

Legislative Update



State Representative Ana Hernandez speaks to the North Channel Chamber at their monthly luncheon, held at Town Center in Jacinto City.

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CHANNEL
CURRENTS

Back-2-School
First Day of
Classes:

DISTRICT:	DATE:
ALDINE	AUG 10 THU
HISD	AUG 28 MON
CROSBY	AUG 7 MON
HUFFMAN	AUG 9 WED
GOOSE CREEK	AUG 14 MON
GALENA PARK	AUG 9 WED
SHELDON	AUG 9 WED
CHANNELVIEW	AUG 16 WED
DAYTON	AUG 9 WED
BARBERS HILL	AUG 16 WED

Free Tablets for
Texas Seniors
August 18

The community is invited to attend a registration event for people ages 49 and older who qualify to receive a free electronic tablet.
August 18, 2023 from 9:00am to 12:00pm.
Jacinto City Heritage Community Center, 1025 Oates Road, Jacinto City.
Bring document: One of the following:
-Tx Drivers License
-Voter Registration
-Utility Bill with Address
-Vehicle Registration
-ID card with address
-Lease on Letterhead
NOTE: It will take 6 months to process application and receive your tablet.

Public Input sought on
Consolidated Plan at
August 17 meeting

The public is invited to a Meeting Thursday, August 17, at Flukinger Community Center, from 4:30pm to 7:30pm.
The plan is the county's vision for improving the quality of life in low-to-moderate income areas.
See complete details on Page 5.

Hernandez updates Chamber on Legislative session

By Gilbert Hoffman
North Channel Star

JACINTO CITY – The monthly meeting of the North Channel Chamber was held in Jacinto City this month, at JC Town Center only a block away from the office of the speaker, State Representative Ana Hernandez.

Representative Hernandez brought the luncheon crowd up to date on the accomplishments, and failures, of the 88th Texas Legislature session, which ended in May, with two special sessions that followed later.

Ana represents Texas District 143 in the Legislature, having been elected in a special vote in 2005. She reviewed some of her life history, having been



SPEAKERS and guests at the Luncheon included Rotarian Ken Wimbley, SanJac Allatia Harris, Chamber president Margie Buentello, State Representative Ana Hernandez, Chamber Board Bill Palko, and SanJac Alexander Okwonna. A Colorful Group! (Photo NC Star/Hoffman)

born in Reynosa, Mexico and raised in Pasadena, Texas. She is a graduate of the University of Houston, and the UT School of Law. She is a practicing attorney

when not working as a Legislator.

In the Legislature she serves as vice-chair of the committee on State Affairs, on the Licensing & Admin Procedures committee, and the House Calendar Committee. She maintains good relations with

the House Speaker, Dade Phalen, and is able to work with other legislators in a bipartisan way.

Ana reminded the audience that the Legislature only meets every 2 years for a 140 day period, and must pass a budget. Otherwise the 150 members of the House can file any bill, hold committee hearings, and vote. This session there were over 11,800 bills filed, but only 4550 considered and only hundreds actually passed and signed by the Governor into law.

In addition to the regular session, the Governor called two special sessions to get a Property Tax Relief bill passed. As adopted in the second session, the bill raises the Homestead Exemption from \$40,000 per home to \$100,000, plus \$10,000 for over 65 or disabled. The Franchise Tax for small businesses was also reduced.

Other bills Ana discussed included a creation of a Texas Energy Fund of \$5 billion dollars, to improve reliability for

See LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, page 2

Constable Garcia Gives Backpacks & Haircuts to Students

By Allan Jamail
North Channel Star

August 1, 2023 ~ Jacinto City, TX. at the Town Center Pct. 2 Constable Jerry Garcia and his deputies and staff provided free haircuts and backpacks. At times translation was needed and NC Star writer Jamail was assisted by Pct. 2 Clerk Mar Tovar.

Garcia said the volunteer barbers and beauticians gave over 85 boy and girl haircuts in just two hours making the moms and dads thrilled to save their money. Three hundred and fifty students received backpacks. All together families saved several thousand dollars and with the savings they'll be able to buy other needed school supplies.



Precinct 2 Constable Garcia and Deputies. L-R: Deputy Cano, Captain M. Anderson, Deputy Torres, Deputy Jacks, Lt. McGinnis, Clerk Mar Tovar, Sgt. Rodela, Constable Jerry Garcia, Sgt. Rodriguez, Yahaira Moreno, Captain Z. Guinn, Captain Kritzler, Victoria Garcilazo, Deputy Magana, Deputy Smith & Deputy Barajas.

Constable Jerry Garcia said, "We know a lot of our people are struggling right now due to inflation so we just wanted to help any way we could. This is our

second backpack and haircut event this year and we are very happy with the turnout of the participants! We will definitely do this again next year."

