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# River Oaks News

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*Suburban Newspapers Staff Writers*

## Castleberry ISD Athletics Announces Game-Day Policies Ahead of Friday's Benbrook Matchup

Fans heading to Clark Stadium for Friday night's football game between the Castleberry Lions and Benbrook Bobcats will need to be mindful of new stadium policies designed to improve safety and streamline entry.

The rules include a clear bag policy that prohibits backpacks, the ban of all noisemakers, and a restriction on bringing outside food or drinks into the facility. Tickets must also be purchased in advance online through the GoFan app, as no in-person sales will be available at the gate.

The stadium is located at 5201 C.A. Roberson Blvd. in Fort Worth. Kickoff is scheduled for 7:30 p.m. Friday, Aug. 29.

The clear bag requirement is in line with similar regulations at other high school and collegiate athletic venues, where stadium of-

ficials aim to enhance security checks and reduce wait times at entry points. Prohibiting noisemakers and outside food and beverages, officials said, also helps create a safer and more enjoyable experience for athletes, fans, and staff.

Spectators planning to attend are encouraged to download the GoFan app and secure their tickets prior to arriving at the stadium. Digital ticketing allows for quicker entry and reduces the need for handling cash at the gate.

Clark Stadium, a longtime host for area high school athletics, is expected to draw a strong crowd. Stadium officials are reminding fans to review the policies in advance to avoid delays at entry and to help ensure a smooth game-day experience.

*From the Texas Department of Licensing & Regulation*

## Keep An Eye Out For Abandoned Or Deteriorated Water Wells



Texas hunters headed out for dove season are asked to watch for abandoned or deteriorated water wells, and to report any they find to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.

If you're aware of abandoned or deteriorated wells, please report them to [TDLR](#). When filing the report, please include an address or GPS coordinates and any photos or video of the well, if possible.

There are thousands of abandoned or deteriorated water wells in Texas, so chances are that hunters could spot these potential safety hazards that also contribute to groundwater pollution. Abandoned or deteriorated water wells can contaminate groundwater by providing a direct conduit for chemicals and other surface contaminants, such as animal waste and pesticides, to directly enter aquifers. Uncapped wells also present a physical danger to humans and animals who can be severely injured or killed when they fall partially or completely into the well.

What does an abandoned or deteriorated water well look like? There could be a plastic, steel, brick or concrete casing (pipe) that extends above ground, or there could be a hole in the ground with no apparent bottom. Some abandoned wells have concrete or brick casing extending above ground or a windmill with missing blades. Abandoned or deteriorated well casings or pipes may be cut off at ground level, posing an additional (story continued on page 3)



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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.
- Yeas and Nays are limited to 50 words or less.
- Engagement Announcements must be published four weeks prior to the wedding.
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Mistakes in stories or ads must be reported by Friday at 4 p.m. following Thursday’s edition for corrections. Payment for advertising is due by 10 a.m. Monday.



# Deteriorated Water Wells (continued from page 1)

threat.

Wells are “abandoned” when they are not in use, as defined by Texas Occupations Code, Section 1901.255.

A “deteriorated” well is a well that is causing or likely to cause pollution of any water in the state, including groundwater.

To avoid problems related to a water well that’s no longer in use, landowners should install a locking well cap or sanitary well seal – not just a cover over the well – to prevent unauthorized use or entry into the well. The well cap should not be easily removable by hand and should be capable of withstanding 400 pounds of weight. Septic systems should be pumped and inspected as often as recommended by the local health department. Care should be taken when mowing or working near the well.

Landowners are responsible for abandoned or deteriorated water wells on their property, and once they’re aware of an abandoned well on their property, they must plug it within 180 days. Landowners can plug the well themselves (in compliance with Title 16, Texas Administrative Code, Section 76.104: Capping and Plugging Wells Standards) or hire a well driller or pump installer licensed by TDLR to plug the well or bring the well into compliance.

If a landowner chooses to plug the well themselves, they are required to plug the well in accordance with TDLR’s well plugging specifications (<https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/wwd/wwdspecs.htm>) and submit a State of Texas Plugging Report to TDLR within 30 days from the date the well was plugged.

