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Galena Park YellowJackets end season with 41-0 victory



Yellowjackets saying goodbye to an era. The 2019 Galena Park Yellowjackets seniors gathered on the field with teammates for their last time to bid farewell to an era.

Photo by Allan Jamail

By Allan Jamail

Galena Park ISD Stadium, Friday, November 8, 2019 – The Galena Park Yellowjackets ended their season with an easy win over the Houston Wisdom

Generals 41 – 0. The Jack-ets showed improvement from the previous year winning more district games but not enough to qualify for the district playoff games.

Friday's game was Parents Night that was never

a real contest, from start to finish Coach Spiro Amarantos' offensive and defensive team's dominated the Generals.

Seniors having played together since their freshmen year became a close knit bunch, and found it to

be emotional to part with their football relationships.

The night's joyous victory wasn't enough to stop

See YellowJackets, Page 3

Northshore Mustangs heading to the playoffs, Defeat Channelview 62 – 0



#28 Zorhan Rideaux, Mustang senior wide receiver goes airborne catching quarterback Demetrius Davis' pass.

Photo by Allan Jamail

By Allan Jamail

Channelview, TX – Friday, November 8, 2019 at the Ray Maddy Memorial Stadium the North Shore

Mustangs easily defeated the Channelview Falcons 62 – 0.

Coach Jon Kay's Mus-

See North Shore Mustangs, Page 8

New District Clerk Burgess collects \$2 million of unpaid debts Making Big Changes at the District Clerk's Office...

By Allan Jamail

In the 2018 sweep by Democrats in Harris County, the office of County District Clerk brought in a new face. It can be said one of the county's most important offices is that of District Clerk.

The District Clerk's office records the actions and judgments of the court; transmits the orders of the court to the authorities responsible for their execution; and assumes all other duties assigned by the presiding judge of a court. The District Clerk's office "makes justice happen." The District Clerk is elected by

Harris County voters for a 4-year term.

A Texas district clerk is a "constitutional officer of county government" found in Article 5, Section 9 of the state's constitution. The district clerk is the custodian of the "official record of the district courts" and must mark the exact date and time of receipt and issue all papers including subpoenas, citations, warrants, and summons.

Marilyn Burgess (D) defeated incumbent Chris Daniel (R) in the general election for Harris County District Clerk on November 6, 2018. She wasted no time after officially taking office

by signing her first order as Harris County District Clerk at midnight, January 1, 2019 and has been working hard to serve the people ever since. Though she has been in office less than a year, her innovations are already making a difference.

During her transition into office, her team discovered that court costs, fines, and fees had not been billed for a number of years. Her office began sending out notices for these fees within the first month of her term and to date has collected \$1,966,798.15.

"We will easily exceed the \$2 million mark prior to the end of the year," \$957,000 of



Marilyn Burgess, Harris County District Clerk

this is from current activity. The rest is from 2018 or earlier when no effort was made to collect. We are committed to billing AND collecting on a current basis, as

well as continuing to work to collect as much of the old balances as possible," said Ms. Burgess.

Other changes include an expansion and modernization of electronic services offered through the DCO. From the start, the District Clerk empowered her IT team to get creative. Attorneys, for example, now enjoy e-Issuance of service papers which is available by email with papers attached and additionally with 24/7 retrieval from our website.

The office is currently piloting e-Notices to replace mailed postcards with case updates in a handful of

courts and will be fully transitioned to electronic notice for all courts by year-end. This saves taxpayer dollars by eliminating postage and printing cost and gets the notices to the attorneys faster.

Another innovation is a new e-hearings system which allows attorneys to schedule hearings on motions online, 24/7 without the need to speak to one of the deputy district clerks directly. This is currently being piloted in six courts

See Unpaid Debts, Page 8

North Channel Chamber holds "Salute to First Responders and Veterans"



The North Channel Chamber held their annual Salute to First Responders and Veterans last Thursday, Nov. 7 at Armentia's in Channelview. Several hundred attended the luncheon and ceremony honoring their service.

Also participating were the local service clubs, North Shore Rotary, Galena Park/Jacinto City Rotary, and the

San Jacinto Pilot Club. Major underwriters for the event were the Channelview ISD Education Foundation, and MedExpress Urgent Care.

Emcee for the luncheon and ceremonies was Bill Pal-ko, a veteran, past president of the North Shore Rotary, and namesake for the Chamber's Education Foundation Scholarship funded by the

luncheon.

Also participating were over 40 community organizations and businesses that had information tables around the room.

Presentation of the Service Flags, seen above, was by the Channelview HS JROTC organization.

See more SALUTE, Page 7

Community leader Yuroba Harris recognized for Education Advocacy Work



L – R: Thelma Scott, Founder & CEO of S.A.F.E Diversity Communities; Yuroba Harris, Attorney Leona Filis with Filis Law Firm; and Freddie Jackson with Jackson Cares/Retired Firefighter

By Allan Jamail

Yuroba Harris well known in the 29th Congressional District was recently honored at a special program on November 2nd by S.A.F.E. Diversity Communities for her work on

promoting Education, Career Awareness and Scholarships for students. Harris worked as the District Director for many years for retired Congressman Gene Green. She's currently working on special initiatives for Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia

with a number of faith based, nonprofit, civic organizations, community development and revitalization committees and boards.

See Award, Page 3

★ COMMUNITY NEWS ★

Governor Abbott honors Veterans at National Museum of The Pacific War



(PHOTO: Office Of The Governor, 11/11/19)

AUSTIN - Governor Greg Abbott today delivered remarks at the National Museum of the Pacific War (NMPW) Veterans Day Ceremony in Fredericksburg. Governor Abbott thanked the men and women who have bravely served in our armed forces, and highlighted the important work that NMPW and the Nimitz Foundation do to preserve the legacy of those who fought valiantly the Asiatic-Pacific Theater during World War II.