The Tovar family of barbers and beauticians in the North Channel area donated their services and can be reached for their location by calling: Jenny or Lorena, UNISEX CUTS at: 713-641-3606. Ana or Maria at: 713-451-4392. Also

CONTINUED. See Free Haircuts and Backpacks, Page 3

Army Sgt. Mom reunites with her 3 children with Surprise Homecoming in Galena Park

By Allan Jamail
North Channel Star

GALENA PARK, August 11, 2023 ~ At the GPISD North Shore volleyball court US Army Sergeant Courtney Jones made a surprise appearance after being overseas for over a year.

Jones' daughter, Ivoryanna Mercer a senior on the Lady Mustangs volleyball team was caught by surprise when her mother ran onto the court as her name was called out as a player. When they saw each other they stretched out their arms and met in full stride giving each other an emotional tearing hug.

Sgt. Jones wearing her camouflage military uniform had been hiding in the gym from her daughter until the moment Ivoryanna's name was called out. The several hundred attendees at first did not



US Army Sgt. Courtney Jones surprise homecoming greeting with her daughter Ivoryanna Mercer at a North Shore Lady Mustang's volleyball game. (Photo by Allan Jamail)

CONTINUED. See Emotional Reunion at Mustang's Volleyball Game, Page 3

Chamber Casino Night nets Fun, Funds for Scholarships

By David Taylor
North Channel Star

Members and friends of the North Channel Chamber of Commerce let down their hair, changed out of their business duds, and celebrated students at their annual Casino Night last Friday at the Jacinto City Town Center. The night is an opportunity for the business community to support area students with funds for scholarships at the gaming tables. No money is exchanged, but it would be hard to tell by the intense play.

Sponsored by the Chamber Foundation, a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the scholarship is named after William C. Palko who was the Foundation's board chair for the last three years.

"Tonight's celebration was themed after movie nights, so a lot of our members came dressed as favorite movie characters," Palko said.

The former chairman said they switch between academic and vocational scholarships.



Bradley Jackson (green box), Crystal Jackson, Debbie Palko cheer on Dr. Thomas Hallisey at the annual Casino Night at the Town Center in Jacinto City last Friday. The event raises money for the North Channel Chamber of Commerce Foundation who awards the money to students for scholarships every year. (Photo by David Taylor)

"Even within those genres, we rotate between different departments like sociology, law enforcement, accounting, and so on," he said.

Qualifications for scholarship applicants include graduating from a local high school (Galena Park, North Shore, Channelview, or C. E. King), they must attend San Jacinto College as a full-time student (12 hours) and must

meet the academic requirements as well.

"Those are the basic requirements. Last year we had enough money to give a \$5,000 and a \$2,000 scholarship if we have enough money," he said.

Palko said last year's recipient was a graduate from Galena Park High

CONTINUED. See Great Casino Night at JC Town Center, Page 5

SHELDON ISD NEWS

Sheldon ISD Staff kick off The Start of the Year with Annual Convocation



On August 4, 1,600 Sheldon ISD staff members participated in the district’s annual Convocation with the theme It Takes a Village. The event provided an opportunity to showcase the talents of student performance groups from King High School as well as the first performance in district history for the staff band called the Spark Plugs. Members of the staff band volunteered to perform by singing and playing a musical instrument.

Welcome Back, Sheldon ISD Students



Sheldon ISD opened its doors on August 9 for the first day of school. Sheldon ISD is a fast-growing school district with 13 campuses, approximately 11,000 students and 1,600 staff members. Thanks to the passage of the 2022 bond, construction is set to start for building additions at Null Middle School and Cravens Early Childhood to provide for additional classrooms. The district continues to enroll roughly 400 new students each year.

Sheldon ISD Receives Superior Finance Rating

Sheldon ISD has received an “A Superior rating” for quality financial management practices for the 2022-23 school year. The state’s school financial accountability rating system, known as the School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST), ensures that Texas public schools are held accountable for the quality of their financial management practices and that they improve these practices. The system is designed to encourage Texas public schools to better manage their financial resources to provide the maximum allocation possible for direct instructional purposes.

CHANNELVIEW ISD NEWS

Back To School Bash with Our Superintendent



Legislative Update,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the electric grid, and to protect critical services such as nursing homes and hospitals. This bill, like several others, will require ratification by voters on the November ballot.

For teachers, the Legislature passed a Cost of Living Increase in pay, on a sliding scale of 2% to 6%, or a raise of \$2400 to \$7500 depending upon length of service. This bill will also require passage on the November ballot.

Another ballot issue was the expansion of the PUF fund, or Public University Fund that sends oil and gas tax revenues to Texas Universities. If approved, a \$3 billion fund will be created and shared by UT, TAMU, and expanded to include UH, Texas Tech, UNT, and Texas State University.

Another important mea-

sure was the creation of a \$1 billion fund for State Parks, for the expansion, and improvement of additional parks in Harris County and throughout the state. State Representative Armando Walle worked with Ana to pass this bill.

Another bill will expand Broadband or WiFi coverage in rural and non-served areas of the state.

