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JACINTO CITY CANCELS ELECTION

Jacinto City had scheduled a municipal election for May 9, to elect a Mayor and two council persons. However, according to City Secretary Joyce Raines, no candidates filed to oppose the incumbents, as per Texas law the election has been cancelled, and the current office holders will be declared elected, as follows:

Mayor: Ana Diaz
Council Member Position No. 4, Carmela Garcia
Council Member Position No. 5, Mario Gonzales.
City Council will vote on an Ordinance to this effect, on March 12 and 26th.

Galena Park appoints Paredes P&R Director



Ernesto Paredes was appointed the new Galena Park director of Parks and Recreation, by City Council at their meeting last Tuesday.

Paredes is past president of the GP/JC Rotary Club, and retired from the Galena Park ISD and the US Army. He is well known in the area, having worked for GPISD for the last 15 years.

Galena Park Council accepts Charter Amendments for vote in May Election

GALENA PARK – After months of contentious meetings, since Mayor Moya took office in July, the City Council held two orderly meetings in the last week to conduct the city's business.

Last Thursday's meeting was a special called meeting, to receive and discuss a report from the Charter Review Committee on recommendations for Amendments to the City Charter. This Tuesday's meeting was only normal business.

The committee presented 22 amendments, of which the council decided to approve and forward 18 for inclusion on the ballot in the May 9th general municipal election. No office holders are up for re-election this term, so this will be the only item on the ballot.

The 22 Amendments follow, briefly stated. All were approved except as noted:

1. Change the Commission's



CITY COUNCIL met twice in the last week, to consider 22 Charter Amendments, and to conduct the City's business in an orderly manner. Note the portrait of Mayor Moya now hangs on the wall with others.

name to City Council.

2. Establish a Department of Community Development to oversee development, planning, and building code enforcement.

3. Establish a Fire Department, with a Fire Chief and Fire Marshal and prescribe duties.

4. Establish a Police Department with a Police Chief, and prescribe duties.

5. Provide for conflict resolution between charter provisions.

6. Change the term of office for Mayor and Council to 3 years instead of 2, stagger terms, and have term limits.

7. Provide for forfeiting or removal of office holders and the filling of the vacancy.

8. City Council shall set level of compensation (NO).

9. Provide for the duties of

the Mayor Pro Tem (NO).

10. Permit City Council meeting in locations other than City Hall.

11. Provide rules for the public to speak at Council meetings.

12. Require roll call votes on resolutions and ordinances (NO).

13. Have a City Manager form of government, prescribe duties and qualifications.

14. Provide for a City Attorney, prescribe duties and qualifications.

15. Provide for a Municipal Court and judges. (NO).

16. Define the powers of the Mayor.

17. Provide for oversight of the City and City Manager by Council.

18. Require Council members signatures on vetoes and deletion of obsolete provisions.

19. Prohibit hiring of employees related to Council members.

20. Provide Citizens with the right to Initiative, Referendum, and Recall.

21. Provide Citizens with the right to amend charter.

22. Provide for a Charter review every 5 years.

The Council approved an ordinance placing the above amendments on the May 9th ballot for citizens to vote. Amendments will be explained in more detail.

Rep. Green “Paying for College” workshop a success

HOUSTON, February 23, 2014 – Congressman Gene Green hosted his bi-annual Paying for College Workshop at MacArthur Senior High in the Aldine Independent School District. Students from around the Houston area brought their parents and families to this free seminar to learn about financing college.

The Sallie Mae Fund and representatives from local colleges and universities presented information about the financial aid process, finding scholarships, and choosing the right



Congressman Gene Green, left, Marva Flentroy, Counselor at MacArthur Senior High, Markques Houston, scholarship winner, and Sergio Gonzalez, right, Representative from The Sallie Mae Fund.

school.

During the event, Markques Houston, a junior at MacArthur, was announced the winner of The

Sallie Mae Fund's \$500 scholarship giveaway. Markques plans to attend

See WORKSHOP, page 3

Trail Rides, BBQ cook-off signal start of Rodeo



The Northeastern Trail Ride, under the direction of Trail Boss Anthony Bruno, rode through Crosby and North Shore on the way to Memorial Park and the Houston Rodeo

See TRAIL RIDES, page 3

COMMUNITY ALERT:

Six year-old boy wounded in shooting by brother

HOUSTON – A 5-year-old boy shot his 6-year-old brother in northeast Harris County, police said.

The shooting happened around 10:30 a.m. on Monday, March 2, 2015 in the 16800 block of Faring Road, near Sheldon Road. The 6-year-old boy was shot once in the abdomen with a 9 mm pistol, deputies said.

Family members said they do not know how the boy got the gun since they have a gun safe. The child was transported to Memorial Hermann Hospital for surgery. The boy was in critical condition as of last Monday afternoon.

At the time of the shooting, the mother was at home with her four kids when she heard the shot and called 911.

An investigation continues and officials said no charges have been filed at this time. Deputies for precaution secured additional weapons at the house.

This is the third shooting case involving kids between 3-years-old and 6-years in less than a week in Houston.



Six year-old wounded with fire arm.

PHOTO COURTESY KPRC

On Friday, February 27, a 3-year-old died after he accidentally shot himself in the head inside his family's house located in the 7400 block of Betanna Drive.

