

BurlesonNOW

M A G A Z I N E

OCTOBER 2026

A Thrilling Goal

Craig Wheeler entertains the community with his flash mob

Hidden Beauty in Hill Country

Lost Maples State Natural Area preserves Texas land

New
CouponsNOW
Inside

Cozy Pumpkin
Recipes

Crossword/Sudoku

Calendar

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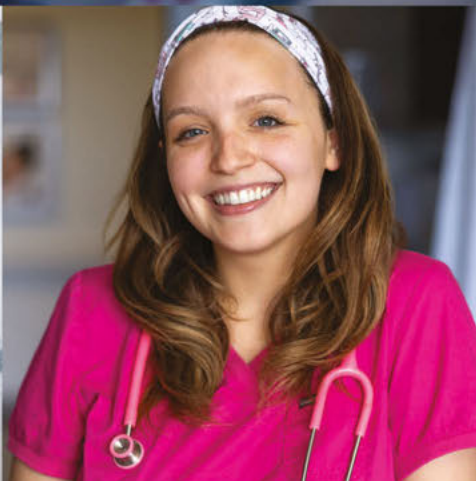
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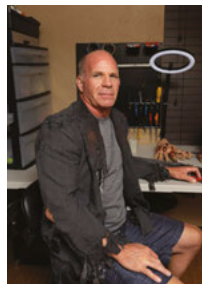
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ON THE COVER



Craig Wheeler brings
"Thriller" to life in *Burleson*.

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A THRILLING Goal

— By Jordan DeWald



As a child growing up in Burleson, Craig Wheeler remembers visiting Mott's Five and Dime, where he chose his Halloween costume. They were the typical costumes of the decade, made of plastic with masks held on by elastic. He kept his love for Halloween, but his costume choices have changed. He now designs and crafts his own wear, with a different goal than candy. Craig spends his weekends in October dressed as a zombie, performing in flash mobs to Michael Jackson's hit "Thriller." Donating his time and finances, Craig brings the popular song and recognizable dance to locations in Burleson and other spots in the Fort Worth area.



An attempt to set a Guinness World Record for the largest group simultaneously performing the same choreography to a song was made in 2009, and Craig participated. The chosen song was the radio version of "Thriller." Although there were 22,596 participants from 32 countries, the record was not broken. Groups of people, including Craig, enjoyed the experience so much that they continued to perform the dance as a flash mob for a few years to follow. After taking a break, Craig decided to bring back the performances under his leadership. This time, he wanted to teach a shortened version of the dance using the choreography from the original 1983 "Thriller" music video. That choreography is not available in written form, so he had to spend hours watching the video and taking notes to learn the dance and translate the steps into teachable, accessible steps for non-dancers. He rented a studio, extended invitations and began teaching the dance to interested participants. In 2025, during every weekend in October, the group brought their flash mob to more than 30 locations across Burleson and Fort Worth. Many of those locations were prescheduled, and others happened organically to a welcome audience. He had 20 people learn the dance, and the number of participants varied at each location.

Craig plans to continue bringing his "Thriller" flash mob to sites in 2026 with an added goal. This year, he hopes to have the largest flash mob in Dallas-Fort Worth history with over 200 participants. To achieve this goal, Craig has rented studio space at two different locations, RL Dance Studio and The BRiCk (Burleson Recreation Center). August was designated for teaching the choreography to professional dance instructors, so they could teach it to their students. The public was invited in September, and the invitation continues through October to join in and learn the choreography. Every weekend in October,



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SCAN TO PRE-PLAN





students from Burleson will join those from the other studios to form a large flash mob to entertain unsuspecting observers. Anyone is welcome to join. Craig encourages the participants to watch the original "Thriller" video to self-assess whether they are "physically fit and mentally mature enough" to keep up with the choreography and multiple performances. The media and all scheduling information can be found by searching "Thriller Flash Mob - Burleson, TX" on Facebook.

When asked what he enjoys about this project, Craig said, "I love teaching. I have always been a teacher." He has years of experience teaching Western and Thai boxing, leading as a Scoutmaster, as an instructor for Burleson Community Emergency Response Team and has a background in ballroom dance. Besides owning multiple businesses and volunteering as a mass-casualty medic, Craig has added choreographer, costumer and

coordinator to his busy schedule. He crafts his own costume by modifying, painting and cutting clothing and masks. While he is the coordinator and teacher for the group, Craig emphasizes that no one person is the center of attention during the dance. "No one is dressed up as Michael Jackson from the original music video," he said. In addition to the creative aspect of his role, Craig also serves in an administrative capacity. He contacts the professional dancers to join in the teaching, the locations for the flash mobs to take place and coordinates the schedule. He generously contributes his own money for the advertising, sound equipment, transportation and studio rentals.