The most important function of the Legislature, the passing of a two-year budget, was accomplished after much negotiation between House and Senate. The final budget was \$321 Billion for two years, and included a teacher pay raise across the board of \$5000, and paid childcare for teachers.

The budget also included \$50 million as matching money for federal grants to

study and advance the so-called “Ike Dike” or Gulf Coast Protection Project.

Ana pointed out several bills that failed to pass, including the most important which was additional school funding and vouchers. She believes that the Governor will call a 3rd Special Session in the fall, to focus on School Finance.

Another measure of interest, that did not get any action, was statewide Gambling or Gaming in Casinos. She said there was not support to pass this item.

Ana invited all in the audience to visit her offices in Jacinto City or Austin, She thanked GPISD teacher and city councilwoman Carmela Garcia for bringing a class of her students for a tour of the Capitol in Austin.

Harris County meetings seek public input on Consolidated Plan

Starting August 1st, Harris County Community Services Department (HCCSD) will hold four public meetings— one in each Harris County precinct—gathering community feedback to develop the department’s five-year consolidated plan.

The Consolidated Plan represents the county’s vision for improving the quality of life in the county’s low-to-moderate-income areas, identifying needs and resources for affordable housing, homeless services, and community and economic development, and establishing a strategic plan to meet those needs.

Meeting dates:

Precinct 3 – Tuesday, August 1, 4:30-7:30 P.M. - San Jacinto Community Center

Precinct 4 – Tuesday, August 8, 4:30-7:30 P.M. - Steve Radack Community Center

Precinct 2 – Thursday, August 17, 4:30-7:30 P.M. - Martin Flukinger Community Center

Precinct 1 – Thursday, August 24, 4:30-7:30 P.M. - Tom Bass Community Center

For any further inquiries, please email Andrea.Zarro@csd.hctx.net or our team inbox at communications@csd.hctx.net.

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CHARLOTTE'S WEB

By Charlotte Jackson



Pain and Violence

I am the first to admit that many nights I am awake by 2 a.m. And like many others, as soon as I am awake, I roll over and get on social media. Within the first twenty minutes, I am sad and find myself praying. Rarely is there a day on the local news that there are not reports of violence.

This past weekend was no different. I read about a house party in Baytown with multiple shootings including one confirmed deceased. I read a story of someone missing only for their family to learn he had died after a road rage incident. Another innocent victim of a drunk driver speeding through the neighborhood,

Another parent lost their child. Another child's parent headed to jail and then prison. Someone's sister was arrested for a heinous crime against a child. A woman in her forties confused as to why her vehicle was towed for not having proper documentation. A young man upset that his father has never been in his life finds himself angry enough to set fire to the father's home. A young teenage girl goes to the movies with a friend of the family only to return home after being raped.

A pastor's past begins to haunt him as a young woman informs him that she believes he is her father. His marriage eventually ends and for years, his from that marriage will not talk to him. Imagine years later, he marries again and has been restored in many ways only to have another young adult show up with paternity papers. Another pastor is faced with rape charges. Families are hurt. Children lose respect for their fathers. Wives are torn, congregation members are confused.

Life is full of hurt and pain, yet we must do our part to end the violence. Gun Violence is not more painful than domestic abuse. Lives are impacted and without addressing the issues, pain continues.

I overheard someone asking a community leader how his brother was doing. You could see his body tense up. Instantly, you noticed frustration and heard negative words. He admitted that his wife tells him all the time that he must forgive and forget. He commented that he can forgive but will NEVER forget. As I heard this, I immediately thought of some of his actions and words over the past few years directed at others. God touched my heart and reminded me that hurting people, hurt others. I instantly prayed for him. I realized that so many of the others I encounter have deep hurt and if we each took the time to pray for those who offend us, we would see change. We must remind ourselves that we are all individuals with faults which sometimes include addictions, emotions of anger and resentment, and often with a chip on our shoulder. We need to ask God to reveal our faults and shortcomings. We must pray for ourselves and then we must do the same with others. The only way we can stop the pain and violence is to do our part.

Free Haircuts and Backpacks,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

cutting hair were: Britney Pannell, 832-202-6939 and Pecina_D_ Barber, 832-806-4720.

There was a custom button badge making booth available, children made custom buttons with their names on them and the Precinct 2 badge logo on them. This booth was the most attended booth of all.

Garcia's always has other vendors at his event that provide lots of useful information helpful to the parents in attendance.

Fe y Justicia Worker

Center was present, Felipe their attendant was giving Workers' Rights Mini-Guides to attendees. The guide is very thorough and most useful to workers not aware of what their employers must provide them and how much their pay must be. For more information visit: www.houstonworkers.org or call 713-862-8222, also the US Department of Labor's OSHA guide was available: www.osha.gov.



L- R: Constable Jerry Garcia, Tristan Zapata, Mathew Zapata, Damian Zapata, Leilani Santiago holding the red backpack.



Two of the six barbers cutting boys and girls hair. Barber Britney Pannell with Jesus Garcia, Deputy Sgt. Rodriguez with sweep up duties and Beautician Jenny Tovar with Adalynn Cabrero.

