NORTH CHANNEL STAR

Your News, Your Newspaper

Serving all of the North Shore -- Channelview, Sheldon, Galena Park, Jacinto City **JANUARY 15, 2014 VOLUME 2. NO. 3** www.northchannelstar.com

CHANNEL **CHATTER**

Rodeo Season brings art shows, livestock auctions

The Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo has announced its performers for the BIG Rodeo that starts on March 4th at Reliant Park in central Houston, and that is the signal for everyone to "block their hat and polish their hoots!"

"block their hat and polish their boots!"
All of the area high schools will have their student rodeo art on display this month and next, and you will be amazed at the high quality of the work. Some of the best will go on to the HL&R for judging, and an opportunity to win a prize and get auctioned for a substantial amount of money, to be used by the students for scholarships. You can see this art done by

You can see this art done by Galena Park students, at a RO-DEO ART SHOW this Thursday evening, from 5 pm to 7 pm at the North Shore Senior high School on Castlegory off Wallis-ville Road. This special public showing shouldn't be missed! Admission is free, and you will enjoy the show, I promise.

Speaking of Livestock Shows

& Auctions, several schools and their FFA clubs are active with this event this month. Galena Park is featured in this issue of the NORTH CHANNEL STAR, but Sheldon held their FFA show last Thursday, and will be featured in an upcoming issue. After that, Channelview FFA holds their Pig & Cattle Jackpot Show & Show-manship event on Jan. 25th, along with a Fish Fry, and we will have that coverage in a future

Debra Duncan headlines Chamber Gala

Television personality Deborah Duncan, of KHOU Channel 11, will be the fea-tured speaker



at the North Channel Chamber Gala, to be held Satur-

be held Saturday, January 25, 2014 at the Houston Marriott Hotel, 9100 Gulf Freeway at 6:30 pm. Call the chamber at 713-450-3600 for reservations and info. Margie Buentello at the Chamber office said tickets are almost sold out! Call now.

Galena Park FFA students hold successful Livestock Sale

Building Character Through FFA

JACINTO CITY – The Ga-lena Park ISD FFA – The Na-tional Future Farmers of America Organization – held its annual livestock show and auction at the District Ag Fa-cility in Jacinto City on No-

auction at the District Ag Fa-cility in Jacinto City on No-vember 21st.

The proceeds from the event this school year raised an astonishing, record-setting \$89,827, up more than 10% from the previous highest year! This was directly attrib-utable to the tremendous com-munity and District support and generosity.

During the year, the partic-ipating students spend their own money purchasing the project animal and feeding and cleaning twice a day, of-ten starting at 5 a.m. every morning of the week.

The annual auction raises money for students' future col-lege expenses or next year's project. Vicki Johnson, Direc-tor of Career and Technology, stated, "These young men and women participate in an orga-



Top Buyer Swindoll







Welcome week events

San Jacinto College is hosting a series of Welcome Back events during the week of January 13 - January 17. The following events will be hosted at the Central Campus, located at 8800 Spencer Highway in Pasadena; the South Campus, located at 13735 Beamer Road in Houston, and the North Campus, located at 5800 Uvalde Road in Houston.

*Central Campus, located at 5800 Uvalde Road in Houston.

*Central Campus. Make your own button, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 15; wax hands, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 16 a.m. to 2 p.m., Wednesday, Jan. 15; back located by Jan. 15; back located by Jan. 16; Jan. 16; Jan. 16; Jan. 17; make Jan. 16; Jan. 16; Jan. 16; Jan. 17; Jan. 18; Jan. 19; Jan. 19

nization that has a very strong opportunity to learn leadership, teamwork, and responsibility. I truly admire the students for their hard work & dedication." Students are required to have passing grades in order to show their projects and also be in good standing with the FFA. The students' yearlong dedication to their project is an outstanding testament to their responsibility, trustworthiness, money management and teamwork.

This year's Silver Sponsors included: Robert Seibert; Dixie & Swindoll Services; Dwayne DeGeorge - North Shore Glass; Lloyd & Linda Duncan - Underwood Self Storage; Sheila Swindoll - Swindoll Paint & Body; Oates Industries Inc; Ana Luna Hernandez Campaign; Chiara Combs - Ideal Smiles Family Dentistry

Buckle Sponsors included:

Combs - Ideal Smiles Family Dentistry Buckle Sponsors included: JA Davis Advertising; Wenona Martinez; Ana Duke; Susan Blevins; CD Williams State Farm; Dwayne DeGeorge -Northshore Glass Co.; Sonia Estrada; David Latham; Ab-ner Fuentes

ner Fuentes Gold Sponsors: Blanquita's Mexican Restaurant, Inc., and Platinum Sponsor: KNCS Services, LLC.

'Young Frankenstein' Auditions

"Young Frankenstein' Auditions
Thirty to 50 adult roles (ages 16 and older) will be cast in auditions for the San Jacinto College Central Theatre and Film department production of "Young Frankenstein." The auditions will take place Jan. 15 and 15, at 6 p.m., in Slocomb Auditorium on the San Jacinto College Central Campus located at 8060 Spencer Highway in Pasadena. The auditions are open for anyone in the community and enrollment at San Jacinto College is not required. People participating in the auditions should come dressed to move, and do not need to bring any prepared material.

Health Care Career Fair, Feb. 20
The San Jacinto College North Campus
will host a Health Care Career Fair from
11 a.m. to 1 yam on Feb. 20 in the
Allied Health and Natural Sciences
Building, From long-term care to
nursing, rehabilitation, physical
therapy, emergency medical services,
and pharmacy, those who attend will
receive opportunities to talk with a
variety of local and national health
care employers. The North Campus is
located at 5800 Uvalde Road in
Houston.