- Resources:
- This link contains a helpful guide to plugging water wells: <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/downloads/publications/rg/landowners-guide-to-plugging-abandoned-water-wells-rg-347.pdf>
  - Check whether a water well driller or pump installer is licensed: <https://www.tdlr.texas.gov/LicenseSearch/>.
  - Water Well Drillers Law, Plugging Water Well: [Texas Occupations Code, Section 1901.255](#).
  - Water Well Drillers and Pump Installers Administrative Rules, Technical Requirements, Standards for Capping and Plugging of Wells and Plugging Wells that Penetrate Injurious Water Zones: [Title 16, Texas Administrative Code, Section 76.104](#).

**About TDLR**

*TDLR provides regulatory oversight for a broad range of occupations, businesses, facilities, and equipment in Texas. The agency protects the health and safety of Texans by ensuring they are served by qualified, licensed professionals. Inspections of individuals, businesses, and equipment are done on a regular basis to safeguard the public. Visit TDLR’s website for more information and resources. You can search the TDLR licensee database, and also find past violations in which a final order was issued against companies or individuals. TDLR’s Customer Service line is available anytime between 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-800-803-9202. TDLR representatives are fluent in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.*

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From the Suburban Newspapers Staff Writers

# The Evolution of Video Games and Their Cultural Impact



Video games have transformed dramatically since their humble beginnings, evolving from pixelated experiments into a global cultural force that shapes entertainment, technology, and even the way people connect with one another. What started as simple digital amusements has become a multibillion-dollar industry with profound social and cultural influence.

## The Early Years: From Experiments to Arcades

The origins of video games can be traced back to the 1950s and 1960s, when scientists and engineers experimented with interactive computer programs. “Tennis for Two” (1958), played on an oscilloscope, and “Spacewar!” (1962), developed at MIT, were early prototypes that hinted at the possibilities of digital play.

The 1970s ushered in commercial gaming with arcade machines. “Pong,” released by Atari in 1972, became a phenomenon and introduced millions to the concept of interactive entertainment. Soon after, titles like “Space Invaders” and “Pac-Man” captured the public imagination, turning arcades into vibrant social spaces where young people gathered, competed, and bonded. This era laid the foundation for gaming’s cultural significance, proving it could engage broad audiences beyond hobbyists and computer labs.

## The Rise of Home Consoles

As technology advanced, gaming moved into living rooms. The release of the Atari 2600 in 1977 popularized the idea of interchangeable game cartridges, allowing players to expand their libraries without buying new hardware. Although the market suffered a crash in 1983 due to oversaturation and declining quality, Nintendo revived the industry with the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) in 1985.

The NES not only delivered iconic titles like “Super Mario Bros.” and “The Legend of Zelda” but also redefined the medium’s storytelling and design. Characters such as Mario, Link, and Donkey Kong became household names, embedding themselves in popular culture. This era also established long-lasting franchises that continue to shape the industry today.

## The Leap to 3D and Beyond

The 1990s brought major technological leaps. With the advent of 16-bit systems like the Super Nintendo and Sega Genesis, games became more sophisticated in design and storytelling. The arrival of 3D graphics, spearheaded by consoles like the Sony PlayStation and Nintendo 64, marked a revolutionary moment. Titles such as “The Legend

of Zelda: Ocarina of Time” demonstrated that video games could rival films in scope and emotional impact.

This period also saw the rise of competitive gaming, with fighting games like “Mortal Kombat” sparking tournaments and laying the groundwork for today’s esports industry.

## The Modern Era: Connectivity and Immersion

In the 2000s and beyond, the internet reshaped gaming. Online multiplayer titles like “Call of Duty” created virtual communities that transcended geography. Players could compete, cooperate, and form friendships with people around the world. Social gaming also emerged, with titles such as “Candy Crush” reaching millions through social media and mobile platforms.

Technological advancements have only deepened immersion. High-definition graphics, virtual reality (VR), and augmented reality (AR) blur the lines between physical and digital experiences. Games like “The Last of Us” showcase cinematic storytelling, while VR titles offer new forms of presence and interactivity. Gaming has also expanded across devices, with smartphones making it more accessible than ever.

## Cultural Impact: Beyond Entertainment

The cultural impact of video games extends far beyond entertainment. They have become powerful storytelling mediums, capable of addressing complex social issues and provoking empathy. Some games explore themes of identity and morality, while indie titles often push boundaries with experimental narratives.

Video games also influence other art forms, from film adaptations to music and fashion. Iconic franchises inspire movies, television shows, and merchandise, reinforcing gaming’s role in mainstream culture. Additionally, esports has emerged as a global phenomenon, with professional players, massive tournaments, and audiences rivaling traditional sports.

