

NORTH CHANNEL ★ STAR

Your News, Your Newspaper

LEARN. PLAY. GROW.



AT SAN JAC
SUMMER
CAMPS

AGES 6-18

SAN JACINTO
COLLEGE

sanjac.edu/summer-camps

An Equal Opportunity Institution

Serving all of the North Shore -- Channelview, Cloverleaf, Sheldon, Galena Park, Jacinto City
VOLUME 10, NO. 20 (#420) THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2022 www.northchannelstar.com

CHANNEL CURRENTS

Free Computers Sat. May 21

East Harris County Empowerment Council serving 6 communities in the North Channel area. We have an upcoming event on Saturday, May 21st that we think is a phenomenal opportunity for residents in the area to receive FREE laptops and hotspots through a partnership we have with Harris County Public Library.

WHILE SUPPLIES LAST we will be handing out these items to Harris County residents who possess a Harris Co library card. We will also be offering them the ability to sign up for that library card while they are in line. One laptop per cardholder and one hotspot per household will be given away.

The drive thru event will be held at North Shore Episcopal Church, 13125 Indianapolis St (off of Uvalde) from 9am - 12pm (or until supplies run out).

Sheldon Road Clean-up Saturday May 21

C.H.I.C. is conducting a cleanup and beautification of Sheldon Rd. from I-10/ Foodtown to Woodforest Blvd. this SATURDAY May 21st from 7:00 am - 4:00 pm. In a great show of teamwork Pct. 2 Commissioner Garcia's and Pct. Commissioner Ramsey's offices will be partnering with C.H.I.C. providing personnel and equipment to help trim trees and remove brush and debris generated by the cleanup.

Please come out and join us. Volunteer's do not have to stay the entire length of the cleanup, participation of any length of time will be greatly appreciated and is needed. Last Nov. we cleaned Sheldon Rd. by removing trash from the roadside and medians and trimming the plantings and the curbsides of the Sheldon Rd. medians from Foodtown to Burger King.

Continued on Page 3

Run-off Election May 24, Early voting this week

Texas voters get another opportunity to cast ballots starting May 16 in primary runoff elections slated for both Republican and Democratic candidates. The election is May 24, with early voting running until May 20. Statewide runoff races are slated for attorney general and land commissioner in both parties, lieutenant governor and comptroller in the Democratic race, and railroad commissioner on the Republican side of the ticket.

More information can be found about particular races at harrisvotes.com. Voters who cast ballots in one party's primary cannot

Continued on Page 5

Record Crowd attends Rotary Fish Fry *Jeanne Shipp wins the new car Raffle*

NORTH CHANNEL – A crowd numbering almost a thousand packed the Rotary Pavilion on Wallisville last Saturday May 14th, as the North Shore Rotary held their 47th Annual Catfish Fry & Crawfish Boil, a benefit event that raises money for Rotary community projects.

The event included fish fry dinners, cooked and served by Rotarians and area high school students, a live auction with over 70 lots of unusual and exotic items, a silent auction, and a raffle that gave away a new car or pickup truck and 19 other worthwhile prizes.

Chairing the event was Rotarian Ken Wimbley, and president Shawn Silman. The rest of the club filled volunteer positions and helped with ticket sales, auction prizes, sponsorship sales, food serving and more.

The Fish Fry returned this year as an in-person event, after two years of online or remote activity, due to health concerns during the COVID-19 Pan-



PHOTO ABOVE: A large crowd attended the North Shore Rotary's Annual Fish Fry, with a catfish or crawfish dinner, live and silent auction, and a raffle drawing for a new car and many other prizes.

RIGHT: Fish Fry chairman Ken Wimbley hands the winning raffle ticket to NS Rotary president Shawn Silman, to announce the winner of the new car. The Toyota car or pickup was won this year by Jeanne Shipp, with a ticket sold by Rotarian Bill Palko. See a complete list of raffle winners on page 5 of this issue of the newspaper.



demie. It seems the crowd brought two years of enthusiasm with them this year, in ticket sales and auction bidding.

Preliminary figures indicate the Fish Fry will raise almost \$400, to be used for various Rotary community projects, scholarships, and more.

In the raffle ticket draw, the prize of a new Toyota car or pickup truck was won by Jeanne Shipp, with a ticket sold by Rotarian Bill Palko. (Remember that for next year, maybe).

Additional prizes in the raffle were a whole hog, a custom grill and firepit, HoustonRodeo tickets, sports tickets, fireworks packages, Apple iPad mini, Yeti cooler, and much more.

In addition to ticket sales and proceeds from the live and silent auctions, a number of sponsors help support the event, and their names are prominently displayed on signs as people enter.

CONTINUED. SEE ROTARY FISH FRY, PAGE 5

Jacinto City Recognizes Fallen Heroes

By Linda Jamail

JACINTO CITY – Saturday, May 14, 2022 law enforcement, firemen and veterans paid tribute to those fallen heroes who've died in the line of duty. This annual event began in the city in 1973 when the Jacinto City Police Officers Association had a monument and flag pole placed at Mercury Drive and IH 10 service road. It's now been moved to the front of the police station at 10429 Market Street Road.

The month of May has memorial events for the Nation's Armed Forces,



JACINTO CITY'S FALLEN HEROES MEMORIAL EVENT

L – R: Lt. D. Walker, Sgt. S. Flores, Officer F. Benavides, Officer R. Fisher, Sgt. C. Nieto, Constable Jerry Garcia, former Jacinto City Police Chief Allan Jamail, Chief J.M. Ayala, Lt. M. Longrigg, TCO Kacey Aguilar, Officer J. Pizano, Detective C. Cazares, Officer N. Frazier, and Officer E. Villatoro. Not pictured Galena Park Fire Chief Tom Ehlers (duty called him away) (Linda Jamail photo)

Firemen and Law Enforcement so it was in 1973 the Police Officers Association decided to

have a monument made recognizing all three services.

Jacinto City Police

Chief Ayala thanked Constable Garcia, Galena Park Fire Chief Tom Ehlers and his officers for

coming to the annual event. Chief Ehlers said

CONTINUED. SEE JACINTO CITY MEMORIAL EVENT, PAGE 7

Planting Trees for Earth Day at Pleasantville Elem.

By Allan Jamail

Houston, TX. – Saturday, April 30, 2022 volunteers from all over the county showed up at the North Channel Pleasantville Elementary School to celebrate Earth Day with tree plantings and donating trees to citizens to take home to plant. Pleasantville Elementary School hosted a "Tree Planting and 500 Tree Giveaway".

The event was a coordinated effort by Trees For Houston, LSG Sky Chefs, Lufthansa Cargo (Lufthansa Group parent company), Constable Jerry Garcia, retired or active teachers of HISD's schools from Holland, Pleasantville, Furr including current and former students.

Natalie Jones, Project & Volunteer Coordinator said, "Trees For Houston is a local non-profit that plants trees all around Houston and surrounding



L – R: Constable Jerry Garcia (holding tree), LSG Sky Chefs volunteers: Becky Barrios (HR Manager), Jesse Barrios, Jessica Gongora, Tarush Nihalani, Guillermina Wisniewski, Trees for Houston rep's. Marita Tee, Natalie Jones, (Projects & Volunteer Coordinator), Kenachel Williams, Isa Mineros, Cheryl Willis (former Holland student/Furr HS volunteer), Shannon Scott (Holland MS Ag teacher), Averi Steen, Cleopatra Vaughn, Katherine Newton (Trees for Houston Projects Director). (Photo by Linda Jamail) SEE STORY FOR OTHER NAMES

areas. The organization has planted 620,000 trees since its inception 40 years ago. Trees For Houston has many different programs including Trees For Schools, Free Tree Giveaways and tree donations. We planted 30 trees at Pleasantville elementary

funded by Lufthansa. The species planted were American Sycamore, Bald Cypress, Red Maple and Sweetbay Magnolia."

