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Primary season underway with Pct. 2 Candidate Forum

By Allan Jamail

February 1, 2022 at The Garden Houston located at 12001 Beamer Road in the Sagemont Subdivision of Houston the Sagemont Civic Club conducted a Precinct 2 County Commissioners candidate forum. The event was well attended by about 200 citizens mostly voters of Harris County Precinct 2.

Eight candidates were invited for the 7pm forum but only five attended. The candidates are on their respective partisan party's March 1st Primary Ballot. On the ballot are five Republican and three Democrats. Those present were, Democrats

PARTICIPANTS IN SAGEMONT CIVIC CLUB PCT 2 FORUM



REPUBLICAN
RICHARD VEGA



DEMOCRAT JUDGE
GEORGE RISNER



REPUBLICAN
JACK MORMAN



REPUBLICAN
JOHN MANLOVE



DEMOCRAT
GARY HARRISON

All Candidate Forum Photos by Allan Jamail

George Risner (Justice of the Peace Precinct 2) and Gary Harrison (former Harris County Deputy Sheriff). Republicans present were Richard Vega, Jack Morman (former county commissioner) and John Manlove

(former Pasadena mayor). Those absent were, Democrat Precinct 2 County Commissioner Adrian Garcia, Republicans Jerry Mouton and Daniel Jason. Kay Barbour the president of the Sagemont Civic

Club and Master of Ceremonies said that both Commissioner Adrian Garcia and Jerry Mouton did answer the questions of the questionnaire she interviewed them in a recorded session. Candidate Daniel Jason

did not reply to the invitation.

In the beginning candidates were given equal time to introduce themselves, at the close they were given the time as to state why they thought vot-

ers should vote for them.

The candidates were asked questions that civic club members had sent in to the club in advance. After those then questions from the audience

were allowed.

Some of the hottest topics questioned to each candidate were public safety, the raising crime rates, flooding and bail reform.

Several candidates pledged to fire the new County Administrator which was recently created for the first time in Harris County's history by Commissioners Court, this received loud applause.

President Kay Barbour announced on February 10th at 7pm they'll have a Harris County Judge candidate forum at the same location. The civic club can be contact at Sagemontcc@gmail.com. By allanj211@aol.com

NS MUSTANGS WIN ONE – LOSE ONE NS 61 – C.E. King 59 / NS 42 – Summer Creek 58

By Allan Jamail

February 2, 2022 at the Sheldon ISD home court of the C. E. King Panthers the North Shore Mustangs pulled out a 4th quarter win. After trailing as much as 19 points in the game the never-die Mustangs won at the clocks final buzzer.

To start the 4th quarter the Mustangs were down 30-44. They outscored the Panthers 31-15 in the fourth quarter.

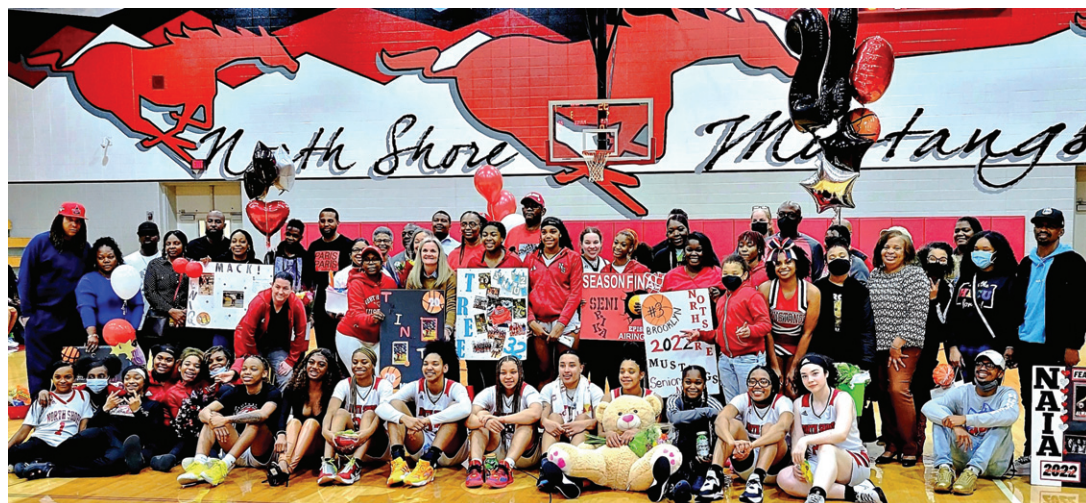
With less than a minute in regulation Mustang Tristian Thomas hit a big three pointer to put NS up 59-56. But then the Panthers came back making a three pointer to tie the game. With 15 seconds in game North Shore turned the ball over only to steal it back which allowed Marcel Dalcourt to find Tristian Thomas for the Mustangs go ahead layup to win the game. Leading scorer was Mustangs Marcel Dalcourt with 13 points and 6 assists.

