consider all the people who have

overcome difficulties far worse than yours. Don't be consumed by your problems, there is always a solution. Maintaining an attitude of gratitude allows your mind to devise a resolution for your circumstances.

Make everyday a day of Thanksgiving and you will be amazed how much better your life will become.

Bryan is the author of "Dare to Live Without Limits." Contact Bryan at Bryan@columnist.com or visit DareToLiveWithoutLimits.com.

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Breckenridge Devotional Page

1. Is the book of Nathan (KJV) in the Old or New Testament or neither?
 2. Though Paul was born in Tarus of Cilicia, where was he brought up? Jerusalem, Shiloh, Jericho, Damascus
 3. What 8-year-old boy served as king of Jerusalem for 100 days? Shamgar, Jehoiachin, Adino, Sisera
 4. From John 5, who stirred up the water at the pool of Bethesda? Priest, Angel, Wind, Jesus
 5. Who was Jacob's firstborn as found in Genesis 35? Reuben, Ehud, Joshua, Elah
 6. From Judges 1, who fed 70 kings at his table? Benaiah, Nebuchadnezzar, Adoni-bezck, Mephibosheth
- ANSWERS: 1) Neither, 2) Jerusalem, 3) Jehoiachin, 4) Angel, 5) Reuben, 6) Adoni-bezck

FEATURES FROM THE BIBLE
TRUTH IN SCRIPTURE
SPIES TO the Promised Land
Numbers 13 and Deuteronomy 1
Moses sent 12 spies to check out the land of Canaan, the land to which they were going. One was selected from each tribe: Shamua from the tribe of Reuben, Shaphat from the tribe of Simeon, Caleb from the tribe of Judah, Igal from the tribe of Issachar, Hoshea (Joshua) from the tribe of Ephraim (a tribe of Joseph), Palti from the tribe of Benjamin, Gaddiel from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddi from the tribe of Manasseh (a tribe of Joseph), Ammiel from the tribe of Dan, Sethur from the tribe of Asher, Nahbi from the tribe of Naphtali, Geuel from the tribe of Gad.
After searching out the land the spies were to report to Moses what they had found.
At the end of 40 days the spies returned to Moses and Aaron and reported that there was great produce of the land, but that the people living there were very large.
10 of the spies said the task of taking the land from the people already there was not possible.
Joshua and Caleb said that the land was exceedingly good. They said that if the Lord was pleased with the Israelites He would lead them into the land and give it to them. "Do not rebel against the Lord. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them," they pleaded before the entire assembly of the Israelites. Numbers 14: 9.

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A veteran points at a name on the Stephens County veterans monument in the courthouse lawn following this year's Memorial Day service Monday, May 26. New names are inscribed to the monument each year and honored during the annual service.

Photo/Alex Kielar

Monument of memory

Honoring Stephens County veterans

Alex Kielar
news@breckenridgeamerican.com

On the southwest corner of the Stephens County Courthouse lawn, a granite monument stands as a solemn tribute to the county's veterans—a physical record of service and sacrifice that continues to grow year after year.

The veterans memorial monument, maintained for decades by Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 7767 and its auxiliary, has long been the centerpiece of local Memorial Day ceremonies. Each year, new names are etched into the stone to honor local veterans who died in the previous year. Each Memorial Day, families gather on the courthouse lawn for a ceremony that would often conclude with



The veterans memorial monument, maintained for decades by Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 7767 and its auxiliary, has long been the centerpiece of local Memorial Day ceremonies.

Photo/Alex Kielar

the sound of Taps echoing through the square—played by a veteran like most notably Dwain “Pops”

Brannan, who served in Vietnam and helped close the ceremony for years before his own death.

The tradition has helped ensure that the community remembers not only the wars fought, but the individuals who served.

In 2019, a new granite stone was installed by Brady Monument Company at a cost of just under \$19,000, funded through local fundraising efforts. As space on the original stones filled up, the addition allowed the tradition to continue. The cost of engraving new names is calculated per character, with seven names added in 2025 totaling approximately \$1,000.

Until recently, the process of gathering names and organiz-

See Honor, Page 7



Richard Lancaster recently visited the Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia which he described as showing that freedom isn't free, walking through and seeing all the veterans who are buried there.

