

The Burton Bulletin

July 2026



Burton Panthers – State Baseball Champions

Burton Baseball Champions

The Burton Baseball Panthers are the 2026 Class AA Division II State Champions. They defeated the Ropes Eagles 6 to 1. The last time Burton won State was in 1987 when they defeated the Sheldon King. Pitcher, P Tyler Witt was named MVP.

On June 14th, Burton ISD held its first annual “Chillin’ with Champions” as they celebrated the accomplishments of students who have represented the school at state and national levels. Along with the baseball team, the school recognized state track qualifiers, BETA national qualifiers, FFA state qualifiers, varsity cheerleaders, state UIL academic qualifiers and band students. At the event, Mayor Buck presented a proclamation declaring June as Burton Championship month. Congratulations to all the Burton ISD students, staff and parents.!

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

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Walter the Debonair Donkey



The wait staff and care takers of Walter and his field mates, Luckey and Smokey, didn’t wake up one morning and think, “We need Donkeys in our pasture!” It started with the purchase of their current home. Luckey & Smokey, Jesus Donkeys, were part of the purchase. Willing to take on this responsibility was a loving commitment that ultimately became lifesaving to one in particular. More to come.

Article by Lynda Zajicek

Sometimes the amount of self-control it takes to not say what’s on my mind is so immense, I need to take a nap afterwards.

Two guys walked into a bar. The third one ducked.

I used to have a fear of speed bumps, but I eventually got over it.

Classic Rock Coffee Co. & Kitchen



Lynda & I recently visited Navasota, where the downtown area has experienced a revitalization in the last few years. Whereas, in many cities where many store fronts are empty, Navasota appears to be thriving.

One store we visited was the Classic Rock Coffee Co. & Kitchen, where we enjoyed a delicious breakfast and rock & roll atmosphere. The walls were displayed with artwork of sixties and seventies rock bands and guitars, where we saw many of our favorite rock groups – Led Zeppelin, The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix Rolling Stones and many more. Towards the back of the store are hundreds of classic rock albums.

Also, an assortment of old coffee grinders was displayed. I failed to take a picture of them.



We were warmly greeted by Manager Gavin and Barista Noah and were told that the Classic Rock will be 10 years old in October.



Gavin & Noah

If you get a chance to visit Navasota, make sure you visit the Classic Rock Coffee & Kitchen located at 129 E. Washington Street. It will be well worth it.

I've been bored recently, so I decided to take up fencing. The neighbors keep demanding that I put it back.

Never discuss infinity with a mathematician. They can go on about it forever.

A synonym is a word you use in place of a one you can't spell.

Rooster Talk

A common discussion in Burton is how to maintain the character of our little slice of Texas while stabilizing and maintaining the infrastructure that makes our little city so special. There are many moving parts here, from the aging out of the population to the creation of a stable economic base for the City to exist.

I'm not talking to you today as some expert with a stack of charts. I'm talking as your neighbor—someone who loves this town, its history, and its people. And I'm not talking outside developers or Data Centers. We all know Burton is a special place. But we also know love doesn't patch potholes or fix water lines. If we want Burton to still feel like Burton ten, twenty, fifty years from now, we've got to be honest about what it takes to keep a town of about 300 people running.

I believe we need an open, community-wide discussion in plain language. No fancy jargon. Just: here's what we're dealing with, here's what we want to protect, and here are some practical steps we can take together. Before we argue about ordinances, taxes, grants, or zoning, we should ask: what exactly are we trying to save?

When folks say they want to keep Burton the way it is, I hear a few things:

- * We know our neighbors, and people look out for each other.
- * Life moves a little slower here than in the big cities.
- * We've got deep roots—churches, schools, family names, and traditions that go back generations.
- * We still have open space and a genuine small-town, rural feel. That's Burton's "character." And it's not just warm feelings. It's actually our greatest asset. It's why people stay here, retire here, or come visit. It's what makes somebody drive through town, have lunch, and say, "You know, I could live here."