Then on Sunday morning, another boy, 4, also died after finding a loaded handgun and shooting himself, in the 19800 block of Imperial Stone Drive. The little boy was staying there for the night and on Sun-

day morning, around 12:00 a.m. somehow got his hands on a gun and shot himself.

These two cases are also under investigation and nobody has been charged. The Harris County Sheriff's Office wants to remind people to secure weapons and keep them out of the reach of children. They are also offering free gun locks for gun owners.

COMMUNITY PROFILE:

North Shore Rotarian picked to lead city's District 5890

A member of the North Shore Rotary Club has been chosen District Governor Nominee, to lead the area's District 5890 for a year, starting in July 2017. The announcement was made last week by the current District Governor Lisa Faith Massey.

Bill Palko has been a Rotarian since 2005, and will be the second club member to hold this important position. Previously, John Painter was the District Governor from 1999 to 2000.

Rotary District 5890 encompasses the greater Houston area, with over 63 clubs and 3500 members. The District Governor is responsible for organizing and supervising these clubs and members for his year in office.

Bill Palko is a native Houstonian. Upon graduation from High School Bill joined the US Army where he served on active duty from 1973-1977. After his honorable discharge from the Army, Bill earned his Associate of Arts Degree in Business Administration from San Jacinto Junior College North Campus. He then



BILL PALKO

earned his BBA in Accounting from the University of Houston Central Campus.

Bill has been a Houston Banker for 33 years. He is currently a Senior Vice President and Community Development Manager with Amegy Bank where he's been employed for 17+ years.

Bill is active in his local

community. He serves as a Board Member for the Wendel D. Ley Y as well as for the North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce. He has twice been named Volunteer of the Year at the Ley Y. He was also named Board Member of the Year by the Chamber.

Bill is an Assistant Governor for the years 2013-2015. He was awarded AG of the

Year in 2013-2014. Bill is a Major Donor as well as a multiple Paul Harris Fellow. He is a member of the Bequest, Paul Harris, Polio Plus and White Hat Societies.

Bill has been married for 36 years to Debbie and they have two wonderful children, Steven and Michelle.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

North Channel Chamber Monthly Luncheon

The North Channel Area Chamber of Commerce monthly luncheon is Friday, March 6th at 11:30am @ San Jacinto College N. in the Monument Room of the Student Center, 5800 Uvalde Rd.

Guest speaker: Curt Williams w/ Youth Reach. Call Blanca by March 3 for reservations: 713-450-3600, or via Email blanca@ncchamber.com.

Cost is \$20.00 per person (with an RSVP) / \$25.00 per person (without an RSVP).

2nd & 4th THURSDAY San Jacinto Pilot Club meeting

San Jacinto Pilot Club meets 2nd and 4th Thursdays at noon at the Galena Park ISD Administration Building.

2nd THURSDAY North Shore Senior Dance

North Shore Senior Citizens hold a monthly dance the second Thursday of every month 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.

MARCH North Channel Library events

-Thursday, March 5, 10:30 am, Baby Time; 12-4 pm, AARP Tax Help.

-Friday, March 6 & Saturday, March 7, Library Book Sale.

-Tuesday, March 10, 10:30 am, Toddler Time; 1:00 pm, Preschool Story Time; 4:30 pm, Teen Tech: LED Flashlight. (registration required)

-Wednesday, March 11, 1:30 pm & 4:30 pm, Strings Attached

-Thursday, March 12, 10:30 am, Baby Time; 12-4 pm, AARP Tax Help; 4:30 pm, Teen Tech: Writing Code (registration required)

-Saturday, March 14, 11 am, Genealogy 101.

COMPUTER CLASSES:

-Intermediate Word, Lecture, March 10, 10-12 pm

-Intermediate Word, Practice, March 12, 10-12 pm.

CLASES DE COMPUTACION:

-Intermedio Word, Lectura, Marzo 9, 1-3 pm.

-Intermedio Word, Práctica, Marzo 11, 1-3 pm.

-Como usar el scanner, parte 2, March 11, 6-7:45 pm.

*Se require registrarse.

Library is located at 15741 Wal-lisville Rd., Houston, TX. 77049. Call 281-457-1631 for more information on other classes.

MARCH Galena Park Library events

-Monday, March 9, 3 pm, Teen's Coding Lab.

-Wednesday, March 11, 11 am, Story Time; 1 pm, Ratón y Teclado; 3:30 pm, Mouse & Keyboard.

-Thursday, March 12, 11 am, Baby Time.

-Monday, March 16, 3:30 pm, Video Game Day.

Please call the library at 713-450-0982 for more details.

The library is located at 1500 Keene St. Galena Park, TX. 77547.

SATURDAY NIGHTS 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.

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TxDOT reminds Spring Breakers about consequences of drinking and driving

AUSTIN, March 3, 2015 – Spring Break is a dangerous and deadly time on Texas roadways with more than 30 fatalities resulting from impaired driving in each of the past two years. In an effort to curb this deadly trend, the Texas Department of Transportation today held a press conference at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMUCC) to launch its statewide “DWI Hangovers Don’t Go Away” campaign reminding young adults and college students about the dangers and long-term consequences of drinking.

“Many of these young people are under 21 and it is against the law for them to drink alcohol,” said TxDOT Executive Director LtGen Joe Weber, USMC (Ret). “Every deadly crash is a tragedy, but it’s especially difficult when the promising future of a young person is suddenly cut short. We ask parents to talk to their kids about the deadly consequences of drinking and driving. Don’t let your child be a Spring Break statistic.”