On Saturday, February 5th the District leader Atascocita Eagles of Humble ISD with a 8-1 district record came to North Shore's court and left with a 58 – 42 victory. Statistician Linda Jamail, allanj211@aol.com.



#13 Mustang Senior Marcel Dalcourt leaps high for a 2 point layup. Photo by Allan Jamail

Lady Mustangs Senior Night Runaway Game - NS 60 – C. E. King 14



2021/2022 Lady Mustangs Senior Night. Senior's sitting upfront with family members in the background. Photo by Linda Jamail (MORE PHOTOS, PAGE 2)

By Allan Jamail

February 2, 2022 at the GPISD North Shore gymnasium the East Side's Lady Mustangs made their season's last home game before a full house home crowd a

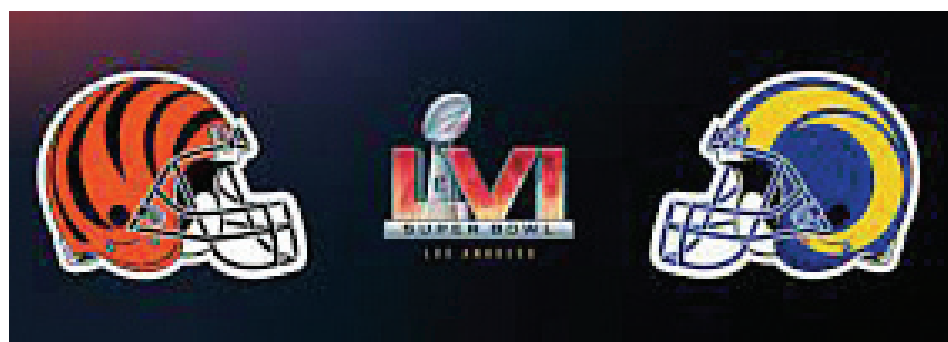
scoring exhibition. It was never a contest, the East-Side girls of North Shore scored at will over their C. E. King Panther district opponent.

Being it was Senior Night more than a usual amount of the

Lady Mustangs family members were present to watch the stampeding Lady Mustangs.

There was a special halftime ceremony where Coach Allison Campbell announced the nine se-

nior's names while their family members joined them on center-court for photos. Gifts and flower bouquets' were given to the seniors. Linda Jamail statistician, allanj211@aol.com.



Surprising Bengals take on Rams on LA's home turf in Super Bowl LVI

By Mike Keeney
Sports Writer

If someone had told you the Cincinnati Bengals would be playing in Super Bowl 56, you might have questioned or wondered what substance they were on.

Well, the unimaginable has happened and the Bengals indeed are one game away from hoisting the Lombardi Trophy and taking it back to the Queen City.

Talk about a real-life Cinderella story!

No one in his or her

right mind could have predicted that the Bengals, better known for decades as the Bungals for their poor play, would be facing the Los Angeles Rams in Super Bowl 56 on Sunday in SoFi Stadium in LA.

Cinci was 4-11-1 in 2020 and their best player, second-year quarterback Joe Burrow, was coming off a serious knee injury.

The Rams, on the other hand, have been one of the better teams in the NFC since head coach Sean McVay arrived in

2017. The Rams won the NFC in 2018 and lost to New England in SB 53, 13-3. After the 2020 season, when the Rams were eliminated by Green Bay in the division round of the NFC playoffs, McVay knew a change had to be made at quarterback and that's when he and the front office traded for former Detroit Lions QB Matthew Stafford.