Surrounded by monuments of history, industries and maritime enterprises of today, and the space age of tomorow, San Jacinto College has been serving the citizens of East Harris County, Texas, for more than 50 years. The Achieving the Dream Leader College is committed to the goals and aspirations of a diverse population of 30,000 students in more than 200 degree and certificate options, including university transfer and career preparation. Students also benefit from the College's job training programs, renowned for meeting the needs of growing industries in the region. San Jacinto College graduates contribute nearly \$630 million each year to the Texas workforce.

North Shore Rotary presents \$40,000 to county for bridge in Park

Harris County Pct. 2 parks department plans to build a walk-ing bridge between North Shore Rotary Park on Wallisville, and the Fonteno Park to the west. The cost of the project will be about \$300,000, and the North Shore Rotary Club donated \$40,000 to this project. Accepting the check in the photo at right is Pct. 2 Commissioner Jack Morman, second from left, with Rotary President Matt Davis holding the check in the center, along with other Rotarians from the club. Harris County Pct. 2 parks de

See related story on page 7



New Voter Registration certificates in your mailbox

HOUSTON - Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector Mike Sullivan announced today that the new voter registration certificates are in the mail and reminds voters to review their information.

"My office has begun mailing voter registration certificates to 1,876,539 registered voters," said Tax Assessor-Collector Mike Sullivan. "The new voter registration certificates, which will be light orange in color, are expected to hit all mailboxes by the end of next week. It will reflect the voter's current name and address, just as it appears in dress, just as it appears in the poll book when they go

New voter registration certificates are n every two years and it gives



the public the opportunity to review their information and update it. The most common reasons voters need to update their voter registration

-Name Changes – due to marriage or divorce

-Moving to a different reside

-Deceased individual that was not reported

was not reported "Updating your informa-tion has never been easier

See REGISTRATION, page 8

Meeting airs opinions on new game room regulations

By Lewis Spearman

The month of November Precinct 2 Co Morman conducted a public Morman conducted a public's hearing to record the public's opinion on game rooms conducting gambling in unincorporated areas of Harris County.

porated areas of Harris County.

The meeting was officiated by Robert Soard, First Assistant County Attorney. Precinct 3 Constable Ken Jones and Precinct 4 Constable Ron Hickman, and Majors from the Harris County Sheriff's Department and the Precinct 2 Commissioner were on hand to hear the comments and to make their own. make their own. Some 20 residents spoke for

regulation of the game rooms and four against regulation



Jessica Woods of Highlands was one of many who testified against the game rooms. Hundreds of interested citizens turned out at the Crosby Community Center for the Town Hall Meeting on new Game Room Regulations.

and another mostly between

In December of 2012 Wayne Smith R. 128 Texas District proposed legislation that

would enable Harris County to strengthen the authority to enforce regulation of game

See GAME ROOMS, page 8



GALENA PARK ISD 2013

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2013

GRAND CHAMPIONS



GRAND CHAMPION STEER
Exhibitor: FRANKIE PENA
Buyer: SECONDARY PRINCIPALS



GRAND CHAMPION SWINE Exhibitor: ANAIDA VAZQUEZ Buyer: CHARLES SWINDOLL



GRAND CHAMPION GOAT Exhibitor: ANGELICA PECINA Buyer: GPISD ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS



GRAND CHAMPION LAMB Exhibitor: MARK MORATO Buyer: GPISD CABINET



GRAND CHAMPION RABBIT Exhibitor: WILLIAM BAUER Buyer: GPISD CTE



GRAND CHAMPION BROILER Exhibitor: MONICA VAZQUEZ Buyer: GPISD ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS



GRAND CHAMPION FOOD Exhibitor: ALAYNA CAIN MATHENY Buyer: GPISD CTE



GRAND CHAMPION HORTICULTURE Exhibitor: FRANZELY PENA Buyer: GPISD GROUNDS DEPARTMENT



GRAND CHAMPION ART Exhibitor: COZIE GARDNER Buyer: OATES INDUSTRIES, INC



GRAND CHAMPION PHOTOGRAPHY Exhibitor: KRYSTAL CHAVEZ Buyer: GPISD CTE



GRAND CHAMPION FLORAL Exhibitor: SARAI LEAL Buyer: GPISD CTE





RESERVE CHAMPION STEER Exhibitor: BRANDON MILLER Buyer: NORTH SHORE ROTARY



RESERVE CHAMPION SWINE Exhibitor: MONICA VAZQUEZ Buyer: SMS PRECISION TECH



RESERVE CHAMPION GOAT Exhibitor: BROOKE COOEY Buyer: GPISD BOARD OF TRUSTEES



RESERVE CHAMPION LAMB Exhibitor: ALEX SILVA Buyer: GPISD CTE



RESERVE CHAMPION RABBIT Exhibitor: ARLETTY SAENZ Buyer: SECONDARY PRINCIPALS



RESERVE CHAMPION BROILER Exhibitor: BRANDON MILLER Buyer: GPISD CTE



RESERVE CHAMPION FOOD Exhibitor: CRYSTAL CHAVEZ Buyer: GPISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION

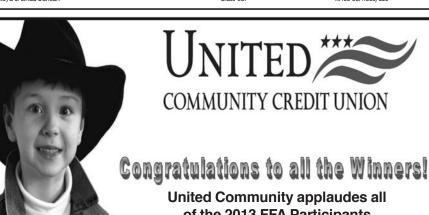
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Platinum Sponsor KNCS Services, LLC -

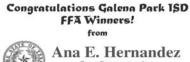
Photography by T.J. Johnson Photography



of the 2013 FFA Participants on a job well done.