Today’s press conference featured TxDOT representatives alongside area law enforcement officials.

A street team on Segways later rode throughout the TAMUCC campus to interact with students and hand out educational materials. The Segway street team will continue to spread its message of safety and sobriety to other college campuses and community events across the state.

In 2014, there were 24,175 impaired-driving traffic crashes in Texas that resulted in 2,292 serious injuries and 969 deaths. Of those crashes, 54 percent involved drivers under the influence of alcohol in the age group of 17-34.

East Houston Regional Medical Center honors certified nurses

Houston, TX/March 19, 2015 – East Houston Regional Medical Center will recognize the unique contributions of certified nurses on Certified Nurses Day, Thursday, March 19. During the celebration, our hospital’s certified nurses will be honored with a VIP breakfast: List Nurses and Specialties.

Alice Adams, Chief Executive Officer at EHRMC, states “Certification is a milestone of personal excellence along the professional journey. Our certified nurses have the dedication and persistence required to achieve and maintain their specific certifications; they

make a tremendous contribution to our staff as well as our facility.” Adams added, “our patients benefit from our Certified Nurses’ experience, knowledge and skills in the complex specialties of acute and critical care.”

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) proposed March 19 as Certified Nurses Day, an annual worldwide event dedicated to honoring and recognizing the important achievement of nursing specialty and subspecialty certification. Certification validates a nurse’s specialty knowledge for practice in a defined functional or clinical area of nursing.

East Houston Regional Medical Center will celebrate Certified Nurses Day by recognizing the staff who have gained certification as a means to ensure high standards of patient care and to promote continuing excellence in the nursing profession. In addition, the day honors the birthday of the late Margaretta “Gretta” Madden Styles. An international pioneer of nursing certification and longtime friend of AACN and AACN Certification Corporation, Styles designed the first comprehensive study of nurse credentialing

COMMUNITY WATCH

Woman accused in robbery of man outside a store on Uvalde

HOUSTON- February 19, 2015 – A woman is accused of robbing a man at gunpoint in a parking lot of a Family Dollar store.

According to reports, last December, Indya Daniels, 22, and two other suspects robbed the man at gunpoint as he was walking to his car in the parking lot of the store located in the 5600 block of Uvalde.

After exiting the store, the man was approached by Daniels who asked for directions while the two suspects got out of a blue Buick pointed out guns at him, reports said. The two suspects robbed his wallet, debit card and cell phone. The victim opened fire with a gun he was carrying in his vehicle but the suspects got away.

The robbed debit card was used 10 minutes later at the TS Mini Mart in the 3600 block of Oates Road, investigators said.

Surveillance video from the Family Dollar and the mini mart, showed the two suspects and investigators were able to



Indya Daniels charged with aggravated robbery with deadly weapon

a license plate number from the blue Buick. Then, police arrested a woman, while driving the blue Buick, for outstanding warrants.

The woman identified Daniels as one of the suspects.

The victim also identified Daniles as the person in the robbery.

She was arrested and charged with aggravated robbery with a deadly weapon. Her bond was set at \$30,000.

WORKSHOP,

Continued from page 1

college in the state of Texas and continue playing basketball.

“These workshops are especially important now, as college costs continue to rise and student loan debt is larger than ever. We hope that the information presented during these seminars will help students and parents be better informed about how to find scholarships, and make sound choices when choosing a school and financial aid package,” Green said.

“We also want to congratulate Markques who won the scholarship drawing. We hope it will add to your college preparedness as you pursue your dreams after high school.”

Also present at the Paying for College Workshop were representatives from Lone Star College, University of Houston Downtown, and Houston Community College Northeast Campus.

CAPITOL UPDATE

Senator Garcia files Legislation to prevent Teen Pregnancy

AUSTIN - February 26, 2015 – Senator Sylvia Garcia participated in the Trust. Respect. Access. rally to restore trust in Texans to make their own reproductive health care decisions, respect for health care professionals’ judgment about patient care and access to the full range of reproductive health care in Texas. There were hundreds of individuals, including college students, present at the rally held on the Capitol steps this afternoon.

Also, earlier this week she filed SB 707 with the goal of reducing repeat teen pregnancy. Texas has the highest rate of repeat teen pregnancy in the nation.

“I’m proud to continue the fight to proactively promote common sense policies that improve access to reproductive health care and reduce unintended pregnancies, especially among teenagers. My bill will allow teenage mothers to have access to the Texas Woman’s Health Program for their annual exams and to also get birth control to prevent any future unintended pregnancies. We already trust these young mothers to care for their child, so we should also support and trust them to make decisions for their own personal health, including permission to get birth control.”

SB 706 to protect children from Liquid Nicotine Poisoning

AUSTIN - Senator Garcia (SD-6) has filed legislation aimed at protecting children from hazardous exposure to liquids that may contain nicotine. Liquid nicotine, which is often inhaled through the use of electronic cigarettes, is highly toxic when ingested or absorbed into the skin. As little as one teaspoon of the liquid can be fatal for young children. The country suffered its first child death from liquid nicotine in December of last year when a 1-year-old in New York swallowed liquid nicotine that was stored in a bottle which did not have child-resistant packaging. In response, SB 706 would require child-resistant packaging of these liquids and labelling which identifies the liquids as hazardous.

