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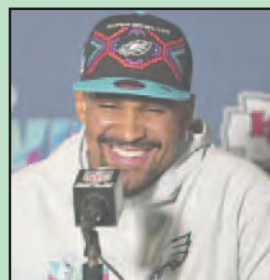
3rd Gun BuyBack Program. Feb. 18

Serving all of the North Shore -- Channelview, Cloverleaf, Sheldon, Galena Park, Jacinto City  
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## CHANNEL CURRENTS

### Jalen Hurts sets records while losing to Chiefs in Super Bowl

Channelview's Jalen Hurts came close to taking his Philadelphia Eagles to a Super Bowl win last Sunday, with a strong first half that saw a 24-7 lead at halftime. But Chiefs QB Patrick Mahomes rallied his team and tied the score with only 2 minutes left. Then the Chiefs kicked the winning field goal with 8 seconds remaining, for a final score of 38-35.



Jalen Hurts at Super Bowl News Conference

But in spite of the loss, Jalen set Super Bowl records with three rushing TDs by a Quarterback, and the most yards gained rushing. He was named the runner-up MVP in the game. Mahomes was the MVP for Super Bowl LVII.

Channelview High School held a **FLY EAGLES FLY** celebration on Friday before the game, in honor of their star Alum Jalen Hurts. Students wore Eagles themed clothing, and the Number 1 in his honor.

## 3rd Gun BuyBack set for Feb. 18

*Harris County, Houston will pay up to \$200*

HARRIS COUNTY – Residents will now have another opportunity to sell their unwanted firearms. Harris County Precinct One Commissioner Rodney Ellis, Sheriff Ed Gonzalez, and Mayor Sylvester Turner announced last Monday a third gun buyback program, to be held on Saturday February 18 from 8 a.m. until noon at Deussen Park in Northeast Harris County. (SEE MAP FOR DEUSSEN PARK LOCATION).

The city and county previously held two gun buyback events that took place in July and October of last year. City and County officials say the events were successful with huge turnouts and over 2,000 firearms collected. Residents can turn in firearms with “no questions asked” in exchange for gift cards ranging from \$50 to \$200 depending on the type of firearm collected.

“We can’t bring a life back, but we can buy a gun back and make sure it never falls into the wrong hands and causes harm to someone,” said County Commissioner Rodney Ellis. “So please



Officers check guns that were turned in at the last Gun BuyBack conducted in October by Harris County and the City of Houston. Over 800 guns were turned in, and Gift Cards varying from \$50 to \$200 were paid.

do as much as you can to help make our communities safer by spreading the word about this – our third gun buyback in Harris County – two in the city and this one will be a county funded one.”

Both the city and county have allocated \$1 million in federal funding towards the gun buyback program. Last year, the county approved its portion of the fund to host up to 8 gun buyback events in an effort to reduce gun violence, suicides, and ac-

cidental deaths caused by a firearm.

The city’s initiative is part of Mayor Sylvester Turner’s \$63 million One Safe Houston Initiative to reduce violent crime throughout the city and allocate funding towards things like mental health programs, domestic violence, and overtime for police officers.

So far, the county has spent \$225,000 on the program and the city has not yet confirmed their amount spent.

The announcement of the third gun buyback program was also an unveiling of the “Stop the Gun Violence” Mural in front of Worthing Early College High School in SunnySide.

Mayor Sylvester Turner said the first two events surpassed the city and county expectations.

“The success of the two events demonstrated that people do want a safe space to dispose of their guns,” he said. “And sure, some may have been driv-

en by the gift cards, but the impact is undeniable – We remove guns that were unwanted and had the potential of falling into wrong and wrong hands.”

The event on February 18 will be from 8 a.m. until noon. The same rules and procedures will apply, but with more lines and staff to accommodate the possibility of a huge turnout that occurred at the first two events.

Officials said they will not be accepting any “ghost guns” or privately manufactured guns, which was a problem during the first gun buyback event in July.

“We discovered we needed more lines, and more people and more staff,” said Turner. “The first one we didn’t know how many, we thought a few 100, but the lines were long.”

The program has sparked criticism on whether or not it’s actually driving crime down in the city. Over the years, homicides in Houston were reaching nearly

*Continued. See GUN BUYBACK, Page 2*

## Galena Park Revolutionizes Emergency Warnings

By Allan Jamail

Galena Park, TX. - February 14, 2023 the City of Galena Park will use advanced voice messaging technology to warn large masses of the citizenry.

Mayor Esmeralda Moya and Fire Chief Tom Ehlers teamed up with Precinct 2 County Commissioner Adrian Garcia to revolutionize the antiquated siren system of the city.

According to Chief Ehlers the city obtained most of the funds for the new systems, costing over one hundred thousand dollars from Precinct 2 County Commissioner Adrian Garcia. The remainder of the cost was obtained from Harris County’s Economic Alliance and Exxon Mobil Pipeline.

Their old worn out siren hasn’t worked in over ten years the Chief Ehlers said, as is the

case in many other cities. A siren sound gets the public’s attention but people don’t know what the emergency is about, until now.

The city has installed in three separate locations emergency voice producing broadcasting warning systems. Each system is mounted high up on telephone poles which include siren and voice producing speakers. One system installed on 3rd Street north of the fire station that’s on 2nd Street, another in Galena Manor and another in Woodland Acres subdivisions.

If there’s a threat to the public’s safety regardless of the time of the day or night, the traditional loud siren sound will first alert the public followed by verbal messages explaining what is the warning concerning. Such as a nearby tornado,



Galena Park Mayor Esmeralda Moya and Fire Chief Tom Ehlers holding an Alertus Voice Speaker.

chemical railroad tank car or other vehicle tank leaking chemicals leak in the air. The messages will be announced in both English and Spanish.

In small cities this is one of

the most advanced ways of alerting masses of the public of emergency conditions. All cities should take advantage of this technology, most especially small cities.

The system’s electronics is in the police station so if there’s a need to warn the public the communication’s officer can activate the system via wireless technology. The software has pre-recorded messages and it also has the ability to record special custom messages if needed. The fire chief also has the ability to activate the system using his cell phone. He said all the hardware is installed and hopefully the software will be completed soon.

The messages can tell citizens to shelter in place or evacuate and also give them instructions to go to the city’s face book page and or website for additional instructions.

The Alertus Company specializes in mass notifications emergency warning systems. For more information go to: www.alertus.com



Galena Park’s emergency warning system. Siren speaker (left in photo) & Alertus Voice Speakers, on right in photo on telephone poles. (Photo by Allan Jamail)



Sitting: L – R: Mgr Taylor Horton, Judith Torres, Ketra Burrough, Megan Lopez, Mikalah Cornejo & Mgr. Dasia Cearcy

Standing: L – R: Assist. Coach Ron Richmond, Assist. Coach Marie Martinez, Rebecca Torres, Miracle Rue, Julissa Montano, Natalie Quintanilla, Jazmine Galindo, Jennifer Rivas, Lily Lopez, Savannah Roberts, Aracely Ayala & Head Coach Casey Fountain (Photo by Allan Jamail)

## The GP Fighting Lady Yellow Jackets Break Into Playoffs

Monday, February 13, 2023 - The Galena Park Varsity Lady Yellow Jackets basketball team made their first playoff game in eighteen years, .

