

NORTH CHANNEL★STAR

Your News, Your Newspaper

Serving all of the North Shore -- Channelview, Sheldon, Galena Park, Jacinto City
VOLUME 5, NO. 47 (#201) THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2017 www.northchannelstar.com

CHANNEL CURRENTS

Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee's Annual Turkey Gift to Jacinto City Seniors

Waste Pits meetings December 4 & 5

Monday, December 4 the EPA will host a community meeting for the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund Site. From 6:30-8:00 PM the EPA will be at the Highlands Community Center to provide information regarding their Record of Decision to remove the Pits and the site's status post-Harvey. You will have the opportunity to ask the EPA questions or express your concerns. We encourage you to join us at this meeting to hear the site's status directly from the EPA.

The San Jacinto River Coalition will host a regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, December 5 at 6:30 at the Highlands Community Center. For those who cannot attend the EPA meeting, or feel they have unanswered questions, this meeting will be an opportunity to receive information and remain engaged.

Galena Park ISD Community Holiday Open House

The community is invited to the Galena Park ISD Community Holiday Open House.

Friday, December 8, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. at Galena Park ISD Administration Building (Board Room), 14705 Woodforest Blvd., Houston, Texas 77015.

Refreshments, student performances and Santa Claus.

Channelview ISD to host holiday Open House

The Channelview Independent School District will host its annual Christmas Open House and Wassail from 9 a.m.- 4 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 14 at the Joyce Hendrix Educational Support Center, 828 Sheldon Road. The public is invited to this holiday event.

Musical entertainment will be provided during the day by elementary, junior high and high school students. Santa and Mrs. Claus will also be in attendance at the event.

By Allan Jamail

Jacinto City, TX. Monday, November 20, 2017 Jacinto City's Heritage Hall Seniors received frozen turkeys ready to bake for their Thanksgiving dinner from Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee.

Annually Congresswoman Lee of the 18th Congressional District gives thousands of turkeys to senior groups during the Thanksgiving season. Eighty seniors were on hand to get their turkey, the homebound seniors had theirs delivered.

One senior said, "because of the kindness of this gift I can make many



Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and Heritage Hall Seniors. (turkeys in foreground)

Photo by Allan Jamail

good meals from it."

Assisting in the event were volunteers of the Congresswoman and the Keep Jacinto City Clean Committee.

Galena Park citizens enjoy first annual turkey dinner



Mayor Moya welcomes guests for Thanksgiving dinner.



Mayor Esmeralda Moya visits with Thanksgiving dinner guest.

See Galena Park First Annual Turkey Dinner, Page 3

Northeast water purification plant expansion project

The City of Houston's Northeast Water Purification Plant (NEWPP) expansion project is led by Ravi Kaleyatodi, P.E., Senior Assistant Director. The project consists of two design-build phases to expand the plant's capacity from 80 million gallons per day (MGD) to 400 MGD by 2024. The expansion project will help the City and water authorities meet water demands, and fulfill requirements by the Har



New water purification plant expansion, aerial view.

See Water Plant, Page 8

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Chamber Foundation receives \$65,000 donation from SeAH



NORTH CHANNEL AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION MEMBERS ACCEPT A CHECK FROM SeAH STEEL USA, WHO GENEROUSLY DONATED \$65,000 TO THE EDUCATION FOUNDATION. SeAH is a new industry in North Channel, and a new member of the Chamber.

GALENA PARK ISD

North Shore Mustangs advance to Regional Playoff Game

Galena Park ISD would like to congratulate the North Shore Mustang football team for their victory over Clear Springs this past weekend! The Mustangs will play Lamar High School in the 6A Regional Playoff Game at Rice Stadium on Friday, December 1 at 7 p.m. Presale tickets will be available at the GPISD Athletic Office until Friday, December 1 at 3 p.m. Presale tickets will be \$5 for students and \$7 for adults. Good luck, Mustangs!



Sophomore Running Back, Zachary Evans

COMMUNITY NEWS

Most Destructive Hurricane Season on Record Ends

Hurricane Harvey Devastates Harris County

(Harris County, TX) - As the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season comes to an end, weather experts are calling it the most destructive season on record. Three major hurricanes - Harvey, Irma, and Maria - were responsible for most of the destruction. Harvey spread a destructive path across much of southeast Texas, while Irma impacted Florida and Maria shattered Puerto Rico.

