

NORTH CHANNEL STAR

Your News, Your Newspaper

Serving all of the North Shore -- Channelview, Cloverleaf, Sheldon, Galena Park, Jacinto City
VOLUME 9, NO. 12 (#365) THURSDAY, MARCH 25, 2021 www.northchannelstar.com

CHANNEL CURRENTS

COVID-19 VACCINE RESOURCES

CITY OF HOUSTON
Registration
HoustonEmergency.org/
covid19
832-393-4920
HARRIS COUNTY
Registration at
readyharris.org OR
https://vacstrac.hctx.net
832-927-8787
RETAIL PHARMACIES
Registration at Websites
CVS, Walgreens, Walmart, Sams
Club, HEB, Kroger, Randalls
HOSPITALS
houstonmethodist.org
memorialhermann.org

COVID-19 Cases as of March 22, 2021

HOUSTON AREA 19 COUNTIES

603,517 POSITIVE
6,223 DEATHS
552,289 RECOVERED

TEXAS

2,754,616 POSITIVE
47,346 DEATHS
20,683,375 TESTS

UNITED STATES

29,818,528 POSITIVE
542,356 DEATHS
381,190,995 TESTS

WORLDWIDE

123,160,171 POSITIVE
2,715,080 DEATHS
69,781,922 RECOVERED

GP-JC CIP meeting Apr. 1

Galena Park-Jacinto City
Community-Industry
Partnership

The Big Freeze: Plant
Experiences, Lessons
Learned, What Plants Will Do
Differently

Thursday, April 1, 2021
5:45 Sign in and get
settled. 6:00 Call to order.
Adjourn by 7:30 p.m. RSVPs
due to Diane Sheridan by
Wed. night, Mar. 31.
DBSfacilitator@gmail.com or
281-326-5253

Zoom Meeting hosted by
Kinder Morgan Galena Park
Splitter

Galena Park Library closed temporarily

Galena Park Branch Li-
brary is closed for winter
storm related repairs as of
February 22, 2021.

Jacinto City Branch Li-
brary, North Channel, High-
lands (Stratford), and South
Houston Branch Library are
the nearest Harris County
Public Library locations. Any
HCPL branch location will
be happy to assist you with
your library needs via curb-
side.

HOLDS starting February
22, 2021 will be transferred
to Jacinto City Branch Li-
brary.

Please, monitor this
webpage and HCPL's Face-
book and Twitter feeds for
updates. You may continue
to use the Galena Park
Branch book drop to return
library materials until further
notice.

Sisi Medina, MLIS
Manager, Galena Park
Branch Library

State opens COVID shots to everyone

HARRIS COUNTY –
March 23, 2021

All adults will be eli-
gible to receive a COVID-19
vaccine in Texas beginning
Monday, March 29. The
Texas Department of State
Health Services expects
vaccine supplies to in-
crease next week, and pro-
viders in multiple parts of
the state have made great
strides in vaccinating peo-
ple in the current priority
groups. The state's Expert
Vaccine Allocation Panel
recommended opening vac-
cination to everyone who
falls under the current
Food and Drug Adminis-

tration emergency use au-
thorizations to protect as
many Texans as possible.

"As a matter of fact, we
in Houston had pretty
much exhausted our wait-
lists and we wanted to
have more real-time ap-
pointments available,"
said Houston Health De-
partment director Stephen
Williams. Texans can con-
tinue to find vaccine pro-
viders throughout Greater
Houston and sign up on
waitlists through the
DSHS Vaccine Informa-
tion page at
dshs.texas.gov/covidvac-
cine.



Houston Methodist, consistently
one of the area's largest vaccine pro-
viders, will allow anyone to sign up on
its waitlist but will prioritize those 50
and older for now.

"We are closing in on 10 million dos-
es administered in Texas, and we want

to keep up the momentum as the vaccine sup-
ply increases," said Imelda Garcia, DSHS
associate commissioner for laboratory and
infectious disease services and the chair of
the Expert Vaccine Allocation Panel. "As eli-
gibility opens up, we are asking providers to
continue to prioritize people who are the most
at risk of severe disease, hospitalization and
death – such as older adults."

DSHS has directed vaccine providers to
prioritize people 80 years old or older when
scheduling appointments and accommodate
anyone in that age group who presents for
vaccination, whether or not they have an ap-
pointment, by immediately moving them to
the front of the line. That will ensure vacci-
nation of anyone 80 or older with as small a

Continued. See COVID SHOTS, page 8

Jacinto City Police Officers Recognized

By Allan Jamail

Jacinto City, TX. - At
the Jacinto City council
meeting members of the
Jacinto City Police Depart-
ment were recognized for
their outstanding perfor-
mance in the investigation
and apprehension of several
dangerous crime sus-
pects. Multiple felony
criminal cases were solved
involving aggravated rob-
beries, house burglaries,
vehicle burglaries, stolen
credit cards and stolen
motor vehicles. The sus-
pects after being booked
were transferred to the
Harris County Jail and are
awaiting their trials.



L – R: Lt. Dennis Walker, Sgt. Eliserio Ramos, Patrolman Ronnie Barker II, Chief Joe Ayala, Dispatcher Kasey Aguilar, Lt. Mark Longrigg, Patrolmen Jody Pizano & Cuitlahuac Cazares. Others recognized but not present, Kathy Andrews & Esther Perez.

