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These Trail Riders were judged winners with their Trail Wagon group. RodeoHouston Feb. 28 thru Mar. 19

Serving all of the North Shore -- Channelview, Cloverleaf, Sheldon, Galena Park, Jacinto City
VOLUME 11, NO. 8 (#458) THURSDAY, MARCH 2, 2023 www.northchannelstar.com

CHANNEL CURRENTS

Chamber Lunch set for March 3rd

Monthly meeting of the North Channel Area Chamber, March 3rd from 11:30am to 1:00pm.

PROGRAM: Generation Park Update, with Gonzalo Echeverria, Director of Design and Planning, McCord Development.

Also honoring Channelview ISD Students and Educators.

RSVP by 3/28 to 713-450-3600 or info@ncachamber.com

RESCHEDULED: NCA Chamber 46th GALA Thursday Mar. 23

North Channel Chamber invites you to their 46th Annual Awards and Installation Gala. Thursday, Mar. 23 at 6:30pm, Sylvan Beach Pavilion. Guest Speaker Gus Dwairy, Entrepreneur and Rancher. \$90 per person. RSVP 713-450-3600.

NS Rotary Annual FISH FRY May 20

Catfish Fry and Crawfish Boil, Raffle for a new car, 2 auctions. Saturday, May 20 at the Rotary Pavilion on Wallisville. Tickets \$100.

CANCELLED: Project Grad Bingo Nite Mar. 4

Lee HS Gander Project Grad Bingo Night, Sat. March 4, 2023 at 6:00pm. Baytown Shrine Club, 110 W. Main, Baytown. \$40 per player. \$450 VIP table of 8. Call 281-221-1616.

Project Grad is an overnight lock-in for our grads, for a safe, drug and alcohol-free environment.

Annual Ana Hernandez Seniors Valentine's Dance

By Allan Jamail

NORTH CHANNEL – Grayson Center – February 24, 2023 was a happy day for hundreds of seniors who came together for dancing and a delicious meal with all the trimmings hosted by State Representative Ana Hernandez for her 14th Annual District 143 Seniors Valentine's Dance.

Representative Hernandez goes all out to ensure seniors have a delicious meal and loads of fun throughout the event. Seniors enjoy the fellowship and socializing as well as the nonstop dancing to the music of



STATE REPRESENTATIVE ANA HERNANDEZ WITH HER VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF.

L-R: Isaiah Jamail, Linda Jamail, Abigail Castillo, Dietrich Willis, Maria Delgado, Jose Garza, Azalia Castillo, Maria Elena Lopez, Marcus & Lucy Hernandez, Maria Martinez, Jessica Flores, Jose Alvarez, Rep. Ana Hernandez (center), Guadalupe Matamoras, Claudia Rodas, JP Victor Trevino III, Alicia Alvarez, Sonia Lopez, Jose Rodriguez, Adriana Aguirre & Rodolfo Martinez. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

Martinez D.J. owned by Rodolfo Martinez (832-715-5364).

Ana provided for seniors to have their photos made as a remembrance gift using a beautifully Valentine's decorated backdrop by a professional photographer.

The seniors especially enjoy near the end of the event when the door prizes are given away. The holder of the winning ticket number usually lets out a loud excited sound making sure

Continued with MORE PHOTOS. See SENIORS VALENTINE'S DANCE, Page 6

Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia Versus the Railroad

By Allan Jamail

HOUSTON - Denver Harbor - 5910 Market St. February 23, 2023. In McReynolds Middle School, the home of the Mighty Fighting Bears Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia showed the Railroad Companies she too is a fighter.

Garcia, a fighter in her own rights took over on a battle with the rail carriers that began many years before without many results by other elected officials, community leaders, organizations and citizens to alleviate the disruptions of vehicular traffic caused by the excessive delays at intersections.



Congresswoman Sylvia Garcia introduces her legislation to prevent long railroad crossing delays. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

"I'm introducing a bill in Congress to address the issue of blocked crossings. My bill, **Don't Block Our Communities Act**, or the

D-BLOC Act, is a significant step towards holding rail carriers accountable and making our communities more efficient and safe. As you know, rail safety and transportation reliability are among my top priorities. I am exceptionally dedicated to ensuring that passing trains do not continue to disrupt the flow of traffic and emergency vehicles in my district," Garcia said.

The law will prohibit blocking intersections with passing trains for more than 10 minutes. It'll require the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to

CONTINUED. See Garcia vs the Railroads, Page 5

Ms. Willie B. Willis 90th Birthday

Galena Manor's Resident Celebrates

By Allan Jamail

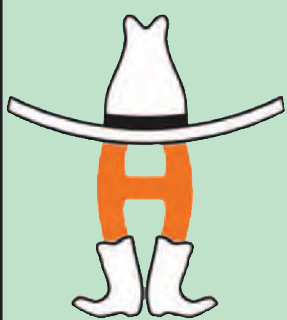
February, 26, 2023 – Family and friends gathered to celebrate one of Galena Manor's (Galena Park, TX.) longest residing resident's birthday. They enjoyed fried chicken, dirty rice, green beans, rolls and lots of Ms. Willie B. Willis' 90th birthday cake. "Ms. Willie" as everyone calls her was

Continued. See 90th Birthday, Page 6



Willie B. Willis, Galena Manor's Community Cook with her 90th birthday cake. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

IN THE STARS



At the Rodeo:

TUESDAY FEB 28
Parker McCollum

WEDNESDAY MAR 1
Brooks & Dunn

THURSDAY MAR 2
Lauren Daigle

FRIDAY MAR 3
Bun B

SATURDAY MAR 4
Walker Hayes

SUNDAY MAR 5
Zac Brown Band

MONDAY MAR 6
Jason Aldean

TUESDAY MAR 7
New Kids on the Block

Trail Rides trek through Crosby, Channelview, Aldine on way to Parade



Trailriders arrive last Friday at their final destination prior to Saturday's Parade. They bedded in Memorial Park, seen above with its new tunnel system that joins grass areas on either side.

By Gilbert Hoffman

HOUSTON – Ten trail rides converged on Memorial Park last Friday night, after a week on the road from their origin cities.