Becky Barrios, Human Resources Manager said, "LSG Sky Chefs is an airline catering company at Bush Airport. Volunteers

from Lufthansa Cargo, our sister company, also participated in the event (not in picture). We have been in business for over 50 years. Lufthansa Group is our parent company, who provided the trees for the tree planting event hosted by Pleasantville Elementary

ry." Event Coordinator Cheryl Willis, Pleasantville Community Activist said "The trees planted will allow the young Scholars at Pleasantville Ele-

CONTINUED. SEE EARTH DAY TREE PLANTING, PAGE 3

SHELDON ISD NEWS

Week of May 13, 2022

KHS Athletes Participate in Signing Day

On Tuesday, May 10, 10 athletes from King High School participated in an NCAA Signing Day to show their commitment to post-secondary education and celebrate a scholarship for athletics.

The following students signed their letters of intent:

- Isaias Alcantar - St.Mary of the Woods College (Football)
- Kerion Barnes - East Texas Baptist University (Football)
- Theresa Green-White – Tusculum University (Girl’s Track)
- Efren Jasso - Praire View A & M (Football)
- Kenndi Lewis - Jarvis College (Volleyball)
- Britt McKinney - Sul Ross State University (Football)
- Jayden Mitchell - Southern University at Shreveport (Football)
- Tyree Perry - University of Mary Hardin Baylor (Football)
- Marcellus Wright - Sul Ross State University (Football)
- Bryson Yarbrough - Wilbur-Wright Community College (Boys Basketball)

This year, 21 total students have signed a letter of intent to play sports at the collegiate level. Students who participated in the February Signing Day are listed below:

- Jayla Flores - Jarvis College (Softball)
- Eric Adams - Tyler Junior College (Football)
- Josheph Auzenne - Louisiana Tech (Football)
- Jalen Cooper - Praire View A & M University (Football)
- Ja’Kobe Crawford - West Texas A & M University (Football)
- D’Korian Hammand - Angelo State University (Football)
- Joshua Lane - Stephen F. Austin State University (Football)
- Roy Morris - Angelo State University (Football)
- Van Wells - University of Colorado (Football)
- Marque Williams - Midwestern State University (Football)
- Jerrell Wimbley - Stephen F. Austin State University (Football)

This year, 42% of senior athletics signed for scholarships totalling \$1.555 million.

Sheldon announces Teachers of the Year; Honors retirees for service

At the annual Employee Awards Ceremony, school board members and administration recognized more than 65 educators for district and campus teachers of the year, rookie of the year, employee of the year and celebrated those retiring from education. This year’s Elementary Teacher of the Year is Kathie Cussen from Cravens Early Childhood Academy. The Secondary Teacher of the Year is Melody Daniel from King High School. To see a complete listing of those recognized at the May 12 celebration, go to www.sheldonisd.com.



Daniel - Sheldon ISD Secondary Teacher of the Year Melody Daniel - King High School



ElementaryTOY - Sheldon ISD Elementary Teacher of the Year Kathie Cussen (Cravens Early Childhood Academy) pictured with Superintendent Dr. King Davis and Board President Eileen Palmer



TOYS - Campus Teachers of the Year



Rookie - Rookie Teachers of the Year



Retirees - 2021-22 retirees

Last Day of School for Sheldon Students is May 25

Wednesday, May 25 is the last day of school for students in Sheldon ISD. Graduation for the Class of 2022 will be held at 7 p.m. Panther Stadium

Registration open for NEW pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students

Registration for the 2022-23 school year is now open for all new pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students. The pre-kindergarten program is a full-day service, and students must be 4 years old on or before September 1, 2022. To register, go to www.sheldonisd.com/register/

Education Foundation presents annual Sheldon Summer Scramble

To help raise funds for innovative teaching grants for Sheldon ISD teachers, the SISD Education Foundation is hosting the annual Sheldon Summer Scramble. The golf tournament will be held at 8 a.m. Thursday, June 2 at the Golf Club of Houston. Teams are on sale now for \$900. To play and support our educators and students, call 281-727-1331.

GALENA PARK ISD NEWS

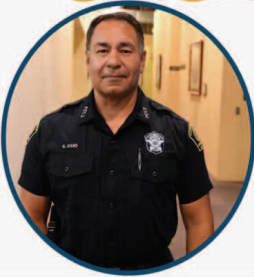
We Recognize Deputy Eddy Cano!

Galena Park ISD School Resource Officers (SROs) play an important part in our school community. They protect our schools, students, teachers and staff on a daily basis, but they also build meaningful relationships with our students and staff.

We will honor all 24 Galena Park ISD School Resource Officers and two K-9 canines for their dedication to our school district.

#GalenaParkISDExcellence #schoolresourceofficers

Galena Park ISD CELEBRATES School Resource Officers



Deputy Eddy Cano- Precinct 2
Advanced Peace Officer
Location: Galena Park Middle School
32 years in Law Enforcement
20 years with Galena Park ISD

Q: What are some of your specific duties?
A: At Galena Park Middle School, I maintain the safety of the students, teachers and staff.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your job?
A: I really enjoy getting to know all of the students and staff at GPMS.

Q: Why do you give back to the community?
A: Being a School Resource Officer is very fulfilling. I get to interact with students everyday and hopefully make a difference in someone's life.

Cimarron Elementary Thank Ms. Bri!



Cimarron Elementary would like to thank their wonderful nurse, Ms. Bri. Thank you for everything you do for the students and staff at CIM! Happy School Nurse Appreciation Week!

#Colts #NationalSchoolNurseWeek #GalenaParkISDExcellence

CHANNELVIEW ISD NEWS

2021-2022 Channelview Special Olympics Track and Field Team

This year’s 2021-2022 Channelview Special Olympics Track and Field Team, led by Head Coach Jamie Everett and Assistant Coach Pamela Smith, kicked off a great Track Meet at the Baytown Local Track Meet at Robert E. Lee High School in Baytown, TX!

Our athlete, Orlando Rivas, really left his mark, including earning Gold in the 50 meter walk and in the softball throw! He was also selected to run the first leg of the Torch Run after the opening ceremony to kick things off!

We cannot wait to see what next year brings! GO FALCONS!



Athlete Orlando Rivas at podium



Our athlete, Orlando Rivas During his performance at the Special Olympics Track and Field Team

CHARLOTTE'S WEB

By Charlotte Jackson



Changing Values

While I am the first to admit that change is good in many ways, there are some things that must have consistency. Over the weekend, I was reading several online postings and the best I could do was shake my head.

It seems as though there was an incident at a local fast-food restaurant where an Assistant Manager was yelling at a high school aged employee. The writer of the post was upset that an adult was yelling at the employee. The younger employee was yelling back and all of this was happening in the midst of a lobby full of customers. The writer was suggesting that parents need to teach their children that they need to speak up for themselves when being treated negatively. Others who commented went on to complain about this being typical of this manager. Readers were literally shredding his appearance, his management skills and his tone of voice.