Channelview FD achieves higher Fire Insurance rating

According to Jimmy
Sumner, Administrator
for Harris County ESD No.
50, and the Channelview
Fire Department, a reclas-
sification of the ISO rating
for the department will
have possible benefits to
Channelview property
owners. This information
may reduce your insurance
rates, but you must notify
your insurance company of
this change. The reduction
in your homeowner's po-
licy will not be automatic.

Channelview Fire De-
partment is getting the
word out to the commu-
nity related to the upcom-
ing change in our ISO Public
Protection Classification
rating. For the past year

the fire department has
been working with the In-
surance Services Office
(ISO) to have Channelview
Fire Department evaluat-
ed for a reclassification.
The PPC Classes range
from 1 to 10 with a Class 1
providing the best fire pro-
tect and also resulting in
the best insurance rates.
Channelview is currently a
Class 6.

Effective 6-1-2021
Channelview will have a
split Class 1/IX. Over 98%
of the area will be a Class
1, but less than 2% of the
area will be classified as a
Class IX. The IX indicates
that the area is serviced by
a Class 1 fire department,



but the property is greater
than 1000 feet from a fire
hydrant. Those that are
Class 1 should see a signif-
icant saving on their home-
owner's insurance once

this change is factored in.
The two areas that are IX
are the properties at the
end of Market St east of
Magnolia, properties in
San Jacinto River Estates

(Monmouth St / Meadow-
brook Dr. area), and prop-
erties at the end of Bear
Bayou, Wood Dr., Oak Ln,
Shady Lane, and all prop-
erties on Park Dr.

The following link will
provide some details about
ISO and PPC. Channel-
view will join the very few
communities in the coun-
try with a Class 1 fire pro-
tection class. Currently
only 393 communities
have a Class 1 nationwide.
In Texas there are only 69
Class 1 fire departments.
<https://www.isomitigation.com/ppc/program-works/facts-and-figures-about-ppc-codes-around-the-country/>

Senegal joins EHCEC as Resource Development Director

East Harris County,
Texas – March 2, 2021 -
East Harris County Em-
powerment Council (EH-
CEC) hires Val Senegal as
Director of Resource De-
velopment.

A Louisiana native, Val
Senegal, has been recent-
ly named as the Director
of Resource Development
for East Harris County
Empowerment Council.
As a former AmeriCorps
member, public school
teacher, and political can-
didate,

Senegal brings a
wealth of knowledge and
experience addressing the
subject matters of public
safety, affordable insur-
ance, education, behavio-
ral health, and mental
health within both the
public and private sectors.



VAL SENEGAL

Her extensive experienc-
es as both a change agent
and an employee-centric
leadership professional
will complement the ini-
tiatives of EHCEC. Senegal
will lead EHCEC's fund-
raising & volunteer ini-
tiatives. Terence Narcisse,
Founder & CEO of EH-

CEC, said, "We're very
excited to have Val join
our team. Her experience,
knowledge, and manage-
ment capabilities will pro-
pel us to the next level!"

Established in 2008,
EHCEC is committed to
improving the quality of
life through innovative,
sustainable programs and
services that empower
men, women, and youth to
achieve their full poten-
tial. We are exclusively fo-
cused on serving the
eastern unincorporated
communities of Channel-
view, Crosby, Galena
Park, Jacinto City, North
Shore, and Sheldon. For
more information about
EHCEC please visit
www.ehcec.org, call 281-
712-2550, or email
info@eastharriscounty.org.

Texas House considers Deep Freeze bills

*Report by Rep. Ana
Hernandez*

On March 8, Speaker
Dade Phelan announced
the first phase of the
House's legislative reforms
to protect consumers and
strengthen our state's elec-
tric grid in the aftermath
of the recent, unprecedent-
ed cold weather event.
Speaker Phelan highlight-
ed the following key legis-
lation filed by members of
the Texas House of Repre-
sentatives:

HB 10 - Reforming En-
ergy Reliability Council of
Texas Leadership

HB 10, filed by Repre-
sentative Paddie, restruc-
tures the ERCOT board,
replacing the unaffiliated
members with members
appointed by the Gover-



REPRESENTATIVE
ANA HERNANDEZ

nor, Lt. Governor, and
Speaker of the House. HB
10 also requires all board
members to reside in the
state of Texas and creates
an additional ERCOT
board member slot to rep-
resent consumer interests.

HB 11 - Protecting Con-
sumers and Hardening

Continued on Page 8

Goose Creek Memorial Basketball Team receives recognition



Baytown Mayor Brandon Capetillo presents a proclamation to Coach Jamaal Haymon and the Goose Creek Memorial Boys Varsity Basketball Team for making it all the way to the Class 5A Region 3 Semifinals.

COVID 19 Testing Sites in NE Harris County

CROSBY

David H. McNerney

Crosby American Legion

Make Appointment (936) 333-3333 ; walk ups welcome

8 a.m. until 6 p.m. Mobile or On-Site Testing

Texas Mobile Medical Labs

Crosby ISD

Apt. Necessary (281) 328-9200

14670 FM 2100 Crosby,

Urgent Care MDs

No appointment needed 9 until 9

14405 FM 2100, Crosby (832) 821-9780

Neighbors Emergency Center

No appointment needed

14120 FM 2100, Crosby, TX

(281) 328-7770

Crosby Community Center (when open)

409 Hare Rd., Crosby, TX

(281) 462-0543

Nova Medical Ctr.

Apt Req. (713) 453-7788

13469 East Freeway, Houston, TX 77015

Open 8:30 a.m.