In our readership area, two trail rides made the trek, stopping along the way about six times to rest, sleep and prepare for the next day. Many also

shared the experience with local residents who visited the campsites, and elementary schools such as Sheldon and Hilliard Elementary.

The Northeastern Trail Ride and the Spanish Trail Ride are the two that come through our area on the way into Memorial Park.

The Northeastern Trail Ride starts in Cheeks, Texas near Beaumont, travels 111 miles with 55 riders and 19 wagons.

Continued. See Trail Rides, Page 5

Black History Month - (3rd of a series) Celebrating Patricia Bath, Inventor of cataract tool

By Allan Jamail

Patricia Bath was born in Harlem, New York in 1942 and would go on to become a pioneering ophthalmologist, inventor, and academic who is known for inventing a tool and procedure for the removal of cataracts using a laser beam, called the Laserphaco Probe.

She was the daughter of the first African-American motorman to work in the NYC subway. She would show an early interest and ability in science at a young age. This passion would drive her onwards and upwards. She died at the age of 76, May 30, 2019.

In 1973, Bath became the first African-American to complete a residency in ophthalmology. She was the first woman ophthalmologist to be appointed to the faculty of the University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine Jules Stein Eye Institute and the first woman to chair an ophthalmology residency program in the United States.

In the early 1980s, her work with cataract patients and related research led her to envision a method of using laser technology to remove cataracts, which cloud the lens of the eye.

Bath took a special interest in combating preventable blindness in underserved populations and along the way became the first black female doctor to receive a medical patent — for a laser technique for treating cataracts.

Dr. Bath was an educator and researcher as well as a physician. She began her medical career in New York and in 1974 joined the faculties of the University of California, Los



Patricia Bath – 1942 - 2019

Angeles, and the Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science in that city.

When she was just out of medical school, working as an intern at Harlem Hospital and then at an eye clinic at Columbia University, she noticed discrepancies in vision problems between the largely black patient population at Harlem and the largely white one at Columbia. Her observations led her to document that blindness was twice as prevalent among black people as among white people — findings that instilled in her a lifelong commitment to bringing quality eye care to those who might not otherwise have access to it.

SHELDON ISD NEWS

King High School Names Valedictorian and Salutatorian

C.E. King High School celebrates the announcement of the Graduating Class of 2023's Valedictorian and Salutatorian. These students have worked hard their entire high school career to achieve this high honor. Their dedication to their academics and the rigor that they have shone are remarkable.

Hilary Tristan is the Class of 2023 Valedictorian. Hilary is in the Sheldon Early College High School and is the president of the ambassador organization. She is also a member of the National Honor Society, Student Council, and PALS. Hilary will graduate with her Associate's Degree in Business from San Jacinto College in May. She will continue her education at the University of Texas at Austin's McCombs School of Business for Finance.

Adam Vieyra is the Class of 2023 Salutatorian. Adam is also in the Sheldon Early College High School and is a member of the ambassador organization, athletics, PALS, and National Honor Society. Adam will graduate with his Associate's Degree in General Studies from San Jacinto College in May. He will continue his education at the University of Texas at Austin and will major in mechanical engineering.



KHS Pantherettes Dance Into Gold

The KHS Pantherette Dance team performed on February 18 at the TrendSetters Northwest Houston Regional competition and took home numerous awards. The team took home several awards, both as a group and individually:

Pantherettes:
Judges' Award
Technical & Precision Merit Award
Outstanding Choreography Awards in Novelty, Contemporary, and Pom Categories
Best in Category Award for Novelty
Best in Class Award for Medium High School
TrendSetters Award of Excellence

Pantherettes Officers:
Super Sweepstakes Award (for 90 and above scores in all dances)
Technical Merit Award
Precision Merit Award
Outstanding Choreography Award in Jazz, Novelty, and Contemporary Categories
Best in Category Award for Novelty

KHS Dance will be hosting the next regional this coming Saturday, February 25 at CE King HS, an event that will also feature our KMS Dance Company.



Sheldon Celebrates The Work of Bus Drivers

On Wednesday, February 22 Sheldon ISD recognized the work of our bus drivers on School Bus Driver Appreciation Day. Bus drivers are some of the first people to greet our students each day and many develop meaningful relationships with the students and families on their route. We are so thankful for the work they do and transporting our students daily.



Sheldon ISD School Board Approves 2023-24 Academic Calendar

The 2023-24 calendar has been approved by the Sheldon ISD Board of Trustees. Highlights of the upcoming school year include the following start date, student holidays, and last day of school:

First Day of School - Wednesday, August 9
Fall Break - Monday,

October 2 - Friday, October 6
Thanksgiving Break - Monday, November 20 - Friday, November 24
Winter Break - Thursday, December 21 - Friday, January 5
February Break - Monday, February 5 - Friday, February 9
Spring Break - Friday, March 8 - Friday, March 15
Last day of school - Thursday, May 30
The calendar can be found at www.sheldonisd.com/calendar.

Sheldon ISD Names Principals of the Year



Sheldon ISD is proud to announce the Elementary Principal of the Year Ms. Solmaria Benavides and Secondary Principal of the Year Mrs. Ashley Sampson. Ms. Benavides is the principal of Carroll Elementary and Mrs. Sampson serves as the principal of C.E. King Middle School. Both were



celebrated at a district leadership team meeting on February 22 and will be recognized at the annual Sheldon Stars banquet in May. Benavides and Sampson will advance to compete against other principals in the region through the Region 4 Principal of the Year contest.

Sheldon ISD Communications Department Wins State Awards



The Sheldon ISD Communications Department has brought home five state medals from the Texas School Public Relations Association. The team's awards include: Gold Star Awards for the Sheldon ISD website and

Pre-Kindergarten marketing and Silver Star Awards for The Scoop Staff News, The Source eNews and a marketing post card mailed to the community.

Members of the department include Emily Conklin, APR, CPC, Monica Arredondo, Cynthia Galeano and Beverly Stephenson. The team was recognized at the annual conference during the Star Awards Banquet on February 22.