“The safety of our children is our utmost priority. These liquids are often brightly colored and advertised as having sweet flavors such as cotton candy;

traits small children find appealing. Thankfully, Texas has not experienced any liquid nicotine-related deaths yet, but Poison Control Centers have seen over a 200% increase in liquid nicotine exposure calls for children and teens just within the last year. I have filed this bill in the hopes that we can greatly reduce the number of children harmed by liquid nicotine and avoid a tragic accident from claiming the life of a young Texan.”

“In keeping with my concern for our children’s well-being, I am also a co-author of SB 96 and SB 97 filed by Senator Hinojosa. These bills would prohibit the sale of vapor products to minors and the use of the products on school property. In conjunction with SB 706, Senator Hinojosa’s legislation would help protect our innocent children from any harms these products may cause.”

Rep. Gene Green votes to fund DHS

House Passes Clean DHS Funding Bill with Bipartisan Support

WASHINGTON—On Tuesday, the House of Representatives voted to pass H.R. 240, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Appropriations Act. The Senate-amended bill fully fund DHS through September 30, 2015, and does not contain any language pertaining to immigration enforcement. Congressman Gene Green released the following statement:

“I am proud to stand with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in passing a clean DHS funding bill.

Fully funding DHS will help protect the people of Houston and Harris County from those who seek to do harm to the U.S. The truth of the matter is that this should have been passed in December with the rest of the federal government appropriations. I hope House leadership will end the pattern of ‘legislating-by-crisis’ that has taken hold in recent years, and engage Members of both parties in passing sorely needed legislation—like the doc fix and surface transportation—that will rebuild America and strengthen our economy.”



DUDE, THAT IS WHAT SHE'S TALKIN' ABOUT

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OPINION PAGE

LETTERS
To The Editor

Newport Replat
Questioned

To the Editor:

For the third time in the last eleven and a half years a request to replat the undeveloped portion of Newport Section 8 has been submitted to the City of Houston Planning and Development Department. Since this request was denied twice before in 2004 and 2006, I am wanting to know what has changed to make someone think that it will pass this time except for the fact that most of the people that opposed the request have moved from Newport and the make-up of the board of directors has changed. My request for information from the City has so far gone unanswered.....

Thank you very much.

W. O. (Bud) Dromgoole

Newport

EDITOR'S NOTE: Opinions expressed in Letters to the Editor are the opinion of the writer, and do not necessarily reflect those of this newspaper. Your opinion on this or any subject may be submitted for consideration for publication. Errors brought to the attention of the newspaper will be promptly corrected.

CAPITOL UPDATE

Republicans against
Medicaid Expansion

AUSTIN – Macrh 2, 2015 — Senator Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) issued the following statement regarding a joint letter to President Barack Obama signed by Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, Senator Brandon Creighton and fellow members of the Senate Republican Caucus standing united against Medicaid expansion.

“In the spirit of our state’s independence, I have joined my fellow Senate Republicans in standing strongly against Medicaid expansion in Texas by signing a joint-letter to President Obama reaffirming our stance. Throughout my service as House Republican Caucus Chair last session and Texas Representative for District 16, blocking Medicaid expansion was a top priority of mine and will remain a top priority in the Senate.”

“Instead of giving our states the flexibility we need to improve health care, Washington has only made things worse. Texas

pays 40 percent of the cost and our state won’t stand idly by while the federal government attempts to make 100 percent of our health care decisions.”

The Texas Medicaid program is a jointly-funded state and federal program designed to provide health care to our state’s most vulnerable citizens: the disabled, elderly, pregnant women, and children. The program currently insures about 4.1 million Texans across the state.

SENATOR BRANDON CREIGHTON represents District 4, which encompasses parts of Montgomery, Harris, Chambers, Jefferson 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, and as the Vice-Chairman of the Senate Committee on Business and Commerce.



Senate panel passes legislation
to fund state highways

AUSTIN — The Senate Transportation Committee on Feb. 25 tentatively approved two pieces of legislation that would take a portion of various motor vehicle related taxes and dedicate that money to road and bridge construction and maintenance.

Senate Bill 5, enabling legislation, and Senate Joint Resolution 5, which would put a constitutional amendment on the November statewide ballot, are meant to help cover the shortfall in the state highway funding program. According to Senate documents, the two measures work together to dedicate a portion of the motor vehicle sales tax and other taxes associated with vehicle use, but not the gas tax, to TxDOT so the agency “can reasonably predict and plan projects six to 10 years into the future, to replace congestion and to preserve our system.”

The state comptroller would be required at the beginning of each fiscal year to deposit to the credit of the state highway fund all money that comes from sources identified in the legislation.

SB 5 and SJR 5 are authored by Senate Transportation Committee Chair Robert Nichols, R-Jacksonville, and Senate Finance Committee Chair Jane Nelson, R-Flower Mound. Signed as coauthors are Sens. Birdwell, Campbell, Fraser, Hall, Hancock, Huffines, Huffman, Kolkhorst, Lucio Jr., Seliger, Taylor of Collin and Zaffirini.

In each fiscal year beginning Sept. 1, 2017, the legislation as currently written would dedicate to general revenue the first \$2.5 billion in revenues from existing sales tax on new and used vehicles and exiting rental tax on vehicles, according to the official analysis of the bills.

