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VOLUME 5, NO. 08 (#162) THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2017 www.northchannelstar.com

CHANNEL CHATTER

Rep. Jackson Lee & Comm. Rodney Ellis fight to save the Affordable Care Act

Rep. Hernandez files Bill to support free community college for students

AUSTIN, TX- Feb. 15, 2017 – Today, State Representative Ana Hernandez filed House Bill 1947, which establishes the Texas Promise Scholarship Program. Modeled after Tennessee's successful initiative, the bill would empower local community colleges to partner with industry stakeholders to provide tuition-free programs for students entering into key majors critical to local economic growth and workforce needs.

"Texas's global standing rests on investing in our greatest resource: our next generation of workforce leaders," Hernandez said. "By reducing students' financial burden and supporting local workforce needs, our state will send a clear message that Texas is serious about maintaining its competitive edge into the Twenty-First Century."

By Allan Jamail

Houston, TX. Friday, February 17, 2017 at the Julia C. Hester House Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee of the 18th Congressional District joined with Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis and health professionals at a community forum on saving the Affordable Care Act (ACA), a law that has expanded the access to affordable health care to millions of Americans.

Congresswoman Lee said, "Quality affordable health care ought to be a right and not a privilege and that's why we can't afford to turn the clock back now; the affordable care act is not about statistics, it's about the people you know and love."

Health Professionals included, Dr. Natalie Dailey infectious disease specialist; graduate Harvard Medical School, George Masi, President and CEO of Harris Health, Steve Schnee, Executive Director of the Harris Center for Mental Health, Dr. Janice Beal, Ann Thielke, CEO, Good Neighbor Healthcare Center-Fourth Ward Clinic, Dr. Ann Barnes, Chief Medical Officer, Legacy Community Health Montrose Clinic, Steve Williams, Director, Houston Department of Health and Human Services and Dr. Dona K. Murphey, Formerly Associated with Baylor College of Medicine.

As a result of the ACA: • 100 million Americans no longer have a life-time limit on healthcare cover-



Photo by Allan Jamail

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and County Commissioner Rodney Ellis welcoming health care professionals and citizens to the Save the Affordable Health Care Act forum.

age. • 17 million children with pre-existing conditions can no longer be denied coverage by insurers. • 6.6 million young-adults up to age 26 can stay on their parents' health insurance plans. • 6.3 million Seniors in

the "donut hole" have saved \$6.1 billion on their prescription drugs.

• 3.2 million Seniors have access to free annual wellness visits under Medicare, and • 360,000 Small Businesses are using the Health Care Tax Credit to help them provide health insurance to their workers.

The risks of repeal and dismantle, the plan Republicans have for the ACA are profound. In Texas alone, 1,874,000 individuals who have gained coverage since the ACA was implemented could lose it if the law is entirely or partially repealed.

Nearly a million individuals in the state who received financial assistance to purchase affordable

See ACA, Page 3

Galena Park commission places Alcohol on Ballot Rancor returns to commission meetings

Chamber Luncheon

Friday - March 3, 2017, 11:30 AM @ San Jacinto College N, 5800 Uvalde Rd. (Inside the Monument Room of the Student Center). Sponsored by: East Houston Regional Medical Center. RSVP by February 28th: \$20. RSVP after February 28th: \$25. RSVP to blanca@ncchamber.com, or call 713-450-1114.

Galena Park/Jacinto City CIP

THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2017. 5:45 – light dinner. 6:15- business starts. Meeting adjourns by 8:15 p.m. Alvin Baggett Recreation Building, 1302 Keene in Galena Park. Host plant: Gulf Coast Waste Disposal Authority.

GALENA PARK – Several controversial issues were on the agenda for this week's City Commission meeting Tuesday night, and disagreements and accusations set the tone for the meeting.

In addition to some heated words between commissioners and the Mayor, the audience also expressed displeasure in the way the city was being managed.

Discussions and words became so loud and heated that the Galena Park police entered the room, and moved toward the perpetrators, in an attempt to quiet them down.

After approval of minutes, the Commission passed a resolution regarding the public's right to see government records. City Attorney Robert Collins made a point that the wording of the resolution followed state guidelines for Open Record Requests.

Some in the audience felt it was an effort to restrict public access to information.

The Commission then voted 4-0 to designate the Hous-



GALENA PARK'S COUNCIL MEETING THIS WEEK was marked by yelling and verbal epithets between the audience and council members and the Mayor, and also between councilmen themselves. Commissioner Eric Broussard in a heated exchange, called out to the Mayor "You're a Big Liar" as they were arguing over needed repairs and remediation to the Evelyn Churchill Community Center Building in Galena Manor. Police Chief Ed Mata, seen above right, stares down a heckler from the audience, warning her that she could be removed from the room if she speaks out again.

ton Chronicle as the official newspaper of the city. In effect, this took that designation away from the North

Channel Star. After the meeting, the Mayor told the publisher of the paper that they wanted more Galena Park

news in the Star, and more price competition on the cost of legal ads, even though the Chronicle is known to be quite

expensive compared with the Star. No mention was made of the paper's reporting of misconduct, but Moya said there were "other issues."