However, They lost to Fort Bend ISD’s Foster Lady Falcons. GP’s Coach Casey Fountain said, he’s proud of the fighting spirit of his young team and hopes to see a significant improvement now that they’ve gained playoff experience.



## CHANNELVIEW ISD NEWS

# Harvey Brown Elementary Teacher Wins Science Grant to Enhance Elementary School Science Lab

**Channelview, TX — February 7, 2023:** Arianna Martinez-Moody, an elementary school teacher at Harvey Brown Elementary School (HBES), was named a regional winner in the Shell Science Lab Regional Challenge to supplement her school's science lab for her students.

Administered by the National Science Teaching Association (NSTA) regional winners received a school science lab makeover support package valued at \$10,000 for elementary campuses. Applicants were asked to describe their school's current laboratory resources, explain why laboratory upgrade support is needed, and describe their approach to science education instruction utili-



lizing their school's current lab facilities. The grant will be used to purchase new equipment, materials and supplies for the science lab, giving students the opportunity to engage in hands-on,

interactive science learning experiences.

Martinez-Moody has been committed to bringing science to life for her students for the past six years, four of which in Channelview ISD. "I am

thrilled that Ms. Martinez-Moody goes above and beyond to secure additional resources for our students," said Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning LaKeshia LeBlanc. "It

will give our students the chance to explore, experiment and discover the wonders of science in a safe and engaging environment."

The science lab at Harvey Brown Elementary

has long been a source of pride for the school, and this grant will only enhance that reputation. The lab will now have the latest equipment, materials and supplies, enabling students to explore a wide range of science topics. "We are dedicated to providing our students with the best possible education, and this grant will help us achieve that goal. I am grateful for Ms. Martinez-Moody's efforts in helping us make that goal become a reality," said HBES Principal Troy Michaud.

Martinez-Moody was honored for her efforts at the January 17th CISD board meeting with a certificate of recognition.

Lila Hollin  
Executive Director of Communications  
Channelview Independent School District

# Channelview High's Interact Club Presents Impact Report to CISD Board of Trustees

**Channelview, TX — February 7, 2023:** The Channelview High School (CHS) Interact Club has presented its annual impact report to the CISD Board of Trustees during their meeting on January

17. The report highlighted the organization's achievements and impact on the community over the past year.

The CHS Interact Club is a student-led group that engages in various volunteer and community service activities throughout the year. The organization's mission is to promote a culture of service and civic engagement among the student body, while also making a positive impact on the community.

According to the report, the organization recruited 45 new members during the past year, and completed 50 volunteer projects, serving a total of 140 hours. The projects included supporting district-wide lit-



eracy events, Adopt-a-Road projects, and assisting in Rotary International's Books for the World Program - an international effort to answer the literacy needs of developing countries overseas.

"The CHS Interact Club is a shining example of the power of student engagement and leadership," said CISD Superintendent Dr. Tory C. Hill. "They are making a real difference in the lives of those they

serve, and we are proud to support their efforts."

The CISD Board of Trustees commended the organization for their hard work and dedication, and for the positive impact they have made on the community by

presenting them with certificates of appreciation and special recognition. The CHS Interact Club plans to continue its efforts in the coming year, and is currently seeking new members within Channelview

High School and partners to join their efforts in making a positive impact on the community.

Lila Hollin  
Executive Director of Communications  
Channelview Independent School District

## SHELDON ISD NEWS

# 6 Sheldon Educators Named HAABSE Outstanding Teacher Nominees; 1 Student to Receive Scholarship

6 Sheldon educators named HAABSE Outstanding Teacher nominees; 1 student to receive scholarship

Sheldon ISD educators representing six campuses will be recognized at the Houston Area Alliance of Black School Educators (HAABSE) annual Outstanding Teacher Awards and Recognition Ceremony on February 9. Nominees from across the Houston region will be recognized for teachers who go above and beyond to serve their school communities, students and families. From the pool of nominees, HAABSE will select Teacher of the Year finalists and one elementary and secondary

winner is chosen.

**Congratulations to the following Sheldon ISD HAABSE Teacher of the Year nominees:**

- Yadira Rebollar - Sheldon Lake Elementary
- Ida Gaines - Sheldon Early Childhood Academy
- Kourtney Gatson - Royalwood Elementary
- Tracie Miller - Null Middle School
- Gloria Castillo - Garrett Elementary
- Donald Sanders, III - King High School 9th Grade Campus

Additionally, proceeds from the event fund student scholarships. Congratulations to King High School senior Myana Libbett for receiving a \$1,000 scholarship.





CHARLOTTE'S WEB

By Charlotte Jackson



## Every Breath We take

When you stop complaining about the circumstances in your life and begin to appreciate the many blessings that you have, life turns around. Early this morning I received a text from someone who I typically drive to work daily. This is someone who I once drove to work and after the rideshare company took out their share, I made about fifteen dollars per trip. He realized that he was spending almost three times that on the ride. He simply asked one day if he could just pay me one hundred and seventy-five dollars a week for the ride. This not only became a steady income source for me, but we have developed a good friendship.

On Saturday, I met a young Marine Veteran who shared that not only is he new to our community, but he is undergoing treatment for cancer. I assured him that I would pray for him and gave him my number, asking him to call if there was anything he needed assistance finding in our community. I also asked if I could share his name, phone number and details of his situation with some of my connections. Two days later, he called to say that the representative from Harris County Commissioner PCT 2 who works with the Veterans had called him. I was more than excited. Then he asked if I would like to make a few dollars by taking him to pick up his bicycle from where he previously lived. That was a no brainer, get to do something for someone and make some money. Sure thing.

Yesterday there was an older woman in the hospital in Pasadena. She reached out on social media to see if I could pick her up as she was uncomfortable with a stranger picking her up. I laughed as even though we have talked on social media for several years, this was actually the first time we met. I was able to pick her up and stopped long enough to meet her husband. I did not expect her to pay me, but she insisted. In addition, they asked if I was available from time to time to run errands for them. Another blessing.

Yet perhaps the biggest blessing came early on Monday. I received a phone call from one of my “bonus” daughters. She love her mother to cancer in 2010 and her father to poor choices several years later. She had texted to see if I would give her a ride to work. I replied that I was running later than I like but I would be on my way. She replied telling me that even if we were late, we were still blessed. I paused and she said “Look at that amazing sunrise God has painted for us. We must be his favorite kids.” Those words melted my heart. She is an overcomer who I talk about from time to time. No matter what obstacles, she is ALWAYS smiling and grateful. She has reminded me that with every breath we take, we control our attitude. Life is awesome so go out and make somebody smile today. I promise, YOU will be the one who is blessed the most.