GALENA PARK ISD NEWS

GP ISD Board of Trustees Recognize the 2023 French Spelling Bee Champion

Houston, Texas: Galena Park ISD (GPISD) recognized Bryan Ibarra, the 2023 French Spelling Bee champion. Bryan attends Galena Park High School, where his interests also extend to robotics and art.

The French Spelling Bee is a competition that extends the knowledge and application of the French language. This challenging competition promotes literacy, provides a performance forum to display the hard work of students, and develops communication and public speaking skills.

If Bryan looks familiar, it is because he also emerged victorious in the GPISD's 2023 Social Studies Bee. During the Social Studies Bee, Bryan earned a \$5,000 scholarship. Congratulations, Bryan, for yet another accomplishment!

A certificate and medal were presented to Bryan



Ibarra on behalf of the Board of Trustees and Dr. John Moore, Superintendent of Schools.

Story Credit: Dr. Tommie L. Smith
Photo Credit: Christopher Gause

CHARLOTTE'S WEB

By Charlotte Jackson



Do It

When you see a hole in the road that needs repair, do it. When you see a new homeless encampment has popped up in the community, do it. When you see a group of teenagers out in the neighborhood when you know there is no school holiday, do it. When you see an elderly neighbor who has an overgrown yard, do it. When you see there is someone struggling while at work, do it.

Do what? Do the right thing. Make the report of the hole in the road instead of complaining on social media. Depending on where the homeless encampment is located, call the Texas Department of Transportation, the Harris County Sheriff's Office or at least call 211 and get help before it turns into a community eyesore, possibly a breeding ground for health issues. If you see students out during school hours, call the administration building and report it. The local school districts have contracts with the Constables and chances are if there is a large group of minors roaming the streets, you will keep them from getting into trouble. If you see an elderly person who needs yardwork, stop and offer to help. It would be a great time to demonstrate to your children how to help.

Too often we see hardworking employees that are simply becoming burned out. When we are in their presence, we need to not only thank them for being at work but encourage them that in life there will be struggles, but they will make it. If you have lived very long, you know how they are feeling. And you also are living proof that life gets better.

I recently stopped to get gas and saw someone who over 25 years ago worked with children where my daughter attended Head Start. She asked how my children were doing and when I shared with her that I was on the way to my daughter's home for dinner, you would have thought she won a million dollars. She was so excited for my daughter to be a homeowner. She started sharing with her husband who was pumping gas about so many things that she had seen through the years that overcame.

Perhaps it was that experience that led me on Sunday morning to visit a small church in the area that I had not been to in several years. (I will admit, that while I have a church home, prior to the pandemic, it was common for me to attend two or more churches on a Sunday.) Surprising the pastor was a blessing. He was not only getting ready to share an awesome message, but he was still the one playing the organ and keyboard, setting the tone for the service. It was so good to see him and others. As he shared about his humble beginnings, I had tears rolling down my face, because, yes I had witnessed much of it as an encourager.

We must do the right things. We must love our neighbors and encourage those we meet. In recent weeks, we have seen tragedies in the community. We need to not only encourage the surviving family and friends, but what about the First Responders who had to investigate? And the teachers who lost students? And the children in the neighborhoods that are dealing with the aftermath? We need to pray for them and be there. I invite you to join others on the first Friday of the month to pray for the Eastside. This Friday at 7 p.m. the Houston Eastside Prayer Gathering will be held at San Jacinto College North, located outdoors near Building N-6 and Building N-13.

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Galena Park ISD Board of Trustees Recognize Distinguished Dance Director

Houston, Texas: Galena Park ISD (GPISD) recognized Audra Taylor, North Shore Senior High School (NSSHS) Dance Director, for receiving the Texas Dance Educators' Association (TDEA) Distinguished Service Award.

The TDEA is dedicated to the advancement of dance education throughout Texas. The TDEA Distinguished Service Award celebrates individuals who have significantly contributed to dance education for a minimum of 20 years. Ms. Taylor's dedication and commitment to the field began as a dance and

show troupe member for the NFL Houston Oilers and progressed to being an assistant director, director, curriculum author, camp coordinator, and distinguished educator.

The students of NSSHS are fortunate to be led by such a dynamic dance educator!

A certificate was presented to Audra Taylor on behalf of the Board of Trustees and Dr. John Moore, Superintendent of Schools.

Story Credit: Dr. Tommie L. Smith
Photo Credit: Christopher Gause

Galena Park ISD Board of Trustees Recognize the 2023 Anti-Vaping Poster Contest Winners

Houston, Texas: Galena Park ISD (GPISD) recognized the 2023 anti-vaping poster contest winners:

Elementary School Winner
*Jimena Herrera, Purple Sage Elementary School

Middle School Winner
*Aundrea Booker, Galena Park Middle School

High School Winner
*Tony Cutliff, North Shore Senior High School

These students brought awareness to the nationwide dangers of vaping. It is commendable to see students use their talents to educate their peers on the dan-

gers of vaping. The winning posters will be displayed throughout all GPISD campuses in an effort to bring awareness to the nationwide vaping epidemic. Thank you, Jimena, Aundrea, and Tony, for partnering with your very own school district and for sharing your artistic skills.

A certificate and medal were presented to each student on behalf of the Board of Trustees and Dr. John Moore, Superintendent of Schools.

Story Credit: Dr. Tommie L. Smith
Photo Credit: Christopher Gause

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ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: “Are Inclusions in Stones Always a Bad Thing?”

When shopping for a diamond or other clear stone, we usually like stones that do not show any inclusions to the naked eye. Most people prefer a clear stone that is well cut and polished. The absence of inclusions is further defined within the 4c as “Clarity”. However, the presence of inclusions is not always a bad thing.

A diamond or other stone that has an internal characteristic or inclusion can give us insight into how it was created. And, in a few rare cases, the inclusion may even add value to the stone because of how unique the inclusion is, such as the shape, size or color of the inclusion(s).

This picture shows a cube shaped clear quartz stone that has been polished on all six sides. Inside the stone crystal is a collection of connected light blue needles. From a distance it seems to resemble the floating seed canopy of a dandelion. These needle-like inclusions were created within the stone under great pressure, heat, and time. Stones that contain such beautiful features are truly unique from all other stones. This quartz was shaped and polished specifically to show off the incredible display of blue needles as being this stone's greatest asset.