In the most important agenda item, and not without controversy, the Commission discussed and voted on putting on November's ballot an item that would allow the sale of alcoholic beverages within the city. Commissioners Silva and Broussard said they felt the resolution was not clearly written, needed more time for discussion, and should be tabled. City attorney Collins said they had to vote on it, because there were sufficient petitions received to require a vote by state law. When the vote was 2-2 to table, Mayor Moya declared "the Ayes have it" by voting too.

At this point, someone in the audience spoke out in disagreement, and Police Chief Mata went to her and warned her that she could not speak,

See GALENA PARK, p. 6

SCHOLARSHIP DONATIONS

Galena Park Council of PTA's host annual banquet



Photo by Allan Jamail

Award Recipients' L – R Brian Allen, Bryan Clements, Wilfred J. Broussard, Juan Carlos Villegas

By Allan Jamail

Thursday, February 16, 2017 the Galena Park Community Council of PTA's Founder's Day Banquet held in the Joyce Zotz Education Center was most ex-

citing with hundreds of PTA and school faculty members coming together as a unified team and goal of helping students obtain a higher education.

Excitement and love filled the air; strong competition was evident between

the schools, each trying to donate the most scholarship funds. Over \$14,000 was donated with more coming in later from other sources.

GPISD's twenty-four

See Council PTA's Banquet, Page 2

PROSECUTION

DA won't prosecute minor marijuana cases



District Attorney Kim Ogg (center) announced the diversion program during a press conference held at the Harris County Criminal Justice Center, where she was accompanied by Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner and Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, among others.

See Marijuana Cases, Page 2

COMMUNITY NEWS

Council PTA’s Banquet,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Photo by Allan Jamail

Love was in the air as scholarship donations to help students get a higher education were being made ... these smiling cowgirls of Sam Houston Elementary wearing their LOVE tee shirts sent their love message throughout the packed banquet room. L – R Carmen Gutierrez, Jessica Sanchez, Elizabeth Villegas, Michelle Cavazos (Principal), Roxanne McCabe.

PTA chapter's each had a school representative come to the front podium to announce their contributions; each announcement brought loud cheers and applause from the unselfish volunteers in attendance. Jacinto City Elementary made the highest elementary school donation and Galena Park High School was highest and overall highest too.

Each year, the Council of PTAs honors several individuals with special recognition.

At this year's banquet, four individuals were thanked for their many years of service to the students and staff of the district.

Receiving the Texas PTA Honorary Life Membership Award is one of the highest forms of recognition to affirm how much the recipients are truly appreciated for their dedication to our children and the community. Lifetime Award recipients were Board of Trustees President, Wilfred J. Brou-

sard, Jr.; longtime educator, Brian Allen; and longtime dedicated staff member, Juan Carlos Villegas.

The Texas PTA Extended Service Award is a prestigious honor that is bestowed upon a deserving individual who has supported the Galena Park Council of PTAs mission of making every child's potential a reality for many years. This year's honoree was Executive Director for Security and Technology/Chief of Police Bryan Clements.

Seniors enjoy visit of good samaritan



Area neighborhood Allan Jamail, center, reads to senior citizens at the senior center. He visits the center frequently and spends some time with his friends.

Marijuana Cases,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Harris County District Attorney Kim Ogg announced Thursday a new program to deal with cases of low amounts of marijuana that she described as part of a new era in the county's criminal justice system.

Under Texas law, having four ounces or less of marijuana is a misdemeanor.

Starting March 1st, people caught with that amount, or lower, will get a second chance before going to jail.

"You will be offered a chance to sign an acknowledgement form promising to take a decision making class, a cognitive decision making class. Takes four hours and costs \$150. You'll be required to do that within 90 days," Ogg explained during a press conference held at the Harris County Criminal Justice Center, located in downtown Houston.

One of the arguments Ogg made was the high

cost of arrests and prosecutions for these types of cases.

The District Attorney estimated the county spends about \$26 million per year on misdemeanor marijuana cases.

She also said the program is in accordance with Texas law because of the discretion prosecutors have.

Kevin Buckler, an associate professor of Criminal Justice at the University of Houston-Downtown, agrees with the District Attorney's reasoning.

"Prosecutors have tremendous discretion in terms of filing charges, police have tremendous street-level discretion in terms of how they handle cases," Buckler said.

Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez praised the initiative and, on behalf of the City of Houston, Mayor Sylvester Turner and the Houston Police Department Chief Art Acevedo did the same.

Acevedo thinks it can help his department improve public safety.

