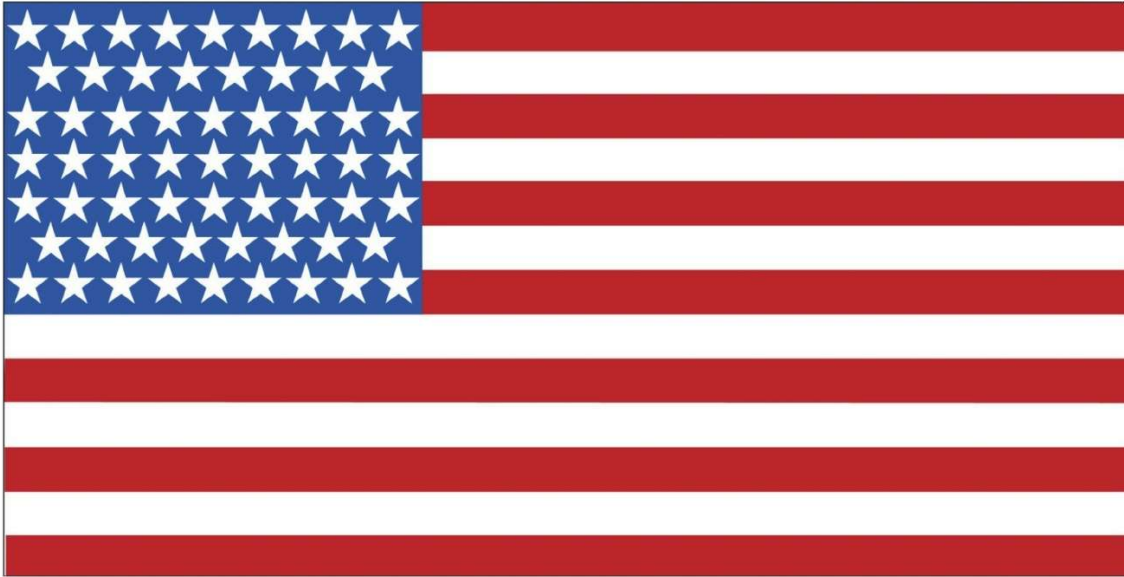


The Burton Bulletin

June 2026



Flag Day

Every year June 14 is observed as Flag Day in the United States in honor of the Congress passing the flag resolution in 1777. The resolution designated the flag to have 13 alternating red and white stripes and 13 stars on a blue background to represent the 13 colonies. This resolution was passed during the Revolutionary War, when the colonies were in need of a unified national symbol.

While not a federal holiday, President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed June 14 as National Flag Day in 1914. Then in 1949 Congress made June 14 a permanent Nation Flag Day.

The Burton Bulletin is a monthly publication For the Burton Texas area.

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Rooster Talk

As I sit here on May Day, May 1st, I feel grateful for this place, these people, and this land. In our small city, gatherings of people and the constant celebration of the good, solid things in life happen every day. It is a spirit that echoes in nearly every public space. Just like on Thursdays at Carl's Neon Moon, and every day at the Short Stop, Seafood, Los Patrones, and 4G. People make this place special. And so, it often comes through in our morning chats. With that in mind, I'll share some thoughts as I listen to the beautiful rain falling outside and savor a cup of tea.

MEDIA

I follow the news from sources within a number of countries, and the quality of "truth" in media puts the current USA right up there with China, Russia, and North Korea. Hence, one of my favorite quotes:

"We know they are lying.
They know they are lying,
They know that we know they are lying.
We know that they know that we know
they are lying.
And still they continue to lie."

—Alexander Solzhenitsyn

So, how do we filter and deal with the endless stream of input, knowing that most of it is garbage? I believe we triage everything as we encounter it and decide if it deserves more of our time on this journey of life. For me, and quite a few people I know, that triage helps us stay balanced and maybe even grateful. I believe we all look forward to a future where we respect ideas, regardless of whether we agree. One of the few remarkable things I find in aging is context. I know what I know and can learn what I need to know more of. Not everything deserves our attention. Not everyone's opinion matters all the time. A rule of thumb: don't give weight to the words of anyone for whom you have no respect, and who does not respect you. Media fails that test every time.

Illegitimi non carborundum

Illegitimi non carborundum is a [mock-Latin aphorism](#), often translated as "Don't let the bastards grind you down". The phrase itself has no meaning in [Latin](#) and can only be mock-translated.



"The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses."