Stafford became the final piece in the puzzle that lifted the Rams as a

Continued. See Super Bowl LVI, Page 7

ESD#12 lowers fire rating score to an ISO Class 1



At Cloverleaf Fire Station, From left to right: Commissioner Frank Staley, Commissioner David Proctor, Fire Chief Edward Russell, Hugh "Skip" Gibson, National Water Resource/Texas Regional Manager of Verisk ISO Community Hazard Mitigation, Commissioner Larry Helgesen, Commissioner William Anders, Joel Duke, Public Protection Classification Oversight Officer for the State Fire Marshal's Office, Commissioner Bryan Clements, and Asst. Fire Chief Marshall Hutton

Northeast Houston – On February 1, 2022, Harris County Emergency Services District 12 Fire Department (Harris County ESD 12 Fire Department) announced a significant improvement in the Fire Department's Insurance Services Office (ISO) Public Protection Classifica-

tion (PPC). The ISO classification process assesses the readiness of local fire departments, based on a community's ability to suppress a fire.

Most Texas insurance companies use the ISO's PPC when calculating insurance premiums for residential, educational,

commercial, and industrial property. The improved ISO score can lead to a reduction in insurance premiums for residents and businesses within the boundaries of Harris County ESD 12 (District). The ISO assigns a Classification from 1 to 10, with 1 being the best and 10 the worst.

Continued. See ESD 12 is an ISO class 1-"best of best", Page 5

SHELDON ISD NEWS

Week of
February 4, 2022

Signing Day

Tuesday, February 2 was National Signing Day, we celebrated 11 of our seniors who committed to play collegiate sports. In the Performing Arts Center at C.E. King High School our 11 student-athletes were joined by family and classmates as they signed. The 2022 Signing Day class was the largest in Sheldon ISD history



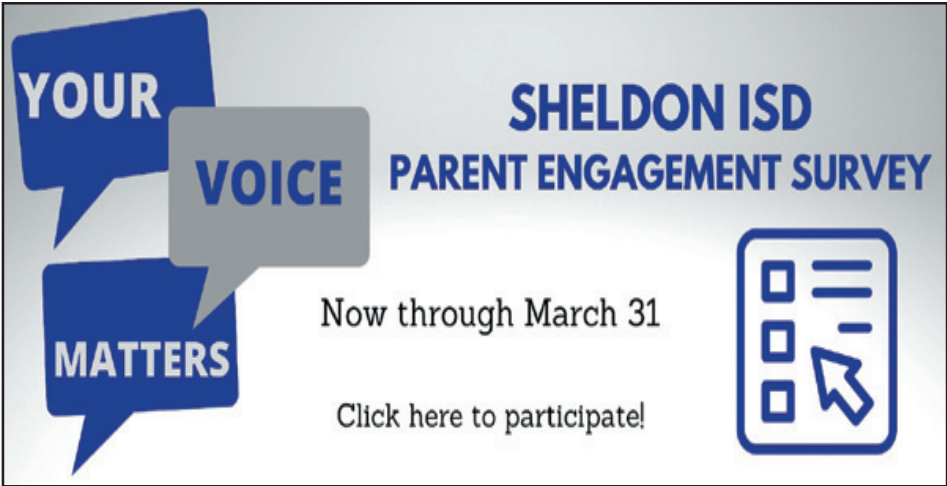
100th Day of School

February 1st marked the 100th day of school. Across the district, many students celebrated in different ways by creating posters, dressing up and by creating original shirts to commemorate their 100th day this semester. There have been a few challenges so far this year but our administrators, teachers and staff took on those challenges and give their best by meeting our students' needs. They truly live out Sheldon ISD's motto of "Every Child, Every Day."



Parent Engagement Survey

We are conducting a district-wide parent survey to improve parental and family engagement. The survey will be available on the district's website at SheldonISD.com until March 31, 2022. If you have questions, contact the district at 281-727-2096. Our community becomes stronger by providing a parental engaged education for our students



Lady Mustangs Senior Night vs. C.E. King

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



Lady Mustang senior forward, leading rebounder #32 Atria Dumas 6'3" makes two point jump shot from 15 feet. Photo by Allan Jamail



#12 Ja'Nyla Kennedy senior forward lays up one of her many 2 point shots. Photo by Allan Jamail

The Judge's Corner

February is marked with popular holidays like Valentine's Day and Groundhog Day, it commemorates Black History and the start of the election season. Black History Month is an annual celebration of achievements by African Americans and their roles in U.S. history. The theme endorsed for 2022, is "Black Health and Wellness", which recognizes the legacy of scholars and medical professionals in Western medicine as well as initiatives that Black communities partake in to be well. There are many local trailblazers whose contributions have made positive impacts in our communities, and I applaud their efforts.

