



Serving the Cities of River Oaks and Westworth Village

River Oaks News

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From Castleberry ISD

Castleberry ISD STEM Academy Accepting Applications

Castleberry ISD is accepting applications for its [STEM Academy at River District](#) for the 2026-27 school year. Current fifth-grade students may apply for the admissions-based program, which launched in 2021 with the Class of 2028. The coming school year will mark the academy's sixth cohort.

The academy offers an advanced curriculum in science, technology, engineering and math, with an emphasis on critical thinking, creativity and collaboration. Graduates are prepared for college, careers or military service.

Students who complete the program may apply in ninth grade to the district's Castleberry Collegiate Academy, where they can earn an associate degree and a Level 1 cybersecurity certificate through Tarrant County College.

Applicants must be current fifth-graders enrolled in *(continued on page 4)*

From the City of River Oaks

Pre-Approved Visitors Invited to Tour River Oaks Water Plant Feb. 25

The River Oaks Water Plant will open its doors to the public next week, but only to those who complete a strict pre-approval process.

River Oaks City officials announced the plant is scheduling a public tour for 10 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 25. The visit offers residents a rare look inside one of the city's most critical pieces *(continued on page 4)*

From Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation

New Wild Thumb App Makes It Easier for Texans to Grow Native Plants for Pollinators



Whether you're growing plants in a patio pot, designing and creating a colorful native flower bed, or transforming a section of your backyard into a pocket prairie, Wild Thumb provides personalized recommendations, design tools, and timely reminders for watering and pruning as well as freeze alerts.

Wild Thumb draws from a proprietary database of commonly available native plants, organized by Texas ecoregions and tailored with key details such as sunlight and watering needs, soil moisture tolerance, and bloom times. The app also provides a map of local nurseries that sell native plants as well as helpful tips and guidance.

"Wild Thumb takes the guesswork out of native gardening so that anyone in Texas, no matter where they live or how much space they have, can be *(continued on page 4)*

A new free mobile app from Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation is helping Texans of all experience levels grow drought-tolerant native plants that will help pollinators thrive.

Wild Thumb guides users through an easy-to-follow, step-by-step process of selecting, planting, and caring for native plants.

From the City of River Oaks

River Oaks Crime Control and Prevention District Sets May 2 Election

The River Oaks Crime Control and Prevention District has officially called an election for Saturday, May 2, 2026.

The election will ask voters whether to continue the CCPD for an additional 20-year period, [according to the official order filed with city documents](#).

The District, established to provide dedicated funding for local law enforcement and crime reduction strategies through a one-half cent sales and use tax, says the election is authorized under state law and is not a proposal for a new tax or tax increase.

Voters registered in the district will decide the *(continued on page 4)*

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Legal Notice

Application has been made with the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission for a Mixed Beverage Restaurant Permit with Food and Beverage Certificate by Naomi Group LLC dba Nyomi Sushi & Bloom, to be located at 4040 N Collins St Suite 150, Arlington, Tarrant County, Texas 76005.

The Officer of the Naomi Group LLC is Sandeep Kumar Shahi, President.