HIGHLANDS (Go to either Baytown or Channelview))

CVS Channelview (281) 452-7184

Appointment Req.

Urgent Care MDs

Appointment Req. (281) 428-0000

Located in the DOW Medical Park

HUFFMAN

Care Now Urgent Care

No Appt. Necessary

Humble (281) 397-5258

Urgent Care M.D.s

No Appt. Necessary

Atascocita (281) 570-6856

Maximum Tax Savings



Jack Noonan B.B.A., T.R.E.B., E.A.

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Telephone (281) 328-1755 Fax (281) 328-5280

E-mail: cri.tax.jhinson@gmail.com

TRADE & UPGRADE

WE NEED YOUR TRADES

TURNER CHEVROLET Crosby, Texas

2020 EQUINOX ONLY \$20,977

2020 CHEVY TRAX LOANER ONLY \$15,999

2021 CHEVY SILVERADO'S 0% FOR 72 MONTHS

2020 CHEVY TRAILBLAZER ONLY \$19,925

2020 Chevy Equinox STK#6272087 MSRP: \$28,475 \$1,498 dealer discount, \$4,750 Factory rebate, \$1,250 conquest (must own 2007 or newer non-gm) \$20,977 Final Price. 2020 Chevy Trax Loaner STK#B338859 MSRP: \$23,055 \$1,306 dealer discount, \$4,500 Factory rebate, \$1,250 conquest (must own 2007 or newer non-gm) \$15,999 Final Price. 0% for 72 months on 2021 Chevy Silverado's and Equinox, \$13.89 for every \$1,000 financed. Must finance with GM Finance. 2021 Chevy Trailblazer STK#MB103241 MSRP: \$23,175 \$2,250 Factory rebate, \$1,000 conquest (must own 2007 or newer non-gm) \$19,925 Final Price, plus TT&L and doc fee of \$150. With approved credit. Must take from dealer stock, see dealer for details offer ends 3/31/2021

PRE-OWNED DEALS!

2015 Scion XB PS1008	\$11,739
2014 Jeep Cherokee EW256426	\$12,967
2015 Chevy Equinox F6352483A	\$12,998
2017 Buick Envision HD002777	\$14,500
2019 Chevy Equinox KS559623A	\$17,145
2016 Honda Accord GA153043	\$17,885
2019 Ram 1500 ks612550	\$23,985

Plus TT&L and doc fee of \$150. See dealer for details.

10% OFF OIL CHANGE

Can not be use in conjunction with other offers, not valid with merchandise, see dealer for details. Offer ends 3/31/2021

21001 Crosby Freeway, Crosby TX 77532

On the corner of Hwy 90 and Hwy 2100 between Barrett Station and Crosby

Call: 281-328-4377

TurnerChevroletCrosby.com



Robert Turner
Owner



281-328-5869



Home Health Care

Skilled Nursing, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy, Medical Social Worker, Home Health Aide, Hospice Services

*Physical Therapy Position Available

CALL TODAY TO SEE IF YOU QUALIFY FOR MEDICARE FUNDED HOME HEALTH CARE

Physical Therapy Position Available

Locally owned and Operated by Tabatha and Jonathan Brady

Non-Discrimination Policy

No client shall be, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, age, sex, disability or handicap, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or status with regard to public assistance or veteran status, excluded from admission to services through Omnix Health Care Services, Inc.

CROSBY'S HOME
TOWN HOME CARE

Crosby United Methodist Church

hosted the *March Madness Spring Festival* on



Saturday, March 20. This festival is a continuation of the Harvest Moon Festival that has been hosted there for many years. The Festival was comprised of many of the activities that the community loves such as: the rummage sale, kids fun events, vendors from the community, and various food contests. The Church plans on making this event a yearly happening.

Michelle Day
1st Place Cake

Sandy Roden
2nd Place Cake

Gavin Fox
2nd Place Chili

Melissa Miley
1st Place
Ice Cream
Peanut Butter
Chocolate Chunk

Ray Reese
2nd Place
Ice Cream
Lemon Sorbet

Galena Park I.S.D.
will host a

SUPER SITE
FOOD
DISTRIBUTION

FRIDAY, MARCH 26, 2021
9:00 A.M.
WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

North Shore Senior High School
353 N. Castlegory, Houston, TX 77049

Enter on Evanston, west of the stadium and remain in your vehicle.
This distribution will not have a walk up option.

Expert primary care CLOSE TO HOME

Houston Methodist Primary Care Group in Baytown

Our team of physicians at Houston Methodist Primary Care Group is proud to provide expert care in serving Baytown and surrounding communities. Our collaborative team offers a wide range of services to meet your primary care needs, including:

- Acute and chronic care

▪ Allergy and asthma

▪ Diabetes management

▪ Flu shots and routine immunizations
- High blood pressure

▪ Preventive care

▪ Weight loss management

▪ Women's health



Mohammad Ahmed, MD
Family Medicine



Irfan Dadabhoy, MD
Family Medicine



Pooja Kulkarni, MD
Family Medicine



Gregory Terry, MD
Family Medicine

SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT

1677A W. Baker Rd.
Outpatient Center, Suite 2701
Baytown, TX 77520

houstonmethodist.org/pcg/baytown
713.394.6638

★ OPINION PAGE ★

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COUNTY CONNECTION

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo



We are so close
to beating the virus

We are Texans, and the concept of freedom is an essential piece of our identity. We all want the freedom to go out to eat and to socialize, the freedom for our economy and our schools to open without the fear of getting deathly ill, the freedom to use amazing science and vaccine developments to our full advantage. But taking away critical public health interventions that we know are working in the name of personal freedom won't make our community safer, nor will it hasten our return to normalcy. The state's decision on Tuesday to end the statewide mask mandate and increase business capacity to 100% is a threat to all of the sacrifices and progress we've made, as well as to everyone who has not yet received a vaccine. At best, Tuesday's decision is wishful thinking. At worst, it is a cynical attempt to distract Texans from the failures of state oversight of our power grid.