Election season starts this month, and it is important that we participate and exercise our American given right to vote. Early voting begins on Monday, February 14th through Friday, February 25th. Be sure to check polling locations and voter requirements at www.HarrisVotes.com

Please continue to take safety precautions to keep yourself healthy. Your friendship and constant support is appreciated more than you know. I am committed to continue my work for the Precinct 3 community. As always, my Courtroom, "The People's Court", is available to anyone who walks through its doors.

"Love is the condition in which the happiness of another person is essential to your own."
- Robert Heinlein

Happy Valentine's Day!

This issue:

A message from Judge Bates

- Employee Spotlight - Ana Clark
- Important Dates - Wednesday, Feb 2 Groundhog Day
- Monday, Feb 14 Valentine's Day
- Monday, Feb 21 Presidents' Day
- Black History Month Heart Health Month

Just in case you have forgotten.
You matter.
You are loved.
You are worthy.
You are magical.

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

Ana Clark became Assistant Chief Clerk in May 2021. She has been busy becoming knowledgeable with the many duties of our court. She also represents the office at many community events. An Ambassador with the North Channel Chamber of Commerce; she begins her term as a member of the Board of Directors. This month she will also be installed to the board of the Crosby Huffman Chamber of Commerce. Our team stays busy and involved in the community.

Important Rent Relief News

- **The Alliance** - Representative present at Eviction Dockets, 346-396-5556
- **Baker Ripley** - Utility Assistance Program (click [HERE](#))
- **Area Rent Assistance Programs Search** [HERE](#)
- **Legal Aid Eviction Portal** - <https://stoptxeviction.org>
- **Lone Star Legal Aid** - 713-652-0077 or <http://lonestarlegal.org>
- **Texas Rent Relief** - **CLOSED** to any new and additional funding request

FILINGS

Filings, pleadings, and payments are accepted through our web page, electronic filing, and in-person. All civil filings and certain criminal filings can be submitted at <https://efile.txcourts.gov/>

Please visit <http://jp.hctx.net/> for case information and payments.
Call (713) 274-0900, if you have any questions

top ten

COLLEGE FOOTBALL STADIUMS BY TEAM

1. Michigan Wolverines
2. Penn State Nittany Lions
3. Ohio State Buckeyes
4. Texas A&M Aggies
5. Tennessee Volunteers
6. LSU Tigers
7. Texas Longhorns
8. Alabama Crimson Tide
9. Georgia Bulldogs
10. UCLA Bruins

Source: Wikipedia

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CHARLOTTE'S WEB

By Charlotte Jackson



Elections

Somehow in the confusion of the past few years, some things will happen as scheduled. In the next few weeks, the Primary Elections will be held. Early Voting will be held February 14 – 18. The “actual” Election Day in Texas will be held on Tuesday, March 1. This will be when political parties select their candidates that will be on the November ballot.

While this is not a Presidential Election, it is as important if not more important, as not only will voters elect the Governor of Texas, but also our local County Commissioner, Justices of the Peace, State Representatives, and others. Each one of these elected officials and their positions matter. People often think of the Presidential Election making the most difference, yet if you ask one hundred of your friends, if they have ever talked to the President of the United States and chances are good there would be less than five who would have. On the other hand, if you asked the same one hundred friends, a much larger number would have talked to their County Commissioner or State Representative. And if the friends are fortunate enough to live in East Harris County, they have probably not only talked to them, but heard them speak at an event in our community.

I often have young people ask how they can get involved in the community. They want to have influence. They want to see changes in the community and in the laws. I have always been someone that wants to be involved and to invite others to come along and enjoy the journey with me. And I know that the reason behind that is I had some of the most incredible teachers while attending public schools. I was amazed at the amount of passion that James West had for American History while teaching at North Shore Junior High. His passion was genuine, and I did not think it could be topped. And then, I walked into my first day of my government class during my senior year. Mary Lou Dillard had placed a blank Harris County Voter Registration Application on each desk. She explained to us that she needed us to clearly print, with black ink, each answer and under no circumstance should be sign or date the application. And then, she filed all the applications in date order of their 18th birthday. One month prior to turning eighteen, she gave us the application and asked us to sign and date the application. She then mailed the applications and we anxiously waited for our Voter Registration Cards to arrive in the mail. So, throughout our Senior year, we learned all about the various elected various candidates and then contact them, interview them, and get busy volunteering with their campaign.