But that character doesn't fix a broken sewer line, repave a street, or pay the electric bill at City Hall. To keep the Burton we love, we also have to keep the basic nuts and bolts of the city working.

Let's just say it out loud: with around 300 people, our tax base is small. We don't have a big Walmart (thank God). We don't have a factory. Most of our land is homes or pasture, and a lot of our folks are on fixed incomes.

What does that mean in real life?

- Every dollar we spend really matters.
- A surprise big repair can throw our whole budget off.
- We can't afford to chase every shiny new project just because it sounds nice.

At the same time, some things are not optional. We've got to take care of:

- Streets and drainage
- Water and sewer
- Basic city administration and staying in line with state and federal rules
- Public safety, often in cooperation with the county

Our pipes and streets aren't getting younger. Stuff built decades ago doesn't last forever. When you mix that with an older population, you get a squeeze—more needs, fewer people who can handle big tax jumps.

So here's our basic challenge in Burton: how do we protect folks on fixed incomes, welcome new people who fit our

values, and still bring in enough steady money to keep the town going?

An Aging Burton: Respecting Our Elders, Planning Ahead
Another big piece of the puzzle is our aging population. Many of the people who built this town, who kept the churches going and the school open, are now retired or close to it. They've poured their lives into Burton, and they deserve stability.

But an older population changes things:

Many can't absorb big jumps in property taxes.

Over time, houses will change hands as people pass away or move to get more care.

There may be fewer kids around, which affects our school, our events, and the overall energy of town life.

So, we need to think about this with some heart and some common sense:

Take care of long-time residents

Any plan for Burton's future has to start with the people who built it. That means being careful and thoughtful about taxes, and working hard to bring in outside money—grants, partnerships—so we're not just putting everything on the backs of older homeowners.

Think about who comes next

As houses change hands, who do we want to see moving in? Families? Retirees who want to be part of the community? Or do we want a bunch of short-term rentals with people who never learn their neighbors' names? We can influence this through our zoning, our reputation, and the way we talk about Burton to the outside world.

Help seniors stay here if they want to

Things like access to healthcare, transportation, and basic support can decide whether someone stays in Burton or moves away. We don't have to do it all ourselves, but we can team up with the county and nearby communities to make sure our folks aren't left behind.

Building a Stable Economic Base (Without Turning into "Anywhere, USA")

Now let's talk money—not in a cold way, but in a real way.

If we agree that our current tax base is thin and our infrastructure is aging, it follows that we need a steadier economic foundation. But the words "economic development" can make small-town people nervous. We picture traffic, big boxes, and losing everything that makes us unique.

For Burton, that's not what we're talking about. A stable economic base for us means just enough reliable income—spread across a few different sources—to cover our needs with a little cushion, all while staying true to who we are.

Here are some down-to-earth ideas:

Lift up small, local businesses

We don't want a major factory or a 100-unit subdivision. But we can absolutely be a good home for small businesses that fit Burton: the cafés and restaurants, repair shops, local artisans, farm-related services, and home-based businesses.

Friendly, low-key tourism

Sus & Steph are nailing this every day, and Carrina is channeling her personality and energy to showing folks the wonders of our city. We've already got what city folks are looking for: history, quiet streets, a slower pace. We don't need crowds. We just need the right kind of visitors—people who come for a day, enjoy themselves, spend some money, and go home saying, "Burton is a gem." **(Con't on page 4)**

Chasing grants and partnerships

With a small tax base, outside money can change the game. There are grants out there for water systems, streets, historic buildings, and more. The catch is, they take time and paperwork.

Slow, steady growth—not a boom

Most of us do not want Burton to explode in size. But a little steady growth—some new families, a few new houses—can help spread costs out. The key is guiding that growth instead of letting it just happen to us. Zoning and development rules should encourage the kind of homes and small businesses that fit our values and our roads and water system, not projects that overwhelm.