"It is because of our veterans and those serving around the world today that America remains the

brightest beacon of freedom the world has ever known," said Governor Abbott. "Today and every day, we must honor the men and women who put service above self and who bravely fought to defend our nation and promote security around the world. While we can never fully repay the debt we owe our veterans, we have a responsibility to preserve their legacy and the freedoms for which they fought. To all our veterans, I share with you the enduring gratitude of the people of Texas."

The National Museum of the Pacific War honors

millions of Americans who stood for freedom and democracy to defeat the enemy in the World War II's Asiatic-Pacific Theater. The museum complex spans six acres and encompasses more than 50,000 square feet of indoor exhibits, state-of-the-art archives and collections, and interactive media presentations, in addition to outdoor exhibits and memorials. The Nimitz Foundation is named after Admiral Chester Nimitz, the Texas-born commander of the Pacific Fleet in World War II. The organization provides financial support to the NMPW.

Stuart Career Tech HS Honors Veterans

By Susan Passmore

Several veterans shared their military service experiences with Debbie King's dual credit English classes at Stuart Career Tech High School for a recent Veterans History Project. The transcripts and videos will be sent to the Library of Congress and maintained in the American Folklife Center.

Ric Morris and his Audio/Video Production classes created a video from the interviews, and the participants were invited to enjoy a steak lunch and dessert, prepared and served by students in the SCTHS Culinary Arts program, under the supervision of Rex Miller, Chef Tina Andrade, and Chef Kylie Sobczak.



Mason Garcia, SCTHS student, poses with his grandfather Mike Garcia, retired U.S. Marine Corps, after enjoying lunch and viewing the video created from interviews with veterans.



Military veterans and dual credit English students at Stuart Career Tech High School enjoy a celebration and a viewing of the video that was the result of a Veterans History Project. Photos by Susan Passmore

After lunch, guests viewed the video created in their honor. There were a few emotional moments as veterans and their family members heard the stories of heartwarming as well as tough experiences.

"I'm incredibly proud of those kids," said King. "They really stepped up. This is the first time we've done a collaborative service learning project, working with Audio/Video Production classes and Culinary Arts."

SCTHS students who participated in the interviews were Nik Arroyo, Jon'Rylan Bohannon, Miguel Cruz, Armando Garcia, Mason Garcia, Jose Gonzalez, Anthony Lazo, Octavio Leon, Elijah Martinez, Felix Martinez, Adam Ovalle, Rick Reyes, Baylee Rodriguez, Brian Serna, Christian Stogsdill,

Daniel Torres and Josh Tovar.

Honored veterans were Erik Aguilera, Macia Aguilera, Robert Boice, Robert Carrizales, Mark Chapman, Conrad Garcia, Charles Hill, Chris Lilley, Resendo Lopez, Rex Miller, Joe Montemayor, Robert Morgan, Ernest "Ernie" Roder, Richard Romolo, John Saenz, Harold Sams, Rebecca Silva, Greg Thomas and Gilbert Trevino.

"The goal of the Library of Congress is to record the stories of every veteran who served active duty in any conflict," King said. "This has been a significant project for the kids as they created oral histories."

Ernie Roder, SCTHS principal Cap Roder's father, was in attendance, having served in the U. S. Navy from 1967-70. Retired Army Col. Harold Sams saw the world in his 31 years of service.

"I'm proud to be in the military and prouder of the effect it had on myself, personally, and my family," Sams said.

Daniel Torres interviewed retired Army veteran Charles Hill, who served in Vietnam from 1966-1968, and found it to be a learning experience.

"What I didn't know is how they were treated when they came back," Torres said.

The celebration of veterans was a tribute to these men and women, but the message to everyone came shining through.

"There is no greater honor than to serve the country," said Rex Miller, Army veteran.

To view the video, go to youtu.be/YRVAaieQc8k.

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CROSBY'S HOME TOWN HOME CARE

HARRIS COUNTY Public review period for hazard mitigation plan open November 7 through 21

Harris County residents can review and provide comments on the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Action Plan, November 7-21. The plan is available online at <https://bit.ly/2qua6jK> or can be reviewed in person at Houston TranStar.

There will also be Public Workshop to go over the plan and take feedback will take place on November 14.

REVIEW ONLINE:

- Download a copy of the plan: <https://bit.ly/2qua6jK>
- NOTE: The plan is very large and may take some time to download
- Provide comments online at: www.surveymonkey.com/r/HarrisCounty_Public_Comment

REVIEW IN PERSON:

- Main Lobby of Houston TranStar (6922 Katy Road, Houston, TX 77024)
- Plan will be on a table with a blue table cloth
- November 7th-21st, Monday-Friday, 8:00am-5:00pm

ATTEND THE WORKSHOP:

- Thursday, November 14th, 2019

6:00pm-9:00pm

Houston TranStar Conference Center (6922 Katy Road, Houston, TX 77024)

HAZARD MITIGATION

Hazard mitigation planning for Harris County helps to identify strategies and actions that will reduce risk for those who live in, work in, and visit the county. In addition, hazard mitigation planning provides a viable planning framework for all foreseeable natural hazards that may impact the county.

For many years, federal disaster funding focused on relief and recovery after disasters occurred, with limited funding for hazard mitigation planning in advance. The Disaster Mitigation Act (DMA), passed in 2000, shifted the federal emphasis toward planning for disasters before they occur. The DMA requires state and local governments to develop hazard mitigation plans as a condition for federal disaster grant assistance.

The responsibility for hazard mitigation lies with many, including private property owners, commercial interests, and local, state and federal governments.

THIS REPORT

In preparing this update, Harris County has again partnered with local cities and special-purpose jurisdictions. The Harris County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Action Plan will help guide and coordinate mitigation activities throughout the planning area.

All citizens and businesses of Harris County are the ultimate beneficiaries of this hazard mitigation plan. The plan reduces risk for those who live in, work in, and visit the planning area. It provides a viable planning framework for all foreseeable natural hazards. Participation in development of the plan by key stakeholders helped ensure that outcomes will be mutually beneficial.