## Gun BuyBack on Feb. 18,

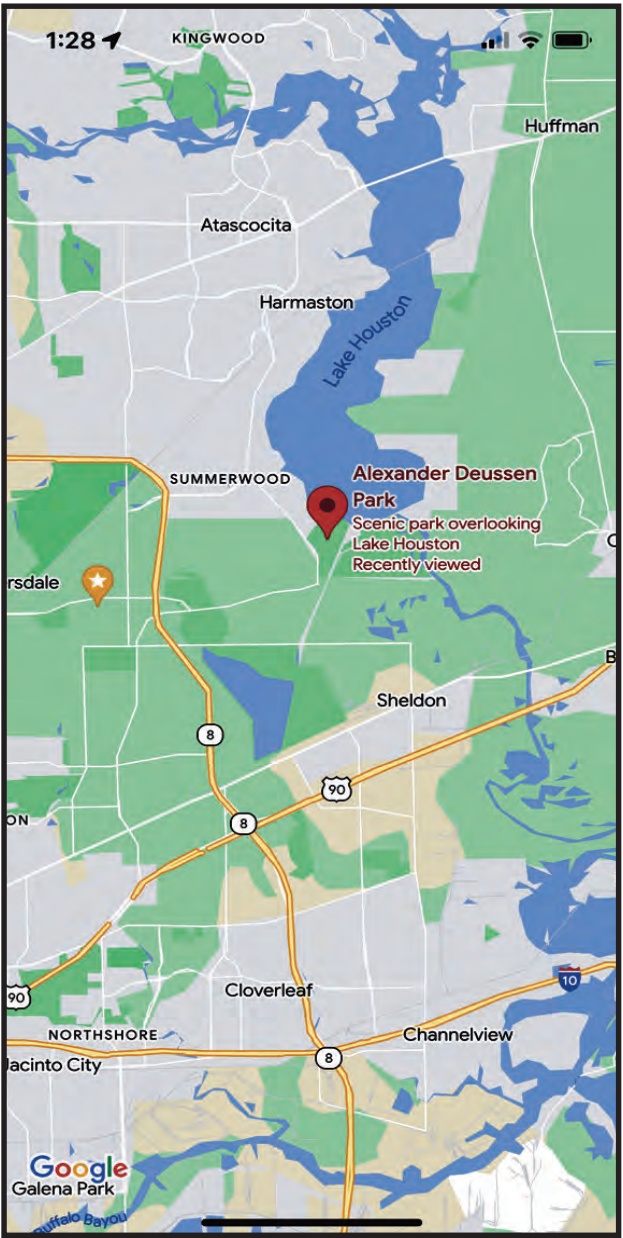
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500, but a report presented by HPD last month showed numbers were down for 2022.

“It takes time for things to actually show that they have been successful,” said District D Council Member Carolyn Evans-Shabazz. “We

know that a lot of people may question, Why did they even do those buy-backs – and certainly I think it makes a difference to someone whose life was preserved because a person did not have an illegal gun.”

## MAP OF DEUSSEN PARK AT LAKE HOUSTON DAM



## COVID-19 Novavax Vaccine Booster Now Available for Individuals 18 and Older

Houston - Following approvals from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS), individuals 18 years and older who have completed their COVID-19 primary vaccine series will have the option to receive a COVID-19 Novavax monovalent booster vaccine instead of the updated (bivalent) Pfizer or Moderna booster vaccine at Harris County Public Health (HCPH) vaccination sites. Individuals who may not be able to receive an mRNA (Moderna or Pfizer) vaccine as a result of an allergy to a component of the vaccine will now have the Novavax booster as an option.

The Novavax booster option will be available to eligible individuals regardless of their primary series vaccine type. The booster dose is recommended for individuals 6 months after they have completed their J&J, Moderna, Pfizer or Novavax primary vaccine series. The Novavax primary series first became available to the public in August so those who first received their Novavax primary series are not yet eligible for the Novavax booster dose.

Individuals who would prefer the Novavax monovalent booster dose are encouraged to call 832-927-8787 for scheduling or visit any HCPH vaccination site to sign up.

Novavax uses a different technique than the other COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer and Moderna. Instead of using mRNA, which provides the instructions for your body to create the COVID-19 spike protein which in turn induces your body's immune response, Novavax's vaccine injects a small protein that your body detects and triggers its immune response. The Novavax vaccine is based on a well-established method of vaccine development that has been used for years in other vaccines such as the human papillomavirus (HPV), hepatitis B, influenza, and shingles.

COVID-19 primary and booster vaccines available at Harris County Public Health sites include:

- Pfizer-BioNTech (mRNA vaccine)
- Moderna (mRNA vaccine)
- Novavax (protein subunit vaccine)

Moderna, Novavax, and Pfizer are recommended for primary vaccination and Moderna and Pfizer are recommended for booster doses. A person's eligibility for a booster dose depends on age and the time interval from the last dose received. Fully vaccinated is considered 2 weeks after the final dose in a primary series. People are considered up to date with COVID-19 vaccines when they receive all the doses in their primary series and a booster, when eligible.

HCPH urges residents to get vaccinated against COVID-19 if they have not done so already and get a booster shot, for those who qualify. All COVID-19 vaccines and boosters are safe, effective, and provide strong protection against severe illness, hospitalizations, and death. Vaccines provided by HCPH are free and appointments are not required though encouraged.

If you would like to schedule an appointment, go to ReadyHarris.org, vacstrac.hctx.net, or call 832-927-8787. To find a location near you, click here.

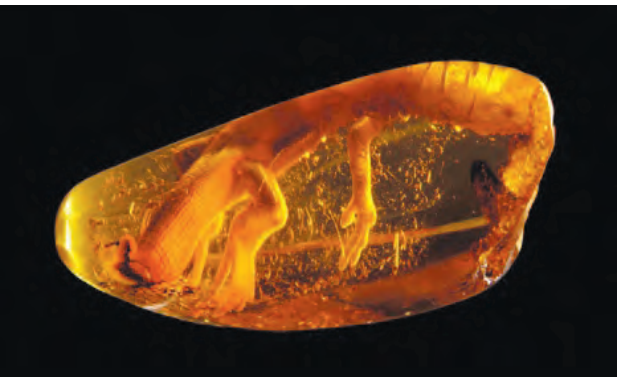
ASK DIAMOND JIM

## Diamond Jim: “Is Amber Really a Gem?”



Amber is an organic gem. Organic gems are the products of living or once-living organisms and biological processes. Amber formed tens of millions of years ago, when sap from ancient trees hardened and fossilized. Amber is nature's time capsule. This fossilized tree resin contains remnants of life on earth, all those years ago.