Hurricane Harvey made landfall on the Central Texas Coast as a Category 4 storm late Friday, August 25th and by the next day, its heavy rainfall stalled in our region causing catastrophic flooding in Harris and surrounding counties. Harvey dumped more than 50 inches of rain across the region, the highest amount in United States history.

"Although Harvey was a hurricane, its effects on us in Harris County were primarily as a rain event.

A trillion gallons of water fell across Harris County over just four days - more than most cities get in a year," said Harris County Judge Ed Emmett. "Clearly, this was the most destructive flood our area has ever experienced."

Harris County officials confirmed 36 deaths due to Harvey, and early estimates indicate that damages will most likely surpass the \$160 billion caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

"Damages are still being assessed and it may be a while before we know an exact number, but we are doing everything we can to help restore our communities," added Emmett. "We are truly grateful to all who have contributed to help residents impacted by the storm."

The Harris County Office of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (HCOHSEM) has been working closely with

local, state, federal and non-profit partners to help expedite the recovery process. To date, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reports that \$675 million for household assistance has been approved in Harris County.

HCOHSEM reminds residents affected by Harvey that the deadline to register for federal assistance is November 30th. To apply go to www.disasterassistance.gov or call 800-621-3362.

Hurricane season officially ends on November 30th, but residents are encouraged to stay informed and be prepared for emergencies throughout the year. They can go to www.readyharris.org to sign up for emergency alerts or download the ReadyHarris app on their mobile devices to access information and preparedness tips.

College Night for Goose Creek ISD students

By Susan Passmore

More than 500 students signed in for Goose Creek CISD's College Night, sponsored by College and Career Readiness, at Goose Creek Memorial High School. Fifty-nine colleges and universities were available to provide information to students and their parents about post secondary opportunities. Army, Navy and Air Force representatives were in attendance, and Sylvan Learning Center also had a table.

"We had several new opportunities this year," said Travita Godfrey, coordinator of college and career readiness. "Due to feedback from other College Nights, we offered a session about NCAA and NAIA requirements for those wishing to play college sports."

The session was presented by coaches Bren Jones and Robert Locke and counselor Georgia Lovell, who provided helpful information about maintaining grade point averages and other guidelines for prospective college athletes.

Grade level parent meetings were held for the first time to help parents better understand the college and career process or exploring, researching and making decisions. Senior parents learned about how to complete the college admissions process. Another first was that the Air Force ROTC came to talk about scholarship programs.

This event gives students and parents the opportunity to ask questions face-to-face with represen-



(from left) Clayton Maddie, Skylar Liles and Nicole Barragan, students from Ross S. Sterling High School get information from Rebecca Montz with Galveston College at Goose Creek CISD's recent College Night held at Goose Creek Memorial High School.



Demoria Howard (second from left), a student at Goose Creek Memorial High School, and her grandmother Emma Miller talk to Chrystal Cantrell with LSU at Goose Creek CISD's recent College Night. Photos by Carrie Pryor-Newman

tatives. Carolyn Washington, secretary at the Peter E. Hyland Center, and her son Nicholas Washington, a senior at Ross S. Sterling High School, were pleased to learn that some colleges and universities waive out of state tuition if a student has a high ACT or SAT score. College Night is held annually for district students and parents.

AREA'S BEST BUSINESS REVIEW

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COMMUNITY/SCHOOL NEWS

GALENA PARK ISD

North Shore Senior Teacher appointed to Texas Commission

Governor Greg Abbott has appointed Melissa Martin, North Shore Senior High teacher, to the Texas Commission on Public School Finance. Martin and three other individuals will develop recommendations for the governor and legislature on public school funding and prepare a report to deliver by the end of 2018.

“I’m honored to represent the students and teachers in our great state,” said Martin. “I’m looking forward to serving by first studying the current public school finance system then collaborating with the others on the commission to make recommendations to improve the system in order to meet the needs of our students.”

Martin is a career and technology teacher and is



Melissa Martin

a member of the Association of Texas Professional Educators, advisor for the Family Career and Community Leaders of America, and a former advisor for the Texas Association of Future Educators. She received her bachelors and master’s degree from Lamar University.

Congratulations, Mrs. Martin!