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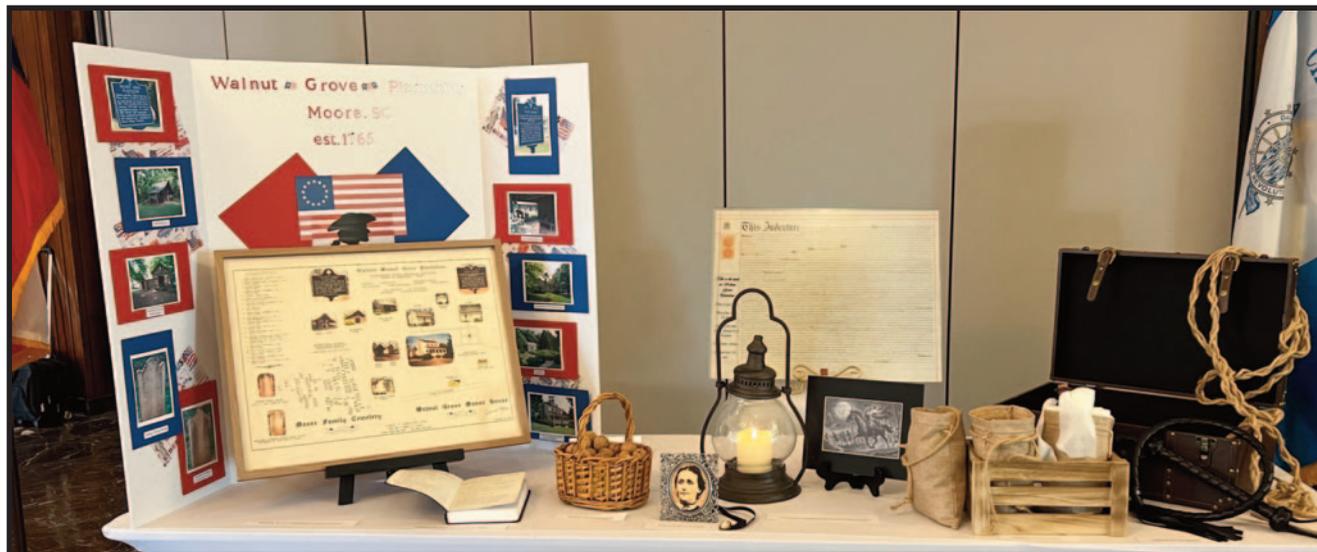
• **All Letters to the Editor** must not be over 250 words, and include the author's name, address and phone number. *Only the name will be included.*

• **Engagement Announcements** must be published four weeks prior to the wedding. **Wedding Announcements** have a 350 word limit. **Anniversaries** are limited to 150 words. • **Obituaries** are limited to 250 words and cost \$100.

Mistakes in stories or ads must be reported by Friday at 4 p.m. following Thursday's edition for corrections. Advertising payments are due by 10 a.m. Monday.

From the Mary Isham Keith Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution

DAR Chapter Highlights Revolutionary War Heroine Kate Barry at February Meeting



patriot cause.

Members also viewed a display of historical items representing Barry's life at Walnut Grove Plantation, the family homestead established after her father, Charles Moore, emigrated from Antrim, Ireland, in 1763. The Moore family claimed a land grant issued by King George III and built what became a focal point of patriot activity in the region.

When the Revolutionary War began, Kate Moore married Capt. Andrew Barry, who joined the Continental Army. According to historical accounts, Barry served as a messenger and spy for patriot forces. She is said to have overheard plans of approaching British troops and relayed the information to Continental officers, helping warn local forces of impending attack. The American victory at the Battle of Cowpens marked a critical turning point in the Southern campaign. In recognition of her efforts, Barry was later awarded a medal and honored as the battle's heroine.

The presentation was delivered by Watson-Sanchez, a sophomore at R.L. Paschal

High School, where she is active in the drama department, serves as vice president of the Creative Writing Club and co-president of the Penta Club. She has earned the Eagle Scout Award and is working toward the Girl Scouts Gold Award. In addition, she volunteers as a figure skating coach and gives her time to organizations including Tarrant Area Food Bank, Mission Arlington and John Peter Smith Hospital.

The DAR is a nonpolitical women's service organization whose members trace their lineage to individuals who supported American independence during the Revolutionary War. Those interested in learning more about membership may email mikregent2025@gmail.com.

Members of the Mary Isham Keith Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution stepped back into Revolutionary War history during their February meeting with a vivid portrayal of a South Carolina patriot.

The program spotlighted Margaret Catherine "Kate" Moore Barry, remembered as the heroine of the Battle of Cowpens and an ancestor of several chapter members. Chile Watson-Sanchez, daughter of member Dr. Ginger Watson-Sanchez and Dr. Hugo Watson and granddaughter of John and Trish Watson, brought Barry's story to life through a first-person reenactment that highlighted her courage and service to the

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Water Plant (continued from page 1)

of infrastructure.