Amber is probably best known for its insect and other types of inclusions. Millions of years ago, when amber oozed from countless plants, the substance acted as a sticky trap for ants, bees, termites, and other insects. Flower parts, leaves, and pine needles are also typical amber inclusions, along with gas bubbles. Amber containing larger animals like scorpions, snails, frogs, and lizards can be very valuable—especially if the animal “inclusions” are preserved intact.



Insects embedded in amber formed the basis of the movie “Jurassic Park.” The story centered around the cloning of dinosaurs from DNA found in dinosaur blood sucked up by prehistoric mosquitoes that were subsequently preserved in amber. The movie generated great interest in the gem. Even today, scientists and collectors alike treasure amber that contains suspended animal or plant fragments.

Amber comes in a variety of colors. The most familiar ones are yellow to orange, while a reddish color is rare. Some types of amber are found in the ground. Other types have been freed and carried by tides, ending up on beaches or near-shore areas. The Baltic coast bordering Germany, Poland, and Russia is still an important source of amber. Amber is sometimes called “gold of the North.” Its warm luster is featured in beads, carvings, pendants, and cabochons, as well as decorative items like cups, bowls, snuff boxes, and umbrella handles. A related material, called copal, is also fossilized tree resin, but it's far younger than amber, at less than a million years old.

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 (IJO) and the Retail Jewelers Organization (RJO) for many years. See more at: [www.pineforestjewelry.com](http://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](mailto:jmills@pineforestjewelry.com).

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OPINION PAGE

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TEXAS MATTERS

By U.S. Senator JOHN CORNYN



# Cornyn Bill to Authorize Coastal Spine Project Signed Into Law



Senator Cornyn meeting with local officials and the Coast Guard and Corps of Engineers last fall, to develop the plans for the Coastal Spine.

## Authorizes Construction of Coastal Spine Project for Texas, Critical for Hurricane Mitigation

WASHINGTON –U.S. Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) released the following statement after his Texas Coastal Spine Authorization Act, which authorizes the construction of a large-scale coastal storm risk management and coastal barrier protection system known as the Coastal Spine, was signed into law:

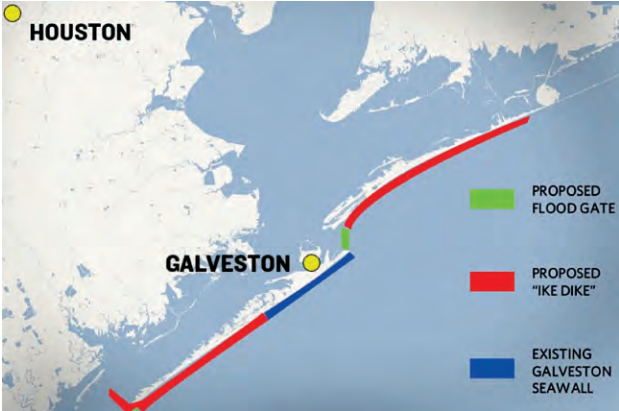
**“The Coastal Spine will provide the critical infrastructure needed to protect our coastal communities and the industries that fuel our state and national economy,” said Sen. Cornyn. “After many years of hard work, I am glad to see that this project has been authorized so that the next steps can be taken to ensure the Texas Gulf Coast is prepared to weather future hurricane seasons.”**

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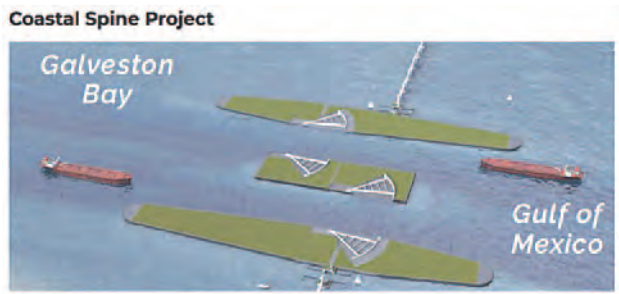
This bill authorizes the construction of the coastal barrier protection system known as the Coastal Spine, a large-scale coastal storm risk management and ecosystem restoration project that will help protect Texas’s coast from storm damage. Sen. Cornyn introduced the legislation earlier this year with Sen. Cruz and Representative Randy Weber (TX-14), which was included in this year’s National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Last year, Sen. Cornyn praised the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chief’s Report signing of the Coastal Texas Study making the project eligible to be authorized by Congress in the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA). In Congress, Sen. Cornyn secured full funding in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 to ensure the completion of the study. Previously, Sen. Cornyn introduced legislation to accelerate the study and worked to obtain a critical exemption from statutory costs and time limitations. Last fall, Sen. Cornyn penned an op-ed discussing current coastal Texas projects and the steps to authorize and fund them.

Senator John Cornyn, a Republican from Texas, is a member of the Senate Finance, Intelligence, and Judiciary Committees.



A combination of “dikes”, gates and the existing Galveston Seawall would protect the communities around Galveston Bay from damage from a hurricane storm surge.



Gates would swing closed to stop the surge of water caused by a hurricane in the Gulf.



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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



## Abbott Issues Disaster Declaration, Seeks Fed Help

Gov. Greg Abbot has issued a disaster declaration for Texas counties affected by the early February ice storm and is seeking a federal declaration as well for areas in Southeast Texas affected by rare January tornadoes. The ice storm caused considerable damage to property and power outages in the affected areas. The declaration for ice-storm damaged counties includes Denton, Hays, Henderson, Milam, Smith, Travis and Williamson counties.

“Through this disaster declaration, we will be able to provide additional assistance to Texans and communities who have experienced property damage and localized power outages from this ice storm,” Abbott said.

The ice storm brought tree limbs snapping and crashing onto power lines. More than 170,000 Austin households were without power for several days, with some going more than 10 days without power.

Abbott also requested a presidential disaster declaration for counties in Southeast Texas hit by tornadoes and severe storms in late January. That request includes Harris, Jefferson, Liberty and Orange counties. If that request is granted, residents and businesses in those counties would have access to federal loans and grants.

### RELIGIOUS FREEDOM BILLS DRAW BIPARTISAN SUPPORT

Three bills have been filed in the Texas House aimed at improving Texans ability to practice their religions. The Austin American-Statesman reported that state Rep. Salman Bhojani, D-Eules, filed the bills to expand the state’s list of optional holidays to include more religious holy days; prevent stan-



dardized tests being given on those days; and ensure that religious leaders of all faiths can legally perform marriages.

Bhojani, one of the state’s first Muslim legislators, was joined at a news conference by Republican state Rep. Jacey Jetton, R-Richmond, who is Christian, and fellow Muslim state Rep. Suleman Lalani, D- Sugar Land.