COMMUNITY EVENTS

HOPE Candlelight Service

Hearts of Parents Endure, Inc., will hold its sixteenth annual candlelight service at 7 p.m. on December 6 at San Jacinto College North Campus. 5800 Uvalde, for parents and families to remember and honor children who have passed away. The inspiration for the Christmas Box Angel Memorial Garden was the 1991 best-seller THE CHRISTMAS BOX by Richard Paul Evans. The public is invited to attend. For information please contact Velma Chesnutt at 713-453-5266.

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.

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.

San Jacinto Pilot Club meeting

The Club meets the 2nd Thursday of each month at Amegy Bank on I-10, at noon. For more information, please visit www.SanJacintoPilot.com.

Evening San Jacinto Pilot Club

This newly chartered club meets on on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 7 pm at the Woodforest Presbyterian Church. For more information, see the Facebook page entitled Evening San Jacinto Pilot Club or call 832-264-1565 / 832-289-4762.

Trip Israel

Join Wayne & Patsy Moss on a trip to ISRAEL! March 2018. Call for more information. 281-447-4307.

Water Plant,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ris-Galveston and Fort Bend Subsidence Districts that restrict groundwater usage.

Construction on the \$1.35 billion project is expected to begin in the fall of 2017. Four partner agencies involved in the project will share portions of the cost and they include: North Harris County Regional Water Authority, Central Harris County Regional Water Authority, West Harris County Regional Water Authority and North Fort Bend Water Authority.

The City will administer and oversee the project, and it is responsible for the planning, design and construction of the project.

Key project aspects include:



New Water Purification Plant building design.

- Design and construction of a new water facility that includes an intake and a pumping and conveyance system.
- Construction of treatment facilities with a combined maximum water capacity of 320 MGD.

- Construct electrical supply facilities and a new electrical substation.
- Build a high service pump station and ground

storage tanks.

- The design-builder on the project is the Houston Waterworks Team, which is a joint venture between CH2M and CDMSmith.

East side water projects

A massive water infrastructure project, which planners call the largest underway in the country, will move Trinity River water more than 40 miles westward Texas to 4.5 million people in Harris and Fort Bend counties.



Source: North Harris County Regional Water Authority and Coastal Water Authority

Houston Chronicle

Galena Park First Annual Turkey Dinner,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

By Allan Jamail

Galena Park, TX. Wednesday, November 22, 2017 - Galena Park Mayor Esmeralda Moya brought sponsors and citizens together for a Thanksgiving turkey dinner at the Deli House Restaurant on Holland Avenue.

According to Jorge Flores Galena Park’s Economic Development Coordinator, more than 350 citizens attended the free dinner. He said because of its success it’ll become an annual event.

“The sponsors were Mayor Moya, Magellan Pipe Line Company LP, the Deli House Restaurant, the Committee for a Better Galena Park, Moya’s Inc, and Ernesto Trevino Trucking” said Flores.

City officials present were Commissioners Rodney Chersky, Barry Ponder, City Secretary Mayra Gonzales, Police Chief Reese Martin and members of the fire department.

Coordinator Flores said, “we cooked 25 turkeys along with all the trimmings, desserts and sodas.”

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OPINION PAGE

Judge Emmett's
STATE OF THE
COUNTY
ADDRESS

Federal, State and Local Partnerships Remain Key To County's Future as Urban Model, Emmett Says.
Just three months after the most destructive storm in American history struck Harris County, County Judge Ed Emmett used his 2017 State of the County Address to announce that the county was back on its feet and again looking to the future.

"During Harvey, the response of our residents and the cooperative spirit among government officials showed our spirit and can-do attitude," Emmett said. "From the Harris County Office of Emergency Management, to first responders, to volunteers with boats and high-water vehicles, the world saw something special. Let us capture that special caring for each other in other aspects of life."