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State Representation District 143

713-455-5100

233 Mercury Dr. na.hernandez@house.state.tx.us

Houston, TX 77029 713-675-8596



FFA LIVESTOCK SHOW

GALENA PARK ISD AGRICULTURAL CENTER • 2000 HOLLAND AVENUE





RESERVE CHAMPION HORTICULTURE Exhibitor: FRANKIE PENA Buyer: CHARLES SWINDOLL



3RD PLACE STEER Exhibitor: ANDREW DUKE Buyer: TAYLOR DUKE



3RD PLACE RABBIT Exhibitor: ALICIA GARCIA Buyer: CHARLES SWINDOLL



4TH PLACE GOAT
Exhibitor: JULYSSA VAZQUEZ
Buyer: GPISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION



5TH PLACE SWINE Exhibitor: EMILY GAINEY Buyer: VICO MFG



RESERVE CHAMPION ART Exhibitor: MEAGAN LEVY Buyer: OATES INDUSTRIES, INC



3RD PLACE SWINE
Exhibitor: MATHEW HARRIS
Buver: GPISD CTE



3RD PLACE BROILER Exhibitor: FRANCOIS EUGENE Buyer: GPISD CTE



4TH PLACE RABBIT
Exhibitor: JUSTIN WENNER
Buyer: GPISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION



5TH PLACE RABBIT Exhibitor: KORDELL PARRISH Buyer: GPISD CTE



RESERVE CHAMPION PHOTOGRAPHY Exhibitor: FRANZELY PENA Buyer: GPISD EDUCATION FOUNDATION



3RD PLACE GOAT Exhibitor: ADRAIN LUNA Buyer: GPISD CTE



4TH PLACE STEER Exhibitor: SEAN GUAJARDO Buyers: CHARLES SWINDOLL,GERALD COBB,JOE HARWELL



4TH PLACE BROILER
Exhibitor: BLAKE WASSON
Buver: GPISD CTE



5TH PLACE BROILER Exhibitor: VIVIANA FLORES Buyer: VICO MFG



RESERVE CHAMPION FLORAL Exhibitor: ISELLE GARCIA Buyer: GPISD CTE



3RD PLACE LAMB Exhibitor: REBECCA PIPITONE Buver: GPISD CTE



4TH PLACE SWINE
Exhibitor: FRANCOIS EUGENE
Buyer: SEASONS LEARNING ACADEMY



5TH PLACE STEER Exhibitor: ALEX LUNA Buyer: VICO MFG

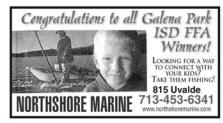
THANK YOU

Thank you to all that have supported and assisted the 2013 GPISD FFA Livestock Show.

Snow.

Sue Edwards, Show book producer,
Stephanie Jones, AST, Heather Szostek, AST
Melissa lane, AST, Erika Espitita, AST
Vicki Johnson, CTE Director, Rutie Bass, CTE
Coordinator, Ken Smith, CTE Coordinator
Brandi Case, CTE Secretary
Sunshine Contreras
Dr Angi Williams, Superintendent
Elizabeth Lalor, Executive Director for
Educational Support
GPISD Board of Trustees & Cabinet
Kathy Bundy, Ramon Garza, Dawn Fisher,
Joe Stephens, June Harris, Wilfred J.
Broussard, Jr., Jeff Miller, and Wanda Heath
Johnson
Kenneth Wallace, Crystal Murray, Orphalinda

Bazan, Arnold Ramirez,
John Moore





Congratulations Galena Park FFA Winners!

12723 Woodforest Blvd., Houston, Texas 77015 (713) 451-3600 • Fax (713) 451-3300

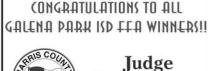
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Judge
Mike Parrott

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE
PRECINCT 3, POSITION 1

14350 Wallisville Road Houston

713-450-2409

website: http://www.jp.hctx.net/3-1/

OPINION PAGE

STATE CAPITAL **HIGHLIGHTS** By Ed Sterling

Railroad Commission to hire seismologist

AUSTIN — After meeting with Azle residents in a town hall style meeting last week, Texas Railroad Commissioner David Porter called for his agency, which regulates the oil and gas industry, to hire a seismologist.



ors felt at their hom

tremors felt at their homes and businesses, and their ongoing safety concerns over seismic activity that has increased locally along with an increase in oil and gas industry activities over the last several years.

"It is imperative that the commission remain engaged and involved in gathering more evidence and data into any possible causation between oil and gas activities and seismic events," Porter said in his Jan. 7 statement. "Commission rules and regulations must be based on sound science and proven facts. In order to do so, I propose the commission hire an in-house seismologist."

Perry makes proclamation

sound science and proven facts. In order to do so, I propose the commission hire an in-house seismologist."

Perry makes proclamation January 2014 is Crime Stoppers Month in Texas, Gov. Rick Perry proclaimed Jan. 7. Every year, according to the proclamation, "the month of January is dedicated to raising awareness of Crime Stoppers' successes and inspiring more Texans to get involved."