Contributed Photo

Richard Lancaster

From Vietnam to Stephens County

Alex Kielar
news@breckenridgeamerican.com

When Richard Lancaster arrived in Vietnam on Christmas Day 1969, he was a newly minted buck sergeant in the United States Army.

Nearly two years after being drafted out of Monahans, Texas, Lancaster would return home—first to West Texas, and then to Stephens County, where he has lived ever since.


Now, as the 55th anniversary of his return

home from Vietnam approaches this November, Lancaster reflects on his time in service, the lessons he carried home and the life he has built in Breckenridge.

See Lancaster, Page 7

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James Robert Reed



John Michael Lohan



Louis Tulane Bass Jr.

Stephens County's WWII veterans

Service and sacrifice remembered

Alex Kielar
news@breckenridgeamerican.com

When World War II erupted, Stephens County was among the many rural communities that sent its sons

and daughters into service.

From Breckenridge's oilfields to the surrounding farms and ranches, more than 500 local residents joined the U.S. Armed Forces.

Their service stretched across every branch of the military.

The war effort touched nearly every household, with local newspapers like the Breckenridge American covering the latest on enlistments, casualty lists and letters from the frontlines. Families rationed goods, schoolchildren collected scrap metal and churches held prayer services for loved ones overseas.

Military records show at least 20 Breckenridge men enlisted

See Service, Page 7



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Roland Wiley Andrews

Honor

Continued from Page 6

ing the ceremony was handled by the local VFW post. However, with the post facing challenges in maintaining the event and managing the logistics, Stephens County commissioners voted in May 2025 to take over the process. That includes funding the engraving, planning the Memorial Day ceremony and verifying the names of veterans to be added.

The changes followed concerns raised earlier this year when several names—including the aforementioned Brannan—were not included on the monument despite having died in 2024. In response, the county has worked on establishing a new system in collaboration with Veterans Services Director Les Strickland.

Under the new process, the county has begun receiving monthly reports from the Texas Veterans Commission through

Strickland, listing deceased veterans. Verified names are added to a working list, and the commissioners have talked about aiming to finalize the engraving list at least 45 days before Memorial Day each year. This is still all unofficial, as the commissioners have not voted on an official process as of yet, just holding workshops with Strickland.

As of August 2025, the county had compiled a list of 17 veterans who died in 2024 and had not yet been added to the monument. Ten of those names had been verified by the Veterans Administration. Some applications were submitted after the deadline, while others were still pending or declined by family members. However, the commissioners have stated that any verified veteran who lived in Stephens County long-term will be added to the monument unless the family

provides a valid reason to opt out.

The final seven names on the list—Thomas Deverle Stanford, George Wayne Mayfield, Eddie Richard Squyers, Donald Paul Rodgers, Sr., Larry Don Markham, Gary Mike Rogers and Jimmy Lee Easter—have been fully verified and are set to be engraved.

The county plans to continue to hold quarterly meetings to review the process and ensure accuracy. The county also hopes to have local funeral homes contribute to the effort by providing tents and chairs for the annual ceremony.

Though the process has evolved, the purpose remains the same: to preserve the memory of those who served. The monument, etched with names and history, stands as a lasting reminder of the county's commitment to its veterans—past, present and future.



The Veterans Monument on the southwest corner of the Stephens County Courthouse lawn has new veteran names inscribed for each Memorial Day for those that died the previous year.

Photo/Alex Kielar

Service

Continued from Page 6

in the Army Air Corps alone, a reflection of the county's strong contribution to the air war. These names, preserved in official rosters including at armyaircorpsmuseum.org, provide a window into the scale of Stephens County's involvement.

Among those who served were:

- James H. Allen, an aerial engineer of the Air Transport Command (ATC) in the United States Air Force. According to cbi.org, he earned two awards during his service – an Air Medal for 150 flight hours and a Distinguished Flying Cross for 300 hours.
- William Arnot, a pilot in the (ATC) who earned three medals—Air Medal for 150 flight hours, Distinguished Flying Cross for 300 flight hours and Air Medal Oak Leaf Cluster for 450 flight hours.