The really amazing thing that an inclusion or two offers is verification that no two diamonds, or any other stone, are exactly the same. Just like people, all gemstones are different and unique from one another. So, the next time you shop for a diamond or other stone, ask the jeweler if they could magnify the stone so that you can see its internal characteristics or inclusions. I think you will be surprised at just how amazing inclusions can be.

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.

If you have questions pertaining to jewelry, watches, diamonds, precious stones, precious metals, and other questions related to the jewelry industry, email jmills@pineforestjewelry.com.

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OPINION

By BILL KING

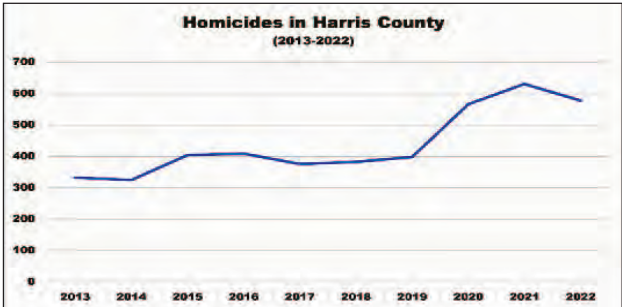


Harris County Crime Stats

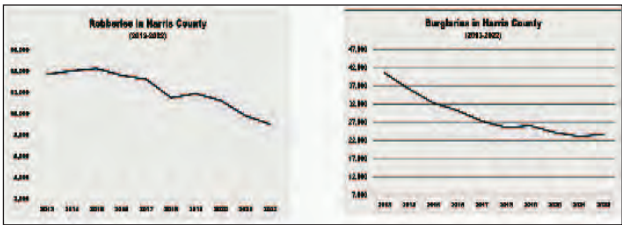
2022 HARRIS COUNTY CRIME STATS

During the last election, the severity of crime in Harris County was hotly debated. The final numbers for 2022 are now available from the Texas Department of Safety and they paint a mixed picture. In some of the more serious categories, there was some improvement last year but the levels remain well above where they stood a decade ago. Robberies and burglaries both continued a long-standing trend downward, but other property crimes continued to climb with double digit increases in 2022.

HOMICIDE, RAPES & ASSAULTS

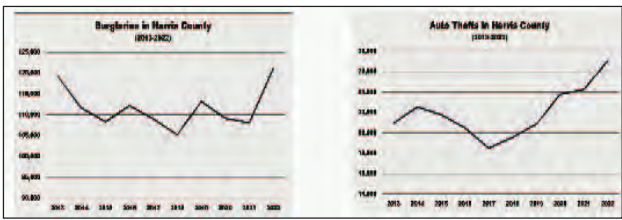


In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Houston was going through its last crime wave. Homicides topped out in 1990 at 734. However, from there, homicides steadily declined for the next twenty years, hitting a low of 264 in 2011. Considering the population of Harris County grew by about 70% during that same period, the decline was truly remarkable. However, after 2011, homicides began creeping up and then skyrocketed higher in 2020 and 2021. The 631 homicides in 2021 was the highest level since 1990. In 2022, homicides declined slightly to 578 (-8%) but were still nearly double the number of homicides a decade ago. The trend for rapes and assaults tracked fairly close to homicides.



ROBBERIES & BURGLARIES

Interestingly, the trend for robberies and burglaries was almost the opposite of homicides, rapes and assaults. Both began the last decade well below the peak in Houston's last crime wave in the early 1990s and have continued to track lower. Robberies took a particularly sharp downturn starting in 2021 and fell again in 2022 to just over 9,000. That is as low a level as I could find going back for thirty years.



THEFT

The DPS has two categories of theft that it reports in its Index Crime Summary - larceny and auto theft. Larceny is basically any kind of theft that does not involve physically taking someone's property from them by force, which is robbery, and breaking into a home or business to steal something, which is burglary. Both larceny and auto theft have also been generally declining for the last thirty years. Improvements in vehicle security systems resulted in a large reduction when those technologies were first rolled out. However, both reached their nadir in 2018 and have been steadily climbing since. Both saw an 11% increase in 2022 alone.

I have been watching Houston's crime stats for nearly thirty years. I have learned over that time that crime is an incredibly complex phenomenon, which defies simple explanations as to why it goes up or down. Also, while local factors like the effectiveness of the local criminal justice system and a community's cohesiveness play a large part, there are also national marco factors that effect it. For example, our nation's decision to largely deinstitutionalize mental health care in the 60s and 70s has tremendously affected the criminal justice system.

Many have speculated that the pandemic affected crime rates, citing various possible effects. While some of that conjecture seems to make some intuitive sense, it is hard to find much support for the pandemic having any outsize effects in the stats. For example, some speculated that the stress of the pandemic and associated lockdowns would cause more violence, especially family violence. But while homicides certainly took a spike upward at the beginning of the pandemic, assaults have slightly declined throughout the pandemic.

However, I do not think that it can be seriously doubted that the more lenient bond practices of many of the Democratic judges elected since 2018, combined with the huge case backlogs, have contributed to much of the increase in serious violent crimes, especially murders, in Harris County recently. Crime Stoppers has documented more than enough specific instances to show that has been a significant driver of the increase.

The precipitous drop in violent crime in Harris County that began in the early 1990s was a national phenomenon. Nationally, the murder rate in the U.S. dropped by half between 1990 and 2006. And for most of the last decade, the rates have remained relatively low. Those lower levels of crime became our new norm. So, it is hardly surprising that Americans would be anxious about the spike in violent crime over the last three years. Unless and until we return to those norms, I expect that crime will continue to be on the public's mind and a leading issue in elections.



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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Street Takeover Spurs Governor's Action

Gov. Greg Abbott has created a statewide task force after several "street takeovers" recently took place in Austin in which motorists obstructed intersections, shot off fireworks and drove recklessly.

Videos posted after the events showed vehicles doing donuts, crowds gathering around intersections, and people setting off fireworks, according to the Austin American-Statesman.

Seven people were arrested in the incidents, which occurred at four Austin intersections.