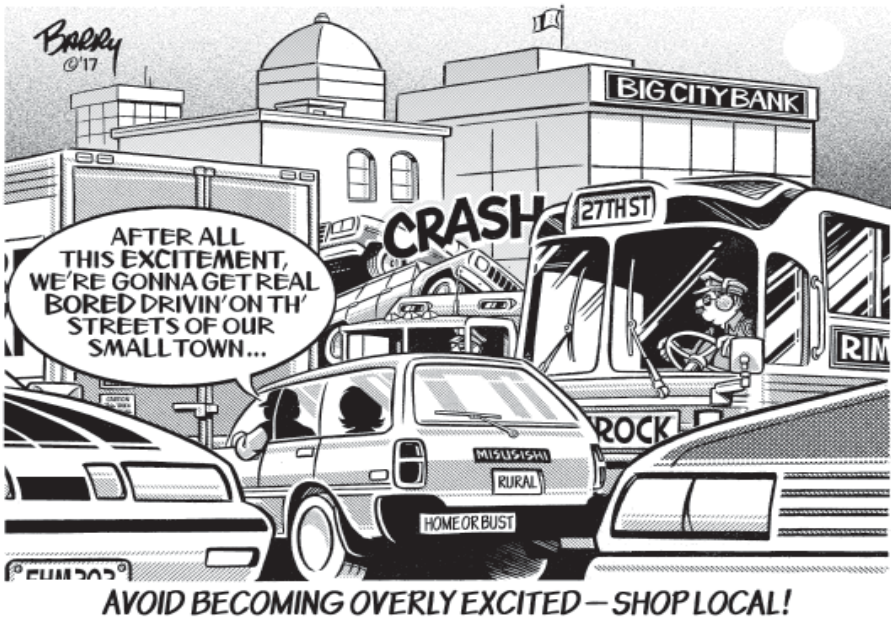
Emmett acknowledged the large amount of recovery work remaining, but said that work presents opportunities for major improvements in flood control, transportation and health care. Seizing those opportunities, however, will require that governments continue to work together even after the crisis has passed.

"I look forward to working with Mayor Turner and officials from the other 33 municipalities in Harris County - as well as academic organizations such as the Kinder Institute - to design and implement a system of urban governance that not only meets the needs of our residents, but will draw people from around the world to study what we have done."

Emmett spoke to approximately 1,000 people attending his 10th State of the County Address, sponsored by the Greater Houston Partnership.

He concluded the event, as he did the year before, by calling on attendees to help him battle an increasingly pervasive antagonism among some in government.

"Harris County has low taxes and exemplary financial ratings, but some state officials want more restrictions on our ability to meet the needs of our residents," he said. "Those same state leaders have shifted the public school tax burden more and more from the state onto local school districts. In an effort to stir up voters, they attack counties and other local governments, all the while offering no real solutions. Organizations like the Greater Houston Partnership should say enough is enough. I urge you to support vision, not pandering."



Hurricane recovery continues with
extension of disaster declaration

AUSTIN - Gov. Greg Abbott on Nov. 20 extended the disaster declaration for counties affected by Hurricane Harvey. Some 60 counties are included and they will continue to be eligible for assistance as they recover and rebuild.

"The most important message I want to send to the victims of this storm is that they are not alone as they continue to recover from this storm. While we still have a long way to go to return to a new normal, I have no doubt that Texas will eventually emerge from this disaster stronger than ever before," Abbott said.

Declarations must be renewed every 30 days for assistance to remain available. Gov. Abbott said he would continue to renew them as needed throughout the recovery process. Counties covered in the disaster declaration include: Angelina, Aransas, Atascosa, Austin, Bastrop, Bee, Bexar, Brazoria, Brazos, Burleson, Caldwell, Calhoun, Cameron, Chambers, Colorado, Comal, DeWitt, Fayette, Fort Bend, Galveston, Goliad, Gonzales, Grimes, Guadalupe, Hardin, Harris, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Jim Wells, Karnes, Kerr, Kleberg, Lavaca, Lee, Leon, Liberty, Live Oak, Madison, Matagorda, Milam, Montgomery, Newton, Nueces, Orange, Polk, Refugio, Sabine, San Patricio, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Trinity, Tyler, Victoria, Walker, Waller, Washington, Wharton, Willacy and Wilson.

Aid request is granted On Nov. 17
Abbott announced that the Federal Emergency Management

★
STATE CAPITAL
HIGHLIGHTS
By Ed Sterling

Agency granted his request to extend the deadline to Jan. 16 for Transitional Sheltering Assistance for victims of Hurricane Harvey. Nearly 17,000 families are receiving this form of assistance, which is intended to help those who have been unable to return to their homes find short-term shelter in hotels or other temporary housing locations. Abbott said he remains "committed to doing everything possible to get these families back under their own roofs."

HUD funds committed
In other hurricane-recovery news, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development on Nov. 17 awarded \$5 billion through a community development block grant program supporting the repair of damaged homes, businesses and critical infrastructure.