Gaming has also proven to be a tool for education and social change. From historical simulations to medical training programs, interactive experiences foster engagement and learning. Online communities provide spaces for connection, creativity, and self-expression, though they also raise questions about toxicity, addiction, and inclusivity that continue to shape cultural conversations.

## The Future of Gaming

As technology progresses, the future of gaming promises even greater integration into everyday life. Artificial intelligence, cloud gaming, and advances in VR and AR suggest increasingly personalized and immersive experiences. The industry continues to grapple with issues of representation, accessibility, and ethical design, but its trajectory shows no signs of slowing.

From its experimental origins to its present status as a cultural powerhouse, the evolution of video games reflects broader shifts in technology, society, and creativity. What was once a niche pastime has become a central pillar of modern culture, influencing how people play, learn, connect, and imagine new worlds.

The story of video games is far from complete, but one thing is clear: their impact on our cultural landscape will only continue to grow.

*From the Suburban Newspapers Staff Writers*

# 10 Ways Automation Can Make Homeownership Easier

Owning a home can feel like a full-time job. From mowing the lawn to keeping track of bills and maintenance, the daily list of tasks rarely ends. But homeowners are increasingly turning to smart technology to lighten the load. Automated systems now manage everything from thermostats to leak detection, offering convenience, savings and peace of mind.

According to a 2023 report from Statista, more than 60 million U.S. households use smart home devices, a number expected to rise steadily through the end of the decade. For many, automation is no longer a luxury—it's a practical solution to everyday stress.

Here are 10 areas where automation can make homeownership easier to manage.

1. **Thermostat settings** - Heating and cooling account for nearly half of the average home's energy use, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Smart thermostats, such as those by Nest and Ecobee, learn household patterns and adjust temperatures accordingly. Some even track local utility rates, shifting usage to off-peak hours. The result: lower bills and fewer manual adjustments.

2. **Lighting schedules** - Automated lighting systems can be set to turn on when residents arrive and turn off when no one is home. Motion sensors in hallways or bathrooms eliminate wasted electricity, while exterior lights on timers or sunset sensors provide added security. "Lighting automation is one of the simplest and most cost-effective upgrades a homeowner can make," said John Martin, a Fort Worth-based electrician.

3. **Lawn irrigation** - Smart sprinklers do more than keep grass green—they save water. By analyzing soil conditions, weather forecasts and seasonal changes, these systems irrigate only when necessary. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that households can reduce outdoor water use by up to 50 percent with automated irrigation.

4. **Security monitoring** - Doorbell cameras, smart locks and motion sensors have redefined home security. Homeowners can set locks to engage automatically at night or receive instant alerts when motion is detected. Automated systems can also trigger lights or alarms if suspicious activity occurs. These features add peace of mind, especially for frequent travelers.

5. **Appliance use** - Smart plugs and connected appliances allow homeowners to control devices remotely or schedule them to run when energy costs are lowest. Coffee makers can brew before the alarm clock rings, and washing machines can run during off-peak hours. Beyond convenience, these tools extend the life of appliances by preventing overuse.

6. **Cleaning routines** - Robotic vacuums and mops can map homes, schedule cleanings and return to charging docks without human input. Premium models even empty their own dustbins. While they don't fully replace deep cleaning, they reduce the need for daily upkeep. "It's like coming home to a freshly vacuumed house every day," said Dallas homeowner Maria Lopez.

7. **Grocery restocking** - Smart refrigerators and pantry-tracking apps can monitor expiration dates and inventory, sending reminders

when staples run low. Some platforms connect directly with grocery delivery services, turning shopping lists into scheduled deliveries. For busy families, this automation prevents last-minute trips to the store.

8. **Window treatments** - Motorized blinds and curtains can be synced with sunrise and sunset or controlled by voice command. Besides convenience, they help regulate indoor temperatures, easing the load on heating and cooling systems. Energy experts say automated window coverings can reduce annual heating and cooling costs by as much as 15 percent.

9. **Leak detection** - Water damage is one of the costliest problems for homeowners. Smart leak sensors, placed near water heaters, dishwashers and sinks, can detect moisture and automatically shut off supply valves. Insurance companies increasingly encourage these devices, offering policy discounts to customers who use them.