"What matters most to the people of Houston isn't somebody with a baggy of marijuana, what matters most to them is what's going on with burglaries of our residences, burglaries of our vehicles, armed robbery, sexual assaults. We are going to focus on being smart on crime, focused on crime," Acevedo commented at the end of the press conference referring to the possibility the program will help HPD use its resources more effectively.

However, some members of the regional law enforcement community have expressed their opposition to the initiative.

Brett Ligon, District Attorney for Montgomery County, criticized Ogg's program and said in a news release that his county wouldn't implement a similar program to avoid becoming "a sanctuary for dope smokers."

Sheldon Early Childhood celebrates 100th day of school



These students from Sheldon Early Childhood Academy dressed up for the "100th Day of School" celebration on Tuesday. In fact, students throughout the district celebrated this milestone day for PreK and kindergarten students.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Channelview ISD's February Students of the Month

Channelview ISD recently honored their February Students of the Month by hosting a recognition luncheon in the top level of the press box at Ray Maddy Memorial Stadium. The Students of the Month include, top row from left, Juan Olivarez (Aguirre Junior High), Angel Zepeda (Channelview High School), Ryan Torres (Alice Johnson Junior High) and Aaron Javier Ochoa (Kolarik Ninth Grade Center). Bottom row, from left, Aubriana Covarrubias (Crenshaw Elementary), Lucia Rivera (McMullan Elementary), Vanessa Rodriguez (Brown Elementary), Jocelyn Sanchez (Schochler Elementary), Frida Hernandez (DeZavala Elementary) and Elijah Perez (Cobb Elementary). Not pictured are Mireyma De Los Santos (Joe Frank Campbell Learning Center) and Hasassah Trevino (Hamblen Elementary).



Galena Park High School Student Receives Gold Award

Galena Park High School senior, Salvador Flores, recently attended the YoungArts competition in Miami where he was awarded the Gold Award in Classical Music Saxophone. The YoungArts program is for emerging artists ages 15-18 from all across the United States. YoungArts winners receive up to \$10,000, educational experiences working with renowned mentors and chances to perform at some of the nation's leading cultural institutions. Flores was awarded \$10,000 and he joins an elite group of YoungArts winners including Kerry Washington, Viola Davis, Josh Groban, Terence Blanchard and Jenji Kohan. Congratulations, Salvador!



ACA,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Marketplace coverage in 2016 are at risk of having the coverage become unaffordable if the Republican Congress eliminates the premium tax credits. Over 500 thousand children in Texas are at risk of having their coverage rolled back. And 205 thousand young people could lose coverage if the Republican Congress eliminates

the provision in the law allowing children to stay on the parent's plans until the age of 26.

The Congresswoman, quoted the words of Coretta Scott King, she said "The greatness of community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members...a heart of grace and a soul generated by love." Congresswoman Lee said her fight to save the ACA is inspired by love.

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COMMUNITY EVENTS

East Houston Democrats meeting

East Houston Democrats invites you to attend the February Membership Meeting on Thursday, February 16 beginning at 6:30 p.m. Membership Meetings are held at Fudrucker's located at 855 Normandy Road. In an effort to introduce newly elected leaders to the community, they have scheduled at least one elected leader monthly to address the community. Membership dues are \$40 per household, \$30 for an individual or \$20 for a college student. More information may be obtained by contacting Charlotte Jackson, Treasurer at 832-896-6333 or by email at Charlotte.Jackson@yahoo.com

East Houston Democrats Volunteer Deputy Voter Registrar Training

East Houston Democrats Club is hosting a Volunteer Deputy Voter Registrar Training on Saturday, February 18 at 230 p.m. This free training is open to any registered voter in Harris County. The training will take Harris County Library located at 15741 Wallisville Road, Houston 77049. The class is presented by the Office of Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector Ann Harris Bennett. Class is one hour and participants must arrive on time and attend the training in its entirety.

The Buckshot Jamboree

Enjoy Classic Country music every Saturday night from 7 pm - 10 pm with The Buckshot Jamboree at 7414 Hartman near Old Beaumont Highway. More info, call 281-458-0729 or 832-444-5000.

Galena Park Senior Dance

Senior Dance is every Monday at the Alvin D. Building, 1302 Keene St., Galena Park. 7 pm - 9 pm. No cover charge. Live band Country music. Call for more information: 713-455-7335.

North Shore Senior Dance

North Shore Seniors holds a dance every Thursday from 1 - 4 pm at the Grayson/Baldree Building, Corpus Christi street. Live bands and refreshments. Cost is \$ 5/per person. For more information call 713-455-3660.

San Jacinto Pilot Club meeting

The Club meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at LyondellBasell on Sheldon Road at noon. For more information, please visit www.SanJacintoPilot.com.

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OPINION PAGE

★
COMMUNITY AWARENESS
By Lewis Spearman

Making Crime Less Profitable Locally



Precinct 3 Constable Sherman Eagleton, a featured speaker for March 23, with Assistant Chief Clint F. Greenwood and Chief Deputy Milton Rivera form the most formally educated law enforcement executives in Precinct 3 Constable's Office since its formation.

The Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce is hosting a Community Awareness Meeting at the David H. McNerney American Legion Hall on March 23 from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m.

A world class detective once told me "If you stay away from illegal drugs and don't sleep with sociopaths your odds of being murdered are infinitesimal."

Once upon a time in Crosby a friend asked me to feed his dogs and livestock because he was going out of town for the weekend with the wife unexpectedly and please, move his truck inside his carport.

'How am I gonna' get in to your place?' I asked incredulously.

"Open the gate and walk in my house, of course, the truck keys are on my coffee table."

That was Crosby 20 years ago, we don't live there now. And other than to say that it took 3 hours to find the chicken feed, thus robbing me of valuable time, there was little fear of burglary or robbery being manifest, then. The reason for this gathering is that residents in Highlands, Crosby and Huffman are tired of burglary and robbery in our communities.

When I measure crime in a community I focus on burglary and robbery, there are many other crimes but I don't have any information on preventing them.

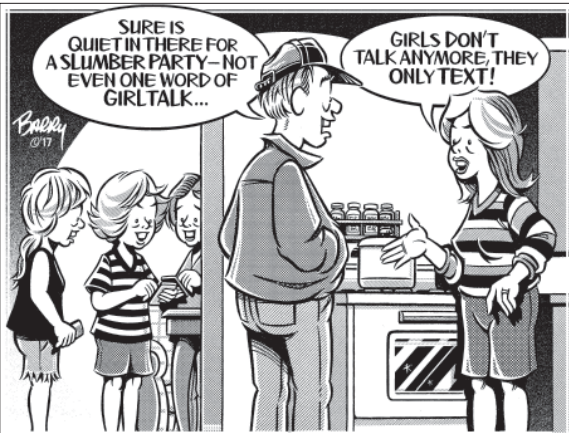
Burglary and robbery are not simply property crimes. They alter lives for the worse and are crimes of opportunity. This evening community leaders, law enforcement and special guests will try to help us focus on curbing local burglary and robbery in our communities. Hopefully, we can find some solutions that will make it harder to do criminal business here and better ways to work together to make criminal business less profitable where we live.

Fortunately, we have capable law enforcement coming to help us learn about the crime business guest speakers include the Precinct 3 Constable, the Newport Crime Watch Chairman, an expert from Harris County Sheriff's Office and others.

Many wonder why don't they solve all of our problems for us in regard to crime and they are a great deterrent to crime. The fact is that it is up to you and I to individually to cooperate together and up to us as individuals to do those things that make crime operate in less welcoming environments than now. So each of us must be responsible for ridding ourselves from opportunity for crime as best we can and work with those law enforcement officials that can really make crime unprofitable.

Has anyone noticed a proliferation of crime watch pages on social media? facebook.com now sports, Crosby, Texas Crime Watch, Real Crosby Crime Watch, Actual Crosby Crime Watch, Crosby Crime Watch and Community Information, Crosby Eastgate Crime Watch & Information, Newport Crime Watch, Newport Residents Crosby, TX, Crime Watch Highlands, TX & Community Information, Huffman Crime Watch etc. Burglary and robbery have increased in our communities over the last few years. And there are reasons why.

To discuss these reasons and learn how to make crime less profitable come work with us on March 23, from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. and plan to attend the following Community Awareness Programs.



Paxton files brief in support of president's immigration order

AUSTIN — Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton has filed a legal brief supporting President Trump's executive order for an immigration crackdown.

In his Feb. 15 brief with a San Francisco federal appeals court, Paxton defends President Donald Trump's Jan. 27 executive order titled "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States."

The states of Washington and Minnesota filed a complaint in a Seattle federal district court and were granted a nationwide temporary restraining order that blocked key provisions of the executive order regarding Trump's proposed ban on travelers from several Muslim-majority countries considered to be terrorism hotspots. On Feb. 9, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco upheld the temporary restraining order.

Soon afterward, federal agencies under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security conducted White House-ordered sweeps in major U.S. metropolitan areas, resulting in the arrests of hundreds of undocumented residents.

"The law," Paxton said, "makes it very clear that the president has discretion to protect the safety of the American people and our nation's institutions with respect to who can come into this country."

State Sen. Sylvia R. Garcia, D-Houston, said on Feb. 16 that the executive order's ban on travelers from several Muslim-majority countries was "illogical, unconstitutional and poorly executed in the first place."

"Now," Garcia continued, "our state tax dollars are being spent trying to defend the exclusion of people based on false claims of security. It's wasted money when we need to focus on the things that matter to Texas." Garcia serves as chair of the Texas Senate Hispanic Caucus.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly confirmed that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement launched a series of target-

★
STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling



Founded as the Texas Highway Department on April 4, 1917, TxDOT has grown into one of the state's largest agencies, with more than 11,000 employees maintaining 80,000 miles of roadways.