Emotional Reunion at Mustang's Volleyball Game,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

know what was taking place, upon finding out they jumped to their feet cheering with joy and excitement as the two united.

North Channel Star writer Allan Jamail interviewed Sgt. Jones and she said, "My family means the world to me! Me coming home and seeing their smiling faces made my heart merry. My new journey and assignment is now to my family." She and her husband Deandrick Jones and children are making their home in the North Channel area.

When asked why she joined the army with having three children in school she said, "I enlisted in order to provide for my kids to have a better life and to be able to help get them a college education. It was hard for me to leave them, but I knew in the end the sacrifice would be worth it for them."

Sgt. Jones has been in the Army on active duty for six years. Her last assignment had her stationed in Kuwait and Iraq for over a year. She said, "We completed our mission without any serious issues arising before returning to the states. The experience ex-



Braylan Jones, North Shore sophomore with mom, Sgt. Courtney Jones surprise homecoming. (Photo By Allan Jamail)

posed me to the culture differences of our countries. I've learned a lot about those countries and their people while serving there," Jones said.

She's now retired from active duty and stationed in Houston in the army reserves. Her new civilian job is with MD Anderson Cancer Center, employed there as Transportation Management Coordinator.

Jones is a 2001 Galena Park High School graduate and the North Channel community has always been her home.



Isaac Mercer, North Shore 2021 graduate was performing a video of his mom, Sgt. Courtney Jones at the surprise homecoming for his sister senior Lady Mustang Ivoryanna Mercer.

ASK DIAMOND JIM

Diamond Jim: "What is Padparadscha?"



Padparadscha is an extremely rare variety of sapphire. In fact, it's the most rare, and most prized form of sapphire. It is also one of the most expensive gems in the world, with prices similar to those of emeralds and rubies. Padparadscha is also one of the hardest gems in the world, second only to diamond. As hardness is a factor that determines how long a gemstone will last, this trait makes padparadscha an excellent gem for jewelry. The name padparadscha (sometimes spelled padparadsha) derives from the Sinhalese word padma radschen, meaning lotus blossom, as the stone is of a similar color to the lotus blossom. Most padparadscha gems are small, less than two carats in weight. However, a stone from Sri Lanka is on display at the American Museum of Natural History in New York that weights an incredible one hundred carats.



Padparadscha is a beautiful pinkish-orange color, however retailers sell rich orange colored sapphires as padparadscha. This is misleading, as true padparadscha displays a delicate mixture of orange and pink. Quality stones will have a uniform, pure pink/ orange color and will be a lot more expensive. Padparadscha is the only variety of corundum other than ruby that is given its own name. Usually, different varieties of corundum are referred to as a particular color of sapphire.

Today, many padparadscha stones are heat treated, to enhance their color. Most are cut into oval or cushion cuts. Padparadscha is brittle, with an adamantine to vitreous luster. It is an extremely hard stone, rating a 9 on the hardness scale. Many knowledgeable sources argue that the only real padparadscha can be found in Sri Lanka. However, pinkish orange sapphires have also been found in Madagascar, at the Quy Chau mines in Vietnam, and in the Tunduru district of the Umba Valley in northeast Tanzania. The padparadscha from Tanzania tends to be browner, and is sometimes called African pad.


It has been said by some that: "Padparadscha is a gentle stone with enormous energy that is said to have many positive attributes. It is a stone that represents joy, vital energy and foresight. It can help the wearer make enormous changes, helping him come close to achieving his life goals. It removes the many resistances to change the wearer may have, replacing this resistance with clarity. With this newfound clarity, the wearer can achieve a much-needed calm. This calm helps him understand the root of his problems, allowing for a much needed change. With this calmness, it is also easier for the wearer to trust himself, which is freeing."

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 PAGE

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TEXAS MATTERS

By U.S. Senator
JOHN CORNYN



Cornyn Highlights Bill to Lower Drug Costs for Texans

‘The list price for Humira is more than \$80,000 per year per patient. That’s higher than the median household income in Texas.’

‘Patients in Texas and across the country are experiencing sticker shock at the pharmacy counter like never before.’

‘There’s a bipartisan desire to stop the anti-competitive behaviors... that are costing patients and taxpayers a fortune, and I hope we can make progress this Congress and finally put a stop to some of the gamesmanship.’

WASHINGTON – Today on the floor, U.S. Senator John Cornyn (R-TX) discussed his bipartisan Affordable Prescriptions for Patients Act, which passed unanimously out of the Senate Judiciary Committee last Congress and would help lower drug prices by preventing bad actors’ anti-competitive use of patents to block generic and biosimilar competition from coming to market. Excerpts of Sen. Cornyn’s remarks are below.

“The list price for Humira is more than \$80,000 per year per patient. That’s higher than the median household income in Texas.”

“Humira is one of the most egregious examples of patent abuse, but it’s far from the only one.”