Every time COVID-19 public health measures have been pulled back, we've seen a spike in hospitalizations. If we start the climb now, we'd be starting from the highest starting point ever when it comes to our hospital population, an unacceptable and dangerous proposition. Even more troubling is the revelation that Houston has the unfortunate distinction of being the only city recording every major strain of COVID-19. Our positivity rate is still sky high and moving up, not down — we're now at 13% positivity. We're still seeing hundreds of new cases a day. With the arrival of COVID-19 vaccines, we're finally inching closer to the finish line of this deadly, destructive pandemic — now is not the time to reverse the gains we've worked so hard to achieve. We're able to finally see the light at the end of the tunnel now because of the common sense steps we've taken to prevent the spread of this virus, like wearing masks. We can't take one step forward just to take two steps back.

History will remember those who took part in the unified effort to save lives in our community and pull us through this awful pandemic. It will also remember those who undermined and prolonged this crisis in the name of scoring political points with their base. Our Harris County community is smart — we can see through the politics of this. I know we will keep at it and continue to be good neighbors, good citizens, and do the right thing, including wearing masks. Let's also reward those that do the same. Shop at businesses still requiring masks and keeping capacity low to protect their employees and their patrons.

We've been through so much, but we are so close. Keep holding on. Our success at beating this virus is all up to us now.



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OPINION

By BILL KING



Does the Economy Need an
Additional \$1.9 Trillion of
Stimulus? No.

The Biden Administration and Democrats in Congress are pressing for another stimulus bill in the amount of \$1.9 trillion to address the effect the COVID pandemic has had on the economy. This comes on top of about \$4 trillion Congress has already approved, much of which has not yet been spent.

The bi-partisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) released its updated economic projections for the U.S. The CBO runs economic projections to advise Congress on budgetary issues. The CBO now projects that the nation's GDP for this quarter will bounce back to what it was prior to the pandemic.

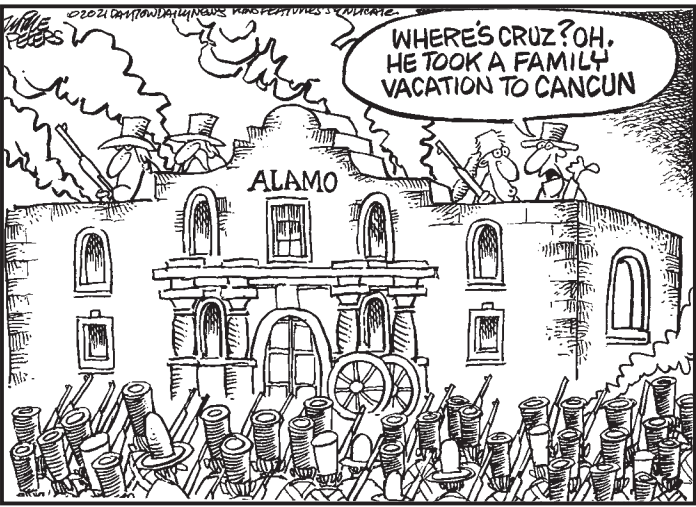
This article by the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget discusses how think tanks and researchers across the political spectrum have all concluded that an additional \$1.9 trillion will substantially overshoot what is necessary for the economy to recover.

That said, it is clear that some segments of the economy have been damaged by the pandemic (and the attendant government response) much more than others. Obviously, the hospitality industry has been decimated. We should continue to support those disproportionately affected until we get past the pandemic. Programs like extended unemployment benefits, bridge loans and direct assistance targeted to those most affected are absolutely warranted. However, that type of aid could be done for a fraction of \$1.9 trillion.

One of the other talking points is that the massive bill is necessary to conduct the vaccination campaign. However, there is little evidence of that. In the last week, an average of 1.5 million doses were administered, a rate that is almost certain to continue to ramp up. While certainly that effort should be vigorously supported, the constraints right now are on the manufacturing side. There is no indication that throwing massive amounts of money at state and local governments will do anything to speed up the manufacturing process.

The bill includes \$350 billion to bailout state and local governments on the theory that they lost revenue during the pandemic. However, the revenue loss has not been nearly as severe as originally feared. Even the left-leaning Washington Post has opined that this provision is no longer warranted.

No one seems to worry these days much about the national debt, now closing in on \$28 trillion. But the national debt as a percentage of GDP is now higher than it has ever been, even higher than during WWII. This is not the time to adding to it unnecessarily.



★

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



PUC chair resigns in wake
of call to energy investors

Arthur D'Andrea, the chair and sole remaining member of the Public Utility Commission, resigned late last week at the request of Gov. Gregg Abbott. D'Andrea pledged to remain on the PUC until Abbott names a replacement. In the announcement Abbott said in part, "Texans deserve to have trust and confidence in the Public Utility Commission, and this action is one of many steps that will be taken to achieve that goal."