HUD Secretary Ben Carson said the agency would work with Abbott and his staff "to do whatever is needed to rebuild damaged homes and to restore shuttered businesses in some of the hardest-hit areas of the State." U.S. Sens. John Cornyn and Ted Cruz acknowledged the importance of federal disaster aid to Texans who are continuing to suffer as a result of Hurricane Harvey and expressed support for the programs.

In September, President Trump signed legislation securing \$7.4 billion in funding for Harvey and major disasters, such as Hurricane Irma (Florida), Hurricane Maria (Puerto Rico) and the California wildfires.

Court blocks new law

Austin U.S. District Judge Lee Yeakel, in a Nov. 22 ruling, granted permanent injunctive relief to abortion providers who have

been trying to prevent enforcement of a law passed last spring by the Texas Legislature. The law would require a provider to perform an additional procedure to ensure fetal demise before continuing a dilation and evacuation abortion.

Yeakel, in finding for the plaintiffs, said the additional procedure, which involves a lethal injection to a fetus in the second trimester, would be invasive, risky and medically unnecessary. Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton said the state would fight the injunction in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth

Circuit.

Job growth continues
The Texas Workforce Commission on Nov. 17 reported that the state's economy added 71,500 seasonally adjusted nonfarm jobs in October while annual employment growth was 2.6 percent for the month, marking 90 consecutive months of annual growth. The agency also touted Texas' seasonally adjusted unemployment rate, which fell to 3.9 percent and set a record for the lowest unemployment rate recorded in four decades.

Notably, the agency pointed out, the leisure and hospitality employment category rebounded by adding 34,700 jobs in October after experiencing its largest monthly decline in September due to hurricane-affected business closures. Also, in 2017 to date, leisure and hospitality has gained 41,000 jobs, while trade, transportation and utilities employment grew by 10,300 jobs, and professional and business services expanded by 6,300 jobs.

The Amarillo and Midland Metropolitan Statistical Areas recorded the month's lowest unemployment rate among Texas MSAs with a non-seasonally adjusted rate of 2.4 percent, followed by the College Station-Bryan MSA with a rate of 2.5 percent. The Austin-Round Rock and Lubbock MSAs registered a rate of 2.6 percent for October, Texas Workforce Commission reported.

Seniors can
improve life
for others &
themselves

(NAPSI)—Many older Americans have discovered that sharing their accumulated wisdom with others who need help can be a big win all around.

Here's a look at two ways you can stretch your mind and show your heart:

Experience Corps
AARP Foundation Experience Corps unites teachers, schools and older adults to improve children's academic and social outcomes. This benefits the children, the schools and the volunteers.

The program has been proven to help children who aren't reading at grade level become better readers by the end of third grade. Last school year, 76 percent of students who were below grade level at the beginning of the year raised their reading and literacy performance by one or more proficiency levels with the help of Experience Corps volunteers.

The goal is to improve children's literacy, strengthen communities, develop cultures of inspiration in schools and support hardworking teachers. It's already changed the lives of thousands of children in schools across America.

Volunteers should be age 50 or older; have at least a high school diploma or GED; pass a criminal background check; pass a basic literacy screening; attend 25 hours of annual training; and have five to 15 hours a week to offer during the school year.

Tax-Aide
AARP Foundation also runs Tax-Aide, the nation's largest free tax assistance and preparation service, giving special attention to those 50 and older. It offers free tax-filing help to those who need it most. You do not need to be a member of AARP or even a retiree to use this free service.

IRS tax-certified volunteer preparers in libraries, malls, banks, community centers and senior centers answer questions and prepare tax returns. In addition to earned and retirement income reporting, they can also help with investment income (interest, dividends, and capital gains for Schedule D), Schedule C for individuals with small businesses that have less than \$25,000 in annual expenses, and various health care, education, child and earned income credits.

Compassionate and friendly individuals can volunteer for the upcoming tax season. Volunteers receive training and continued support in a welcoming environment.

Learn More
For facts about Tax-Aide, including requirements for volunteers, go to www.aarp.org/money/taxes/info-2006/volunteer_aarp_tax_aide.html. For factson Experience Corps, visit www.aarpfoundation.org/experiencecorps. For information about AARP Foundation, visit www.aarpfoundation.org.

Letter to Santa

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LIFESTYLE






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the Jamboree!”
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& Children’s Pageant

10—3pm Craft Fair/Expo at Highlands Elementary Campus

12 pm Children’s Pageant

2:30 Silent Auction closes

6 pm Cookies and Hot Chocolate at Heritage Park with
Santa Claus! At
the Parade of Christmas Trees!