The second \$2.5 billion would be dedicated to the State Highway Fund with the restriction that it could only be appropriated to construct, maintain, or acquire rights-of ways for public roadways other than toll roads. Those funds also be used to repay Proposition 12 bonds that currently are paid with general revenues funds, which cost about \$335 million per year.

Furthermore, “Any additional revenue in the same fiscal year that is collected above the \$2.5 billion for general revenue and the \$2.5 billion for the State Highway Fund would be divided equally between these two funds.”

“TxDOT has to know, six, eight, 10 years out what they’re going to have or they cannot even begin design work,” Chairman Nichols said. “It’s extremely important.”

STATE CAPITAL
HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling



rently are paid with general revenues funds, which cost about \$335 million per year.

During the Feb. 25 session of the Texas House, state Rep. John Otto expressed the body’s intention to “fully fund” TRS-Care — the health care plan of retired teachers and their dependents — a group numbering more than 230,000 people.

Otto, R-Dayton, who chairs the budget-writing House Appropriations Committee, made the announcement on the House floor. The chamber erupted in hurrahs. The estimated cost of fully funding the health care plan for fiscal years 2016 and 2017 is more than three-quarters of a billion dollars.

After Otto spoke, Rep. Jim Keffer, R-Eastland, made a statement challenging the Senate to do likewise by passing legislation to fully fund TRS-Care.

Tax repeals are sought

Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar on Feb. 26 announced he is working with the state House and Senate to repeal nine state taxes during the 2015 legislative session.

Targeted for repeal are: the inheritance tax, the airline and passenger train beverage tax, the liquefied gas tax, the combative sports admissions tax, the bingo rental tax, the fireworks tax, the oil regulation tax, the sulphur tax and the controlled substance tax certificates.

Hegar said, “The resources needed to administer these tax laws should be redeployed to ensure Texans are getting the best possible government at the lowest possible cost, rather than maintaining red tape and regulation unnecessarily burdening business owners.”

Van de Putte leaves Senate

After more than 24 years as a member of the Texas Legislature, Sen. Leticia Van de Putte worked her last day for San Antonio’s Senate District 26 on Feb. 24.

Van de Putte, who resigned to run for mayor of San Antonio, is succeeded by José Menéndez, a state representative who won the runoff election that pitted him against fellow state Rep. Trey Martinez Fischer.

Van de Putte, a pharmacist by trade, served as a member of the Texas House from 1990 to 1999 and as a member of the Senate since 1999. Menéndez was first elected to the House in 2000 and was in his seventh consecutive term as a House member before moving to the Senate.

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TEXAS
With Russell
A. Graves

A Prairie in
Pieces - Part 2

Across the continent the Great Plains is a huge swath of land that incises mid-America from northeastern Mexico to the southern Canadian provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. The Western Great Plains runs through arid landscapes where sediments from the Rocky Mountains have flowed for eons. With scant rainfall, the prairie grows short there.

On the eastern side of the Great Plains — where rainfall measures up to 40 inches per year — the grass grows tall. “Of all America’s vanished wilderness, no part has suffered and declined as much as the prairie,” the Boston Globe lamented in a 1970 editorial.

When the early settlers arrived, there were 140 million acres of tallgrass prairie nationwide. The ecosystems of Texas and Oklahoma (Cross Timbers and Southern Tallgrass Prairie) included 49 million acres of that total. Today, nearly 99 percent of the original prairies are gone. The Tallgrass Prairie Preserve (spanning both states) is the largest protected remnant of tallgrass prairie left in the world. The elements that make the grass grow so tall — the rich soil, abundant rainfall, ample sunshine, temperate climate and moderately sloping topography — also make it attractive for development. Now, nearly all the prairie is gone.

“Over the last 150 years, we have lost most of our grassland heritage,” says Matt White, author of *Prairie Time*. “It is a process that sadly is still happening even though we have such a small fraction left.”

White says that he believes the greatest risk to existing prairies is the conversion of grasses into improved forage for agriculture and residential/commercial development.

“My belief is that black soil was the first black gold in Texas,” explains White. “It was so rich, so fertile that soon value of the land skyrocketed as a plowing frenzy turned the land upside-down. When that happened, the vegetation vanished into memory, except in places where hay meadows were hoarded like money in the bank by cattle ranchers who knew their value.”

According to White, those small patches are scant now and becoming more rare every day.

“The greatest risk to the remaining prairies is that they too will be sold, plowed or developed by the next generation who believe that more is better,” White says. “As we lose folks who knew their value and their importance, we lose even more of our collective memory about what was here and what we have lost.”

HIGHLANDS

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ASSEMBLY OF GOD

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• Gospel Lighthouse, 8218 John Martin Rd., Baytown, 281-421-1168

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• Highlands Baptist, 111 E. Canal Rd., Highlands, 281-426-2470
• Northeast Freeway Baptist, 1635 Runneberg Rd., Crosby, 281-328-2723
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• Harvest Time Church of God, 495 S. Diamondhead Blvd., Crosby, 281-462-8060

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•Second Baptist Church, 1913 18th. St., Galena Park, TX. 713-672-9232.
•Second Baptist Church, 10501 Muscatine, Jacinto City, TX. 713-674-8463.
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•Old River Terrace United Methodist Church, 16102 East Freeway, Channelview, TX. 281-452-2861.
•Galena Park United Methodist, 1705 1st. St., Galena Park, TX. 713-672-0245.