To view the 2015 Hazard Mitigation Plan, visit www.ReadyHarris.org.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Channelview ISD honors local veterans

The 4th annual Veterans Day Program was hosted by Channelview Independent School District (CISD) to celebrate Veterans Day. The salute to veterans was held Nov. 7 at the Bill Neal Center and presented by Channelview High School ROTC, Aguirre Junior High LOTC, and Alice Johnson Junior High LOTC.

Military personnel who have served our country were proudly saluted during the CISD Veterans Day program. Veterans participated in the Walk of Honor when their branch was recognized and entered the



JROTC and LOTC students accompanied the men and women from each branch of the military during the CISD Veterans Day Program.



Local veterans were honored during Channelview ISD's Veterans Day Program.

arena through crossed swords. Major Jimmy Ta was the keynote speaker at the ceremony, and he was introduced by the Mistress

of Ceremony, Paola Venegas. The Channelview High School Band performed musical arrangements, Mr.

William Titus played a selection on bagpipes, and CHS student Daniel Shahid played TAPS.

Channelview ISD transportation highlight

A new school year has brought new opportunities for the Channelview ISD Transportation Department. Under the direction of the new transportation director, Patricia Almaraz, new school buses are rolling in to add to the existing fleet, and new positions have been approved to aid in the overall efficiency of the department.

Ms. Almaraz comes to Channelview from New Caney, where she was Area Coordinator - Transportation Supervisor. In her former position, Ms. Almaraz helped to implement new technologies, managed the district's fleet, and supervised drivers. During her tenure in New Caney, Ms. Almaraz was credited for significantly decreasing the transportation department's turnover rate.

Ms. Almaraz has recently been listed as a



Channelview ISD Transportation Department welcomed Director Patricia Almaraz to the team.

2019 Rising Superstar in School Transportation by School Transportation News. Her willingness to create an environment that places student safety at the forefront of daily operations has given a new look and feel to the department. "I am excited to serve as the new director of transportation! In the few months that I been in Channelview, I have had the opportunity to witness the hard work of talented individuals who go above and beyond for our

students," said Almaraz. "My goal is to provide the necessary tools and resources that will allow the district to keep students safe while creating a nurturing environment for all students who enter and exit our buses. The Channelview ISD Transportation Department is currently hiring bus drivers, bus aides, dispatchers, and preventative mechanics. For additional information, visit the CISD Job Board at www.cvisd.org.

Over 4,000 fathers and father figures attend Galena Park ISD 'Fathers Take Your Children to School Day'



Galena Park Independent School District (GPISD) invited fathers and father figures to participate in GPISD's Fathers Take Your Children to School Day. All 26 GPISD's campuses hosted fathers and father figures to eat breakfast with their child(ren) and attend a brief presentation by school administrators encouraging them to volunteer in our schools.

Over 4,250 fathers and men across the community participated in Fathers Take Your Children to School Day. This event was established to encourage fathers to take a more active role in their children's lives and introduce them to their children's school community.

Galena Park I.S.D. appreciates fathers and father figures for being actively involved in their child's education and making a commitment to attending this annual event.

The Galena Park I.S.D Prize Posse on a Mission to Deliver Teaching Grants



On October 29, the Galena Park I.S.D. (GPISD) Education Foundation Prize Posse boarded a GPISD school bus on a mission to deliver innovative teaching grants to unsuspecting educators at various campuses throughout the district.

Earlier in the year, educators throughout the district had the opportunity to apply for grants to fund innovative instruction for their classrooms, departments or campuses. The Education Foundation Grants Selection Committee carefully considered each application and selected this year's recipients.

Ten grants totaling over \$27,800 were awarded at six GPISD campuses. The grants will be used to fund educational resources ranging from 3D models to helping students with cursive writing to the Early Act First Knight Character Education program. This year's grants were all increased by \$1,100, thanks to partnerships with Chevron, DonorsChoose and Acorn.

Congratulations to Gunjan Gupta, Veronica Stell, Julie Glover and Vaughn Belcher from North Shore Senior High School; Michael Tenaglio from North Shore Middle School; Imelda Hernandez and Veronica Garza from Cimarron Elementary School; Kendra Walker, Carmen Guereque, Beverly Conner, Stacy Costley, Eva Ojeda, Britani Simon and Brandi Couch from Galena Park High School; Kaneice Washington and Teresa Brown Perez from Galena Park Elementary School; and German Espinoza, Crystal Castillo, Eleana Vasquez and Candace Campbell from Pyburn Elementary School.

Award,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

During the special award presentation (also honoring Veterans), Mrs. Thelma Scott, President-CEO and founder of

S.A.F.E. Diversity Communities, thanked Yuroba for her 17 years of support for their education and scholarship program efforts. S.A.F.E. Diversity Communities is a nonprofit organization that provides scholarships, support and

inspires at risk students with disabilities. To learn more about the organization, their Summer Youth Internship Program or to donate to its mission please visit www.safediversity.org.

Yellow Jackets,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the tears from players, parents and friends that had gathered in a large crowd to say goodbye to the senior players.

The Jackets lose valuable senior talent, losing 28 seniors. The coaches will have 22 returning varsity players and have 56 freshman players coming up to build from.

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Social Security Matters

by AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor Russell Gloor
Association of Mature American Citizens

Ask Rusty – Should I Claim Benefits at Age 67 if I’m working?

Dear Rusty: My wife and I were talking to some other senior citizens who say it would be more beneficial to start drawing social security when I turn 67 next year, rather than wait till 70, even if I work full time. Can I do that? Signed: Working Senior

Dear Working Senior: Yes, you can do that, but it may not be your best strategy. Let’s explore your options:

If your wife is already collecting Social Security on her work record, you might consider filing a “restricted application for spousal benefits only” and collect a spousal benefit from your wife, while continuing to delay your claim for your own benefit, thus allowing your benefit to continue to grow. You can do this because you were born before 1/2/1954, which is the cutoff date for filing in this manner. In this way you could collect 50% of the benefit your wife is entitled to at her full retirement age (FRA) until such time as you file for your own benefit. If you wait until age 70 to file for your own, your payment will be 24% more than it will be when you are 67. But you cannot use this option unless, or until, your wife is collecting her Social Security benefit from her own work record.