Abbott directed the Texas Department of Public Safety to investigate the events and "target the organized crime aspect" of the events, according to The Dallas Morning News.

"We are seeing fireworks fired at officers in crowds, lasers pointed at aircraft, drivers driving upwards of 130 miles per hour with no lights on in the dark of night — all of it is reckless, and it needs to be stopped," DPS Director Steve McCraw said.

Additional arrests are expected, law enforcement officials said.

TXDOT PROPOSES \$100 BILLION TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Texas Department of Transportation is proposing a record \$100 billion, 10-year transportation plan to improve congestion, increase safety and maintain the state's roadways. That's a \$15 billion increase over the original plan and comes after record projected revenue for the state, generated by oil and gas fees that are dedicated to highway projects.

The latest plan would increase funding in a number of areas, including "safety, energy sector, rural and urban connectivity, border infrastructure, maintenance and preservation," according to a TxDOT statement.

"Safety is a top priority for TxDOT, and these funding levels reflect that," TxDOT Executive Director Marc Williams said.

TxDOT now has more than \$33 billion in transportation projects under construction throughout the state. More than 7,000 projects are either underway or scheduled to break ground this year.



BILLS WOULD BAN COVID RESTRICTIONS

A trio of bills by state Rep. Lois Kolkhorst, R-Brenham, would address Gov. Greg Abbott's calls to end COVID-related restrictions put in place as the pandemic began in 2020.

"This legislation is aimed at preventing future repeats of these controversial public health measures, which did little to slow the spread of the virus and did serious damage to the economy and education systems," Kolkhorst said in a statement, as reported by the Statesman.

The measures, if passed, would codify executive measures issued by Abbott in 2021 that prohibited employer or governmental COVID-19 mandates requiring people to wear masks or to be vaccinated.

Since Abbott has made the COVID-19 package an emergency measure, it bypasses many of the rules put in place by the state constitution to slow passage of legislation, the Statesman reported.

SENATE REVIVES EFFORT TO MAKE ILLEGAL VOTING A FELONY

After lowering the penalty for illegal voting to a misdemeanor in 2021, leaders in the Texas Senate appear poised to again raise the penalty to a second-degree felony, the Texas Tribune reported. Legislation filed by state Sen. Bryan Hughes, R-Mineola, would also modify the standard for determining a person's intent to vote illegally.

Current law says a person commits a crime if they "knowingly or intentionally" vote or attempt to vote and know they are not eligible. Under Hughes' bill, the language changes that to say anyone who votes

or attempts to vote in an election in which "the person knows of a particular circumstance that makes the person not eligible to vote" could be charged.

That means, for example, that someone who knows they are not a U.S. citizen but did not know they were ineligible to vote could still be prosecuted. An attorney with the Texas Civil Rights Project criticized the proposed change as a "very nasty and very potentially consequential provision."

"That is why this intent requirement exists, because it's not fair for people to go to jail for good-faith mistakes," attorney James Slattery said.

STATE COULD FOOT AG OFFICE'S LEGAL BILL

A \$3.3 million settlement of a whistleblower complaint filed against the Texas attorney general's office should be paid by the state and not personally by Attorney General Ken Paxton, an agency attorney said. The AG's chief of general litigation told lawmakers that the agency, not Paxton personally, is the defendant under the Texas Whistleblower Act, and that taking the case to trial would cost even more. "The agreement itself is contingent on legislative funding," he said. "It's a settlement that we made in order to save money for the state of Texas. It was the prudent thing to do to minimize litigation risk," Chris Hilton of the AG's office said, according to kut.org.

However, House Speaker Dade Phelan has said he does not support using taxpayer dollars for the settlement. Abbott has said "this is an issue that the attorney general is going to have to fully explain to both the House and the Senate."

TEA RELEASES TEACHER VACANCY RECOMMENDATIONS

A task force appointed last year by the Texas Education Agency has released its recommendations to address the teacher and staff vacancy crisis in Texas, as record numbers of both leave the education field in the wake of the pandemic and other issues.

The Teacher Vacancy Task Force, established last March, was comprised of teachers and school system leaders from across the state. The recommendations include:

- A significant increase in overall teacher salaries
- Enhancing teachers' total compensation package, including reducing cost of health care insurance.
- Provide incentives and support for hard-to-staff areas, such as special education and bilingual education teachers.
- Improve the pipeline and pre-service preparation of novice teachers.
- Expand training and support for teacher mentorship.
- Provide access and support for high-quality instructional materials.
- Demonstrate respect and value for teacher time.
- School culture and discipline supports.

The task force urged the Legislature to increase funding for teacher salaries, noting the state ranks 28th in the nation for average teacher salary.

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THE POSTSCRIPT

By Carrie Classon

"Chia Pet Moment"

"You know, since I've been eating these chia seeds, I've noticed my beard has gotten heavier."

My husband, Peter, was talking to my father downstairs. I sat up at attention.

This comment about the chia seeds was news to me. I knew Peter was eating chia seeds because he thought it might lower his cholesterol. Peter is always reading articles about health, and I don't usually pay a lot of attention. He reads scientific studies about a variety of things. The studies are rarely conclusive, but if they indicate that eating chia seeds might be a good thing, Peter starts eating them every morning.

My cholesterol is low, and I've never eaten a chia seed in my life. But this information about his beard caught my attention. For one full moment.

Then I realized this was Peter's way of making a joke. "You mean like a Chia Pet?" I hollered downstairs.

Peter started laughing and my dad groaned, and I was deeply disappointed. Because I was actually hoping it was true.

I had been hoping—for one long and optimistic moment—that chia seeds might help my hair. My hair is so wispy at this point that saying I look like a dandelion gone to seed is doing dandelions a disservice. I look at photos of myself taken a couple of years ago and can see I used to have a lot more hair. I can see a trajectory, and it's not going in the right direction. I wouldn't mind one bit if I started to resemble a Chia Pet. It would be a big step up, as I see it.

"Yes!" Peter laughed. "I've started to look like a Chia Pet!"

