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# Benbrook News

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*Around the Town with Denise Honeycutt*

## Veterans of Foreign Wars Post Hosts Run For the V

The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post 10429 in Benbrook hosted their third annual “Run for the V”, 5K Run, Walk and Ruck event on Sunday, Sept. 10 at the facility. The one-mile route took participants along Benbrook Lake for great scenery.

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Scout Troop 9299 presented the Colors (l-r) Jaxon Mason, Talon Sain, Cody Bloomingdale, Paul Cisneros, Jessy Monger and Scout Master, Kenny Monger.



In charge of registration were: (l-r) Whitney Cauthen, Kimberly Kowalski, Tammi Cauthen and Jodi Rudel.

*Benbrook Council Action by John English*

## Sept. 7 Meeting Review

The Benbrook city council meeting held on Sept. 7 was conducted as scheduled. Mayor Jason Ward called the meeting to order. An invocation was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Time was then allowed for citizen comments on any agenda item.

Peter Kau approached the podium and informed the council members that he has been a resident of Benbrook for more than 40 years.

“The patriotism of the citizens of Benbrook is well-known,” Kau said. “You’ve consistently supported both the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion posts. As a 30-year veteran, I personally wish to thank you for your support.”

Kau went on to say that Sept. 15 has traditionally been designated as POW/MIA day and that on Sept. 15 the Benbrook American Legion will commemorate soldiers who have become prisoners of war or are considered missing in action.

Kau went on to say that more than 81,000 people who served remain unaccounted for and that the suffering of families of the missing in action never stops.

Kau invited Benbrook citizens to join the legion in a ceremony at 7 p.m. on Sept. 15 at the American Legion Hall.

When Kau stepped away, resident Terry Roach approached the podium and expressed displeasure at there being no record or detail kept of citizen comments in the minutes kept at the council meetings.

Minutes from the previous meeting held on Aug. 17 were then approved unanimously.

The first item of the evening was a report by the city manager to consider approving an interlocal agreement with the City of Fort Worth for rabies control and testing.

According to the agenda, in 1999, the City of Benbrook entered into an agreement with the City of

(continued on page 5)

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# Cougars and Bobcats Head into District Play After Wins

The BMHS football team improved to 3-0 on Friday night, defeating Mineral Wells by a score of 35-20 and continuing it's romp through the non-district schedule.

Coach Cody Slater said it was a good effort from his team.

"I was super proud of our team," Slater said. "It was a total team effort on Friday night. I'm excited for our kids and community, and we are looking forward to our match up this week against the Bridgeport Bulls."

Benbrook had a number of strong efforts in the game.

Offensively, Chris Harris had 15 carries for 100 yards and two touchdowns, while Brady Gordon had 12 carries for 75 yards.

Receivers DeShawn Deane and Kade Cross had combined for four catches for 67 yards and three touchdowns, and quarter back Collin Thompson tossed three touchdown passes.

Defensively, Jack Roberts and Roman Rabago combined for four tackles and graded out at 90 percent, and Cross had nine tackles and three tackles for loss at line-backer.

Jake Lindsey had a strong performance with 18 tackles and a pass breakup.

Benbrook will play at 7:30 p.m. tomorrow at Bridgeport, and Slater said he expects

a good game.

"Bridgeport will present another challenge upfront," Slater said. "They have good size and decent speed. We will need to execute in all three phases to give ourselves the best opportunity to be successful."

Over at Western Hills, the Cougars wrapped up the non-district schedule on a high note, defeating Polytechnic by a score of 26-16 to improve to 1-2.

Coach Blake Moilan he was happy with the victory, but saw room for improvement.

"A win is a win," Moilan said. "That's the most important thing to remember. We made some mistakes and didn't play great at times, but in the end the scoreboard went our way. We will happily take the win."

Kaream Williams ran for 250 yards and scored twice, and EJ Jones added two touchdowns and 70 yards on the ground.

D'Shun Hawkins also had a great game on defense, moving to nose guard and playing "really well against their run game."

The Cougars are in their bye week this

coming weekend, and Moilan said there are a couple of objectives.