“As legislators, it is our duty to ensure that Texas is the religious freedom state, where we can practice our faith with pride, where we can pray in a church, synagogue, mosque, temple, jamatkhana or gurdwara, where we can love God by any name,” Bhojani said.

### PLAN TO BAN TIKTOK ON STATE-OWNED DEVICES RELEASED

Abbott last week also announced a security plan to ban the use of the popular video app TikTok as well as other software on all state-issued devices, as well as personal devices used to conduct state business. Abbott contends the Chinese-owned company can harvest data from TikTok user’s devices and poses

a security risk to Texas.

After Abbott issued the initial order in December, The University of Texas at Austin banned TikTok on all its Wi-Fi networks. The latest security plan also includes other lesser-known apps, such as WeChat. A number of hardware manufacturers are also prohibited from being used by state agencies and employees.

TikTok, which is known for its short videos, is owned by the Chinese company ByteDance and has more than 86 million users in the United States.

### A WET JANUARY FOR PARTS OF THE STATE

January brought above-average rainfall for large swaths of East Texas while the rest of the state had below-average precipitation, hydrologist Mark Wentzel wrote in the Texas Water Development Board’s monthly report. Drought conditions expanded by five percentage points to include 54% of the state, while statewide storage in water supply reservoirs is at 72.5% of capacity, down about 10 percentage points from what is normal this time of year.

Drought conditions have been all but eliminated in the eastern portion of Texas, while much of the state is in moderate to severe drought conditions. The worst drought conditions now are in a circle of counties around Bexar County.

Wentzel predicted that except for northeast Texas, much of the state will see expanded drought conditions.

“However, with the anticipated breakup of La Niña conditions later this year, there is some hope that the rest of Texas may see at least some easing of drought conditions as early as May,” he wrote.

### FINAL ROUND OF EMERGENCY SNAP BENEFITS

This month brings the final allocation of emergency food benefits provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and distributed to eligible households by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. The extra minimum of \$95 per household began during the start of the COVID-10 pandemic and has provided nearly \$10 billion in added food benefits since its inception. However, Congress recently passed legislation ending the emergency benefits, which go to about 1.6 million Texas households.

“We’re thankful that we’ve been able to help millions of Texans by providing more than \$9.7 billion in additional benefits since the Families First Coronavirus Response Act was passed,” said Wayne Salter, HHSC deputy executive commissioner.

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THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

## “Valentine Gift”

My husband, Peter, does not believe in Valentine’s Day. I mean, he knows it is a thing. It’s just a thing he prefers to ignore.

“Stupid!” That is Peter’s verdict.

Peter takes offense whenever there is a big marketing effort aimed at getting him to buy things in order to show affection. He feels this way about Christmas, believing it has become too commercialized. He feels this way about birthdays, insisting that the day of his birth is nothing to celebrate. Buying gifts for Peter is pretty easy because he doesn’t want any.

But Peter is one of the most generous people I have ever known. He never hesitates to pick up the bill. He is always a generous tipper. He contributes to organizations he believes in all the time. It just bothers him when he is expected to come up with a gift. He finds it stressful and annoying, and so I learned, long ago, that he would not give me gifts on so-called special occasions, and I wouldn’t try to figure out what he wanted.

I am very glad I don’t have to guess what Peter wants.

Peter has very particular tastes, and he enjoys further refining those tastes. If Peter buys a new shirt, he can tell me more about that shirt than I have ever known about any piece of clothing I own. It will almost certainly be sun-resistant and probably bug-resistant and possibly provide protection against a thermonuclear attack. I don’t even ask. This is equally true of every gadget he uses and every pot and pan in our house. Not having to figure out what Peter wants (or do that kind of research!) is a great relief.

Instead, I try to be nice to him.

I try to remember when I am stressed or bothered that none of these feelings ever have anything to do with him. If my mind is filled with things already, I try to make room and listen closely to whatever he is telling me. I try to stay out of his way when he needs his space. I try to keep him company when he needs it.

And Peter is always giving me gifts. They are just not the kind that seem like presents.

I hate the light in the kitchen of the little place we rent in Mexico. It is bright blue-white.

“I feel like we could be doing elective surgery in here!” I tell Peter.

But the ceilings are high, I don’t have a ladder and we really do need light in the kitchen. The light does not bother Peter. He does not seem to notice the difference in light color the way I do. This is just one of the many ways (I am sure) I seem unreasonably fussy to him.

“Turn the light off as soon as you are through!” I always tell Peter, in an unnecessarily crabby voice.

But then, one day, I walked into the kitchen, and Peter was cooking in a bright, amber-colored light.

“You changed the bulb!” I said in delight.

“I did,” he said. “It wasn’t as high up as I thought.”

I don’t know how Peter got up to the ceiling to change the bulb. But everything else, I know.

He changed the bulb because he understands me. He changed it because he wanted me to be happy. He changed it because he loves me, and this was his Valentine gift to me.

“Thank you,” I said.

“You’re welcome!” he answered.

And both the kitchen and my heart were bathed in a warm light.

Till next time,

Carrie  
*Photos and other news can be found at CarrieClasson.com.*

We welcome your thoughts on Opinions on this page. Send to Letters to the Editor in care of our email address.

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# THE MAN BEHIND BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Feb. 1 – Mar. 1 (#1 of a series)

By Allan Jamail

The celebration of Black History Month began as “Negro History Week,” which was created in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson, a noted African American historian, scholar, educator and publisher. It became a month-long celebration in 1976. Negro History Week took place during the second week of February to commemorate the births of abolitionist Frederick Douglass, who claimed February 14 as his birthday, and President Abraham Lincoln, who was born on February 12.

Dr. Carter G. Woodson (1875-1950) dedicated his life to educating African Americans about the achievements and contributions of their ancestors.

In 1915, Carter G. Woodson traveled to Chicago from his home in Washington, D.C. to take part in a national celebration of the 50th anniversary of emancipation. He had earned his bachelor’s and master’s degree at the University of Chicago, and still had many friends there. As he joined the thousands of Black Americans overflowing from the Coliseum, which housed exhibits highlighting African American achievements since the abolition of slavery, Woodson was inspired to do more in the spirit of celebrating Black history and heritage. Before he left Chicago, he helped found the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH). A year later, Woodson singlehandedly launched the Journal of Negro History, in



Dr. Carter G. Woodson

which he and other researchers brought attention to the achievements of Black Americans. He found the Associated Publishers Press in 1921.

**The author of more than 20 books, including A Century of Negro Migration (1918), The History of the Negro Church (1921), The Negro in Our History (1922) and his most celebrated text, The Mis-Education of the Negro (1933).**

Born in 1875 in New Canton, Virginia, Woodson had worked as a sharecropper, miner and various other jobs during his childhood to help support his large family. Though he entered high school late, he made up for lost time, graduating in less than two years. After attending Berea College in Kentucky, Woodson worked in the Philippines as an education superintendent for the U.S. government. He earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees at the University of Chicago before entering Harvard. In 1912, three years before founding the ASNLH, he became only the second African American (after W.E.B. DuBois) to earn a doctorate from that

institution.