TxDOT Executive Director James Bass, in a Feb. 6 news release, invited the public to visit www.txdot.gov where they can "Track the Truck" to locate a traveling exhibit that tells the district-by-district story of the agency's history in a refurbished, 27-foot-long 1918 Liberty Truck making its way across the state.

"Our traveling centennial exhibit affords us a great opportunity to thank the public and share a uniquely historical perspective of how our roadways have evolved from their early beginnings into the expansive network we know today," Bass said.

DPS helps in rescues

The Texas Department of Public Safety on Feb. 15 announced that state troopers, with the support of the DPS Interdiction for the Protection of Children program, the Texas Rangers and DPS special agents, rescued 76 missing, exploited or at-risk children and initiated 42 related criminal investigations in 2016.

The IPC program was implemented in 2009 to teach law enforcement officers how to recognize indicators of endangered children who do not actively seek out help or exhibit obvious signs of abuse. As a result of receiving this specialized and targeted training, law enforcement officers can more readily identify and rescue children and arrest suspects, according to the DPS news release.

"Children who go missing, who are abused or at risk of being abused don't always make an outcry for help when they encounter an officer," said DPS Director Steven McCraw.

TxDOT reaches centennial

The Texas Department of Transportation is soon to celebrate its 100th year of service in its mission to move people and goods across the Lone Star State.

★
CAPITOL UPDATE
State Senator
Brandon Creighton

Senator Creighton on Property Tax Reform

AUSTIN, February 21, 2017 — Yesterday, Senator Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) made the following statement after Montgomery County became the first county to unanimously pass a resolution in support of Senate Bill 2, The Property Tax Reform & Relief Act.

"I am proud to join Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick, Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) and Montgomery County Commissioners Court in support of Senate Bill 2. Montgomery County's support for property tax reform shows they care about their residents and take the issue of rising property taxes seriously," said Creighton.

"As a co-author of this legislation, I am eager to help my constituents and all Texans with property tax relief. I am proud Montgomery County is a leader in this effort."

Senator Creighton was appointed by Lieutenant Governor Patrick to the interim Senate Select Committee on Property Tax Reform and Relief in which the members traveled across Texas during the interim listening to the testimony of concerned taxpayers.

SENATOR BRANDON CREIGHTON represents District 4, which encompasses Chambers, Jefferson and parts of Montgomery, Harris, and Galveston Counties. He currently serves on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water and Rural Affairs, the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, the Senate Committee on State Affairs, Senate Committee on Transportation and as the Vice-Chairman of the Senate Committee on Business and Commerce.

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Entered as Periodicals Class at Highlands Post Office, Highlands, TX 77562. Under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Published 50 weeks per year, on Thursday, by Grafikpress Corp., 5900 Star Lane, Houston, TX 77057. Opinions in this paper are those of the authors, and not necessarily this newspaper's. Any erroneous statement which may appear will be corrected when brought to the attention of the publisher. Liability for errors is limited to the reprinting of the corrected version. Submissions are encouraged; in person, by mail, by fax, or by email, to grafikstar@aol.com.

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LIFESTYLE

OBITUARIES

Ashley Janee Bloomfield



Ashley Janee Bloomfield age, 31, went to be with the Lord on Monday February 13, 2017. She was born in Houston, Texas on October 17, 1985 to June Renee McVicker and Paul Tate Bloomfield. She was a talented artist who enjoyed sketching all types of images, writing poetry, bowling and listening to

music. Ashley was a wonderful and caring mother who loved spending time with her family, especially her children. Ashley was always protective, non-judgmental and was always offering to help others. She will be dearly missed by all who knew her.

She is preceded in death by her grandfathers, Paul J. Bloomfield, Louis Gorman, and Charles Brodd; grandparents, Jean and Glen Stockton; sister, Bonnie Cox-Clevenger; cousin, Crystal Holloway; and aunts, Charlotte Holloway-Mead and Anna Sue Bloomfield.

Ashley is survived by her father, Paul T. Bloomfield; mother, June Renee Cox; stepfather, Karl Brodd; daughter, Shy Denne; son, Colton Thomas; aunt and uncle, Kristy and Donnie Fonteno; uncles, George Taylor Tuck, Ricky Mean, and

David Hare; cousins, Kylea McCrary, Katie and Jeston Norman, Virginia Brodd, Christine Nichols, Richard "Duke" Smith, J.P. Keigley, George Tuck and John Tuck; nieces, Kayla and Destini Clevenger; nephew, Aaron Clevenger; grandparents, Martha Brodd, and Bill and Jan Clites; and also survived by other relatives and many friends.

A visitation for family and friends will be held at Sterling-White Funeral Home 11011 Crosby-Lynchburg Rd. Highlands, on Saturday, February 18 2017 from 9:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m.. Services will immediately follow. Interment will be private. Arrangements entrusted to Sterling-White Funeral Home 11011 Crosby-Lynchburg Rd. Highlands, Texas 77562. To offer condolences to the family, please visit www.sterlingwhite.com.