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Pride only breeds quarrels,
but wisdom is found in
those who take advice.

God is our refuge
and strength, a
very present help
in trouble
Psalm: 46:1

*Northside Baptist, Highlands
Christmas Program*

A Christmas Program will be held at Northside Baptist Church, Highlands on December 3, 2017 at 6pm. Primarily composed of congregational singing and special music, it will be led by Gene Littlejohn and Karen Bascom.

Other musicians include: Patricia Brockinton, Sarah Stanley, Adam Stanley, Linda Sonnier, Marlon Littlejohn, Maggie Love Littlejohn, Stevie Ray Littlejohn, Jesse Wayne Littlejohn, Ava Arriaga, Nita Ford.

Fellowship immediately after this service. Pastor David R. Brumelow invites everyone to join in this Christmas Celebration. Northside Baptist Church is located at 317 Barbers Hill Road, Highlands, 77562.

AREA'S BEST BUSINESS REVIEW
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ROMANS 8:18

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the faith. Have courage
and be strong.
1 Corinthians 16:13

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

ASK THE EXPERT

Diamond Jim: "What is the birthstone for December?"



ASK DIAMOND JIM

DECEMBER BIRTHSTONES

December's birthstones offer three ways to fight the winter blues: tanzanite, zircon and turquoise – all of them, appropriately, best known for beautiful shades of blue. These gems range from the oldest on earth (zircon), to one of the first mined and used in jewelry (turquoise), to one of the most recently discovered (tanzanite).

All of these stones are relatively inexpensive, but their beauty rivals even precious gems. Colorless zircon is a convincing replacement for diamond, tanzanite often substitutes sapphire, and turquoise is unmatched in its hue of robin's egg blue.

TANZANITE OVERVIEW

Tanzanite is the exquisite blue variety of the mineral zoisite that is only found in one part of the world. Named for its limited geographic origin in Tanzania, tanzanite has quickly risen to popularity since its relatively recent discovery.

Tanzanite is still only found on a few square

miles of land in Tanzania, near majestic Mount Kilimanjaro. Its price and availability are directly tied to mines in this region. Between its deep blue color and its limited supply, tanzanite is treasured by many – whether one is born in December or not!

ZIRCON OVERVIEW

Zircon is an underrated gem that's often confused with synthetic cubic zirconia due to similar names and shared use as diamond simulants. Few people realize that zircon is a spectacular natural gem available in a variety of colors. The name zircon likely comes from the Persian word zargun, meaning "gold-colored." Others trace it to the Arabic zarkun, meaning "vermillion." Given its wide range of colors – spanning red, orange, yellow, green, blue and brown – both origins make sense. Zircon commonly occurs brownish red, which can be popular for its earth tones. However, most gem-quality stones are heat treated until colorless, gold or

blue (the most popular color). Blue zircon, in particular, is the alternative birthstone for December.

TURQUOISE OVERVIEW

Admired since ancient times, turquoise is known for its distinct color, which ranges from powdery blue to greenish robin's egg blue. It's one of few minerals to lend its name to anything that resembles its striking color.

The U.S. is now the world's largest turquoise supplier. Nevada, New Mexico, California and Colorado have produced turquoise, but Arizona leads in production by value, as well as quality. The stone's popularity here makes it a staple in Native American jewelry. Turquoise is found in arid regions where rainwater dissolves copper in the soil, forming colorful nodular deposits when it combines with aluminum and phosphorus. Copper contributes blue hues, while iron and chrome add a hint of green.

Turquoise is sensitive to direct sunlight and solvents like makeup, perfume and natural oils. The hardest turquoise only measures 6 on the Mohs scale, which made this soft stone popular in carved talismans throughout history. Highly esteemed for its striking namesake color and its ancient history, turquoise remains popular through time.

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.

CHANNELVIEW ISD

Cobb, Schochler students join forces for robotics competition



Members of the combined team of Cobb and Schochler elementary students perform a test run on their LEGO robot after they programmed it to navigate a tabletop course.

Cobb Elementary and Schochler Elementary students are teaming up to build a better robot as they are preparing for the FIRST LEGO League competition to be held in Houston in December.

The team will be the first elementary group from Channelview ISD to participate in the competition. Team members are comprised of fourth and fifth grade students from both schools. Cobb teacher Kelsey Evans and Schochler teacher Jose Vasquez are serving as the team's coaches.