About 45 comments later, one person was suggesting to call corporate and demand that they do something. Others suggested picketing the location on an upcoming busy day. One person asked if anyone had reported this man to the General Manager of the restaurant. Within a few comments, the General Manager posted that she would send her personal phone number to the original person who posted.

Someone else added than with the attitudes of so many of the youth these days, they would want to know what provoked the Assistant Manager. Had the younger employee been on their cell phone? Perhaps they were texting instead of paying attention to the details of the job. This is something seen all too often.

My concern was that it was all being aired on a public forum instead of anyone trying to calmly bring it to the attention of the General Manager. In the past few years, it seems that people would rather speak up and complain instead of talking one on one and trying to resolve the issue.

Several generations ago, parents taught their children to respect all adults. At some point children started questioning what their parents taught them. They not only questioned an adult's authority but started feeling as though they were entitled to the same level of respect as parents, teachers, pastors and adults in general. Sadly, we have seen too many children attempting to take on adult roles and we have seen what we knew as traditional family values all but disappear.

When you see a high school student being honored for turning their life around after almost dropping out of high school, running with the wrong crowd and ending up as a parent at 17 instead of seeing a student who not only stayed in school, applying themselves as they worked part-time and graduating on time, something is just different. I know that many students today face greater challenges than students did 40 years ago, but some of those challenges were brought about by parents wanting to be their child's friend instead of parent.

We must teach values and set boundaries. Perhaps one of the most important lessons we could all learn and implement is to praise others in public and when there is an issue, we should offer corrective criticism in private.

Tree Planting at North Channel Pleasantville EL,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mentary School to appreciate nature and provide shading throughout the campus; as well as very much needed shading on their playground. It was an honor to see former students come back to support this event: Jarisbeth Melgar, Noel Trejo, and Sir Genesis Caldwell (former Holland students/Energy Institute HS students). Special thanks to: Natalie Jones, Nancy Edwards, Sherra Aguirre, Travis Weddle, Bridgett Murray, Deborah Adams, the entire Pleasantville community for their continuous support to make this event a HUGE SUCCESS!

Not pictured Event Coordinator Bridgett Murray, President Pleasantville Area Super Neighborhood Council #57 and Deborah Adams Council Member (Photo by Linda Jamail)

LSG Sky Chefs Group volunteers not in picture: Patricia Cardenas LSG Warehouse Clerk with her following family: Anissa Ruiz, Anthony Mendoza, Bianca Cardenas, CeAnna Cardenas.

Lufthansa Group volunteers not in picture: Rohan Lobo – Director of Sales & Handling USA SW. & cargo workers: Preethi Lobo, Daniella Irachete, Oscar Montes, Leybi Perla, Sasha Berrueta, David Aguilar, Shirley Mattinson & Peter Mattinson.

Sheldon Road Clean-up May 21,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

This cleanup we will concentrate on the medians and roadsides north of Burger King towards Woodforest Blvd. while performing maintenance cleaning and trimming of those south of Burger King towards I-10.

Saturday's Cleanup Plan:
Date & Time: Saturday, 05/21/2022 @ 7:00 AM - 4:00 PM
Meeting Location: Foodtown parking lot
435 Sheldon Rd., Channelview

Please Wear Bright Clothing. Preferably Safety Yellow or Orange Shirts or Vests if you have them.

Equipment to Bring: Gloves and your personal protective gear (safety glasses, gloves, closed toed shoes, etc.). Some tools such as gloves, rakes, shovels, wheelbarrows. pruners, trash cans may be provided, but you are encouraged to bring bring your personal lawn care equipment for your use (i.e. pruners, clippers, shears, and lawn mowers). Wagons are also very helpful to have.

Clean Up Plan: We will begin at the roadside and the medians north of I-10 East in front of Foodtown and work our way North up Sheldon Rd. cleaning and trimming as much area as we can with the number of people participating and tools provided. We will work in groups based on the number of participants and equipment brought.

Cautions: We will be working in a traffic area. You will be responsible for your own safety for yourself and equipment. NO SMALL CHILDREN! It is just not safe conditions for children and we do not want to see them harmed. Older children, teenagers, can participate if they are responsible and safety orientated. Again they, and yourself, will be your responsibility and you will be participating at your own risk.

ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: “Does the Chlorine in swimming pools harm jewelry?”

Summer is almost here with hot, sultry days that lead to lounging at the pool. For jewelry lovers, all this pool time poses a question: “Is it safe to wear your treasured jewelry at the pool, especially since your diamond ring sparkles so beautifully in the sun?” Sparkle aside, the answer is NO.

Pools and hot tubs usually contain copious quantities of chlorine to kill bacteria, viruses and more. Chlorine does a great job of keeping the water clean for swimmers, but what’s good for the water you swim in isn’t so good for your jewelry.

Your high school chemistry may be years behind you, but you probably remember the phrase “chemical reaction.” Well, chlorine is a chemical and it reacts with metals, including silver, nickel and zinc. And, since gold is often alloyed or combined with other metals - including silver, nickel and zinc - to strengthen it, your gold jewelry will also react with the chlorine you are soaking in, doing damage in quick order.

When chlorine is in contact with your jewelry, the chemical reaction will leave behind microscopic holes in the jewelry and will cause disintegration. This weakens the metal, which in time can cause it to break. And if your prongs break, you can lose the beautiful stone they’re holding. The chemical reaction with the metals can also cause your jewelry to turn black, which is probably not the look you wanted! Finally, while diamonds and harder gemstones are not susceptible to direct damage, softer gemstones and doublets can be dulled or pitted by contact with chlorine and other chemicals.

In addition to avoiding chlorine in pools and hot tubs, similar damage can come from using cleaning products with chlorine. So, it is best to remove your jewelry when cleaning as well. And because it’s so easy for jewelry to slip off in the water, not wearing jewelry at the pool or beach is a good rule on many fronts.

If you simply must accessorize your bathing suit or caftan, consider wearing fashion jewelry, which if damaged or lost will not cause such an emotional or financial hit. And remember, any jewelry you do wear in the summer is likely to get coated in sunblock, BBQ sauce or sand, so be sure to give it a proper cleaning to keep it sparkling. Check with your jeweler for professional products that are safe for the piece of jewelry in question. Most jewelers carry a line of professional jewelry care products designed especially for the task. And if you are traveling, consider packing a jewelry cleaning cloth or wipe, which are easy to tuck into your luggage and beach bag.

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

Diamond Jim is a master jeweler, diamond dealer and precious metals broker. Pineforest Jewelry has been a proud member of the Independent Jewelers Organization and the Retail Jewelers Organization for many years. 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.

NORTH CHANNEL BUSINESS DIRECTORY

COMMERCIAL PRINTING

Commercial Printing

We specialize in 4 Color Brochures, Magazines, Sale Flyers, We print Newspapers, too.