10. **Home maintenance reminders** - One of the simplest but most overlooked forms of automation is scheduling reminders. Apps can track when to change HVAC filters, clean gutters or test smoke alarms. By staying ahead of routine tasks, homeowners can avoid costly repairs and extend the lifespan of systems and appliances.

## A Growing Market

The smart home industry is booming, with U.S. consumers spending more than \$30 billion on devices in 2022, according to the Consumer Technology Association. The pandemic accelerated adoption, as more people spent time at home and sought ways to make daily life easier.

The technology also continues to get smarter. Artificial intelligence and machine learning allow devices to adapt to individual habits, creating personalized experiences. For example, a thermostat might lower the temperature automatically on nights when the family typically cooks a big meal, anticipating extra heat from the oven.

## Barriers to Adoption

Despite the benefits, not every homeowner is ready to automate. Cost is a significant barrier, with advanced systems requiring hundreds or even thousands of dollars in upfront investment. Privacy and cybersecurity also remain concerns, as connected devices can be vulnerable to hacking if not properly secured.

"Homeowners should always research products, choose trusted brands and keep software updated," said Martin, the electrician. "Automation works best when it's reliable and safe."

## The Bottom Line

While no device can completely eliminate the work of owning a home, automation can ease the burden of repetitive tasks and help homeowners save money over time. From energy management to maintenance alerts, technology offers a chance to spend less time worrying about chores and more time enjoying home life.

As the market grows, so does the potential for even more innovative solutions. For now, these 10 automations offer a glimpse of how technology is reshaping the meaning of homeownership—making it not just smarter, but simpler.



From Daughters of the American Colonists

Honorable Philip Livingston

Chapter Members

Attend Fall Workshop



Pictured (l-r) are: Joyce Ogle, Laurie Behn, Lisa Kight-Alcala, Linda Hines, Wanda Samek, Lorie Williams, Colleen Petosa and Dawn Needles.

Eight members of the Honorable Philip Livingston Chapter, Daughters of the American Colonists attended the Texas Society State’s Fall Workshop on February 13 & 14 in Temple, Texas. Both days were filled with business sessions and learning.

The object of the society is to research and preserve the history and deeds of American colonists and commemorate deeds of colonial interest.

The chapter’s goals are the same and to provide an annual scholarship, contribute to veteran services, and to provide JROTC and ROTC medals to outstanding students at TCU and the Fort Worth ISD.

The National Society Daughters of the American Colonists is a non-profit, non-political service organization and lineage society.

For information on how to find your ancestors or about its programs, please email lhines7007@gmail.com.

Prospective members are always welcome.

From the Project Linus Blanketeers

First Monday Quilt Club:

Project Linus Volunteers Needed

Come join the fun and enjoy great fellowship at the monthly meeting 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 pot-luck lunch, ladies are asked to bring snack items. Their next meeting is on Monday, Sept. 1.

Project Linus is a non-profit service organization. The members of this group are Tarrant County Chapter Project Linus volunteers who create handmade quilts and blankets that provide warmth and comfort for local children who have suffered 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. 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 high school students can receive community service credits for participating. Materials (fabric, batting, thread, and yarn) are provided.

For more information about the mission of Project Linus, visit [www.projectlinus.org](http://www.projectlinus.org). For more information on this group and meetings, call Virginia Biela at 817-244-1263.

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Texas History Minute by Dr. Ken Bridges

# Bessie Coleman: The First African-American Woman Pilot

## Who Opened the Skies for Future Generations

Bessie Coleman had said as a child that she wanted to make something of herself. For an African-American at the turn of the century, there were few opportunities for that to happen. With the invention of airplanes, she found a magnificent new calling as the first African-American woman to become a pilot. As a famous stunt pilot in the 1920s, she toured the country, and all eyes looked skyward to see her perform.



Coleman was born outside Atlanta, in deep East Texas, in January 1892 in a one-room cabin. She was the twelfth of thirteen children in a family of sharecroppers. Her father was part black and part Cherokee and her mother was a former slave. At the age of two, the family moved to Waxahachie, where she would attend school. She would walk four miles to the one-room school where she developed a talent for math. Her father, however, left for Oklahoma when she was seven for work and never returned.

She later took her life savings and enrolled at what was then called Oklahoma Colored Normal and Agricultural School (present-day Langston University). She had to quit after her first semester. In 1916, she moved to Chicago with a couple of her brothers. She picked up a job as a manicurist. As World War I progressed, she was mesmerized by the daring tales of World War I fighter pilots that were told by returning veterans. She also began hearing about women getting their own pilots licenses in France and began dreaming of her own career as a pilot. Coleman took up a second job and started saving her money.