There is no simple answer to when you should claim. It depends upon your current financial needs, your current health and your anticipated longevity (considering your family history). If you anticipate a long healthy life and don’t urgently need the money, then waiting until age 70 to claim your benefit will not only give you the highest possible monthly payment but also the most in lifetime benefits (assuming you live to at least the “average” age (84 for a man today). Waiting until 70 will also ensure that your wife gets the highest possible survivor benefit, should you predecease her (at her FRA, your surviving spouse gets 100% of the amount you were receiving at your death).

As for you working, since you’ve reached your full retirement age you no longer need to worry about Social Security’s “earnings test” which takes back benefits from anyone whose earnings exceed a certain limit. But it would be wise to consider that Social Security benefits are subject to Federal Income Tax (and, depending upon where you live, possibly a State income tax), so adding your Social Security income to your earnings from work could be an important tax consideration for you.

Claiming your benefit at age 67 will give you a payment which is 8% more than you would have gotten at age 66. But if the factors discussed above suggest you should wait longer, then you’ll earn an additional 8% for each additional year you wait to claim your benefit, up to age 70 when your maximum benefit is reached. What is the downside to waiting? Well, only that your wife, if she will be eligible for a spousal benefit from you, cannot collect that spousal benefit until you start collecting your own benefit. Your wife’s spousal benefit would be half of your age 66 benefit if she claims at her full retirement age.

So, as you can see, there is no easy answer to whether you should claim Social Security at age 67, but with the above information you should be able to make an informed decision. And here’s one final suggestion: don’t take Social Security advice from “armchair experts” and don’t be swayed by those who might say “collect now because Social Security is going bankrupt.” It’s not. It’s true that Congress needs to fix some portions of the program soon, and it’s also true they’ve been dragging their collective feet to do so. But, historically, Congress has always stepped up to the task when they had to, and I’m confident they will eventually do so again.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance.



Voters approve 9 of 10 proposed constitutional amendments

AUSTIN — Voters rejected only one of 10 proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution in the statewide election held Nov. 5.

The House and Senate, in the 86th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature that ended in May, approved the propositions for voters to decide. Results are as follows:

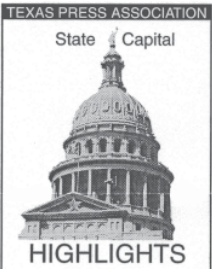
Prop. 1, permitting a person to hold more than one office as a municipal judge at a time, failed with 681,139 “yes” votes — or 34.56 percent of votes cast — to 1,970,765 “no” votes or 65.44 percent.

Prop. 2, providing for the issuance of additional general obligation bonds by the Texas Water Development Board in an amount not to exceed \$200 million to provide financial assistance for the development of certain projects in economically distressed areas, passed with 1,285,397 votes or 65.62 percent of votes cast, to 673,306 votes or 34.38 percent.

Prop. 3, authorizing the Legislature to provide for a temporary exemption from ad valorem taxation of a portion of the appraised value of certain property damaged by disaster, passed with 1,667,110 votes or 85.09 percent of votes cast to 292,031 votes or 14.91 percent.

Prop. 4, making it more difficult for the state to impose an individual income tax by requiring a two-thirds majority vote of the House and Senate before putting the matter on a ballot for voters to approve or disapprove, passed with 1,467,994 votes or 74.41 percent of

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS By Ed Sterling



votes cast to 504,848 votes or 25.59 percent.

Prop. 5, dedicating the revenue received from the existing state sales and use taxes that are imposed on sporting goods to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and the Texas Historical Commission to protect Texas natural areas, water quality and history by acquiring, managing and improving state and local parks and historic sites while not increasing the rate of the state sales and use taxes, passed with 1,732,331 votes or 88 percent of votes cast to 236,251 votes or 12 percent.

Prop. 6, authorizing the Legislature to increase by \$3 billion the maximum bond amount authorized for the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, passed with 1,250,089 votes or 64 percent of votes cast to 703,157 votes or 36 percent.

Prop. 7, allowing increased distributions to the Available School Fund, passed with 1,449,333 votes or 74.12 percent of votes cast to 506,142 votes or 25.88 percent.

Prop. 8, providing for the creation of the Flood Infrastructure Fund to assist in the financing of drainage, flood mitigation and flood control projects, passed with 1,527,394 votes or 77.83 percent of votes cast to 435,184 votes or 22.17 percent.

Prop. 9, authorizing the Legislature to exempt from ad valorem taxation precious metal held in a precious metal depository located in this state, passed with 977,272 votes or 51.6 percent of votes cast to 916,513 votes or 48.4 percent.

Prop. 10, to allow the transfer of a law enforcement animal to a qualified caretaker in certain circumstances, passed with 1,845,766 votes or 93.75 percent of votes cast to 123,032 votes or 6.25 percent.

Cash report is released
The State of Texas finished the 2019 fiscal year with unspent revenue, according to a new report. Texas Comptroller Glen Hegar on Nov. 4 announced the publication of the State of Texas Annual Cash Report, a 458-page document, for the fiscal year that ended Aug. 31.

The report, summarized in a cover letter to Gov. Greg Abbott, presents the state’s financial condition and details revenues and expenditures on a cash basis as required by state law.

The Consolidated General Revenue Fund ended the year with a cash balance in the state treasury of \$8.4 billion, an increase of \$3.9 billion, or 88.1 percent, from fiscal 2018. The change in the balance, Hegar said, is largely due to an increase in tax collections.

Hegar estimates revenue
Comptroller Hegar on Nov. 4 reported state sales tax revenue totaled \$2.82 billion in October, 7 percent more than in October 2018. Total sales tax revenue for the three months ending in October 2019 was up 4.1 percent compared to the same period a year ago. Sales tax is the largest source of state funding for the state budget, accounting for 57 percent of all tax collections.

