

# THE OBSERVER/ENTERPRISE

Published Weekly  
 The Observer/Enterprise, LLC  
 (325) 277-9210  
 observerenterprise@gmail.com  
 www.ObserverEnterprise.com  
 Periodical Rate Postage paid at Robert Lee, Texas

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to  
 Observer/Enterprise  
 PO Box 1329, Robert Lee, Texas 76945

STAFF  
 Morgan McCutchen, Publisher/Editor  
 Ashley McCutchen Braswell, Social Media Coordinator

SUBSCRIPTION RATES  
 Per Year in Coke County ... \$35.00  
 Per Year Elsewhere in Texas ... \$40.00  
 Per Year Outside of Texas ... \$45.00



## Living Well, Living Strenuously

By James M. Decker

[Author's Note: This was written on Sunday, August 20, 2023.]

I'm writing this from the road. Now, I'm no literary chronicler of travel like John Steinbeck ("Travels With Charley") or Jack Kerouac ("On the Road") but I did manage to dictate this with the wonders of voice-to-text while driving from Stamford to Colorado.

Two years ago, my friend Ed Roberson unveiled the idea of the "Strenuous Life Retreat," a week-long dedication to the guiding principles of Theodore Roosevelt's life: physical exertion, intellectual stimulation, eating well, and sleeping energetically. The first retreat was held in September 2022 at the Medano Zapata Ranch in southern Colorado, adjacent to Great Sand Dunes National Park.

Last year, that retreat came at something of an inopportune time. It was scheduled only a few weeks after my family was unexpectedly displaced from our home by an electrical fire. I gave a great deal of thought to canceling, but my deeply-caring wife insisted that I go on the trip anyway. She rightly told me that I would forever regret canceling. She was correct. It was one of the most enjoyable weeks of my life and it was certainly the most exhausting, but in the best possible way. This year, the retreat is about a month earlier. There are no life crises this time, but I seem to feel drained and exhausted in a non-strenuous living manner. The summer heat certainly has not helped.

Our daughters are big fans of Daniel Tiger. He is a PBS character and the star of a children's television show that does not drive adults insane. He also descends from the Mr. Rogers universe. There's a song on that show that I have pondered, with lyrics that go,

"sometimes you can feel two things at the same time, and that's OK." It is a great lesson to help small children learn to process their emotions. You can be disappointed about something while also being otherwise happy. I've considered how that might be a great lesson for adults too. Our human tendency is to label everything in neat boxes and make those boxes as simple as possible. It's a Disney-esque false reality: everything is clearly good or bad, right or wrong, and there can be no complexity.

Now, as Alan Jackson once sang, "But here in the real world, it's not that easy at all." Robert Earl Keen further elaborated that "we live and die by shades of gray."

Life can be exhausting, y'all. It is important to understand that we can do good work and pursue truly beautiful and important things, while occasionally being worn out and even frustrated. Sometimes that is bad timing. Sometimes it is bad luck. Sometimes it is a human tendency to make life unnecessary complicated and difficult for ourselves and everyone around us. I can be talented at that. We must fight the Disney-esque tendency to think that means something is wrong. Daniel Tiger knows better. Sometimes it is just life.

It is vital that we find ways to re-center and ground ourselves

throughout the year, so that we thrive in our good work and pursuit of beautiful and important things, without getting burned out by them. In the past year, we've greatly reduced the television watching in our house. I've spent much more time kayaking, and gardening. Those have been very positive, but I still don't have it all figured out yet. Wendell Berry's most famous poetry works are collectively called the "Sabbath Poems." They are just what they sound like: poems that he wrote after Sunday morning walks through the woods and fields surrounding his home. Reading those poems is extraordinarily peaceful and cleansing. One can only imagine the feeling from actually living the moments that created them.

As I wind my way into the San Luis Valley of Colorado for a week of strenuous life, I think about the downhill slope to the end of the year. We have just enough time to truly re-center ourselves to do the good work of rural revitalization or whatever else you individually are passionate about. Or, we can muddle through four months, look up on New Year's Day, and feel like we're still just in an exhausting slog.

I know what Theodore Roosevelt and Wendell Berry would do. They would make the most of the weeks and months to come, not in a chaotic obsession with productivity, but in living well, doing good work, and focusing on the most important things. May we do the same.

And may I conquer the trail and the climb to 12,000 feet and Zapata Lake!

*James Decker is the Mayor of Stamford, Texas and the creator of the West of 98 website and the Rural Church and State and West of 98 podcasts. Contact James and subscribe to these essays at westof98.substack.com and subscribe to him wherever podcasts are found.*

# RLISD board meetings minutes told

July 13, 2023

The Robert Lee ISD Board of Trustees held a special meeting on Thursday, July 13, 2023, at RLISD.

Those present included board members Wes Washam, Jeffie Roberts, Linda Burns, Jose Morales, and Erin Oleksiuk. Board members Beverly Sinclair and Cole Bosworth were absent.

The meeting was called to order at 12 noon by President Washam with a quorum of members present.

The invocation and pledge were led by Erin Oleksiuk.

Supt. Hood recommend to adopt an order authorizing the issuance of Unlimited Tax School Building Bonds; levying an Annual Ad Valorem tax and providing for the security for and payment of said bonds; Approving an Official Statement; authorizing submission of the bonds to the Texas Attorney General; and enacting other provisions relating to the subject. Erin Oleksiuk made a motion to approve the recommendation and was seconded by Linda Burns. All were for.