Now, this is almost true. Peter has a lot of hair. His whole family has a talent for growing hair. But the idea of a real-life, Chia Pet-type cure stayed with me. That's the trouble with getting your hopes up. When I was reconciled to being bald as a cue ball by 70, everything was fine. Get me hoping I might grow more hair—even for a moment—and I suddenly see this future filled with hair. I see luxuriant long tresses cascading down my back. OK, not really. But I imagine having enough hair where it would make a noticeable difference if I ran a comb over my head or not.

I discovered, unsurprisingly, that there were a lot of folks happy to sell products to grow more hair. There were legions of photos of impossibly long, thick hair and products associated with these photos, claiming to take credit. It was a swamp of dubious information and misplaced hopes and snake oil. It was irresistible. I ordered some supplements.

"I'm just gonna give this a try!" I told myself late at night as I imprudently ordered enough product to get me through the next three months.

The product is "guaranteed or your money back," but I know how that goes. Nobody wants to say they were suckered. Nobody wants to admit they got their hopes up. Nobody wants to come back and report that they now have almost no hair at all and would feel a lot better if they at least had the 30 bucks back that they spent, so they could buy a hat to keep their head warm, since their hair was no longer doing the job.

But now I have miracle supplements on the way, and I'm resigned to giving them a try. I'm trying to recapture my Chia Pet moment—that 15 seconds when I thought anything was possible.

Till next time,
Carrie
Photos and other news at CarrieClasson.com.



Long Railroad Crossing Delays,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

investigate blocked crossings incidents that have been reported by the public to the new “blocked crossing database.”

The legislation allows the FRA to issue fines to rail carriers for repeated violations of this blocked crossing time limit (10 minutes).

The public meeting was well attended by elected officials, community leaders, organizations and citizens. Some present I noticed was, State Senator Carol Alvarado, Yuorba Harris, Chief District Director for Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, Adriana Aguirre, Chief of Staff for State Representative Ana Hernandez, Joaquin Martinez, Chief of Staff for Councilman Robert Gallegos and Lon Squyres, City Manager of Jacinto City and Chief Samuel Peña, Houston’s Fire Chief.

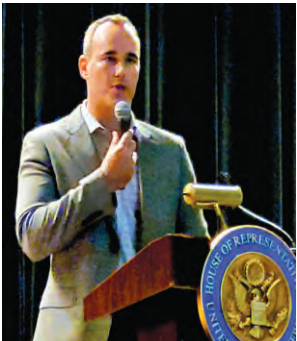
Congresswoman Garcia introduced Amit Bose, FRA Administrator. Administrator Bose was nominated by the President Joe Biden and confirmed by the Senate January 2022. Bose is the principal advisor to the Secretary of Transportation (Secretary Pete Buttigieg, U.S. Secretary of Transportation) and is the principal representative of the US Department of Transportation on railroad affairs and other fixed guideway transportation matters.

Garcia also introduced Clint Schelbitzki, Assist. Vice President of Public Affairs of Houston’s Union Pacific Railroad office. Union Pacific (UP) is the largest railroad in North America, covering 23 states across the western two-thirds of the United States.

Bose and Schelbitzki explained the new FRA Houston Blocked Crossing Initiative. It’s an innovative approach called TRAINFO Pilot Program and Positive Train Control (PTC) made available by \$430,000 in FRA funds. The goals of the program are to decrease the number of stopped trains and the duration of times trains are stopped. By using a data base of reported and or known excessive crossing delays UP working with and communicating with the city of Houston’s



Amit Bose, FRA Administrator. (Photo by Allan Jamail)



Clint Schelbitzki, UP's Assist. Vice President (Photo by Allan Jamail)

emergency departments it can help navigate alternative routes for emergency vehicles and the public.

Bose said the FRA is committed to having two members of his staff monitor and to support his pledge to focus on blocked crossings in Houston. They’ll ensure collected data on stopped trains, length of trains, time of day, duration of stoppage, critical crossings blocked and the reason for stoppage and duration. They’ll provide weekly status meetings with the FRA headquarters.

TRAINFO will help emergency dispatchers select routes to avoid delays caused by trains. Put an end to emergency vehicles with activated sirens and lights stopped and waiting at rail crossings. Emergency dispatchers will receive real-time rail crossing blockage alerts so to give emergency vehicles other routes around blocked crossings. Houston FD and PD are currently collecting and analyzing TRAINFO information data into dispatching in January 2023.

During the public’s question and answers period questions were asked of Garcia, Bose or Schelbitzki. City Manager Lon Squyres said and asked, “While it’s good to see the new technology to help blocked crossings, it has

been limited within the city of Houston. When will we see this type of technology applied to outlying areas?” He was advised that for now this is a pilot program and hopefully once it’s producing positive results, then it can be used more widely across the county.

Briana Baisden, a Houston citizen asked UP’s Clint Schelbitzki, why after funding was approved to establish 8 quiet zones and with “no horn” signs posted within the east end in 2018 haven’t they been erected? She was informed the matter will be looked into. Baisden has kept detailed records presented them of how many times she’s been given the run-around by UP. Now she is again being told what she’s been told for years.

State Senator Carol Alvarado issued the following statement: “I appreciate the attention we’re receiving from the Federal Railroad Administration. This has been a longstanding issue in our community and I remain committed to working with all stakeholders to find a meaningful solution for Senate District 6.”

State Representative Ana Hernandez issued the following statement: “Railroad trains have become increasingly longer and more dangerous as they travel across the country through our communities. Long trains impact our communities by blocking major thoroughfares for long periods of time, impeding emergency response time, and also impact railroad worker safety. I filed House Bill 2717 to regulate train length. This legislation will improve public safety and worker safety by setting a maximum train length.”

Allan Jamail’s NC Star writer after the meeting asked UP’s Clint Schelbitzki numerous questions which members of the public solicited his help in getting answers to, but as of this writing Schelbitzki has not provided the answers.

Citizens can report excessively blocked UP rail crossings by calling, 1-888-877-7267 UP’s critical call center or the Texas FRA office: Phone: 817-862-2200.

Trail Rides through area,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

This ride was established in 1982, and the trail boss is Anthony Bruno, taking over for his dad who passed away last year.