— Malcolm X

I was foolishly listening to one of the talking heads on TV a while ago as he spewed what he called 'truth'. I was struck by his detachment from the very concept of truth. He read the script, he expressed the correct emotion to the theme, then went

to a commercial. It was artificial from the opening shot. It reminded me of the CBS camera crew that followed a small group (perhaps a dozen) of "pensioners" as they walked around Red Square in Moscow in the early 90's protesting the quality of their lives. After a bit, the pensioners decided to cross the street (a major road with crossing lights) and got into the back of a crowd of perhaps a hundred or so who were also waiting to cross. When I got back to Maine (home at the time) I watched CBS News for a while to see if the video had made it to the screen. A few days after I returned, I saw the "news" video in which the talking head talked about the "hundreds of pensioners" protesting in Russia. Yeah, I haven't wasted much of my life watching TV news in the USA since that.

PEOPLE

People persevere; they live within their circumstances regardless of the political or cultural environment, whether it be wealth or poverty, health or illness, race, creed, or color. They are part of a Community. Amazing doesn't even begin to cover this. More individual points of knowledge, culture, and experience than the grains of sand on a beach, yet somehow we cope, dream, work, and achieve. I've had the honor of working within many cultures and languages throughout my life, and the human spirit remains the one constant. Love of family and belief in the future are universal. The conversations I've had (within the limits of language) have always reflected those constants. A blessing I have had has been being invited into people's homes, sharing a meal or local celebration. I couldn't count the number of meals that came from kitchens with dirt floors and a simple stove of wood or gas. The constants were always there.

As the world becomes more sophisticated, it has also grown emotionally and intellectually colder. Being 'handled' by non-humans (AI) is dehumanizing, and dealing with people who objectify you to "deal" with you is degrading. As the world grows more "intelligent," it somehow feels colder. We are no longer greeted as neighbors, but "handled" as tickets in a queue, profiles in a database, problems to be processed by non-humans.

Today's AI culture promises convenience, but often ends up creating distance: scripted empathy instead of genuine listening, optimization instead of understanding. It reduces us to data points to be predicted and nudged, rather than people to be known and respected. I find that dehumanizing. The great irony is that behind all this technology still stand human beings—designers, executives, engineers—who could choose to create tools that foster connection instead of replacing it. Until they do, I'll keep trusting the simple, delightful warmth of real conversations, shared tables, and the kind of eye contact no machine can fake.



"It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart."

— Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl*

(Continue on Page 4)

RUNOFF ELECTION

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(Continue from page 2 – Rooster Talk)

The antithesis of AI is where most of the world actually lives. They grind out their existence as needed to have food, safety, and comfort. I've spoken with people who are slaves, I've spoken to Presidents and Prime Ministers, the constants are always there: Family & Future.

In many rural areas where AI hasn't truly arrived, life remains centered around land, weather, and neighbors more than screens and digital systems. The daily routine follows the sun and seasons: planting, caring for animals, harvesting, and fixing what's worn out instead of replacing it. News spreads by word of mouth, radio, or a shared newspaper at the café. Shops are small and personal; the grocer knows who prefers to buy on credit at the end of the month, and the mechanic understands what you can afford, helping you get another year out of an old truck. Bureaucracies are still a hassle, but they are managed through people—someone's cousin at the office, a friend who knows the right window to stand in front of—rather than through automated menus and chatbots.

Because there are fewer digital buffers, interactions are more direct, for better and worse. Privacy can be thin, but so can loneliness. A broken leg, a bad crop, or a lost job are not just individual problems; they become communal concerns, met with casseroles, shared labor, and quiet loans that may never be written down. Children grow up with more unstructured outdoor time, and elders retain visible roles in community life, their memories and stories acting as the living "database" of the place. Life is not romantic—there is hard work, limited opportunity, and often poor access to healthcare or education—but its logic is fundamentally human: face-to-face, name-to-name, carried more by shared history than by algorithms.

"Farming is a matter of dirt and dung. It is not the kind of thing we look to find the meaning of human life. It is too ordinary, too inescapably a part of life to be interesting. We know that it has to be done but see no reason to pay much attention to it. But it is just because farming is inescapably a part of human life that it may provide a clue to what is most basically human, and so a clue to our place within the cosmos." – Stephanie Nelson

We talk about "community" as if it were a thing that exists out there somewhere—a town, a club, a church, a list of names on a roster. But the older I get, the more I see that community is nothing more or less than individual people choosing, over and over, to show up for one another. It isn't built by committees or ordinances as much as it is by small, stubborn acts of presence. The map might draw the borders of a place, but it's those daily decisions that give it a soul.