Texas Monthly obtained a recording of a March 9 call D'Andrea had with investors to discuss the fallout from the mid-February power crisis, in the midst of a fierce statewide winter storm. In that 48-minute call, D'Andrea promised to put the "weight of the commission" in opposing efforts to reverse skyrocketing power rates during the blackouts.

Those efforts are being spearheaded by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who in effect controls the Texas Senate. That body passed SB 242 last week, calling on the PUC and the Electrical Reliability Council of Texas to correct what Patrick called "billions in pricing errors that occurred" during the winter storm.

However, House Speaker Dade Phelan has called repricing "an extraordinary government intervention into the free market, which may have major consequences for both residential and commercial consumers going forward." The House is holding hearings on restructuring ERCOT and related issues this week.

RISE IN PEDESTRIAN
FATALITIES RINGS ALARM
BELLS

With spring arriving and COVID-19 restrictions easing, state officials warn that pedestrian deaths continue to increase each year. They urge both drivers and pedestrians to watch out for each other. According to the Texas Department of Transportation, pedestrian fatalities account for one in five of all



state traffic fatalities.

In 2019, the latest year for which figures are available, 5,973 traffic crashes involved pedestrians, resulting in 669 deaths and 1,317 serious injuries.

The two leading causes of pedestrian fatalities are: 1) Pedestrians failing to follow traffic safety laws and being struck crossing streets and roadways, and 2) motorists failing to yield the right of way, driving distracted or driving too fast.

TxDOT's pedestrian safety campaign is a component of #EndTheStreak-TX, a social media effort to encourage drivers to make safer choices, such as wearing a seat belt, driving the speed limit, not texting while driving, and never driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. The last deathless day on Texas roadways was Nov. 7, 2000.

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS
UP MORE THAN MILLION
IN A WEEK

With more than 900,000 additional COVID-19 vaccines arriving in Texas this week, the state has now administered more than 9 million doses, according to the Texas Department of Health and Human Services. More than 3 million are now fully vaccinated, roughly 10.8% of the state's population.

Nearly one in seven of all Texans at least 16 years of age are now fully vaccinated, according to DSHS. Anyone over the age of 50, health-care workers, long-term care residents, people

with chronic health issues, and school and childcare workers are all eligible for the vaccine.

You can find a list of vaccine hub providers at this link: <https://tinyurl.com/2u5een4w>

COVID-19 CASES, DEATHS
IN STATE STILL DROPPING

The number of new COVID-19 cases in Texas dropped again last week, with 27,672 reported, down about 12 percent from the previous week. Deaths also dropped, with 932 reported, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University. That's down 16.5% from the previous week.

Hospitalizations of confirmed COVID-19 patients also continue to decrease, with 3,620 in Texas hospitals as of Sunday, according to DSHS. That's down 14.1% from the previous week and 75% lower than the record high of 14,218 hospitalizations in mid-January.

NATURE CHALLENGE
LAUNCHED BY FOREST
SERVICE

The Nature Challenge website has launched, connecting Texans with ways to explore the outdoors, acquire new skills and get involved in their community. The collaboration between the Texas Children in Nature Network, Texan by Nature and the Texas A&M Forest Service encourages Texans to explore nature and earn digital badges to track their progress. The website, naturechallenge.tamu.edu, features an interactive map and resources for users of all ages.

"The Nature Challenge provides the perfect opportunity for every Texan to have fun and learn something new while enjoying the physical, mental and emotional benefits of being in nature," said Joni Carswell, CEO and President of Texan by Nature.

Nature-related organizations are encouraged to use the site to promote their services and opportunities at no charge. Information for providers can be found on the Nature Challenge website.

WEBINAR SLATED TO HELP
HOMEOWNERS FILE
INSURANCE DAMAGE
CLAIMS

Folks who need help with an insurance claim for winter storm damage can register for a free online webinar set for 11 a.m. Thursday, March 25. Staff with the Texas Department of Insurance will explain what to expect once a claim is filed and cover the options available if a claimant disagrees with an insurance company's decision. Register for the webinar at: <http://bit.ly/TDI-winter-storm-claim-webinar>.

Gary Borders is a veteran award-winning Texas journalist. He published a number of community newspapers in Texas during a 30-year span. Email: gborders@texapress.com

★

THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

Lori's
Laughter

Throughout the past year, my husband, Peter, and I have been seeing no one except Peter's sister, Lori, and her husband.

Lori has Stage 4 cancer and has had a tough fight. She's been on oxygen all this time. The decision of how careful we needed to be was easy. If we were going to see Lori, we had to be extremely careful. And as a reward, once a week we have heard Lori's laughter.

I've been writing fiction for the first time in my life. No one told me in advance that writing novels is a lonely process. Especially now, there are no writers' groups, no coffee shops to write in—although I wasn't part of a writers' group before, and I've always thought a coffee shop was a noisy place to write.

Instead, I sit alone at my desk with my coffee cup and a vase of fresh flowers in front of me and I write. I write and I wait for the end of the week when we will see Lori.

"Where did we leave off?" Lori will always ask, sounding excited, followed by, "I might need a reminder," followed by, "I get two chapters this week, don't I?"

I will read in a mask (something I thought would be harder than it is), and I will listen for the sound of Lori's laughter, which is loud and frequent.

And many days—most days, in fact—that is enough reason to write.

Because it's impossible to never have a doubt when you are working on something like this. I wonder if it's any good or if anyone will find it interesting or if I have any idea what I am doing. But then I read another chapter to Lori, and I remember why I'm writing to begin with. I'm writing to tell a story, to entertain, to amuse, maybe even (every so often) to make a small point.