Call for a Quote

GRAFIKSHOP

713-977-2555



EILEEN BRIGHTWELL, DDS

www.brightwelldental.com

1820 Holland St. • Jacinto City, TX 77029

(713) 455-7923

Call 713-266-3444 to Advertise YOUR Business in this Directory. 5,000 readers Weekly

NORTHSHORE VACUUM

Professional Floor & Carpet Cleaning



Rodrigo "Rodney" Sanchez

729 Uvalde Road

Houston, TX 77015

northshorevacuum729@gmail.com

713-451-3247

Stripping & Wax Floors / Carpet Cleaning / Shampooing Carpet



Luis F. Garcia, CPA

Attorney at Law

13364 Woodforest Blvd

Houston, TX 77015

713-999-8006

E.luis@luisgarcialaw.com

www.luisgarcialaw.com

FREE DATE CHANGES

BEST OF HAWAII FOUR-ISLAND TOUR

12 days, departs year-round

Oahu • Hawaii Island • Kauai • Maui — Enjoy a fully guided 4-island Hawaiian vacation with centrally located lodging in Waikiki on Oahu, and beachfront lodging on the "Big Island" of Hawaii, Kauai, and Maui. Guided throughout by our friendly Tour Directors—your local experts. Includes 3 inter-island flights.

GRAND ALASKAN CRUISE & TOUR

12 days, departs May - Sep 2022

Seattle • Vancouver • Ketchikan • Juneau • Skagway • Glacier Bay • Anchorage • Denali • and more — Visit Denali National Park and Glacier Bay National Park on the same incredible trip! Cruise through the Gulf of Alaska and the Inside Passage as you discover the best of the Frontier State by land and by sea.

CRIMSON CANYONS & MEXAS NATIONAL PARKS TOUR

10 days, departs Apr - Sep 2022

Grand Canyon • Bryce Canyon • Zion • Capitol Reef • Arches & Canyonlands • and more — Experience the stunningly red rocks of these 6 iconic southwestern national parks. Travel through deserts, forests, mountains, and to the very edge of the Grand Canyon on this tour.

FROM \$2,549

\$2,299*

FROM \$1,949

\$1,699*

FROM \$1,849

\$1,599*

VMT vacations

promo code N7017

CALL 1-844-684-4305

*Prices are per person based on double occupancy plus up to \$200 in taxes & fees. Single supplement and seasonal surcharges may apply. All on offers available. Free date changes prior to final payment. Deposits and final payments are non-refundable. Weekend Credit requires purchase of 3000 New or Balancing Cakes. Offer apply to new bookings only, made by 3/31/22. Other terms & conditions may apply. Add your Travel Consultant for details.

As we get older, eyesight weakens



This requires bigger diamonds.



PineforestJewelry.com

1141 Uvalde • Houston, Texas 77015

713.451.1321



Check us on the Internet:

www.starcouriernews.com

www.northchannelstar.com



STARLITE

By Gil Hoffman, Publisher

Pages from an editor's notebook

With the COVID-19 Pandemic under control due to vaccinations and social distancing, many activities that were curtailed or cancelled last year have now returned to in-person events.

A few of these activities that kept our staff busy this past week are reviewed here. We welcome your event information too, please let us know what you are doing.

Aldine Education Foundation Scholarships

The AEF board and administration of AISD were happy to be able to come together last week and award scholarships to 200 graduating students, whose pictures are on page 1. Here is a look at the AEF folks:



Highlands Rotary awards 18 scholarships

Over in Highlands, the Rotary Club held their annual Scholarship Awards. They gave 18 students a total of \$32,000. The keynote speaker was Lee College president Dr. Lynda Villanueva, seen center in the photo:



North Shore Rotary Fish Fry a huge success

In North Shore, the annual Rotary Catfish Fry and Crawfish Boil, with its auctions and car raffle, had a great turnout for this benefit:



Meet and Greet a run-off candidate Mealer

Alexandra Mealer, one of two run-off Republican candidates for Harris County judge, was at Teapot Depot in Highlands Saturday:

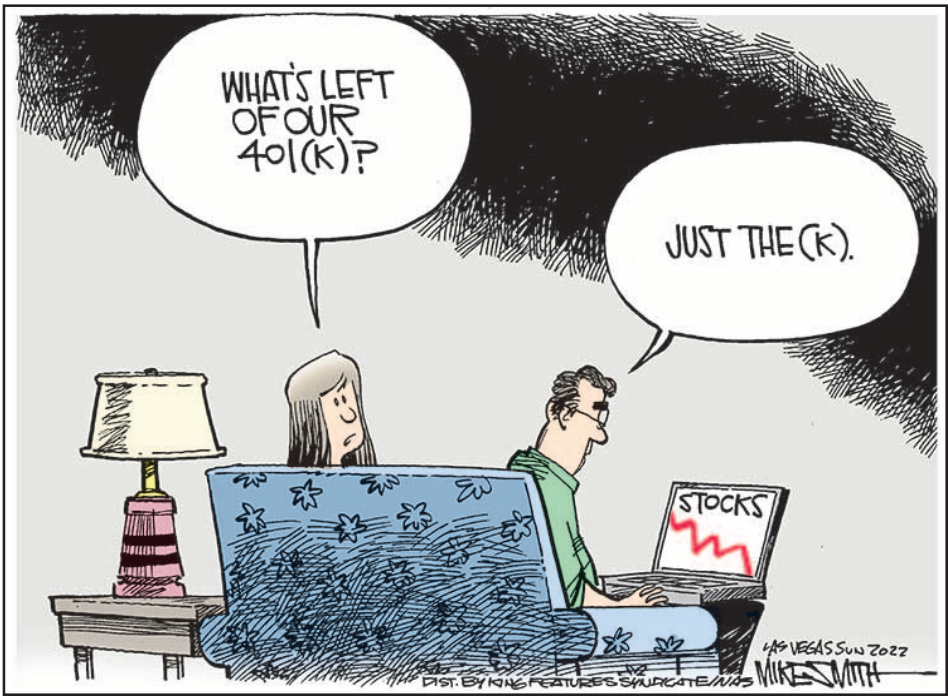


Country Music at the Buckshot Jamboree

To close out a busy week, a little Country Music was just the ticket. Buckshot Jamboree, with Buck and Shirley Sloan, plays every Saturday night at 7414 Hartman, just off old Beaumont Highway in Channelview. Below, Shirley accompanies Buck in a number with Danielle Kudelka as the vocalist:



That pretty much rounded out a busy week and weekend, but with an election coming up, and graduation for all nine school districts that we cover, it promises not to slow down until summer. I guess I'll need a few more pages in my notebook.





STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Voters Back Property Tax Amendments

Texas voters overwhelmingly approved two proposed amendments on Saturday that will provide property tax relief to homeowners. According to the Austin American-Statesman, nearly 85% of voters supported Proposition 2, which raises the homestead exemption from \$25,000 to \$40,000= starting this year. That will save the average homeowner about \$175 in school property taxes.

Another proposition that easily passed corrects an oversight to a 2019 bill passed by the Legislature, which didn't apply to homeowners who are disabled or 65 and older, because their school taxes were already frozen. The state will reimburse school districts for tax funding lost by both propositions, with the Legislative Budget Board anticipating the amount at more than a half-billion dollars, according to the Statesman. Meanwhile, Texas voters get another opportunity to cast ballots starting May16 in primary runoff elections slated for both Republican and Democratic candidates. The election is May 24, with early voting running until May 20.Statewide runoff races are slated for attorney general and land commissioner in both parties, lieutenant governor and comptroller in the Democratic race, and railroad commissioner on the Republican side of the ticket.