“Earlier this week Senator Blumenthal, the Senator from Connecticut, and I reintroduced a bill called the Affordable Prescriptions for Patients Act to put an end to this anti-competitive practice that keeps drug prices artificially high.”

“There are two practices in particular that this bill will address. One is called patent thicketing, which involves building layers upon layers of patents to prevent competitors from ever hitting the market. That’s what AbbVie did with Humira.”

“The other anticompetitive behavior this bill will address is something called product hopping, which occurs when a company develops a reformulation of a product that’s about to lose exclusivity, and then pulls the original product off the market. This is done not because the new formula is more effective, but because it prevents generic competitors.”

“The Affordable Prescriptions for Patients Act puts an end to this practice by expressly prohibiting manufacturers from engaging in product hopping. It also facilitates market entry for generics and biosimilars, which lead to more options and lower prices for patients.”

“Patients in Texas and across the country are experiencing sticker shock at the pharmacy counter like never before.”

“There’s a bipartisan desire to stop the anti-competitive behaviors that I described here today that are costing patients and taxpayers a fortune, and I hope we can make progress this Congress and finally put a stop to some of the gamesmanship.”

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

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OPINION

By U.S. Representative
SYLVIA GARCIA



The Fight Against Surprise Fees: Share Your Story

Have you ever had to pay a junk fee? Junk fees are hidden, or surprise charges are often added right at the end of transactions – and they cost American consumers tens of billions of dollars each year. Junk fees are frequently found in banking, utility service, cell and cable service, travel, and entertainment transactions– but they can appear just about anywhere.

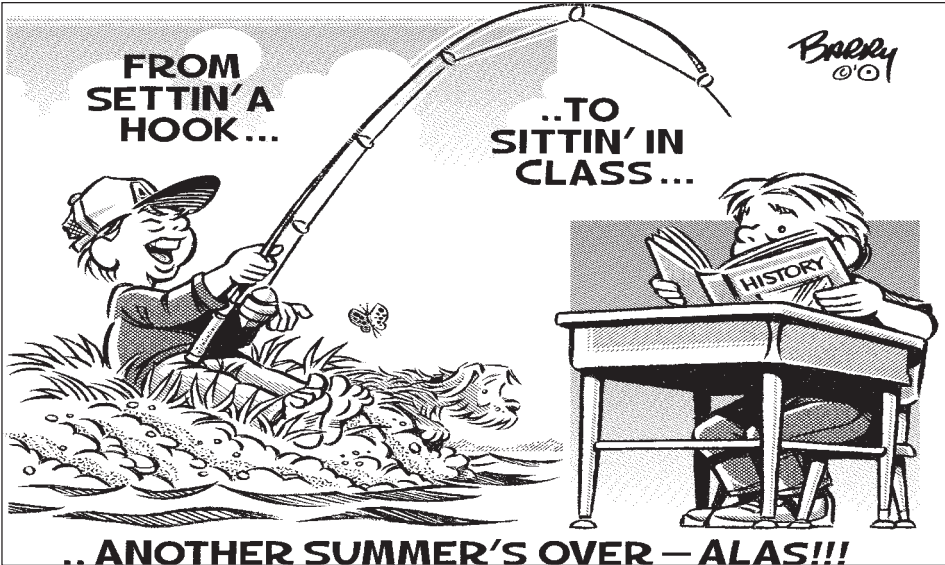
I am working to put an end to these unfair practices. Several of my Congressional colleagues and I are collecting powerful stories reinforcing the need for action, and this is where you come in. I want to hear from you if you’ve run into surprise fees when buying tickets online, such as “family seating” fees, “early termination” fees, or “surprise resort” fees.

Reply to this -newsletter to share your own personal stories of encountering junk fees.

President Biden himself has expressed his determination to tackle this issue. In his State of the Union address earlier this year, and again just a few days ago, he made his commitment to banning junk fees clear.

Junk fees are nothing more than a tax imposed by greedy corporations, and it’s time to fight back. Reply to share how junk fees have personally impacted you.

I will ensure a fair and transparent marketplace for all Americans.



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STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS

By Gary Borders



Child Care Centers Closing Across State

An unprecedented number of child care centers are expected to close across the state as pandemic relief funding ends, the Texas Standard reported. A survey conducted by the Texas Association for the Education of Young Children of about 1,600 child care programs indicated 44% were likely to close their doors without additional funding. Federal pandemic relief funds ended for most centers in June.

The Texas Legislature declined to pass a \$2.3 billion House proposal for child care providers, with the intent that the money be used to raise the average wage of staff from \$12 per hour to at least \$15 per hour.

Since 2020, Texas child care providers have received more than \$4 billion in COVID-19 funding, according to the Texas Tribune. The money helped cover child care costs for more than 800,000 Texas children.

“This is going to be something that affects every community here in the state of Texas and will have a lasting effect on our economy as the supply of workers in all industries is shortened because of the lack of child care,” Cody Summerville, executive director of TAEYC, said.