Because the water plant operates as a high-security facility, attendance is limited to individuals who complete advance clearance requirements. Participants must submit a signed and notarized participant affidavit to City Hall no later than 11:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 20. In addition to the affidavit, a background check must be completed and approved before access will be granted.

Officials emphasized that no exceptions will be made. "Those without pre-approval will not be allowed access to the plant," the announcement states.

The security measures reflect the essential role the facility plays in treating and delivering safe drinking water to the community. Municipal water plants are considered sensitive infrastructure, and access is closely monitored to protect public health and safety.

The upcoming tour is expected to provide attendees with an inside look at water treatment operations, safety procedures and the technology used to ensure water quality standards are met. Educational tours like this are often designed to give residents greater insight into how local utilities operate and how taxpayer dollars are invested in essential services.

Residents interested in attending are encouraged to act quickly to meet the affidavit deadline. Documents must be properly notarized before submission, and late paperwork will not be accepted.

City Hall staff will review submissions and notify applicants once background checks and approvals are finalized.

The tour begins promptly at 10 a.m. Feb. 25. Additional details regarding arrival instructions and on-site procedures will be provided to approved participants.

For more information about submission requirements, contact City Hall during regular business hours.

May 2 Election (continued from page 1)

continuation of the funding mechanism that supports policing and public safety efforts in River Oaks. More details on polling places, ballot language and early voting schedules will be made available as the election date approaches.

Wild Thumb App (continued from page 1)

part of the pollinator solution," said Julie Shaddox, TPWF's Director of Development & Conservation Programs. "Most people don't realize that many of our native pollinators, including the American bumblebee, are in decline. By planting even a few native plants, Texans can make a tangible difference in restoring the critical habitat these species depend on."

Future updates to the app will add more plant species, highlight specific pollinators each plant attracts, and more educational content about prairie ecosystems.

The app is part of TPWF's Pollinators & Prairies program, which launched in 2024 to increase healthy prairie habitat and pollinator populations, encourage Texans to plant native grasses and wildflowers, and to fund critical research on native bees and other vital pollinators.

More information on the program can be found at www.pollinatorsandprairies.org.

The app was funded by H-E-B, the presenting sponsor of Pollinators & Prairies, as part of its *Our Texas, Our Future* commitment, and contributing sponsor Phillips 66. The app was developed in collaboration with Outside Studio, with assistance from the Native Plant Society of Texas and professional botanists.

Wild Thumb is available for smartphones and iPad and can be downloaded for free in the App Store and Google Play, just in time for the spring gardening season.

STEM Academy (continued from page 1)

Castleberry ISD or [planning to transfer into the district](#) for 2026-27.

Applications are due by 11:59 p.m. March 28. Submissions will be reviewed using the STEM Academy rubric, and 28 students will be notified of acceptance in April.

For more information or to apply, visit the [STEM Academy page on the Castleberry ISD website](#).

EARLY VOTING

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FEBRUARY 21ST
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FEBRUARY 22ND
10:00 AM TO 4:00 PM

FEBRUARY 23RD - 27TH
7:00 AM TO 7:00 PM

Texas History Minute by Dr. Ken Bridges

From Mount Vernon to Yorktown: George Washington and the Unconquerable Resolve that Forged a Nation

As America approaches its 250th anniversary of its independence, historians continue to assess the lives and impact of its earliest leaders. George Washington, long called the Father of the Country, stands out among a cast of daring, bold, and sometimes colorful figures from the time period. Washington had a life of both frustrations and triumphs, but his determination and sense of integrity became the defining characteristics of his life.

George Washington was born February 22, 1732, in Westmoreland County, Virginia, near the coast. His father, Augustine, was a planter and justice of the peace. His marriage to Mary Ball Washington was his second marriage. George Washington was the eldest of six children born into the second marriage and had a warm relationship with his older half-brother Lawrence from his father's first marriage. In 1735, the family moved to a new plantation in nearby Fairfax County which the family later named Mount Vernon.