More information can be found about particular races at votetexas.gov. Voters who cast ballots in one party's primary cannot vote in the other party's runoff election. However, voters who did not cast ballots in the primary can vote in either party's runoff.

FIRST STATE CASE OF AVIAN INFLUENZA IN WILD BIRD CONFIRMED

A great horned owl at a



rehabilitation facility in Wichita County was confirmed to have the virus by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories, which notified the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The potentially fatal HAI is highly contagious and transmits easily among wild and domestic bird species. It has been found in 38 states, and its symptoms include diarrhea, incoordination, lethargy, coughing and sneezing.

TPWD recommends enhanced biosecurity measures at labs that deal with wild or domestic birds, including quarantining birds showing symptoms of HPAI.While the risk of transmission to humans from birds is low, TPWD recommendstaking basic precautions if contact with birds cannot be avoided, such aswearing gloves and face masks.

SBA LOANS AVAILABLE FOR EASTLAND COMPLEX FIRE VICTIMS

The U.S. Small Business Administration has approved the state's request for a disaster declaration in communities affected by the recent Eastland Complex Fire, which means low-interest loans are available for qualified homeowners, renters, and businesses in affected communities. Counties included are

Brown, Callahan, Comanche, Eastland, Erath, Palo Pinto, Shackelford, and Stephens.

"Thank you to the U.S. Small Business Administration for providing this much-needed financial assistance to communities affected by the Eastland Complex Fire," Gov. Greg Abbott said.

Applicants can apply online or receive additional disaster assistance information at disasterloanassistance.sba.gov.

The potential for more wildfires continues, especially in the Texas Panhandle and the Trans Pecos, including areas near Canadian, Amarillo, Childress, Lubbock, Abilene, Big Spring, Midland and Alpine, according to the Texas A&M Forest Service. In the first week of May, the service responded to 26 requests for assistance on wildfires that burned more than 18,000 acres across the state. Burn bans are in effect in 132 Texas counties.

LOOK TWICE FOR MOTORCYCLES

A motorcycle safety and public awareness campaign is underway, spearheaded by the Texas Department of Public Transportation. It urges motorists to look twice for motorcycles, especially at intersections- the most common collision site. Last year, 519 riders were killed and 2,318 were seriously injured in crashes in Texas. More than half of the fatalities result from collisions with other vehicles. "Drivers simply don't see the motorcycle or misjudge its distance and speed.

The small size of motorcycles can make them appear farther away when they're actually closer. The combination of congested roadways, distracted driving and the difficulty of seeing motorcycles in traffic has led to many preventable fatalities each year," a T+DOT news release said.

COVID-19 CASES TICK UP SLIGHTLY IN STATE

The number of COVID-19 cases in Texas rose slightly in the past week to21,105, according to the Coronavirus Resource Center at John Hopkins University, with 68 new deaths reported. The number of lab-confirmed COVID-19 hospitalizations in the state was essentially unchanged, with 783 reported by the Texas Department of State Health Services.

The number of Texans who are fully vaccinated now stands at 17.615 million, or 60.4 percent of the state's population, while 6.783 million have received a booster shot, according to DSHS.



THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

Friends like Angel

This time of year still hits me hard.

It is the anniversary of the death of my best girlfriend, Angel, who died too young and left an Angel-shaped hole in my life.

"Can it be six years?" I ask my husband, Peter, in disbelief. Angel died at 50 years old, six years ago.

In the years since she died, I have tried to fill the spot she occupied without success. I expect new friends to be like Angel, and this is, of course, unfair. I expect they will be willing to listen to whatever mad idea has entered my head at any hour of the day. I expect them to type as fast as they speak and keep up three conversations at once—usually with people on different sides of the globe.

While I considered Angel my best girlfriend, I had no illusions that she felt the same about me. Angel was rich in friends. There was no limit to her ability to support and encourage and cajole and occasionally berate her legions of friends into being more hopeful and less gloomy and better able to face the very particular challenges of their lives. Angel floated into and over so many lives. I was just lucky to be one of them.

Of course, she was no angel.

I remember her boyfriend, Alain, discovering she had thawed out all the baguettes he had been saving in the freezer. He was enraged and at a loss for words.

"She is not perfect!" he finally exploded.

This was not news to anyone who knew her. We did not seek her out because she was perfect. We sought her out because she was so unbelievably real.

There was no experience she would dismiss out of hand, no passion she did not think was worth exploring, no body of knowledge she felt was beyond her depth. Art and cooking and politics and string theory and Disney movies and bad '80s rock 'n' roll and fashion and trashy novels and whatever else the person she happened to be talking to was interested in—this is what Angel was interested in. She tried everything. She was the first to admit she was wrong—and she frequently was. But it never discouraged her from experiencing another thing, learning a bit more.

Today, I felt a little wicked.

I spoke the truth to a friend. I told him he had hurt me and that I didn't want to put up with his nonsense anymore. It's the sort of thing I don't often do. Usually, I tell myself how lucky I am and how much easier things are for me than for some people and how I should just forget about the slight. This time I did not. I felt a little guilty, I confess.

And I heard Angel laughing.

Angel would chide me for being so anxious, so careful, so worried about things—things that were never worth worrying about in the long run. She was all about speaking her truth. She was all about getting her needs met without shame or embarrassment. She has been dead for six years, and she is still teaching me. She was bigger and freer and more lively than any person I've known, which is why it is so hard to accept that she is no longer alive.

I don't need another friend like Angel, because there are no other friends like Angel. Besides, the goal was never to replicate her. The goal was to try—in my cautious, nervous, high-strung way—to become a bit more like her.

Till next time, Carrie

For photos from the column and other info visit: CarrieClasson.com.

HIGHLANDS

CROSBY

Star★Courier

USPS 244-500

Barbers Hill★Dayton PRESS

NORTH CHANNEL★STAR

Editor & Publisher.....**Gilbert Hoffman**
Associate Publisher.....**Mei-Ing Liu Hoffman**
Assignment Editor.....**Julietta Paita**
Website Editor.....**Kristan Hoffman**
Marketing Executive.....**Willie Glasgow**
Production Manager.....**Gerardo Hernandez**

Entered as Periodicals Clats at Highlands Post Office, Highlands, TX 77562. Under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879. Published 50 weeks per year, on Thursday, by Grafikpress Corp., 5906 Star Lane, Houston, TX 77057. Opinions in this paper are those of the authors, and not necessarily this newspaper's. Any erroneous statement which may appear will be corrected when brought to the attention of the publisher. Liability for errors is limited to the reprinting of the corrected version. Submissions are encouraged, in person, by mail, by Fax, or by email, to grafikstar@aol.com.

GRAFIKPRESS is publisher of community newspapers, including Highlands STAR-Crosby COURIER, Barbers Hill Dayton PRESS, Northeast NEWS, North Forest NEWS, North Channel STAR. Combined circulation of these newspapers exceeds 20,000. Readership exceeds 50,000 according to industry standards. We also print dozens of school, ethnic, and government publications on contract. Call for information to 713-977-2555.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In-county, \$28.00 per year. Out of county, \$35.00 per year. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Star-Courier, P. O. Box 405, Highlands, TX 77562

News and Ad Phones....713-266-3444
FAX Line....713-977-1188
email: grafikstar@aol.com
Member Texas Press Association

NS Rotary Fish Fry,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Major sponsors this year included KNCS Services LLC, Channelview ISD Education Foundation, Community Toyota, Galena Park ISD Education Foundation, San Jacinto College Foundation, and Blue Northern A/C. There were also about 26 additional corporate sponsors.