Economic stability isn't only about bringing in more money. It's also about how carefully we spend what we already have. For Burton, that means we need to be smart about maintaining the stuff we already own:

Have a simple, written maintenance plan for streets, water, and sewer so we're not always in panic mode.

Rank projects by urgency and long-term savings, not just by who complains the loudest.

Fix small problems early so they don't turn into giant emergencies later.

When you're a town of 300, every project feels big. But if we plan ahead and tackle things one step at a time, it's a lot less scary. A plan also lets us explain to folks why we're doing certain projects first and others later.

Trust, Communication, and Doing This Together

At the end of the day, all of this comes down to trust.

In a town this size, people notice everything: who gets heard, which projects move forward, how money gets spent. If people feel out of the loop, they assume the worst. If they feel informed and respected, they're a lot more willing to support tough decisions.

So, a big part of keeping Burton stable is how we talk to each other:

- Hold open, well-announced meetings where questions are truly welcome.
- Explain the city's finances in plain English—no mystery, no fine print.
- Be honest when we don't have an answer yet and promise to go find it.

We're not always going to agree on everything. That's okay. What matters is that we can disagree without falling apart as a community.

So how does a tiny Texas town like Burton stay stable and economically viable without losing its soul?

Here's my opinion:

1. We start by remembering what we love about Burton—our people, our history, our slower pace.
2. We admit we've got a small tax base and aging infrastructure, instead of pretending those problems don't exist.
3. We respect and protect our older residents while planning for the next generation that will live in these homes and walk these streets.
4. We build a modest, steady economic base through small businesses, low-key tourism, grants, and carefully guided growth.

5. We take care of the infrastructure we already have with a real plan, not just crisis management.
6. We talk openly with each other, so people feel informed, not blindsided.

If we can do those things—slowly, steadily, and together—we give ourselves a great chance that fifty years from now someone else will be standing up at a meeting like this, saying, "Burton stayed Burton."

A little slice of Texas, still with a big heart, solid infrastructure, and a community that chose to work together instead of drifting apart. And it won't happen by accident. It'll happen because we decide, as neighbors, that Burton is worth the effort.

Article by Pete Horn

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Burton City Council Meeting

A regular meeting was held on June 16 at Burton City Hall. The first item action was verifying the results of the run-off election for positions 2 and 5. Sheila Ripple was sworn in after she defeated Tommie Gilmon 79 to 69. Macey Tidwell defeated Berneake Gantt 76 to 72 but was absent due to a prior commitment. She will be sworn in at a special-called meeting and workshop on June 30th.



Sheila Ripple

Mayor Buck announced there will be a ribbon cutting for Water Well #5 on Tuesday, July 14th at 10:00am. State and Local officials will be attending.

In the Utility Report, Clerk Rachel Belvin stated that the City will no longer accept cash payments effective immediately. This is to promote transparency and accountability while protecting the employees in the performance of their duties. She also stated that she will not be subjected to false accusations of theft. A notice will be included in the next water bill.

The Council approved a proclamation for Camp for All as it celebrated 200,000th camper.

The Council approved an engagement letter as submitted by Medack & Oltmann to complete the 2025-2026 fiscal year audit and authorization for the mayor to execute required documentation.

The council approved the closure of the seized funds from the former police department and to forward the funds of \$4,894 to the Washington County Sheriff's Office for services provided to the city.

The council approved closing parts of Main Street for the Burton Friends & Neighbors' street dance scheduled for July 25th.

There will be a special called meeting on June 30th for the administration of the oath of office of Macey Tidwell. Also, the council will discuss for members of the council to be authorized signers for bank accounts at Citizen State Bank. Following the meeting there will be a workshop for new council orientation.

The next regular meeting will be held on July 14th.

A government big enough to give you everything you want, is strong enough to take everything you have.

No man's life, liberty, or property is safe while the legislature is in session.

Talk is cheap, except when congress does it.

Vikki Curry named Superintendent of the Year



Superintendent Vikki Curry

On June 5th at the 4th annual Brazos Valley Educator Award ceremony, Burton ISD Superintendent Vikki Curry was named Superintendent of the year. She was humbled and grateful for receiving recognition.