"We are excited to see that the temps are finally going to drop and allow us to get outside during our normal practice times," Moilan said. "We plan to work on a lot of fundamentals while also taking the time to prepare for Carter-Riverside."

Moilan said that overall, he believes the non-district schedule has done a good job of preparing his team for district competition.

"Maypearl and Mineral Wells are both big physical teams that forced us to play physical," Moilan said. "Poly had some speed that we hadn't seen yet. We feel like the combination of those games gave us a great start to the season. We need to continue to find what works best for us as a team and get better at those things. We are excited to start district play."

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# Benbrook Trash Bash Sept. 16

The 31st Annual Benbrook Trash Bash cleanup event is Saturday, Sept. 16 at Dutch Branch Park. Registration opens at 8:30 a.m., and cleanup begins at 9 a.m. A free hotdog lunch is provided to all volunteers. Participants will gather at the pavilion located behind the concession stand in the rear parking lot.

The City will be providing giveaway items and prizes. Advance registration is requested.

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# FWISD College Fair Sept. 18

Make plans to attend your one-stop shop for all things higher education at Fort Worth ISD's Annual College Night, Monday, Sept. 18, from 6 to 8 p.m. This is an event where students and parents within and beyond Fort Worth ISD can explore college, career, and military options. You don't want to miss this event at the Will Rogers Memorial Center - Amon G. Carter, Jr. Exhibit Halls located at 3400 Burnett-Tandy Drive in Fort Worth.

There will be information about financing a college education, scholarships in Tarrant County, the college admission process, and much more. Translators will be on-hand to support Spanish-speaking families.

Free parking is available at Farrington Field, where there will be a ride shuttle to the event location.

For more information, please visit [fwisd.org/college](https://fwisd.org/college) or call the Choice and Collegiate Programming Department at 817-814-1564.

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The “Run for the V” is focused on providing awareness for suicide prevention; the Crisis Hotline number is 9-8-8.

According to the Centers for Disease - 49,449 people took their lives in 2022. In 2021, 48,183 people died by suicide and brings the combined total from 2021-2022 to 97,632 individuals.

These are sobering statistics; they represent the equivalent of thousands of people residing in multiple small towns and cities getting wiped out from suicide.

Experts note there are several contributing factors for suicide; one of them is limited access to mental health resources.

This factor is not an issue for military members and their families because help is readily available, and professionals can help you and/or your family cope with things such as work stress, anxiety, depression, relationships, financial burdens and so much more.

An enormous outpouring of local business sponsorship and raffle items from the community supported this amazing and successful event. The proceeds benefit a non-profit organization, One

Tribe Foundation, that provides services to veterans facing life struggles. This years goal reached \$15,000 for non- profit organizations.

Approximately 150 participants joined in to have fun, fellowship and enjoying music entertainment, as well as grilled burgers and hot dogs with all the trimmings that was enjoyed by all who attended.

The VFW is a non-profit organization dedicated to foster camaraderie among United States veterans of overseas conflicts, to serve our veterans, the military and our communities, and to advocate on behalf of all veterans. This Post prides itself on having a non-smoking, all-volunteer facility; a unique model for VFW’s across Texas. They are family friendly and have Burger Night every Friday from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. and every first Saturday of the month they offer steak and pork chops during the same time. These dinner events are open to the public.

(photos continued on page 5)



WATCH Program Director for One Tribe Foundation Buck Kem (left) and Post Commander Troy Collum prepare for the awards presentation.