His relationship with his parents was often uncomfortable, and after his father's death in 1743, Washington's life changed considerably. He was unable to go to the English boarding school his half-brother had gone attended. Instead, he attended the nearby Lower Church School, a small school run out of the local Anglican church. He grew to a towering 6'4" and became an expert horseman and developed a love for dancing. Family friend William Fairfax, a local judge and planter, took the young Washington under his wing and taught him to be a surveyor. Washington received a surveying certificate from the College of William and Mary in 1749, and Fairfax had him appointed county surveyor for nearby Culpeper County at the age of 17.

In 1752, following his older brother's footsteps, he enlisted in the Virginia Militia and was soon appointed as a major. The British were facing tensions with the French as the two powers challenged each other for control of the Upper Ohio River Valley. The Ohio Company, a Virginia land company that included Fairfax, Washington's older brother, and other elites, heard rumors of French encroachments on their lands in eastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania. Washington's superiors tasked him with assessing the threats.

The threat became obvious in June 1754 when Washington found the French building Ft. Duquesne, a huge fortress in what became Pittsburgh. Washington, with a small detachment of militia troops quickly built a small stockade called Ft. Necessity to challenge the French. On July 4, French troops ordered his surrender. Washington, surrounded and vastly outmanned and outgunned, accepted the terms and agreed to leave the area. Though he faced criticism for the decision, most observers across the colonies and in Britain called it a heroic stand in the face of overwhelming opposition.

The French and Indian War soon erupted, a war that engulfed

Europe and the Americas. Washington, soon promoted to lieutenant colonel, distinguished himself in campaigns throughout the war and hoped his conduct would be rewarded with a commission as a regular officer in the British army. At the Battle of the Monongahela in 1755, a devastating ambush that left the senior officer, Gen. Edward Braddock dead, Washington had two horses shot out from under him as his actions saved what was left of British and colonial forces. After the battle, he discovered several bullet holes in his coat and hat and realized how close he had come to death himself. Washington won the respect of the men for charging into combat. But by 1757, the new British commander in Virginia, Lord Loudon, told Washington in no uncertain terms that he would not be given a commission. The decision stung Washington, but he still did his duty to his utmost. In 1758, he took part in the Forbes Expedition, the attempt to retake Ft. Duquesne. By this point, the tide of the war was shifting in the British favor, and Washington's and other brigades found the fort abandoned.

With the war now winding down, Washington resigned his militia commission. In 1759, he married the widowed Martha Custis and adopted her two children. The union made him one of the wealthiest men in Virginia. The two never had children together, but it was a happy marriage by all accounts.

That year, voters sent Washington to the House of Burgesses. Washington never became a great speaker or orator in a time when those skills could make or break a political career. A formal man, he preferred brevity in speech and moderation with the issues. A man of principle, Washington saw these principles increasingly tested in the 1760s as heavy-handed British actions upended its relationship with the colonies, tore apart the rights of the colonists, and pushed America into a confrontation with the crown government. Washington, like the other Americans of his generation, would soon face a difficult choice about his principles and what price he was willing to pay for those ideas.

In the years after the French and Indian War, the American colonies saw one right falling after another from a distant government in which the colonists had no vote and no voice. Taxation without representation, the erosion of the right of trial by jury, invasions of homes and businesses without warrants, arrests for peaceful assemblies, and the closures of colonial legislatures for protesting these actions. He served in the Virginia House of Burgesses aside Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry.

Washington was more moderate in his approach to the growing problems than a firebrand like Henry and his thundering speeches. He supported the colonial boycotts against British products in the 1760s to protest taxation without representation and preferred the work of quiet diplomacy. In 1772, he supported more united action by the colonies with the Committees of Correspondence, in which colonial leaders would communicate with *(continued on page 6)*

Washington (continued from page 5)

each other to report the actions and abuses of the British. In 1774, he became a delegate to the First Continental Congress, an attempt to unite the colonies in their protests against British abuses.