Mrs. Curry has been here at Burton ISD since June 2024. She has served previously as assistant-superintendent in Galveston, Texas. Congratulations Mrs. Curry!

People will believe anything if you whisper it to them.

Discretion is being able to raise your eyebrow instead of your voice.

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TRY THAT IN A SMALL TOWN
– A Series Highlighting Burton Blessings
What’s Great About Our Town: A Universal
Love of Cars – And Skilled Tradesmen
By Ned Ross – Contributing Writer.

Perhaps by now some of you have seen a mysterious little car in Burton. As small as our town is, we recognize most of the vehicles that drive around daily. This one doesn't exactly blend in with the white or gray F-250s pulling horse trailers. This car is very small, looks like a 60s Italian sports car, has a ragtop roof, and - - - is pink.

I want to introduce you to the Figaro. So far nobody we have met in or near town has ever seen one or even heard of it, and there's a good reason. The Figaro wasn't made for the US market, and there were only 30,000 made in or around 1991. Even though the car appears to be 60 years old, it was made to appear that way in '91. By Nissan!

These little gems were built for driving in Tokyo and the UK. If you haven't seen the roadways in those countries, they are narrow with extremely limited parking. Most Figaros were right-hand drive (because they drive on the wrong side of the road). Some cars were modified for left-hand drive, and we were fortunate to find one of these. The original Figaro came in 4 colors, one for each season: pale green (the original color of our car), pale blue, taupe, and gray. A large car importer in Virginia had 4 or 5 of them, but most were right-hand drive. Our machine only has around 30,000 miles on it. I doubt you will see another one anywhere near Washington County, and I'm not sure if there are any in Houston.

Lauren saw a Figaro on social media and commented on how much she liked it. I researched the car and learned all I could about it. Despite its retro appearance, it has a lot of modern conveniences and upgrades. The engine is a 4-cylinder turbo, and it moves right along. It included the 1991-essential CD player tucked under the dash and fuel injection. There's enough headroom for me (at 6'2"), an unusual outcome for such a small car. The ragtop is framed and folds neatly into the "boot" where a trunk lid hides it.

Local great guy and outstanding mechanic Nick Goldberg can tell you how packed it is under the hood. Changing out belts, hoses and fluids in the Figaro is a challenge for all but extreme contortionists. He worked through the challenges but found a leak in the power steering system that required the replacement of a fitting in a very tight space. We could not locate the part online. Gulp. Did I just buy a car that won't run without balsting fluid all over town? Nick called a gentleman from Brenham named Drew Weid (who is now my local hero) to see if he could make the part. And he did - the next day. That's amazing service and skill that only a small town can deliver! Turns out that Drew has worked on fire engines and farm equipment all over the county and has earned an outstanding reputation. Drew stopped into The Pink Door in late June and introduced himself to Lauren.

The Figaro was purchased to be leveraged for Lauren's store. The pink branding could be spread to Round Top with a car, so we agreed to make it pink to promote the store. I visited a high-end wrap shop in Houston, and they provided an honest assessment of what we needed: A custom paint job in the perfect

shade of pink. I asked neighbors about where I could get a good paint job. Good friend and car aficionado Chris Herron referred me to Billy Mulder, and after a short conversation Billy agreed to take the Figaro project. He only does classic cars and race cars, and his finish work is second to none. The Mulder team is excellent at choosing colors, and that was the perfect team to work with Lauren on choosing the right shade of pink. Repainting was no small task as the car has a lot of chrome trim to remove. In just a couple of weeks, Billy's team did an outstanding job of converting our little ride to pale pink and reinstalling all those trim pieces without a hitch.

Hats off to Nick, Drew, and Billy for jobs well done! We have amazing craftsmen in our small community. What a gift to all of us that we have such skilled people living and working around Burton.

The Figaro will spend time under the porte-cochere at The Pink Door on Main when the store is open. It is an eye-catching car, and I would be surprised if we don't have requests to do photo shoots and parades with it.