Perry said anonymous tips have led to more than 180,000 arrests and \$1 billion in property recovered and narcotics seized since the beginning of Crime Stoppers' app is promoted Texas Department of Agriculture on Jan. 6 announced an upgraded version of its free "GO TEXAN" application, a way for smartphone users to track their visits to wineries, farmers markets, pick-your-own farms, nurseries and florists, and share their experiences on social media.

Agriculture Commissioner

media.

Agriculture Commissioner
Todd Staples said, "This is an
easy way for those who enjoy
local products to support Texas businesses and track their
visits, simply by pulling out
their smartphone."
Interim director is name
Texas Transportation
Commission on Jan. 7 announced its selection of
James Bass as interim executive director of the Texas

HIGHLANDS

Department of Transporta-tion, effective Jan. 17.

Bass succeeds Phil Wilson at the post. Wilson last fall was named general manager of the Lower Colorado River Author-ity. Bass has been serving as chief financial officer of Tx-

DOT.
Governor swears Berry in
On Jan. 7 Nandita Berry of
Houston was sworn in by Gov.
Perry as the 109th Texas Secretary of State.

"I am bacara" to 1

retry as the 109th Texas Secretary of State.

"I am honored to be appointed by Gov. Perry and look forward to serving Texas as secretary of state," Berry said. As secretary of state, Berry sion one of six state officials who comprise the state's executive department of the state of Texas. Her duties now include serving as the chief election officer for the state, the governor's liaison on border and Mexican affairs, and Texas' chief protocol officer for state and international matters. And, the office manages the business and public filings for Texas.

Berry is a graduate of

Texas.

Berry is a graduate of Mount Carmel College in Bangalore, India, a bachelor's degree from the University of Houston and a law degree from the University of Houston Law Center. Prior to her appointment, Secretary Berry was senior counsel at the Locke Lord law firm in Houston, and she was an in-house counsel for a Fortune 500 company.

counsel for a Fortune 5-10 company.

Please resign, senators say
State Sens. Rodney Ellis,
Sylvia Garcia and John Whitmire, all Democrats from
Houston, on Jan. 7 called on
state Finance Commission
Chair William J. White to voluntarily resign from office.
In asking for the resignation, the trio of senators called
attention to a Dec. 29 story in
the El Paso Times that included comments White made disparaging consumers of payday
loans, and noted that White is
vice president of Cash America, a payday loan company, a
type of company that is regulated by the Finance Commission.

Ellis said White's comments.

on. Ellis said White's comments

Ellis said White's comments
"severely call into question his
ability to put his outside employment aside and truly look
out for Texas consumers."
Revenue increases again
Texas Comptroller Susan
Combs, the state's chief financial officer, on Jan. 8 announced that state sales tax
revenue in December was
\$2.25 billion, up 3.9 percent
compared to December 2012.
"Consumer spending in re-

compared to December 2012.

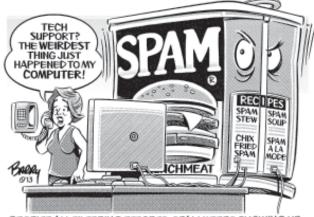
"Consumer spending in retail trade contributed to the latest gain in state sales tax collections,"

Combs said. "Other sectors such as

said. "Other sectors such as telecommunications also contributed to the monthly growth, and state sales tax revenue has now increased for 45 consecutive months."

In her Jan. 8 announcement, Combs said she would send cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts their January local sales tax allocations to local sales tax allocations to-taling \$573.5 million, up 8.1 percent compared to January

CROSBY



DESPITE ALL FILTERING EFFORTS, SPAM KEEPS SHOWING UP...

Chemical spill; water problem

This week I am writing about something I had no idea about a few days ago. That is the horrific water situation that has occurred back in my

the horrific water situation that has occurred back in my home city and nine counties in West Virginia. For a few days the national news was rife with the chemical spill that has made the water basically useless in that area of the Mountain State.

For the previous 13 years I have spent in Crosby that would have been of little personal grief to me as I was here and such an action would have been cleaned up long before I returned in early April. However, this year is different; my house is occupied while I am here as my daughter is living there this winter. Obviously I have talked with her several times in the past week and she says she is getting along fine living in a house where the water can only be used for flushing. I continue to be concerned about her. Washing, cleaning, cooking, etc. has to come from bottled water or some other source and with thousands having that need, water is scarce.

My daughter-in-law, Marta, spouse of my older son, Don, works in one of the major hospitals associated with the Area Medical Center. She

Don, works in one of the major hospitals associated with the Area Medical Center. She was on break at work having a cup of coffee when the news broke. The hospital staff came into the break room, sounded the alarm and threw away all of the water and coffee. Unfortunately Marta had already had some of it and her mouth broke out in blisters a day or so late

so late
Stores are out of water in many places and the National Guard is distributing water in large trucks to assist. However, the last I heard they only

TOUCH OF LIFE

By Don Springer

ever, the last I heard they only had sixteen trucks and that won't go far over a nine county area. I'm sure more help will come.

When I tell people where I live I always say St. Albans, but the truth is I live on the west bank of the Coal River which is outside of the city limits. That is working against us now as St. Albans has its own water supply out of the Coal River, not the Kanawha or Elk where most of the val-Coal River, not the Kanawha or Elk where most of the valley gets its water. It is not contaminated so it is life as usual there. There are one or two other communities like St. Albans but most of the 350,000 people in the area, like me, get water from the West Virginia-American Water Company and that entire service is impacted.

and that entire service is mip-pacted.

