The Burton Bulletin

"The Best Kept Secret in Texas"

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TRY THAT IN A SMALL TOWN – A Series Highlighting Burton Blessings

What's Great About Our Town: The Importance of a Coffee Shop to a Small Town

By Ned Ross, contributing writer

Most locals know that we lost a beloved figure in recent months. Carl Luning, owner of the Neon Moon Coffee shop, passed away suddenly in August. Family and friends were shocked and devastated by this. The coffee shop closed overnight as estate matters had to be ironed out to do anything with it. Carl's widow, Rose, was a good friend, and I offered to help with selling the shop assets. She was quick to accept the offer, and I was glad to help.

First, a note about Carl. A celebration of life was held for Carl at Bethany Church, and more than 120 people came to honor Carl's legacy. The tiny church was packed with people listening to the service from the hallway, the kitchen, and the Sunday school room. His extended family spoke of his life and his giving nature. Neon was a passion project where Carl could visit with folks and share a bit about faith while he roasted and served the best coffee in several counties. He was quick to offer goods for silent auctions and philanthropic events. He opened the store for local groups to meet. The connections between Neon and the community deepened. Its closing was upending.

As I became involved in selling Neon, people commented to me that Carl was the first person they met in Burton because they arrived for coffee. They received so much more. Carl's warm, personal, and humorous nature was a great first impression for our town. He was pitching Burton to passers-by who kept coming to the shop for great coffee and, more importantly, an upbeat conversation. Some of them bought homes and decided to put down roots in our town.

I was eager to get the shop reopened, so I put the word out that it was for sale. Within a couple weeks of Carl's death, 13 people expressed interest in Neon Moon. Five submitted offers, and one was accepted by Rose. Brett Sims is the proud new owner of the renamed Restoration Coffee. He lives north of Brenham in a late 1800s home he is renovating with his two adorable children who attend Burton Elementary. Brett expects to open the shop in the first week of November.

Until becoming involved in the sale of Neon, I didn't realize the importance of that tiny shop to the local community. Folks were texting me daily about its status and expressing concerns about it being moved or closed for good. Why were so many people concerned about Neon?

A coffee shop is a social hub, a meeting place, and a first-of-the-morning stop for locals. When it closes, daily routines are disrupted, coffee must be brewed at home and contact with other residents and patrons stops. Neon was the single best source of local information. It was a friendly conversation and a staple of daily life for many people. Some of our county officials met there frequently to visit. The Roosters met there weekly to solve the world's problems (and were successful every week). Mothers dropped off their children at school and stopped by for a caffeine boost. Andy and Don and others dropped in every morning for caffeine and a conversation.

If a coffee shop is important to you or your family members or tenants or employees or teachers or friends – well, anyone in town you know - then <u>you need to support it</u>. Operating a small business in a small town is extremely challenging. For a coffee shop, the most expensive merchandise is likely a pound of coffee for around $20. A lot of pounds must be sold each month to just cover rent and personnel. Nobody gets rich owning a Burton coffee shop. But the benefits of that little shop are many for the community.

Pick up a pound of Restoration Coffee to brew at home. Stop in the store for a special cup a few times each week. Encourage friends to meet you there for coffee and a laugh. The health and vibrancy of our community depends on these small things. This holds true for all of our local businesses. I know my friends in Burton will turn out in force to keep Restoration humming for years to come.

And that's what makes Burton great.

Walter the Debonair Donkey

(Continuing Saga)



The search was on. Lucky would be given treatment, at the very least, to make him comfortable. At the very best, to see if he would recover to a degree that Lucky could lead a somewhat normal life in the field with his buddy Smokey. However, if he didn't respond well, there would be a hunt for another donkey to replace Lucky. A bittersweet situation indeed. Everything was done to help Lucky for the rest of his days. To what end, only time will tell. More to come.

Article by Lynda Zajicek

The grass may be greener on the other side, but at least you don't have to mow it.

My neighbors listen to good music whether they like it or not.

Why do we spend so much time looking for intelligent life on other planets? I'd be happy if we found it on earth first.

Have fun with your life. Call in sick to places you don't even work at.



Restoration Coffee



Brett Sims and son

Restoration Coffee & Roastery, formerly the Neon Moon, will be opening its door on November 9th. Picture above is the new owner, Brett Sims. He is formerly from the Tomball area and currently lives in Brenham. He has two children, a son and daughter, who are enrolled in Burton ISD. Brett owns a flower shop in Magnolia and a building that houses a coffee shop.

Restoration Coffee will be opening on Monday, November 9th. The hours of operation will be Monday thru Friday from 6:30am to 2:00pm. He will be open on Saturdays, but he has not determined what the hours will be. The shop will be closed on Sundays. The address of Restoration Coffee is 12510 W. Texas Street, Burton, Texas.

Burton City Council Meeting

Burton City Council held its regular meeting on Tuesday, October 13, 2026.

A proclamation was read and approved by the council for Scotty's House, which is Brazos Valley's Child Advocacy Center, which includes Washington County. They are a welcoming, child friendly place where child victims receive trauma-informed medical evaluations and return for ongoing counseling and therapy. For more information you can contact their website at www.scottyshouse.org .

