

context of fresh starts. When you've had a bad day, you can go to bed and wake up the next morning with a fresh start. The school year is the same way. In many ways, the first day of school often serves as more of a New Year's Day for our communities than January 1. Instead of just flipping the calendar from one year to the next, the first day of school defines the lasting changes in the community. Young children graduate from daycare to kindergarten. New teachers and administrators establish their places in town. Old faces - from teachers to graduated seniors - are no longer around. The cycle of school and youth activities winds back up and quickly fills the community calendar for months to come.

Without a doubt, the last year-plus has been taxing and challenging for everyone associated with our schools. Students, parents, teachers, support staff, and administrators all dealt with the consequences of a worldwide pandemic that disrupted school and extracurricular activities in the spring of 2020. They all learned to adapt and create a "new normal," so to speak, for the 2020-21 school year and then a once-in-a-lifetime (let's hope!) winter storm disrupted the school year for a miserable week that none of us ever want to relive. Now that the 2021-22 school year is underway, the world is facing new challenges from the newest COVID strain.

If that wasn't enough, it seems that every challenge faced by our school is used as a

political football by a bunch of state and national politicians who are primarily interested in appealing to their own voters and donors. If they happen to do the right thing, it is only an accident, and the rest of us can just be collateral damage along the way.

Meanwhile, our students, parents, teachers, support staff, and administrators have persevered onward. I think the politicians could learn a lot from the resilience that these folks have shown since March of 2020. From the pandemic to the winter storm, I was always encouraged by every conversation I had with our school administrators, who were constantly looking for the best ways to take care of their students. Our teachers and support staff have adapted, reacted, and put in yeoman's work to ensure that their students continued to learn. Our parents and students have adapted to the circumstances and made the best of them.

One of our world's greatest blessings is the innocence and wonder of a child. They do not always behave perfectly (as evidenced by the tears of an unhappy toddler at my house this morning), but children do a wonderful job of adapting as the world changes around them. Adults can be set in their ways. Children often don't know enough to know that the *should* be set in their ways and in many ways, that can be a good thing.

As the 2021-22 school year opens, no matter where you are reading this, let's not dwell on



Story Time! The Coke County Library in Robert Lee hosts Story Time the second Wednesday of each month. This month the kids read 'A Color of His Own' by Leo Lionni. They then used watercolors to paint their own colorful chameleon.

the hardships of recent times. However, let us be thankful for the strength that our people have shown through it all and let us be grateful for the lessons that have been learned. Above all, let us be thankful and hopeful

for the fresh start offered by a new school year. In many ways, it is New Year's Day in our communities. Let's make it a good one for ourselves and for each other.

James Decker is the Mayor of

Stamford, Texas and the creator of the West of 98 website and podcast. Contact James and subscribe to these essays at westof98.substack.com and subscribe to West of 98 wherever podcasts are found.

Bronte City Council meeting minutes told

[Editor's Note: The City of Bronte recently posted minutes for the months of April, May, and June. Before this week, the last minutes we were able to publish were the March 2021 minutes. We will run the April minutes this week and as space allows, we will do our best to run the minutes that have been posted.]

The Bronte City Council met

on Monday, April 26, 2021, for a regular meeting at City Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm by Mayor Paul Gohman, and a quorum was established. Those in attendance included Mayor Pro Tem Santiago Rodriguez, Council Members Ron Cooper, Gwen Dyess and Kinley Pritchard. Council Member Stormy Vaughn

was absent. Staff members present included Teresa Ballard, Tina Smith, and Ricky Royall.

Mayor Paul Gohman led the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer was offered by Kinley Pritchard.

There were no citizen comments.

There was not a Bronte Volunteer Fire Department representative at the meeting to give a fire department report.

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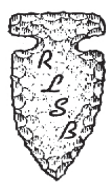
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