Like DuBois, Woodson believed that young African Americans in the early 20th century were not being taught enough of their own heritage, and the achievements of their ancestors. To get his message out, Woodson first turned to his fraternity, Omega Psi Phi, which created Negro History and Literature Week in 1924. But Woodson wanted a wider celebration, and he decided the ASNLH should take on the task itself.

In February 1926, Woodson sent out a press release announcing the first Negro History Week. He chose February because the month contained the birthdays of both Abraham Lincoln and Frederick Douglass, two prominent men whose historic achievements African Americans already celebrated. (Lincoln’s birthday was February 12; Douglass, who was formerly enslaved, hadn’t known his actual birthday, but had marked the occasion on February 14.)

**As schools and other organizations across the country quickly embraced Woodson’s initiative, he and his colleagues struggled to meet the demand for course materials and other resources. The ASNLH formed branches all over the country, though its national headquarters remained centered in Woodson’s row house on Ninth Street in Washington D.C. The house was also home base for the Associated Publishers Press.**

## Remembrance Murals celebrate Black History Month



Gathered at the Celebration were community leaders, including honoree Senfronia Thompson, County Commissioners Rodney Ellis and Tom Ramsey, US Representative Sheila Jackson Lee, State Representatives Ron Reynolds and Armando Walle, County Attorney Christian Menefee, and others.

HOUSTON – The University of Houston Downtown was the site on Friday, Feb. 10 of a celebration for the unveiling of Black History murals, known as “Remembrance” murals.

Hosting the event was Harris County Commissioner Rodney Ellis and other county and city leaders.

Honored at the event was State Representative Senfronia Thompson, the trailblazing Texas state legislator. A photo of Senfronia inspired the mural known as “Lady Justice.”



The Remembrance murals were created by artist Victor Ash, and created by Street Art for Mankind. They overlook Congress Plaza, which is surrounded by Harris County justice institutions.

## Channelview Fire Dept. Rescues FFA Calf

By Allan Jamail

Channelview, TX. – January 25, 2023 – A student of the Channelview High School Future Farmers of America (FFA) was raising a black calf named Midnight that got out of its pen. The calf began roaming the grounds unknown to anyone and made its way to the back of a building and fell into a pit where plumbing work was in progress earlier.

According to Wesley Hutchins the agriculture teacher, the plumbing workers had left an open pit for the day but before leaving they covered the opening with a piece of plywood and then put up caution barricade tape, with DO NOT ENTER BEYOND printed on it. However Midnight who’s a resident of a well polished school never attended reading classes. So as most uneducated animals would do, it couldn’t read the, “do not enter beyond” message. It crossed over the barricade tape, stepped on the board breaking it and fell into the pit. The wood covering the hole was suitable for preventing a human from breaking it but not the heavy calf.

Hutchins said, “It was by the grace of God the calf fell into the pit hind feet first had it fell front feet first it would have broke its neck and died.” Hutchins was at home when he got the call of the crises. When he arrived people who were present had already began enlarging the hole. Efforts were made to raise the calf up physically out of the hole with ropes tied around it. Lifting over a 1,000 pound calf can hardly be done without the means of strong lifting equipment.

The Channelview Fire Department (CFD) was called to the scene; the rescuers used some nylon lifting straps they had. They attempted to lift the calf using a borrowed backhoe tractor’s lifting arm. The lifting straps they had were too



Channelview High School FFA calf “Midnight” trapped in pit



Midnight raised up out of the pit.

long and not working so the Houston Fire Department (HFD) who has specially designed lifting straps especially made for this rescue were also on the scene, they loaned the CFD their straps and Midnight was freed. Once freed Wesley said the calf acted normal and had no injuries and is eating normally as if, “all it wanted to do was take a walk in the park.”

During this same time weather alerts for tornados nearby were given so this made the crises even more stressful for everyone except

Midnight. Midnight doesn’t get tornado warnings either.

Rescuers from CFD are, District Chief Steve Roane, Senior Captain Nathan Mathews, Engineer Operator Scott Dickens & Firefighter Mark Hinojosa. And Houston Fire Department Heavy Rescue 11 members.

Wesley says he thanks all the FFA parents there who assisted and especially the CFD, HFD and Randy Teel owner of Teel Paving, an alumni of the school for loaning the backhoe and operator which was Curtis Sumbera.

## Stephens spreads screening message to Super Bowl media

PHOENIX – Scott Stephens spent several days prior to the Super Bowl speaking with national media about his son’s death from SCA, or Sudden Cardiac Arrest. Stephen’s message was that all student athletes should get a screening for potential heart defects prior to their participation in stressful sports.

Accompanying Stephens was Randy Grimes, retired NFL Tampa Bay Buccaneer player and author of a book “Off Center” about recovery from painkillers.

The pair had about 30 interviews of 15 minutes each, and were able to reach a wide national audience. Stephens spoke about the work of his Cody Foundation, and his success in getting state legislatures to include screenings in high school athletic programs.



Stephens and Grimes in one of their radio interviews.



Stephens and Grimes talk with Scott Ferrall, host of the national sports podcast “Ferrall Coast to Coast.” You can listen at @SportsGrid or @SiriusXM.

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### One unit destroyed in Apartment fire in North Channel area

Houston Fire Department reports an Apartment fire on January 30, 2023 at 12:41 a.m. at a building at 12200 Fleming Dr. 77013.

There were no reported injuries. Property saved was \$460,000 in estimated property saved, but \$90,000 in estimated damage.

The cause was listed as unintentional (cooking).

Firefighters arrived on scene within three minutes to find a first-floor apartment unit on fire, spreading to the unit above it. They made an offensive attack and extinguished the fire. The roof was ventilated, and the utilities were secured. A tenant had been frying food when the grease caught fire. When they attempted to extinguish the fire, it spread throughout the apartment. Crews from Stations 23, 20, 45, 41, 44, 53 and Rescue 42 responded to this incident.

If you attempt to extinguish a kitchen fire it is best to use a class ABC multipurpose fire extinguisher. Baking soda can also smother the fire. If the fire has not burned for more than fifteen seconds, it may still be possible to turn the burner off and use a tight fitting lid to smother the fire, but only if the fire is still small and has not spread beyond the pan. For additional cooking safety tips visit <http://houstontx.gov/fire/safety-info/cookingsafety.html>

## Legislature releases first Budget draft

State Rep. Walle statement on State Budget

AUSTIN – The initial draft of the Texas state budget has been released for fiscal years 2024/2025. The draft leaves more than \$40 billion additional dollars in general revenue unspent. Contingent on how the various spending limits end up and on the different funding mechanisms used, legislators will have the opportunity to allocate billions of surplus dollars by the end of this Legislative Session.