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LITTLE BIDDY BITS

By Danny Biddy

So the Wind Blew

As I thought about this extended winter our country is experiencing, another bad weather experience came to mind. In 2005 as Hurricane Rita was dying down and people began to return to their homes, many reported a most unusual sight. It was like a mercy drop from heaven. What peace it brought when I was privileged to see it. Maybe you saw it also. It was those little winged creatures that defy the law of aerodynamics called hummingbirds. They were everywhere. One would have thought that the winds encountered here would have blown them all away. Evidently, the Lord had other plans. Some words from an old hymn, based on Matthew 10:29 by Civi-lla D. Martin, came to mind, "...for His eye is on the sparrow, and I know He watches me."

BIBLE TRIVIA

1. Is the book of 2 Thessalonians in the Old or New Testament or neither?
 2. From Song of Solomon 8, what is so powerful that many waters cannot quench it? Hope, Love, Salvation, Peace
 3. Which book (KJV) begins, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners ..."? Philip-pians, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews
 4. Thorns and what else grew from the ground that God cursed after Adam and Eve's sin? Vines, Ivy, Thistles, Weeds
 5. According to Paul, in hardships Christians are "more than" what? Friends, Conquerors, Warriors, Inn-keepers
 6. From Luke 19, what town was home to Zacchaeus? Jeri-cho, Tarsus, Thessalonica, Corinth
- ANSWERS: 1) New; 2) Love; 3) Hebrews; 4) Thistles; 5) Conquerors; 6) Jericho
- Comments? More Trivia? Visit www.TriviaGuy.com

★

OBITUARIES

Cheryl Lynn Westra

Cheryl Lynn Westra, 65, of Kenefick, Texas, went home to be with her Lord on March 1, 2015. She was born August 1, 1949 in Houston, Texas to par-ents, Gene Austin & Helen (Hart) Williams. She was a graduate of Northshore High School, Class of 1967.

She had worked for several area funeral homes, most re-cently with Carter Funeral Home, working as secretary for 17 years until retiring. She was a life member of the VFW Post 2438 in Bay City, Texas.

She is preceded in death by her parents and by one sister, Iva Christine Lehr.

She is survived by husband of 43 years, Harold Westra; by children, Jody Westra & wife, Tina; and Christopher L. We-stra; daughters, Kim Har-ington and Kelly Westra; by grandchildren, Brittany, Beth-any, Paige, Sierra, Hannah, Ashlie and Bayleigh Westra; by brother, Austin Hearon; and by sisters, Debbie Atzenhoffer; Cindy Boyd & husband Bo; Ora White; Jeannie Gilbert & husband, Tip; Jeanie Engle; Thelma Banks and Harriett Jackson.



A visitation is scheduled for Thursday, March 5, 2015 at Carter Funeral Home from 5-8:00 p.m. with services at 2:00 pm. Friday, March 6, 2015 in Carter's Chapel. Interment will follow in Sterling White Cemetery, in Highlands, Tex-as under the direction of Cart-er Funeral Home.

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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

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Detail of the scene by Jan. 1470-1480

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SCHOOL NEWS



Panthers Sign Letters of Intent

Sheldon ISD had six football players sign with colleges or universities on National Signing Day. These players were a part of the team that won the 21-5A District Championship. We are so excited to see what these guys will do at the next level.

Pictured left to right, Andre Thomas signed with Southwestern Assemblies of God, Keshun Smith signed with Navarro College, Rozzell Barber signed with Mary-Hardin Baylor University, Clayton Ferguson signed with Arkansas Baptist College, Robert Anderson signed with Texas A&T and Quentin Richard signed with Texas A&T. Congratulations, Panthers!

Students bolster brainpower with school breakfast

Galena Park ISD Schools Celebrate National School Breakfast Week

Children who eat school provided breakfast at the start the day are ready to learn. This is reflected in higher test scores and better classroom behavior. However, only half of the children who eat lunch at school also eat school breakfast according to the Food Research and Action Council. To encourage increased participation in the School Breakfast Program, Galena Park ISD schools participated in National School Breakfast Week March 2-6, 2015. National School Breakfast Week is a weeklong celebration aimed at increasing awareness of the School Breakfast Program among students and parents.

The 2015 National School Breakfast Week theme, "Make the Grade with School Breakfast," reminded parents, students and administrators that a healthy school breakfast sets students up for a day of learning and academic success. The theme was displayed in school cafeterias during this week. "Too many children are showing up at school hungry and we know hungry children can't learn," said Dorinda Eubanks,

Director of Student Nutrition Services. "A healthy breakfast helps students focus in the classroom and perform better. That's why we offer a healthy breakfast to students free of charge every morning in our schools."

School breakfast provides children with the energy they need to succeed in the classroom and on the playing field. Every breakfast served meets federal nutrition standards limiting fat, calories, and sodium. GPISD cafeterias are competing in the Texas Department of Agriculture Local Products Challenge and offered a variety of Texas grown foods during this special week. Throughout the week, the GPISD Student Nutrition Department encouraged all students to celebrate this special week by eating breakfast in the school cafeterias. Every



Kaitlyn Moore, a student at Cloverleaf Elementary, is preparing for another day of learning by eating a healthy school breakfast.

school day Galena Park ISD's breakfast program offers students a healthy breakfast so they may be prepared for a busy school day. Breakfast is always free of charge to all students!