NO ADDITIONAL IMPEACHMENT ARTICLES FOR PAXTON

The deadline has passed with no additional impeachment charges against suspended Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton, who already faces 20 articles of impeachment in a trial set in the Senate for Sept. 5, the Austin American-Statesman reported.

House members in late May voted 121-23 to send the articles of impeachment to the Senate, accusing Paxton of bribery and misuse of office. Paxton was indicted in 2015 for securities fraud, with that trial now set for 2024.

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who will preside over the impeachment trial, said it will likely last two to three weeks.

NEW LAW CRACKS DOWN ON STREET RACING



Gov. Greg Abbott last week signed two laws cracking down on illegal street racing. House Bills 1442 and 2899 enhance penalties for those involved in such activities and provide law enforcement and prosecutors additional tools to address those crimes.

“Street takeover” events have been occurring in Austin, Fort Worth and other cities, where intersections are blocked by vehicles doing donuts in intersections while others film the event.

Abbott ceremonially signed the bill in Fort Worth, where a street takeover led to a pair of fatalities.

“Street racing and street takeovers are not a victimless crime,” said Mayor Mattie Parker. “Right here in Fort Worth, we lost a wonderful young couple who had three children. These types of incidents are all too common across the country.”

Abbott announced the formation of a task force in February to combat street takeovers. The Texas Department of Public Safety, working with local law enforcement, has made more than 50 arrests and nearly 400 traffic citations related to illegal street racing across the state.

WILDFIRE DANGER CONTINUES TO RISE AS STATE BAKES

Texas A&M Forest Service is warning of increased wildfire danger as high temperatures and dry conditions continue to cover the state.

“Since mid-July, wildfire activity has increased substantially across Texas due to expanding drought conditions,” said Wes Moorehead, Texas A&M Forest Service

Fire Chief. “Over the past two weeks, state and local firefighters have responded to 280 wildfires across the state that burned almost 10,000 acres.”

While the risk of wildfire has increased, the five active wildfires across the state have largely been contained. The number of counties with burn bans in place increased to 168 as of last weekend.

A&M REACHES \$1 MILLION SETTLEMENT WITH JOURNALISM PROFESSOR

Texas A&M University reached a \$1 million settlement with a journalism professor whose botched hiring led to the resignation of the university’s president, The Dallas Morning News reported.

University officials released the results of an internal investigation last week that admitted “mistakes were made during the hiring process.”

Kathleen McElroy, a former editor for the New York Times and a journalism professor at the University of Texas at Austin, accepted a tenure-track position to restart A&M’s journalism program. A public signing ceremony was followed with backlash, including from six A&M regents, because of her work to diversify newsrooms. The original offer eventually was reduced to a one-year contract with no protection from being summarily fired. McElroy decided to stay at UT-Austin while making public how the offer had changed.

“I hope the resolution of my matter will reinforce A&M’s allegiance to excellence in higher education and its commitment to academic freedom and journalism,” McElroy said. She is a Texas A&M graduate.

TEXAS LEADS NATION IN 'FAMILY ANNIHILATION' CASES

Cases of “family annihilation,” where one family member kills at least two close family members, occur every five days in the United States, according to a study originally made by the IndyStar and analyzed by the Statesman. That analysis indicated since 2020 such homicides have occurred in Texas 33 times —more than any other state.

Firearms are used most frequently in family annihilations in the state, the study showed. Texas, the second most populous state in the nation, leads the country in firearm-related deaths, with 4,613 reported in the state in 2021, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

The data focused on the two and a half years since the COVID-19 pandemic.

“A lot of the stressors of the COVID pandemic exacerbated the issues around domestic violence and mental health,” Mikisha Hooper, with the Texas Council on Family Violence, told the Texas Standard. “So that isolation, the financial pressure, and those types of things are exacerbating the increase in the number of homicides that we’re seeing,” she said.

★

THE POSTSCRIPT

By
Carrie Classon

Summer Cold

So, I got a cold. If you catch a cold in the winter, everyone is sympathetic. They tell you to drink hot tea and put on another sweater. A cold in the winter just seems like part of the season, and I can turn the thermostat up and wait it out.

A summer cold is totally different.

A summer cold seems like an act of idiocy. A summer cold feels like I’m being difficult on purpose. I feel I must have done something really stupid—because who gets sick in the middle of the summer? And yet, here we are.

My husband, Peter, takes good care of me when I have a cold. He shows up with all sorts of pills and supplements he says I should ingest. And so I do, but I’m not sure they help. They make Peter happy, and that’s the point. But when I don’t get better after two days, Peter starts to frown at me. He wants me to say that I am at least better than yesterday. But today I am not better than yesterday. Today I am considerably worse than yesterday, and yesterday I was worse than the day before.

Peter does not approve of this trajectory. He feels I am headed in the wrong direction and need to do something to rectify my course. But I don’t know what I can do—besides drinking orange juice and trying to sleep a bit more. Colds take time.