I'm feeling for my family, friends and other citizens in the Kanawha Valley but it isn't known as yet (to my knowledge) when all of this will be cleaned up. Some of the local news broadcasts in the Charleston area are saying the contaminated water from the coal cleaning source may have been leaking for days or weeks before it was discovered and the seriousness of the incident may be worse than first considered. I hope my entire fellow West Virginians are lucky enough for this all to be cleaned up, maybe before this column is printed but from what I am ing the contaminated water

hearing, I think not.

hearing, I think not.

The local media is also full of early attempts to place blame and file legal claims but that is just scratching the surface. When the leak is corrected and the water safe for human consumption the screams of legal action will intensify. The company at fault is a relatively small firm and I'm sure its financial resources have already been exhausted. I don't know how wide-spread the ownership is wide-spread the ownership is for the firm but if any of the

for the firm but if any of the large coal companies are part towners the financial claims may spread like wildfire.

The State and/or local governments may not escape some of the responsibility either. I haven't seen any reports along this line. We West Virginians are going to hear about this for years on end. (PS. Just as I finished this Don called and said they were going to start cleaning out the water lines tomorrow (Monday). Job will take a few days. Also he and Marta went to hotel in Parkersburg (80 miles

tel in Parkersburg (80 miles north) to stay a day, get a shower etc.) He said after they checked in the hotel manager checked in the hotel manager came by the room and gave him \$50 to take back and assist those in need. There are good people everywhere! God Bless them.)

Such are the people, places and things that have touched my life in my West Virginia home!

* LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

I just finished reading the North Channel Star's 1" edition and I am so happy you are giving the North Channel Area a voice! One that hasn't been heard for some time now.

I wanted to thank you for including the Freeport Road Project article in the paper. It was a great article.

Thank you,

Dawn Harris

Dear Editor,
The paper looks terrific!
Congratulations on your first issue.
Gretchen Knowles

Dear North Channel
Star Staff,
Welcome to the Northshore
areal We need you! Again, it
is great to have this tool at our
fingertips. May God richly
bless your efforts.
Sincerely, Ken Durham,
pastor, First Baptist Church of
North Channel

Achieving financial responsibility

AUSTIN, Texas—With the dawn of another January upon us and credit card statements beginning to reveal the full extent of the damage done with Christmas shopping, now is the time when many Americans get serious about living within their means for the year ahead. Unfortunately for many of us, the decisions of our past mean we have some cleaning up to do before we turn the corner of financial responsibility.

Avoid Immediate Drastic

Avoid Immediate Drastic

Changes

Before you can even begin to create a realistic budget for yourself, you need to know where, on what and how much you're currently spending. Take the time to look at your bank and credit card statements for the last regular month (don't use December—Christmas spending throws everything off and take note of where your money goes. Adding up expenses in different areas will likely reveal frivolous spending money by a expenses in different areas of the transfer that can be cut down or eliminated.

eliminated.

Once you identify these areas, it's tempting to make the resolution to completely stop spending money in those ways. However, if your frivolous spending habits are deeply rooted in your lifestyle, you might have to take moderate steps to reduce spending rather than eliminating it. Just as you can't go from couch potato to marathoner in a day, committing to a budget takes time, discipline and training. This means that you might have to phase in your budget over several months in order to achieve success.

Don't Forset Savings

Don't Forget Savings

It's hard to save when you're It's hard to save when you're trying to cover current expenses and pay off existing debt. However, it's important to build up some savings to cover future financial catastrophes—which are sure to come sooner or later—and avoid the creation of additional future debt.

additional future debt.

If possible, consolidate credit card debt at a zero percent or low interest rate that will allow you to prioritize saving in the short term and retire debt once you have \$500 to \$1,000 in your savings account for future unforeseen needs.

Find/ Use the Right Tools

Find/ Use the Right Tools

To successfully transition to
living on a budget, you need to
find the strategy and tools that
you're most likely to use. For
some, this might mean using
cash envelopes. For others, the
use of a mobile app to track
expenses by department might
be more appropriate. It's
important to remember that
budgeting is not "one size fits
all," and there are tools
available for every personality.

Don't Give Up

Don't Give Up

Don't Give Up
Unexpected expenses creep
up. Your best estimates can turn
out wrong. You won't be a
budget guru your first month. It
takes time to understand
everything that crops up in the
course of a typical budget month
and to begin to understand how
to deal with those variables.
Despite these challenges, don't
give up. Stick to it, be flexible
and let your budget take on a
life of its own that reflects your
priorities and goals for a better
2014.

A Commitment

This is a manifesto of sorts. A public declaration of my intentions for the coming year. Although I've power been much of a reso-

coming year. Although I've never been much of a resolution maker, the older I get the more I make it a point to reset my goals each year and try to accomplish a short list of things that are most important to me.

A lot of people make new goals each year. Many revolve around things like to stop smoking or loose weight. My goals have always been experiential in nature: things I wanted to do or experience in the coming months.

TEXAS

With Russell A. Graves

Spend more time outside
During my entire adult life, I've never been much of a TV watcher nor have a I wanted to spend much time indoors. There are a few shows I'll watch from time to time but I've never invested much time into invested much time into watching television. In-stead, I've always liked to read and research, work on my photography business, and spend time outdoors. During the entire home construction process in

most places of natural, cultural, and historical importance. They haven't been everywhere however. This year I resolve to take them on more adventures like canoeing down a Texas river or hiking in places where they were too young and inexperienced to hike before. which I was the general contractor, I spent a ton of time inside the house in which we'd eventually

which we'd eventually move into.