Military dad surprises son at school



Tim Bailey's pre-kindergarten class at Alamo Elementary helps welcome Staff Sgt. Matthew Rasberry home from Qatar. Rasberry came to lunch at Alamo to surprise his son Benny (behind Rasberry).

By Susan Passmore

Alamo pre-kindergartener Benny Rasberry excitedly trotted onto the stage as his name was called as the winner of the good behavior drawing.

"It's cool!" he said into the microphone as he waited for his prize.

But he forgot all about that prize when his dad Staff Sgt. Matthew Rasberry stepped out from behind the curtains, engulfing his son in a big bear hug. Rasberry was deployed to Qatar in September and had not seen his family – wife Jasmin and sons Benny, 5, Carlos, 2, and Mateo, 7 months – since then.

"He knew I was coming home, but he didn't know when," said Rasberry. "Since he was in school, we decided to surprise him at lunch."

They had enlisted help from Maria Sauza, Jasmin's mother, who was on hand for the surprise with Jasmin's sister Aida Sauza, to help with the boys, since Rasberry had flown in the night before and didn't want to spoil the surprise for Benny.

Rasberry, a 2003 graduate of Robert E. Lee High School, has served in the U.S. Air Force for 13 years, and this was his fourth deployment. He is now stationed at McConnell AFB in Kansas.

Meanwhile, Jasmin Rasberry, a Ross S. Sterling High School graduate, moved back to Baytown to be close to family so that she could go to school to pursue a career in nursing. Right now, they are all just happy to be together for the next two weeks.

"My daddy – he was back there!" said Benny, pointing to the curtain as he happily ate his lunch.

As lunch ended and Rasberry got ready to go see his other two sons, Benny was already making plans.

"Hey, Dad, I want to play 'Hello Neighbor,'" he said.

Yes, You Need a Hobby

By Matilda Charles

Hobbies can help keep us physically and mentally fit, and there are plenty of them to choose from. If you've recently retired, you might not even know where to begin. Here are some ideas to get you started.

For the physically active, explore outdoor photography, yoga, woodworking, metal detecting, ballroom dance, golf or indoor swimming at the Y. While you're there, check out the Y's offering of fitness classes for seniors.

For those who'd rather sit at a table or computer, those boxes of memorabilia will give you plenty of items to begin your own scrapbook. (Add stories and poetry, or photos to pass down to the next family generations.) Try online chess or other games for brain stretching. Start a collection, or expand one you dabbled at before, such as coins or stamps. Consider ham radio, and

talk to the world.

Even if you don't think you can paint or draw, taking a class will give you a start. (Remember that Georgia O'Keeffe painted into her 90s.) Writing a daily or weekly blog post on an online forum of your own can give you a voice to express your opinions. Stories, poetry or even a novel are at your fingertips. Take a computer class that will teach you how to create and save files, if that's where you need to begin.

Still don't know where to start? Make a list of things that interest you and expand from there. If you're good at sewing or painting, see if your skills are needed by the local theater group. If a line-dance class sounds good, try that. If you're going to travel, take a foreign-language class.

Bonus: You don't have to limit yourself to one hobby. For the most fun, combine active and sitting activities.

OBITUARIES

Keith Lee Bell



Keith Lee Bell, 35, of Houston, Texas, passed away on Saturday, January 28, 2017. He was born on November 22, 1981 to Bette Bell and Lonnie Bell in Houston, Texas. He was a kind, and loving gentleman, always caring for his family. Keith was a sharp dresser and loved the art of his tattoos. He was a collector of Jordans and jerseys. He also enjoyed cooking, motorcycles, and the Houston Rockets. He will be dearly missed by all who knew and loved him.

He is preceded in death by his father, Lonnie Bell; grandfather, Leon Bell;

grandmother, Fran Bell; grandma, Ora Marie Turley; and uncle, Wayne Lopez.

Keith is survived by his mother, Bette Sue Fails; step-father, Shannon Fails; son, Anthony Bell; brother, Steven Bell; sister-in-law, Lisa Bell; aunt, Viola Lopez; uncle,

Charles Turley Jr.; and a host of other extended family and friends.

A visitation for family and friends will be held on Monday, February 6, 2017 from 5:00 pm – 8:00 pm at Sterling White Funeral Home. Funeral Services will be held on Tuesday, February 7, 2017 at 10:00 am at Sterling White Funeral Home. Interment will follow in Sterling White Cemetery. Services have been entrusted to Sterling-White Funeral Home 11011 Crosby-Lynchburg Rd, Highlands, Texas 77562.