- Frank Collins, a member of the 325th Fighter Group “The Checkertail Clan” who earned 21 medals during his time of service according to records.
- James Dowell served in the 464th Bombardment Group and earned four medals during his time in the service.
- Allen Hall was a Glider pilot in the Air Commando Group and earned an Air Medal award for meritorious achievement in March

of 1944.

- Billy Joplin, a Breckenridge native who enlisted in the Army Air Corps. His training prepared him for the dangerous missions flown by American bomber and fighter crews in Europe and the Pacific. According to records, Joplin served in the 451st Bombardment Group and earned four medals throughout his service.
- Edward Meyer, a member of the 485th Bombardment and was part of the massive ground campaigns that pushed Allied forces across Europe. Records show he earned one medal during his service.
- James Pike, a member of the 436th Troop Carrier Group and 81st Troop Carrier Squadron who earned a first bronze oak leaf cluster air medal March 31, 1945.

Stephens County also bore the cost of war, with at least 47 service members from the county dying in uniform across WWII, Korea and Vietnam and being Gold Star Veterans, according to records at HonorStates.org.

That includes at least three servicemen who were born in Stephens County before their families moved prior to their enlistment—Rex Warren Vanalst (Army Air Forces Second Lt.), Vernon Paul “Buck” Keaton (Marine Corps Private) and Louis Tu-

lane Bass Jr. (Navy Lt. Junior Grade Pilot).

There are also six gold star veterans buried in cemeteries in Stephens County—four in Breckenridge Cemetery, one in Necessity Cemetery and one in Veal Creek Cemetery near Possum Kingdom.

Breckenridge Cemetery:

- John Michael Lohan—Army Air Forces Technical Sergeant Radio Operator, 441st Troop Carrier Group, 99th Troop Carrier Squadron, Air Medal.
- Roland Wiley Andrews—Army Sergeant, 36th Division, 142nd Infantry Regiment, Purple Heart.
- Walter L Cravey—Army Air Forces Second Lieutenant, 24th Troop Carrier Squadron.
- Thomas Edward Cruse—Navy Petty Officer, Coxswain, USS Marathon, Purple Heart.
- John Michael Lohan—Army Air Forces Technical Sergeant, Radio Operator, 441st Troop Carrier Group, 99th Troop Carrier Squadron, Air Medal.

He also spoke candidly about the emotional toll of war and the culture differences he encountered. “Those people had

been fighting for 100 years when we got there, so life didn't mean nothing to them,” Lancaster said. “I was raised differently; I was raised by an old man, and he kept saying, ‘When the power of love overcomes the love of power, there will be peace.’”

Lancaster comes from a long line of military service. His father served as a medic in Korea and his grandfather fought in the South Pacific during World War II. That legacy shaped his understanding of duty and sacrifice.

“We went there, we did what we were supposed to do and thank God we got to come home,” he said. “It was a blessing to come home.”

Today, Lancaster continues to serve his community through Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 7767 in Breckenridge. Each Thanksgiving, the post provides meals to 100 to 150 people—primarily widows and close family members of deceased veterans in Stephens County.

It's a tradition that reflects the same sense of responsibility and camaraderie that carried Lancaster through his military service. His story, like so many others etched into the county's veterans memorial monument, is a reminder that service doesn't end when the uniform comes off.



The Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia where U.S. Army veteran Richard Lancaster recently visited.

Contributed Photo

Lancaster

Continued from Page 6

Lancaster's military journey began at Fort Bliss in El Paso, where he completed eight weeks of basic training followed by eight weeks of Advanced Individual Training (AIT).

He then underwent 26 weeks of Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC) training—a fast-track leadership program he and his fellow soldiers referred to as the “candidate school of shake n' bake.”

“When I went to Vietnam, I was a buck sergeant,” Lancaster said. “I was in there one year, 11 months to the day I was drafted.”

His deployment began in late 1969 and ended November 20, 1970. Two years later, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) transferred him to Stephens County, where he found a new home and community.

Lancaster described Vietnam as a place of stark contrasts—a country of natural beauty and deep conflict.

“It was wet and muddy about six months out of the year and the other six months it was dry,” he recalled.