Now that the new home in the country is nearing completion, my yard and the surrounding land is a blank canvas. I have big ideas as to what the yard will look like, how I'll manage my property for wildlife, and how my family and I will spend our time cooking, listening to music, and enjoying the outside space our new home offers.

Take my kids on a new adventure My kids aren't world travelers but they've defi-nitely seen a done a lot in their short lives. As a pho-tographer and writer cover-ing everything Texas, they've been with me all over the state and visited

Meet new people
I can't tell you how many
times that I've been somewhere and saw people doing interesting things and
later lamenting on how I
should have stopped and
talked to them. I've seen
bluegrass bands jamming
or artists creating exciting
work and just pass them by
only later regretting not
stopping. This year I resolve to stop and meet new
people thereby enriching
my life and my experience
as a Texan.

as a Texan

Star & Courier

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keep their vehicles running in tip top condition to make 5 & 5 AUTO REPAIR your first choice for suaintenance
and service!

Free tax help for seniors at Harris County Libraries

The Tax-Aide program sponsored by the IRS and AARP Foundation is again providing free federal income tax assistance this year. The program is designed to assist taxpayers age 60 and over but will also assist low and moder-

ate income filers.

There are three locations supported by the local volunteers:

-Sterling Municipal Library in Baytown, Tuesdays/Thursdays, noon to 4

p.m. --Stratford Library in

a.m. to 3 p.m.
--North Channel Branch
of Harris, County Public Library, Thursdays noon to 4

p.m.
Services will begin on
Tuesday, Feb. 4th and conclude on Tuesday, April 15th.

Diamond Jim... what is the history of the diamond as an engagement ring?



FINE JEWELRY

With Jim Mills

Diamonds signify steadfast, enduring love because of their unmatched strength and beauty. The versatile look of diamonds enables them to be worn with any outfit, from an elegant cocktail dress to blue jeans. It's no wonder diamond engagement rings are the most popular accompaniement to popping the question. Although the tradition of giving a ring to the woman who has promised to become your bride goes back centuries, diamond engagement rings are a relatively recent innovation. Diamond engagement rings first became popular in the 1930s. By 1965, 80 percent of all new brides in the United States sported one. What's the most important criterion for the diamond engagement ring? It should be a piece of jewelry that she loves and that fits within his budget.

The History of the Diamond Engagement Ring

A man presents his prospective bride with an engagement ring upon acceptance of his marriage proposal. Anthropologists believe this tradition originated from a Roman custom in which wives wore rings attached to small keys, indicating their husbands' ownership. In 1477, Archduke Maximillian of Austria commissioned the very first diamond engagement ring on record for his betrothed, Mary of Burgundy. This sparked a trend for diamond rings among Europeau aristocracy and nobility. The sentimental Victorians popularized ornate engagement ring designs that mixed diamonds with other gemstones, precious metals and enamels. Often these rings were crafted in the shapes of flowers and were dubbed "posey rings." Diamond rings crafted during the Edwardian era continued the tradition of pairing diamonds with other jewels, commonly mounted in filigree settings. Diamonds were too rare and expensive for those of lessers means to afford until the discovery of African diamond mines in the 1870s. The De Beers Company was the sole owner and operator of these newly discovered mines in South Africa. In the 1930s, when demand for diamond rings declined in the U.S. during hard economic times, the De Beers Company began an aggressive marketing campaign using photographs of glamorous movie stars swathed in diamonds. Within three years, the sales of diamonds had increased by 50 percent. In 1947, De Beers launched its now classic slogan, "A Diamond is Forever." This spurred even more sales. The implied durability of a diamond conveyed the meaning in the American psyche that marriage is forever. A diamond's purity and sparkle have now become symbols of the depth of a man's commitment to the woman he loves in practically all corners of the world. In 1992, the average cost of a diamond mond engagement rings has always been the round brilliant, consisting of 58 facets that divide the stone into a top and bottom half. Runners up include the princess cut, the emerald cut and the oval cut, with the cushi

If you have questions pertaining to jewelry, watches, diamonds, precious stones, precious mals, and other questions related to the jewelry industry email jmills@pineforestjewelry.com. will answer as many questions as time permits.

Taxpayers should bring the following items with

-Social Security cards for yourself and all dependents
-A copy of last year's tax

turn -W-2 forms from each

employer
-Unemployment compensation statements

-SSA-1099 form if you were paid Social Security enefits benefits
-All 1099 forms (1099-

-All 1099 forms (1099-INT, 1099-DIV, etc.) -1099R forms if you re-ceived a pension or annuity -All forms indicating fed-eral income tax paid -Child care provider in-formation

-Some type of picture ID
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can be obtained by calling
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the website at ww.arp.org/taxaide

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NOTICE OF LOCATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Notice is hereby given that the street address of the administra tive office of Harris County Emergency Services District No. 80 is Crosby Volunteer Fire Department, 123 S. Diamondhead Blvd., Crosby, Texas 77532

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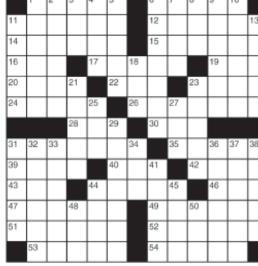
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COMMUNITY NEWS

Bay Area Homeless Services

Bay Area Homeless Services has received a grant from the Tex-as Bar Foundation to screen cli-ents for issues which may create barriers to better employment and housing, says Executive Di-rector Bill Eckert. Many of our

rector Bill Eckert. Many of our clients are unaware of how some of their past choices limit their future opportunities for achieving self-sufficiency.

