

...West of 98

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So what are third places? Downtown sidewalks, post offices, and park benches have characteristics. In the proverbial “old days,” front porches were important third places. Sure, you might be at a person’s house, but the porch was a communal gathering space for old and young to converse, play, and perhaps share food and drink, or even a smoke. Stories were told, concocted, and passed on. Culture spread from one generation to the next. Churches, libraries, parks, and bookstores serve as important third places. So do bars and coffee shops.

I recently read a fascinating Pittsburgh Post-Gazette column on neighborhood bars. These are not unfriendly places where a new person meets a chorus of questioning scowls from the regulars. Rather, these are reminiscent of the classic English pub which, in case you were unaware, is short for “public house.” Pubs are a classic third place. 17th century English diarist Samuel Pepys described them as the “heart of England.”

Neighborhood bars are often the heart of a community. In many places, coffee shops have

similar purpose. The column’s author wrote of a place where the bartender learned the customer’s life story in the process of sharing about the bar. New customers were invited to return with friends. The author described the place with affinity as a “community center with beer taps.” It was a place that encouraged a “culture of connection,” a neighborhood living room of sorts, because the owner wanted it that way. He wrote:

“Unlike a chain restaurant, a townie bar/public house pushes the average person into worlds we don’t know well. We live in small worlds, mostly people like us - family, old friends, people at church and work, maybe a few neighbors, other members of a club. Even places that claim to exist for everyone, like churches, tend to serve a specific group. It’s hard to get away from people like you. In a real townie place, in a real public house, you can’t help it...many of the people I talk to are unlike anyone else I know in my usual circles. I also like them a great deal - more than a lot of people in my usual circles...you see lives different from yours and yet in deeper ways the same.”

It is important to spend time

around people unlike ourselves. That does not require us to travel across the ocean or even outside our own city limits. Rural communities are often stereotyped as homogeneous, but we live in communities full of different people with wildly different life experiences and stories. Learning about each other and sharing our experiences and stories creates a richer local culture and a stronger community for everyone who is part of it.

Third places create those interactions. Strong local culture requires healthy third places, whether they’re public spaces, private businesses, or more likely, a mix of both. If your community is lacking third places, maybe you’re the one to help establish them. From a 17th century English pub to a 20th century rural porch to a 21st century coffee shop, our communities need third places. Local culture cannot exist without them.

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was seconded by Terry Queen and the motion passed with a vote of 7 - 0.

Discussion was held with the architect regarding the emergency roofing project. There were four companies that sent in bids for the roofing project: Hartman Roofing, LBK Roofing, Parsons Roofing, and M&R Roofing and Construction. LBK was not present at the meeting. The other three companies each had a chance to present their projects without the price of their bid. The architect advised that he will go over each of the bids further to make sure they match the scope of the work.

Jodie Arrott made a motion to table the selection of roofing contractor for the emergency roofing project until there has been further discussion with the school attorneys. Josh Schoenfield seconded the motion and the motion passed with a vote of 7 - 0.

Ashley Braswell made a motion to nominate Paul Williams and Ryan Webb for the Coke County Appraisal District Board of Directors, as they are currently serving on the board. She was seconded by Josh Schoenfield and the motion passed with a vote of 7 - 0.

Discussion was held regarding the resolution related to evolution of control and direction with Robert Lee ISD. Mr. Siler advised that this is a plan to give control of the school to Robert Lee ISD in the extremely unlikely event that there is no one at BISD who is able to take control. Robert Lee ISD has a reciprocal plan in place. Lynsey Coalson made a motion to approve as presented, seconded by Josh Schoenfield. The motion passed with a vote of 7 - 0.

Terry Queen made a motion to table the maintenance pay scale item until the next meeting. He was seconded by Ashley Braswell and the motion passed

with a vote of 7 - 0.

Ashley Braswell made a motion to approve the Coke County Extension Agents as adjunct faculty and was seconded by Lynsey Coalson. The motion passed with a vote of 7 - 0.

Marty Pearcy, with Patriot Mechanical, presented a quote for replacement of four of five HVAC units for a total of \$33,767 for four units or \$39,567 for five units. Ashley Braswell made a motion to approve as presented for five units. Josh Schoenfield seconded the motion and the motion passed with a vote of 7 - 0.

Superintendent’s Report

Mr. Siler went over the current finances. He advised the final ESSER amount was received today but he has not added to the template yet. Some of the ESSER funds will be moved over to help pay for the HVAC units. Mr. Siler suggests that the board members call Drew Darby to oppose Senate Bill 1.

The next board meeting will be Tuesday, October 12, at 6 pm.

Board training dates will be discussed at a later meeting.

Josh Schoenfield made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Terry Queen seconded. The motion passed with a vote of 7 - 0 and the meeting adjourned at 8:59 pm.

More than \$200,000 in scholarships available

High school and college graduations may be months away, but now is the time to start thinking about applying for scholarships, according to John Ross Copeland, Coke County Farm Bureau president.

Coke County students are encouraged to apply for more than \$200,000 in Farm Bureau college scholarships offered on the local, district and state levels.

“Scholarships and awards are an excellent opportunity for Farm Bureau families to earn money to pursue their education,” John Ross said. “We encourage all eligible students to apply.”

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Bronte ISD board meeting minutes told

[Editor’s Note: We are continuing to play catchup with Bronte ISD board meeting minutes as space allows.]

The Bronte ISD Board of Trustees held a regular meeting on September 28, 2021. Those in attendance included board members Ashley Braswell, John Seales, Jodie Arrott, David McWright, Terry Queen, Josh Schoenfield, and Lynsey Coalson; and administration members Tim Siler and Jennifer Englert.

The meeting was opened at 6:33 pm with prayer by Josh Schoenfield.

A quorum was established at 6:34 pm with seven members present.

The minutes were presented and read, with a motion by Josh Schoenfield to approve as presented. He was seconded by

Lynsey Coalson and the motion passed with a vote of 7 - 0.

A motion was made by David McWright, seconded by Terry Queen, to approve the bill listing as presented. The motion passed with a vote of 7 - 0.

There were no audience items. Principal’s Report

Ms. Englert gave an update on student activities. The Honor Roll Pep Rally was held with 54 “A” Honor Roll students. Planning is in the works for the Fall Festival which will take place on October 21, 2021. Conferences are now being held in person instead of online. Secondary has been having some attendance struggles, but Mr. Kuhlmann has been meeting with students to address this. The ag students recently had a show. The band will be performing at ASU on October 9 and October

16. The band has been workings o hard and have been so enthusiastic! BISD currently has 55 students enrolled in high school and this is a realignment year. Volleyball is going into the second half of district play and are currently third in Class A. District football starts on October 8. Cross Country recently competed at Miles.

The current BISD student count is 242 total students, with 149 in elementary and 93 in secondary. The ADA for the first six weeks is 92.3%.

Josh Schoenfield made a motion to enter into a interlocal agreement with Region 8 Education Service Center to enter into the Interlocal Purchasing System (TIPS). He

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