As a community, individuals mean we don't wait for some official program to fix what's broken. We look at what is in our hands—our time, our skills, our stories—and put them into circulation. The teacher who tutors a kid after school for no extra pay, the rancher who checks fences on the neighbor's side after a storm, the café owner who lets someone sit all morning over a single cup of coffee: each is voting for a certain kind of town with their own two feet. None of it makes headlines, and most of it is never posted or measured. But you can feel it in the way people linger to talk, in how quickly words spread when someone is in trouble, and in the quiet confidence that you are not entirely on your own.

Systems may come and go—governments, technologies, fashions—but the simple practice of turning toward each other, instead of away, remains. That practice is fragile because it depends on each of us. And it is exactly that fragility, that freedom to say yes or no to our neighbor, that makes it so precious.

Article By Pete Horn

Walter the Debonair Donkey



Walter's journey to Burton began in Florida. He was a part of a herd bought by a Texas group called TMR Rescue in Plantersville, TX. He became known as one the "Florida Boys" after traveling to Plantersville from Florida.

This rescue group today, of at least 300 donkeys, has an intense process for becoming a rescue parent. Forms are filled out, meetings of both donkeys, care takers, and owners are scheduled and even visits to prospective rescue parents' facilities are done to ensure the donkeys and foster parents are a good match.

Unfortunately, some donkeys cannot be adopted as they mix better with their own kind than with humans. However, this is **NOT** the case with Walter. Stay tuned!

Article by Lynda Zajicek

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TRY THAT IN A SMALL TOWN – A Series Highlighting Burton Blessings What’s Great About Our Town: Smack Dab in the Middle and Loving It

By Ned Ross, contributing writer

On May 21st the good folks in southeastern Lee County (near Ledbetter) held a meeting to discuss a large subdivision that has been proposed near them. A friend and long-time Burton resident asked if I planned to go, so I joined him. This was an interesting meeting and a topic for discussion among Burtonites as well.

In the last couple of years, an investor group purchased a 200+ acre tract along the north side of 290 as well as a 460+ acre tract that is almost adjacent to it. The buyers then sent an application to the TCEQ (Texas environmental agency) for a wastewater permit. That application listed facts about the development:

The development is west of Ledbetter and outside city limits.

The initial phase will involve 400 homes, small businesses, parks, etc...

Development of homes would begin in 2030.

A second phase would involve an additional 1000 homes.

The subdivision will require drilling new water wells (larger than Burton’s, to be sure, for that many people)

A wastewater permit would allow a maximum discharge of 500,000 gallons per day into an “unnamed tributary” of Cummins Creek, then into Cummins for tens of miles

There’s a lot to absorb in those facts. For starters, who is itching to buy a house between Giddings and Ledbetter in a subdivision along a major highway? The math indicates that each home would have no more than a third acre of land and probably closer to a quarter acre. A commute to and from Austin would be long and punishing, and there is plenty of land closer to Austin for development to shorten that commute. Adding 400 homes means something like an additional 1000 people. Giddings has a population of only 5100, and adding 20% to the population is a big change. Adding another 2000 people in the second phase is even harder to fathom.

I visited with a resident there who is very involved in the local scene and politics, and there is no large employer planning to locate in or near Giddings to rationalize this demand for additional homes. Frankly, I do not know how someone could finance a project like this without a significant change in employment. Considering that roads, water, sewers, and power all need to be added for this neighborhood, the total cost for the first 400 homes (at \$400,000 each) is \$160,000,000. Gulp.

Perhaps most surprising is the wastewater permit. The “unnamed tributary” through which the treated wastewater will pass is a family’s pasture on the south side of 290. That land floods during heavy rains, so the treated wastewater will spread across their land at times. Anyone who has been involved with wastewater at all knows that the treated water is far from perfect despite the best of efforts. Applying chemicals and maintaining the equipment is expensive and time-consuming. We have witnessed issues locally with this. If that “unnamed tributary” were on my pasture, I would be issuing legal challenges to prevent my livestock and family from being exposed to effluent and odor.

The water to serve all of the new residents will be significant. The depth of the well will matter to surrounding landowners, and locals are very concerned about wells running dry or being polluted by the wastewater.