When fighting erupted in April 1775, the Continental Congress concluded that the colonies needed their own army instead of the individual militias of the colonies. On June 14, 1775, the Continental Army was created, a day the US Army still celebrates as its birth. John Adams nominated Washington to be its commander-in-chief. Washington accepted but refused to be paid for his service believing his duty to defend his neighbors was more important. In fact, he would end up paying many army expenses personally.

In March 1776, he forced the British from Boston at the Battle of Dorchester Heights. As the British approached New York with an army of 37,000 that summer, he rushed to Long Island to meet them. On July 4, the colonies declared independence. A copy of the Declaration of Independence was sent to Washington in New York. Washington had it read to his troops as he wanted to remind them what they were fighting for. He understood the difficulty they were facing. Above all, Washington believed the greatest strength of America was in his words “the unconquerable resolve of its citizens.”

Washington was outnumbered and lost the Battle of Long Island. New York City would be held by the British throughout the war. He was pushed back across New York into New Jersey and then into Pennsylvania. By December, it looked like the war was lost. Washington decided they needed to strike back. On Christmas night, he gathered his troops and crossed the Delaware River back into New Jersey and quietly marched to the nearest garrison, an outpost at Trenton held by German mercenaries working for the British. At daybreak, he caught them completely off guard and took the post. The victory in the dead of winter sent a message to the British and to the American people that Washington was not backing down and the cause was still alive.

He would lose more battles than he won, a fact that frustrated some in the heat of the moment, but his determination to keep fighting wore down the British. Conditions on the battlefield were harsh and dispiriting, but Washington kept the men fighting each

year of the war. By 1778, British officials quietly concluded they could not win the conflict, but the fighting would continue. That same year, France allied with the United States against the British, impressed how the small force fighting for independence was matching one of the most armies in the world.

The final victory would come at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781. Knowing that British forces were heading northward from the Carolinas prompted Washington and his French allies to head to Virginia. After a battle of nearly two weeks, the British surrendered; and the war was won. Washington could have had anything he wanted after leading the fight against Britain, but he instead quietly returned to his life at Mt. Vernon.

In 1787, he would preside over the Constitutional Convention that gave the new nation the constitution still in use today. He was elected unanimously to two terms as president starting in 1789. He stepped down in 1797, believing that no man was indispensable and that the cause of freedom and unity mattered more than one man.

“They wanted another Washington,” mused Napoleon during his exile to St. Helena years later. Even decades after his death, Washington's willingness to give up power astounded European observers. He preferred to let Americans define themselves and lead themselves than force any vision of his own upon the people. His honesty and his character were upheld as an example to American schoolchildren for generations afterward. Cities, counties, schools, monuments, universities, and the nation’s capital were dedicated to Washington.

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From River Oaks News Staff Writers
Sign Up & Support
Special Olympics Athletes at
the Polar Plunge March 27

Community supporters are invited to take a chilly leap for a warm cause when the 2026 Polar Plunge returns to Splash Dayz in support of Special Olympics Texas.

The event is scheduled for Friday, March 27, at Splash Dayz, 405 N. Las Vegas Trail, and will benefit more than 10,000 Area 11 Special Olympics Texas athletes. Organizers say the plunge is open to participants of all ages. The cost to participate is \$40 for adults and \$25 for youth.

The event is hosted in partnership with Special Olympics Texas and the Law Enforcement Torch Run, with local support from the WS Police Dept. and Splash Dayz.

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Weekend Forecast

Friday, Feb. 20:

AM - Mostly sunny, with a high near 68. N/NE wind 5 to 10 mph becoming E in the afternoon.
PM - Partly cloudy, with a low around 49. East wind around 5 mph becoming W/NW after midnight.

Saturday, Feb. 21:

AM - Sunny, with a high near 64.
Northwest wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 25 mph.
PM - Mostly clear, with a low around 36. North wind 10 to 15 mph, with gusts as high as 20 mph.

Sunday, Feb. 22:

AM - Mostly sunny, with a high near 59. North wind around 10 mph.
PM - Partly cloudy, with a low around 37.

[Extended Forecast Click Here](#)