Often, these issues can be easily resolved by a referral to a local attorney, or legal services provider. We are fortunate in this area to have a number of legal services providers who work with disadvantaged clients. Our goal is to serve as a conduit, matching clients with appropriate resources to better serve our community.

In addition to these referrals, Bay Area Homeless Services will sponsor quarterly information sessions throughout its service area. The agency services eastern Harris County, chambers County and Liberty County. The purpose of these sessions is to spread valuable consumer information to those in need and spotlight the leadership of the Texas Bar Foundation in assisting with the legal needs of all Texans.

Since it's inception in 1965, the Texas Bar Foundation has awarded more than \$15 million in grants to law related programs.

ed more than \$10 million in grants to law related programs. Supported by members of the State Bar of Texas, the Texas Bar Foundation is the nations largest charitably-funded bar foundation.

Morman brings Precinct 2 updates to North Shore Rotary

NORTH SHORE – Pet. 2
Commissioner Jack Morman
visited with the Rotary Club
of North Shore on Sept. 12th,
2013. Morman has been active
in meeting his constituents in
their neighborhoods since taking office.
The commissioner was accompanied by a number of his
staff, who were available to
answer questions and follow
up on citizen concerns. He introduced two new staff members, Tammy Fuselier, ChieFinancial Officer, and Jeremy
Phillips, the new road and
bridge engineer, replacing the
retiring Jack Rodriguez.



Pct. 2 Commissioner Jack Morman at North Shore Rotary

Morman covered the projects in his area that were of interest to the Rotarians, but he started by reviewing the recent court decision that confirmed redistricting boundaries similar to the ones used in the last election. He pointed out that now his precinct ed out that now his precinct was unified, with no neighbor-

was unified, with no neighborhoods split with another pre-cinct, such as Crosby or Highlands might have been. The major project about to start is a "walk" bridge, con-necting North Shore Rotary Pavilion with the Fonten Park to the south, allowing a longer walking trail and a uni-

fied park experience.

He said that Freeport
Street was about to be rebuilt and widened, costing \$15 million. Also, Jacinto Port will have a lane added.

A study is underway for Federal Road, to see if it can be grade separated over the railroad, but this is a very expensive \$25 million project, without funding currently,

he said. The Better Streets 2 Neighborhoods Initiative, undertak-

en with Rodriguez, will rebuild and repave many of the older streets in Channelview in the next 90 days, he said. He also mentioned a new program that will be starting, "Safer Streets to Schools" which will provide sidewalks and improved road turning lanes for childrens' safety.

Morman said that transportation infrastructure will have major expenditures, including a possible new or expanded ship channel bridge on Beltway 8 East, a widening of the

ship channel bridge on Belt-way 8 East, a widening of the Beltway, and a widening of Highway 146 near the port. There was quite a bit of dis-cussion on the Astrodome, and

Morman pointed out that the issue will be on the November ballot, and will ask for a tax increase to repurpose the structure. Morman's position

increase to repurpose the structure. Morman's position is that it is too much money, and he opposes the ballot issue and saving the dome.

In regard to the ship channel and the port, which are in his precinct, he noted that the 45' depth of the channel will eventually have to be deepened to 50' to handle the larger ships that will be moving through the modified Panama Canal next year. He noted that even the 45' depth is not true, as much of the ship channel is only 40' deep due to silt.

Precinct 2 now has 380 employees, he said, and a budget of \$33 million this year. When he first took office, the budge had been \$42 million, but the county did not have the money and he reduced that to \$30 million. He has gradually build the budget back, with more revenue, and added projects and services that had been cut.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Town Hall Meeting

Gene Green sponsors a Town Hall Meeting at the Harris County North Channel Branch Library, 15741 Wal-lisville Road, Houston 77049. 6:30 pm. Public invited.

WED. JAN 22 Senior Citizens Issues Forum

ISSUES FORUITI

Gene Green sponsors a Forum for Senior Citizens, at the Baldree Center, 13828 Corpus Christi Street, Houston 77015. 10:00 am, all senior citizens are welcome. There will be Agency representatives from the Social Security Administration, Agency on Aging, Better Business Bureau. Topics include Health Care, Referral Services, programs for seniors, and fraud prevention.

JANUARY Galena Park Library events

-Wednesday, January 15, Children's Story Time at 11:00 am -Thursday, January 16, Baby time at 11:00 am; 4:00 pm Family movie

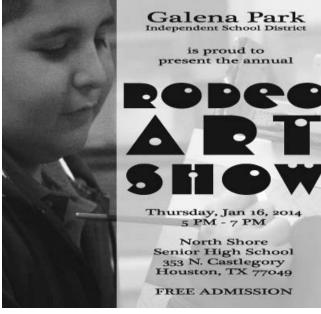
time. -Fridays, CLOSED 1500 Keene St. Galena Park, TX. 77547. Call 713-450-0982 for more

North Channel Library events

LIOrdry EVENTS

-Wednesday, January 15, Wii game day at 4 pm.

-Thursday, January 16, baby time at 10:30 am and lego play at 4:30 pm.
-Saturday, January 18, Crapbooking with Mia at 10 am.
-Monday, January 20- CLOSED
The library is closed on Sundays.
And it's located at 15741 Wallisville Rd, Houston, TX. 77049.
You may call 281-457-1631 for more information on these programs.







SCHOOL & COMMUNITY NEWS

Channelview ISD recognizes **Board Members**

The month of January is School Board Recognition Month and the Channel-view Independent School District is celebrating the countless contributions of countless contributions of these dedicated community leaders.