CHANNELVIEW: Briggs donates \$15,000 to Relay for Life Houston-North Channel



The employees of Briggs Equipment recently presented Relay for Life Houston-North Channel a \$15,000 donation for the event to be held on May 1 at North Shore High School Ninth Grade Campus. Accepting the donation are Relay for Life co-chairs Vince Bradshaw and Darcy Blackstock.

Briggs Equipment pledged a strong show of support to the Relay for Life of Houston North Channel, as they became an Event Sponsor by presenting the organization a \$15,000 donation for the event.

This year's event will be held from 6 p.m.-1 a.m., Friday May 1, at the North Shore High School Ninth Grade Campus, 13501 Holly Park. Funds from the event go toward the American Cancer Society cancer research, patient services and prevention efforts.

"We are very appreciative to Briggs for this most generous donation," said Vince Bradshaw, co-chairman of Relay for Life Houston-North Channel. "Briggs has been a longtime sponsor of our event and they

realize the importance of our communities coming together to support the fight against cancer."

Briggs Equipment, located on Wallisville Road near Channelview, has many offices nationwide and is one of the oldest and most trusted materials handling equipment providers in the country.

For the past several years, Briggs has not only contributed financially to Relay for Life, their employees have been active participants in the event. Briggs has sponsored a tent on the Relay course and employees take part in many of the activities held during the evening.

"Our friends at Briggs have always been there to support Relay in every way possible,"

said Darcy Blackstock, event co-chairwoman. "They really want to help make a difference in the lives of those affected by cancer and the efforts of those researching possible cures for this terrible disease."

The Relay for Life efforts began in May 1985, when Dr. Gordy Klatt walked and ran for 24 hours around a track in Tacoma, Washington, ultimately raising \$27,000 to help the American Cancer Society fight the nation's biggest health concern – cancer. A year later, 340 supporters joined the overnight event. Since those first steps, the Relay For Life movement has grown into a worldwide phenomenon, raising nearly \$5 billion to fight cancer.

Psychology expo to showcase student projects

Free event will also provide information about psychological and mental health professions

HOUSTON – The San Jacinto College North Campus psychology department will host a psychology expo to allow students to showcase class projects and to provide information about psychological topics.

The expo will be held Wednesday and Thursday, March 11 and 12, from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., each day. The event will take place in the Monument Room, located on the second floor of the Slovacek Student Center, 5800 Uvalde Road.

The event is free and open to the public. Tri-fold posters created by San Jacinto College students will be on display at the expo. There will be more than 100 projects on display and the student projects are based on current research. Poster topics include mental illness; substance abuse; and, sexual orientation and family issues such as divorce and its affect on children. Some students have incorporated service learning into their project, volunteering at community-based agencies. First, second and third place awards will be

presented to students based on creativity, content and overall presentation.

Darla Rocha, San Jacinto College psychology professor and North Campus behavioral and social sciences department chair, said students look forward to sharing what they have learned with others. "The expo gives students opportunities to showcase psychological topics while demonstrating creative skills," she said. "The event also educates and informs others about important psychological issues that relate to everyday life."

There will be a table with information about psychology and mental health professions. Instructors will be available to provide information about psychology and mental health degrees and certificates. San Jacinto College offers psychology courses at all three campuses.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Texas Independence Day: Happy 179th Birthday, Texas!

By Contributing writer

On March 2 in 1836, Texas became a republic. On March 1, delegates from the seventeen Mexican municipalities of Texas and the settlement of Pecan Point met at Washington-on-the-Brazos to consider independence from Mexico.

George C. Childress presented a resolution calling for independence, and the chairman of the convention appointed Childress to head a committee of five to draft a declaration of independence.

The committee consisted of: George C. Childress, James Gaines, Edward Conrad, Colin McKinney, and Bailey Hardeman. Childress was named chairman, and it is generally conceded that he wrote the instrument with little help from the other members. In fact, there is some evidence that he brought to the convention a proposed declaration that was adopted with little change by the committee and the convention. This view is substantiated by the fact that the committee was appointed on March 1, and the declaration was presented to the convention on March 2.

The Texas edict, like the United States Declaration of Independence, contains a statement on the nature of government, a list of grievances, and a final declaration of independence. The separation from Mexico was justified by a brief philosophical argument and by a list of grievances. The declaration charged that the government of Mexico had



ceased to protect the lives, liberty, and property of the people; that it had been changed from a restricted federal republic to a consolidated, central, military despotism; that the people of Texas had remonstrated against the misdeeds of the government only to have their agents thrown into dungeons and armies sent forth to enforce the decrees of the new government at the point of the bayonet; that the welfare of Texas had been sacrificed to that of Coahuila; that the government had failed to provide a system of public education, trial by jury, freedom of religion, and other essentials of good government; and that the Indians had been incited to massacre the settlers. According to the declaration, the Mexican government had invaded Texas to lay waste to the territory and had a large mercenary army advancing to carry on a

war of extermination. The final grievance, listed in justification of revolution, charged that the Mexican government had been “the contemptible sport and victim of successive military revolutions and hath continually exhibited every characteristic of a weak, corrupt, and tyrannical government.” After the signing of the original declaration by fifty-nine delegates, five copies of the document were dispatched to the designated Texas towns of Bexar, Goliad, Nacogdoches, Brazoria, and San Felipe. The printer at San Felipe was also instructed to make 1,000 copies in handbill form. The original was deposited with the United States Department of State in Washington, D.C., and was not returned to Texas until some time after June, 1896. We hope that you enjoy this insight into the lives of the early days of Texas.