Revenue is distributed
Comptroller Hegar on Nov. 6 announced he would send cities, counties, transit systems and special purpose taxing districts \$849.6 million in local sales tax allocations for the month of November.

The amount is 4 percent more than the amount distributed in November 2018.

THE POSTSCRIPT By Carrie Classon

“Temporary Worries”

My husband, Peter, and I are spending a month in Spain and we have left our worries behind. As a result, we have had to come up with new, temporary worries to occupy us until we get back home.

Peter ran out of lotion and for several days used something he found in the house which turned out to be soap. (“I wondered why it wasn’t soaking in!” Peter said.) He doesn’t like my lotion (“axle grease!” Peter complains) so he ventured out yesterday to buy some more. He came home with some lotion in a metal tin and immediately began worrying if this container would travel well.

“I don’t want grease leaking all over my luggage!” Peter worried.

In the absence of a real grocery store, we worry if we will be able to find olives we like and, once we find them, if we will ever find them again. We feed the cats on the roof every day, then worry how they will survive after we are gone. (But then we remember they were not overly slim when we arrived.)

Earlier this week we hiked to a neighboring town, spent the night, and returned. The hike was wonderful, crossing through mountains and fording a stream. We had dinner in the square with two ladies in their sixties—an Englishwoman who had come to live in this remote town several years earlier and a Dane, who was on her way to explore Argentina. Hiking home the following day, I thought (as I always do while traveling) of the endless variety of ways there are to live.

It was nice to get back in our funny little house, but I worried we were running out of time. Peter made soup, as he does. “This will be my last batch this trip!” Peter announced.

I will miss this little house more than Peter will. The doors are very low, and the stairs are very steep, so Peter walks around the house slightly stooped and carries a hiking pole up and down the stairs, as if he is herding sheep to and from the upstairs bathroom. I try not to laugh—but sometimes I fail.

Yesterday I hiked to the top of a hill that overlooks the town. There used to be a Moorish castle on the top hundreds of years ago. The view is amazing. I looked down on the white houses and the Mediterranean in the distance and thought of all the people who had been exactly where I was, looking at that view.

Sometimes they were worried, I imagined, looking for invaders, or bad weather, or some other trouble coming by sea. But most of the time I imagine they sat where I did for the same reason—to wonder how long they would get to look at something so glorious, to wonder why they spent so much time worrying.

When I got home, Peter read about a ship that was having mechanical troubles in the Mediterranean. Once they finish cruising the Mediterranean for the season, the bigger ships cross the ocean to spend the winter in the Caribbean. Peter reads these articles because we are taking one of those ships home.

It turns out, the ship in trouble was ours.

“Someone said they heard an explosion and reported a fire in the engine room!” Peter exclaimed, reading the article (which was not from a major news source and seemed a little short on facts).

“Goodness!” I said. I guess—since we need something to worry about—this is as good a worry as any.

Till next time,
Carrie
Carrie Classon’s memoir, “Blue Yarn,” was released earlier this year. Learn more at CarrieClasson.com.

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Texas Renaissance Festival School Days hosts over 41,000

Nov. 11, 2019 (Todd Mission, TX) – Over 41,000 students, chaperones, teachers, administrators and parents descended upon the Texas Renaissance Festival (TRF) for the 15th Annual School Days event that took place Nov. 5-6 on the festival grounds. For two special days during the week, the festival opens its gates to welcome educators and students from public, private and home school where they are immersed into the world of the 16th century European village with its characters, performers, artisan demonstrations, games, rides and vendors.

Additionally, students elementary through high school are invited to engage with other students in a variety of arts and music competitions. These include: Journalism, Essay, Trebuchet, Costume, Poetry, Art, Theatre and Music. Contest results from the 2019 School Days have been posted on the TRF website under School Days.

“TRF’s School Days program provides a unique, immersive educational ex-



Photo Credit: Steven David Photography

perience in which students can see, hear, touch, and participate in history, arts, and sciences in ways that are completely unlike anything in a traditional classroom. As a career educator, I am proud of what TRF offers for students in the Houston and surrounding areas.”

If you would like more information about the 2020 School Days program, please visit the website at www.texrenfest.com/school-days, or email Bryant.schooldays@texrenfest.com. Dates for the 2020 School

Days event will be Nov. 10 – 11, 2020.

About the Texas Renaissance Festival –

The Texas Renaissance Festival is an immersive experience located in Todd Mission, TX, where visitors enter a 16th Century European Village filled with performers, stage and music acts, artisans, and vendors. 2019 Festival dates are Oct. 5 – Dec. 1, open Saturdays, Sundays and Thanksgiving Friday. Tickets are available at texrenfest.com. Children 12 and under are admitted for free on Sundays.

The Houston Symphony serves up a cornucopia of Holiday Season offerings at Jones Hall



HOUSTON (Nov. 7, 2019) – Every year, the Houston Symphony offers numerous festive programs during the holiday season. An annual attraction, the Symphony’s holiday concerts range from traditional and classical music, popular festive tunes, and family-friendly Christmas music. The Houston Symphony’s holiday programming is supported by a generous Cultural Districts Project grant from the Texas Commission on the Arts.

A MUSICAL FEAST: ALL-STAUSS THANKSGIVING
Nov. 29–Dec. 1, 2019

Houston Symphony Music Director Andrés Orozco-Estrada opens the holiday season at Jones Hall with an all-Strauss program this Thanksgiving weekend. A classical concert to enjoy with the whole family and out-of-town guest, the program features some of Strauss’s greatest masterpieces: Death and Transfiguration, Don Juan, and Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks. Also joining the orchestra and Orozco-Estrada in the festivities is Swedish soprano Miah Persson singing Strauss’ Four Last Songs. This debut performance with the Houston Symphony has her luxuriating in the sumptuous soprano vocal lines Strauss is known for. “It is so well written for the voice that you can sing his music for hours without getting tired,” says Persson. “Sometimes I even get dizzy when I sing his long, high phrases.” A Musical

Feast: All-Strauss Thanksgiving is sponsored by Rand Group Great Performers and the Texas Commission on the Arts.