During that year, we learned not just about the positions but also about how our lives could help impact others. As time went by, others influenced us to get involved as Election Workers and Precinct Chairs. Many of us went on to attend Senate District Conventions as well as State and National Party Conventions. Elections matter. If you are not a registered voter, please contact me. As a Volunteer Deputized Voter Registrar, I will help you register. If you are a Registered Voter, get involved. Have influence.

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Woman possibly robbed before being shot

HOUSTON, Texas — A woman may have been robbed before being shot and killed Saturday night, February 5, in east Harris County, deputies say.

She was found outside Bellevue Riviera Apartments on Normandy Street near Woodforest, around 1:15 a.m.

The victim was transported to a nearby hospital where she was pronounced dead.

Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez says in a tweet the motive may have been a robbery.

No information about the shooter has been released. Authorities ask if you have any information, to call Crime Stoppers at 713-222-TIPS (8477).

WANTED: Suspects who stole over \$100k in gold coins from inside vehicle



Crime Stoppers and the Harris County Constable’s Office Precinct Two need the public’s assistance identifying the suspects responsible for a Burglary of a Vehicle.

On Tuesday, September 28, 2021, at approximately 3:00 p.m., two male suspects burglarized a vehicle in the 11800 block of East Freeway in Houston, Texas. During the incident, the suspects were captured on video surveillance in the parking lot burglarizing vehicles. The suspects stole over \$100,000 of gold coins. The suspects fled the scene in an unknown direction.

Crime Stoppers may pay up to \$5,000 for information leading to the charging and/or arrest of the suspect(s) in this case. Information may be reported by calling 713-222-TIPS (8477), submitted online at www.crimestoppers.org or through the Crime Stoppers mobile app. Only tips and calls DIRECTLY TO Crime Stoppers are anonymous and eligible for a cash reward.

Fatal Crash at 10500 East Freeway

Houston police are investigating the fatal crash that occurred at 10500 East Freeway (East Interstate Highway 10) about 3:30 a.m. on Tuesday (January 11).

The identity of the male victim, 29, is pending notification to family members by the Harris County Institute of Forensic Sciences.

HPD Vehicular Crimes Division Sergeant D. Griffiths and Officer Z. Radcliffe reported:

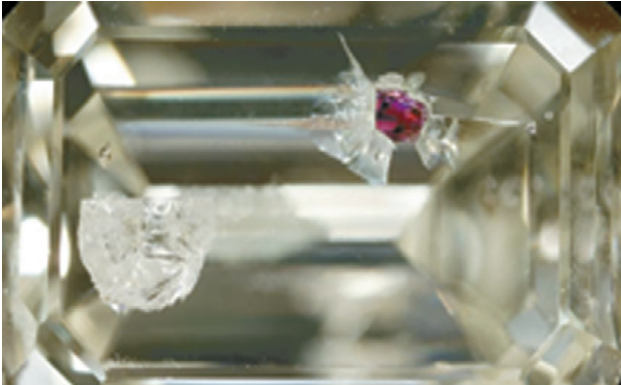
The victim was driving a silver Toyota Corolla on the East Freeway when he failed to maintain a single lane and hit the guardrail. The vehicle flipped and the victim was ejected. He was transported to Ben Taub General Hospital where, on Wednesday (January 12), he was pronounced deceased.

The investigation is continuing.

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ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: “How old are natural diamonds?”



A cut diamond with a large violet-red garnet inclusion

Diamonds are carried to the surface of the earth by magma, or molten rock, which solidifies when it draws closer to the surface. However, the diamonds themselves are much older than the rock that they are found in.

Measuring age

It isn’t always possible to find out the age of a diamond by examining it directly. A better method is to look at tiny inclusions, which are crystals made from other minerals that are often found within diamonds. These give out a slight radioactive signal that scientists can measure to find out how old they are. This means flawless diamonds, that don’t have any inclusions, are very difficult to date.