Rep. Armando Walle (HD 140), who currently serves as the chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Articles VI, VII & VIII and who also sits on the Legislative Budget Board, released the following statement in response.

“Our state’s economy is thriving right now. With the state’s general operating budget covered in this initial draft, legislators will now need to work out how to spend this unprecedented and historic surplus of dollars.

“This money came



State Representative Armando Walle On Budget Committee

from the people of Texas, and should be invested back into our communities in meaningful ways that bring about lasting change. This session, I will fight for these dollars to go to creating good jobs, improving our education system — not least by increasing teacher pay — and to expanding access to life-saving health care.

“I look forward to continuing my work with Speaker Dade Phelan, Chairman Greg Bonnen and all of my colleagues over the next few months to use this surplus to foster opportunities for every Texan.”

### TEXAS HOUSE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

#### SUMMARY

As proposed, the total funding of House Bill 1 is **\$288.7 billion**, a decrease of **2.9 percent**. While remaining well below the Pay as You Go limit, constitutional tax spending limit, and the newly created consolidated general revenue limit, the 88th Legislature has identified a series of priorities that are addressed through this fiscally conservative budget and will meet the needs of Texans.

##### EDUCATION

**\$38.4 billion** in General Revenue for the 88th Legislative Session.  
**\$15 billion** to deliver property tax relief to homeowners.  
**\$600 million** for school safety equipment and safety measures.  
**\$2.5 billion** to strengthen research-based funding at universities.

##### INFRASTRUCTURE

**\$1.95 billion** dedicated to water and transportation infrastructure.  
**\$1.45 billion** to support the Gulf Coast in trade and natural disasters.  
**\$500 million** for maintenance and land acquisition by Texas Parks and Wildlife.

##### HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

**\$2.3 billion** for increased capacity and renovations at mental health facilities.  
**\$55.5 million** for Crisis Services, specifically targeting youth.  
**\$20 million** increase to the Alternatives to Abortion Program.

##### PENSIONS AND LEGACY OBLIGATIONS

**\$1 billion** to ensure the soundness of the state's employee pension fund, resulting in **\$5.5 billion** in interest savings and retiring the fund **5 years** early.  
**\$1.14 billion** to retire unfunded liabilities of law enforcement and judicial retirement systems, and the Texas Guaranteed Tuition Plan.

##### CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

**\$4.6 billion** maintaining our commitment to border security, including **\$1 billion** to the Governor's office for constructing physical barriers.  
**\$334 million** for the Texas Juvenile Justice System.  
**\$22 million** to improve the state crime lab and eliminate testing backlog.

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#### LEGAL NOTICE

INVITATION TO BIDDERS

Sealed Bids, in duplicate, on Bid Forms provided, addressed to the President and Board of Directors of Harris County F.W.S.D. No. 6, Channelview, Texas, Harris County, will be received at Harris County F.W.S.D. No. 6, 15902 Market Street, Channelview, Texas 77530 until 2:00 P.M., Thursday, March 2, 2023, and then publicly opened and read for construction of the "New Water Well at Water Plant No. 1"

Accompany Bids with acceptable Cashier's or Certified Check in the amount of five percent (5%) of the total amount bid, payable without recourse to the District, or a Bid Bond of like amount from an approved surety company, as a guarantee that bidder will enter into a contract.

Secure Plans and Specifications from LJA Engineering, Inc., at <https://bids.lja.com> for One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00 non-refundable plus cost of delivery) (\$50.00 for electronic copy) for each set of documents, which sum will not be refunded. A printed set can be picked up at LJA Engineering, Inc., East Houston Office, 11821 East Freeway, Suite 360, Houston, TX 77029.

Examine documents at the East Houston office of LJA Engineering, Inc, Amtek Plan Room, Dodge Data & Analytics, AGC of Texas, Construct Connect and the District.

A Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference will be held on Thursday, February 23, 2023, at 2:00 P.M. at the Harris County F.W.S.D. No. 6, Conference Room, 15902 Market Street, Channelview, Texas 77530. Bids from Firms other than the Mandatory Pre-Bid Conference Attendees WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Harris County F.W.S.D. No. 6

Gary O'Brian  
President

5-2t

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#### LEGAL NOTICE

Application has been made with the Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission for a BG license by Carla Petrash at SnowBallz Shaved Ice & More LLC to be located at 13600 Old River Winfree Texas. Officers of SnowBallz Shaved Ice and More LLC are Carla Petrash.

4-2t

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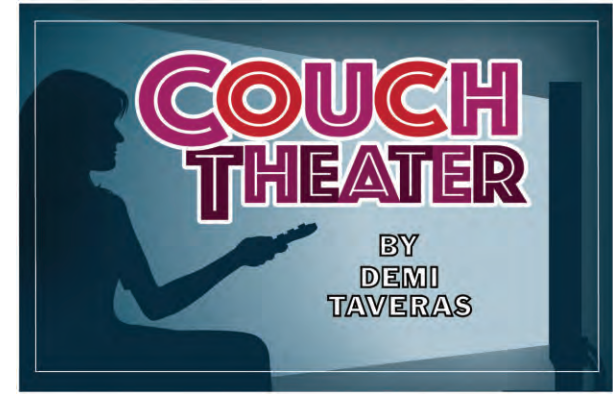
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Justice Smith, left, and Julianne Moore star in “Sharper.”

## “Your Place or Mine”

**“Your Place or Mine”** (PG-13) — Since the arrival of February marked the beginning of the most romantic time of the year, it is the perfect opportunity to dive into a rom-com!

First up is a new film out now from rom-com veterans Reese Witherspoon and Ashton Kutcher. They star as Debbie and Peter, a pair of long-distance best friends who once hooked up on the night they first met.

Twenty years later, they're both single, and Debbie's barely gotten a break from taking care of her teenage son, Jack. So, Peter offers to take care of Jack, switching places with Debbie for a week while she stays in his apartment and enjoys a well-deserved vacation.

But little do Peter and Debbie know how much this one

week will uncover deeply buried feelings from the both of them. (Netflix)

**“Spoiler Alert”** (PG-13) — The second rom-com film for this week brings a bit more drama with its comedy. Based on the memoir by Michael Ausiello, this film features Jim Parsons (“The Big Bang Theory”) and Ben Aldridge (“Fleabag”) as Kit and Michael, and just as the title suggests, the spoiler comes before the story actually begins.