"Local school board members work tirelessly and devote hundreds of hours to lead our students to success. Setting aside time in cess. Setting aside time in January is one small way to celebrate their service to our community and say thanks for caring so much about the future of every child enrolled in our schools," said Greg Ollis, Channelview ISD superintendent.

The board members serving Channelview ISD include Board President Steven Dennis, Vice President E.B. Garcia, Secretary Patrick Lacy, Parliamentarian Keith Liggett and members J. Kyle Campbell, Greg Johnstone and Alex Ybarra.

"Our school board members are a vital link between the community and the classroom. They have a commitment to serve their community and ensure that all students are given every opportunity to

sure that all students are given every opportunity to excel through education. We appreciate our board members for giving of themselves and caring so much about every child en-rolled in our schools," Ollis

Channelview's Taeler Deer signs to play for Texas State



Channelview High School girls basketball player Taeler Deer recently signed a letter of intent for a full scholarship to play basketball for the Texas State University Lady Bobcats in San Marcos next fall. She will graduate from CHS in June. Deer, who is a four-year varsity letterman, leads the Lady Falcons in scoring with an average of 21 points per

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GAME ROOMS,

Continued from page 1 rooms at which gambling is being conducted. According to Constable Hickman, 135 search warrants have been served on illegal gambling operations doing business as game rooms. In the last 5 years in these illegal game rooms there have been over 100 aggravated robberies. In thee same area and time there have been seven homicides. The dramatic rise in the number of game rooms has prompted Harris County as a body corporate and politic under the laws of the State of Texas, is tasked with protecting the health and welfare of its residents.

dents.

The regulations would give the county to investigate game rooms for violations of regula-

rooms for violations of regulations.

Huffman resident Leslie
Dean spoke first, she is President of the Harris County
Emergency Services District
#4, she favored the regulations as the game rooms often "create a hazard to the occupants as well as firefighters, and medics performing services at them. Dean laid out a cogent argument about the crowding locked doors, lack of entries and safety issues with unregulated game rooms.

Next Attorney Steven

Next Attorney Steven Next Attorney Steven Gates spoke opposed to regulation, indicating that regulations only serve to change the location of illegal facilities. He argued that regulations in the past have only served to exacerbate the problems. "There has not been one case of robberies solved by Houston Police Department from clear window regulation."

Personal stories of loved ones losing everything to game

ones losing everything to game rooms were pronounced from many speakers in favor of reg-

ulation. Velma Ellison of Alliance Properties spoke of the impact of game rooms Ministers from Huffman Baptist Church, Keenan Smith of Crosby Church, and Tim Edwards of First Baptist Church Highlands all offered compelling arguments for regulation of game rooms.

Constable ken Jones gave a most dramatic statement regarding illegal activities (drugs, unfair gambling practices and robberies) that without the regulations his office could not interdict and therefore presented a menace to ulation. Velma Ellison of Alli-

fore presented a menace to public health and safety.

REGISTRATION,

Continued from page 1

vith my office," said Mr. Sul-

with my office," said Mr. Sullivan.

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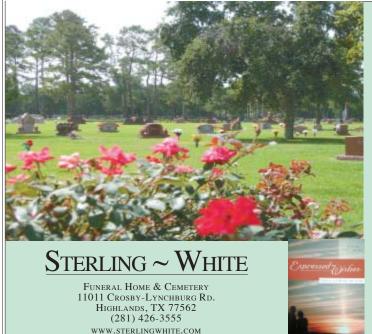
Registered voters can also check our website to view their current voter registration information and contact the office if they have questions at 713-368-2000 or via e-mail: tax_voters@hctx.net.

Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector Mike Sullivan also serves as the Harris County Voter Registrar, which conducts voter registration activities and maintains a certified list of registered voters.

Learn more by visiting www bevoter net

Learn more by visiting www.hcvoter.net





DO YOUR FAMILY A FAVOR!

GIVE YOUR FAMILY THE GIFT OF PEACE OF MIND. PREPLAN YOUR FINAL ARRANGEMENTS TODAY !!

WE ALL PLAN FOR THE "JUST IN CASE"

- CAR INSURANCE "JUST IN CASE" WE HAVE AN ACCIDENT=
 HOME OWNERS' INSURANCE " JUST IN CASE" WE HAVE A FIRE
- COLLEGE FUND "JUST IN CASE" OUR KIDS GO TO COLLEGE

 DOESN'T IT MAKE GOOD SENSE TO PLAN FOR THE INEVITIBLE?

BEFORE WE DIE SHOULDN'T WE PROVIDE A PLAN FOR OUR FAMILIES TO FOLLOW?

- PROVIDE THE MOST LOVING GIFT YOU CAN GIVE TO YOUR FAMILY
 STOP INFLATION BY FREEZING THE COST AT TODAY'S PRICES
- REFLECT YOUR EXPRESSED WISHES
- ALLOW YOU TO PREFUND ARRANGEMENTS AT TODAY'S PRICES
- · OFFER PAYMENT PLANS THAT FIT YOUR BUDGET.

GET A FREE EXPRESSED WISHES PLANNING GUIDE TODAY! NO OBLIGATION! CALL 281.426.3555 TODAY.

START YOUR CEMETERY PREARRANGEMENTS TODAY. PURCHASE TWO PLOTS FOR AS LITTLE AS \$250 DOWNPAYMENT AND \$40.00/MONTH* Call 281.426.3555 FOR DETAILS.

*TWO SPACES in restricted area of Garden of Love for \$1995.00 plus Perpetual Care. 10% down payment REQUIRED.