I haven't seen Lori in four weeks now.

She's been too ill for visitors. Her pain is higher, and her oxygen is lower, and we don't really know what is happening because she is too tired to tell us. Peter keeps bringing her food and I keep writing, but I cannot tell you how much I miss Lori's laughter.

I did not realize how much I have relied on Lori's laughter through all these weeks and months. I did not realize how seeing her every week has anchored my life to something real and joyful and positive—because that is what Lori is.

Today the sun is not shining, and a cold wind is blowing, and we have not heard from Lori and I don't know if we will.

"Maybe we'll see her this weekend," Peter says. "Maybe she'll feel better by the end of the week."

But we don't know. No one knows.

There are no platitudes about Stage 4 cancer that will make things fine. Things are not fine, and that is how it is. We don't know what the future will hold. She has battled back before, and we are hoping she will again.

But we don't know. Peter cooks and worries.

I write. Lori is now far behind in the story. I am trying to remember what I last read to her.

But every time I come to a part where a deliciously unpleasant person is behaving especially badly, I imagine how Lori would laugh, if I finally get the chance to read to her again.

"Oh!" I think to myself. "Lori will love this."

Till next time,

Carrie
Carrie Classon's memoir is called, "Blue Yarn." Learn more at CarrieClasson.com



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OBITUARIES

ARTHUR WAYNE PETERSON

Arthur Wayne Peterson, 86, of Crosby, TX, climbed into the loving arms of the Lord on Thursday, Jan. 21, 2021 in Baytown, TX.

Wayne was born in April of 1934 to E. Harold Peterson and Esther Nelson Peterson. He was a 1952 graduate of Crosby High School, where he played as a star basketball player for the Crosby Buffalos. Wayne briefly attended Wharton College and transferred to Lee College where he again starred in basketball.

Wayne happily eloped to Waco with his sweetheart D'Alva on February 26, 1955, where they were married by the pastor of Seventh & James Baptist Church. Daughters Cynthia, Ellen, and Karen were born and life became a journey - full of love, wonder, and humor. Wayne worked for Anderson, Clayton in Houston. He later entered the reinsurance industry when he joined General Re in 1967 in Chicago and New York City, and later in 1974 he worked first for SCOR Re and then Texas Inter-ocean in Dallas. He later headed a reinsurance brokerage firm that brought him back to Houston.

Wayne loved spending time with his family and



grandkids. Known as "Granddad," the great-grands would rush to him with big smiles and hugs. Watching them swim and roughhouse brought joy to his heart. Wayne spent hours studying the Bible and fellowshiping with the Lord. He served as a deacon and shared Jesus' love with many people. His appreciation of music was obvious in his life. While living in Illinois, Wayne led the choir and music at Wooddale First Baptist Church. He also directed the choir and played the organ at Westchester Baptist Church, in Hartsdale, New York. Growing vegetables and herbs and sharing his culinary skills with family and friends was a favorite pastime. He also enjoyed watching his beloved Baylor Bear sports, especially in football and basketball, and in his early years, the Houston Oilers and the

Colt-45s/Astros.

Wayne was preceded in death by his parents and sister, Barbara Ann Copes. He is survived by his wife of almost 66 years, D'Alva Rae Hopper Peterson; daughters, Cynthia Peterson of Plainview, TX; Ellen Beck and husband Alan of Crosby, TX, and Karen Nott of Santa Fe, NM.; grandchildren, Erin McMinn and husband Curtis of Humble, TX, Philip Beck and wife Danielle of Kaysville, UT, and David Beck of Crosby; great-grandchildren, Kinley McMinn, Axton McMinn, Laikyn McMinn, Dalton Carter, RiLynn Beck, and Emma Beck; brother-in-law and sister-in-law Bill and Shirley Hopper of Tyler, TX, and sister-in-law and brother-in-law Linda and E.J. "Punchy" Riley of Leakey, TX; and several nieces and nephews, other relatives, and friends.

A Celebration of Wayne's life will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, March 27 at First Baptist Church of Crosby, 615 Runneburg Rd., Crosby, Texas.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts may be made to Gideon's International, www.gideons.org or the American Heart Association, www2.heart.org.

MAURICE ROBBINS



that they would survive.

Maurice volunteered at the Highlands Volunteer Fire Department from 1960 until 1980. He was Fireman of the year in 1969. He also was on the Pumper Team where he pulled the water hose.

Maurice was a member of the Highlands Masonic Lodge and Baytown Shrine Club. He along with his sidekick Archie Bickley sold between 200-300 bricks each year to support the Lodge's charities.

In 2003, Maurice and Jennie were awarded the community builders award for the community involvement in Highlands for many years. In February of 2012, he received the Golden Trough Award for his community involvement and friendship to the people of Highlands. Maurice was a member of the Highlands Water Board from December 1981- May 2012 where he served as President of the Water Board for many years. In 2011, he was nominated as an Unsung Hero by The Baytown Sun.

Maurice coached baseball at Highlands Little League for many years and he helped put up the 1st set of lights up at the park in the late 1960's early 1970's.