So, what does this Ledbetter development mean for Burton? There is no direct threat. Carmine is wedged between Ledbetter and Burton, and I haven’t heard of any activity closer to our town. We find ourselves squarely in the middle of Houston and Austin, a distance that is too uncomfortable for a daily commute to those cities, and that’s a great thing! We must remain diligent, however, to changes around us, particularly those developments that would be sited “upstream” of us where we would be impacted by the aftereffects. A large development means trucks, cars, dust, noise, water consumption, and wastewater.

Burton’s Achilles Heel is also its defense in this circumstance. Aging city infrastructure and limited capabilities means anyone trying to do a larger development must bring their own roads, water, sewer, etc.... That’s not cheap and discourages this type of growth. Meanwhile, home ownership continues to be expensive or completely unaffordable for many Americans. A greenfield development in Burton would be too expensive per home to attract local buyers.

Another lesson for our town is the importance of maintaining that critical infrastructure. If we have a failure of our water or sewer systems, the cost of building new piping and equipment could be prohibitive. Our town leaders would have their hands out for state money to assist, and that’s not the way to operate. Burton needs to take care of itself as best it can. Enjoying the quality of life requires her focus on basic needs and substantial investment over many decades.

As to development in general, I firmly support private property rights and do not support others interfering with those rights. I also firmly believe that the rights of a buyer of property do not trump the rights of existing (surrounding) neighbors. Being a good neighbor is necessary, not a nicety, especially in rural areas. Thus, any large developer needs to inform surrounding property owners about their intentions and try to work with them on reasonable solutions. Change can be upending for long-time residents, but change is inevitable. Just thumb through the history books of Burton to see how this town has continuously changed over the last 175 years.

Finding ourselves smack dab in the middle of two major cities is a good thing. We have a safe distance from the city that should sustain our small town for decades. Let’s all enjoy our relative isolation to the growth around us but plan long-term and comprehensively for the future.

And that’s what makes Burton great.

You can’t have everything. Where would you put it?

If you’re riding ahead of the crowd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it’s still there.

The sooner you fall behind, the more time you have to catch up.

City of Burton City Council Meeting

A regular meeting was held on May 12 at Burton City Hall. The Council discussed the election where 2 positions had tied. In position 2, Incumbent Tommie Gilmon and challenger Sheila Ripple both received 66 votes each. In position 5, incumbent Macy Tidwell and challenger Berneake Gantt both received 65 votes. The candidates have decided to have a run-off.

Early voting will begin on June 1 to June 5 from 8am to 4pm and then on June 8 and June 9 from 8am to 4pm. Election Day will be on June 13 from 7am to 7 pm. All voting will take place at Burton City Hall.

Charley Ruemke, who defeated Jeff Eckhardt for position 3, was sworn in by City Secretary Amanda Klehm.



Charley Ruemke

Students from Texas A&M who have been researching out water/wasted system, presented their findings, which included servicing the city’s manholes and conducting testing along North Railroad Street.

The council approved a contract with AOKA to review the 2021 BISD plans related to the fire suppression requirements and to evaluate the city’s water infrastructure capacity to support the proposed system.

The city council approved Nathan Kalkhake as mayor pro-tem and Paul McLaughlin as sergeant-at-arms.

The council approved a resolution authorizing submission of an application to the Texas Water Development Board for the water system and infrastructure grant and to authorize the Mayor to execute all necessary documents, including the required affidavit and certificate.

The city approved the current council members to be authorized signers on all City of Burton bank accounts and to authorize City Secretary Amanda Klhem to call and contact the bank regarding information on all bank accounts.

The next city hall meeting will be held on June 9th at 5:30 pm.

Update: A ribbon cutting will be held to open Water Well #5 for public use on July 14th at 10am.

My uncle told me his joints are getting weaker. I told him he needed to roll them tighter.

I’m reading a book about transportation. Its bound to take me places.

Patio Add-On at Neon Moon



There has been a new add-on at the Neon Moon. Customers will be able to enjoy their cup of coffee and the back patio. According to Carl Luning, proprietor of Neon Moon, new patio furniture will be added for the enjoyment of customers. Looks great Carl!

Matthew Gaines



A marker dedicated to Matthen Gaines was unveiled on May 2nd at Long Life Brotherhood located at 12419 E. Branch Street.

In 1869, Gaines was elected as Texas’s 16th district in the Twelfth Texas Legislature. He gained a reputation for being a guardian of the newly won rights of Black Texans. He addressed issues of public education, prison reform, the protection of black voters and tenant farming reformation. Matthew Gaines died on June 11, 1900, in Giddings, Texas. On November 19, 2021, a statue of Gaines was unveiled and dedicated at Texas A&M.

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