If any of you decide you cannot live without a Figaro, I would be happy to help you locate one. We could start a local Fig Car Club that would likely remain two members indefinitely! Stop by the store and have a look at the car if you see it under the old "gas station carport."

And that's what makes Burton great.



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What does the US Constitution mean to the Average American?

As some folks know, I've been having "conversations" with AI on a wide range of topics from gravity fed watering systems to the new micro-nuclear power plants, and the insights generated have been interesting. With all the posts about Constitutionally protected Rights I decided to ask my buddy Grok what the value is of this great document to the average person in the current era. The response said in a few pages more than many of the documentaries out there. So, I'm sharing it. Hopefully it provokes both thought and understanding.

The United States Constitution, drafted in 1787 and ratified shortly thereafter, is often discussed in terms of grand themes: liberty, separation of powers, checks and balances, federalism. Yet its deepest significance is not only in shaping institutions of government, but in the concrete ways it structures and protects the everyday lives of average Americans. Far from being an abstract relic, the Constitution acts as a quiet, persistent presence in daily life: shaping what the police may do during a traffic stop, safeguarding what citizens say online, defining who can vote in an election, anchoring economic stability, and providing avenues of redress when government overreaches. To understand its value, one must see the Constitution not as a distant text, but as a lived framework that protects rights, channels conflict into peaceful processes, and undergirds a shared civic order.

Summary: The Quiet Architecture of Everyday Freedom

In the end, the value of the U.S. Constitution to the everyday lives of average Americans lies in its **quiet, pervasive influence**. It rarely announces itself in dramatic fashion. Instead, it shapes a thousand ordinary interactions: the ease of speaking one's mind about public issues, the expectation of privacy at home, the process for contesting a traffic ticket, the regularity of elections, the ability to practice a chosen faith, the opportunity to start a business within a stable economic system, and the hope that injustices can be challenged through law rather than violence.

The Constitution provides a structure within which people can pursue their own visions of the good life while living alongside others who may disagree. It protects individuals from the worst abuses of power and offers tools for reform when the system falls short. Its value is not simply in grand words but in the everyday security, opportunity, and dignity those words help secure.

To appreciate the Constitution, then, is to recognize how deeply it is woven into the lived fabric of American life. It is the architecture of ordered liberty, the common language of civic argument, and the enduring promise that government exists to serve the people, not the other way around.

I. A Framework for Ordered Liberty

The core value of the Constitution to ordinary Americans is that it creates a system of **ordered liberty**—freedom structured and guided by law so that people can live, work, and disagree without descending into chaos or tyranny.

A. Limiting Government Power

At the heart of the constitutional order is the idea that government is both necessary and dangerous. It is necessary to provide security, establish justice, and promote the general welfare. It is dangerous because the same power used to protect

can also be used to oppress. The Constitution addresses this tension through several interlocking mechanisms.

First, it **separates power** among three branches—legislative, executive, and judicial—ensuring no single actor controls all levers of authority. For an average American, this matters whenever a new law is proposed, an executive order is issued, or a controversial policy is challenged in court. Each branch checks the others. A president cannot simply imprison political opponents at will; Congress cannot violate basic rights without facing judicial scrutiny; courts cannot unilaterally govern without constitutional or statutory grounding.

Second, the Constitution embodies **federalism**, dividing power between the national government and the states. This structure allows issues closer to daily life—education, local policing, zoning, many aspects of family law—to be primarily regulated at the state or local level, where citizens often have more direct influence. At the same time, the national government can address problems that transcend state borders, such as national defense, immigration, and interstate commerce. For ordinary people, this division means they can turn to their city council about a local ordinance, their state legislature about education policy, and their federal representatives about national issues, each drawing legitimacy from the constitutional framework.