VERY MERRY POPS
Dec. 13–15 & 17, 2019

Former Houston Symphony Principal POPS Conductor Michael Krzewski returns to Jones Hall to lead the orchestra and Houston Symphony Chorus in this cherished musical holiday tradition: an evening full of holiday tunes like “Silent Night” and “Joy to the World.” The program includes the Symphony’s commissioned holiday piece Glad Tidings, a musical and narrative telling of the Christmas story packed with classic carols and an audience sing-along. Very Merry Pops is sponsored by the Texas Commission on the Arts.

’T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS
Dec. 14, 2019

Families and children of all ages are invited to join Associate Conductor Robert Franz in a program that includes holiday tunes such as “Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer” and “Sleigh Ride.” The seasonal performance includes a visit from Santa Claus and concludes with a festive sing-along. Part of the BBVA Family Series, the Houston Symphony along with students from the Kinder High School for the Performing and Visual Arts (HSPVA) Handbell Choir celebrate the season with beloved holiday classics. Additional support for “Twas the Night Before Christmas comes from the

Texas Commission on the Arts.

HANDEL’S MESSIAH
Dec. 20–22, 2019

A beloved Houston holiday tradition, performances of Handel’s timeless oratorio about the Nativity, Passion, and Resurrection of Jesus bring together the orchestra, Houston Symphony, and star guest soloists this holiday season. Hailed as “one of the finest baroque conductors” (London “Independent”), Nicholas McGegan leads vocalists Sherezade Panthaki (soprano), Diana Moore (mezzo-soprano), Benjamin Butterfield (tenor), and Hadleigh Adams (bass). Handel’s “Messiah” is sponsored by the Texas Commission on the Arts.

SINATRA AND BEYOND
Jan. 3–5, 2020

Closing out the holiday season, Houston Symphony Principal POPS Conductor Steven Reineke welcomes the New Year with an all-Frank Sinatra program with vocalist and jazz pianist Tony DeSare. Reineke, DeSare, and the Houston Symphony ring in 2020 with Sinatra’s greatest hits, including “Come Fly with Me” and “New York, New York.” “Really, any great pop vocalist who has held a mic and fronted a band in the last 80 years owes a debt to Frank Sinatra,” says DeSare. “The real greatness in his art was the perfection of a phrase, breath control, and an overarching musical taste that rarely ever failed him. He knew what material worked for him and it has stood the test of time.”

Bañuelos Hosts Careers on Wheels

By Susan Passmore

Careers on Wheels at Dr. Antonio Bañuelos Elementary allowed students from pre-kindergarten through fifth grade to explore various careers, thanks to volunteers who brought vehicles and set up booths in the parking lot.

Students visited with the City of Baytown Public Works; San Jacinto Towing and Collision; Game-On Premium Game Theater; Royal Carriages, Limousines and Charters; Baytown Police Department, Baytown Fire Department Station 7; Beacon Federal Credit Union and Radio One Houston, 97.9 The Box and Magic 102.1. Kouzan’s Creole Kitchen’s mobile kitchen accepted lunch orders from staff members, and the City



Katherine Olivares stands tall on the Kubota Excavator during Careers on Wheels, a career day held at Dr. Antonio Bañuelos Elementary.

Photos by Carrie Pryor-Newman

of Baytown provided lunch from Kouzan’s for City employees.

Organized by Mitzi Oliver, Bañuelos counselor, the career day was informative and provided a few hours out in the sunshine for students and staff.

“Our kids really enjoyed it,” said Oliver. “College isn’t for everyone. I wanted our students to see that there are other options out there to allow them to make a good living.”

Oliver hopes to make Careers on Wheels an annual event at Bañuelos.

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THOUGHTS FROM
MARANATHA CHURCH
By Dr. Mark Trice

Want Peace?

We often hear about the “peace that passes understanding.” I think it’s safe to say this is a promise from God that we would all want to hang onto. The question is, “How do we get this peace so great that it’s beyond our ability to comprehend?”

Philippians 4:6-7 gives us the answer: “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Do you see it? Obviously we’re going to make our requests known to God while in prayer and supplication. Most people do that anyway. Our sticking points are most often on 1) “Be careful for nothing” and 2) “with thanksgiving.”

Worry is a continual battle, and worthy of an article all by itself, but today, it being the month of November, let’s focus on thanksgiving or, as The Passion Translation expresses it, “overflowing gratitude.”

Here’s the thing. Study after study has been done on gratitude/thanksgiving. We’re talking primarily secular studies here, and they’ve consistently found that a person who makes a

practice of being thankful/grateful gains certain benefits. Here are a just a few from the very long list: live longer, more relaxed, more spiritual, improved relationships, fewer aches and pains, less sick, less self-centered, improved psychological health, better sleep, reduced depression symptoms, reduced aggression/anger issues, improved self-esteem, reduced stress, reduction of PTSD, increased energy, lower blood pressure, stronger immune system, more optimistic, improved decision making, increased productivity, increased creativity, better leader, more resilient, less envious, healthier marriage.

Now, doesn’t that sound a lot like peace that passes understanding?

The key, in all of these studies, is consistency. The ones who gained these benefits were the ones who lived lives of thankfulness or “overflowing gratitude.” This type of person makes a practice of being thankful, when praying of course, but also in their daily lives. Given the culture we live in, this can be a challenge, but it’s a habit God obviously wants us to develop since He mentions it here.

So the next question is, “How do I develop a habit of thankfulness?” It can be as simple as making a conscious effort to stop and thank people or God during the day; this can be for large things or small things. In fact, focusing on thanking God for the small things helps us see Him more in all things!

We can also use tools to help us develop thankfulness. Something as simple as recording one thing in the day’s block on a calendar, and stopping to thank God for it, has power. Thankfulness journals, records dedicated specifically to recording those things for which we want to thank God, also have an impact on our lives. Taking time to write good, old-fashioned thank you notes to people... Now there’s something you don’t see every day, and it affects not only the writer, but the reader as well.