Though trained for a specific Military Occupational Speciality (MOS), he was reassigned to a special unit and took on broader responsibilities. Lancaster noted how he was very well trained by the time he got to Vietnam.

He also spoke candidly about the emotional toll of war and the culture differences he encountered.


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been fighting for 100 years when we got there, so life didn't mean nothing to them,” Lancaster said. “I was raised differently; I was raised by an old man, and he kept saying, ‘When the power of love overcomes the love of power, there will be peace.’”

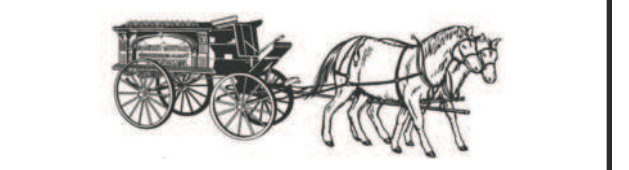
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Sue Turner, Deceased, by and through her attorney of record, Amy P. Bryan, at Amy Bryan Law, PLLC, 193 South Graham, Stephenville, Texas 76401, within the time prescribed by law. DATED the 10th day of November, 2025. Respectfully submitted, **AMY BRYAN LAW, PLLC** 193 S. Graham Street Stephenville, Texas 76401 Telephone: (254) 965-6203 Facsimile: (254) 965-5971 Email: bryan@abryanlaw.com By: /s/ Amy P. Bryan State Bar No. 00794450



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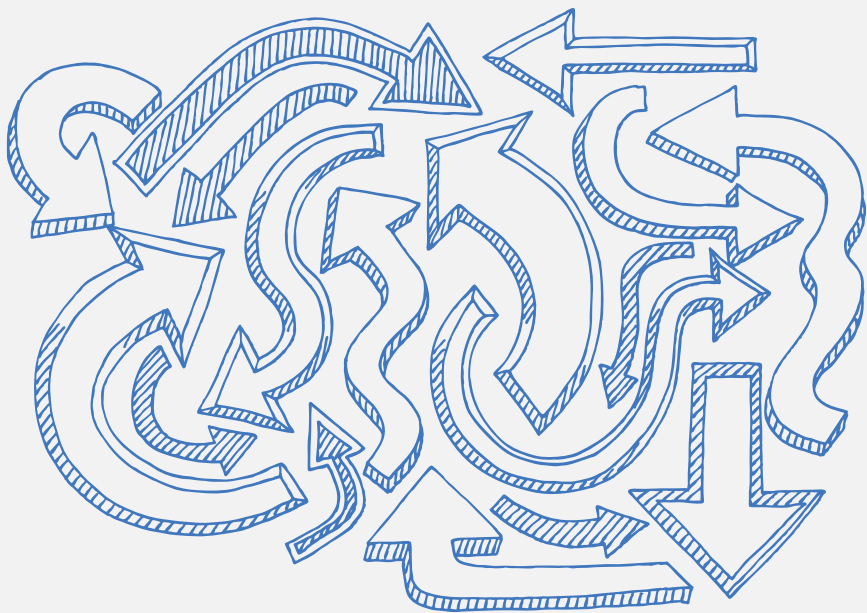
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ENTERTAINMENT

Midweek Edition

OUT ON A LIMB by Gary Kopervas



THE SPATS by Jeff Pickering



POPEYE by Randy Milholland



Even Exchange by Donna Pettman

Each numbered row contains two clues and two 6-letter answers. The two answers differ from each other by only one letter, which has already been inserted. For example, if you exchange the A from MASTER for an I, you get MISTER. Do not change the order of the letters.

1. BLT ingredient	___ C ___	Industrialist	___ R ___
2. Traveler's inn	___ O ___	Shelf	___ E ___
3. Implant	___ S ___	Turn inside out	___ V ___
4. Tent user	C ___	Monkey with	T ___
5. Welcome	___ E ___	Super-duper	___ A ___
6. Nocturnal	N ___	Vision	S ___
7. Petition	___ L ___	Seem to be	___ R ___
8. 1000	___ D ___	Civil War general	___ T ___
9. Adobe	___ C ___	Invigorating	___ S ___
10. Strategy	___ Y ___	Law enforcement	___ E ___