More than 2 billion approved for road projects across the state

TxDOT moving forward shortly after voters overwhelmingly approve Proposition 1

AUSTIN – Three short months after Texas voters approved Proposition 1, adding \$1.74 billion to the state highway fund, the Texas Transportation Commission today approved the construction of 201 road projects giving momentum to much-needed progress across the state. Starting in March, the Texas Department of Transportation will begin awarding projects to contractors with construction kicking off soon after. “Citizens sent a clear message in November and TxDOT is carrying out its responsibility quickly, effectively and with a great deal of local input,” said Texas Transportation Commission Chairman Ted Houghton. “Between Prop. 1’s \$1.74 billion and other funding sources, we are able to allocate \$2 billion to projects

that will help address roadway congestion, safety and the growing demands on our infrastructure. This is great news for commuters, industry and the overall economic health of Texas.” Among the projects slated to begin work are more than 800 miles of rehabilitated highways; nearly 500 miles of new highway lanes; 64 bridge replacements; and 18 lane-widening enhancements that will add 159 miles of passing lanes to rural highways. Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) and TxDOT Districts worked together to formulate the list of projects and then gathered public comments. Many TxDOT districts plan to use money dedicated for maintenance to repair or rehabilitate highways affected by

production in the energy sector. These funds, along with Proposition 1 funds specifically allocated for energy sector needs, means that projects in areas affected by energy sector development are receiving nearly 30 percent of total 2015 Proposition 1 funding. “Safety is our top priority and the money we are putting toward enhancing safety in the energy sector is proof of this,” said Texas Transportation Commissioner Fred Underwood. Over the past five years, there were 248 fatalities and more than 23,000 crashes on the highway segments where Proposition 1 projects are located. The work planned in these areas will help reduce the number of crashes, resulting in fewer fatalities and injuries.

Northeastern Trail Ride ends journey to the Rodeo

Continued from Page 1

A signature tradition that dates back to January of 1952, trail rides continue to be a distinguished part of the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo nowadays. Last Friday and after a week of riding, more than a dozen trail rides from all around Texas arrived at Memorial Park in Houston for the Rodeo. The Northeastern Trail Ride started in Beaumont, Texas about a week ago, under the direction of Anthony Bruno, trail boss, and Keith Mack, assistant Trail Boss. Wednesday night they camped at the Rockin’ C Arena in Crosby, Texas and then took old U.S. 90 to their campsite at Triangle 7 Arena on Parker Road in North Forest. Along the way, they stopped at several schools to show children the horses and

wagons, and share stories about Western Life. The schools they stopped at included Sheldon Elementary, Hilliard Elementary, Kipp Academy, BC Elmore, and Bruce Elementary. Last year, this trail ride experienced a sad event, as one of the original founders, J. Joe, died of heart attack the morning they arrived in North Forest. His son, Kevin, has continued the tradition this year. Brian Richard, son of Northeastern’s sound man, Caston Richard, also continued in place of his father, who died before last year’s ride. Also riding with her father was flag-bearer Birdie Sion, keeping up that family tradition with her dad. The Northeastern Trail Ride rode through North Channel, Channelview and North Forest, and the Span-

ish trail ride passed through the Aldine area, a tradition every year since 1982 and 1961 respectively. This family ride began their journey of 108 miles from Beaumont, Texas the morning of February 21, 2015. Trail boss Anthony Bruno led a total of 300 riders and 14 wagons. The group started each day early in the morning and traveled between 10 to 20 miles per day riding until about 4:00 pm. Wednesday night, they camped at Crosby Fairgrounds. Last Thursday, the ride made a late morning stop at Sheldon Elementary for lunch. estern Wear on Aldine Bender. Then Friday night they camped in Memorial Park, and Saturday they participated in the downtown Houston Rodeo parade along with the other 12 trail ride groups.

Rep. Gene Green responds to internet regulations announcement

WASHINGTON—On Thursday, Chairman Wheeler and the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) released an official plan for Internet regulations. Rep. Gene Green (D-TX) released the following statement in response: “The future of the Internet is important to all of us. As a senior Member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, I have followed the FCC’s work on broadband regulation for many years, and I’ve consistently supported the Commission’s light-touch ap-

proach, which has created a whole new sector in our economy and transformed the way Americans communicate and receive information every day. “With today’s decision to re-classify broadband as a common carrier service, the Commission has granted itself needed authorities to protect our constituents and local businesses from potential abuses, like throttling and blocking. “Title II, however, is a blunt instrument written for a different era and intended for a different industry. I am concerned

that with this action, the Commission has opened a Pandora’s Box that may freeze investment, harm job creation, and deny the very regulatory certainty that the American people need. I hope that the House and Senate Commerce Committees will now begin earnest discussions to find a broad, bipartisan agreement that will ensure permanent, bright line net neutrality protections for our constituents and local businesses, and avoid the unnecessary Depression-era authorities the FCC has just been granted.”

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