The main part of the event involves the team designing, building and programming a robot using LEGO Mindstorms materials and software. The robot must then compete on a table-top playing field. All phases of the competition require students to use concepts in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, also known as STEM.

"The robotics competition challenges the students to use problem solving skills they have learned," Evans said. "Our students have to think outside of the box when programming their robots to perform different tasks. Competitions like this

gives our students experience in working together to accomplish specific goals."

At the event, the Channelview team will compete in three categories. In the first phase, the students must program their robots to perform different tasks. The team then earns points for the successful completion of each exercise. The second portion of the competition involves team members participating in a research exercise where they have to come up with a solution to a problem. Students are able to present the findings of their research in various forms, such as through a PowerPoint presentation or other forms of visual displays.

"In conducting research, the students are having to think creatively and must understand how to navigate the internet for reliable resources and come up with their own solutions and not one that someone has already produced," Evans said.

In the final stage of the event, the students will participate in a timed team challenge. The team will be given an exercise where they will collaborate in determining the solution to a specific scenario.

"One thing that the

judges look at closely is how the team applies their knowledge of STEM in each stage of the competition," Vasquez said. "Our team is very diverse and we have students with strong levels of intelligence."

Members of the team and their coaches have met at least once a week for the past two months to prepare for the competition.

"This is a dedicated group of students," said Chad Nuetzmann, Cobb Elementary principal. "These students have dedicated themselves to spending time after school learning the specifics of programming their LEGO robots and further developing their higher-level skills that is required for this event."

Schochler Elementary Principal Ann Garza said her students have enjoyed joining forces with their peers from Cobb Elementary.

"We are very excited about this event and this opportunity for students from both campuses," she said. "The students are certainly strengthening their skills in science, technology and math while having fun in the process. I know they will represent Channelview well."

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WATER SAFETY

Well system parts vital for good water quality

(NAPSI)—If you ever get water from a well, you should know there's more to it than just, well, a well. In fact, a water well is really a water well system because it consists of numerous components—many of which can affect water quality if not well maintained.

What's in A Well

These components are designed to protect water from contaminants that are harmful to health or adversely affect the water's appearance, taste or odor. They include:

- The Well Casing: This is the tubular structure that is placed in the drilled well to maintain the opening. Along with grout, the casing confines the groundwater to its zone underground and can prevent contaminants from mixing with the water.

The most common materials for well casings are carbon steel, plastic (most commonly PVC), and stainless steel. Different geologic formations dictate



which type of casing can be used. Residents in some areas have a choice between steel and PVC, both of which have advantages.

PVC is lightweight, resistant to corrosion, and relatively easy for contractors to install. However, it is not as strong and not as resistant to heat as steel. Steel, though, is susceptible to corrosion, can have scale buildup, and can cost more than PVC.

If the casing is sufficiently corroded or breaks, or if the grouting fails, contaminants could enter the well and compromise your water quality. Your best protection is to get a periodic water well system inspection to identify any such problems.

- The Well Cap: This goes on top of the well casing. It should fit snugly so debris, insects or small animals can't find their way into the well system. The well cap should be bolted or locked so it cannot be easily removed.

Well caps are usually aluminum or thermoplastic and have a vented screen so the pressure difference between the inside and outside of the well casing will be equalized when water is pumped from the well.

A cracked or loose well cap could allow outside contaminants, including bacteria via insects or vermin, into the well. Well owners should visually inspect their well cap from time to time and contact a water well system professional if a problem is detected.

- The Pitless Adapter: This connector is used in places where freezing occurs. It's installed underground below the frost line to provide a sanitary seal between the well casing and the water line running to the house. If this seal is compromised, it could allow bacteria or other contamination into the well. A water well system contractor can determine whether a faulty pitless adapter is contributing to such water quality problems.

- The Well Screen: This prevents excess sediment from entering the well. The screen attaches to the bottom of the casing, letting water move through the well while keeping out most gravel and sand.

There are assorted styles of screens, and a water well system professional can determine which type is best suited to your well. The wrong type of screen or a deteriorated screen could allow sediment, sand and gravel into your well and your water.

The National Ground Water Association (NGWA) advises household well owners to maintain their well systems, including these important components, to protect drinking water quality and health.

Learn More

For further information about well systems, water quality, and groundwater protection, visit www.WellOwner.org.

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