The method for determining age known as “Carbon Dating” is, unfortunately, of little help when it comes to diamonds. The accuracy of carbon dating reaches its limit when attempting to date an item older than 60,000 years old, thus falling way short of what’s needed for diamonds.

A garnet within a diamond

The diamond in the image above contains a violet-red garnet. The garnet gives us a clue to the conditions and rock types that the diamond formed in, as scientists know the temperature and pressure that is needed for garnet to turn into its crystal form.

Other minerals turn into crystals at different temperatures and different pressures.

Finding accurate information

There is some debate about how accurate the evidence from inclusions is. Many inclusions are very old and so the diamonds they were found in may also have formed a very long time ago. However, some scientists think diamonds could have formed around the inclusions more recently.

The popular consensus is that the diamonds we can now see and touch are between 900,000 and 3 billion years old.

Synthetic diamonds

Advances in technology mean that we can now create synthetic diamonds and these have increased our understanding of diamonds in the natural world. By working out the conditions needed to create synthetic diamonds, we have also learned more about how and where real diamonds form, and where else we might hunt for them.


“Diamond Jim” Mills

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.

Top of her head. Tips of her toes.




... and everything in between. Oh, do you love that girl! Make those toes tingle this Valentine's!



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OPINION PAGE

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COUNTY CONNECTION

Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo



Dealing with COVID-19 in a New Year

A new year is a time for new beginnings, and I know we are all ready to start fresh. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 epidemic has not slowed down over the holidays. With the emergence of the Omicron strain fueling the fire, a new wave of infections are once again raising our numbers. Hospitalizations are slowly rising and approaching problematic levels, infections are spreading rapidly across our County, and this week our numbers have pushed our threat level back to red. The possible exposures from travel, holiday celebrations, and gatherings on top of the return of children to school this week could trigger a very difficult month ahead in terms of hospitalizations and the strain on our medical system. It is clear that we will be living with this virus indefinitely.

But here in Harris County we are not giving in – we have more tools available and more knowledge on this virus than at any previous point during this pandemic. And we know that vaccinations are the best protection for you and your family against this virus. If there has ever been a wake up call to get vaccinated and get your booster, that time is now. You can find all the information you need on how and where to get vaccinated and your booster at readyharris.org.

Another powerful tool we have to combat this latest wave is testing. Our public health sites continue to have plenty of PCR test capacity across the county and I want to encourage anyone who needs to get tested to visit one of these sites. Rapid tests that are available over the counter for home use are also helpful, particularly when it comes to giving parents and schools peace of mind on whether or not students and staff are clear to be teaching and learning. Last week, Commissioners Court approved additional funding for 55,000 test kits which we will be distributing to schools and health clinics that serve the low income communities that need them most.

Also this week, a state court ruled that our local health officials do have the authority to put reasonable measures such as mask requirements in place to protect our community from COVID-19, something we have been fighting for the entirety of the pandemic. While this ruling will likely be appealed to the Texas Supreme Court, wearing a mask right now is simply the right thing to do. Schools and businesses are in the right to enforce mask requirements and policies. So please, put the masks back on when you are in public, regardless of your vaccination status.

In this new year, our fight is still not over. But we have more reasons than ever to be hopeful that the end of COVID-19 as a major threat to our community is near. Here's wishing everyone a safe and healthy 2022.

George Floyd Sculpture Donated to Tom Bass Park

George Floyd's tragic death sparked a worldwide movement against police violence in communities of color. In Harris County, we know that the Houston native is not only a symbol, he was a son, father, neighbor, and friend.

Last month, Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo and Commissioners Court accepted a donation from the Kay Davis In the Community (KDITC) Foundation of a life-size, bronze sculpture of George Floyd to be placed at Tom Bass Regional Park. The sculpture is being designed and created by Texas-based Sculptress Adrienne Rison-Isom and is entitled "A Conversation with George."

We look forward to visiting the statue in his remembrance.

There's no voter suppression.

Good. Here's my application to vote.

Rejected...for using your social security number, which we don't have on file.

OK. I'll need another application.

Sorry. We're out of paper. Supply chain issues.

OK. I'll register online.

Nope. Unlike 42 other states, you can't register online.

Oh well. I registered years ago, and I'm sure I'm still registered.

Wrong. You were purged because your name was similar to a suspected non-citizen.