Third, the Constitution enshrines **the rule of law**, the idea that government officials are bound by law just as private citizens are. This principle is not mere rhetoric. If a police officer conducts an unlawful search, if a bureaucrat denies benefits in violation of statutory rights, or if a state official tries to interfere with someone's right to vote, courts—empowered and guided by the Constitution—can step in. The text of the Constitution and the system it creates give ordinary people a language and legal basis to say, "You cannot do this to me; the law is above you too."

B. Making Politics Safer and More Predictable

The Constitution also stabilizes public life by turning political conflict into a **structured process**. Elections at regular intervals—two years for the House, six for the Senate, four for the presidency—mean that disagreements about policy are resolved through ballots rather than bullets. Peaceful transfer of power, presided over by constitutional rules, allows citizens to plan their lives without constantly fearing violent upheaval.

For the average American, this predictability is easy to take for granted. People sign long-term leases, invest in homes, start businesses, and save for retirement partly because they trust that underlying constitutional order will endure. Even when debates grow intense—over taxation, healthcare, or foreign policy—the underlying processes remain governed by the same guiding document. That continuity is itself one of the Constitution's greatest gifts to daily life: it makes long-term planning and personal stability possible.

II. Safeguarding Individual Rights

While the Constitution's structural features are crucial, its most visible value to everyday life emerges in its protection of **individual rights**. Many of these protections are codified in the Bill of Rights and later amendments. They shape daily interactions with government and, more subtly, the norms by which Americans understand themselves and one another.

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A. Freedom of Speech, Religion, and Association

The First Amendment is perhaps the most widely recognized source of constitutional protection. To the average American, it means being able to express opinions—popular or unpopular—without fear of criminal punishment by the government. Whether posting on social media, speaking at a community meeting, publishing an article, or protesting peacefully, citizens draw on the First Amendment's guarantee of free expression.

This freedom has practical consequences. It allows whistleblowers to expose corruption, journalists to investigate government misconduct, community members to organize around local issues, and activists to demand change. Even when speech is controversial, the constitutional presumption is that it should be met with more speech, not government suppression. This culture of robust public debate, anchored in constitutional protection, empowers citizens to shape their communities.

The First Amendment also protects religious liberty. For many Americans, faith traditions inform daily life—what they eat, how they dress, when they gather, how they raise their children. The Constitution restricts the government from establishing a national religion and protects the free exercise of religious belief. This allows diverse religious communities to flourish side by side. It means that an average person can attend religious services, decline participation in religious practices, or change beliefs without worrying that the government will dictate their conscience.

Connected to speech and religion is the right to peaceably assemble and petition the government. Marches, rallies, community meetings, union organizing, and public petitions are all tangible ways citizens can make their concerns heard. When local residents oppose a new zoning change, when workers seek better conditions, or when students protest a policy, they are exercising rights rooted directly in the Constitution.

B. Protection Against Unreasonable Searches and Seizures

The Fourth Amendment safeguards Americans from arbitrary intrusions by the state. In daily life, this affects traffic stops, home searches, and digital privacy. The requirement that searches and seizures be "reasonable" and, generally, supported by warrants based on probable cause limits the government's ability to enter homes, search phones, or seize property at will. Consider a routine scenario: a police officer pulls someone over for a minor traffic violation. The Constitution, as interpreted through centuries of case law, shapes what the officer can ask, how long the stop can last, and under what circumstances a vehicle may be searched. While abuses still occur, individuals have legal recourse when officers exceed constitutional limits. Over time, this framework both deters some misconduct and provides a mechanism for challenging it.

In an age of pervasive technology and data collection, the Fourth Amendment's value only grows. Questions about location tracking, surveillance cameras, access to smartphone data, and monitoring of online behavior are all filtered through constitutional principles. The average American may not recite the precise doctrine, but when they expect a measure of privacy in their home, on their devices, and in their personal communications, they are drawing—often unconsciously—on constitutional protections.

C. Due Process, Fair Trials, and Equality Before the Law

The Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments guarantee due process of law, ensuring that before the government can deprive someone of life, liberty, or property, it must follow fair procedures. For everyday life, due process means written laws rather than arbitrary decrees, notice of charges, opportunities to be heard, and access to neutral decision-makers.