SCRAMBLERS
 Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Arrange

GATES [] [] [] [] [] []

Tail

GUDDER [] [] [] [] [] []

Happy

HIBELT [] [] [] [] [] []

Danger

NEECAM [] [] [] [] [] []

TODAY'S WORD [] [] [] [] [] []

Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12				13					14		
15				16					17		
18							19	20			
24	25	26		27				28	29	30	
31				32					33		
34			35	36				37			
		38	39				40				
41	42					43			44	45	46
47				48	49	50					
51				52				53			
54				55					56		

- ACROSS**
- 1 Ella's style
 - 5 Haydn nickname
 - 9 Oklahoma city
 - 12 "Hell — no fury ..."
 - 13 Pitcher
 - 14 Goose egg
 - 15 Long-snouted mammals
 - 17 "Mazel —!"
 - 18 Actress Ryder
 - 19 Puccini work
 - 21 ICU worker
 - 22 Tablecloth material
 - 24 Broadway production
 - 27 Silent
 - 28 Pesky insect
 - 31 Poetic dusk
 - 32 Khan title
 - 33 "Hail, Caesar!"
 - 34 Evening, in an ad
 - 36 Rep.'s rival
 - 37 Blue shade
 - 38 "It's nobody — business"
 - 40 Yes, to Juan
 - 41 Least desirable
 - 43 Iraqi currency
 - 47 "Entourage" character
 - 48 South Pole region
 - 51 Corp. boss
 - 52 Leeway
 - 53 Bandleader
 - 54 Lieth., once
 - 55 Art Deco master
 - 56 Leftovers recipe
- DOWN**
- 1 "Candida" playwright
 - 2 Kid's plea
 - 3 Envelope abbr.
 - 4 Supposition
 - 5 Anti-fur org.
 - 6 Shock partner
 - 7 For each
 - 8 Incendiary crime
 - 9 Feelers
 - 10 Couturier
 - 11 Thomas — Edison
 - 16 Raggedy doll
 - 20 Identify
 - 22 Olympic sleds
 - 23 Mosque leader
 - 24 Stock holder
 - 25 Maui souvenir
 - 26 Toward the front
 - 27 Constructed
 - 29 Director
 - 30 Aviv preceder
 - 35 Golf's Ernie
 - 37 Colors lightly
 - 39 Intent look
 - 40 — Lancelot
 - 41 Some WWII vets
 - 42 Unrefined metals
 - 43 Title for Judi Dench
 - 44 Bickering
 - 45 Bar mitzvah, e.g.
 - 46 Garbage barge
 - 49 Neither here — there
 - 50 Preschooler
- Look for answers in the Classifieds.

SPORTS



With the Buckaroo sideline holding its collective breath, Jaime Cruz and Canyon Shirley knock down a Hail Mary pass on the final play of a thrilling victory for the Bucks over Comanche, 26-22.

Photo/Alex Kielar

Bucks drop Eagles in regular season finale

Alex Kielar
news@breckenridgeamerican.com

The Buckaroos had a successful Senior Night as they defeated the San Angelo TLCA Eagles, 43-0, to close out the regular season. The final result was never in question as the Bucks didn't take long to gain momentum and never let their foot off the gas.

In the game that took place Friday, Nov. 7, it only took three offensive plays for the Bucks to find the end zone. A Hunter Davis sack on third down led to an Eagles punt in the game's first drive.

Joseph Juneau completed a screen pass to Ryan Waller, who ran into TLCA territory down to the 40-yard line. Jaime Cruz then took a handoff and ran 32 yards to the 8-yard line, and on the next play ran into the end zone.

The Bucks forced another punt, leading to another score as Juneau found Waller wide open deep downfield, who made the catch and ran into the end zone for a 60-yard touchdown. That would be the end of the first quarter, with the Bucks leading 14-0.

Taking advantage of a turnover on downs, the Bucks drove back down the field and scored on a Juneau quarterback sneak with just over two minutes to go in the half.

Another deep pass to Waller had set them up, and strong runs by Christian Flores and Cruz got them deeper into Eagles' territory.

The Bucks were able to get the ball back again before half and took advantage, with Juneau completing a pass to Erik Saucedo in the left side of the end zone for a six-yard score. The half ended with Breckenridge leading 28-0.

