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# River Oaks News

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*Around the Town with Denise Honeycutt*

## Army Reserves Celebrate 116th Birthday



Pictured are: (l-r) Community Services Liason **Christine Wilesen**, Commander **Lora McGee**, Exchange Manager **Tonita Bechert**, Executive Board Member **Nancy Wyatt** and **Kevin Curtis**, Ret. CSM Army.

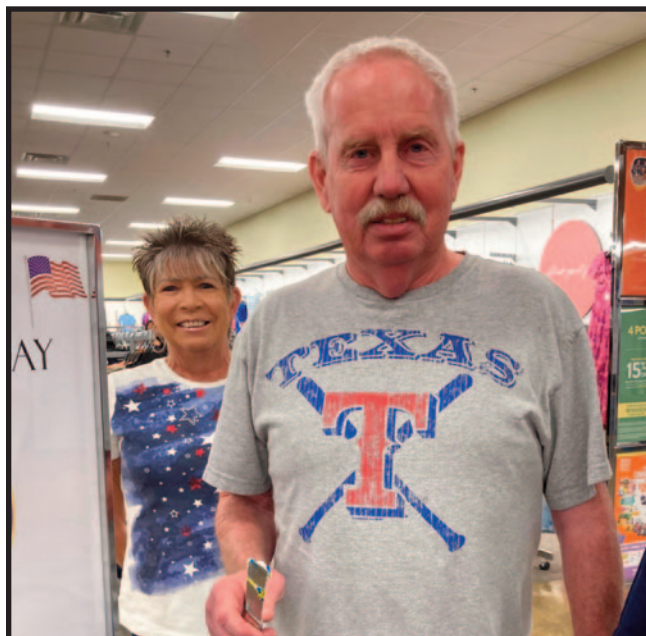
The Army Reserves birthday celebration was held on Tuesday, April 23 at the NASJRB. American Legion Post 297 Auxiliary Unit hosted an event at the Base Exchange.

On this day in 1908, Congress created the Medial Reserve Corps., the official predecessor of the Army Reserve. Following WWI, under the National Guard, and an organized Reserve of 35 divisions which later became the Army Reserve. This provided a peacetime pool of trained Reserve Officers and enlisted men for use in war. When the United States entered WWII in December 1941, the number of Army Reserve Officers on active duty rose from less than 3,000 to more than 57,000.

This war signified the beginning of a new era in national security, and from that point the United States became the “world guardian “ and “arsenal of democracy,” a new mission in which the Army Reserve



**Harold Billow**, Ret. MSgt, Army participated at the event.



Auxiliary Executive Board member **Nancy Wyatt** with **Shane Weller**, Ret. Army Major 04.

would play a major role.

Participants delighted in the delicious cake, fun and fellowship that was enjoyed by those who came to the Base Exchange.

*From Texas Parks & Wildlife*

## Take the City Nature Challenge

Join Texas Parks & Wildlife, Texas Master Naturalists, the Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy and others in a fun challenge to see which city can document the most species. It is easy to participate by joining an event or making observations on your own using iNaturalist — sign up on [iNaturalist.org](https://www.inaturalist.org) and download the App for your device or smartphone.

Once again, this year you can participate in City Nature Challenge even if you don't live in one of the metro areas. Visit [City Nature Challenge 2024 Global Project](https://www.citynaturechallenge.org). Simply click on the link, join the project and you are ready to join the fun.

This year, more people than ever will get to join the fun and learning.

With the iNaturalist App, you just take a picture of a plant or animal and the community will help identify what species it is. Any observation made during the four days of the event in the greater metropolitan area of each city will count towards the challenge. You can participate by exploring the life in your backyard, in your local park or on a field trip with your local naturalist group.

To find out if your metro area is participating, check the list below and get involved! Not only is this a competition between metropolitan areas across Texas, cities across the world are participating — let's show them what we've got! Be sure to check out the [City Nature Challenge Website](https://www.citynaturechallenge.org) to see the list of global participants.

For more information, contact [tracker@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:tracker@tpwd.texas.gov).