In the criminal context, due process intertwines with other protections: the right to counsel, the right to confront witnesses, the right to a jury trial, and the privilege against self-incrimination. These safeguards are not abstract. They matter when someone is accused of a crime and faces the loss of liberty. The requirement that the state prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, before a jury of peers, offers a powerful shield against wrongful conviction.

Beyond criminal law, due process guides how agencies make decisions about benefits, licenses, and regulations. Whether an individual is at risk of losing a driver's license, being denied a housing voucher, or facing deportation, due process principles insist on notice, an opportunity to respond, and some form of impartial review.

The Fourteenth Amendment also promises equal protection of the laws, a principle that has shaped battles against racial segregation, discrimination based on sex, and other forms of unequal treatment by government. For ordinary Americans, equal protection means that the state may not openly maintain separate schools by race, deny voting rights on the basis of sex, or treat groups differently without adequate justification. While equality in practice remains imperfect, the Constitution provides a powerful tool for challenging discriminatory policies and practices that affect employment, education, family life, and more.

III. Enabling Democratic Participation and Self-Government

Another way the Constitution touches daily life is by structuring how individuals participate in self-government. The document defines who may vote, how representation is apportioned, and what mechanisms exist for changing laws and even the Constitution itself.

A. The Right to Vote and Representation

Over time, constitutional amendments and statutes have expanded the franchise, bringing more Americans into the political community. While the original Constitution left voting rules largely to the states and tolerated many exclusions, later amendments—such as the Fifteenth (barring racial discrimination in voting), Nineteenth (extending suffrage to women), Twenty-Fourth (prohibiting poll taxes in federal elections), and Twenty-Sixth (lowering the voting age to eighteen)—embody a long struggle toward more inclusive democracy.

For an average citizen, the value of these changes is clear in routine acts: registering to vote, going to a polling place, casting a ballot in local and national elections. The guarantee that votes will be counted equally in many contexts—"one person, one vote"—flows from constitutional interpretation of equal protection. This norm shapes how legislative districts are drawn and how power is apportioned among communities.

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Voting is not merely symbolic. It allows citizens to influence taxation, education policy, public safety priorities, environmental regulation, and more. When a parent participates in a school board election, when a worker votes on a local minimum wage initiative, or when a homeowner chooses a candidate based on infrastructure plans, they are exercising power grounded in constitutional design. That design links ordinary preferences to governmental action.

B. Peaceful Change and Constitutional Amendments

The Constitution also contains its own mechanism for transformation: the amendment process. Although intentionally demanding, this process allows the nation to correct injustices, expand rights, and update its fundamental law. The abolition of slavery, the guarantee of birthright citizenship, the expansion of voting rights, and limits on presidential terms all emerged through amendments.

This capacity for lawful change is crucial for everyday life. It means that people seeking reform—whether on issues of privacy, campaign finance, or term limits—have a legitimate, structured route through which to pursue constitutional revision. Even when amendments are not successfully adopted, the very existence of the process channels energy into civic debate, advocacy, and coalition-building rather than violent upheaval.

IV. Providing Stability and Economic Confidence

The Constitution's value is also economic. By establishing a stable legal framework for property, contracts, and commerce, it allows ordinary Americans to plan their financial lives with some confidence.

A. Uniform Rules and the National Market

The Constitution grants Congress power over interstate commerce, which has enabled the development of a large, integrated national market. For everyday life, this means that goods, services, and labor flow relatively freely across state lines under a common legal structure. Someone can order products from another state, work remotely for an out-of-state company, or relocate across the country without navigating entirely different sets of foundational legal rules.

This predictability extends to contracts and property rights. While many details are governed by state law, the overarching constitutional system provides a backdrop of stability: a functioning court system, a currency managed by the federal government, and limits on states impairing contractual obligations. These features, rooted in the Constitution's grants of power and prohibitions, underpin everything from mortgages and car loans to retirement accounts and small business agreements.