Except for the pandemic years, this event draws many hundreds that enjoy a day of friendship and catching up with old Rotary pals from all over the city, and lots of local folks that wish they were Rotarians, too. It's a great event that everyone enjoys.



THIS YEAR'S FISH FRY THEME WAS "THE BIG TOP" COMPLETE WITH CLOWNS, AS WELL AS STATE REP. ANA HERNANDEZ, HER FATHER, AND VICTOR TREVINO II.



FRED AND MRS. BOSSE BROUGHT THE PERSON WHO TRAVELED THE FARTHEST TO GET HERE - ANDREA REGO FROM STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN.



AUCTION ITEMS FOR THE LIVE AUCTION INCLUDED GREAT PRIZES SUCH AS TICKETS TO THE SHRINE CIRCUS, SPORTS EVENTS AND THE HOUSTON RODEO, GOLF OUTINGS, FISHING AND HUNTING TRIPS, AND WEEKEND GET-A-WAYS.



ROTARIAN KEN WIMBLEY GREETED U.S.REP. SYLVIA GARCIA



ROTARY CLUB PRESIDENT SHAWN SILMAN, AND PRES-ELECT KEN WIMBLEY

Run-off Election,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

vote in the other party's run-off election. However, voters who did not cast ballots in the primary can vote in either party's runoff.

Early voting hours are Mon-Fri, 7am to 7pm, and the same on Tuesday, May 24 Election Day. Voting locations in this area include:

- Baggett Community Center, Galena Park
- HCC North Forest Campus, Community Room
- Sheldon Ed. & Community Center, CEKing Parkway
- Flukinger Community Center, Channelview
- Crosby Community Center
- JD Walker Community Center
- St. John's Methodist Church, Baytown

On the Democratic bal-

lot, races of interest include: Lieutenant Governor, Michelle Beckley vs Mike Collier; Attorney General, Joe Jaworski vs Rochelle Mercedes Garza; Commissioner of the General Land Office, Sandragrace Martinez vs Jay Kleberg; Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1, Place 2, Steve Duble vs Sonia Lopez.

On the Republican ballot, races of interest include: Attorney General, Ken Paxton vs George P. Bush; Commissioner of the General Land Office, Tim Westley vs Dawn Buckingham; Railroad Commissioner, Wayne Christian vs Sarah Stogner; Harris County Judge, Alexandra del Moral Mealer vs Vidal Martinez; County Commissioner Pct. 2, Jack Morman vs Jerry Mouton.

Dealing with the loss of a loved one is never easy, but maybe these guys can help!

We're the only funeral home in the Houston area providing full-time, certified therapy dogs for the comfort of our families and guests

Adi and Izzy are both certified grief therapy dogs. You can follow them on Facebook and Instagram @GriefTherapyDood

CARTER ★ CONLEY
FUNERAL HOME

FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED FOR OVER 30 YEARS

13701 Corpus Christi St, Houston, TX 77015 • (713) 455-5100
www.carterconleyfh.com

THE TEAPOT DEPOT
TEA ROOM

112 Denny St. Highlands, TX 77562-Dine In & Boutique Shopping
15110 FM 2100 Ste. 9 Crosby, TX 77532-Pickup Only & Boutique Shopping
281-426-3670

We are now offering Graduation Party Packs! Valid Until 7/1/2022!

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2022 FROM ALL OF US AT THE TEAPOT DEPOT!

Our Full Catering Menu is also available!

Feeds 20-25 People! \$175.00

- * 1 Sandwich Tray - with Chicken Salad, Pimento * Cheese, Turkey and Swiss, Ham and Cheese on Croissant
- * 2 Quarts of Baked Potato Dip with Ruffles
- * 2 Quarts of Pasta Salad
- * 2 Dozen Chocolate Chip Cookies
- * 2 Gallons of Lemonade

CLASS OF 2022

Milestones Page Sponsors

WESTON COTTEN, ATTORNEY
HIGHLANDS
281-421-4050 1500 E. Wallisville Rd.
NOT CERTIFIED BY THE TEXAS BOARD OF LEGAL SPECIALIZATION

Sterling ~ White
FUNERAL HOME & CEMETERY
11011 CROSBY-LYNCHBURG RD.
HIGHLANDS, TX 77562
(281) 426-3555
WWW.STERLINGWHITE.COM
"A Tradition of Excellence Since 1824"

Siding & Roof Repairs
Mobile Home Skirting
Call Mr. Roofer
281-452-0000

Call 713-266-3444 to join to join sponsorship of this page. Thank you.

Maximum Tax Savings

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

CRI FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT COMPANY

A DIVISION OF CORPORATE RECOVERY, INC.

TAX PREPARATION & CONSULTATION

All Federal, State, Foreign & Individual, Partnerships, Trusts, Estates, Corporations (C,Sub S & Limited Liability) & Payroll Tax Returns,Intuit Pro-Advisors, Service All Businesses & Individual Taxes

Specialists in getting late filers into I.R.S. Compliance

Business Solutions for New Tax Rules, Regulations and Tax Audits
Debt Consultation and Bankruptcy Protection as a Solution to your Debts
Other Services Rendered

Bookkeeping, Computer Systems, Financial Management, Investments, Payroll, Property Rendition, Real Estate & Business Brokerage

Normal Business Hours
Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. to Noon – 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Saturday By Appointment

ASK FOR YOUR FREE COPY OF OUR INCOME TAX ORGANIZER

JACK NOONAN, B.B.A., TREB, E.A. & STAFF

IRS Enrolled License # 2022 – 65282
6400 FM 2100 North Main, P.O. Box 1428, Crosby, TX 77532-1428
Telephone (281) 328-1755 Fax (281) 328-5280
E-mail: info@crosbytaxes.com

Your AD will reach up to 40,000 readers in our FIVE newspapers, with a combined circulation of 20,000 copies. Get ACTION on your AD. Rates start at only \$18 for 20 words. A bargain!

HELP WANTED

Position available for AD SALES representative. Experience helpful but not necessary. Possible to work from home. Suitable for Part Time, or Full Time. Commission plus. Send letter of interest to GRAFIKSTAR@aol.com or call 713-252-8000

C: 832-915-1212 C: 713-419-0744

Yard Maintainer
person needed. Part
time or Full time.
Highlands area. Call
281-843-2626

**PRINTING &
MAILING**
Full Service
Marketing Services.
713-977-2555

LEGAL NOTICE

Non-profit private schools and homeschoolers who legally qualify as non-profit (currently hold a 501-C3 certificate) are invited to meet with a representative from Channelview Independent School District to learn more about federally funded services available for eligible residents of Channelview ISD. Please contact the district, Dr. Patricia Glaeser (patricia.glaeser@cvisd.org), Director of Federal Programs, no later than Friday, May 27, 2022.

Escuelas privadas sin fines lucrativos y estudiantes educados en casa, que legalmente califican como una entidad no lucrativa y que tengan un certificado 501-C3, son invitados a una junta con representante de Channelview para aprender más sobre servicios financiados por el gobierno federal que están disponibles para los residentes elegibles en dichos distritos. Por Favor de contactarse con Dr. Patricia Glaeser la coordinadora del Programa Federal de Distrito de Channelview (patricia.glaeser@cvisd.org), a no más tardar el día Viernes, 27 de Mayo del 2022.