Harriet Quimby of Michigan became the first American woman pilot in 1911. Dozens more women had become pilots since that time. But there were no opportunities for minority women to even enter flight schools. She talked to some local businessmen who suggested she take flight lessons in France. After getting extra funds from local benefactors, she left for France in 1920. In June 1921, she gained her pilots license, the first African-American or Native American woman ever to receive a license. The news was met with considerable acclaim in the United States. She spent the next year working on further pilot training.

The airplanes at the time were primitive, often single-propeller biplanes with wood frames overlaid with cloth bodies. The open-air cockpits had room for only one or two people. The engines were underpowered and stalled often. The dangers were obvious, but the risk made it all the more tempting for those early pilots willing to defy gravity and sail among the clouds. The plane Coleman used most often was the JN-4 "Jenny" biplane.

There were few occupations for pilots at the time, especially for women. The Army Air Corps and Naval Air Corps were still very small and would not admit women. The U. S. Postal Service had its air mail program in effect before World War I, but it would not hire women pilots. Passenger air service was still in its infancy, and the major airlines

would not be formed for several more years. Most air travel in the 1920s, in fact, was by Zeppelin airship rather than airplanes.

The best option, and the most visible, was the air show. Airplanes were not yet two decades old, and millions were fascinated by the new invention and the sight of death-defying aerial acrobatics that air shows offered. At air shows, pilots would perform complicated maneuvers, stuntmen would walk on the wings, and some would even parachute out of planes.

Coleman toured the country with air shows, billed as "Brave Bessie" or "Queen Bessie." She appeared in a silent short film in 1922. In 1923, she bought her first plane, but she was seriously injured in an air show when it crashed a few days later. She saved up to buy another plane the next year. In the meantime, she continued to tour across the country.

"In the air is the only place free from prejudice," Coleman often said. In the air, pilots can only rely on their training, instincts, and determination, qualities that do not know skin color or gender. She gave presentations at African-American churches and schools, urging other African-American men and women to get involved in aviation. She openly talked about one day opening a flight school for African-Americans.

By 1926, Coleman was still performing air shows and was preparing for a performance in Florida. Coleman was unable to get a plane for the next air show, where she planned a spectacular parachute jump from the plane, and had her publicist and mechanic, William Wills, fly in her plane from Dallas. Wills had to land several times for repairs, but managed to deliver the JN-4. On April 30, she and Wills took off on a test flight. Unknown to either one, a wrench had been left inside the engine assembly. During the flight, the wrench came loose, damaging the internal controls. The plane suddenly went into an uncontrolled spin, plummeting to the ground. Coleman was thrown out of the plane, falling to her death. Wills desperately fought the controls to no avail. He died when the plane crashed moments later.

The 34-year-old aviation pioneer was buried in Chicago. The city and aviators alike came to honor her memory in the years afterward. The city named a library, a park, and a street near O'Hare International Airport for her. Several other cities named streets for her near their airports in the coming decades. The Aerospace Education Foundation in New York offers the Bess Coleman Scholarship for students interested in aviation careers. In 1995, the U. S. Postal Service issued a stamp in her honor. The Cedar Hill Independent School District opened Bessie Coleman Middle School in 2006.

Perhaps the most fitting tribute came decades after her death. In 1992, Dr. Mae Jemison, the first African-American woman in space, carried a small picture of Coleman with her on her mission aboard the space shuttle *Endeavour*. A great moment in exploration became possible by one person opening the door for others to follow. All eyes had turned to the skies once again for Bessie Coleman.

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## Weekend Forecast

### Friday, Aug. 29:

**AM** - Partly sunny, with a high near 91. Southwest wind 5 to 10 mph becoming north in the afternoon. Chance of precipitation is 40%  
**PM** - Mostly cloudy, with a low around 71. East northeast wind 5 to 10 mph. Chance of precipitation is 30%.

### Saturday, Aug. 30:

**AM** - Mostly cloudy, with a high near 84. Northeast wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40%.  
**PM** - Mostly cloudy, with a low around 70. East wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40%.

### Sunday, Aug. 31:

**AM** - Mostly cloudy, with a high near 83. Northeast wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 40%.  
**PM** - A 20 percent chance of showers after 1am. Partly cloudy, with a low around 69.

Extended Forecast Click Here