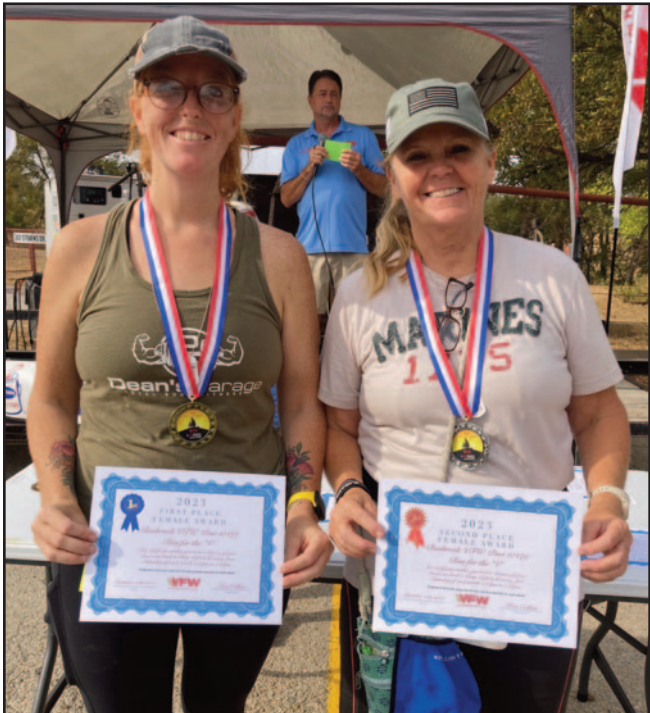
Female running winners: (l-r) first place Mary Lee King and third place Terra Sarnacki-Kratz. Not pictured is second place Bella Aranda.



Male walking winners: (l-r) third place David Payne, second place Ben Stri and first place Gabriel Garcia.



Male running winners: (l-r) second place Sergio Hernandez, first place Isaac Garcia and third place Caleb.



Female walking winners: (l-r) first place Serena Gariadiaz; second place Mari Briggs.





“Proud Country” provided entertainment.



Dave Brown displayed his singing talents that had several individuals dancing!



Female ruck winners: (l-r) third place Angela Hickman, second place Staci Silver and first place Melisa Cook.



These members from the BMHS Bobcat Cross Country are ready to run. They are: (l-r) Kennedy Kaiser, Addison Gunther, Bella Aranda and Kyler Parsons.



Male ruck winners: (l-r) third place Noah Blumenthal, second place Leslie Evans and first place District 21 Commander Joseph Campbell.



Representative of One Tribe Foundation, Adrian Joel.

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## Benbrook Council Action (continued from page 1)

Fort Worth for the processing, shipping, and laboratory testing of suspected rabid animals. When services are needed, specimens are transported to the City of Fort Worth Animal Control Office for processing and shipment to the laboratory. The results are returned directly to the Benbrook Animal Control Officer.

The annual Interlocal agreement is written on a per case basis and the 2023-2024 contract fee is \$250 per animal, and on average, three specimens are processed each year. The Interlocal agreement was approved unanimously.

Next up was a public hearing to discuss a property tax rate for 2023. The current tax rate is \$0.5950 and the proposed tax rate is \$0.5650 for the next fiscal year.

Mayor Ward opened the floor for a public hearing on the proposed tax rate, but there were no comments.

The adoption of the 2023 property tax rate will be ratified on at the Sept. 21 council meeting.

Next up was a public hearing to discuss a proposed budget for 2023.

The Proposed budget for the General Fund is \$19,133,867 and total operating funds would total \$19,598,538. The budget will allow for a continuation of current services, programs and staffing levels.

A public hearing followed, and Roach again approached the podium and asked if there funds available to purchase video editing technology in light of the city's claim that it does not have that and cannot at this time release body camera video.

There was no response given.

The adoption of the 2023 budget will be ratified on at the Sept. 21 council meeting.

Next up was informal citizen comments, and Roach again came to the podium and voiced concerns about city leadership.

Time was then allowed for council member and staff comments, and council member Renee Franklin reminded residents of upcoming events, including the Trash Bash at Dutch Branch Park on Sept. 16 starting at 8:30 a.m. with a free hot dog lunch afterward.

The meeting was then adjourned.



# The 1937 New London Natural Gas Explosion *by Dr. Ken Bridges*

It is every parent's worst nightmare. And it is a tragedy that still haunts a small East Texas town. On one terrible day in 1937, a school building in New London exploded, killing nearly 300 children.