Private, non-profit schools, who legally qualify as a non-profit (currently hold a 501-C3 certificate), home schoolers, parents, and community members are invited to participate in a meeting with representatives from the Sheldon Independent School District to learn more about federally funded programs and services available for the 2022-2023 school year. The meeting will be held on Thursday, June 2, 2022, from 9:00 - 10:00 a.m. If you are interested in participating or have questions, please contact Sheldon ISD at (281) 727-2096.

Atención a las escuelas privadas sin fines de lucro, los educadores en el hogar, los padres y los miembros de la comunidad en el Distrito Escolar Independiente de Sheldon

Los escuelas privadas, sin fines de lucro, que califican legalmente como una organización sin fines de lucro (actualmente tienen un certificado 501-C3), educadores en el hogar, padres y miembros de la comunidad están invitados a participar en una reunión con representantes del Distrito Escolar Independiente de Sheldon para obtener más información sobre los programas y servicios financiados por el gobierno federal disponibles para el año escolar 2022-2023. La reunión se llevará a cabo el jueves 2 de junio de 2022, de 9:00 a 10:00 a.m. Si está interesado en participar o tiene preguntas, comuníquese con Sheldon ISD al (281) 727-2096.

LEGAL NOTICE

Notice for Private Nonprofit Schools with students who reside in the Galena Park ISD attendance area.

Please be advised that Galena Park ISD will hold a Zoom meeting for administrators of all Private Nonprofit Schools that have students who reside in the Galena Park ISD attendance area. Information on program planning, availability, and eligibility criteria of Federal funds and services (Title I, II, III, IV and Special Education programs) will be held on Tuesday, May 31, 2022 at 9:00 am & 1:00 pm. For additional information about this meeting, please contact Amy Cole at 832-386-1028 or acole@galenaparkisd.com.

WALK-IN BATHTUB SALE! SAVE \$1,500⁰⁰

American Standard Walk-In Tubs

A woman in a white bathrobe stands next to a white American Standard walk-in bathtub. The tub has a wide door and a textured floor. A small potted plant sits on a table next to the tub.

✓ EXPERIENCE YOU CAN TRUST

Only American Standard has **OVER 150** years of experience and offers the Liberation Walk-In Bathtub

✓ SUPERIOR DESIGN

Ultra low easy entry and exit design, wide door, built-in safety bar & textured floor provides a safer bathing experience

✓ PATENTED QUICK DRAIN[®] TECHNOLOGY

✓ LIFETIME WARRANTY

The **ONLY** Lifetime Warranty on the bath **AND** installation, **INCLUDING** labor backed by American Standard

✓ 44 HYDROTHERAPY JETS

More than any other tub we've seen

Lifetime Warranty | Finance Options Available^{*}

Limited Time Offer—Call Today!

844-759-2948

The American Standard logo, featuring a circular seal with the words "AMERICAN STANDARD" and "EST. 1881".

The American Standard logo, featuring a circular seal with the words "AMERICAN STANDARD" and "EST. 1881".

Designed for pain relief
& easy use

The American Standard logo, featuring a circular seal with the words "AMERICAN STANDARD" and "EST. 1881".

A white American Standard toilet.

FREE

Savings include
our own
American Standard
Right Height Toilet
(\$1500 VALUE)

SHOP LOCALLY -- Save Time & Money

SMALL ADS BRING **BIG** RESULTS

Ask about our Business Directory Package

13 Weeks + Story + Display for \$260

Ask about our Ribbon Cutting Package

Photo + Story + Web for \$260

713-266-3444

To advertise in the Business Directory, please call 713-266-3444 for details

HARRIS COUNTY

New VIPER program to reduce crime

VIPER VIOLENT FELONY WARRANT TASK FORCE

Harris County, TX — TUESDAY, May 10, Harris County Pct. 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia was joined by County Judge Lina Hidalgo, Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, and Pct. 6 Constable Silvia R. Trevino announced VIPER - a new violent crime warrants task force approved by Commissioners Court. The warrant roundup initiative aims to reduce the number of violent offenders on the loose in Harris County. After being considered by Commissioners Court, VIPER passed unanimously with a 4-0 vote.

There are more than 50,000 people in Harris County who are wanted by police, including more than 700 people who are wanted for murder. The Harris County Commissioners Court passed the creation of a new task force that will be aimed at tracking down and arresting the most violent offenders.

The Harris County Violence Persons Task Force, or VIPER, consists of deputies from both the sheriff's and constables' offices. VIPER will add much-needed staff, whose purpose will be to track down and arrest the most violent offenders in Harris County. The task force will be



Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, along with the County Commissioners and Judge Hidalgo, announce the new VIPER program.

made up of two teams, each team will consist of 4 deputy constables and 4 deputy sheriffs.

"VIPER will help ensure public safety that must be addressed," Commissioner Adrian Garcia said. "Putting a stop to the culture of not feeling there are any consequences for criminal activity."

"This historic investment in VIPER not only aims to address the warrant backlog of violent cases, for Harris County, it is a first-of-its-kind partnership between all local county law enforcement – the sheriff and constables. Our message to people who are accused of violent crime and have warrants issued for their arrest: you have a pair of handcuffs on, and you don't even know it because VIPER is upon you."

-Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian

Garcia

"The simple truth is that justice delayed is justice denied. Denied for those who need to present themselves to authorities and denied for crime victims awaiting justice. When dangerous criminals aren't apprehended quickly, it creates a sense that the government does not do its part in addressing serious crimes, making victims feel ignored and perpetrators empowered. That's why this specific initiative is so important."

-Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo

"50,000 active warrants in our community – 4,800 of those are for aggravated felonies. Almost 1,000 are for bond revocations. We need to make sure we are working together because every community and every precinct in Harris County has violent offenders that have absconded. We want them to know we are going to be out there looking for them."

-Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzalez

Jacinto City Memorial Event,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

he and his department are always willing to work with Jacinto City's emergency departments to help save lives.

After the event refreshments were served each of last year's attendees received a medal with the monuments inscription on it along with their name and date. The medal medallion and monument inscription is: DEDICATED TO THE PEACE OFFICERS, FIREMEN AND VETERANS OF WAR WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES IN THE PURSUIT OF DUTY. DONATED BY THE JACINTO CITY POLICE OFFICERS ASSOC. 1973.



Galena Park Fire Chief Tom Ehlers (right) holding the Memorial Medallion presented by former Chief of Police and Mayor Allan Jamail who began the event in 1973 (read medal inscription in article below). (Linda Jamail photo)



Cutting the memorial cake: L-R: Constable Jerry Garcia, Sgt. S. Flores, Chief J. M. Ayala, Lt. D. Walker, Sgt. C. Nieto & Lt. M. Longrigg. (Linda Jamail photo)

Russia may want to trade Griner for criminal in U.S. custody

WASHINGTON, DC – American officials learned last week that Brittney Griner, a professional women's basketball star player will be detained for another month in Russian custody, and that her pre-trial hearing had been delayed until then.

Griner is well known in Houston and Aldine, where she was a star center for the girl's basketball team at Nimitz High School. She currently plays for the Phoenix, and was in Russia for the off-season playing pro ball there.

Griner was detained at a Russian airport in February, and charged with having illegal drugs in her luggage. Since then, U.S. officials have been working to get her release, with little progress.