To send the family condolences please visit www.sterlingwhite.com

Mary Alice McCall



Mary Alice McCall 9/23/1933 – 2/11/2017. Wife, mother, sister, and a dear friend to all died peacefully in her home in the presence of loved ones on February 11, 2017. She was born and raised in the Mississippi Delta to share crop farmer John Craig Tillman & Mary Alice Foster. She married the love of her life Homer McCall and followed him to the Gulf Coast of Texas in 1953 where they grew their family. Her greatest passion in life was serving God and serving others with her charitable heart. She loved her family with all of her being and had a heart of pure forgiveness. She opened her home to all and fostered numerous children over the years. Mary Alice was a devoted member of Old River Assembly of God for many years.

Proverbs 31:10-31 was

Craig Tillman & Mary Alice Tillman, her siblings Clay and Craig Tillman, as well as many other family members and friends. In her final days, Mary had a childlike excitement about the prospect of joining them all in the presence of Christ.

Mary Alice is survived by her siblings Jerry Tillman, Kenneth Tillman, & Patricia Reneau; her remaining children Harold McCall, Sandra Campbell, Kathy Price, Charlie McCall, and Ruth McIntosh; her 16 grandchildren, 26 great grandchildren, and 2 great great grandchildren. All of these she loved and touched deeply. Please join us in celebrating her life Friday morning February 17, 2017 at Sterling White Funeral Home 11011 Crosby Lynchburg Rd, Highlands, TX 77562. Visitation will be from 9am-11am and a service will be held at 11am with a graveside service to follow.

Mary Alice's favorite scripture and her life is evidence of this as she strived to be the Wife of Noble Character; "...10She is worth far more than rubies. ...30Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. 31Honor her for all that her hands have done, and let her works bring her praise."

She was preceded in death by Homer McCall, her loving husband of 60 years, by her children Marilyn, Johnny, Sharon, & Karl, her parents John

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John 7:38

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All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Acts 2:4

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Be alert. Continue strong in the faith. Have courage and be strong.
1 Corinthians 16:13

Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God.
Leviticus 19:32

ASK THE EXPERT

Diamond Jim: "I'm confused. What's the difference between Mined vs Lab Grown vs Synthetic gemstones?"



ASK DIAMOND JIM

Would a rose by any other name smell as sweet? People have used lots of words to describe laboratory grown gemstones, some a bit sweeter than others.

What we're all trying to do is to find language that communicates clearly without confusing consumers. Unfortunately, there are so many terms for lab grown gems out there (and some bad apples who are actually trying to confuse people) that there isn't always as much communication as there should be.

Perhaps the best "lab-grown" gemstones are grown by a company called "Chatham". They prefer to call their gems "lab-grown" because they feel it most clearly describes what their gemstones really are. Chatham is a company which grows gemstone crystals.

When Carroll Chatham grew his first emerald crystals in the 1930s, the jewelry industry was worried that the value of natural gems would collapse. They were also worried they wouldn't be able to tell lab-grown emeralds from mined emeralds.

In 1959, the Federal Trade Commission stepped in to make strict rules about what companies like Chatham could call their products. The commission ordered Carroll Chatham to release all the details of his process in order to decide whether his gems could be called "cultured." Because he refused to divulge the secret of how his gems were grown, Carroll agreed to stop calling them "cultured" and to call them "Chatham-created."

Those worries from the natural gem industry are still there. So is a lot of prejudice against Chatham's products from

people who don't understand them. (And, frankly, not all jewelers can tell the difference between mined and lab-grown gemstones even today.) Scientists (and natural gem enthusiasts) often use the term "synthetic" to describe lab-grown gems. But when we talk to consumers, we find that most people think it means "imitation" or "artificial," so we don't use the word "Synthetic". If you heard "synthetic diamond" you'd think of a high-tech laboratory-grown diamond that costs thousands of dollars a carat or would you think of a cheap imitation?

Other terms that are often used to describe lab-grown gems are "lab created gemstones," "synthetic gemstones," "created gemstones," "lab gemstones," "man-made gemstones," and "cultured gemstones." These are good ways to describe lab-grown gems too as long as they are used correctly.

To make this debate about nomenclature even more confusing, there are some gem materials that are man-made and also imitations. Cubic zirconia is man-made but it's an imitation diamond, not a synthetic or lab-grown diamond (because it's not actually diamond.) Unfortunately, plenty of unscrupulous people use "lab," "man-made," or "created" to refer to imitations that are not the actual minerals described. That's not just bad etiquette. That's deceptive and clearly against FTC rules.

We also think consumers should know the difference between inexpensive flame fusion (or pulled created gemstones) and the more expensive lab-grown gems. Not all gem varieties

can be made inexpensively by flame fusion or pulling: sapphire, ruby, and spinel are the main ones. That's how sapphire watch crystals are made.

In these inexpensive processes, powdered chemical ingredients are melted into a large block in an hour, not grown as crystals taking over a year to complete. The crystal structure of flame fusion or pulled synthetics is disoriented, like glass, due to the way it's made. It doesn't have natural crystal facets. From a crystallography perspective, flame fusion isn't the same as mined ruby or sapphire.