And Peter probably has a point about pushing myself. I felt bad yesterday but attended a Zoom meeting with some ladies I’m very fond of. I had almost no voice when I started, and much less when I was done. Peter gave me a disapproving look.

In order to get ready for the meeting, I had to work a little harder to get everything done a little earlier. Then I had dinner and got a stomachache. The stomachache had nothing to do with being sick, so you would think it would have the courtesy to hold off until I wasn’t coughing quite so much—or at least until I had a voice, so I could complain about it.

But this one was terrible. So I went to bed early with a stomachache and a cough and a sore throat and the feeling that I must have behaved very badly to get all these things at once.

And, while perhaps I didn’t behave badly, I suspect I didn’t listen as well as I might have. I suspect, if I’d been paying attention, I would have noticed I was getting more and more tired before I finally got sick. I might have noticed a stomachache forming while I ate a bit more. I might have wondered if it wouldn’t be a good idea just to rest, for a change, to have a day when I didn’t have a goal or a deadline I had to make—and beat—because it was the only way I had to measure if I’d done well that day.

Maybe “doing well” sometimes means doing less, not trying quite so hard, letting myself simply relax. Maybe paying more attention would be a smart thing to do, since my body is going to insist I rest eventually—either voluntarily, or by force.

“What are you doing out of bed?” Peter wants to know as I write this.

“I’m just writing a little today,” I tell him, because I am. I’m going to write just a little. Then I’m going to work very hard at being a little more lazy.

Till next time,
Carrie

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OBITUARIES

CHRYSTAL ANN PERKINS

Chrystal Ann Perkins, born on September 9, 1960, in Brewton, AL, passed away peacefully on July 30, 2023, in Woodville, TX. She was a beloved mother, grandmother, and friend who touched the lives of many with her kindness, generosity, and infectious love for life.

Chrystal was preceded in death by her parents, William E. Moore and Christine A. Moore, her loving husband of 16 years, David Perkins and her brother, Anthony Moore. She is survived by her son, Matthew Dent, her cherished granddaughter, Alyssa Dent, and numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, and extended family members who will miss her deeply.

On August 21, 2003, Chrystal married the love of her life, David Perkins. Their love story was one of deep affection and mutual respect, and their bond was a source of inspiration for many. Chrystal was a woman of many passions. She loved to cook, and her kitchen was a place of warmth and laughter, where family and friends gathered to share meals and create lasting memories.



An avid fisher, Chrystal found peace and tranquility in the great outdoors. She loved the thrill of the catch and the serenity of the water. Her love for the beach was unparalleled. She found joy in the simple pleasures of life, like the feel of sand between her toes and the sound of waves crashing on the shore. Her love for these pastimes was only surpassed by the love she had for her only granddaughter, Alyssa. Their bond was special, and Chrystal cherished every moment they spent together.

Pallbearers will be Steve Boutwell, Josh Boutwell, Craig Boutwell, Tommy Howard, David Hosts, and Bradley Hosts. They, along with all who knew Chrystal, will remember her for her warm heart, her infectious laughter, and her unwavering love for her family.

In her 62 years, Chrystal Ann Perkins lived a life full of love, laughter, and adventure. She was a beacon of light in the lives of those she touched, and her memory will live on in the hearts of all who knew her. Her spirit, her love, and her legacy will forever be a part of the lives she touched. She will be deeply missed, but her memory will live on, a testament to a life well-lived.

A visitation was held on Wednesday, August 9, 2023 at 11 AM with a funeral service officiated by Rev. Ken Durham at 1 PM in the chapel of Carter-Conley Funeral Home. A graveside service followed at 2:30 PM at San Jacinto Memorial Park under the direction of Carter-Conley Funeral Home. For those unable to attend in person, a livestream of the funeral service is available to watch by following the link below Chrystal's funeral details or on her tribute wall at CarterConleyFH.com

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Great Casino Night at Jacinto City Town Center,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

School, was a single mother with a 15-year-old daughter and wanted to take HVAC classes.

"She wants to open her own company because she wants to give back to her community. She told us she was seeing a lot of low income and struggling single mothers getting taken advantage of when they needed air conditioning repair," he said.

The \$2,000 recipient was 30 years old, had finished an eight-year hitch in the Army 82nd Airborne and was a full-time employee of Centertpoint.

"They are both graduating this December. They both want to come back to the community and share their talents," he said.

"It's local money that stays local and benefits the local high school graduates and the community."

This is the fifth year of the scholarship program.

"Some recipients are directly out of high school while others have been out and working for 10 to 15 years," said Dr. Allatia Harris, chairman of the Foundation Board.



A few superheroes try their luck at the card table during the North Channel Chamber of Commerce Foundation's Casino Night. From left, Brenda Bell, Jay Coppock, Jeff Pickard, and Laurie Coppock. (Photo by David Taylor)

One year the scholarship went to a Channelview maritime major, another was an engineering student from North Shore, HVAC students from Galena Park, and Harris pointed out that the money is spread around to students across the area.