Sigh. I give up.

NICK ANDERSON Q1-27-22 COUNTERPOINT

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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Two Proposed Amendments on the May primary ballot

TWO PROPOSED AMENDMENTS ON MAY BALLOT

Voters who go to the polls for municipal and school board elections on May 7 will also be asked to decide on two proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution.

Deputy Secretary of State Joe Esparza drew the ballot order last week for the two proposed amendments, both dealing with property taxes. The first proposition on May's ballot would authorize the Legislature to cut the property tax limit for the homesteads of elderly or disabled residents "to reflect any statutory reduction from the preceding tax year."

According to Ballotpedia.org, the measure would result in a reduction in revenue of \$467.5 million in the first two years it is implemented. The measure passed unanimously in both chambers during the second special session.

The second proposed amendment would increase the homestead exemption for school district property taxes from \$25,000 to \$40,000. That measure, approved by the Legislature in October in another special session, also passed unanimously.

State Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston, the author of the amendment, said, "People see the need for property tax relief, and Texans are going to cry out for that continuously. This is a great way to bring that home to all of the taxpayers of Texas."

STATE SIGNS DEAL WITH TOKYO

The state hopes to see expanded growth from Tokyo-based small and medium-sized businesses after signing a cooperative agreement with the Tokyo metropolitan government. The governor's office of Economic Development and Tourism organized 18 local economic development partners across the state to provide resources to Tokyo businesses interested in expanding in Texas.

TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders

omment and Tourism organized 18 local economic development partners across the state to provide resources to Tokyo businesses interested in expanding in Texas.

"Tokyo and Texas may be half a world apart, but we are closing that gap by facilitating more investment and economic development between our two regions," Gov. Greg Abbott said. "I look forward to our continued work together as we create a more robust partnership and a more prosperous economic future."

The Texas community partners include cities and economic development corporations from throughout the state. More than 400 Japanese companies have operations in Texas. Japan was the state's sixth-largest export destination in 2020, with more than \$9.8 billion in exported goods, including organic chemicals, industrial machinery, aircraft and spacecraft, fuel and oil.

DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR URI REIMBURSEMENT FOR SCHOOLS

The deadline for public school districts and charter schools to seek reimbursement from the state for damages caused last year by Winter Storm Uri has been extended to Feb. 24, the Texas Education Agency announced. Any district located in an area declared a disaster after last February's storm can apply for assistance for

costs not covered by insurance or federal disaster relief.

Schools can receive reimbursement for uninsured damages to facilities, vehicles and computers.

TEA has posted two webinars explaining the program on YouTube, which can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/y76tev3j>

COVID-19 CASES DOWN; ICU BEDS NEARLY FULL

While the number of new COVID-19 cases in Texas during the past week dropped to 295,501 — a decrease of more than 130,000 — the state's intensive care unit beds are approaching capacity once again. The Coronavirus Resource Center at Johns Hopkins University also reported 1,212 deaths, up nearly 25% from the previous week.

The drop in new cases has health officials hopeful the omicron variant has peaked. Hospitalizations in Texas of lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19 dropped slightly to 12,760, with only 317 available ICU beds in the entire state, according to the Texas Department of State Health Services.

"The vast majority of the people who are critically ill are either unvaccinated or have significant comorbidities," Dr. James McCarthy, chief physician executive at Memorial Hermann, told the Houston Chronicle. "We are not seeing middle-aged, healthy, vaccinated individuals in the ICU like we did in the previous wave."

A total of 16.896 million Texans are fully vaccinated, according to DSHS, which is 58% of the state's population. An additional 5.85 million Texans have received a booster dose.

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THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

Out of the Jungle

In my dream, the jungle was thick and dark.

There was a river running through it and I was on a small raft, careening down it. The current was flowing fast in the center and I wanted to steer closer to the banks, but the jungle was filled with monsters—prehistoric creatures that roared when they saw my little raft tumbling in the water. I never saw them clearly, but could sense their large presence. They reared their giant heads as I went by. The branches of the trees thrashed as they moved just out of sight.

Then, up ahead, I saw huge stones in the center of the river. I feared I would smash my makeshift raft to bits. I steered closer to the bank until my raft was very close to the river's edge.

Suddenly, a huge arm reached out of the jungle. It was gray and covered in scales with long claws and I was easily within reach.

