

Check Out Coke County Library

The Coke County Library spring sale was a success and with the good patrons of Coke County and some generous folks who dropped by, funds are

ready for the summer program at the library. A group of citizens in Carlsbad are working to establish a library in their town. The books which did not sell at our sale will be delivered to the volunteers working this project. Their project brings back memories of when volunteers were establishing the Coke County Library, building

shelves, moving books, driving cross-country to pick up donations, labeling, fish-frying to raise funds, filling out the necessary forms, giving time to establish an institution that is forty years and counting. The next sale will be held sometime in November. Those who donate to and attend the sale are appreciated.

Dear Editor,

I would like to address the folks (taxpayers, students, employees, and voters) of the Bronte Independent School District.

The last three years I have served on the Bronte Board of Trustees, having served this year as your Board President and the prior year as the Secretary. These 3 years have been both personally rewarding and frustrating. The single most frustrating scenario has been dealing with the bureaucratic nightmare of the mandates that are forced on our local district by both the State of Texas and the federal government – mandates that are directed but not always funded. It amazes me as to how severely the state/federal government ties the hands of our independent school district's elected officials.

Some of the positive contributions that I feel your Board has made in the last few years include the following:

Personnel: On March 28, 2011, the Board voted 6-1 to take back the hiring authority for the certified personnel of the District. Previous Boards had decided to give 100% of the hiring authority of the District to the Superintendent, thereby taking the community-elected Board out of the decision process of one of the historically most important duties your representative Board has. Starting in April, your Board now has significant input and oversight as to who is hired to teach and serve the kids of the Bronte ISD.

Record keeping/reporting: This year we voted to change how the minutes of the meetings of the Board are written and recorded. Locally, the Secretary of the Board has a duty to write down the minutes of Board actions. To do this correctly, the Secretary becomes multi-tasked as to his/her level (or lack thereof) of participation in the meeting and/or different writing styles. To better align this important responsibility, the Board now has an employee of the district write the minutes and the meetings are also recorded on audio and video. Community members are now able to go to the district's website and listen to the audio of the meetings at your convenience. Also, taxpayers can go to the school and request to watch the entire video. We realize that most folks do not want to take the time to come to the meetings of the Board, as they are held in the evenings when most folks want to be doing something else. These changes in record keeping provide a more open and accessible means to stay abreast of your school district's status and the financial and other business conducted during Board meetings.

Academics: If you will look at the April 8, 2011, *Observer/Enterprise* news article "Bronte UIL Advances to Region" you will find that the 35 Bronte students participated in and had great success at our district UIL academic competition. This is a direct result of the community members asking for this participation in UIL at the District's "Site Based Planning Retreats," and the Board acting upon that request to promote a greater level of participation and success in UIL academics. This desire of community members gave new energy to school faculty & UIL sponsors, and the result is the highest number of student UIL participation in years achieving a second place District finish, along with seven students going to Regional competition, two to state debate, and alternate area for the One-Act Play.

Financial condition: The Board passed the first balanced budget the District has had in several years for the fiscal year 2010-2011. Your district has been financially blessed for more than a decade. These blessings have resulted in facilities that are second to none, and a District that is financially healthy with no debt and a local tax rate that is comparably low. It is no secret that our state budget is in crisis in Austin, and many school districts are proactively making tough decisions in terms of personnel, class sizes, and facilities. Because BISD is dependent upon state funding, this budget crisis will eventually affect us. However, I believe with prudent fiscal management and by keeping a focus on academic support, Bronte ISD will be able to survive these perilous economic times with minimum impact on our children's education and or the community.

Folks, let me be clear, these achievements are a product of the entire Board of Trustees. I have served with a fine group of people that have been responsive to the wishes of the community.

Increased student academic achievement and fiscal responsibility has been and will continue to be my top priorities if you will allow me to serve another term on the Bronte ISD Board of Trustees.

I am asking for your vote on May 14, 2011.

Paul Williams

Pd. Pol. Adv. by Paul Williams, 439 Morrow Loop, Bronte, TX 76933



Educators of the Year! Rocky Rawls (top photo) was named Secondary Educator of the Year and Donna Poehls, Bronte Elementary Principal, was named Elementary Educator of the Year at the annual Bronte Community Banquet Monday evening, April 11, 2011. The annual event is sponsored by the Bronte Chamber of Commerce.

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