The crystal structure of flux-grown ruby or sapphire is the same as mined ruby and sapphire. Its internal structure is identical. That's why it's worth devoting a year to letting it grow. Because the structure is identical, you get the same brilliance and reflection from the crystal structure and that is why people fall in love with gems in the first place.

In the end, that's what this is all about: understanding what the differences are between different kinds of gems so you can make an informed smart choice: natural mined, lab-grown, man-made, or imitation. It's up to you!

To see an amazing display of Chatham lab grown, Eco friendly and affordable gemstones, visit Pineforest Jewelry today!

If you have questions pertaining to jewelry, watches, diamonds, precious stones, precious metals, and other questions related to the jewelry industry, email jmills@pineforestjewelry.com.

Diamond Jim is a diamond dealer and precious metals broker of NTR Metals. See more at: www.pineforestjewelry.com.

Galena Park Commission Meeting,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

or she would be removed. Attorney Collins indicated that the exact language of the ballot item, and where alcohol could be sold and with what restrictions, would be worked out later prior to the election.

The Commission passed an agreement with Texas Solid Waste Services, Inc. for the waste collection service at \$13.00 per month, for approximately 3,400 accounts.

On the next item, hiring of a new full time city employee, Commissioners Silva and Broussard asked to table the item until more candidates could be interviewed. Mayor Moya said "I override the Table" and in a 2-2 vote, Moya said the motion carried.

City Attorney Collins reported that a survey of the Churchill Community Building in Galena Manor was complete, and warned of toxicity in the building. Specifically it cited asbestos in the floor tile, and mold in the walls and wood. He advised that remediation was required.

The building has been closed for about 7 months, due to deterioration. Mayor Moya indicated that the Commission had authorized work on remediation by the city, but



Evelyn Churchill Community Center in Galena Manor

Commissioner Broussard said this was not true, and shouted out "You're a Big Liar" toward the Mayor and Commissioner Ponder. He felt that he was being unfairly blamed for the continued closing of the building.

Fire Chief Paul Gregory said the building was not condemned, but remained a fire hazard with exit doors blocked or not working properly.

Mayor Moya reassured the audience that she wants to "keep the building by doing it ourselves."

Public comments followed this part of the meeting. A Galena Park businessman stated that alcohol sales was important to his business, and could generate needed in-

come for the city and its businesses. He suggested that proper controls could limit any negative results from allowing the sale of spirits.

Former Commissioner Robert Clowers questioned violations to the city charter that allowed for payment of invoices from the city attorney. He claimed that \$81,000 had been paid without proper authorization, including the first invoice for \$20,000 after Collin's first 5 days of work. He pointed out that Collins was billing at \$375 per hour, though he was only paid \$150 in his previous job.

Collins took issue with the comments, shaking his head "NO" after each of Clowers points. However, he did not speak on the matter.

HCC Global Energy COE reaches out to women

HOUSTON [February 15, 2017] – As petrochemical plant expansions continue in the Gulf Coast region, opportunities for employment in the field persist. The need to replace retiring workers and fill positions has created opportunities for women in what is viewed as a male-dominated industry.

In an effort to attract women into the petrochemical industry, the Houston Community College (HCC) Global Energy Center of Excellence (COE) participated in the Women in Petrochemical 2017 Conference last Friday, February 17 at South Shore Harbor Resort in League City.

The conference was designed to introduce women to the petrochemical industry. It also showcased training available through the Community College Petrochemical Initiative

(CCPI). HCC is a partner in the CCPI.

The conference attracted more than 350 women from Houston and surrounding cities who are interested in the petrochemical field. Seven faculty and staff members were on hand to conduct sessions promoting awareness of Global Energy programs, financial aid, and admissions at HCC.

The Global Energy COE offers certificates and degrees in Electronics Engineering Technology, Petroleum Engineering Technology, Instrumentation and Controls Engineering Technology, Process Technology and Drafting and Design. The Global Energy COE is a hub for high-tech training with curricula guided by more than 50 industry advisors and classes taught by 25 experienced engineers.

At the conference, HCC highlighted opportunities women have in the petrochemical industry by sharing information and success stories of students and faculty like Arusha Jones. Eight years ago, Jones began her career as a process technology student at HCC. After graduating and working in the petrochemical industry for a number of years, she returned to HCC to teach in the Global Energy program. "I wanted to give back to the COE and I love the fact that we continue to grow," said Jones. As a skilled refinery worker and female engineer, Jones brings a unique perspective to the classroom.

The Global Energy COE is located at the HCC Northeast Campus at 555 Community College Drive, Houston, Texas 77013. For more information on programs offered in the COE, visit hccs.edu/globalenergy



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Published each Wednesday by GrafikPress Corp. Any erroneous statement which may appear will be corrected when brought to the attention of the publisher. Liability for errors is limited to the reprinting of the corrected version. Submissions are encouraged, in person, by mail, by Fax, or by email, to: northchannelstar@gmail.com

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