There was a discussion regarding economic development tools and information from Brazos Valley Councils of Governments and Texas Municipal League. Tshe council will be holding a workshop on November 5th.

The council postponed the purchase of pipe wrapping materials for the wastewater system.

The council decided to postpone an interlocal agreement with Washington for plat review, civil inspection and technical review related to the City of Burton subdivision ordinance. The agreement needed some additional work.

The council discussed the hiring of a code enforcement officer for the City of Burton. It was brought up that possibly hiring one part-time that would share with other small cities nearby.

The council approved a payment to Bluebonnet Electric for $10,890.00 for the installation of electric distribution facilities at the Knittel Lift Station.

The council approved a bill from Washington County for replacing a 100-year-old culvert on South Railroad Street in the amount of $7,711.10. **(Continue of Page 4)**

Burton City Council Meeting (con't from pg. 3)

The council approved the estimate of $44,400 from HDU Services for ductile iron pipe repair and reconstruction on Railroad Street.
The council approved the resolution authorizing the submission of an application for the 2027-2028 Texas Community Development Fund Competition and authorize the mayor to sign any necessary documentation.

City of Burton City Council Seminar

The City of Burton will have a seminar at Burton City Hall on Thursday, November 5th from 10am to 11:15am. The name of the event is: **TML – Data Centers and Texas Cities: Understanding Legal Landscape.** TML Economic Development Seminar.
No action to be taken and no city business discussion.

Pete's Ponderings

The events of these times, the changing seasons, and the endless hate and rioting around the world have led me to a place of introspection. I've been reading more poetry, harvesting food with my wife, spending more time outdoors with our dog, and pondering the loss of so many friends and acquaintances over the past year. The endless pummeling of our minds by political advertising, intolerance, and the backlash of extremes of all sides have left me numb. I'm seeing the weather and the change of seasons as an analog for life, and the hope that we cling to that everything has a cycle, and things will improve. So it is that I started writing, and rewriting this, ultimately calling on AI to help give words and texture to the multitude of thoughts that I have been focused on lately.
The sky held its breath at first light, a pale blue stretched taut over the fields like a sheet pulled smooth. No wind stirred the grasses. The air carried the clean scent of last night's dew, and in that stillness, one could almost believe the day would pass without interruption. As I walk the dog in the early light of day, we watch the parade of parents dropping off their kids, their future. Days begin this way sometimes—unmarked, full of promise that feels as permanent as the horizon. We wake into such mornings and call them ordinary, not yet knowing that ordinary is only the name we give to weather before it changes. The light arrives evenly, without drama, and for a while the world seems content to remain exactly as it is.
Then the first cloud. Small, almost apologetic, drifting in from the southeast. It did not darken the land, only softened the edge of the sun. In that gentle shift one learns the first lesson of weather and of living: change arrives quietly, long before it announces itself. A shadow lengthens across the porch. The temperature drops by a degree no one notices. Somewhere a door is closed that will not open again in quite the same way. The cloud itself is unremarkable, yet its presence alters the character of the light and the quality of attention one brings to the day.

A single cloud leans against the sun,
and the light thins like water over stone
What was certain becomes suggestion.

The day continues, but already it is not the day that began.

By midmorning the clouds had multiplied, not in menace but in conversation. They gathered in loose congregations above the distant tree line, their edges catching light and releasing it again. The wind, which had been absent, now moved through the high grass in long, deliberate strokes. One felt the air's intention without yet knowing its direction. This is how many of life's larger turns announce themselves: not with thunder, but with a change in the quality of attention. We look up more often. We listen for what the silence has begun to say. Ordinary tasks continue, yet each is performed with a slight adjustment, as if the body already anticipates a different afternoon.
A man standing at the edge of a field might watch these clouds and think of a decision long deferred. The same wind that lifts the grass lifts something in him—not urgency, exactly, but the recognition that the present arrangement of light and shadow cannot hold. He does not move. He simply stands longer than he had intended, letting the weather make visible the passage of time that was always occurring. The field itself seems to wait with him. Nothing decisive has happened, and yet the morning has already become a different kind of morning.

Wind through the grass writes a language no one taught us and everyone knows.
The clouds lean closer as if to confide what the clear sky had no need to say.

We pray for rain here in Texas because rain is life. All the folks out here know that, as the quote goes, our very existence is based "on the top 6" of soil and the fact that it rains. So we pray. The light changed first. It did not dim so much as gather weight. Colors deepened. The green of the fields took on a metallic edge, and the distant hills began to waver as if seen through water. The first low rumble arrived not from the sky but from the ground—or so it seemed—traveling through the soles of the feet before the ear could claim it. Birds rose all at once and turned as a single body toward the east. In that collective movement one sees the intelligence that lives outside of language: the knowledge that a threshold has been crossed. The air grows dense. Conversations grow shorter. Someone closes a window that had been open all morning.
Life, too, has moments when the ordinary physics of a day reverses. A conversation that began in sunlight ends in a room that has suddenly grown small. Another conversation springs from the first, and new thoughts carry the conversation elsewhere. The body registers the change before the mind has assembled its explanations. We say the weather turned, as if weather were something separate from the life lived inside it. But the two have always shared a climate. The pressure drops. One feels it in the temples, in the slight heaviness of the hands. What had been open begins, almost imperceptibly, to close.