Thankfulness, gratitude... There is power here that we should never underestimate.

Do you want peace? Let your heart be overflowing with gratitude; start thanking Him.

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ROMANS 8:18

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ASK THE EXPERT

CHARLOTTE'S WEB



Silence, an Uproar and then Involvement

Driving home two weeks ago, I noticed five or six used vehicles in the parking lot of what was once Fuddrucker's on Normandy. A few days later, I passed by and saw several pop-up canopies with tables filled with clothes, used home furnishings and while it caught my eye, I was silent. Then earlier this week I received a notice on one of the social media sites asking if anyone knew what was happening.

It seems like there were 25-30 people who noticed it and were now concerned.

I reached out to the Luby's Corporation who is the parent company of Fuddrucker's and after a couple of attempts, found out that they had determined that after Hurricane Harvey, it was not worth the money to reopen the restaurant. Apparently they had put the property up for sale and in June 2018 sold the location to a local investor. And now as I wait for a return phone call from him, I join many more area residents who wish we had done something earlier.

Several of the comments on social media, before we knew Luby's no longer owned the location, were upset that a company who we had supported for years had not taken care of the property. Several neighbors wondered if there were squatters at the location. Several were just relieved that members of the home-


less community had not moved into the vacant building.

Some of the posts were about who do we contact, the city of the county. Some were wanting our elected leaders to get involved. Most comments were in hopes that this location would not turn into an eyesore like so many other locations. Many were naming off the various Home Owner Associations or Civic Clubs, yet we were all guilty of not doing something earlier.

In hopes that the new owner returns my phone call, I want to just ask others to join me in not being so complacent. When we see something, we need to get involved. Perhaps if we had asked questions six months after Hurricane Harvey, someone could have directed us into seeing if there was some way to get the location cleaned up, the building torn down and as several people suggested, having it sold to the county to be used as part of a future retention plan. Our future depends on being informed votes who are also involved voters. We must be ready to meet, plan and put our thoughts into action. As 2019 draws to an end, start looking for ways to be involved and committed to making a difference in our community. If you need suggestions on how to get involved, please contact me at 281.241.7059.

ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: "Should I have my jewelry appraised?"



An official appraisal is necessary for insurance and estate planning. Fair market value appraisals indicate the amount a piece would be sold for between a willing buyer and seller. This appraisal can be used for estate tax determination and division of property in a divorce. A fair market value can also be helpful to allow for a fair division of jewelry assets among loved ones once you have passed.

Insurance replacement appraisals provide you protection for reimbursement in case of loss and are the most common type of appraisal. This appraisal will give you a document that describes your item exactly (stone clarity, size, color, quality and value). By having a relatively recent appraisal, you will be better able to get the lost item replaced with a similar item or receive a settlement from your insurance company. Gems of the same size can have significantly different values so you need an appraisal to ensure your replacement is comparable to the original.

Listed below are the most common reasons to have your jewelry appraised by a professional.

- Insurance coverage is the most common reason for getting an appraisal. A full appraisal is a detailed document that will assure you of a comparable replacement in case of loss.
- With the popularity of purchasing jewelry over the internet, an appraisal from an independent appraiser can verify that diamonds and other jewelry match the certification or appraisal that accompany the item. Schedule an appointment to give you an idea of the value and peace of mind.
- A detailed appraisal is a valuable document to have whenever you choose to dispose of (sell, trade or bequeath) your jewelry.
- An appraisal is necessary in the event of Estate Settlement, forming a Trust, or Equitable Distribution.
- You will need an appraisal to claim a casualty loss for your insurance company or uninsured loss for the IRS.
- You should have an appraisal for division of property in a divorce.
- You will need an appraisal for tax deduction of a charitable contribution.

Is there a cost to have my jewelry appraised?

Yes. When asking any professional for their appraised value of an item, you should usually expect to pay a reasonable amount for their expert opinion. How much that amount is can vary from professional to professional. It's safe to say that the most important factor to consider when selecting someone to appraise your fine jewelry, is trust. Work with a professional that you trust to appraise your jewelry. At Pineforest Jewelry, your jewelry will be evaluated and appraised by Diamond Certified professionals formally trained by the Gemological Institute of America (GIA).

Thank you for reading the "Ask Diamond Jim" column and for supporting the North Channel Star Newspaper!

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

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.

San Jacinto College again eligible for \$1 million Aspen Prize as one of the Top 150 community colleges nationwide

Prize for Community College Excellence recognizes outstanding achievements that result in community college student success

WASHINGTON, D.C. — San Jacinto College was named today as one of the top 150 community colleges eligible to compete for the 2021 Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's signature recognition of high achievement and performance in America's community colleges.

Awarded every two years since 2011, the Aspen Prize recognizes institutions based on strong and improving student outcomes, including learning, completion rates, employment rates and earnings, and equity. Fifteen percent of community colleges nationwide have been invited to apply for the Aspen Prize.

"We are always honored to be recognized by the Aspen Institute for the work that is being done by our faculty and staff at San Jacinto College in support of student success," said San Jacinto College Chancellor Dr. Brenda Hellyer. "Our faculty and staff are always finding innovative new ways to help our students learn in and out of the classroom to put them on a path to a successful career or educational journey. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, and all of the employees and students at San Jacinto College, I thank the Aspen Institute for this tremendous recognition."

The 150 community colleges named today as eligible to compete for the 2021 Aspen Prize were selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 public two-year colleges nationwide using publicly available data on student outcomes. Located in 39

Data show that over the last two years, student retention, graduation rates, and degree completion have improved at the top tier of 150 Aspen Prize-eligible colleges.

"Community colleges play a vital role in developing talent and enabling social mobility across the country, and it's critical for them to get better at what they do," said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. "We're pleased to see evidence that these institutions are improving, that more are delivering on their promise. We're also pleased to play a role in honoring outstanding community colleges and sharing what works to ensure great outcomes for students—through graduation and beyond."