Halloween is Craig's favorite holiday. Coordinating the flash mobs throughout the month of October lets him share what he enjoys about the season. He brings entertainment to his community and gives others the opportunity to participate in the fun. **NOW**

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Hidden Beauty in Hill Country

— By Emma McKay

Located in the Hill Country taking up 2,208 acres of land, lies Lost Maples State Natural Area. Purchased by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in the 1970s, this land houses more than 350 different logged plant species and rare birds such as the Golden-cheeked Warbler, the Black-capped Vireo and the Green Kingfisher. In 1980, the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service named Lost Maples a national natural landmark. While some refer to Lost Maples as a park, due to the focus on conserving and maintaining its natural beauty, it's considered a natural area rather than a state park. Because of this, certain parts of the natural area may be closed off to the public at times to protect the land.

Due to the voluminous number of bigtooth maple trees in the natural area, people from all over Texas travel to Lost Maples during the fall to see the stunning colors of the leaves as the trees ready themselves for winter. Even though this fall foliage

draws in the largest crowds of the year, visitors still find beauty in the land during any season. Ten miles of hiking trails take visitors to limestone canyons, plateau grasslands, clear streams and the top of a 2,200-foot cliff.

Visitors should keep in mind that cell phone service is unavailable in the natural area. Due to its dedication to protecting the land, they must adhere to the Leave No Trace policy. People are discouraged from veering off trails and from marking them.

Fishing is allowed at Can Creek and the Sabinal River. On the shore or pier, fishing licenses are not required to engage in the sport. Fishing equipment can be borrowed to use while in the park.

Like in any other Texas state park or natural area, parties with kids can pick up a free Junior Ranger Activity Journal. These journals include coloring pages, games and worksheets for kids to complete during their visit. Upon completing a certain number of activities, they may receive a Junior Ranger pin.

Campers can select from 30 campsites with electricity and 30 primitive campsites. Campsites with electricity allow up to 8 people per site, and come equipped with water hookups, 30-amp hookups and back-in RV parking. There are also fire rings, picnic tables, restrooms with nearby showers and shade shelters. Primitive campsites allow campers the opportunity to truly rough it. Each primitive site allows up to 6 campers and can only be accessed by hiking.

Overnight visitors may enjoy the night sky free from light pollution. According to the natural area's web page, the darkness of the area's sky has been rated on the Bortle Dark-Sky Scale to have Class 3 visibility,



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with a Class 1 being pitch black skies and a Class 9 being near-impossible sky viewings due to city lights. With nights this dark, stars shine clear and bright for visitors to admire. Lost Maples hosts special events to appreciate the celestial bodies seen overhead, so visitors should be sure to check the events calendar before planning their visit.

Experience hidden beauty in Texas, and plan a trip to Lost Maples State Natural Area today! Busy season runs from October to November, so be sure to make your reservation early when visiting during this time. **NOW**

Editor's Note: Reservations may be made through the Texas Parks and Wildlife website: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lost-maples>.

Sources:

1. tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/lost-maples-state-natural-area.
2. tpwd.texas.gov/state-parks/lost-maples.
3. backroadstexas.net/lost-maples/.
4. txmn.org/lostpines/2018/10/15/backroads-nature-lost-maples-state-natural-area/.

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Zoomed In: Bob Harper

By Jordan DeWald

Bob Harper is the liaison for veterans at his home at Heritage Place. He said, "If I can't answer your questions, I'll find someone who can." Bob proudly served in the United States Air Force from 1951-1955 and was a cargo crewman in the Korean War, where he unloaded cargo off the C-47 in Korea. He carries that spirit of service into helping other residents in his living community. Bob noticed a need for additional shelving in the library at Heritage Place. His daughter, Cindy Harper Wade, connected him with a Girl Scout Troop, and he funded their building of the large shelving unit. Now the residents have a more accessible library. He connects with other veterans, helping them find information to get assistance from Veterans Affairs; suggests improvements to the Veterans Wall; takes part in Veterans Day programs; and donates items when he sees a need.



Heather Taylor and Krystal Anderson celebrate 817 Day by raising funds and sharing information about The Center for ASD.



The Negrete family celebrates Adriana after her game where she kicked a PAT.



Elementary students are greeted by the BHS Volleyball team on gameday.



Oliver Johnson helps a shelter pet get attention through an activity at the library.

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Zoomed In:
Kristen Hodges

By Jordan DeWald

Kristen Hodges loves supporting local businesses in Burleson. She recently had a friend visit from Indiana. Stephany Koch’s very first out-of-state trip was to Texas, where Kristen introduced her to all of the fun things to do in Burleson. Kristen said, “We got to celebrate her birthday during her visit and shopped at the local boutiques in Burleson. I also took her to Mojoes, of course!” Kristen summed up the trip with, “Overall, she enjoyed it and even was greeted with a ‘Howdy’ from a sweet lady at my church!”



Burleson Collegiate celebrates their September staff birthdays.