B. Protection Against Arbitrary Economic Deprivations

Due process and other constitutional constraints also protect individuals and businesses from arbitrary economic actions by government. The state cannot simply seize property without compensation or single out individuals for punitive measures without lawful process. This encourages investment and risk-taking, which in turn affects job opportunities, wages, and the availability of goods and services.

For the average household, this may show up in less dramatic ways: confidence that a home will not be taken without legal justification and compensation, expectation that tax rules will

be publicly debated and written into law rather than imposed secretly, and assurance that disputes about benefits or licenses can be appealed.

V. A Shared Civic Language and Identity

Beyond institutions and rules, the Constitution provides Americans with a shared civic reference point. People of different backgrounds, beliefs, and interests often disagree passionately about what the Constitution means, yet their very disagreements take place in its shadow. This shared focus helps hold together a diverse society.

A. Common Ground Amid Diversity

The United States is marked by deep religious, cultural, and ideological diversity. The Constitution offers a framework within which these differences can coexist. By protecting basic rights for all—speech, religion, due process, equal protection—it sets minimum standards of how the state must treat individuals regardless of their views or identities.

In everyday life, this means neighbors with opposing opinions about politics can nonetheless expect the same baseline protection from their government. People may disagree about the best policies but accept that certain rights are not up for majority vote. This shared commitment, however contested in practice, enables pluralism without disintegration.

B. Civic Education and Responsibility

The Constitution also shapes how Americans are educated as citizens. Students study its provisions, landmark cases, and historical struggles over its meaning. This exposure encourages people to think not only in terms of private interests but also in terms of public responsibilities.

When individuals serve on juries, participate in civic organizations, or run for local office, they are enacting constitutional roles. Jury service, for example, transforms ordinary citizens into temporary decision-makers about guilt or liability, reflecting the Constitution's trust in the people. This experience reinforces the idea that the Constitution is not merely a text governing distant institutions, but an invitation to shared responsibility for justice and self-rule.

VI. Imperfection, Critique, and Enduring Value

Recognizing the Constitution's value does not mean ignoring its flaws or the ways it has been used to justify injustice. The original text contained grave compromises, most notably with slavery. For much of American history, constitutional structures and interpretations allowed or even endorsed racial hierarchy, gender inequality, and exclusion of many from the democratic process.

Yet one of the Constitution's enduring strengths is its capacity to be challenged, reinterpreted, and improved. Social movements, advocacy, and litigation have repeatedly pressed the nation to live up to the Constitution's highest principles. Amendments abolished slavery, guaranteed equal protection, expanded suffrage, and adjusted institutional design. Courts reinterpreted provisions in light of evolving understandings of privacy, equality, and liberty.

For the everyday American, this dynamic quality matters. It means they are not merely subjects of a static document, but potential participants in its ongoing interpretation.

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When communities organize to challenge discriminatory laws, when individuals bring test cases to court, or when citizens advocate constitutional amendments, they are engaging a living framework capable of growth.

The Constitution's imperfections also underscore a crucial truth: its value depends on how people use it. Rights on paper must be claimed in practice; structures that limit power must be respected and defended. The document cannot enforce itself. Its protections persist because generations of Americans—lawyers and judges, activists and journalists, teachers and ordinary voters—have insisted that it matters.

Article by Pete Horn

Burton Cotton Gin Classic Car & Truck Show

The 8th annual Burton Cotton Gin Classic Car & Truck Show was held on June 13th at the grounds of the Texas Cotton Gin. Featured are just a very few of the vehicles that took place.



Quilts Presented to Veterans



On June 15th, at St. John's United Church of Christ, 4 veterans of Washington County were presented with beautiful quilts made and presented by Suzanne Kessler. It was an emotional and heartfelt gift. Thank you Suzanne and all that helped. The veterans left to right are Larry Dunford, Bill Comiskey, David Zajicek and Bill Kendall.



**God bless America on our
250th Anniversary**

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