Brittney Griner is seen on Russian TV leaving a hearing room last week, where she learned that her detention and pre-trial hearing will be extended another month. Griner, in handcuffs, did not speak to the media. She was accompanied by her Russian lawyer, but no U.S. officials have been allowed to see her except once for a welfare check.

For the first time since Brittney Griner's arrest almost three months ago, Russia appears to have publicly signaled its asking price for her safe return, if multiple reports by Russian state media are to be believed.

Russia is looking to exchange the WNBA star in a prisoner swap for notorious convicted arms trafficker Viktor Bout, several state-owned Russian news outlets reported last Friday, citing unnamed government sources.

Bout, whose exploits earned him the nickname the "Merchant of Death," flooded fierce conflicts in Africa and the Middle East with weapons, U.S. authorities say. He was arrested during a sting operation in Thailand in 2008, extradited to the U.S. and sentenced to 25 years for conspiracy to kill U.S. citizens, delivery of anti-aircraft missiles and providing aid to a terrorist organization.

After Bout's arrest, the U.S. alleged that his Russian allies tried to block his extradition from Thailand to America by bribing key witnesses to give false tes-

timony. Since his 2012 conviction, Bout has been at the top of Russia's prisoner exchange wish list and has been linked repeatedly in the Russian state media with potential swaps involving jailed Americans that haven't come to fruition.

WNBA star and two-time Olympic gold medalist Brittney Griner leaves a courtroom after a hearing, in Khimki just outside Moscow, Russia, Friday, May 13, 2022. Griner, a two-time Olympic gold medalist, was detained at the Moscow airport in February after vape cartridges containing oil derived from cannabis were allegedly found in her luggage, which could carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. (AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko)

WNBA star and two-time Olympic gold medalist Brittney Griner leaves a courtroom after a hearing, in Khimki just outside Moscow on Friday. Griner, a two-time Olympic gold medalist, was detained at the Moscow airport in February after vape cartridges containing oil derived from cannabis were alleg-

edly found in her luggage, which could carry a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. (AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko)

U.S. ambassador to Russia John Sullivan visited Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow on Wednesday, but the State Department did not disclose what they discussed. A spokesperson for the State Department declined comment to Yahoo Sports on Friday when asked if negotiations for Griner's release were underway and if Russia was seeking a trade for Bout.

"Due to operational and privacy concerns, we are unable to discuss specific details," the spokesperson said.

While one Russian state media report quoted an unnamed source who described a potential Griner-for-Bout exchange as "likely," experts in Russian diplomacy viewed that skeptically. William Pomeranz, a professor of Russian law and the acting director of the Kennan Institute, told Yahoo Sports that he interprets the reports as a signal that "Russia really wants to make

that trade" but cautioned that they give no indication of the U.S.'s willingness.

"This is Russia saying, 'Wouldn't this be a great idea?'" Pomeranz said. "This isn't the U.S. saying they're interested. We've had other opportunities to get rid of Viktor Bout in the past and we haven't done it."

Griner has been behind bars since Feb. 17 when she flew into a Moscow airport and Russian customs officials allegedly found vape cartridges containing hashish oil in her luggage. She is under investigation for the large-scale transportation of drugs and faces up to 10 years in a Russian prison if convicted.

Griner appeared at a hearing in a courtroom outside Moscow on Friday and had her pre-trial detention extended by a month. Photos taken at the hearing show Griner leaving the courtroom handcuffed, the hood of an orange sweatshirt pulled over her head and her signature dreadlocks peeking out.

Last month, the U.S. and Russia completed a prisoner swap despite deteriorating relations between the two nations. Trevor Reed, the former Marine who the U.S. says was wrongfully detained in Russia for almost three years, came home in exchange for Konstantin Yaroshenko, a Russian pilot convicted of drug trafficking.

The release of Reed leaves at least two Americans in Russia who the U.S. classifies as wrongfully detained: Griner and Paul Whelan, another former Marine sentenced to 16 years on spying charges. Their cases are now in the hands of the Office of the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, which focuses on negotiating the release of



Griner in Russian Detention in February.

American hostages and others deemed to be wrongfully detained in foreign countries.

A 1-for-1 exchange for Griner could be especially unpalatable for the U.S. if Russia insists on Bout in return. Bout is a far more notorious figure than Yaroshenko, having inspired Nicolas Cage's character in the 2005 movie "Lord of War." Bout's arms trafficking history also makes the allegations against Griner appear minimal by comparison.

Former top Pentagon official Evelyn Farkas hopes the Biden administration explores all options to get Griner and Whelan home, but she points out there is a downside to prisoner exchanges.

"This is the kind of situation that we want to avoid," said Farkas, the executive director of the McCain Institute, "because the Russians will continue to seize Americans as trade bait if we agree to such swaps."



Griner played for TeamUSA in the Olympics

KEEP YOU MOVING

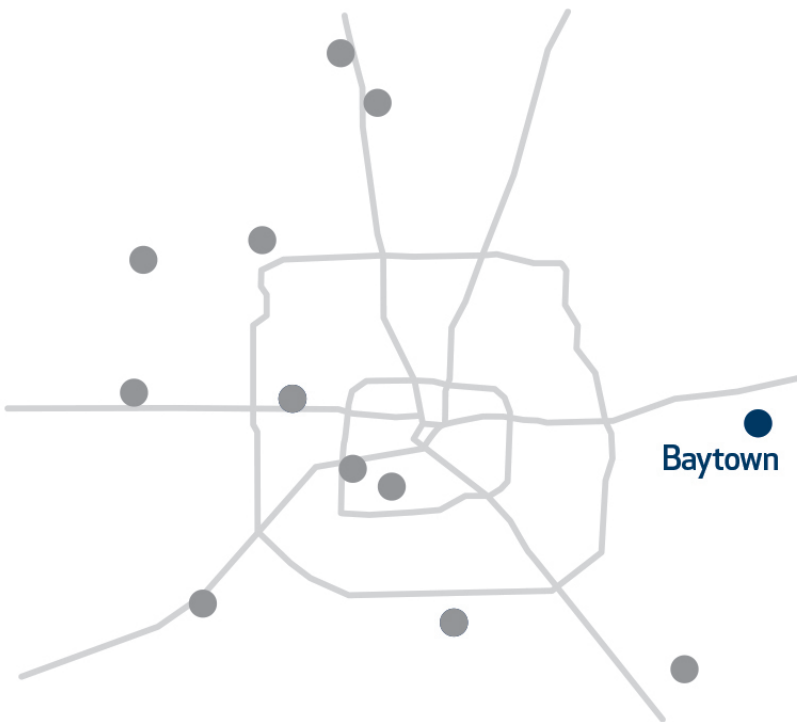
without joint pain



Live life without joint pain.

At Houston Methodist Orthopedics & Sports Medicine at Baytown, we know that joint pain affects every part of your life. With treatment plans customized for you, our specialists offer a full range of advanced nonsurgical and surgical techniques. Our expert joint care includes:

- Innovative pain control methods
- Physical therapy to improve mobility and range of motion
- The latest technology, including minimally invasive surgical techniques that help reduce recovery time



HOUSTON
Methodist[®]
ORTHOPEDICS &
SPORTS MEDICINE

Schedule an appointment:
houstonmethodist.org/jointpain
281.427.7400