Sophia Dunn shows off her Spartan spirit before the Battle of the Boot.



Old Town made the perfect setting for Joel and Summer Garcia to enjoy a night out on 817 Day.



The Burleson Big Red Booster Club is set up before every BHS home football game to support the student athletes.

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OCTOBER

Some events may have been cancelled or rescheduled while we were at press.

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10/3

Stuffed Animal Sleepover Storytime

Children can bring their stuffed animals for story time, songs and a craft. They can leave a stuffed animal at the library the day before to spend the night. Free. 10:00-11:00 a.m., Burleson Public Library, 248 SW Johnson Ave.

Halloween Night Market

Burleson Farmer's Market. 5:00-10:00 p.m., Mayor Vera Calvin Plaza.

10/10

Founders Day

A family-friendly event

celebrating Burleson's founding featuring activities, re-enactments, live music, a car show and a kid zone. Free. 10:00-11:00 a.m., Mayor Vera Calvin Plaza.

10/11

Annual Fall Festival

The community is invited for a fun-filled afternoon of games, delicious food, live music and a silent auction. Free. 11:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., St. Ann Catholic Church, 100 SW Alsbury Blvd.

10/17

Fall Fest at the Farm

Hayride, petting donkeys, fall arts and crafts, games, live

music and more. Free. 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. (10:00 a.m. Sensory Hour), Russell Farm, 405 W. CR 714.

10/23 and 10/30

Old Town Picture Show

Bring a chair or blanket to watch a movie on a giant screen. Free. 7:00 p.m., Mayor Vera Calvin Plaza.

10/24

Crossroads of Texas Go Texan Country Festival

Enjoy Texas' largest one-day arts, music and food festival. Free. 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m., Downtown Waxahachie. For more information, visit

www.waxahachiecvb.com/events.

Boo Bash Festival

Children can enjoy free candy, games, bounce houses and more. Costumes welcome! Free, but registration is encouraged. 5:30-8:30 p.m., Chisenhall Sports Complex, 500 W. Hidden Creek Pkwy.

10/31

The Great Pumpkin Plunge

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**MIDLOTHIAN, TX | NOVEMBER 5
8:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

The Governor's Small Business Summit – Midlothian aims to help Texas small business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs reach new heights by connecting them with the resources and information needed to start, strengthen and grow a business. This event offers a variety of sessions bringing together local, state and federal resource partners to provide key insights on critical business topics.



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WHEN: November 5 | 8:00am - 2:00pm
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1	A	P	H	I	D	6	B	L	E	9	P
11	D	I	A	N	E	12	R	I	V	A	L
13	S	E	R	V	E	14	O	V	A	R	Y
15	R	E	M	A	K	E					
17	U	N	I	S		19	S	A	F	A	R
23	P	R	E	T	T	24	Y	W	O	M	A
25	S	A	T	I	R	E		26	R	E	D
27	G	O	T	T	E	N					
29	S	T	R	A	W		32	E	V	I	C
35	R	O	U	T	E		36	M	E	T	O
37	I	N	T	E	L		38	P	R	Y	O

Easy

5	8	7	9	1	6	4	3	2
1	9	3	7	4	2	6	5	8
2	4	6	8	5	3	7	9	1
7	2	4	6	9	5	8	1	3
9	1	8	4	3	7	2	6	5
6	3	5	2	8	1	9	7	4
3	7	2	1	6	8	5	4	9
8	5	9	3	7	4	1	2	6
4	6	1	5	2	9	3	8	7

Medium

7	3	8	5	2	6	4	9	1
4	5	1	3	9	7	8	6	2
6	2	9	8	4	1	7	3	5
2	8	7	4	1	9	6	5	3
1	9	5	7	6	3	2	8	4
3	6	4	2	8	5	9	1	7
8	7	6	1	3	4	5	2	9
9	4	3	6	5	2	1	7	8
5	1	2	9	7	8	3	4	6



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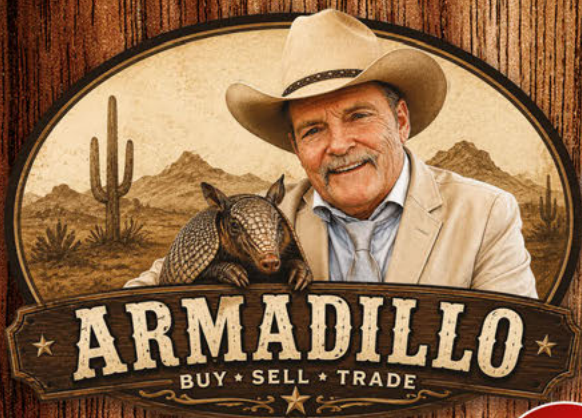
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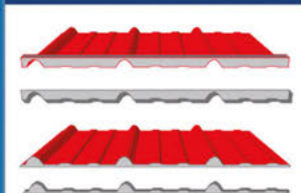


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