# On This Day...

# Balloons vs. Nature

# Thunderstorm

## April 25

- **1792** – "La Marseillaise" (the French national anthem) is composed by Claude Joseph Rouget de Lisle.
- **1859** – British and French engineers break ground for the Suez Canal.
- **1862** – American Civil War: Forces under U.S. Admiral David Farragut demand the surrender of the Confederate city of New Orleans, Louisiana.
- **1901** – New York becomes the first U.S. state to require automobile license plates.
- **1945** – World War II: The last German troops retreat from Finnish soil in Lapland, ending the Lapland War. Military actions of the Second World War end in Finland.
- **1954** – The first practical solar cell is publicly demonstrated by Bell Telephone Laboratories.
- **1960** – The United States Navy submarine USS Triton completes the first submerged circumnavigation of the globe.
- **1983** – Pioneer 10 travels beyond Pluto's orbit.

Whether you are having a party or you are honoring a loved one, it is never a good idea to release balloons. They might say eco-friendly but could take up to seven years to biodegrade.

Mylar balloons are composed of synthetic nylon with metallic coating. They are not biodegradable and can cause power outages or fires when they get twisted with electrical lines. When you release them it might look majestic and you might wonder how far it will go but where it really ends up is terrible.

Balloons, usually bright with color, attract wildlife and marine life and get easily mistaken for foliage or food. Devouring balloons can cause them their life, not to mention being tangled up in the balloon string can cause suffocation. Helium which fills the balloons is a finite source and we cannot manufacture it. Helium is used for fiber optics, infant breathing ventilators, and MRI's.

The next time you want to use this party staple remember the fatal consequences for wildlife and marine life. If you have to have balloons, weigh them down, pop them and properly dispose of them.

## Season Supply Kit

Be sure to stay alert during storm season. Keep these items on hand in case of a weather emergency:

- Food and Water
- Battery Powered Weather Radio
- Flashlights and Batteries
- Cell Phone (With Charger or Spare Battery Pack)
- First Aid Kit
- Pair of Shoes
- List of Emergency Contacts
- Whistle to Signal for Help

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# Factors to Consider When Determining How Much Home You Can Afford

Figuring out how much home you can afford is one of the most important questions you'll need to answer before you begin house hunting. But as home prices and interest rates have increased in the past few years, you may be wondering how your buying power has changed.

To get a rough estimate of what you can afford, most lenders suggest you spend no more than 28% of your monthly income, before taxes are taken out, on your mortgage payment, which includes principal, interest, taxes and insurance. In addition to having a firm grip on your income and expenses, it's important to understand the role the following factors play in how much home you can afford:

## Your Credit

Lenders look closely at your credit score when determining whether you qualify for a loan. Generally, the higher your credit score the more options will be available to you, including better loan terms and a lower interest rate. Because of the large role credit plays in the homebuying process, make sure you understand how your credit score is compiled, how to get a copy of your credit report and how to build strong credit.

## Current Mortgage Rates

It's important to watch mortgage rates carefully, because when rates are lower you may be able to afford a larger mortgage. Although 26 million mortgage-ready potential homebuyers had the capacity to afford a \$400,000 mortgage at a 3 percent interest rate, the total falls by 3 to 4 million with each percentage point gain, according to Freddie Mac research. In short, a small increase in rates can make a home that was once affordable, unaffordable.

Bear in mind that similar borrowers may receive notably different rates based on the lender, so you may want to shop around to increase your buying power. In fact, you can potentially save \$600-\$1,200 annually by applying for mortgages from multiple lenders, according to Freddie Mac.

## Your Down Payment

Typically, homebuyers need to make a down payment of at least 3 percent, and generally between 5 percent and 20 percent, of their home's purchase price to qualify for a mortgage. That means as home prices go up, so do down payment requirements. Talk to your lender about all the down payment options available and explore assistance programs.

Each year, many state, county and city governments provide financial assistance for people in their communities who are well-qualified and ready for homeownership. Requirements vary, but if you are eligible you could receive down payment assistance ranging from a few thousand dollars to larger amounts, depending on your needs, your qualifications and where the home is located. Ad-

ditionally, many programs specifically benefit veterans, Native communities and workers employed in education, health care, law enforcement and firefighting. Your lender or housing counselor should be able to point you in the right direction of these programs.

## Fees and Other Closing Costs

Don't forget that when you get a mortgage, you'll need to pay closing costs, which likely include an appraisal fee, credit report fee, tax services fee and more. These costs will generally run between 2 percent and 5 percent of your purchase price.