Maurice was a loving father, grandfather, cousin, uncle and friend to many who knew him. He was preceded in death by his parents, his wife Eugenia Vidano Robbins, his son Kenneth Maurice Robbins, his grandson Ryan David Dunlop, his siblings Loretta Hanks, James, Charles, Don, and Billy Robbins, his special friend Vincent Hooper. He leaves behind to cherish his loving memory his beloved daughter Kathryn Dunlop of Highlands, Texas; his grandson Zachary Kenneth Dunlop of Highlands, Texas; his

special granddaughter Rachel Dunlop Falconi and husband Nino of Mont Belvieu, Texas; his special grandchildren Jake Brewer and Amy Brewer Ringler; his cousin Orleas Brown of Palestine, Texas; his brother in law Fred McDonald of Panama City, Florida; his sister in law Jessica Robbins of Channelview, Texas; his 14 nieces, nephews and a host of other loving relatives and friends.

Honoring the family by serving as pallbearers will be Mark Clamon, Stan Cargill, Larry Pittman, Kent Erwin, Brent Perry, and Scott Newport. Honorary Pallbearers will be Vann Hooper, Raymond Balcerowicz, Damian Nichols and Shawn Robbins.

"A special thank you to my cousin, Donna Robbins for helping take care of my dad for the past few years allowing me to do various activities and giving me a much needed break. When you go out in the world today please do a kind deed for someone and try to make a difference in a person's life. Dad loved helping people..." Kathryn

In lieu of flowers, please donate to 1st Baptist Highlands Church to the food pantry, Backpack Buddies or the Youth Ministry for children to attend summer camp. 1st Baptist Church, 210 N. Magnolia St, Highlands, Texas 77562.

Friends are invited to visit with the family on Thursday, March 25, 2021, from 5 pm until 8 pm, in the chapel of Sterling-White Funeral Home, 11011 Crosby Lynchburg Rd, Highlands, Texas, 77562. A funeral service for Mr. Robbins will be held on Friday, March 26, 2021, beginning at 10 am with Pastor Tim Edwards officiating at 1st Baptist Church, 210 N. Magnolia St, Highlands, Texas 77562, with a graveside service in Earthman Memory Gardens Cemetery, 8624 Garth Rd, Baytown, TX 77521.

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Chamber enjoys mudbugs, promotes local businesses



March 18, Dan Meaux and daughter entertain Chamber members like banker Jamie Lee at the Crawfish Shack, serving the most delicious crawfish etouffe and some sausage gumbo. Business werre invited to host tables to display their products and services, later they were given a chance to make a presentation of their business outreaching to the Crosby and Huffman area. The Chamber and Crawfish Shack are getting ready for April 15 when the Annual Tees-N-Tails Golf Tournament is to be at Stonebridge in Newport, promising games, raffles, auctions and of course the tails aspect crawfish and shrimp prepared by the most expert Mr. Meaux.

Turkey Shoot,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

at \$1 per shoot. A winner is to be declared at every shooting.

The Legion just concluded a Lone-Star Legacy Run, a motorcycle ride around the State of Texas Raising Funds for the American Le-

gion Legacy Scholarship Fund for children of military personnel killed on active duty since 9/11/2001. Beginning in 2017, the American Legion expanded awardee to include children of VA-rated, post-9/11/01 veterans

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Each Friday night from 5p.m. until 8p.m. is Friday Night Dinner Fundraiser offering meals for online orders, phone orders and walk-ins.

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Proposals for RFP-MA 21-002 Fundraising Items will be received by the Galena Park Independent School District until Thursday, April 8, 2021 at 10:00 AM CST. At that time proposals will be opened at the GPISD Administration Building, 14705 Woodforest Blvd., Houston, TX 77015. Proposals will be opened publicly and read aloud.

Additional information may be obtained by contacting the Purchasing Dept. at purchasing@galenaparkisd.com or on our website: galenaparkisd.com/Page/1155

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ASK THE EXPERT

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Do you remember being a child and enjoying the long summer breaks? There was something special about the memories made from playing outdoors and not having a set routine that as children, we loved. But by the time we reached our teenage years, we longed to be around our classmates and have a more defined schedule. We knew that much of our high school years were planned around football and that included lots of practice from those who played football, to the award-winning drill teams and certainly for the high school bands. There were many weekend afternoons spent with classmates painting banners for pep rallies as well as for the game on the following Friday night.

Perhaps you went off to college after high school. It was an entire new experience for many. Suddenly there was no structure of bells ringing or lining up for lunch in the cafeteria. There was a new-found freedom in not being on a schedule for doing your assignments. There was more time than ever to meet new people and begin to “grow up” and make your own decisions. Yet, most of us who went away to college will tell you that coming home for holiday breaks and the summer, felt great. There was a sense of being independent yet having that familiar comfort of being at home with family.

Like many others, I have recently returned to the office after working remotely for 364 days. Yes, almost a year to the day. I found myself happy at first that I did not have to worry with uniforms going to the dry cleaner or having to get up early enough to drive to work. In talking with neighbors as well as coworkers who were working from home, we all felt a sense of peace in the beginning. We were thankful that we worked for employers who wanted to help stop the spread of COVID-19 by allowing us to work from the safety of home. We found our commute time being replaced with many zoom meetings. By the end of the first month, our workspace had become a center of activity. I realized that I was often working harder at home, as I wanted to be sure to stay busy. There were no coworkers stopping by my office to share details of their busy weekends. It seemed like I blinked and lost count of birthdays, anniversaries and other important events. I talked to more and more people who were feeling down at not being able to attend graduations, weddings, funerals or to plan vacations. The days suddenly ran into each other. Before we knew it the holidays had come and gone. We spent many hours registering for COVID Testing and then eventually COVID vaccinations.