Thunder does not announce.
It remembers.
The air thickens with everything that was almost said.
Rain begins as rumor then becomes fact, striking the roof like a verdict already rendered. **(Continue on page 5)**

Pete's Ponderings (Con't from page 4)

When the rain came it came without hesitation. It fell in sheets that erased the middle distance, reducing the world to the immediate: the sound of water on metal, the smell of wet earth rising, the way light fractured through the falling water into brief, trembling prisms. Inside, the windows fogged. Outside, the fields drank what the sky had been holding. There is a particular honesty to heavy rain. It does not negotiate. It does not explain. It simply arrives and continues until the air is emptied of what it carried. Gutters fill and overflow. For a time the only available world is the one contained within the sound of water.

Grief works this way, and so do certain kinds of love. So does the sudden recognition that a season of one's life has ended even as one still stands within it. Friends who live around the world impart perceptions and perspectives that are not expressed in the media or conversation of regular life. Most conversation is small and shallow, perspective gives thought weight, color, and texture. The rain does not ask permission to alter the landscape. Neither does the knowledge that people are without food or shelter, a parent is ill, that a child has grown beyond the reach of one's hands, or that a conviction once held with certainty has quietly dissolved. One stands at the window and watches the world grow less distinct, and in that blurring, something is clarified. The rain insists on its own duration. It will not be hurried. It falls until the ground can hold no more, and then a little longer.

Water finds every seam the dry earth had forgotten.
It enters the cracks we called solid and teaches them to yield.
What remains after is not the same ground, only the memory of having been dry.

The storm did not end so much as exhaust itself. The rain thinned to a fine mist, then to occasional drops that struck the leaves with individual, almost deliberate sounds. The wind began to circle and settle. Light returned not all at once but in widening patches, as if the sky were being slowly uncovered by an unseen hand. The fields steamed. The air smelled of green things broken open and of stone washed clean. Somewhere a bird tested a note, then another, until the silence had been rewritten. Water still moved in the low places. The land continued to accept what had been given it.

After such weather one does not return to the morning that was. The light is different. The ground remembers the water. A person who has passed through a comparable storm—whether of loss, of love, of the slow erosion of what once seemed permanent—carries the same alteration. The horizon is still there, but it has been measured. The sky is blue again, but one has seen how quickly blue can become something else. This knowledge does not diminish the beauty of the clearing. It deepens it. One stands in the wet grass and feels, for a moment, the full weight of having remained.

The last cloud drifts eastward like a thought that has done its work.
Light returns not as promise but as fact: cooler, clearer, bearing the shape of what the rain has taught the land.

By late afternoon the sky had recovered most of its earlier blue, though a few high, thin clouds remained, moving so slowly they seemed almost fixed. The fields glittered where the sun struck standing water. Shadows stretched long and precise across the ground. A person walking the edge of the property might pause where the first cloud had appeared that morning and find no trace of it, only the ordinary light of a day that had been thoroughly altered and then restored to something resembling itself. Life offers the same sequence more often than we admit: the gathering, the breaking, the slow return of visibility. We name the intervals between storms "ordinary time," forgetting that ordinary time is itself a kind of weather—temporary, instructive, and already preparing the next change.

The residual heat of the day rose from the wet ground in thin, wavering columns. Insects resumed their low, continuous music. A breeze moved through the trees with less force than before. Somewhere a screen door opened and closed. The sound carried farther in the washed air. One becomes aware, after weather, of how much of a day is spent simply inhabiting the conditions that remain. The body registers the cooler temperature, the clearer light, the particular silence that follows heavy rain. These are not dramatic facts. They are the facts that remain.

We walk out into the changed air and call it the same day.
The grass holds water in the hollow of each blade.
The light arrives already knowing what it has passed through.

The evening came on without drama. The temperature fell. The first stars appeared where the clouds had been thickest hours before. Somewhere water still moved in the ditches, finding its way toward lower ground. The land, which had been one thing at dawn and another at noon and yet another in the rain, settled into the particular quiet that follows weather. It is not the quiet of before. It is the quiet of after. And in that distinction—small, absolute, and shared by every living thing that has endured a change of sky—resides the entire analog. Night does not restore the morning. It simply continues the altered day into darkness, where the memory of rain continues its quiet work in the soil.

By full dark the sky was clear again. The stars occupied their familiar places with a clarity the earlier humidity had denied them. The ground continued to release the day's warmth. A single cricket kept time somewhere near the foundation of the house. Nothing in the visible world announced the storm that had passed, yet everything bore its trace: the softened earth, the rinsed leaves, the particular stillness of air that has recently been emptied. One stands for a moment longer than necessary on the step, listening to the absence of rain, and understands that the day has completed its instruction. Tomorrow the light will arrive again, and with it the possibility of other weather. The analog holds.

Article By Pete Hron


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