In the first scene of the film, Kit dies in his husband Michael's arms after an 11-month battle with terminal cancer, with the rest of the film depicting their love story through Michael's eyes. As with any relationship, the two go through ups and downs, but every circumstance ends up making them stronger, leading up to that moment where Kit takes his very last

breath. Sally Field and Antoni Porowski (“Queer Eye”) also star in this very touching film, out now. (Peacock)

**“Sharper”** (R) — For those who'd rather skip all the mushy-gushiness, “Sharper” — with an impressive cast comprised of Julianne Moore, John Lithgow, Sebastian Stan and Justice Smith — is a psychological thriller that premieres on Feb. 17.

Lithgow portrays billionaire Richard Hobbes, who's in a relationship with Moore's character, Madeline. Madeline's son, Max, is a con artist, who's dying to get his hands on the type of money Richard has. This leads Max to convince his girlfriend, Sandra, to get her claws into Richard's sheepish son, Tom, and make him fall for her so that the two can eventually con him out of Tom's huge inheritance.

But don't be fooled — nobody, not even sweet Madeline, is who they seem to be. (AppleTV+)

**“Halloween Ends”** (R) — Did you miss the final installment of the newly rebooted “Halloween” trilogy in theaters? Have no fear ... or maybe have some, because “Halloween Ends” premieres right on Valentine's Day. Jamie Lee Curtis reprises her role as Laurie Strode, who has lived with her granddaughter, Allyson, since the death of her daughter, Karen, by Michael Myers. Michael has “vanished,” but his aura is still present throughout Haddonfield. Meanwhile, Allyson begins dating a man named Corey, who increasingly begins to show signs of malicious intent. Corey discovers Michael hiding in a sewer, and Corey's so entranced by him that he starts making plans to follow in his footsteps. While this is the least impressive film in the series by far, at least we got to tie a bow on the end of Michael Myers' terrifying reign. (I hope.) (Prime Video)



**HOLLYWOOD** — Will Harrison Ford ever slow down? The 80-year-old superstar has completed “Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny,” due June 30. Then he steps in for the late William Hurt as Thaddeus Ross in “Captain America: New World Order,” due May 3, 2024. July 2024 brings “Thunderbolts,” where Ford will reprise the role of Thaddeus Ross.

His Paramount+ Western series “1923” premiered Dec. 18, 2022, and will run for two seasons, eight episodes each. You'd think Ford would take time to spend his \$300 million enjoying time with his wife, Calista Flockhart, and his children!

But his 77-year-old co-star, Oscar winner Helen Mirren, is no slouch either. Both “Golda” (as in Golda Meir) and “Shazam! Fury of the Gods,” with Zachary Levi, hit screens this March, followed by “Fast X” and “White Bird: A Wonder Story” this May.

In 1968, while shooting celebrities during a press screening of Steve McQueen's film “Bullitt,” I got into an altercation with Elliott Gould, then married to Barbra Streisand. We four photographers had to walk backward as they rushed out, and when Streisand saw us, she went crazy and kept covering her face with her hands, saying “You have enough, don't you?”

I answered her with: “If you'd been polite and stopped for us, we wouldn't have to bother you now!” An infuriated Gould lunged at me, grabbed my heavy Nikon Camera chain, and lifted me off the ground. He threw me into the street, pummeling me against a parked car. Doctors at UCLA Medical Center said I had a dislocated shoulder as well as other injuries.

It took three years to get to court, at which time I won all three charges for battery against him. I was awarded four figures, but I told Gould that at the time,



Harrison Ford and Helen Mirren as Jacob and Cara Dutton in “1923”

it wasn't about money. It was about principal and precedent.

Everytime I encountered him after that, he was civil, saying, “They told me to be nice to you.” Once, at a charity event, he offered me a marijuana joint as a peace offering, but I declined.

A few weeks ago, I went into a local Smart & Final store, and when I reached the glass cleaner aisle, I was astounded to see Elliot Gould there. I said to him, “Do you recognize me?” He said, “You look familiar.” I replied, “Does the name Tony Rizzo mean anything?” “Oh,” he said, “You're that guy who won a lawsuit against me.”

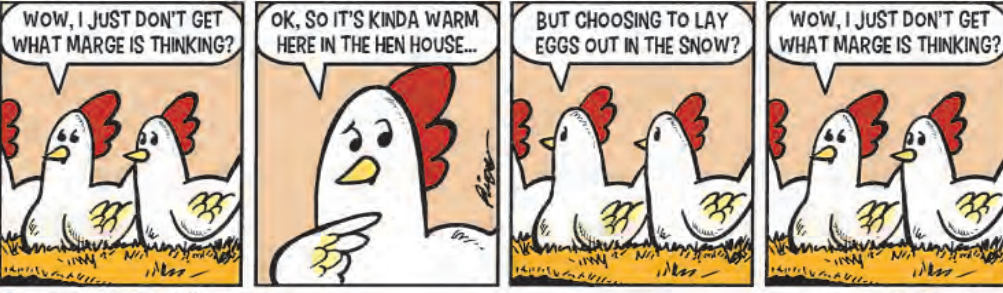
I said, “I hope you know I never blamed you. You, Ryan O'Neal, Don Johnson and Jon Peters all acted as Barbra's protectors when she saw photographers and flipped out.”

I asked him why he was there, and he just said, “My maid sent me to get Wind-ex.”

Such is the price of fame and fortune! (c) 2023 King Features Synd., Inc.

# ENTERTAINMENT

## Amber Waves



### Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

**DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK:** ♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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### HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Differences: 1. Snow fort is missing. 2. Sign is missing. 3. Cap differs. 4. Snowball stack is smaller. 5. Picture is missing. 6. Pendant is missing. 7. Snow fort is missing. 8. Snowball stack is smaller. 9. Snow fort is missing. 10. Snowball stack is smaller. 11. Snow fort is missing. 12. Snowball stack is smaller. 13. Snow fort is missing. 14. Snowball stack is smaller. 15. Snow fort is missing. 16. Snowball stack is smaller. 17. Snow fort is missing. 18. Snowball stack is smaller. 19. Snow fort is missing. 20. Snowball stack is smaller. 21. Snow fort is missing. 22. Snowball stack is smaller. 23. Snow fort is missing. 24. Snowball stack is smaller. 25. Snow fort is missing. 26. Snowball stack is smaller. 27. Snow fort is missing. 28. Snowball stack is smaller. 29. Snow fort is missing. 30. Snowball stack is smaller. 31. Snow fort is missing. 32. Snowball stack is smaller. 33. Snow fort is missing. 34. Snowball stack is smaller. 35. Snow fort is missing. 36. 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# THERE'S A BETTER APPROACH TO CANCER CARE in Baytown

At Houston Methodist Neal Cancer Center, we treat every aspect of your cancer. Leading oncologists work with our specialists across disciplines to minimize cancer's effects on major organs. One comprehensive team — dedicated to your individual care — uses the latest research, treatments and technology to stop your cancer. From infusion and clinical trials to surgery and reconstruction, our innovative care is available in Baytown.

**That's the difference between practicing medicine and leading it.**



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