The top ten finalists for the 2021 Aspen Prize will be named in May 2020. The Aspen Institute will then conduct site visits to each of the finalists and collect additional quantitative data, including employment and earnings data. A distinguished jury will make award decisions in spring 2021.

Previous winners of the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence are: Miami Dade College (FL) and Indian River State College (FL), 2019; Lake Area Technical College (SD), 2017; Santa Fe College (FL), 2015; Santa Barbara City College (CA) and Walla Walla Community College (WA), 2013; Valencia College (FL), 2011.

For a full list of the top 150 eligible institutions and to read more on the selection process, visit the Aspen Institute website.

The Aspen Prize is generously funded by ECMC Foundation, Joyce Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, and Siemens Foundation.

The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership that significantly improve student outcomes, especially for the growing population of low-income students and students of color on American campuses. For more information, visit <http://higher.ed.aspeninstitute.org/> and www.linkedin.com/showcase/aspenhighered and follow @AspenHigherEd on Twitter.

The Aspen Institute is a community-serving organization with global reach whose vision is a free, just, and equitable society. For 70 years, the Institute has driven change through dialogue, leadership, and action to help solve the world's greatest challenges. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Institute has offices in Aspen, Colorado, and New York City, and an international network of partners. For more information, visit www.aspeninstitute.org.

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states in urban, rural, and suburban areas, serving as few as 500 students and as many as 75,000 students, these colleges represent the diversity and depth of the community college sector.

In 2017, San Jacinto College earned the Aspen Rising Star Award as one of the top five community colleges in the nation. In 2019, The Aspen Institute named San Jacinto College as one of the top 10 community colleges in the country.

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CPAC Committee Members
Back row - L - R: Redy Montoya, Sandra Rodriguez, Principal Dale Baca, Dan Lettner, Michelle White, Allan Jamail, Photojournalist, North Channel Star
Front row - L - R: Sonia Lloyd, Sandra Martinez, Adriana Lopez, Emely Benitez, Fabiola Concha-Pacheco

By Allan Jamail

Woodlands Acres Elementary School, Thursday, November 7, 2019 the school's Campus Planning and Advisory Committee (CPAC) met to discuss the Campus Improvement Plan. They also discussed ways to improve student attendance, grades and review of the school's current budget.

The Texas Education Code (TEC) requires each school year, the principal of each school campus, with the assistance of a campus-level committee, shall develop, review, and revise the Campus Improvement Plan for the purpose of im-

proving student performance for all student populations, including students in special education programs under the TEC, Subchapter A, Chapter 29, with respect to the achievement indicators adopted under Section 39.053(c) and any other appropriate performance measures for special needs populations.

Principal Sandra Rodriguez said, "Our CPAC team consists of campus administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, parents and community members. The team will meet quarterly to discuss goals and strategies to better serve the students of Woodland Acres Elementary. Collec-

tively, we aim to increase student success and improve student achievement."

Rodriguez informed committee members of a change coming to the Pre-K classes. "We look forward to having full day Pre-Kindergarten programs in all GPISD schools. Historically PK in GPISD has only been half day but starting in the Fall of 2020, all campuses will have full day PK programs," Principal Rodriguez said.

North Channel Star writer Allan Jamail who's on the school's CPAC team say's "The next CPAC meeting will be Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 3:30 PM."

Unpaid Debts,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

with more coming online as judges give the DCO the go ahead for their court.

The office culture is also changing at the DCO. "We have taken an office that had low morale and drastically improved it by giving much-needed raises, soliciting input, and listening to the needs of the staff. We make each staff member feel like a valuable part of the team," said Ms. Burgess.

A complete website overhaul is in the works too. The new site will offer intuitive navigation, more frequent updates on news and office

events, and include a mobile friendly version.

The Harris County District Clerk's Office is also boosting its outreach effort to diversify juries and study barriers to service, cooperating with Houston METRO to improve their free rides for jurors' program, and supporting the Jury Assembly Building reconstruction.

Stay tuned for more developments with a major initiative to introduce electronic jury summoning to Harris County. Residents can already go online to claim an exemption, re-

schedule their date of service, or print a new summons, but the new summoning process will take this a step farther. While residents will still receive the summons itself via mail, they could get in line digitally the day of their service and receive their assignment for service online.

"Many other counties across the state and nation use similar electronic systems and have had great success in boosting appearance rates. It is time for Harris County to catch up!" said Ms. Burgess. --

Man found dead on Mercury Drive

Houston police are investigating the death of a male found on Mercury Drive about 9:20 a.m. last Tuesday, November 12.

According to Houston Police Officers responded to a report of a deceased male found at 400 Mercury Drive. Upon arrival,

they found the victim with multiple lacerations and stab wounds. It appeared the victim had struggled with the suspect. At this time, there are is no known motive or suspect(s).

The identity of the male victim is pending verification by the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences.

Anyone with information in this case is urged to contact the HPD Homicide Division at 713-308-3600 or Crime Stoppers at 713-222-TIPS.

North Shore Mustangs,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tangs offense rushed for 365 yards and passed for 210 yards (575) and his defense held the Falcons to 83 rushing yards and 34 passing yards. They continued to have a high number of 9 penalties giving up 84 yards.

Early in the game when it was obvious Kay's team didn't have much opposition he began pulling his starting players. His second team continued to score on the Falcons making the score heavily lopsided.

North Shore has a home playoff bi-district game at 353 N. Castlegory Road, Houston, TX 77049 with the Dobie Longhorns on Friday, November 15 at 7 PM. Both teams have a 9 - 1 record.

The winner will next



#9 Demetrius Davis, Mustang junior quarterback sprints across the goal for a touchdown. Davis completed 9 of 12 passes for 187 yards before coming out early.

Photo Allan Jamail

play the winner of the Dawson and Clear Springs game. Watch Live Broad-

cast North Shore vs. Dobie Live on NFHS Network.

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