To crunch the numbers, start by using Freddie Mac's Homebuying Budget Calculator, then learn more about the homebuying process with Freddie Mac's CreditSmart. Visit [creditsmart.freddie-mac.com](https://creditsmart.freddie-mac.com) to get started.

If you think you're ready for homeownership, you'll want to work closely with your lender to determine what you can comfortably afford. It's their job to cover all bases so that your final number is within your means and aligns with your financial goals.



From the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

# Stormwater Pollution Education: Lawn Fertilization



It's hard to imagine that a green, flourishing lawn could pose a threat to the environment, but the fertilizers you apply to your lawn are potential pollutants! More than 60 percent of water pollution comes from stormwater runoff. The runoff picks up pollutants like leaking oil from cars, fertilizers from farms and gardens, and failing septic tanks. All these sources add up to a big pollution problem.

Unfortunately, fertilizer is a "growing" problem for lakes, rivers, and streams, especially if it's not used carefully. If you use too much fertilizer or apply it at the wrong time, it can easily wash off your lawn or garden into storm drains and then flow into lakes or streams. Just like in your garden, fertilizer in lakes and streams makes plants grow. In water bodies, extra fertilizer can mean extra algae and aquatic plant growth. Too many algae cause water quality problems and makes boating, fishing, and swimming unpleasant.

As algae decays, it uses up oxygen in the water that fish and other wildlife need to survive.

For more information, visit [www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution](http://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution).

From the Project Linus Blanketeers

# First Monday Quilt Club: Project Linus Volunteers Needed

Come join the fun and fellowship with the Quilt Club volunteers while you make a difference in our community and bless others by making quilts for Project Linus.

The First Monday Quilt Club meets on the first Monday of each month at Bethany Christian Church, located at 1500 Meadow Park Drive in White Settlement from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Instead of a potluck lunch, ladies are asked to bring brunch or snack items. Their next meeting is on Monday, May 6.

Project Linus is a non-profit service organization, and the members of this group are Tarrant County Chapter Project Linus volunteers who create handmade quilts and blankets that provide love, warmth, and comfort for local children who have suffered trauma, tragedy, or illness.

Volunteers also make coverlets for veterans, nursing home residents, and the homeless. Unfortunately, the need for these blankets increases each month. They desperately need volunteers with portable sewing machines to help assemble the quilts.

No experience is needed - there is a place for you. Anyone can help if you can follow instructions, sew, tie a knot, crochet a blanket, or tell a good joke. Volunteers have lots of fun and develop fantastic friendships.

High school students can receive community service credits for participating. Materials (fabric, batting, thread, and yarn) are provided. Donations of fabric, yarn, thread, sewing machines, sergers, or money to purchase materials are greatly appreciated.

For more information about the mission of Project Linus, visit [www.projectlinus.org](http://www.projectlinus.org).

For more information about the First Monday Quilt Club, call Virginia Biela at 817-244-1263.

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# American Singer-Songwriter, Janis Joplin

by Dr. Ken Bridges



Janis Joplin thrilled rock fans with her soulful music. As she burst onto the scene in the late 1960s, she was known for songs that were a unique mix of rock, folk, and blues. After her death in 1970, her fame and legend only grew.

She was born in January 1943 in Port Arthur. She was the eldest of three children born to Scott Joplin, a Texaco engineer, and his wife, Dorothy, a registrar at a local college. As a youth, she performed in her church choir at First Christian Church in Port Arthur. Her artistic talents were emerging. However, she was relentlessly and cruelly bullied by a number of people throughout her years in school. She was never able to get over the bitterness she felt from those years. She also started drinking.

She befriended a group of fellow outcasts where she became enamored with early blues artists such as Bessie Smith and Texas native Huttie "Lead Belly" Ledbetter. They traveled along the Gulf coast listening to a mix of bands.

After her graduation in 1960, she eventually made her way to the University of Texas as an art student by 1962, where she became part of the rising music and counterculture scene on campus. She became a well-known figure, famous for walking barefoot and carrying her autoharp wherever she went.

She began performing gigs around Austin where she met country singer Kenneth Threadgill after performing at his small club.

Threadgill gave her a lot of advice and encouragement on her career.

By early 1963, she decided to leave for San Francisco, hitchhiking across the country. She continued to perform at small venues while writing and recording music in her spare time. But she also began falling into heavy drug use by this time and was arrested for shoplifting. By 1965, her drug use became so bad that friends bought her a bus ticket back home to Port Arthur to recuperate.