Numbers were beginning to slow down, and it was as if we could finally take a deep breath and come out of our homes. By returning to work, things slowly began to feel better. Being blessed to celebrate a birthday with cake and flowers with coworkers, lunch with friends and an evening with others made me more grateful than ever.

I pray that as we begin to experience the new normal, we will remember just how good it feels to live each day.

COVID shots open to everyone,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

burden on themselves as possible.

Also next week, DSHS will launch a website to allow people to register for a shot through some public health providers. The public will be able to enroll in the Texas Public Health Vaccine Scheduler to identify upcoming vaccine clinics hosted by DSHS or a participating local health department and be notified when new clinics and appointments become available. People can continue to find additional providers through the DSHS Vaccine Information page at dshs.texas.gov/covidvaccine.

Online registration will

be the best option for most people. For those for whom that is not an option, DSHS will launch a toll-free number to provide assistance making an appointment with a participating provider or locating another provider that has vaccine available.

To date, Texas has administered more than 9.3 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine, equating to more than 6 million people with at least one dose and more than 3 million fully vaccinated. Most vaccines are authorized for people 18 years old and older; the FDA has authorized the Pfizer vaccine for use in people 16 and older.

Texas House on Freeze bills,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Facilities for Extreme Weather

HB 11, filed by Representative Paddie, requires electric transmission and generation facilities in this state to be weatherized against the spectrum of extreme weather Texas may face. Utilities will be required to reconnect service as soon as possible and prevent slower reconnections for low-income areas, rural Texas, and small communities.

HB 12 - Alerting Texans During Emergencies

HB 12, filed by Representative Raymond, creates a statewide disaster alert system administered by Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) to alert Texans across the state about impending disasters and extreme weather events. The alerts will also provide targeted information on extended power outages to the state's regions most affected. This system builds off the model used in Amber, Silver, and Blue Alert systems.

HB 13 - Improving Coordination During Disasters

HB 13, filed by Representative Raymond, establishes a council composed of ERCOT, Public Utility Commission of Texas, Railroad Commission, and TDEM leaders to coordinate during a disaster. The committee will identify challenges with fuel supplies, repairs, energy operations and prevent service interruptions from the wellhead to the consumer.

HB 14 - Weatherizing Natural Gas Infrastructure

HB 14, filed by Representative Goldman, requires the Railroad Commission to adopt rules requiring gas pipeline operators to implement measures that ensure service quality and reliability during an extreme weather emergency, which covers winter and heat wave conditions.

HB 16 - Defending Ratepayers

HB 16, filed by Representative Hernandez, bans variable rate products like Griddy for residential customers. These types of speculative plans resulted in exorbitant bills. This bill will provide consumer protection to residential customers while still allowing the competitive market to flourish.

HB 16 is scheduled for a public hearing on Thursday, March 18 at 8:00am.

To watch the hearing live, please follow this link: <https://house.texas.gov/video-audio/>.

HB 17 - Protecting Homeowner Rights

HB 17, filed by Rep. Deshotel, prevents any political subdivision or planning authority from adopting or enforcing an ordinance, regulation, code, or policy that would prohibit the connection of residential or commercial buildings to specific infrastructure based on the type or source of energy that will be delivered to the end user.

ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: “Clam Chowder with a side of Pearl?”



Recently, GIA's laboratory in New York had the opportunity to examine a fascinating find and hear about an even more fascinating story.

According to Bryan Gosman, co-owner of Gosman's Fish Market in Montauk, Long Island, one of his staff was shucking clams in the kitchen while preparing to cook New England chowder when he discovered a pearl the size of a gumball. “It didn't look real,” said Gosman. “Usually [pearls are] the size of your pinky nail or something like that, but this looked like a plastic knob.”

He then reached out to Rebekah Harris – a co-owner of The Shipwreck Jewelry and Trading Company – to help him confirm the identity of the pearl. She assured him that the pearl was genuine and also the largest one she'd ever seen outside of a museum. She helped him submit the pearl to GIA in New York.



GIA scientists confirmed that the pearl formed in a *Mercenaria mercenaria* (northern quahog) “clam.” It weighed 27.78 carats and measured 18.96 x 11.32 mm. To put that in perspective, many cultured pearls in jewelry stores range from 8-12 millimeters, meaning that this natural pearl is extraordinarily large. It is also a near perfect button shape, with an attractive white and purple color. Unlike many pearls valued for jewelry, it is non-nacreous, meaning its surface structure is different and has a more porcelainous appearance.

Quahog (“koh-hawg”) clams like the one that produced this pearl are found on the Eastern shore of North America, especially along the coast of the New England states, and can also be found along California's Pacific coast. The pearls range in color from white and light gray to varied shades of purple, with purer colors being the most sought-after. Finding a quahog pearl is uncommon, not least because cleaning and shucking clams is often done mechanically, so most pearls are lost or destroyed in the process. The rare few pearls that make it into an unsuspecting patron's food have been cooked, which can damage them. How fortunate that this pearl was discovered early and remained intact!

“What is it really worth? I don't know,” Gosman said of the pearl. “It's not about the money – it's just kind of cool.” Gosman reported that he intends to raffle off the pearl to raise money for the Montauk Food Pantry.

Diamond Jim is a master jeweler, diamond dealer and precious metals broker of NTR Metals. Pineforest Jewelry has been a proud member of the IJO for many years. See more at: www.pineforestjewelry.com.

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

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.

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