Supt. Hood recommended awarding the bid to purchase two new SUV's from Ivey Motors. Linda Burns made a motion to approve the recommendation and was seconded by Jose Morales. All

were for.

Supt. Hood recommended to hire Kristi Fowler as an elementary teacher for 2023-2024 school year. Erin Oleksiuk made a motion to approve the recommendation and was seconded by Jose Morales. All were for.

The next regular school board meeting will be held Tuesday, July 18, 2023, at 5 pm.

The meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm.

July 18, 2023

The Robert Lee ISD Board of Trustees held a regular meeting on Tuesday, July 18, 2023, at RLISD.

Those present included board members Wes Washam, Jeffie Roberts, Linda Burns, Jose Morales, Beverly Sinclair and Erin Oleksiuk. Board member Cole Bosworth was absent.

The meeting was called to order at 5 pm by President Washam with a quorum of members present.

The invocation and pledge were led by Linda Burns.

A presentation was held from TASB on RLISD salary study.

The 2023-2024 District Salary Schedule was discussed.

Jeffie Roberts made a motion to approve the minutes of June 22, 2023, and July 13, 2023, and was seconded by Jose Morales. All were for.

Erin Oleksiuk made a motion

## Area Churches

### Invite You to Worship

#### Bronte

##### Bronte Church of Christ

PO Box 346  
 118 S. Jefferson • Bronte  
 Sun. 10 am & 6 pm, Wed. 7 pm

##### Central Baptist Church

324 S. Franklin • Bronte  
 (325) 473-4811  
 Dale Patterson, Pastor  
 Sun. 10 am Sunday School  
 11 am & 5 pm Worship

##### First Baptist Church

424 S. Washington • Bronte  
 (325) 473-2331  
 firstbronte@gmail.com  
 Pastor George Cooper

Sunday 9:45 am Sunday School,  
 10:30 am Worship  
 Wednesday 6 pm - 8 pm  
 Children and Youth

##### Bronte Methodist Church

Corner of Washington & Holmes  
 Bronte • (325) 650-4836  
 Pastor Keith Fletcher  
 Sun. 10:00 am Sunday School  
 11:00 am Worship

##### St. James Catholic Church

215 N. Washington, Bronte  
 (325) 365-2687

Rev. Timothy Hayter, Pastor  
 Sunday Bilingual Mass 8 am

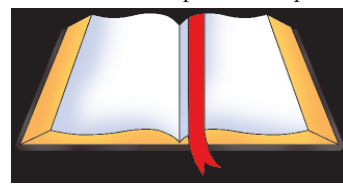
##### 4C Cowboy Church

Drawer R • Bronte • (325) 895-4080  
 Robert Lemmond, Pastor  
 Sunday, 10:30 am - Texas Theater  
 Wednesday Bible Study 6 pm -  
 4C Feedlot Youth Building

#### Coke County

##### Pecan Baptist

PO Box 542 • 12 miles West of  
 Robert Lee on Sterling City Hwy  
 (325) 453-2065, Bill Hood, Pastor  
 www.pecanbaptistchurchrl.com  
 Sun. 10 am, Sunday School  
 11 am & 7 pm, Worship



#### Robert Lee

##### Bible Baptist Church

PO Box 938 • 9th & Austin  
 Sunday 10 am Sunday School,  
 11 am and 5 pm Worship,  
 Wed 5 pm Bible Study

##### Emmanuel Pentecostal

PO Box 794 • 1004 Hillcrest  
 Pastor Brantly Robertson  
 (972) 841-2009  
 Sundays 10 am, Wednesdays 7 pm

##### First Methodist Church

PO Box 144 • 9th & Chadbourne  
 Robert Lee • (325) 453-2417  
 Sun. 10 am Sunday School  
 11 am Worship,

##### Iglesia Bautista Betel

101 Houston • Robert Lee  
 Sun. 9:45 am • Sunday School  
 11 am Service • Bible Study Wed. 6 pm

##### Southside Church of Christ

PO Box 698 • 8th & Houston  
 Robert Lee (325) 453-2176  
 Sun. 10 am, Sunday School  
 11 am Worship

##### Wed. 6 pm, Worship

##### Northside Church of Christ

PO Box 508  
 9th & Chadbourne • Robert Lee  
 (325) 453-2685, (325) 763-2118  
 or (325) 473-1053  
 Services: Sun. 10 am

##### Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church

601 W. 10th, Robert Lee  
 (325) 365-2687  
 Rev. Timothy Hayter, Pastor  
 Saturday Vigil Mass 6 pm

##### Robert Lee Baptist Church

PO Box 493 • 22 W. 11th  
 (325) 453-2724  
 Chris Walls, Pastor  
 Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School  
 11 am Worship

##### Wed. 6:30 pm, Prayer Meeting

##### Victory Assembly of God

(325) 453-2208, PO Box 638  
 202 E. 6th Street, Robert Lee  
 Rev. Rocky Youngblood, Pastor  
 Sun. 9:45 am, Sunday School  
 10:45 am & 6 pm, Worship  
 Wed. 6 pm, Bible Study

**Russell Davis**  
 Agent  
 611 Austin Street  
 PO Box 1079  
 Robert Lee, Texas 76945  
 (325) 453-4505 office  
 (325) 453-4524 fax  
 (325) 650-1904 mobile  
 TXFB-INS.COM

## Are you earning enough on your savings?



**Tommy E Neal, AAMS®**  
 Financial Advisor

2412 College Hills Boulevard  
 Suite 102  
 San Angelo, TX 76904  
 325-223-8244

**Edward Jones**  
 MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

Member SIPC

MKT-5894I-A