I woke with a start. Peter was sleeping. I grabbed him.

"What's the matter?" he asked groggily.

I tried to explain about the monsters that were like dinosaurs and the river that was flowing too fast for me to navigate the rickety raft and the rocks ahead.

"Wasn't I there?" he asked. "No!"

He wasn't there. But as he fell back to sleep, I knew he thought he should have been. If he had been there, we would have evaded those monsters. Next time, he would make a point of being on the raft.

Being married comes with a lot of responsibilities they don't tell you about.

We are now in Mexico and, after weeks of feeling good, Peter's back went out again last night. He felt worse than he'd ever felt before. I didn't know what we should do. Stay where we were? Continue to our destination? Return home?

"I can't think clearly enough to decide. Let's do what you think is best," Peter said.

"Let's go!" I said. We packed up in minutes, caught a shuttle, and headed to our final stop, an hour and a half away.

I explained to our driver, Ricardo, in my childlike Spanish that my husband had "terrible pain of the spine" and he looked on sympathetically.

We had almost made it to our destination when Ricardo asked if we would like to stop at a pharmacy. The only thing that had helped Peter before was a short course of steroids. I figured it couldn't hurt to ask. So I launched into my small-child Spanish again, asking the pharmacist if it was "possible to buy prednisone."

"What strength?" she wanted to know. "And how much?" This was beyond my abilities to communicate, so she just brought out the boxes and laid them on the counter.

By nightfall Peter was feeling a bit better, and today he is up and cooking beans. He will see another doctor when we get home, because he cannot live like this—always in fear of monsters jumping out of the jungle. But I am so glad he is better today.

"I am not very good at taking care of you," I said, because I'm not.

I have no experience caring for people who are ill or in pain. I don't know what to say or do. I feel helpless and useless and frustrated—none of which makes me much of a Florence Nightingale.

But I was able to speak enough Spanish to get some help. I got our raft a little closer to the center of the river and now we are picking up speed.

Till next time,
Carrie

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

HIGHLANDS CROSBY

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ESD 12 is an ISO Class 1- “Best of Best”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Department’s Classification was based on the examination of existing structures in the District; the Fire Department’s equipment, staffing, training, and operation; the District’s multiple water supply providers’ distribution abilities and stored water capacity; and emergency communications provided by East Harris County Emergency Communications Center. Previously, from a 2006 ISO survey, the Department received an ISO Class 4. On February 1, 2022, Harris County ESD 12 Fire Department received a new classification and recognition of ISO Class 1 from Hugh “Skip” Gibson, National Water Resource/Texas Regional Manager of Verisk ISO Community Hazard Mitigation and Joel Duke, Public Protection Classification Oversight Officer for the State Fire Marshal’s Office

“We are excited and extremely pleased to see the Harris County ESD 12 Fire Department has improved from a Class 4 to Class 1,” said Harris County ESD 12 Commissioner and ESD Board President William Anders. Commissioner David Proctor stated, “Initially, being from the insurance industry, I believed Fire Chief Russell’s Strategic Plan goal to achieve an ISO Class 1 within a certain time period was aggressive, however, I was also aware the ISO team consisting of himself

and Assistant Chief Hutton, was committed to get the job done.” Harris County ESD 12 Fire Department now ranks in the top 1% of all rated fire departments nationwide and ranks in the top 2.5% of all rated fire departments in Texas. Fire Chief Edward Russell stated, “I am proud of the professionalism and commitment of the Harris County ESD 12 Commissioners, and Members that make up this department.” “Achieving an ISO Class 1, clearly indicates our Commissioners and Members are committed to providing the best fire protection service to the residents and visitors of Harris County ESD 12.” “Our Commissioners and Members are now part of an elite 1% group of “Best of the Best,” fire departments in the Nation.”



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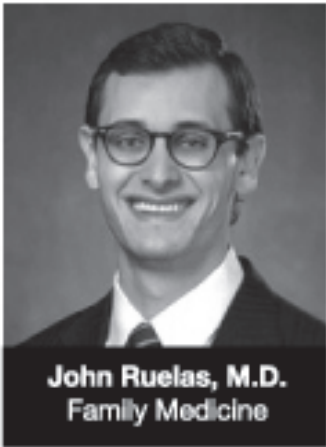
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06-2T

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