

Don't Mess with Texas Scholarship Contest open

Don't mess with Texas Scholarship contest are now being accepted. Eligible applicants include any Texas high school senior currently attending public, private or home school and planning to attend an accredited Texas college or university in the coming year.

Presented in partnership with Keep Texas Beautiful, the Don't mess with Texas Scholarship contest will award one \$6,000 scholarship and two \$2,000 scholarships in June. The scholarships recognize the achievements of high school seniors who take a leadership role in preventing litter in their schools and communities while working to build awareness for the Don't mess with Texas initiative.

"We're proud to offer the Don't mess with Texas Scholarship to support higher education in Texas and recognize outstanding students who are using their creativity to beautify their communities," said Becky Ozuna, program administrator for TxDOT's Don't mess with Texas campaign.

TxDOT's Don't mess with Texas program has been educating Texans about litter prevention since 1986. The program includes Adopt-a-Highway and a grassroots partnership with Keep Texas Beautiful as well as spring "Trash-Off" community outreach events, all in an effort to keep Texas roadways litter free.

To apply for the Don't mess with Texas Scholarship, visit dntmesswithtexas.org. Applications must be received by online submission or postmarked by 5 pm (CST) April 20, 2018.

For media inquiries, contact TxDOT Media Relations at MediaRelations@txdot.gov or (512) 463-8700.

...BISD Board Minutes

(Continued from page 3)

Administration - Tim Siler, John Phillips, Jenny Baker;

Guests - Maureen Youngblood, Heather Middleton

The call to order was made at 6:17 pm.

The Texas Academic Performance Reports (TAPR), formerly known as the Academic Excellence Indicator System (AEIS) reports, pull together a wide range of information annually on the performance of students in each school and district in Texas. The reports also provide extensive information on staff, programs, and demographics for each school and district.

Bronte ISD met the standard rating.

There were no public comments.

The hearing was adjourned at 6:23 pm.

Barking Dogs and Progress

by James M. Decker

Positivity in leadership and influence is a necessity in improving our communities. It's a necessity for several reasons (among other things):

1) to think beyond present circumstances;

2) to encourage others to see the big picture of a better future, and;

3) to push past the pessimists and complainers.

It's that third point that comes to my mind today, with a quote I ran across recently from Winston Churchill: *"You will never reach your destination if you stop and throw stones at every dog that barks."*

It's inevitable that progress in our communities will face challenges. As I've talked about before, a lack of change in a community can turn to stagnation and decline, and the stagnation and decline becomes hardened into the community culture with a view of "that's the way we've always done it." Doing things differently is a necessity if a community is to advance forward, but different ideas can seem like an affront to some who are deeply tied to old ideas and old ways.

And so I come to Churchill's barking dogs. It is neither practical nor good manners to simply ignore anyone and everyone who might disagree with you. If you are in a position of elected leadership, the folks who disagree are also your constituents, and you are as accountable to them as much as you are to the folks who support your ideas. Respectful disagreement, competing ideas, and sincere questions should be engaged and discussed. This is something that's been on my mind for a while - good communication by elected officials is enormously productive to relations with, and support from, citizens. Simply giving a "what" and a "why" goes a long way towards citizen support. Even if citizens don't fully understand or agree with the decision-making, they're more likely to be on board with something that's been communicated to them than being kept in the dark and told to stay out of it by the people serving them.

It takes wisdom to discern the sincere questions and respectful disagreement from the barking dogs, but it's a necessity of good leadership. Engage the fruitful conversations and realize that some barking dogs are simply that. If your idea was not front and center, they'd probably be



Blooming! *Though the official first day of spring is March 20, this tree did not get the memo and was seen blooming earlier.*

barking at someone else's idea, and they probably will next week or next month. It can sap your time, energy, and enthusiasm to fight un-winnable battles with folks who simply want to bark more than discuss, and it distracts you from the fruitful conversations and your actual goals.

On the flip side of this topic: are you simply a barking dog? Whether we care to admit it or not, all of us have been that barking dog on at least one topic in our life. If you're simply barking at the folks trying to improve the topic, you're neither helping them improve it nor are you actually contributing to the improvement yourself. If you're not willing to improve it or help

those who are, at least stay out of the way and don't sap the energy of the folks who ARE trying.

Barking dogs are inevitable. Realize that, keep an eye out for them, and then keep them in their place. And please don't be one yourself. Focus your time and energy on engaging the fruitful conversations that make you, your ideas, and your

community stronger, and keep your eye on the bigger goals that will be there long after the dog starts barking at something else.

James Decker is a lawyer, farmer, and city councilman in Stamford, and the creator of the forthcoming "West of 98" podcast and website. He may be contacted through Facebook at [facebook.com/james.decker](https://www.facebook.com/james.decker).

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contact Nancy at 432-413-4216

or email vprobertlee@gmail.com

Russell Davis
Agent

611 Austin Street
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Robert Lee, Texas 76945
(325) 453-4505 office
(325) 453-4524 fax
(325) 650-1904 mobile
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