The Spanish Trail Ride starts in Shepherd, Texas north of Houston. It travels 109 miles, with 125 riders and 9 wagons. It was established in 1961 and the trail boss is Larry Cantrell. By coincidence Cantrell took over from his father, who also passed away last year.

Obviously the ride is a physical challenge, but interviews with the participants tell how much they look forward to it each year.



NORTHEASTERN TRAIL BOSS ANTHONY BRUNO

Hopoeffuly you got to observe the rides in one of their travels through the area. The Northeastern Trail Ride stopped overnight Wednesday at the Crosby Fairgrounds, and

Thursday night at the Triangle Seven Arena in North Forest. They travelled along old Beaumont Highway for part of the trip, stopping at elementary schools to show their horses and wagons, and tell their stories to enthralled children.

The Spanish Trail Ride stopped at Humble Civic Center Wednesday night, and Knight of Columbus on Whitney prior to Friday’s ride into Memorial Park. They travelled along Aldine-Bender for part of the trip, and Shepherd after that.

The ultimate goal was to participate in the Rodeo-Houston parade on Saturday in downtown Houston.



Northeastern Trail Riders on the road this week.

OBITUARIES

Maye Evelyn (Pat) Lambert

Maye Evelyn (Pat) Lambert, 85, of Galena Park, Texas, went home to be with the Lord on February 20, 2023.

Pat was born to Samuel Prewitt and Delema Penrod, on April 2, 1937 in Leggett, Texas and she graduated from Leggett High School and Lufkin Business School. After moving to Galena Park, she became an active member of the First Baptist Church of Galena Park, where she worshiped, learned, and served for over sixty years. Here, her passions included pouring into mission work, including fundraising for the Lottie Moon Offering, hosting birthday parties at nearby nursing homes, leading a hostess and benevolence committee, and performing outreach with the Hospitality House. She loved teaching Sunday school, playing the piano, and serving as the church secretary for many



years as well. She had a love of keeping those who were sick or homebound supported through her card ministry, and she never missed an opportunity to witness about her faith. In addition to her work with the church, Pat was the smiling face of the medical practice of Dr. Alan Lambert for over twenty-five years.

Pat is survived by her loving husband of forty years, Dr. Alan Lambert, her children, Patti Raines and husband Keith, Allan (Randy) Parish, Todd Parrish and wife Renee, Stepson Gary Lambert and wife Mary Alice,

her grandchildren, Shanna Carmouche, Angel Raines, Russell Lambert, Holly Wiese, and great-grandchildren, Kailyn Wimmer, Isabella Carmouche, Benjamin, Bradley, and Molly Lambert, and Dollie and William Wiese. She also leaves to cherish her memory, her siblings, Raymond (Bud) Prewitt and wife Cara, Carolyn Williams, and Russell (Bubba) Brock and wife Kathleen.

A celebration of Pat’s Life will be held on February 25, 2023 at First Baptist Church Galena Park, 1505 1st Street, Galena Park, Texas 77547. Visitation will be at 10:00 AM and Brother Marcos Ramos will officiate the Funeral Service, which will begin at 11:00 AM, with a reception will follow the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to First Baptist Church designated for mission work. Interment will be at Forest Park Lawndale Funeral Home.

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Seniors Valentine's Dance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1



REP. ANA HERNANDEZ LINE-DANCING WITH SENIORS.
L-R: LaGloria Sephus, Diann Cotton, Rep. Ana Hernandez & JP Victor Trevino III
(Photo by Allan Jamail)

they're heard. They waste no time hustling up to receive their gift. As they exited for their trip home many seniors were excited to have a "selfie" made with Rep. Hernandez to put on their cell-phone.

"A special thank you to our amazing sponsors and volunteers for making this our best dance yet. We're looking forward to our next Valentine's dance," Hernandez said.

Car burglary leads to Shootout, one death in Channelview

CHANNELVIEW – Deputies from the Sheriff's office were called to the 16,000 block of Wallisville, where a dead body was found lying in the road.

Further investigation indicated that the body was that of a group of burglars that had been breaking into cars on Conover Court in Sterling Green subdivision.

One homeowner, on seeing the crime, began shooting at the group. What ensued after that was a chase through the neighborhood, with guns fired from both the homeowner and the burglars.

The chase went from Sterlling Green to Beltway



Resident of Sterling Green in Channelview, whose white pickup behine him was burglarized to start the chase.

8, and then to Wallisville, near Harvey Brown Elementary.

The body was apparently dumped from the burglars' car, in front of the

school.

Authorities are looking for a white 4 door sedan. Call Crimestoppers 713-222-TIPS with info.

GP Longest Residing Resident's Birthday

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

born February 23, 1933 in Wharton, Texas. She mothered 10 children and worked many years for the Alfron Motel on Houston's Crane Street. She's an excellent cook and the neighbors have always enjoyed her oxtails, meat loaf, mustard, turnip and collard greens and her delicious homemade sweet potato pie. Neighborhood kids frequently knock on her door for candy or other treats.

I've had the pleasure of getting Ms. Willie's hugs and seeing her wide and happy "to see me" smile when I personally bring her the North Channel Star Newspaper, she loves getting this newspaper.



90th birthday celebrants for Willie B. Willis. Photo of: Ms. Willie B. Willis seated holding baby Cody Holley, Nadine "Queen" Huff, Nakia N. Huff, Katherine Taylor, Denise A. Guillory, Debra Baines, Rebecca Hallock, Judy Guillen, Partick Willis, Martin E. Guillory, Regina Smith, Jeffrey Smith, Toyi L. Holley, Theresa Guillory, Dante Brown & Marvin C. Huff. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

Fire destroys North Channel Tattoo shop

HARRIS COUNTY – An east Harris County tattoo shop is a total loss after a large fire engulfed the building early Saturday, officials said.

The fire broke out at Southern Boys Tattoo Shop in the 13700 block of East Freeway near Uvalde Road.

Harris County ESD 12 and Channelview Fire Department responded to the scene where officials said they found a large amount of flames coming from the building.

The tattoo shop was closed at the time of the fire.No injuries were reported.

Officials said firefighters were able to control the flames. An investigation was launched to find the cause of the fire.