"We also get to meet some amazing young people from our community in the process," she said.

Chamber president and CEO Margie Buentello also added that the money

is well-spent.

"Not one penny goes to the chamber, staff, or anything else. One hundred percent of the money goes into the Foundation to fund the scholarships," she said.

Didn't make the casino party but would still like to donate to the scholarship fund? Contact Buentello at the chamber at info@ncachamber.com or by calling 713-450-3600.



Dr. Donald Nino, Bill Palko and Jim Wadzinski look on as Dr. Allatia Harris tries her luck on the Blackjack table. The themed party invited chamber members to dress up as movie characters. Harris came as the witch from the Wizard of Oz. (Photo by David Taylor)

Burn Ban in effect for Harris County for next 90 days

Harris County, August 8 – Harris County Commissioner's Court approved a burn ban in Unincorporated Harris County due to extreme temperatures and continuous dry conditions. Harris County joins 168 Texas counties that have already implemented a burn ban, including our neighbors in Galveston, Waller, Chambers, and Liberty County.

"The burn ban is in place to reduce the potential of a devastating wildfire happening in our community," said Fire Marshal Laurie L. Christensen. "The excessive heat conditions we have been experiencing and lack of rain have elevated KBDI levels and vegetation fuels. The safety of Harris County is in our proactive actions- let's heed the ban, reduce risks, and protect our community."

The burn ban means no outdoor burning is allowed, except in an enclosure that contains all flames and/or sparks; outdoor burning activities authorized by TCEQ; approved ceremonial fires; non-commercial cooking such as backyard cookouts and barbecues are allowed; and welding and other "hot work" performed in accordance with county fire code requirements.

Violation of the ban is a Class "C" misdemeanor, punishable by up to a \$500 fine. In addition, any person who starts a fire that causes damage to property without the owner's consent may be charged with Reckless Damage or Destruction, a Class C misdemeanor, or arson, a felony.

Preparation is critical when protecting your property and home from the threat of wildfire damage. Here are a few effective actions and precautions you can take to minimize the risk:

- DO NOT burn on "red Flag" or windy days, and think twice before burning outdoors when KBDI approaches 700 or more.
- LPG tanks should be far enough away from buildings for valves to be shut off in case of fire. Keep the area around the tank clear of flammable vegetation.
- Store gasoline in an approved safety can away from occupied buildings.
- All combustibles such as firewood, wooden picnic tables, boats, and stacked lumber should be kept away from structures.
- Clear roof surfaces and gutters regularly to avoid the build-up of flammable materials such as leaves and other debris.
- Remove branches from trees to a height of 15 feet or more.
- In rural areas, clear a fuel break of at least three times the fuel length around all structures.
- Have fire tools handy such as a ladder long enough to reach your roof, a shovel, a rake, and a bucket or two for water.
- Place connected garden hoses on all sides of your home for emergency use.
- Assure you and your family know all emergency exits from your home.

The Texas Forest Service (TFS) measures drought conditions based on the Keetch-Byram Drought Index (KBDI) scale. KBDI conditions between 600 and 800 have the potential to lead to intense, prolonged wildfires. As of August 8th, Harris County's average KBDI is 681. Texas counties can implement a burn ban if their KBDI is above 575. 68 percent of Texas counties are currently under a burn ban.

The burn ban will be in effect for 90 days or until TFS determines that Harris County is no longer experiencing a drought.

To contact our office for questions, please email: fmosupport@fmosupport@hctx.net

To submit any fire and life safety complaint or concern, go to: <https://www.hcfmo.net/report-hazard>

LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

LEGAL NOTICE

THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF JACINTO CITY WILL MEET IN A SPECIAL SESSION ON THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2023 AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER AT 10301 MARKET STREET FOR THE PURPOSE OF A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE PROPOSED BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024.

The proposed budget will raise more revenue from property taxes than last year's budget by an amount of \$ 231,067, which is a 5.9 percent increase from last year's budget. The property tax revenue to be raised from new property added to the tax roll this year is \$ 29,587.04

Property Tax Rate Comparison	2022-2023	2023-2024
Property Tax Rate	0.65588/100	0.596874/100
No-New-Revenue Tax Rate	\$0.681354/\$100	0.576422/100
No-New-Revenue Maintenance & Operations Tax Rate	\$0.681354/\$100	0.576422/100
Voter-Approval Tax Rate	\$0.620453/\$100	0.596875/100
De minimis rate	\$0.682623/\$100	0.648853/100

Total debt obligation for CITY OF JACINTOCITY secured by property taxes:
\$ 0.0

During the 2022-2023 Budget year, \$ 2,500.00 projected for advertising and \$ 2985.00 has been spent as of 7/31/2023. The 2023-2024 Budget Proposal includes \$ 2000.00 for advertising.

Jacinto City did not budget for or spend funds on lobbying efforts in the 2021-2022 budget and there is no such funding proposed for the 2022-2023 budget.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IS ENCOURAGED

Joyce Raines, City Secretary

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