The opening drive



Cooper Wimberly (5) celebrates with Erik Saucedo (6) after Wimberly came down with a big 34-yard touchdown catch with under a minute to go as the Bucks took a 26-22 lead over Comanche.

Photo/Alex Kielar

of the second half was capped off by a four-yard touchdown run by Christian Flores, who was leaned on for a lot of the drive for tough runs. That would be the only score of the third, as the Bucks led 35-0 going into the final quarter.

"Wanted to try and get that kid in the end zone, he's earned it," coach Casey Pearce said. "He's had a long year."

With under two minutes in the game, Hayden Mendoza got pressure on the SAT-LCA quarterback, forcing a strip sack which was picked up by Davis, who ran it all the way back to the end zone.

The extra point following the scoop'n'score was blocked, but Davis picked it up and pushed his way into the end zone for the two-point conversion. "I'm proud for the

seniors, who've been through a lot the last four years. They've earned their time and they earned what they got tonight," Pearce said. "Super proud of what they've done for this program, but it doesn't need to end tonight."

The Bucks will face off against the Paradise Panthers (9-1, 6-0) to begin the playoffs in the bi-district round Friday, Nov. 14 at 7 p.m. at Rams Stadium in Mineral Wells.

"We're gonna have to air up the basketballs after next Friday. We need to figure out how to be way more physical," Pearce said. "I don't think we were very physical early. I think we were a little soft thinking that was just going to be just a roll and do our thing. If we can't get where we can stop the run and run the football over people, it's going to be a long night coming next Friday."

Lady Bucks knocked off by Lady Longhorns

Alex Kielar
news@breckenridgeamerican.com

The Lady Bucks tipped off their non-district home opening game against the Gordon Lady Longhorns, who proved too much for them to handle as they lost, 58-23.

The game occurred Tuesday, Nov. 11 at the Breckenridge ISD Athletic and Fine Arts Center, with the visiting Lady Longhorns quickly gaining momentum that would never waiver.

Defensively for the Lady Bucks, they allowed Gordon shooters too much space for wide open shots, en route to the visitors taking an 18-7 lead after the first quarter.

Scoring for the Lady Bucks in the first quarter was Paisley Thibodeaux with a two-point jumper and Analia Palacios with a layup and three free throws.

The Gordon lead nearly doubled in the second quarter as they would go into halftime leading 33-13. The shotmaking continued to be tough for the Lady Bucks to stop, as the Lady Longhorns knocked down two three-pointers early in the quarter and a third later on.

Gordon also had a couple of fastbreak points off of turnovers, as the Lady Bucks had



Senior Preslie Malcuit hits the ball over the net during the opening set of her final match of her career Friday, Oct. 24 against Peaster.

Photo/Alex Kielar

trouble keeping possession.

Thibodeaux recorded a rebound and put-back shot late in the quarter, while Preslie Malcuit and Neveah Johnson each hit fast-break layups off steals for the Lady Bucks' scoring.

The Lady Bucks scored just five points in each of the final

two quarters, getting a layup from Ra'Shey Losh, one free throw from Palacios and a jump shot from Malcuit in the third quarter as they trailed 46-18.

The scoring in the final quarter was all on behalf of Malcuit, who hit two layups—one assisted by Palacios and one of two free throw attempts after she hit the glass for a rebound.

The final quarter was the Lady Bucks' best quarter defensively as they allowed 12 points, but they were already too far behind the eight ball to come back.

Leading the way in scoring was Malcuit with eight points, followed by Palacios with six points, Thibodeaux with four, Johnson with two and Losh with two.

The Lady Bucks will head to Gordon High School to participate in a tournament Thursday, Nov. 13, with game times set for 10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Following that, they will host the Vernon Lady Lions Tuesday, Nov. 18.



Senior Preslie Malcuit hits the ball over the net during the opening set of her final match of her career Friday, Oct. 24 against Peaster.

Photo/Alex Kielar



Kamden Tidwell, right, and LaKyla Bartley work for a block at the net against Peaster in the Lady Bucks' final match of the season Friday, Oct. 24.

Photo/Alex Kielar