The oil industry had transformed Rusk County in a very short time since oil was first discovered in 1930. Oil workers and investors had swarmed into the area. The oil industry was creating many jobs, shielding the community from the effects of the Great Depression that affected the rest of the country. In the ensuing years, oil workers were injured or killed in natural gas explosions or oil rig accidents. Safety and environmental regulations did not exist, and company owners viciously fought any suggestion that they should ever be enacted. The easy money kept coming in, and practically no one thought about the consequences.

The New London School District reaped the rewards of the oil money in the meantime and built the impressive \$1 million London School building (\$17.6 million in 2016 dollars) in 1932.

In January 1937, school district officials, with the full knowledge and consent of the school board and the superintendent, cancelled the \$300 monthly natural gas bill (or \$5,028 in 2016 dollars). Instead, a team of plumbers tapped into a residual gas line from Parade Gasoline Co., owned by H. L. Hunt, and connected the unrefined gas to the school. This was a common practice among some homeowners and local businesses, and Parade was aware of the school district's plans.

Not long afterward, some students re-

portedly began complaining about headaches, a symptom of gas poisoning, but no one made the connection between the reports of illness and the odorless natural gas supply the building was using.

March 18 started as a typical day. More than 500 students attended, along with 40 teachers. At around 3:05 p.m., as the day was winding down, Lemmie Butler, a respected shop teacher, innocently turned on the sander in his classroom as he had many times before.

A spark flew.

And the gates of hell opened.

The spark ignited a cloud of natural gas that destroyed half of the building in an instant. Desperate parents rushed to the scene, digging through rubble with their bare hands. Police and firefighters were overwhelmed. Local oil workers brought heavy moving equipment and torches to cut through the debris. Within the hour, Gov. Jimmy Allred sent Texas Rangers and emergency services to New London.

The new Mother Frances Hospital (which still exists) was scheduled to open in nearby Tyler the next day but opened early to accommodate the injured from New London. Volunteers came from across the state and neighboring Louisiana.

The death toll, including teachers, was put at 319.

In the aftermath, the school district was exonerated. More than 70 lawsuits were filed against the district and Parade, but Judge Robert T. Brown, ignoring law, precedent, and evidence, dismissed them all.

In one moment, an unfeeling and uncaring judge prevented any possibility of anyone ever being held accountable for the worst school disaster in American History.

Hundreds of families were devastated, and one judge decided that business would proceed as usual. No justice was ever served. No one was ever convicted, and neither the school district nor the gas company nor anyone else responsible ever had to pay a dime.

School superintendent W.C. Shaw, whose son died in the blast, resigned and left New London.

Texas passed important new safety regulations in an emergency session later in 1937. These laws included a requirement that an odor be added to natural gas in case of leaks. The Engineering Registration Act was passed to ensure that engineers would be licensed and that only qualified personnel could run gas lines. Fire drills in schools are now required; and all public buildings must have doors that open outward, all in light of the tragedy.

The school was soon rebuilt. A memorial was placed near the site in 1939, listing the names of all those who perished. A museum across the street from the explosion site opened in 1998, curated by a survivor.

The tragedy has been the subject of several books and documentaries, including *"When Even Angels Wept"* (2009), a first-hand account told by survivors. The physical wounds healed, but for hundreds of families and an entire community, the hearts remained broken.

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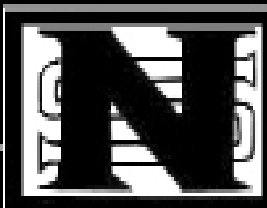
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# Three Day Weekend Forecast



### Friday, Sept. 15:

**AM** - Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 82. East wind 5 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 60%.  
**PM** - A 50% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 67. East north-east wind 5 to 10 mph.



### Saturday, Sept. 16:

**AM** - A 40% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Partly sunny, with a high near 84. North north-west wind 5 to 10 mph.  
**PM** - A 20% chance of showers before 1am. Partly cloudy, with a low around 65. North wind 5 to 10 mph.



### Sunday, Sept. 17:

**AM** - Sunny, with a high near 85. North northeast wind 5 to 10 mph.  
**PM** - Mostly clear, with a low around 64.

[Extended Forecast Click Here](#)