Joplin enrolled at Lamar University in Beaumont and took classes in anthropology and social work, even briefly becoming engaged, but her first love was music and continued performing at small clubs.

Once her health was restored, she headed back to San Francisco on an invitation to join Big Brother and the Holding Company. She electrified audiences across California with her energetic performances, often inviting audiences to sing along. Her iconic performance at the Monterey Pops Festival in 1967 caught the attention of music fans and producers. The band's self-titled album that year was a hit.

The next album, "Cheap Thrills," released in 1968, hit number 1. She began touring with the band across the country. Her version of "Piece of My Heart" was released as a single and was a Top 20 hit. Along the way, she relapsed and started using drugs heavily, with her life began spiraling out of control. She split with her band and formed a new one, the Kozmic Blues Band by late 1968, but essentially it was a solo career.

She released "I Got Dem Kozmic Blues Again Mama" in 1969, which hit number 5 on the Billboard charts, her second straight platinum album. That summer, she performed at the famous Woodstock music festival in New York.

On Thanksgiving Day 1969, she performed at Madison Square Garden with the Rolling Stones and sang a duet with Tina Turner. She was so intoxicated that friends and other performers worried about her.

In February 1970, she traveled to Brazil and attempted to kick her addiction habit once again. But her sobriety was short-lived. Within a few weeks, she returned to the United States and quickly fell back into her

addiction. She formed a new band, eventually known as the Full Tilt Boogie Band, and went on tour, appearing with the Grateful Dead and blues guitarist Buddy Guy. She concluded the tour in August.

Shortly afterward, she returned to Port Arthur for the last time to attend her 10-year class reunion. Though her musical talents had earned her a lot of fame, her relationships with many of her former classmates were still strained; and she publicly berated the city and her classmates in a press conference.

She returned to Los Angeles and began recording an album with her band. They had spent several weeks recording tracks. Her behavior was erratic, and she wondered how much longer her newest band would perform with her. On Oct. 4, she was found dead from an overdose. She was only 27, part of a string of deaths of young artists from drug overdoses at that time, including Jim Morrison and Jimi Hendrix.

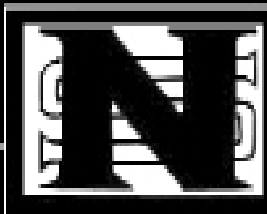
Though the album was still incomplete, Columbia Records decided to release the album in early 1971. "Pearl" was the biggest hit of Joplin's career. The album's title was her nickname among her friends. The album shot to the top of the charts and featured some of her most memorable songs. Her rendition of "Me and Bobby McGee," which was written by one-time boyfriend Kris Kristofferson was a number 1 single on the Billboard charts. The track, "Mercedes Benz" was also released as a popular single from the album. The song was a take on consumerism and was one of her last recordings, completed just days before her death.

In the years afterward, Columbia continued to release old recordings. "In Concert" was released in 1972 and peaked at number four. A greatest hits album was released in 1973 and was a Top 40 hit. Numerous books and documentaries were made about her, including tribute songs performed by friends and admirers. Many artists continue to perform cover versions of her hits.

In 1988, a statue of her was unveiled in Port Arthur. Her younger sister Laura wrote a loving biography of her in 1992.

She was honored posthumously with an induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1995.

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## Weekend Forecast



### Friday, April 26:

**AM** - Showers and thunderstorms likely. Mostly sunny, with a high near 83. Breezy, with a south wind 20 to 25 mph, with gusts as high as 40 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70%.  
**PM** - Partly cloudy, with a low around 69. Breezy, with a south wind 20 to 25 mph, with gusts as high as 40 mph.



### Saturday, April 27:

**AM** - A 50% chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly after 1pm. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 83. Breezy, with a south wind 20 to 25 mph, with gusts as high as 40 mph.  
**PM** - Showers and thunderstorms likely. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 68. Breezy, with a south wind around 25 mph, with gusts as high as 40 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70%.



### Sunday, April 28:

**AM** - A 50% chance of showers and thunderstorms. Mostly sunny, with a high near 82. South southwest wind 15 to 20 mph, with gusts as high as 30 mph.  
**PM** - A 30% chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly before 1am. Partly cloudy, with a low around 65.

**Extended Forecast [Click Here](#)**