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CANCER FUNDRAISER IN CROSBY

BRAs For the Cause raises \$155,000 & Riotous Fun

By Debbie Holmelin

The Crosby community once again rallied and showed their overwhelming generosity and support of Crosby Fair and Rodeo's 11th Annual Bras for the Cause Event hosted by the Bras for the Cause Committee on Saturday, February 4, 2023 at the Crosby American Legion Hall. Preliminary reports show over \$155,000 was raised at the event through ticket sales, VIP sponsors, live auction and silent auction donations.

100% of proceeds will benefit people in our community and surrounding areas that are fighting cancer through the Pink Heals Fund and Breast Care Fund at Houston Methodist Baytown, Candlelighters Childhood Alliance, and Joseph's Warriors.

20 male celebrity models participated in a fashion show modeling bras designed by family and friends. Jason Lewis got the party started with his "Shake Cancer" Bra designed by Sarah Humphries and Shelly Carter. Some of the themes included, "Ropin' a Cure" a handmade leather bra made by the model himself (aka Kurt Marek). Adam Notgrass was "Cruella Deville" and Dr. Nirav Naik, Oncologist from

lucky to live in the community of Crosby. The stories that we receive about patients who have been helped through the proceeds of this event warms our hearts and confirms our drive to continue this great service for anyone in need. There were lots of smiles on Saturday night! Thank you Crosby Community!

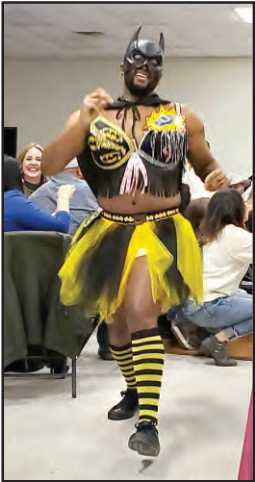
THANKS TO PHOTOS BY MECHELE, STORY BY DEBBIE HOLMELIN



BOTTOM ROW: Dr. Joe Dervay, Josh Boyd, JD Ramirez, Justin Whittredge, Adam Notgrass, Matt Whitworth, Dr. Navir Naik
TOP ROW: Dr. Tyson Brunstetter, Brian Parker, Andrew Tarpinian, Kurt Marek, Kory Hornberger, Jason Lewis, Andrew Rumney, Teaque Schexnayder, Jacob Massengale, Jeremy Strang, Aaron Bond, David Cagigas, Jason McWhorter (not pictured Jamayne Carter-Casey.) (Photos by Michele)



Lily-White



Batman



The LINEMAN with friends & buyers (Photos by Michele)



"Top Gun" model with friends



"On Tap" Model with friends



"Britney WHO?" model with mom and aunt



"Shake Cancer" model with friends



"Grinch" with North Shore Rotary supporters

Amber Waves

SON, I HOPE YOU'VE TAKEN MY ADVICE AND SET ASIDE FOR RETIREMENT.

YOU NEED TO BE THINKING ABOUT YOUR FUTURE.

I SURE AM. IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE DOING AS WELL?

ARE YOU KIDDING? AT MY AGE I'M MORE JUST REFLECTING ON THE PAST.

by Dave T. Phipps

TIGER

THIS IS SILLY.

WE COULD HAVE USED ONE BOX. PRESENTS TO US.

I LIKE TO GIVE SEPARATE PRESENTS.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, SUZY!

OPEN MY PRESENT FIRST.

ONE SKI!

OPEN MINE...YOU'LL UNDERSTAND!

The Spats

GRANDPA, ARE YOU AFRAID OF DYING?

CERTAINLY NOT!

...I JUST DON'T WANT TO BE THERE WHEN IT HAPPENS.

by Jeff Pickering

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

8			2				1	
		9		8	2			
	1		4				6	
	6			3	4			
3			2	1			7	
			7	5				9
	4			6				5

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 3x3 box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

Trivia Test

by Fifi Rodriguez

1. GEOGRAPHY: Which river flows through the European capitals of Vienna and Budapest?

2. SCIENCE: At what temperature are Fahrenheit and Celsius equal?

3. TELEVISION: The comedy series "Frasier" is a spinoff of which sitcom?

4. LITERATURE: Which novel features a character named Katniss Everdeen?

5. FOOD & DRINK: What kind of beans are used in falafel?

6. ANIMAL KINGDOM: What is a beaver's home called?

7. THEATER: Which musical features a character named Tracy Turnblad?

8. MOVIES: Which actress plays the young Wendy Darling in the movie "Hook"?

9. HISTORY: Who invented the game of lacrosse?

10. SCIENCE: What percentage of the world's population has brown eyes?

February 27, 2023 Posting Date

King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Pirate's chart

4 "Shark Tank" network

7 Clench

11 Misfortunes

13 Monk's title

14 Jeans maker Strauss

15 Grabbed

16 Sailor

17 Opposite of "sans"

18 Lukewarm

20 Soft shoes, for short

22 Eggy quaff

24 Give

28 Limo alternative

32 Orange variety

33 Online auction site

34 "Kapow!"

36 Traditional tales

37 Winter woes

39 Lauded

41 Balloon filler

43 Little rascal

44 Beseech

46 Speak one's mind

50 Big swig

53 Profit

55 Alike (Fr.)

56 Sheltered

57 — Jima

58 Activist Parks

DOWN

1 Catcher's aid

2 Skin soother

3 Fall into a soft chair

4 Astern

5 "Dracula" author Stoker

6 Ersatz chocolate

7 Fairy-tale footwear

8 Speed (up) " — had it!"

9 Photo, for short

10 Swimmer without a suit

12 Medico

19 Biz bigwig

21 Prattle

25 New Mexico resort

26 Shrek, for one

27 Garden intruder

28 Georgia or Cal

29 Bassoon's kin

30 Humpty's perch

31 Knock

35 Hosp. scan

38 California's Big —

40 I love (Lat.)

42 Craze

45 Evergreen trees

47 Mr. Stravinsky

48 "Apollo 13" org.

49 Panache

50 Tank filler

51 Last (Abbr.)

52 Meadow

54 Spinning toy

Answers

King Crossword

Solution time: 22 mins.



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